



The Old Fliers' Group

Attached to the Royal Aero Club of WA (Inc).

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****NEXT MEETING**** **Friday February 23rd 2018.**

Last Meeting

After the usual formalities the meeting got under way with a “Mastermind Quiz” conducted by Paul Andriessen. Paul assured us that the quiz was totally *unbiased*, but in fact it was anything but. Two participants (Brian and Steve) were presented with a set of five images and asked a question about each. For contestant (B) the questions were ridiculously simple – while for the other (S) the questions were impossible to answer. It raised a good laugh from the membership.

Thanks Paul for your light-hearted contribution.

Support Speaker

Our support speaker was Tony McGrath who spoke about the origins of aviation in Western Australia. He began with “Professor Price” who made the earliest ascent in a balloon 1891 – later, Miss Millie Viola made a number of ascents in the same year.

The next serious attempt at ballooning in W.A. took place in Perth in 1910 when Mr. Vincent Beebe arranged for a series of exhibitions. Beebe employed two aeronauts, Christopher Sebpe, a Spaniard, and Albert Eastwood, an Australian, to conduct the displays.

Next, came the unsuccessful attempts at aircraft design by Andrew Barr, Robert McMullin, Edgar Henderson and Charles Lindsay Campbell. The first successful flight of a heavier than aircraft was by Joseph Joel Hammond in a Bristol Boxkite in 1911 at Belmont Park. Others followed.



JJ Hammond and the Bristol Boxkite at Belmont.

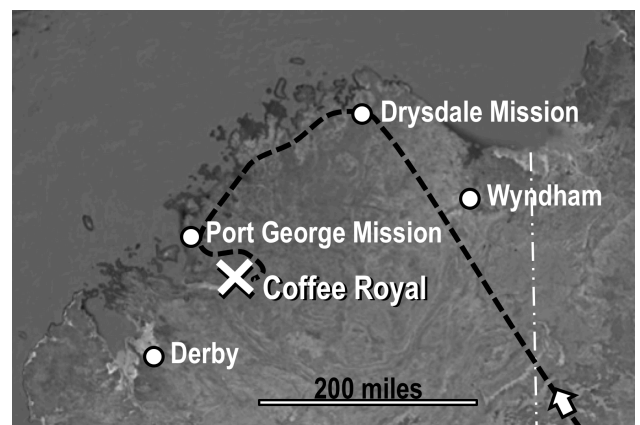
Coffee Royal Incident

The Coffee Royal Incident was next on the list. It covered the forced landing of the *Southern Cross* in the north-west of this state. The crew of Charles Kingsford Smith, Charles Ulm, Hal Litchfield and Tom McWilliams set off from Mascot (now Kingsford Smith Airport in Sydney) to fly direct to Wyndham as the first leg of a proposed record-breaking flight to England.

They struck bad weather about 450 miles out of Wyndham and were unable to get a fix, but they carried on, eventually overflying Drysdale and Port George missions before force landing near the Glenelg River. It was there that Ulm produced a thermos of coffee and a bottle of brandy. Hence, the force landing became known as the “Coffee Royal Incident”.

It took twelve days to find them, during which time there was enormous public attention. Unfortunately, it resulted in the loss of two friends and fellow aviators, Keith Anderson and Bobby Hitchcock, who had set out to search for the *Southern Cross*. There were accusations that the forced landing of the *Southern Cross* was a publicity stunt.

An extensive public inquiry exonerated Kingsford Smith and Ulm, but many of the public remained unconvinced.



Map of the Southern Cross flight.

Annual Subscription

The annual subscription remains the same as last year, at \$20.00. You can pay at the next meeting, or any future meeting should you wish. Alternatively, you can mail a cheque to Brian Hernan, 1 / 4 Kings Park Ave, Crawley, 6009. Cheques must be made out to “Royal Aero Club”.

2018 Meeting Date

Please note: In the last bulletin the date for the March meeting was listed as March 30th. That is in fact Good Friday – hence that meeting will be deferred to Friday April 6th.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be at the Royal Aero Club, starting at noon on **Friday February 23rd**. Speakers will cover the following: “Aviation English” and the forced landing of the German aviators, Bertram and Klausmann who were lost for six weeks in the north-west of this state in 1932.

Hope to see you there.

Brian Hernan.