



The Old Fliers' Group

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

Coordinator: Stephen Rogers – Email: henol@bigpond.net.au

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Report on our last meeting

Once again we had about ninety people attended our last – and it was also pleasing to see a good number of new members and visitors.

First Speaker

Bevan Marshall was first to speak. He talked about being a Safety Officer when he worked for an Airborne Geophysical Survey Company. The company operated a variety of aircraft that are usually recognised by the “stinger/s”, a device that protruded from the back or front of the aircraft. (See picture below).

The stinger is usually a ‘magnetometer’ placed as far as possible from the ferrous metal components and electrical apparatus in the aircraft. Also, the aircraft may have a diamond shaped wire aerial, attached to a probe at the front, the wingtips, and stinger at the tail.



A geophysical aircraft with “stingers” and a diamond aerial.

Magnetometers are magnetic sensors widely used to measure the Earth's magnetic field and so detect magnetic anomalies of various types. This information allows the geophysicist to identify the typical minerals that might lie below the surface of the earth.

The process enables the mining companies to detect the likelihood of mineralisation in certain areas without the expense of widespread exploration drilling. Best results are achieved by flying at a low ground clearance – say 50 to 100 metres.

Bevan told us that, “Explorers reached new heights by flying low!!!”

Other airborne sensors include the “fluorescencer” which has the property of recording reflected short wavelength radiation.

The company for which Bevan worked had contracts both in Australia and overseas. It was a job that, “Kept him on his toes.”

Second Speaker

Next, members heard about Edwin (Dryblower) Murphy who was the grandfather of long-time OFG member Bob Murphy. Edwin was attracted from Victoria to the gold discoveries in Western Australia. He carried his swag 550 kilometres from Perth to Coolgardie, arriving in 1894. He did a stint of prospecting and struck a rich patch that netted him £2000, an enormous amount of money for that time.



‘Dryblower’ Murphy in 1928.

Murphy helped Billy Clare launch the *Coolgardie Miner* newspaper. Edwin contributed a weekly column that included gossip, poetry and jingles – he used the pen-name 'Dryblower'. He also enjoyed the nightly sing-songs around the pianos in the pubs.

Later in Perth, Dryblower worked for a variety of newspapers and spent his final years with the *Sunday Times*.

Bob told us of a number of practical jokes and incidents relating to Dryblower that appealed to all.

Finally, Bob told us of his flight in the Pipistrel Alpha Electric aircraft. He was certainly impressed with its performance and characteristics.

Next Meeting

The next OFG meeting will be at the Royal Aero Club, starting at noon on Friday, 29 March. Our Speaker of the Day will be Tony McGrath who will tell us about early flights over the Indian Ocean. We will also hear about some early flights of Western Australian Airways.

Hope to see you there.

Brian Hernan.