



The Old Fliers' Group

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

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**Next Meeting
Friday June 28th**

Report on our last meeting

Speaker of the Day

Just short of ninety people attended our June meeting. All were delighted to hear Jan Ende return to tell a new story – “The night Flight to Balgo”. It was his account of an urgent night flight that was made from Derby to Balgo Hills Station when a call came in to the RFDS in Derby at about 8pm one evening. The request was for urgent medical assistance at Balgo. Almost immediately, Jan, with an RFDS doctor and nurse, departed in a Beechcraft Queen Air.



The RFDS Queen Air.

The weather was foul with cumulo-nimbus clouds spewing lightning throughout the region. Flying at just under the cloud base, Jan navigated visually by observing the ground features that he saw during successive lightning flashes! There were no nav aids or GPS to help.

In the rough weather the doctor and nurse became almost comatose.



Night lightning.

As he approached Balgo, the station manager turned on the basketball court lights to guide him. The airstrip is on a rocky plateau and volunteers had laid out the flare path. Fortunately, the flares were laid out correctly and he made a successful landing on a very wet airstrip.

The patient was treated then flown back to Derby in atrocious weather.

Mini Speaker

Your editor, due to a late cancellation, became the Mini Speaker for June. The talk covered his experiences as a ‘stand-in’ station pilot when he had barely 100 hours in his logbook. The permanent station pilot was to have a fortnight break, so a replacement was needed.

The station pilot had flown the aircraft to Jandakot for service and after that I flew it back to the station. With an early start from Jandakot I flew the Cessna C172 to the station, situated about 200 kilometres north-east of Geraldton, and arrived just before noon. My first job was to immediately fly the station owner to Mullewa for a meeting.

After the meeting the participants adjourned to the bar and became hard to move on. My aim was to depart Mullewa at least twenty minutes before last light, however this became impossible as long “stories” dragged on.

The result was that I made my first ever night landing at the station about five minutes after last light – it was very ‘tricky’ as there was no runway lighting.

In the two weeks that followed I learned a lot about station life and station flying: checking windmills, troughs, fences, stock numbers, and moving stock from one place to another.



Cessna C172 at Yallalong Station.

Next Meeting

The next OFG meeting will be at the Royal Aero Club, starting at noon on Friday, 28th June. Our speakers will be John Hinton on De Havilland and Chris Boyes on the Concorde.

Hope to see you there.

Brian Hernan.