

# AIRTOURER ASSOCIATION

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL MEETING HELD AT GRIFFITH AERO CLUB ON 29TH JANUARY, 1978

The meeting was called to order at 1006 a.m. by Mr. Doug Stott acting as Chairman.

Welcome to the meeting by the Chairman to distinguished guests, all owners of Airtourers, members and guests.

Apologies for non-attendance were received from:

Andrew Withers	-	CNO	Peter Coy	-	COI
Tom Lucas	-	MRL	Timothy Coyle	-	MRZ
Jeane Thorpe	-	UQX	Laurie Campbell	-	MUP
Des Hurst	-	MUZ	Greg Rutherford	-	MOC
Adrian Pfeoffer	-	MOA	Roy Taylor	-	RQL
Fred Tiefel	-	BQW	Allan Woods	-	MUL
Paul Mander	-	MVA	Brian Leech	-	MTE
Phil Hamer	-	MTH	Col Thompson	-	MVF
Frank Campbell	-	TWG	Richard Sims	-	
Vic Walton	-		John Willis	-	
Peter Furlong	-		Guy Richardson	-	

The Agenda Contents were given as:

1. Speech by Mr. H. K. Millicer.
2. Speech by Present Secretary-Treasurer Mr. Robert Page.
3. Retirement of the Present Committee.
4. Election of New Committee.

The Chairman added that the meeting should call on the New Committee to be responsible for despatching letters of appreciation to:

- a. Griffith Aero Club - Mr. Maurie Harriman.
- b. Irrigana Motel - Mr. & Mrs. Jones.
- c. Kendall Airlines - Mr. Don Kendall.
- d. Aircraft Magazine.
- e. A.O.P.A. - Secretary Mr. L. Davoren.
- f. R.A.A.F. - Air Commodore Ray  
IFIS Pt. Cook - Wing Commander McDonald.

The Chairman explained that at the Inaugural Meeting at the Royal Aero Club of N.S.W. on 17th August, 1977, the committee elected was only a Caretaker Committee and subject to an election at the First General Meeting. Also the New Committee when elected would be responsible for a period of 12 months or till the next election.

The Chairman then called on Mr. Henry Millicer, Patron of the Airtourer Association, for comments:

Henry Millicer:

"I am really delighted and thrilled to see this Association happen and this gathering today. I've never seen so many Airtourers in my life in one spot.

First, I'd like to thank the people that started the whole thing going, completely, I might add, without any prompting on my part, but mainly Doug Stott and Bob Page. I'd like you to show appreciation by a show of hands with applause for the people who put a tremendous effort and amount of work into it.

Bob and Helen Page, Doug Stott, Barbara Keenan and Harry Couzin, these people really carried the "can" for the last 6 months.

And consequently, you will note that Helen and Bob are so tired from it, they would like a rest, and will retire temporarily.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I want to say a few words about the aeroplane itself. You probably realise we made 173 of the Aircraft in the country, 168 fully assembled, and 5 were shipped to N.Z. when the Aircraft assembly line stopped production on 14th February, 1966. Since then the Aircraft has been lingering slowly in production by the A.E.S.L. Group in N.Z. and its on its way, quite frankly, to die

unless something is done today. We have got to organize ourselves into a really tight Association to do something about the future of the Aircraft and keep these Aircraft flying. So this is what the meeting is about today. I have been taken into confidence by your Secretary-Treasurer on what is proposed.

Last night I delivered a lecture to you all, trying to keep it on the facetious side so as not to put you all to sleep (especially the ladies). Today I'd like to propose that after the meeting we might have a Technical Committee Meeting and I will be available to answer any queries and give advice and tips that the general owner would not be aware of. What I'd like to do now is call upon the retiring Secretary-Treasurer to give a Precise of the formation of the Association,

Resume of Achievements  
Financial Statement  
and Secretary's Report."

and now I call on Mr. Robert Page.

Robert Page

Thank you very much Mr. Millicer.

Secretary's Report:

Contents:

1. Formalities
2. History of the Association and Resume of achievements.
3. Henry's Airtourers are unique.
4. Where are we heading?
5. A novel approach to our future problems.
6. Any prospective shareholders in a \$100,000 company?

(1) Formalities

(a) We are pleased to acknowledge our Patron, Mr. Henry K. Millicer, who responded to a request to be Patron of the Association under not very definite circumstances. Nevertheless, he gave an indication that the Assn. could expect his wholehearted support. Henry added that he considered the name Airtourer Association very appropriate, and would like to see as its main aims mutual help and benefit to all Airtourer owners, but especially members. I can only hope that Henry as Patron, but primarily as Designer of the Airtourer, is pleased with the visible results made in the name of the Airtourer Association to date.

(b) The most important point that must be taken now is that this meeting is a turning point in the Association. Up to now it's really been a club, but from here on it's likely to get very serious. Henry has neglected to tell you why the Airtourer is not now in Australia, but you may or may not be aware of the real reason why the Airtourer became not economical for Victa Aviation. In the Industries Assistance Commission report of 1975, if you read between the lines it's obvious that the Airtourer was shaping up to be competition for the Americans and they had to do something when Henry designed the Airtourer and the performance figures became known. The result was that the Government did not give Victa Aviation the financial subsidy required to compete with the Americans and keep production alive.

(2) Brief History of the Airtourer Association

The Airtourer Association resulted from discussion between two people with a common interest, who realised that other owners like themselves were in the grip of the same "vice", namely, high spare parts prices and poor availability.

As well as various other factors that serve to turn the screw and tighten up on available finances, budgeted for pursuing a very worthwhile activity. Rumors of a cheap source of one thing or other were encouraging, but contact required co-ordination.

The Association was founded on these other grounds as well, namely:-

- A need for social contact between owners.
- A regular newsheet.
- Collective representatives to statutory bodies.
- A parts register.
- Administrative advice.
- Technical advice.

Each of these "angles" had individual merit, and fitted the formulae of mutual benefit for owners of Airtourers, but the "angle" that can save money and

time, and make flying cheaper, was the keystone for a successful venture in every person's varied interest. Members of the RQL Group, Roy Taylor, Geoff Osborne, Harry Couzin (the President) and myself, made available the necessary funds to explore and gauge the interest amongst owners, and for that matter, any interested person.

Seventy people responded to a pro forma sent out by us which represented about 50% of registered Airtourers.

A meeting was held at a later date, 17th August, 1977, with the object of formally assessing the proposal of a Club or Association. The previously mentioned reasons were given as grounds for consideration.

The meeting gave its endorsement by unanimous decision to some form of club to be founded and accepted the name - Airtourer Association - this name being the choice of the majority of proposed members as well as the Aircraft designer and people involved in the formation of the group.

An election produced Mr. Harry Couzin as President  
Myself as Secretary/Treasurer  
Mr. Doug Stott as Sthn. Region Rep.  
Cliff Tait as International Rep.

A competition was conducted for a motif for the Association. The successful tender was without doubt the most obvious choice, and the crest on the Airtourer Association Badge is the entry of Mr. Alex Hood of Latrobe Valley Aero Club. Mr. Henry Millicer chose this entry out of those submitted.

Considerable publicity has been gained in the past few months by articles and acknowledgement in A.O.P.A. Magazine, New Zealand "Wings", Flight International (U.K.), and also various Aero Club newsheets.

Newsletters, of a sort, have been printed reasonably regularly and experience gained in this field is being plowed back into the following issue.

Various technical queries have been answered and a few spare parts problems have been solved as well.

The Airtourer Association had its official baptism at the Schofields Silver Jubilee Air Show, and gave an admirable account of itself. I have since been contacted by Virginia Kruze, and asked if we can take part in the 1978 Air Show. (More about that later.) But favourable comments are still being received about our presentation.

The Association handled brokerage of an Airtourer for a member and his son (also a member) and arranged some very hard to get parts to complete a major on another Airtourer.

To this date, no complaints have been received, therefore it is reasonable to assume that the Association has been successful.

### (3) Henry's Airtourer is Unique

And there is no replacement for it on the Horizon!!!!

Who ever thought (except Henry and his dedicated band of supporters) that this Aircraft with its chaotic history to date, would be the key to popular sport and light G.A. type flying in Australia? In the future there will be an increased demand for this Aircraft or one exactly like it to fill the same requirements as its present counterpart.

I have been informed of one other Aircraft that could take its place, but the design is not yet finalized, and its appeal could not match the Airtourer. It is also an ultra light.

There will always be a need for a 2 seat, stick control, fully Aerobatic light aircraft.

Complete rebuilding of Airtourers would be economic in a few years time.

### (4) Where are we Heading? (and HOW are we going to get there)

Definite proof is at hand to show that light Aircraft flying is increasing even under the strained economic conditions at present being experienced.

The owners of light aircraft, though, individually seem to afford to fly less. It is the Association's aim to help owners manage their flying and their Airtourers better and more economically. We offer no magic solution (even though it would seem the situation warrants it) but the answers are available and lie in collective bargaining power with both suppliers and statutory bodies, a more conscientious approach to detail where engineering is concerned and some dedicated

analysis of modification possibilities. Naturally our aim is not to depart from Henry's design but rearrange it a little if necessary to suit the economic trend of today, guard what rights are available to us as owner-pilots, and extend parts life to more realistic values with specialised scientific evidence that is available for the asking. Not necessarily free, but certainly the grasp of the Association.

The Airtourer, as an aircraft taken separately from the bunch, is heading for extinction. From my close studies made since the inception of the Airtourer Association, I feel that effects will be felt within the next decade, beginning possibly within 5 years. Since the assembly line closed down, parts stock have gradually been depleted of some items and this has accounted for part of the exorbitant prices we're paying. There is a way to keep the Airtourer alive for 20 - 30 years more, and make it a very much more economical proposition than it is now, even considering the escalating economic trend.

#### (5) A Novel Approach to our Future Problems

Evidence obtained in the study, referred to earlier, reveals some valid points towards a new approach and given a little latitude, using the same amount of imagination we can show a way clearly to keep your Airtourers flying safely and much more economically than ever previously considered possible. To eliminate any misconception, it will cost money, initially about \$1000 per owner, but would be returnable, no different from a share.

Guidelines - (a) In the first major overhaul period as a cost saving \$500.  
(b) In the first engine overhaul period as a cost saving of \$1000.  
(c) Over the period of ownership as appreciation \$1000.  
(d) And the shareholding in a Co-operative as real investment share returnable on demand after (c) ceases. \$1000.

The aim of the Association is for mutual benefit. In other words, a Co-operative effort. The Association gets out of this, complete, Autonomy and becomes self supporting with a non-profit ideology and excesses are either funnelled back to give a cheaper service or shared equally amongst current shareholders.

The basic framework would conceivably consist and appear to be an Airtourer Service Centre. ONLY Airtourers belonging to the Association members would reap full benefits. Any NON-members Airtourers would attract a penalty payment of modest proportion.

Points worth considering are that:

- (a) The Airtourer Assembly Line ex A.E.S.L. could be set up to manufacture parts as required (NO PARTS SHORTAGE).
- (b) Specialization in ONE product (time cut to eliminate the learning curve experienced in all workshops where they cater for all breeds of Aircraft).
- (c) Changeover Assemblies available (speed of turnover).
- (d) Remanufacture of some assemblies (keeps costs down).
- (e) Very low overheads through specialization (cost saving).
- (f) Centrally placed workshops.
- (g) Consideration given to long distance members.  
e.g. (i) a subsidy, if local person does job, parts supplied  
(ii) pick-up and delivery service.
- (h) Travelling breakdown service.

(Members invited to give their own thoughts for and against the idea. Imagining they had the money to spare.)

#### (6) Any Prospective Shareholders in a \$100,000 Company

Since forming the Association I have negotiated an option on the Airtourer Assembly Line. Preliminary talks have been held on my personal behalf and certain amounts have been raised. My personal circumstances have changed just enough not to make a solo effort possible now, though.

It is with this in mind that I present to you the framework of a Company or Co-operative Society and invite comment about it and also invite optimistic approaches from members to participate in this unique venture.

The venture is at this stage proposed (and as I will explain later and will be the subject of an intensive study).

Merits for the proposal are many and there are few apparently unsurmountable problems.

Each Airtourer owner that is a serious owner planning to keep his aircraft, would be advised to think upon the broad lines of the proposal.

In a few words its this:

- (1) We have approx. 100 members owing aircraft.
- (2) Each person to contribute \$1000 to a co-operative fund (over a period of 1 or 2 years).
- (3) The purchase of all parts, tools, jigs, dies, drawings and rights to the AT100 and AT115 series (4 models).
- (4) Benefits as respective to the previous topic.

Remember this -

That what I've produced here is only a proposal, for your serious consideration. But before you all leave, please feel free to give opinion or criticism!!

Chairman, Mr. Doug Stott, asks the meeting for views on progress thus far. No comment except happy and no complaints.

On behalf of the meeting Mr. Stott thanks Bob Page and Harry Couzin on their initiative in stirring Airtourer owners to consolidate and form, with Doug's own help, what is now known as the Airtourer Association.

Telephone contact has been at a premium, but indulgence there has brought results that postal methods could not have, also some people's complacency won't let them even return stamped addressed envelopes, but the telephone begs answering. Justification of using STD methods was approved and any funds for that use approved by the meeting.

The meeting does not comment after Mr. Stott's invitation.

Mr. Millicer requests to be heard:

"Ladies and gents, I wish to mention something Bob Page didn't say and it's this. Ten years ago I had a chance to purchase an Airtourer for R.M.I.T. at \$3000 and couldn't raise the capital and today the same aircraft brings \$8000. R.M.I.T. refused to buy it and didn't think the students needed to fly. This is how the game is. The proposal that Bob Page put forward has got the absolute solution, perhaps you bought your Airtourer cheap, but remember this asset worth \$8000 - \$10,000 will deteriorate if it becomes known that parts are diminishing and your asset will be worthless. They sold for \$10,000 in 1966 and in one year they dropped to \$3000 because spare parts went to N.Z. Unless we do something today - in 5 years time you can write your aircraft off."

Henry supports reimbursement of all costs incurred by committee members, also applauds the talent of Doug Stott and the contacts he has, exemplifying the way Doug organized transport for Henry.

Our Patron also expressed that he was "thrilled to bits" to see how wonderful the Association is, and affirms his continuing support for Doug and Bob in whatever they do in the name of the Association.

The Chairman expresses thanks to the Committee and declares the committee retired.

- Then requests nominations for
- (i) President
  - (ii) Secretary
  - (iii) Treasurer
  - (iv) Regional Representatives.

The Present Committee retire, and decline re-election.

An election then produces:

Mr. Sonny Rankin	as President	Nominated by Bob Page
Mr. Doug Stott	as Secretary	" " H.K. Millicer
Mr. Bill Kelly	as Treasurer	" " Doug Stott

and Regional Representatives are to be chosen later.

The President, Mr. Sonny Rankin, then expresses appreciation and assures the meeting of support of the Committee and thanks members for their support.

A discussion develops about spare parts prices and the need to do something definite and soon. Mr. Brian Hore is presented with a prize for the longest distance traveller, but only just beats Howie Schriever. The President informs everyone of the Dubbo Air Show and wishes as many as possible there.

The Meeting closes at 1155 a.m.

TREASURERS REPORT:

In the course of considering viability of the Airtourer Association, financial feasibility was established by reaction from members proposal forms.

A budget for the Association's financial obligations was drawn up using simple, standard accounting technique (1 + 1 = 2).

Every indication of financial security was apparent before formalising the formation on the 17th August, 1977.

A large proportion of proposed members have paid their fees and this is very heartening, but continued success and rate of growth of the Association can only be guaranteed by full subscription and this has not yet been achieved.

It is too much to expect that any unpaid members reap benefits from successes financed by enthusiastic members in such a group as this.

Being both Secretary and Treasurer has its problems, as I have found out. But in the dual rôle in most cases it has been beneficial in economic decision and time, and has partly been responsible for the rapid growth in the embryonic stage, but I would recommend that the dual rôle of Secretary/Treasurer be now parted and would like to see some other able persons take up the post for 12 months.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT:

The Financial Statement for the period 17th August, 1977, to 27th January, 1978, is as follows:-

1. Credits were in the form of:

- (1) Membership Fees.
- (2) Donations.
- (3) Miscellaneous Credits, e.g. Profit from sale of parts and aircraft, result of raffles etc.

2. Debits were in the form of:

- (1) Postage and telephone.
- (2) Advertising and stationery.
- (3) Miscellaneous Debits - Purchase of parts, aircraft, administrative costs, badges etc. (Bank charges etc.)

3. On the Credit side - 59 paid up members fees produced \$1180.00  
5 donations \$145.00  
Miscellaneous credits \$6824.00  
Proceeds from brokerage of A/c netted \$150.00  
So that Total Credits as at yesterday were \$8149.00

4. Total Debits of \$7749.10 were made up of Postage and telephone \$385.58  
Advertising & Stationery \$598.15  
Miscellaneous debits of \$6810.37 included sale of parts and aircraft, repayment of loan from RQL Group. Leaving a Bank Balance of \$355.01.

Cash and assets valued at \$846.41.

Signed: Robert Page,  
Sec./Treas.  
Airtourer Association.

5/2/1978.