

AIRTOURER ASSOCIATION

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Newsletter No. 83



Dedicated to the preservation and continued airworthiness of VICTA and AESL
Airtourer Series Aircraft



NEWSLETTER

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Articles for inclusion in the Newsletter should be submitted direct to John O'Halloran at the contacts listed above. Please enclose payment for any advertisement. The next Newsletter will be published in November 1997. Contributions and or advertisements are to be with JOH by 15th October 1997.

Small advertisement (3 to 4 lines) \$10.00

Large advertisement \$20.00

Cheque to be made payable to the Airtourer Association. Post with copy direct to the publisher.

EDITORIAL

Once again it is my sad duty to report the passing of an important member of the Association. Betty Rankin died of a heart attack on 14 July 1997. Betty was the wife of one of the Associations founders and long time President, Sonny Rankin. She epitomized that old saying that "Behind every good man there is a good woman". Stu Hilsberg and Beryl Marshall have contributed a short report on the funeral as well as the 'Sheriff' interview, more will be included in the next issue.

Once again Bob Peak has contributed to the Newsletter, fortunately it's not an advertisement for MRE this time but an article. MRE finally has been sold to member Rusell Lucas who will use it for training at Ibis Air.

Thank you for your responses to the membership renewal. Most have arrived by the end of July and when this Newsletter is complete I will update the database and compile a new list.

I have attempted to experiment a little more with photographs in this issue so if the result is satisfactory please include photos with your articles.

We have been very fortunate, through the efforts of Hector Blemings, to be able to publish a talk by Mr. John Wallis O.A.M. on the Airtourer at Latrobe Valley Aero Club. Thank you John and Hector.

Safe Airtouring & see you at Parkes,

John O'Halloran

Disclaimer

The views expressed are those of the contributors and not necessarily those of the Publishers, the Airtourer Association or the Airtourer Co-Operative Ltd.

Betty Rankin's Funeral

The Association members in attendance were the Matthews, the Woods incl. Graham, the Penfound, the Marshalls, the Tilley's, the Sims, Jim Crocker and myself. There were numerous other aviation friends who at some stage had enjoyed the hospitality of Yarrandale.

The Church was packed full for the service. Betty's coffin was covered with flowers and at one end was her famous straw hat (complete with Airtourer Association badge), at the other was Sonny's equally famous Akubra.

The service was very personal, Mary-Anne and Helen read the eulogy – Betty to a tee, and everyone was laughing and crying – not a dry eye in the house. They highlighted all the aspects of Betty's personality and life as we all knew her.

The centre of West Wyalong was closed (at midday on a Saturday) by the Police as the 80 or so cars formed the cortege and proceeded to the cemetery. After a short service Betty was laid to rest next to Sonny.

Afterwards at Tattersalls Pub we had a cuppa and some sandwiches. The Yarrandale photo albums were on the table and are naturally full of wonderful memories. I did not enjoy saying "farewell" to my "Yarrandale Mum".

Stu Hilsberg

If members wish to send notices of condolences, Betty's daughters addresses are:

Mrs. Helen Browning
33 Chambers Street
Latham, ACT 2615

Mrs. Maryanne Foster,
Eutchella Station,
Maxwelton QLD 4830

SIX DAYS IN CENTRAL QUEENSLAND 22-27TH APRIL, 1997

John Plummer did a fabulous job of orchestrating a tour to Central Qld to include Longreach, a stay at Avington Station and Barcaldine. Yes, I'll be in that! Too bad John was going to be heading back to work and we wouldn't be able to make it. What a lovely surprise it was then when Pat and Cath Kelly offered me the back seat in their Debonair so I could go. Quick as a flash I was on the phone to mum to organise her as a live-in babysitter for the 6 days. Yes, it was all coming together. This was going to be great!! Off for a holiday on my own with no children and good mates for company. I envisioned plenty of rest, late morning sleep-ins, early to bed and lots of time to while away with my book. Well...It didn't quite turn out that way!

In fact, there was just so much that happened, I couldn't possibly do it justice (and with the Newsletter Editor keeping a wary eye on my ramblings, I'd better keep it brief.)

The Highlights:

Longreach

Pat Kelly's jokes! (Well, they just never stopped and I truly wished I'd had a secret recorder to keep up with them!)

The Stockman's Hall of Fame - definitely leave a full day for this.

The Qantas Outback Museum – what *does* VH on Aussie regos stand for?

Billabong Sunset Cruise – and Pat Kelly's Pavarotti renditions on the bus back to the motel.

The speediest and most efficient Chinese waiter ever encountered in a restaurant!

Avington Station with Des and Norma Fallon

Pat Kelly's jokes took second place to Des's jokes and practical joking.

Norma's cooking – we were all asking for her recipes by the end of our stay.

Des jumping out of the mini-bus to lure the wild emus with his arm, leg and hat waving routines whilst on his back in the long grass! No, I'm not joking and the amazing thing is that the wild emus really do come close!

Hale-Bopp comet watching in the clear outback night skies.

Dusk trail rides on horseback.

Riding Cecil the Clydesdale bareback – and getting off by sliding down his tail!

Riding in a dray drawn by Cecil who bolts when Des yells "Indians".

Fran and Maureen doing emu-attracting antics (see above) trying to flag down the horse-drawn dray.

Riding in a cart or sulky drawn by either "Midnight Cowboy", the racing goat or by Basil, the miniature pony.

A bus ride to a neighbouring station (about an hour away) in time to see the last of 40,000 sheep being loaded onto trucks – we *just* missed the action in the shearing shed!



Group of “explorers” outside QANTAS Outback Museum. From L to R, Pat and Cath Kelly, John Plummer, Frances Beckwith, Jan O’Halloran, Doug Beckwith and Leonie Plummer.





John and Leonie Plummer on board Billabong Sunset Cruise at Longreach.



Maureen Knox and Frances Beckwith trying to “attract” the horse-drawn dray with Des’s famous emu-attracting dance!

Previous Page Lower Photo: Longreach Stockman’s hall of Fame and tribute to the Aussie Stockman.

Singalong around the dinner table.

Barcaldine

Before daybreak breakfast – so much for my late morning sleep-in!

Pat Kelly's jokes!

Having our photos taken by the local press photographer – and published!

A full day tour with Tom Lockie on his Artesian Country Tours – boy, did we cover some miles – whoops!...kilometres that day!! And what a character Tom is. The tour covered Barcaldine, Aramac, Gray Rock and Gracevale, and we learnt about aboriginal carvings, caves, springs and the history of the settlement of this part of the country. Quite fascinating.

Pat Kelly attempting to crack 2 stockwhips simultaneously – just like Tom.

Tom Lockie's jokes.

Being serenaded throughout dinner at the motel by an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Commission (ATSIC) gathering – their singing didn't quite match our usual standard but Pat Kelly managed to break in and serenade them with "Danny Boy"!

AWARDS:

Emu Dancing Award: Frances and Maureen (See photo.)

Beaky Parrot Award: Peter and Lorraine – both bitten by Norma's corella

"Man From Snowy River" Award: Doug – his 1st horse ride

Cordon Bleu Excellence Award: Norma – for advancing our waistlines

Aerial Booze Bus Award: Pat Kelly and crew - for flying off to restock Des's wine cellar

Pavaroti Award: Pat Kelly – he really wowed them at the ATSIC gathering too!

Goat Racing Champion Award: Maureen and Des – both tipped on their posteriors by Midnight Cowboy, the goat.

Funniest Home Video Award: Pat Kelly – for videoing the above!

Best Joke of the Trip Award: Bill Pennell – just ask him about the bloke who lost his car keys!!

Shy, Retiring and Bashful Award: (Tied for 1st place) DES!! and PAT!!

Many, many thanks must go to John and Leonie Plummer for all your planning of such a worthwhile trip – you're both champs in my books!

OUTBACK EXPLORERS:

BQW John and Leonie Plummer

RVC Pat and Cath Kelly and Jan O'Halloran

XVV Bill Pennell and Lorraine Howson

XAF Doug and Frances Beckwith

MWR Hugh and Maureen Knox

TWE Peter Newman and Barbara

UK Revisited

Bob Peak.

Pat and I are just returned from our first trip back to Britain since we came to this fair country, thirty-five years ago. The prime purpose of the trip was to allow Pat to visit her two sisters and one brother that she had not seen, but only communicated by not much more than Christmas cards. Pat is the youngest sibling, and I had been nagging for some years for Pat to make the journey - or it may become too late!

The decision was made for us however, when lying in bed, reading the paper on the day before Valentine's Day, I opened the page to a full-spread advert by Qantas, offering "take your partner for free - buy a return ticket to London and your companion travels free!

Qantas was phoned there and then, and, yes! that was the deal, buy one get one free. So next call was to our friends Marya and Bob Philips (the people who organise the Oshkosh Express). The Philips are now a registered Travel Agency - after the hassles they went through because of trusting others for the 1995 Express. Airtours Australia booked our "cheapie" tickets and planned and booked the stopovers we made at Bangkok going and Singapore returning.

Arrival in London was uneventful, but emotional, surprisingly for both of us. Seeing London on a clear spring morning as we approached Heathrow was very moving - I was able to spot two immense new features, the Bridge over the Thames at Deptford and the Thames Barrier itself.

Our first stop was Pat's eldest sister at Kingsbury just 20 miles away. Whilst we felt confident that we could have coped

with the London Tube Railway, common sense prevailed, and we used a good old London Taxicab.

Sister and brother-in-law then made us very welcome, but at 77 and 82 and both still driving, I was pleased that we had not allowed them to battle London's horrific traffic to meet us at the airport. They both drive Alfas - Doug treated himself to a new one for his Eightieth birthday! But really, British driving has to be seen to be believed - so many cars, driving so fast, but surprisingly courteously, on an incredible labyrinth of roads and motorways.

Keeping in mind that the object of this trip was to visit all of Pat's relatives, I nevertheless felt that I should attempt to meet as many of the Airtourer people as possible, consistent with our fairly rigid timetable and route, so we rang Alan Hart, who lives at Ealing, only a few minutes away, to be told that tomorrow was the Airtourer Fly-in to Sywell - would I care to Co-pilot G-AZOF ?

For various complicated reasons, I felt I couldn't leave Pat for the day, but we agreed to try and meet at High Wycombe on his return. We did and I flew G-AZOF in some gentle aerobatics in English skies for the first time in about 45 years.

Pat and I then hired a car for the next 4 weeks and drove 2,400 miles (4,000 km) travelling up through England, from London to York and Scarborough for a few days with brother, then on to Edinburgh to stay with a Nephew up in the rooftops in a 300 year old tenement with 65 stone steps to climb!

After a few more days at Polmont on the Firth of Forth with the second sister, we made a pilgrimage to Glen Strathfarrer where we both worked on a Hydro scheme a long time ago. Restoration of the old construction site was so good that we were unable to locate the spot, dug out of the hillside, where our caravan had rested through one extremely cold Highland winter.

Continuing our journey back South again, we passed Loch Ness and through Glencoe Pass before a rapid tour of the Lakes District.

Next relative was near Flint, North Wales, then across to Birmingham to meet a 26 year old great nephew for the first time!

From Birmingham back across to South Wales, and a very interesting stay with a niece and her husband, both PhDs and although very pleasant, not really on this planet! Their house was though - another 300 year old structure, this time a genuine Welsh Farmhouse.

As it happens, Brian Strawford and his wife live in the same village of Llangorse as our niece, but opposite sides of the world in lifestyle and outlook.

We had seen Brian's Airtourer at Shobdon and when we called in for coffee on a Friday afternoon, Brian was preparing his flightplan to take himself to St Andrews for a week of golf, whilst his wife was off to Cairo - don't know if he got away, the weather was decidedly iffy the whole weekend.

Having caught up with all of Pat's relatives, and been made very welcome indeed, it was now time to try and see a few of the tourist things - like aeroplanes! So off we headed to Baldock via RAF Coswoth, to spend three days with Chris and Christine Scholfield. Chris was very apologetic that his toy, a red Ferrari, was being serviced, but his aircraft G-AWVG,

a 115, had just been inspected, so we retired to Top Farm and committed aviation. Very pleasant, as all Airtourers are, but how strange that they each have their individual characteristics. Chris is semi-retired and has recently taken on a part-time job with an outfit that organises "Corporate Days" at RAF Duxford. These "Corporate Days" sound fascinating - depending on the generosity of the Company footing the bill. The participants get for example, a trip in a Rapide (DH twin biplane), followed by aerobatics in a Tiger Moth then after lunch and a guided tour of the massive Museum, maybe a drive of a Centurion tank!

Also operating at Duxford, is a young woman pilot who flies joyrides in a two-seat Spitfire!

As Old Warden and the Shuttleworth Collection was only a few minutes away, we were able to spend the next morning viewing it - regretting that it was only a weekday, without anything flying!

Leaving the Scholfields and heading South across London via the notorious M25, we made our way to Maidstone, to meet up with an old sailing friend and his wife and family of the last 34 years that we had not met, - they have a 32 year old daughter presently living at Cronulla, not 5km from home in Sydney!

Last few days in London went very quickly, with a second visit to RAF Hendon - the place of my misspent youth! and a last look at the area that Pat and I grew up in - my house is now a motorway and all our old haunts look so different, with so many people and so so many cars.

Final farewells with eldest sister and off to Heathrow, with no regrets to be returning to Oz - but just wondering what might have been.

P. S. Today is my birthday, and MRE

has just been sold to Russell Lucas who intends to put her to work at Sale, Victoria. My best wishes to Russell, I

hope he looks after her well, and many thanks to all of you who have helped in the sale, particularly, Alan and Merle.

Airworthiness News

Stuart Hilsberg

AD/ENG4/Amdt 6

Piston Engine Overhaul Requirements

Anyone contemplating an engine change or overhaul due to time expired (Manufacturers TBO) do not do anything without checking with your LAME. The above AD amendment is in the pipeline for private use aircraft engines to go to "on condition" instead of an hours life. There will be certain criterior (compression test, oil consumption etc) that must be met, but if all the indications are ok then the engine can remain in service until the indications suggest something needs to be done. This amendment will provide significant cost savings to us and encourage constant monitoring and timely preventative maintenance of our engines. This will not only return savings to us in what can presently be seen as unnecessary maintenance costs (if it ain't broke, don't fix it) whilst providing increased safety due to the "trend monitoring" requirements of the AD.

The proposed amended AD goes for several pages and is too involved to include in the newsletter. I do suggest it's worth either getting a copy from your local CASA Airworthiness office, your LAME or from CASA's home page on the Internet (<http://www.casa.gov.au>). Whilst the proposed

amendment is not definite as yet, I believe it will be shortly. A program based on the amended AD is currently being "tried" in Queensland.

Keep a look out for a final AD/ENG4/Amdt 6.

Till Parkes,
Fly them Airtourers

Airtourer Flaps

*Two members are growing old,
Turning 40 I do behold!
We wish them happy birthdays
Celebrating in very special ways.*

*Who are these members I hear you say,
Will you reveal and give the game
away?
Well both have plenty to say,
One with the typewriter, the other –
verbal play.*

*They live near towns ending in A,
He wears a uniform and jets away.
She wears red when in control
Of the aircraft in which she shares the
role.*

*Okay give up you do not know,
Who the heck is the lass and the
fellow?
We call him JOH, and she is Sue,
So good luck and happy birthdays to
you.*

AIRTOURERS AND LATROBE VALLEY AERO CLUB

John Willis

Despite having flown some 4500 hours on Airtourers I have a soft spot for them, though many say that the soft spot is located between my ears.

LVAC was involved with the Airtourer from very early in the history of the marque. Des Kelly, long term LVAC President and at that time a Vice President of the Royal Federation of Aero Clubs of Australia, was heavily involved in pushing the design from the drawing boards to the flight lines of the Aero Clubs.

Even when the wooden "proof of concept" aircraft VH-FMM was being built, Des could see its potential for Aero Clubs struggling to maintain aging Chipmunk fleets. VH-FMM, which visited Latrobe Valley on a demonstration tour in the East West Airline days' eventually became the property of Des and was stored at LVAC until it went to the aviation collection of the Museum of Victoria.

My own association with the Airtourer and Victas goes back to early 1961 when, as a trainee pilot I first visited Victas at Bankstown with Des Kelly and the then CFI of LVAC, Aub Coote.

LVAC took delivery of the first CUSTOMER PURCHASED AND OPERATED Airtourer VH-MOA (Serial No 3), in AUGUST 1962. There was a great deal of frustration within the Club with the delays in the delivery of this aircraft. In a small way we felt like the Australia Army troops in Port Moresby in WWII, waiting for the Kittyhawks to arrive to ward off the invading Japanese. The Airtourers became known at LVAC as the

Tomorrow Tourers and the Never Tourers. But eventually the great day came and Kelly and Coote arrived to a great welcome.

Because LVAC was the first Airtourer operator, it achieved many "Firsts" including the dubious honour of the first prang. The second LVAC aircraft VH-MOE (S/N 61) was landed heavily at Yarram by a pilot undergoing conversion training. When the instructor initiated a go round he found the elevator to be jammed in the full up position, so he promptly shut the throttle and landed forthwith, again quite heavily. After taxiing back to the clubhouse they found that they had one very broken aircraft on their hands. Due to the crew protection features of the aircraft they had been unaware of the severity of their landings. Victas immediately despatched an investigation team, including Henry Millicer and Alan Wood. Dear Henry was elated at this practical demonstration of the crash worthiness features that had been designed into the aircraft.

As an indication of the future level of service support that Victa were to give to their customers, Alan and LVAC Chief Engineer, Jimmy Brenton, set to and worked virtually non-stop for six days and nights to repair the aircraft. When they were too tired they slept on the hangar floors. A marathon effort.

The next two firsts were also a couple of lasts in that 2 LVAC trainees, Phil Horrocks and Ian Callendar, were issued with the 1st PPLs issued to pilots totally trained on Airtourers. These were also the last two Private Pilots Licences issued

under the old system prior to the introduction of the Restricted/Unrestricted licensing system. They had to be tested before the end of November and prior to this they had to complete their Solo Navexs.

The weather on the last possible day was terrible but they were launched into the soup to grope their way down the coast to Cape Everard and return. I know the weather was bad because I went along with them in one of the aircraft to keep them out of harms way. It was rationalised that, as I was only a trainee instructor, my presence did not constitute dual instruction and at the same time I wasn't really a passenger and therefore it was all legal and above board, sort of. Needless to say we all survived the trip and they got their licences.

The next 1st was my own Commercial Pilot Licence and Instructor rating, a first for the Airtourer and a first for Commonwealth Flying Scholarship Scheme which replaced the old Flying Training Subsidy Scheme. Both of my tests were conducted on the one day and, in fact, on the one flight. Having completed the CPL part of the test, we pulled over to the side of the runway and the examiner, Tony Christie, and I changed seats to commence the Instructor Rating part of the test.

My first student was Fred Boomsma, who is now Director of Flight Operations at Ansett Airlines. It may give Airtourer enthusiasts a warm feeling to know that the top pilot in the Ansett empire is an Airtourer trained pilot.

The first year with the new aircraft was something of a nightmare for the Clubs. Hardly a weekend went past without a telegram (before the days of the dreaded fax) from DCA arriving, grounding the fleet as a fault would have

been found in an Airtourer somewhere. On about Thursday or Friday I would be despatched to Essendon airport to pick up a kit of parts sent from Victas on the airline. Jimmy Brenton and his apprentices would work through until late Friday night to have the aircraft on line on Saturday morning for the weekends training.

However, at the end of the first year Victa took the aircraft back to the factory, in rotation, and recycled them from stern to stern and from then on we had a very reliable aircraft.

On one notable winter time ferry flight to Victas, we had the canopy externally sealed with masking tape to keep out the fearful cold draughts for which the early aircraft were noted. The only problem was that on arrival at Victa's Bankstown hangar, after a non-stop, four and a bit hour flight, we had to sit in the aircraft until we could attract the attention of Alan Wood to let us out for a much needed pit stop.

The early 1960s were the halcyon days of general aviation in Australia. It seemed that everyone was learning to fly, so the Airtourer was a very timely aircraft. The main reason for this interest in learning to fly was that the airlines were recruiting pilots in a big way for they had a huge training task as they prepared to introduce the jets. To meet the demand for airline pilots, the Government introduced the Commonwealth Flying Scholarships, which paid about 70% of a pilot's training costs.

In addition, charter flights to cattle sales etc. were very popular with the farming community as commodity prices were high and Agricultural flying was at a peak due to the good prices and the superphosphate bounty. So there were

many jobs in general aviation as well.

In the Clubs a World War 1 scenario prevailed. The "boggy pilot" soon found himself to be an instructor and then in turn went off into ag flying or charter or became the CFI. Then with half-an-ounce of luck he would be accepted into the pilots "promised land" of the airlines. The staff turn over was phenomenal. One such LVAC "boggy pilot" was accepted into TAA with only 300 hours total flying time. These days you need three thousand twin hours as a minimum.

During this period of the early 60s, LVAC owned or operated many Airtourers with, at times, up to 5 on line. For a time we were in the happy situation of being able to trade in an Airtourer after a year, during which time it had flown its 1000 hour engine life and receive a new one. This was usually at a considerable loss to Victa's thanks to the horse-trading ability of President Kelly (who in real life was an astute Holden dealer not for nothing known as "Ned").

The Victa 100s are "Curvature of the Earth" machines, giving pilots a great respect for the law of gravity. I remember ferry flights to our Orbost out station for weekend training with full fuel, wife, new baby and camping gear on board, which had me wishing for retractable undercarriage to clear the end fence on take off.

Then there was a take off from Delegate, on the Monaro High Plains. It was a warm day with three on board, myself, Engineer Jim Brenton and the aforementioned "boggy pilot", who we were rescuing from a disabled aircraft, and Jim Brenton's voluminous toolbox. The airstrip at Delegate, which is at an elevation of 3000ft AMSL, is downhill towards the town. It would be more correct to say that we flew "through" Delegate

rather than over it, but we eventually made it to six thousand feet.

The Club had one serious Airtourer accident, fortunately not fatal, involving a wire strike. The crew survived, although injured, due to the Airtourers excellent crashworthy features.

We had another wire encounter which an Airtourer miraculously won, as the wire broke and the Airtourer managed to keep flying. This happened at a club picnic, right above the heads of 200 or so people. The pilot involved immediately joined the clergy. Did the combined and simultaneous loud utterance of the name of the Almighty by the audience make him see that his vocation was as a sky pilot not an aircraft pilot?

Another accident involved a trainee who stalled the aircraft during forced landing practice and rode the aircraft to the ground whilst holding the stick hard back. Apparently the aircraft oscillated in the stall, contacting the ground at the bottom of one of these oscillations, and so our hero stepped out unharmed and hitchhiked back to the Club. It being April Fools Day, he found it quite difficult to convince the Club staff that he had actually crashed. Another rebuild for Wood and Brenton.

LVAC purchased the last Victa built Airtourer VH-MOH, again at severe loss to Victa's. This aircraft was painted red and white with a gold flash in the Aircruiser colour scheme and was so popular that it flew 1300 hours in it's first 12 months on line. Red aeroplanes do fly faster.

When the Airtourer project went to New Zealand, Des Kelly quickly stitched up a deal with AESL NZ for LVAC to be the Australian agent for the type. The Club imported the first NZ built Airtourer 115s, VH-MOI and VH-MOJ in unfinished form for assembly at LVAC. The Club invested

heavily in this project in the way of workshop improvements and staff and things looked very promising.

The first 2 aircraft were only just in the country when GA bubble burst. The airlines had stopped hiring, the super bounty cut out and a severe drought was also affecting the farmers. Because there were no jobs at the top, there quickly became no jobs at the bottom or the middle for that matter. As a result people stopped training and so the whole GA training machine stagnated and then collapsed. The LVAC was left with a huge staff, lots of bills and two brand new but unsaleable aircraft.

We campaigned the aircraft around the Airshows etc. but could not find buyers and the finance company was wanting it's money. Des Kelly was able to perform one of the many miracles that he is renowned for and refinanced the aircraft through the GMH finance company GMAC. This was the first and only time that GMAC financed aircraft and there was hell to pay when their US head office eventually found what sort of car an Airtourer is.

LVAC along with many other Clubs was really in deep financial trouble. To add to our woes we were committed to an Airtourer 150 which we flew on a trade plate but which eventually became VH-AHW. We "downsized" the staff from a peak of 15 to one CFI and a part time office lady. By selling off our Airtourer 100s, first VH-MOG and then VH-MOF and finally VH-MOH and our Comanche VH-MOD and operating first VH-MOI, and then both MOI & MOJ and giving back the 150,

we were eventually able to trade out of our dilemma. A commercial company would simply and politely have gone bankrupt, but Aero Clubs are survivors.... or gluttons for punishment.

We were now in the 70s and things started to come good. We were able to purchase a new Cessna 172M. This worked so well that we were quickly able to afford another one and we made a decision to change our basic fleet to Cessna 172s. So we sold VH-MOJ and modified VH-MOI to 150 HP fixed pitch prop.

This aircraft proved to be too productive to be economic for the Club. It could climb to altitude, perform lots of aerobatics and be back on the ground in half the time that it took a 115 to clamber up to do a loop, a roll and a stall turn. The maintenance costs associated with this high performance eventually won.

We sold MOI to a syndicate of Club members who kindly permitted it to stay on line. Like a lot of syndicates the membership changed and dwindled until the aircraft was sold to Barry Gray. Barry expended lots of tender loving care on the aircraft but eventually sold it thus ending the LVACs continuous involvement with the type. The good news is that Barry has managed to win his beloved MOI back and it now graces the Valley skies once more.

What do I remember most about flying Airtourers? Well it was probably the dog fighting, but that is another story that is.....!

Why is it so?

Stan Tilley.

Every year the annual inspections seem to get closer together and not only that - it always seems to be the three yearly inspection !

Anyway this year we would 'trick' it.

"Hi Al -Y--O--B-----!"

"Would it be too much work for you if we came up to Sydney to do the annual and then spent a couple of days catching up with you and Merle and Hugh and Maureen? ""Would that be OK?"

To which came the reply "Is the Pope a Catholic? Can't wait. Bring that bird with you and by the way - have most of the work done."

And so it was. The Bonnie bird did not need any encouragement and armed with a long list of things that I was allowed and able to do I set to and got going. Brakes, wheel bearings, whoops a few loose rivets on the nose strut attach, U/C bolts due, tyres, ELT batteries and so on. What I could not do I managed to get some local experts to check and certify so I felt confident that things were 'pretty well under control' and we would not interrupt Alan's schedule very much at all.

Alas! The best laid plans!

MTL went beautifully across the Strait once again . We had planned via Merimbula to avoid winter temperatures so after a relaxing night

there were at Hoxton early the next morning.

All looked good. Yes ! Everything we had done was fine but we would have to replace those rivets. And after a comment about wear on the rudder cables, we would check those too. Then it was a check on the ADs. How many hours? The magnetos are due for a strip and check.

First delay. (It seemed a shame to me as I thought the mags were 'perfect', not a miss and no rev drop, but I changed my mind after getting the repair report that said that one bearing was rotating in its mount).

Second delay. To check the rudder cables they are doubled back and if U/ S -ping, ping, ping, the tiny strands break and fan out like a spray. New rudder cables required.

Third delay. Not easy to replace the nose strut rivets but we managed.

Fourth delay. I know now why most Engineers can't stand having an owner in the workshop. I was the one who found a broken engine mount. This was the BIG one. Engine out, mount off, reg 35 drawing and certified repair, repaint and replace the motor. Then to cap it all off.

Fifth delay. The alternator went off line. Cowls off again and problem solved by finding a loose field earth wire. (But was it ? Six hours later the regulator 'died' completely)

It was fun to be with Alan and Merle but we decided that we had overstayed our welcome, so in the middle of all this we took a couple of international flights. We had promised our two daughters in Brisbane that we would visit. The only flights available commercially were international 'fill-ins' so it was in and out of Customs and Immigration, (at least fast tracked), for an enjoyable weekend with the girls.

It was interesting to compare. From Hoxton to Brisbane Int. by Airtourer takes around 4 1/4 hours flying. The commercial flight time Sydney/Brisbane is about 1 1/4 hours. The actual travelling time each way by commercial, was over 5 hours. Sydney does not need a new airport. According to statements published by overseas sources, compared with other international airports, Sydney is operating at only 20% of its capacity. The reason given for this low productivity is our Australian work practices. What Sydney does need urgently is an improved local transport system to get passengers to and from the airport more efficiently.

Anyway, much fun was had despite or maybe because of our extra work load. Merle had Bonnie running as she took her to numerous beauty spots and even Al and I eventually caught up. All too soon we had to be thinking about home commitments and we had only briefly caught up with the Knox clan.

When the aeroplane was eventually finished we just had to do a little formation run up to Clareville and then down through Victor 1. Not only did we check out Hugh and Maureen's and Merle and Al's place from the air but also caught a couple of Humpback whales frolicking in the bay.

The excellent weather that we had been enjoying was forecast to change but a superb one and a half hour run back to Merimbula belied this. Once again we overnighted and followed up with an uneventful three hour run back to Hobart.

PS. Needless to say there was much speculation as to why an engine mount would break. Whilst the aeroplane has done over 1500 hours in the nine years since the engine conversion, it does have a very easy life and is usually only driven by 'a little old man' on Sundays. An acceptable reason became instantly apparent though when the mount was jiggled up for repair. The offending tube, one of six, was and always would have been, short by some 3mm. This gap had been 'taken out' by tightening the mounting bolt so the tube had been under a severe tension stress since first fitted. Fortunately the resultant stress relieving fracture was immediately apparent on the white painted mount.

Regulatory Changes

John O'Halloran

We are all only too aware of the way aviation regulation is changing. There are two recent changes that affect us.

ICAO Flight Plan. The 'new' ICAO Flight Plan forms will be introduced from 17 July and will be the only acceptable means of submitting a flight plan. Air Services Australia have distributed educational information on the new forms so there is no point in going into further detail in the newsletter.

If you don't wish to submit a flight plan but would like to retain some level of SAR protection a flight note may be left with a responsible person along with instructions on how to contact ATS if the aircraft becomes overdue. The Flight Note has not changed and is described in AIP OPS FPLAN – Flight Notification/Note Contents, a suggested format is included in Appendix 3 to AIP OPS.

Aircraft Type Designator. ICAO have updated the way aircraft type is designated on flight plan/flight note forms. In the past the Airtourer family has been designated as follows:

Airtourer 100/115	VT10
Airtourer 150	VT15
Aircruiser	VT11
Airtrainer	PRO7

The new designation will be simply TOUR for the Airtourer and Aircruiser family and CT4 for the Airtrainer. These designators can be used now but must be used after 5 November '97.

Changes of Ownership

Most of you know that Bob Peak has been trying to sell his very well appointed and presented MRE. Unfortunately the market has been slow but finally someone has appreciated it's worth. Russel Lucas of Ibis Air bought it to use for training. Ibis Air now has three Airtourers with Ross Day also owning MBG and late last year he bought Glen Sturges's BWG. It's good to see Airtourers back in the training role. Harry Couzin in partnership with R.

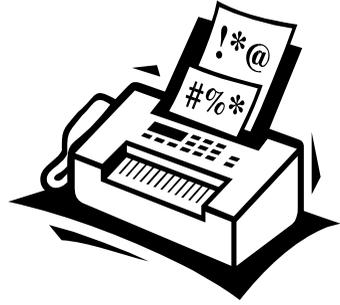
Emery purchased TPY from Bruce Martin in July.

Finally Adrain Jolly sold his T6 BVV to Peter Hurst. Peter has his 100 for sale, see the advertisement in Aviation Trader.

New Member

Welcome to Steve Gwilliam from Whangarei, New Zealand and his syndicate, Northland Aircraft Holdings. They operate a 115, ZK-CWA.

AVFAX



AVFAX is the fax based briefing system for pilots requiring weather data from the Bureau of Meteorology and Notams from Airservices Australia. For those that can remember (fondly) the old briefing offices dotted around our country where you got your weather from the Met man (and some pertinent advice) and then walked across the office and picked up your notams (and probably some less than polite comments) from a FS officer or ATC and then went and put pen to paper and did a flight plan. AVFAX has replaced the face to face briefing with bits of paper off a fax machine and of course we all have a fax machine at home don't we.

The basis of the weather part of AVFAX is the Area Forecast (ARFOR). A number of these are further divided into sub areas where the weather can be different in the different sub areas of a complete ARFOR e.g. area 20 has inland, coastal and metro or area 21 that has western, inland and coastal but area 51 only has all. In this way you can select only those areas in which you will actually be operating. By using the group code you will not only get the usual ARFOR data but all the airport TAF's in that group as well. ERSA has a list of the airports in the various sub areas under the heading ARFOR Subdivision Contents. Make a list of the numbers of the selected

forecast areas you will need and I suggest in the order of departure to destination so that is the way they will come off AVFAX.

Having selected your weather codes it's now a simple matter to obtain the relevant notams for the same areas. Or is it?

Notams unfortunately are something else again. There are 4 basic types of notam:

Those that affect all Australia called Head Office Notams.

Those that affect an FIR (there are only 2 now Melbourne and Brisbane)

Those that affect an Airport or Navaid
Those that affect Military or Restricted airspace

Any notam less than 7 days old will always be shown in its entirety (Full Text). After 7 days the notam is only shown as a 1 line summary so most of the notam will be missing. There are some tricks to the system but I'll explain those later.

AVFAX relies on 5 figure codes being entered from a phone key pad, but the numbers in ERSA are only 4 figure numbers. Under the heading Product Type Prefix in ERSA you will notice the number 0,1, 2 etc. These are the numbers to put in front of the 4 number code you selected for the weather. If you look at the

number 1, you will see that is for met information by location or group. If you now look at 2, it is for notam information by single location or group. If however you skip down to 6 you will see that if you put that number in front of your selected ARFOR code you will get all the met (ARFOR and TAF's) and all the notams applicable to that area. The notams will include all the airport, navaid, military restricted area and low jet route notams for that area. It will not however include Head Office notams, these must be requested separately with the code either 21390 or 51390. I prefer to use group codes as opposed to just origin and destination airports in case I need to divert to one of those airports enroute, then at least I have the relevant weather and notams. It also helps generate a mind picture of the weather better than an ARFOR does.

Some of the problems recent changes to AVFAX addressed was the quantity of paper generated by an AVFAX briefing and the excessive duplication of information in one briefing. A typical briefing for me to go Tamworth/ Port Macquarie/Tamworth can be as little as 4 pages, to go to Melbourne can be up to 23 and that is without Satpix or analysis charts.

If after you have received your AVFAX you find a 1 line notam that you want the full text of, there are 2 ways to get the full notam. One way is simple, the other way is stupid so I'll ignore it. Lets say it's a notam for Tamworth (YSTW). The simplest way to get the full text is to request 5 (notam full text regardless of age) 2025 (for Tamworth). As a bonus notams for airports called in this way also include first and last light times for that

airport (for those who can't remember how to calculate the times or don't have an electronic nav computer). The alternative way of inputting the notam number is too complicated and long-winded to ever worry about so I won't even explain it.

One last tip for the times you are away from your home fax machine. Find out the fax number of the motel you are staying at, get the owners permission to use it (for a small per page fee) and when AVFAX asks if you want your briefing sent to your registered fax number (the last prompt in the process), key 1 and then enter the motel number and your AVFAX briefing will arrive at your motel.

Using AVFAX everyday as I do has taught me lots of tricks to make it's use easier, explanation in a short article as this, is almost impossible. In the mean time have a close look at ERSA, GEN-AVFAX, (GEN -59 onwards in the 17 July 1997 ERSA), for all the information you will need. However if you have any specific questions you are welcome to e-mail me, write to me or buy me a beer the next time we meet somewhere around the country, I'll be happy to help.

Stu Hilsberg



VIC END OF YEAR FLY-IN KYNETON 29/30 November 1997

Location - S37 13 5 E 144 26 8

Saturday 29th November

Arrive for Sausage Sizzle lunch at the club house.
Sat. afternoon explore the historic old town of Kyneton.

Sunday 30th November

Sat. evening dinner at a local restaurant.
local mystery trip and collection of mineral water,
Depart. Sun. afternoon at leisure.

I have booked one Motel so far, ten units at \$50 per dbl.

Other costs , approx. Bus for both days \$12 per head.

Sat. night dinner \$25.

Final details will be available at Parkes .

Hector Blemings. 03 9859 5793 or 03 5634 2421

Internet Humour

A light aircraft was taxiing to takeoff at a large US airport. A cargo DC-8 was on finals and proceeded to land very heavily. Later the pilot of the DC-8 said over the radio sarcastically, "Say, that's a cute little airplane. Did you make it yourself?"

The light aircraft pilot was not going to let that type of comment pass and came straight back with, "Yes, I made it out of DC-8 parts and if you do another landing like that one I'll be able to build another!"

Timescale Navigator

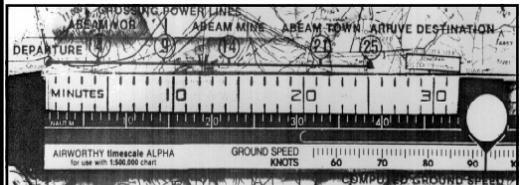
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THE SHERIFF OF LOCKINGTON INTERROGATES.....

OLIVE ELIZABETH RANKIN

(BETTY).

(In West Wyalong 96/97 - some face to face, and some via a letter from Betty).



Where we you born? West Wyalong. My father managed a flour mill there.

I had four sisters.

What was your occupation before marriage? After doing my training at Prince Henry's, Sydney, I nursed in Tasmania and Western Australia.

How did you meet 'Sonny'? At a 21st birthday party, I went there in the place of my parents, - the best thing I ever did, there was 'Sonny'!!! I must have meant to be a glider pilot - I floated on a cloud (my mother said!). 'Sonny' was brought up at West Wyalong. He withdrew from the army due to his father's ill health. We got 'Yarrandale' as a Returned Soldiers property. 'Sonny' always wanted to grow good wheat and so worked on it. The old homestead we managed to get on 'Yarrandale', I had to stick butcher's paper on the kitchen walls to keep the dust out. ad the floors sanded and then we painted them with "Solpa" paint, it was an improvement. After 3 weeks of toil we were able to have our wedding breakfast from my God Mother's house, that was on the 6th May, 1949 - I can still feel the warmth of the sun on my skin as we stepped out from the Church that special day.

How many children do you have? Two. Maryanne, our eldest daughter, was born in 1950, and if you had seen 'Sonny's' face when we brought her home, his face was covered with the dust of harvesting - the tiny baby was so like him (his teeth were whiter!?!), and when 'Sonny' smiled, it was with great sincerity!! Our youngest daughter, Helen Browning, who now lives in Canberra was born in 1958 after a rough period of health for me - virus pneumonia etc. She seemed more interested in flying, but her husband is interested in fast cars so to the race track they go together.

Tell us about 'Sonny'. He always wanted to fly, even from a tiny boy of 8 years, and demonstrated from his mother's home at "Westwood" Ungarie. When he had the opportunity to meet Richard Sims, and the Aviation Crew from Victa Aviation - he decided then and there our country, Australia, needed a plane that was economical - it could land on a toad if necessary!!! He was a man of great enthusiasm. If he set his mind to doing something, he did it well - that was the beginning of meeting such wonderful and true members of Australian friends from all over in the Airtourer Association. 'Sonny' and I visited the factory at Milperra to see the Airtourer being built. I met Henry Millicer and his family, and all his other crew who enthusiastically helped at the factory. I was intrigued. More friends from their farms

could see the potential of this little plane and so visited Bankstown and the factory. 'Sonny' found F.M.A. a great asset - during the bush fires the Council would ask him to fly over the area and disclose the flight of fires, - had to fly a favourite sheep dog to a Vet in

Cootamundra because at the time there was no Vet in West Wyalong, - young men and women wanting to learn to fly found it expensive to go to Sydney or Centres to learn to fly, so they organised the West Wyalong Aero Club - that was a fight on its own!! He graded a strip on 'Yarrandale' and it has been marked on a map at Bankstown with pride. (Alan Wood showed me). 'Sonny' found the little Airtourer strong enough to hold two fair sized teenage school girls with one small suitcase to fly them back to School in Orange - at the request of Henry Millicer. Henry flew the other two girls in another Airtourer which he had brought to 'Yarrandale'. Henry tested G.B.S. for heat stress at 'Yarrandale' on the hottest of days! So when it came to flying the Simpson Desert with their "babies" and the Aircruiser, they handled the situation beautifully. Unfortunately Sonny's health deteriorated and he retired from the Presidency in 1988, after 10 years.

Do you enjoy flying? I developed a love for flying. I've been a little nervous. 'Sonny' once said "If I want to keep Betty quiet I take her flying"! I made wonderful friendships in the Airtourer Association and still have great memories and good friends, it brought different people from various walks of life to 'Yarrandale'. The association kept me sane.

Can you recall a humorous moment in flight? Going to Balranald everything looked the same, we missed the Airstrip and landed on the road!

Thank you Betty for allowing us to 'find out a little more about you', it gave me pleasure to do this "interrogation" because you have given the Airtourer Association SO MUCH PLEASURE AND SO FREELY AND SO WILLINGLY.



PRESIDENT'S FLY-IN, PARKES, NSW
19th, 20th, and 21st SEPTEMBER 1997
PROGRAMME

Friday, 19th	Early Arrivals 1900 hours	Book into motels Informal dinner at Coachman
Saturday 20 th	1230 hours 1700 hours 1830 hours	Lunch at Aero Club Bus from airport to motels Bus from motels to Aero Club
Sunday, 21st	0900-1100 hours 1100 hours 1130 hours 1300 hours	T.B.A. Bus to airport Depart to "Timaldra" Barbecue lunch at "Timaldra"

"Timaldra" is the farm owned by John and Adele Allan. The property is 22 nm. from Parkes, has two grass strips 800 and 1000 metres in length. The Allans have built an indoor heated swimming pool and entertainment area since we were last there.

Accommodation Has been reserved at two motels.
 Coachman Hotel/Motel. Phone: (068) 62 2622
 Court Street Motel. Phone: (068) 62 3844
 Please contact the Motel **direct** to reserve a room.
 There is some basic dormitory accommodation available at the
 Parkes Aero Club -B.Y.O. sleeping bag.

After booking your room at the Motel of your choice, would you please complete and return the following form.

✂ _____

PRESIDENT'S FLY-IN, 19th, 20th, and 21st SEPTEMBER, 1997

TO: Tony Matthews, PO Box 74, Parkes 2870

I, _____ will be arriving in VH - ___ about
 ___ hours on Friday/Saturday.

I will be **accompanied** by _____

I have booked into the _____ motel

I will be departing about _____ hours on Sunday/Monday.



Calendar of Events

President's Fly-In

Parkes, 19-21 September 1997

Details this Newsletter

Victorian End of Year Fly-In

Kyneton

29-30th November

Details this Newsletter

Airtourer Association Annual General Meeting

Griffith NSW

Details in future Newsletters

The Last Laugh

The following article was extracted from the inflight magazine of a Chinese Airline.

"At the Kennedy Airport was a scene the pilot had never thought of. An unusual thunderstorm was attacking it so fiercely that people present couldn't open their eyes . . .

"The pilot received the control-tower's notification: 'The airport's closed, your aircraft can't land, please touch down at another airport nearby instead.'

"The pilot squinted his eyes a little. Nope, he thought, my big bird could not fly to any other airport because it lacked fuel,

my dear controller.

"'It's too perilous! You Chinese are crazy!' said the controller.

"After a while, the controller wound down and then said to his colleague indignantly: 'I'd like to know what superman the pilot is.' And he ran towards the apron at once.

"The Boeing 747 stood alone in downpour ... He [the air traffic controller] held the pilot's hand tightly, stared at his dark eyes and howled in amazement: 'Ah, young man.' Then he praised quietly and clearly: 'You Chinese are great!'"

The person who reported this article was heard to say "I would have enjoyed reading it more had I not been in one of their aircraft at the time."