

May 2019  
Newsletter No. 169

# AIRTOURER ASSOCIATION



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



# NEWSLETTER

<http://www.Airtourer.asn.au>

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Articles for inclusion in the Newsletter should be submitted direct to John O'Halloran at the contacts listed above.

The next Newsletter will be published in August 2019. Contributions and or advertisements are to be with JOH by 15 July 2019.

Advertisements are free for current members.

### Editorial

The Airtourer community saw the end of an era with the passing of Alan Wood at the age of 96. Other than Henry Millicer, the Airtourer designer, no other individual has contributed as much to the ongoing airworthiness of the Airtourer fleet than Alan. Thanks Al and you'll be fondly remembered for many year's to come.

The Airtourers were on show at the Australian International Airshow at Avalon earlier this year. Thank you to those who placed their aircraft on display or volunteered to answer questions from the crowd.

The Events Sub-Committee once again faced challenges with events out of their control conspiring to disrupt the 2019 Convention. Even the weather made an attempt. In the end it was an enjoyable weekend and the Committee feels it's time again to canvas the membership on what they would like for future fly-ins. Watch the website for a survey.

In the 21st century the internet is the main means of communication and the Committee questions the role of a traditional paper based newsletter. Future newsletters will be via email, with extensive reference to the website, and more timely. Watch your 'inbox'. Paper versions will be available for those without internet access.

Safe Airtouring,

*John O'Halloran*

*Cover Photo:* This photo says it all. Alan Wood in his element, in his hangar working on an Airtourer. In this case the Airtourer is his T5 VH-POB that had been sitting in the corner of the hangar for many years while Alan worked on other peoples' Airtourers.

### 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.

# Vale

## Alan Wood



The Airtourer community saw the end of an era when over a hundred friends and family said their final goodbyes to Alan Wood. Al made his 'last flight' on 13 May 2019, he was 96 years old. The chapel was packed with standing room only as we celebrated his 80 years plus in aviation and almost 77 years as a loving husband and family man.

Alan's life in aviation commenced prior to World War 2 and while still a teenager he built two full sized gliders in his back yard. His first aviation job was with Adastral Airways at Mascot Aerodrome. In WW2 he raised his age to enlist in the RAAF. While wanting to fly, his technical skills were quickly recognised and he was trained as an airframe technician.

Post WW2 Alan joined Butler Air Transport, initially converting military C47s into civilian DC3s.

Alan joined Victa in 1960, originally working on the Victa R2 before being made the Deputy Service Manager. In this role he often released the new aircraft for their first flight but also visited the users around the country as a trouble shooter. His practical approach to solving problems led Henry Millicer to refer to him as his "Chief Re-designer".

Alan remained with Victa until aircraft production ceased.

After some time at Hawker Pacific and later the Hoxton Park Flying School he went out on his own with Hoxton Park Aviation.

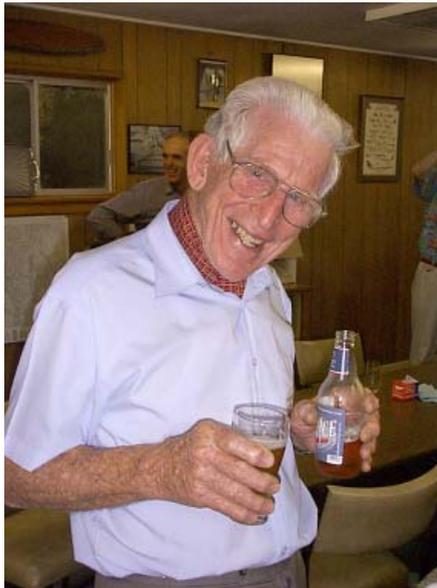
Although officially retiring in the 1990s he continued to maintain a select group of aircraft including the sole example of the Victa Aircruiser, currently owned by Des Heffernan. When Hoxton Park was closed due to encroaching housing Al was forced to move to Wedderburn which was an even longer drive from his home in the northern suburbs of Sydney.

Within the Airtourer community Alan is best known for his great depth of knowledge of the aeroplane as well as his willingness to share that knowledge. He served on the board of the Airtourer Co-operative for 36 years in addition to providing the day to day support.

Members have been asking for decades “what are we going to do when Al retires?” Quite simply, it was impossible to replace him so the Board did the next best thing and sat him in front of a video camera for two days in an attempt to record as much of that accumulated knowledge as possible. Al’s willingness to pass on this knowledge will ensure that his contribution will continue for many years.

It’s not possible to do Alan justice in a short article so I will rely on the presentation his son Graham made to the 2017 Airtourer Association Convention in Broken Hill. This can be accessed via the website by clicking the photo of Al on the home page or the link at the end of the website article.

You will be greatly missed Alan but the continued operation of the Airtourer fleet is due in no small part to your contributions and will serve as your legacy.



# Convention and AGM 2019 Orange, NSW

The Airtourer Association Convention and AGM at Orange, NSW, started with a bang. Not the happy bang of celebratory fireworks and champagne but nature's fireworks, lightning.

We were about 70 NM north of Orange when my co-pilot, navigator, radio operator, weather advisor and lightning detector started issuing cautions about the darkening skies ahead. A quick check of the latest weather via OZ RUNWAYS suggested a VFR arrival was still possible.

The radio then became busy with

Airtourers DDZ and BNV approaching from the south west discussing whether to divert to Forbes or Parkes.

The right hand seat warning system upgraded the alerts from caution to warning status.

The sky ahead became darker, a SPECI was issued for Orange indicating thunderstorms and the right hand seat became more insistent. Maybe Parkes was a good option, except it was very dark on the direct track and now there was lightning as well.

The right hand seat warning system



*L to R: Gerry Pels, John O'Halloran, Mike Fisher, Denise Pels, Andy Morris, Beryl Marshall, Jan O'Halloran, Jane Morris and Parkes local Liz Matthews, at Parkes waiting for the weather to clear.*



*Mike Fisher's BNV safely tied down at Orange Airport after the storms had passed.*

reached its highest level of alert with, "I've got a bad feeling about this" audio alert.

Without boring the reader with details of the multitude of problem solving tasks, including devising backup plans such as diverting to Narromine, we eventually landed at Parkes in light rain after approaching from the west, (the long way around.)

Also on the ground at Parkes were Andy and Jane in their newly restored and stealth painted DDZ, Mike in BNV, Gerry and Denise in the Arrow. Local Parkes member Liz Matthews drove out check on us.

The pilots did pilot stuff, gathering information, identifying and assessing various options before deciding to wait an hour and ring the Orange Aero Club. The entertainment for that hour was provided by two of the right hand seat warning systems getting more and more excited

by the multiple lighting strikes receding to the north of Parkes.

The Bureau of Meteorology radar was now showing the storms, and lighting to be 40 to 50 NM to the north of Parkes while the destination, Orange, was 47 NM to the east south east. A quick phone call to the Orange Aero Club confirmed the towers on nearly Mt Canobolas, 2,000ft above the airfield were clearly visible and the rain had passed. The right hand seat warnings systems were not convinced. Suffice to say, all diverted Airtourers safely arrived at Orange with ample time to tie down and enjoy some aero club hospitality.

Chris and Sheridan Wilson in their RV6 diverted initially to Mudgee but on realising the storm was headed their way flew west for the night at Narromine. It's worth noting that Narromine is very aviation friendly with accommodation on the airfield or otherwise within walking

distance.

Milthorpe, which was our base for the weekend, is an old town by Australian standards dating back to the 1830s. Interest in the area grew in 1850 with the discovery of gold nearby and the Robertson Land Act of 1861 which opened freehold land in an attempt to break the hold on land ownership established by the squatters.

As agriculture developed a flour mill was built in the 1880s and continued until the 1960s. By this stage the area was known as Spring Grove and in an attempt to distinguish themselves from the other 'Spring ...' communities nearby the locals voted to change the name to Milthorpe.

The mill brought the railway and the railway brought industry. However, as the 20th century progressed the industry



*Denise Pels, one of the 'lightning warning alerts' overjoyed at being safely on the ground at Orange.*



*Enjoying lunch at the Golden Memories Museum Milthorpe.*



*Above: Gathering around the 'Wishing Well' at the Golden Memories Museum. Below L: Pat Sheil and George Penfound with an ore crusher. Below R: Monique playing "Twinkle Twinkle Little Star" on a set of 'tuned' spanners. Another project for Jon and the kids.*





*Above: Judy Riddel and Liz Matthews at the Convention Dinner.  
Below: L to R, Lyn Butler, Beryl Marshall and Jan O'Halloran*





*Above: Pat Peak and grandson Elliott.*

*Below L: Jan O'Halloran discovers a little local wisdom outside a wine tasting outlet in Milthorpe.*

*Below R: Beryl 'The Sheriff' Marshall with one of the 'prizes' from her raffle raising funds for the Royal Flying Doctor Service.*





*Above: An Airtourer that hasn't been seen at our fly-ins for many years. VH-DDZ, last seen as a 100 now modified to a 160 in the Experimental Category. The grey "stealth" paint scheme is not attempting the military look but simply still the primer. The final scheme is yet to be revealed.*

*Below: Andy and Jane Morris receiving the award for "Best Presented Airtourer" from President Mike Fisher.*





*Above: The Annual General Meetings at the Orange Aero Club conference facility.  
Below: President Mike Fisher (right) with our hosts from the Orange Aero Club.*



moved to larger centres and Milthorpe almost died leaving only the historical buildings.

In the late 20th and early 21st centuries the historical charm and modern growth of tourism, food and wine in the Orange area allowed Milthorpe to reinvent itself. Just 3 ½ hours drive from Sydney it's an ideal base, with 19th century charm, to explore the Orange region.

Saturday was spent at a leisurely pace exploring the historic village. The main event was lunch, and hours of browsing at the Golden Memories Museum. This included a wide range of exhibits detailing the history of the area but also the wider history of Australia. In particular, one pavilion was dedicated to Australian inventions. It included the "black box" flight data recorder but not the Victa Airtourer, something we'll have to address. (There was mention of the Victa lawn mower in another pavilion).

The Convention Dinner was planned for the "hatted" Tonic Restaurant. Unfortunately, the change in date for the weekend, driven by factors outside our control, led to that venue not being practical, much to the disappointment of some attendees. Plan "B" was the Railway Hotel. Unfortunately, Milthorpe hosted a district football tournament that weekend and the matches were being debriefed at the hotel by the large crowd of players and supporters at an increasingly higher volume as the night progressed. Consequently the convention presentations were postponed until the AGM the following day.

The AGMs were held in the well appointed Orange Aero Club. The Orange airport terminal was upgraded and the Council wanted to use the Aero Club as



*Not your standard Airtourer. DDZ sporting a NACA scoop air intake that increases the pressure in the induction system.*

the temporary terminal. This required the Aero Club to be upgraded first and two years ago the new terminal opened allowing the Aero Club to return to an excellent facility. It is called the Max Hazelton Aero Centre and with a licenced bar and full commercial catering facilities is available as a function centre.

With the AGMs over most attendees elected to leave as there was another front approaching on Monday. Some delayed their departure to even later in the week after the weather had passed and made us of the Aero Club courtesy car to explore the area.

Overall a challenging weekend for the organisers with events beyond their control conspiring to undermine their plans. Nevertheless, moving the location to Milthorpe afforded us the opportunity to enjoy this historic town.

# MEMORIES

THEY DIDN'T WANT ME TO BLOW THE WHISTLE !!



THE IRREPRESSIBLE PHANTOM WHISTLER

JUST TOO MANY AL.. I THINK WE'LL HAVE TO FLIP A COIN !!



YES... I THINK YOU'RE RIGHT STAN!



CHOOSING THE BEST PRESENTED AIRTOURER

We haven't seen Gerry Lawson and his Airtourer 100 for some time. He's missed, not this cartoon of his memories over many years. Thank you Gerry!

# LAWNMOWERS ACROSS THE DESERT

SIMPSON DESERT SAFARI — AUGUST 1984



THE AIRTOURER ANTHEM & THE THREE SPINNERS



THE SHERIFF'S METHOD OF COLLECTING FINES

only for his company but his cartoons of events at the fly-ins. Gerry has provided

# Mid Year Lunch

## Riddell Creek, Victoria

This year's Mid Year Lunch was held at Jon and Mon's at Riddell Creek airfield.



*Above: Executive parking, President Mike Fisher's BNV and Vice President John Day's VRT parked together at Riddell.*

*Below and opposite top: Lunch at Jon and Mon's.*

*Opposite lower: Sharon Clement struggling to load the weekend's shopping into KGR. Looking on is an unsympathetic Andrew while Jon Pels attempts to help.*





## Airtourers at the Avalon Airshow

*John O'Halloran*

The Airtourer Association was on display at the recent Australian International Airshow held at Avalon Airport over 26th February to 3rd March. The airshow included a GA Airsport section and the Airtourers were given a prime corner location facing the display line.

Originally five aircraft planned to be on display but the inevitable unforeseen events reduced this to three for the duration of the show. COI from Queensland was the first to arrive followed by Jon Meridew from Lilydale Flying School in ECI and Jon Pels & Monique Gillett in LVU.

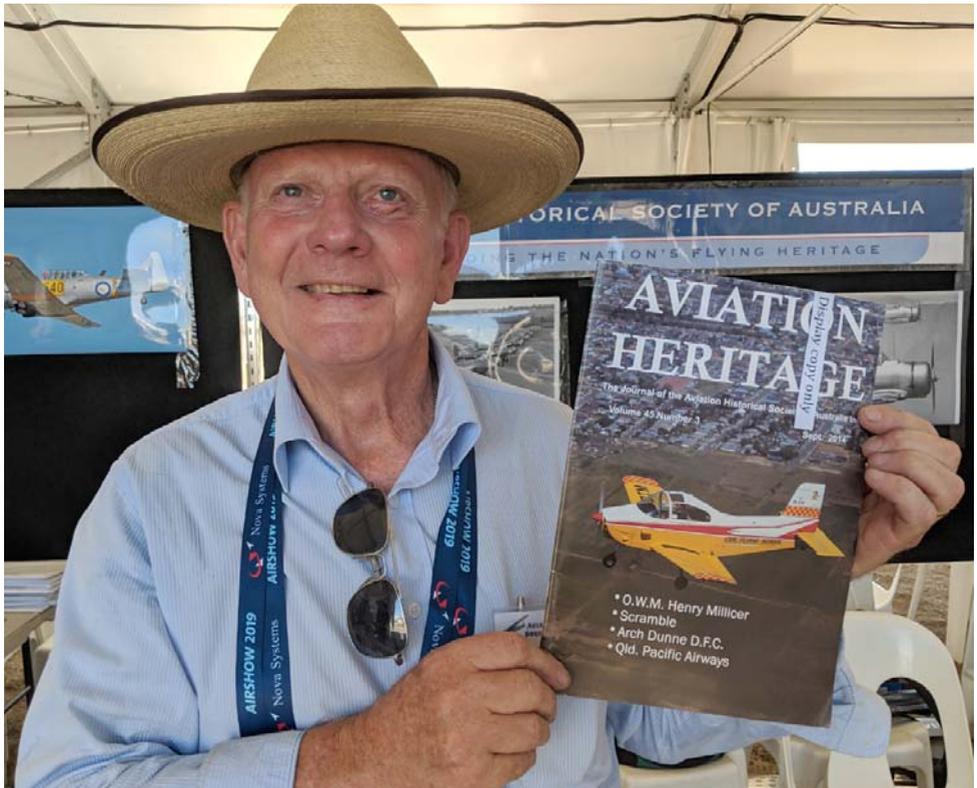
The Lilydale team had a number of

charters to Avalon and while the passengers enjoyed the show, a variety of pilots, mostly instructors, answered questions about the Airtourer as well as the school. Others on hand over the show were the author, Jon and Mon, Gerry and Denise Pels, Ivan Porteus and Andrew Clement.

We were looked after well by the airshow organisers with an undercover area to display association information. This area was shared with two other exhibitors, one of whom was East Coast Aviation at West Sale Airport. East Coast have maintained Airtourer 115 TWE and are currently rebuilding MTP after



*The Lilydale Flying School team with Airtourer 150 ECI in prime position on the corner of the GA Airsport display area.*



*The author caught up with an old friend he hadn't seen since the late 1970s, Dave Prossor. Many of you will know of Dave through his columns in Australian Aviation magazine. He is currently the President of the Aviation Historical Society of Australia. The AHSA display included a back issue of their magazine Aviation Heritage with the cover photo showing Dave flying Airtourer 100, VH-CTM, as it was before Doug Stott upgraded it to Super 150 standard.*

an engine failure some years ago. The rebuild includes a metal tank which led to some interesting discussions, particularly regarding Henry's design philosophy with regard to the safety aspects of the metal tank and the implications on AD/VAT/28.

The airshow organisers also provided a dedicated area for GA Airport exhibitors to relax with barista coffee for \$2 a cup and a good supply of water. The

water was particularly important with sunny skies and hot dry northerly winds raising the temperature to the high 30s each day. This area included a section fenced off from the crowd and with an unobstructed view of the flying display. An army of aviation minded volunteers provided great support and interesting conversations.

Some members would be dissuaded from flying into the airshow by the Class D

airspace, requirement to talk to ATC and the high traffic density. The procedures were simple and clearly published with an online slot booking system. While there were some computer “glitches” with the bookings, the actual arrival and departure on non-show days was a non-event. Monique elected to depart with LVU on Sunday immediately after the show finished at 4PM. Although slot times had been allocated the parking arrangements made adherence to them impractical. The organisers therefore elected a “Le Mans” style departure. This is where the ground volunteers shone in assisting moving aircraft and giving start and taxi instructions to facilitate an orderly and efficient departure.

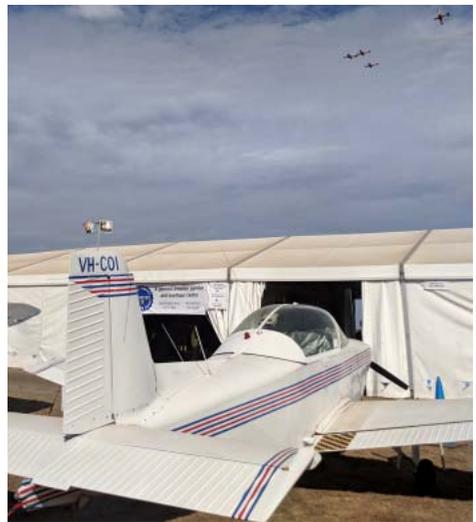
The author was surprised by the number of visitors who personally knew Henry or his family. Additionally there were the inevitable “I learned to fly in a Victa” observations. See the accompanying photos for some of the Association members, and others, who stopped by.

The next Avalon airshow will be held in 2021 and will celebrate the centenary of the RAAF. I’m hoping the Airtourers will once again be invited and would like to see the progression of aircraft variants from a 100 to the Aircruiser and the CT4. This would demonstrate the progress of Henry’s design culminating in the CT4 which trained thousands of RAAF pilots over 40 years.

*Right: Airtourer Super 150 VH-COI on display with the RAAF Roulettes and their final display in the PC-9 aircraft.*



*Above: The plaque presented to the Airtourer Association by the airshow organisers thanking us for attending.*





*Above: Association members and owners of Airtourer 100, VH-RKL, Bronwyn Hicks and John Stewart-Jones operated a booth at the airshow selling John's aviation sketches. When the author visited they had sold out of Airtourer pictures.  
Below: Andrew Gornlie from Tauranga in NZ who is restoring a couple of Airtourers*



## Stocktake at Tocumwal

A group of Association and Co-operative members converged on Lee Gordon-Brown's hangar by car and aeroplane over the weekend of 23rd and 24th February 2019. They assisted in overcoming one of the greatest challenges to the Coop providing efficient day to day parts support; establishing what parts we actually have in stock.

In 1980, a team from the newly formed Airtourer Co-operative went to New Zealand and packed up the Airtourer project including the remaining spares held by AESL. These were held for many years by Alan Wood at Hoxton Park before being moved to Wedderburn and Tocumwal. Some of the spares were held by Millicer Aircraft Industries while they were a going concern. The Wedderburn stock has since been moved to Tinbeer-

wah in Queensland. The net result of the passage of time and moves was no clear list of what parts existed and where. The only solution would be a new stock take from scratch.

A complete stock take of parts held in two locations, about 800 NM apart, presented a number of challenges ranging from high level questions like how to record and manage the list to simply getting sufficient people in the right place at the right time.

Andrew Younger, part owner of Airtourer 115 TPY and 150 MWR, was factory manager at the Nestle factory in Gympie in Queensland and developed a system using a spreadsheet. This approach was greatly assisted by the immense amount of work done by Lee Gordon-Brown and Ross McBride in cataloguing



*Part of the Sunday team, L to R, Lee Gordon-Brown, Tony Self, Jon Pels, Monique Gillett, Andrew Clement, Ross McBride, Ian Close and John Wynn.*



*Above: Andrew Clement cross checking a part in the Illustrated Parts Catalogue and logging it on the worksheet.*

*Below: David Wearne working through a variety of parts. The aircraft in the background is a de Havilland DH89 Dragon Rapide owned by Airtourer Association member Maurice Rolfe.*



the list of drawings.

Over two days 10 volunteers identified, recorded and tagged around 500 parts currently stored in Lee's hangar at Tocumwal. It's estimated about 2/3 of the stock has now been recorded and at least one more session is required at both Tocumwal and Tinbeerwah. The next step is entering the 500 records into the spreadsheet and while this is a daunting task it is small compared to what Lee and Ross has already done.

Many thanks to those who assisted and those members who passed on apologies, including from the UK.

- Lee Gordon-Brown, our host and chief coffee maker.

- Ross McBride

- John Wynn

- Tony Self

- Andrew Clement

- Stuart Trevaskis, (Andrew's mate from Shepparton who thought he was going for a short flight around Shep with Andrew only to end up at TOC counting parts.)

- Jon and Mon

- David Wearne

- Ian Close

## Change in Newsletter Format Paper to Electronic

In the last Newsletter I raised the question whether the traditional newsletter remains relevant for the Association well into the 21st century.

**History.** When the Association was formed a newsletter to "keep members informed about Association activities" was deemed sufficiently important that it was included in the constitution. When the constitution was replaced to comply with the change to an incorporated association the clause regarding the newsletter was included. In the early days it was published as required but settled into the quarterly format.

The newsletter remained the primary form of communication, with the occasional mail out, until the mid 1990s when Doug Stott created the website and email became more popular. At some point past 2000 the newsletter was made available for download and this remains a popular option.

Over the years a number of members have suggested not sending them the printed newsletter as they read the downloaded version. These suggestions have prompted discussions about paper vs electronic but a number of other members made the point they enjoyed sitting down and reading the paper.

Currently, bulk emails are being used to notify members of the publishing of the newsletter and other matters such as fly-ins. The email method allows a more timely update where necessary at no additional financial cost.

This raises the question about communication with our members going forward and whether a paper based format remains relevant, whether distributed by email or post.

### **Frequency of Communications.**

The newsletter is currently quarterly which generally provides sufficient time to notify members of activities with enough

forward planning. Unfortunately plans are becoming more fluid, not due to our activities but rather the wider community planning on a shorter time scale as enabled by modern communications. Recent changes at both Naracoorte and Orange forced on the Association have been addressed by email updates. Traditionally, postal updates would have been possible but less timely and at greater cost. Additionally, more frequent communications raises the awareness of the Association among the members.

I don't believe there is any argument about the benefits of having information readily available on the website with reminder / updates by email. The question is the continuing role of the paper based newsletter.

The matter was considered by the Committee at the meeting at Milthorpe and agreed that future newsletters would be in electronic format. This issue would

be the last of the traditional paper versions. Shortly after this issue is published an email equivalent will also be published. You will note that the email version will often link to articles on the website emphasising the point that the website is the 'go to' place for information. However, the Committee acknowledges that a small number of members are not on email and do not use the Internet. A paper version of the email newsletter will be printed and posted on a limited basis. This will be more like a printed email than the current paper newsletter.

This change has two additional advantages, it will be less work for the webmaster / editor and there will be savings in the postage costs allowing the Committee to maintain the annual fees and low levels.

As always, the Committee is open to the views of the members and welcomes feedback.



### **What could possibly go wrong?**

With the obsession about aviation security and the requirement for ASIC cards to get access to otherwise deserted country airports it was amusing to see this explosives truck parked adjacent to the tarmac at Parkes airport.

## Membership Survey

It's been about five years since the last membership survey. Mike and John are drafting another survey to gather feedback from the membership, in particular regarding your desires regarding fly-ins. If you don't attend our events we'd like to know why and how we can make it more attractive to you. Also, what would you like to do at the fly-ins.

Watch the website for the survey. We'll also let you know by email.

## For Sale

### Airtourer 150 - Fixed Pitch VH-CND S/N11



With the best combination of performance and maintenance simplicity the fixed pitch 150 HP makes this Airtourer an ideal entry level aircraft. Excellent major component times to run would see many hours of flying into the future. This aircraft is one of the few Airtourer fitted with spats giving a few extra knots of speed.

Total airframe hours 5421

Engine 1469 hours to recommended overhaul

Prop 82 hours since new!

A full summary of component times and AD compliance is available.

Asking \$47,500.

Enquiries to Mike Fisher  
0429869134 or [ktnlndry2@bigpond.com](mailto:ktnlndry2@bigpond.com)

## Flight of the Kiwi

Fifty years ago Cliff Tait was flying around the world in his Airtourer 115, ZK-CXU, otherwise known as Miss Jacy. On 12th May 1969 Cliff took off from Hamilton in New Zealand on the first leg of an epic journey and it was not until 1st August that he finally returned to Hamilton.

Miss Jacy is now on display at the Museum of Transport and Technology (MOTAT) in Auckland. Cliff has invited all members to join a celebration of his flight at MOTAT on 1st August at 5PM. Watch the Association website for more details.



## Congratulations to Mel Hupfeld

Congratulations to Association member Mel Hupfeld on being appointed to be the next Chief of Airforce effective 4th July this year.

Mel is part owner in Airtourer 150 MTP. Unfortunately we haven't seen MTP at our fly-ins for some time due to a forced landing resulting from loss of oil pressure. Although the damage was minor, due to the excellent skills of the pilot, the project has been slow and is currently being completed by East Coast Aviation at West Sale aerodrome.

Mel's parents Peter and Bernardine are also Association members and regulars at our events.



## Calendar of Events

### President's Fly-in

Mudgee NSW  
20th - 22nd September 2019  
Watch website for updates.

### End of Year Function

Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> November 2019  
Fly or drive to Tooradin for lunch at Wings and Fins adjacent to the Airfield.  
Lunch is at 1230.  
Please RSVP to Gerry Pels no latter than Friday 15th November so we can finalise numbers with the venue.  
If you are flying in, prior permission is required from the airfield operator, details in ERSA.

### Convention 2020

20<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020  
Parkes NSW (YPKS)  
A return to Parkes and the surrounding area.  
Watch the website for updates.

## Membership Renewal

It's membership renewal time again for both the Association and the Co-op. The subscriptions remain the same at \$50 for the Association and \$100 for the Co-operative. If you own an Airtourer you should be a member of the Co-operative.

Email renewals will be sent soon but you can pay now via internet banking to the Association account:

BSB: 033 028 Acct. No.: 460085

Enter your surname as a reference and let us know by email to *membership@airtourer.asn.au*

Also remember the option to donate to the RFDS with your renewal.

## Welcome

**Peter Young** from Sure-flight Aviation at Devonport in Tasmania. Sure-flight maintain a couple of Airtourers and we welcome them to our community.