



## **General Meeting: Saturday 18 May 2013**

### **Minutes**

**Venue:** Building 96, Victoria Barracks

**Chairman:** Gareth Morgan

**Commenced:** 1:30 PM

**Apologies:** Peter Chapman, Mark Lax, David Perkins, Eric Peterson, Mike Abbott

- 1. Attendance:** 22 members as per attendance book

New member welcomed – Bernard de Broglio

Guest welcomed - Igor Demianenko, guest of Gordon Lasslett

A minute's silence was observed to mark the passing of Peter Williams, long term society member and librarian. Peter's funeral was attended by society members John Baker, Gareth Morgan, Alex Stewart, Andrew Smith and Des Sheehan, and condolences were expressed by all to his widow Claire.

- 2. Minutes:** The Minutes of the General Meeting of 16 February 2013 were confirmed.

**Accepted: (m)** Gordon Lasslett                      **(s)** Jerry Weingarth

### **3. Business arising from the Minutes**

#### **a) Journal matters**

The May 2012 Journal has been distributed, and has been well received. The editor would appreciate contributions for the November edition, and for subsequent issues.

The May Journal has been posted out to members. Full details are in the editors report below.

#### **b) Newsletter**

Peter Chapman is doing a good job as Newsletter editor, but it would be preferable to have a dedicated editor so that Peter can concentrate on the Journal. Members are again asked to consider volunteering for this role. Peter Chapman's report is below.

**c) In memory of our Librarian Peter Williams**

The committee is keen to perpetuate the memory of Peter Williams in some way – perhaps connected to modelling. Suggestions from the membership will be welcome. Perhaps a trophy for modelling, although there is already one currently awarded.

**d) Membership Numbers/recruitment**

Alex Stewart reports that membership is still relatively static: there were 11 new members in 2012, and 2 in 2013. Various strategies are being considered for obtaining new members. The remainder of Alex Stewart's report is summarised in the Treasurer's report below.

Mike Garside is investigating advertising for members in "Defence News", either paid advertising or perhaps in return for an article. Gareth Morgan has arranged for links/references to the society in the online newsletters of the UK-based Western Front Association and the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, and the committee is looking at advertising in other publications.

**e) August General Meeting**

Gareth Morgan clarified that the item in the May Newsletter regarding the 17th August meeting at Fighter World – the Society has indeed negotiated a discount on the admittance fee, but it will also pay the fee for those attending. For catering purposes, we need an estimate of numbers, and suggestions regarding who can transport other members. Could members contact Gareth Morgan at [president@ww1aero.org.au](mailto:president@ww1aero.org.au) or Des Sheehan at [dessaheehan@optusnet.com.au](mailto:dessheehan@optusnet.com.au) (tel 0415 207 730) by 30 June 2013, for catering purposes. Noted that Derek White will delegate the Raffle for that meeting to a volunteer.

Members confirmed having the August meeting at Fighter World. Gareth Morgan will contact the Museum's caterers to arrange a modest afternoon tea.

**f) November General Meeting**

Michael Garside is looking into whether a speaker who has compiled a history of No 3 Squadron RAAF might be available to address the November meeting. Gordon Lasslett is also looking into another possible speaker for that meeting, and will discuss further with the committee.

**g) NZ Trip in November and other events**

Andrew Smith outlined more details of the NZ trip in November. Departure from Australia will be 8 November and return 13 November. Total cost per person not including meals and museum entry is estimated at \$2,100.00, although Andrew had been quoted up to \$4,000.00 from some agencies. Some highlights are 10 November

at Masterton airfield, fly to Blenheim and visit Omaka airfield and museum, then to Christchurch and NZAF museum. All planning to go please contact Andrew Smith at [webmaster@ww1aero.org.au](mailto:webmaster@ww1aero.org.au) for confirmation, arrangements and itinerary.

Proposed visit to Qantas Heritage Museum: The committee is looking into options for this and an interesting proposed speaker. Members will be kept informed via the newsletter.

#### **4. Correspondence and Reports.**

##### **a) Correspondence:**

The President has had a number of letters and emails from Mr John Capp OAM of Melbourne regarding a book privately printed by a friend of his in the UK which documents the friend's research into the AFC in Gloucestershire. Only six copies of the book were printed, and one is with the RAAF Museum, while Mr Capp holds another. If any member wishes to view Mr Capp's copy, his contact details can be obtained from the President.

There was also an exchange of correspondence with Mr George Franki of Waverton, who has researched the men from Mosman who died during the Great War (a copy of his book was donated to the library). He is now working on a similar volume dealing with the men from North Sydney.

##### **b) Reports:**

###### **i) President (Gareth Morgan):**

Andrew Smith and I gave a presentation on Aviation in the Great War at Mosman Library on 12 March; it was well attended, and several new members have subsequently joined. The Librarian has told other libraries about the event, and we hope that similar events may occur in the future. We were invited to and attended a subsequent gathering at the Library on 24 April to launch Mr George Franki's book on the men from Mosman.

A former staff member from Adastra Airways sought and received permission to include an article from a 1969 Journal on their website; it was about WT Hammond, the company's co-founder.

###### **ii) VP Administration (Michael Garside)**

Michael Garside reports he was part of an official party on in France on Anzac Day, where he met the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Chief of the Air Force and The Chair of the Anzac Centenary Planning Committee, all of whom are now well aware of our society. He is also is now in touch with a gentleman from the Museum in the Victoria School (Villers-Brettonneaux) who is a keen aviation historian.

The Society is still looking appropriate patron (some further names were canvassed), and views on appropriate patrons, or approaches by members, would be welcome.

**iii) Webmaster (Andrew Smith)**

The website is still being improved, Andrew Smith has however spent most of his recent time getting together the final itinerary and costings for the New Zealand trip.

**iv) Treasurer/Membership Secretary (Alex Stewart)**

Alex Stewart reports: The society's current finances are healthy and a current financial statement shows a balance of about \$5,700.00 at present , but outlays for the journal and postage will (as in other years) substantially reduce that balance. Andrew Smith has kindly absorbed the costs of hosting the website.

We have 120 paid up members at present, plus 5 life members. This is slightly down on last year (123) and the year previous (128). Since last July we have had a total of 17 new members join, and clearly a larger number leave the society. A few have passed away, but the majority of the losses are people just not renewing their membership. We had 17 join in the 12 months prior to that, and 7 of these did not renew this year. None of the members who did not rejoin attended any meetings that I am aware of, so it may just be that the virtual membership did not appeal to them. I rarely get anyone advising me why they don't renew, even if I email them, so I regret I cannot be more detailed in reasons for this behaviour.

**v) Newsletter Editor (Peter Chapman acting)**

Peter Chapman reports: With the May newsletter just completed and being sent out this week to all members with e-mail addresses, I am slowly getting on top of producing one in each case, having set up new templates after taking over from David, as we use incompatible systems to produce the newsletters. There hasn't been much feedback, either positive or negative, so I am as yet unsure how they are being received. However, I did note that I was swiftly contacted if one was not received by a member, so obviously some are looking forward to them still!

Here's again grateful to all of you who contacted me with news or snippets and reviews to add to these newsletters, as without your support I would be unable to produce them, at least in the format that has been done so far. Some small changes have been made too, like adding short articles to the newsletters to maintain member interest in the journals, especially in times when they will not get one (February and August). Sadly, I have had to include obituaries for members in both the February and May newsletters so hopefully we won't have any more this year!

One hiccup that was encountered was our move to a purely digital newsletter. It was discovered in February that there are some 20 members who cannot receive their newsletters in this format via e-mail, either because they do not have access to the latter or because their newsletters and journals are posted elsewhere, to daughters and sons,

who then deliver these. As we didn't have time to adjust at the time, I posted all the printed versions required from New Zealand which is less desirable due to the postage costs involved. Most go to Australian addresses and are therefore domestic postage from that side of the Tasman, so Gareth again has undertaken to ensure that these members receive a printed copy of the newsletter from now on. I've decided to absorb these postage costs incurred in February myself, as a donation to the Society, as I no longer pay an annual membership fee as an honorary member.

**vi) Liaison Co-ordinator (Greg Mullens)**

Greg Mullens reports that he has been in hospital and has not therefore been able to line up a post May meeting dinner at the New Thai Yuen, Dixon Street. He will be assisting the library transfer.

**vii) Librarian (Gordon Lasslett)**

Alex Stewart has made arrangements with Claire (Peter Williams' wife) and his family for collection of the library cabinets and records, which should take place in June, with transfer to Gordon Lasslett's facilities at East Lindfield.

Peter Williams bequeathed his (prize winning) models to the society. Claire has also generously donated Peter's papers and his own extensive library to the society and arrangements are in hand to ensure all these are currently to be maintained with the library, pending further plans.

Pending finalisation of the library transfer it may be difficult to accommodate loans to members, but it is hoped that loans can start again in July. Gordon Lasslett reminds members that he has facilities for reading, colour copying and/or printing.

**viii) Journal Editor (Peter Chapman)**

Peter Chapman reports: Progress on the May edition of *The '14 -'18 Journal*, the first of two issues scheduled to be produced this year, proceeded well and with a lot of support. We were fortunate enough to obtain some fine donated artwork by artist Russell Smith, a non-member, for use on the front cover of the May edition, and I'm sure all will agree that this is the kind of work we need to encourage, especially when freely given. Thanks go to our webmaster Andrew who arranged this with Russell, and all for the donation of a copy of the journal when published.

The journal was also redesigned, from a Perfect Bound to a Saddle Stitched format, as this is better suited to the slightly lower page count (64 pages in May). With the journal spine no longer in use as a result, I have taken up president Gareth's excellent suggestion and added a small identifier on the top left hand side of each front cover, to enable those who wish to shelve their journals an easier way of identifying them when they are pulled from the shelf. These, and the *President's Message* and *Contents / Office Bearer* pages are the only cosmetic changes that were necessary, to preserve as much

space as possible for the actual contents, which I am sure is what our members and wider readers are interested in.

Regular printers, Union Offset Printing in Canberra, gave us a competitive quote for the production of 150 copies of the issue, the whole costing about \$6.60 per issue without any further postage costs included. Mark Lax was kind enough to check the proof copy for us and he arranged for the final mass printing to be completed. Gareth has kindly undertaken to see that they were posted out to all members and non-members to whom a complimentary copy was due, and I would like to again express my grateful thanks to both for their assistance.

The next issue, Volume 2, is due in November, and we already have at least two articles on hand that can be used in this issue, as well as artwork for both front and rear covers. Besides these, I am aware of another two articles at least which are in preparation, but we do need some of our less active members to put their thinking caps on and perhaps write for the journal. There are a handful of regulars who are contributing the majority of the content in these journals, and although the quantity and quality is high in each case and this is in itself not a problem, it would be nice and is in fact desirable to have a few new faces represented. There is always room for others in the journals, and I hope to write to some of our newer members in the coming months to canvas their opinions and interests in the hope of teasing another budding author or two out of the woodwork.

Contributions to the November Journal are still required.

#### **ix) Secretary (Des Sheehan)**

Nothing to report as covered by other committee members above.

**Acceptance of Reports:** (m) Mike Crisp (s) Steve Drew

#### **5) General Business:**

Steve Drew has successfully captured the Eric Watson Address from the 2012 AGM on DVD, along with the *By the Seat of Their Pants* seminar in Melbourne last year. Copies will be available for purchase by members.

Alex Stewart has collected some old journals and newsletters from Philip Townsend at Philip's request, and they have now been sorted and held temporarily with the library. There are a number of very old model kits (1950s) that Philip wants to be sold to members, for the benefit of the society. Interested members should contact Alex Stewart or Gordon Lasslett.

2014 : Next year will be 100 years since the start of the Great War. Members' contributions for what we can do to mark this momentous centenary, and subsequent events, were discussed, and further views would be welcomed.

Jerry Weingarth gave his apologies for the remainder of 2013, as he will be returning to live in Begur (Girona, northern Spain), noting that members are welcome to visit him there. Jerry Weingarth enquired whether there might be interest in having a plaque constructed and dedicated at Richmond RAAF base commemorating the AFC flyers who trained there in about 1916, for the centenary in 2016.

Derek White enquired whether consideration could be given to the society re-introducing members name badges so that members can be easily identified at meetings and other gatherings. This and other matters raised as above will be discussed at the next committee meeting, and reported on after that.

A group photograph of society members at the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary dinner held on 15 February 1992 was donated by Derek White and will be held with the society archives in the library. A lot of famous society members attended.

## **6) Raffle Draw**

First prize, "*Fokker Fodder: The Royal Aircraft Factory B.E. 2c*" by Paul R Hare was won by James Woolley of Queensland .

Second prize, "*Open Cockpit*" by Arthur Gould Lee was won by Gary Sunderland of Victoria.

These will be mailed out to the recipients by the Book Depository.

There will be no raffle at the August meeting as the meeting will be away from the main venue, however it is planned to have two raffles in November to make up.

## **7) Next Meeting:**

**Venue:** Fighter World, Williamtown RAAF Aerodrome, Williamtown via Newcastle

(committee members can be contacted as to whether any person needs a lift to and from Sydney)

**Date:** Saturday 17 August 2013

**Time:** 13:30

**8) Formal meeting close:** 2:30 PM

## **Report on the remainder of the meeting**

### **General Information Session**

Alan Cook brought along his replica of a Montgolfier balloon which is now in its final form constructed from fibreglass, and explained its construction from a special mould. Once it is painted it will look spectacular.

Mark Dawson mentioned that on the following Sunday the National Maritime Museum is holding a series of talks on 100 years of the RAN, and naval aviation.

Gareth Morgan reported on a recently read book, “Chocolate Wars”, about the rivalry between the world’s main chocolate manufacturers in WW1 and after (including how the name “Snickers” came into being). Gareth Morgan also donated a UK magazine “The Great War”, to which members may wish to subscribe.

### **The Capt Roy Brown Debate**

Bill Renfrew achieved a resounding victory by vote of members (on his own, his co-debater Mike Abbott being delayed overseas) arguing that Rittmeister Manfred Freiherr von Richtofen was more than likely shot down by Australian machine gunners from the ground, on Morlancourt Ridge.

The official version, that his demise was caused by long distance fire from Capt Roy Brown of 209 Squadron RFC, was capably argued by Alex Stewart and Des Sheehan (with some dissension from the floor), and it is possible that some doubt was sown in the minds of members already swayed by Bill’s argument. Ultimately however the vote for Bill’s view carried the day, and Australian pride is restored.

Des Sheehan produced as some late proof an oil splattered German message streamer (possibly retrieved from the downed Fokker), however it did not contain any message from the Rittmeister clarifying the issue.

### **The Major A. D. Carey collection**

Gareth Morgan gave a talk on the amazing Major A. D. Carey collection of photographs (originals held at the Naval Air Museum), with explanations of the photos shown on screen. They showed a range of aircraft, ships and airmen, all part of the supporting force the UK sent in 1919 to assist the doomed White Russian campaign against the Bolsheviks, in the freezing snow of north Russia. Gordon Lasslett brought a range of his books on that campaign, for members to peruse.