



Australian Society of World War I Aero Historians Inc

General Meeting: Saturday 16 August 2014

Minutes

Venue: Building 96, Victoria Barracks, Paddington

Chairman: Gareth Morgan

Commenced: 1:40 PM

Apologies: Peter Chapman, Mike Crisp, Mark Dawson, Bob Foggin, Juanita Franzi, Michael Garside, John Goble, Adrian Hellwig, Greg Mullens, David Perkins, Eric Peterson, Alex Stewart, Jerry Weingarh, Derek White.

1. **Attendance:** 15 members as per attendance book
2. **Minutes:** Confirmation of the Minutes of the General Meeting of 17 May 2014.

(M): Greg Mullens **(S):** Steve Drew

3. Business arising

a) The Mark Lax award

Mark Lax was formally presented by President Gareth Morgan with the award for his articles in the 2013 Journal, which he was unable to receive in person previously.

b) Outcome of the sale of Peter Williams' excess books and models.

As noted previously Peter had indicated that all these items which were excess to the library (to which he donated his own library) and for display were to be sold for the benefit of the society. Gordon Lasslett reported that the sale at the May meeting was very successful and resulted in excess of \$450.00 being received so far. Leftover items/books were brought to the August meeting for further sale, as well as Peter's collection of World War 11 books/magazines. Alex Stewart continues to maintain contact with Peter's remaining family.

These proceeds are planned to be utilised for the purchase of specialty research books for the Peter Williams Memorial Library, which will be designated as purchased from Peter's donation.

c) Journal matters

Gareth Morgan reported on behalf of Peter Chapman (who is on holidays) that the November 2014 issue has sufficient material but contributions from the wider membership are still earnestly sought.

d) The Newsletter

The August newsletter has been emailed and sent out. The newsletter has an excellent 14 pages of detailed content, even larger than the May newsletter. The links are particularly interesting. There are even more reviews by a range of contributors.

There has been very positive feedback on the format and content of the newsletter.

Following a query by the newsletter editor Adrian Hellwig on members' thoughts on continuing the quiz in the newsletter, a vote of members present was taken, with only one member in support of its continuation!

e) Library matters

Gordon Lasslett reported that 8 new books and 3 new magazines have been donated to the library (titles noted in the newsletter) and he is still able to be contacted to access library catalogues (details also in the newsletter).

Email for Gordon Lasslett is glaslett@bigpond.net.au and phone 02 9416 7603.

f) John Goble

Liaison Co-ordinator Greg Mullens reported that our most senior and esteemed member John Goble is not well and has gone into care accommodation, hopefully near his home – updates on his location and how to see him can be obtained from Greg Mullens Tel 02 8095 8059 (mob 0401 639 494) or email at gregomullens@gmail.com

g) Membership/recruitment/finances

Alex Stewart reported via Des Sheehan:

Membership - We have 132 paid up members at present, 2 down on last year. We continue to churn some of our more recent internet members, and need to do a bit more to try and recruit new ones, particularly local to Sydney. We have had 14 new members join this year.

Finances : We remain in a healthy state with income slightly exceeding expenditure. We have around \$6,800.00 in funds at the moment, with plans to spend some of this on books

for the library and also on our Clerget and OX5 Engines. A final financial statement will be produced for the 2013-14 year at the AGM in November.

Treasurer/Membership Secretary : Just a reminder that we will need someone in the Society to step up and perform this role next year. I will remain available to advise the new incumbent.

Thus society finances remain sound, with a sufficient bank balance to well cover the expenses of upcoming journals.

h) Barry Videon Database

Gareth Morgan reported for David Perkins that 242 Australians who served in British service are now recorded on the database.

Steps are in place now to enable members to simply use their yearly members' area password to access the data base, instead of the previous more involved process. This will hopefully avoid both David Perkins and members having to take up extra time gaining access.

i) November Meeting and possible future meeting venues for 2015

The proposed speaker for the November Eric Watson address is Vice President Michael Garside, who now resides for part of the year in the village of Corbie (near the Somme River) and has been liaising with a number of museums, curators and WW1 activities in France. Mike will speak on these and other information and contacts he made whilst officially participating in the ANZAC day activities and other WW1 commemorations in France.

Mike has also met a member of the *Association Bretonvilloise d'Animation* (ABA) who has access to a large amount of local WW1 aviation memorabilia from the area, some of which may be displayed.

Canberra (at the AWM) and Point Cook are being investigated as possible venues for upcoming meetings, perhaps in conjunction with particular commemorations.

j) The visit to the Nowra Museum in June 2014

On 28 June 2014 15 members of the society and friends visited the Fleet Air Arm Museum (FAAM) at Nowra to view the Capt R A Little artefacts now on display (photographs of those items are in the November 2013 newsletter), as well as other WW1 and aviation displays.

Our very helpful guide also showed attendees the remaining artefacts of Capt Little held in storage at the museum (Steve Drew took a photographic record of all items) and took us on a guided tour of a Westland Wessex helicopter.

Committee members also viewed and took a photographic record of the Clerget 9B and OX-5 engines held by the museum (property of the society) for restoration and identification (see below).

k) Society assets at the Australian Aviation Museum (Bankstown) (AAM) and the FAAM

Gareth Morgan reported that the last committee meeting was held at the offices of the Australian Aviation Museum (Bankstown), during their WW1 commemoration open day on the weekend of Sat 3 and Sun 4 August. Society assets on display were viewed, and Paul Ewoldt supplied the committee with a proposed loan agreement for those assets, which is currently being considered by the committee (including an advice from Des Sheehan). The latest AAM newsletter was passed around.

Gareth Morgan further reported (as previously noted) that the two engines at the FAAM are considered by the FAAM to be excess to their needs and the society is planning to return them to an appropriate place in Sydney for restoration (see below) and later display, likely at the AAM, in the future.

l) Society engine restoration project for 2015

As shown in the newsletter the society has two engines currently held on display at the FAAM, a Clerget 9b and a Curtiss OX-5. The FAAM would like the society to take them over and display them at another suitable location, largely because they actually have no connection with Naval Aviation. Following inspection it is clear both engines will need some restoration before being properly displayed in the future, likely at the Australian Aviation Museum, at Bankstown or eventually at Camden.

Alex Stewart reported in detail on their state. The committee decided that the restoration and future display should be managed by a sub-committee composed of some committee members and interested society members, the Engines Working Group. Alex Stewart kindly volunteered as co-ordinator/committee head, and the makeup of the committee is open to interested members as described at this meeting. The sub-committee will have to initially consider transport to Sydney, location for the restoration (currently Gordon Lasslett has volunteered his remaining garage), and how it will be carried out, including funding for the project. In the future they might be able to even be moving displays, such as those at the Smithsonian etc.

The committee will also look into the possibility of grants for such restoration. Alex has written to CAMS at Omaka and Adrian Hellwig is in contact with TVAL. Contact is also being made with the AWM concerning their previous Albatros restoration. This is an ongoing enquiry and any members should contact Alex as co-ordinator email currently at treasurer@ww1aero.org.au and tel 0410 575 494.

Alex Stewart in addition adds for this meeting:

Our aim is to retrieve our two aero engines from Nowra, restore them as best as possible, and get them displayed in the local area, most likely at Bankstown Aviation Museum.

The project will involve a number of elements - research on the engines history (Well done Gordon on work done so far), transport and storage of the engines, disassembling, assessing and cleaning the engines, assembling and display of the engines after restoration, applying for funding to restore the engines....the list goes on. You don't need to be a mechanical expert to be involved, but you do need to be interested in our engines. Please get in touch with me if you think you might be interested in getting involved...

m) Other projects for WW1 commemoration – Recognition of those Australians who died serving in other allied air forces in WW1

As part of the commemoration of the War's centenary, Gareth Morgan has commenced a project to mark the sacrifice of the Australians who served in the RFC, RNAS and RAF. He reported to the meeting:

To this end, our database is slowly being expanded, as details of more and more Australians who served in the British services emerge (not as easy as might be imagined, as it's hard to find information on Aussies who joined the RFC 'off the street' in the UK, but we're trying). Once we have a comprehensive list, the next step is to identify all who died; these men are not eligible for inclusion in the AWM Roll of Honour, but can be included in the Memorial's Commemorative Roll, provided we have evidence of their Australian connection and service record. In addition to the Commemorative Roll, it'd be good to see something tangible somewhere, eg some form of monument. However, it's not easy to determine just what and where (the AWM doesn't seem keen on monuments to those who weren't in Australian uniforms at the time of death, but perhaps this might change – it seems unfair when we recall that many transferred from the AIF to the RFC).

Members interested in assisting in this project, or who have ideas regarding a monument, should contact Gareth Morgan as set out below.

(We have already considered, and discarded, the idea of *The Big Airman*, a garishly painted 4 metre concrete statue with associated tacky gift shop near a highway somewhere).

Members are also asked for other ideas for later in the following three years.

Gareth can be contacted at president@ww1aero.org.au or by telephone at 02 9885 7092, and Des Sheehan as below.

n) A shorter name for everyday use by the society

The current name of the Society is a bit of a mouthful, and one that doesn't roll off the tongue easily. Our overseas counterparts use shorter, snappier names: The First World

War Aviation Historical Society = *Cross & Cockade International*, and The League of World War One Aviation Historians = *Over the Front*. I understand from our legal department (Des) that we can change our name by being ASWWIAH trading as whatever we opt for. This has come up before, and it was then determined that any new/trading name should reflect (1) Australia (maybe Australasia?), (2) the 1914-1919 War (so as not to be confused with general aviation/military history), and (3) aircraft and the men who flew in them. One option would be for the *Australian Great War Aviation Society*, which gives us the usable acronym AGWAS, but there's probably a better idea out there in the membership. Other options were Great War Aviation or Great War Aviation Australia.

Gareth can again be contacted at president@ww1aero.org.au or by telephone at 02 9885 7092, and Des Sheehan as below.

o) Publications and Research Fund, the ACNC and a bequest clause

Des Sheehan reported that he has been in touch with the Aviation Historical Society (Vic) Inc and will be provided with an update from their secretary on their fund. Also advice for an accountant is awaited.

As noted before, current advice is that registration by the society with the ACNC is not necessary, nor would there appear to be any particular benefit (or eligibility), but position to be clarified.

Des Sheehan provided members with a clause for insertion in a will to bequeath items or money to the society. Will email to interested members, and be placed in the newsletter, as well as prepare a general document to enable gifts to the society to be properly evidenced by the donor (requested by members post meeting).

Des Sheehan can be contacted at dessheehan@optusnet.com.au and tel 0415 207 730.

p) Treasurer for 2015

The Society is still in very great need of a new treasurer/membership secretary following Alex's imminent retirement and volunteers are urgently sought.

q) Membership list

A privacy release clause for members to sign on renewal will be drawn up for next year's membership so that members can have access to other members contact details.

Publication of members' details in the members section of the website needs individual permission of a member. Renewals will now have that permission ticked as a default box so that such details can be available again for all members.

4. Correspondence and Reports.

a) Correspondence:

The Society has received all the recent publications from the Aviation Historical Society of Australia (for May June and July 2014). The Society has also received the latest Aerolog of the Aviation Historical Society of New Zealand. Further correspondence in the reports below.

b) Reports:

i) President (Gareth Morgan):

Gareth Morgan reported that his Journal article on the first RFC casualties in France has been republished (with acknowledgement and a link to the society's website) in the Commonwealth War Graves Commission newsletter for August 2014.

Gareth Morgan has also tabled the extensive correspondence he has had with various personnel, concerning particular Australian WW1 airmen or WW1 publications/projects, namely:

Aaron Pegram, Senior Historian, First World War Centenary Projects, AWM
Nyree Morrison, Reference Archivist, University of Sydney, (who enquired about adding to the University's Book of Remembrance).
David Tattersfield, WFA Development Trustee
John Horne, President Blacktown and District Historical Society
The Editor, The Great War

and Jay Myers, SO2, External Publications, Royal Air Force (provision of two articles [with credit to author Alan Rowe] from the 1998 and 1999 Journals for publication by the RAF in a text on air combat in WW1 – to be published later).

ii) Vice President (Mike Garside)

- i) Mike Garside will detail in his address at the November meeting his further contacts with RAAF senior staff, planners of commemorations/museums on the Somme and an upcoming air show at Glisy (formerly WW1) aerodrome outside Amiens.

iii) Webmaster (Andrew Smith)

Andrew Smith reported that the main website is now updated and online again. The blog has been removed. The members section is now very large (13GB).

There have been 61,000 views, 170,000 pages read and 290,000 hits on the website over the last 12 months, showing considerable interest.

iv) Treasurer/Membership Secretary (Alex Stewart)

General report is already set out at 3 (g) above.

v) Liaison Co-ordinator (Greg Mullens)

Greg proposed a social function for interested members for Sunday 18 August for a Yum Cha meal at the New Tai Yuen Restaurant (31-37 Dixon St Chinatown) at 12 noon.

Greg mentions a text he has been looking for, titled "*Dicta Richthofen*", believed to be Richthofen's last wishes, can any members assist.

Greg also suggests that the society look into whether funding for WW1 projects might be sourced from Jamie Packer's fund for worthy causes, committee will look into.

vi) Librarian (Gordon Lasslett)

Most of Gordon's time continues to be taken up with finalising the sale of the books and models above, and further cataloguing/indexing of magazines/newsletters.

Gordon can still be contacted for loans, returns etc. The Peter Williams Memorial Library is situated at 38 Woodlands Road, East Lindfield NSW 2070 – Librarian Gordon Lasslett Tel 02 9416 7603 (H) glaslett@bigpond.com

vii) Journal Editor (Peter Chapman)

As above 3 (b).

(viii) Newsletter Editor

As above 3 (c)

ix) Secretary (Des Sheehan)

As noted above at 3 (k) (o) and (q).

Acceptance of Reports: (m) Steve Drew (s) Mark Lax

5) General Business and items of interest:

Gareth Morgan mentioned some more interesting publications/catalogues seen at local newsagents, published by Naval and Military press, including a text on Sopwith aeroplanes of the Great War.

Mark Lax has been provided with access to the archival material of Andrew Delforce Badgery (of Badgerys Creek fame), originally 1 AFC, which includes a large 1/250,000

map of the area of that squadron's operations. He will be providing an article for the journal on this later.

Keith Keohane also kindly made available his full archive of society newsletters since 1967, which the committee will arrange collection for the library. Keith Keohane also brought the remainder of his books for sale at bargain prices.

Des Sheehan provided to the meeting copy extracts from his father's WW1 diary and three photo albums (3 Squadron AFC) which have recently been provided to him, having been previously hidden in the family's records in Melbourne. Journal article is in preparation.

These photos included a group photo of A flight in 1918 showing Lt Malcolm Sheehan and Lt Jack Treacy. Next to the society's desk at the AAM was a desk manned by the grandson of Lt Treacy (for the Air League), and Des was able to provide this photo to the grandson, who will also become a member (courtesy of Gareth) and will provide photos from Lt Treacy's archives. There are previous journal articles on Lt Treacy.

6) Raffle Draw

In Derek Whites absence the numbers were drawn by Keith Keohane .

First Prize = *Fall of Eagles* won by Lorne Fogarty.

Second Prize = *No 60 Squadron RFC/RAF* won by Bernard de Broglio.

7) Next Meeting (AGM):

Venue: Building 96, Victoria Barracks, Oxford Street, Paddington NSW

Date: Saturday 15 November 2014

Time: 1:30 PM

8) Formal meeting close: 2:45 PM

Report on the remainder of the meeting

Gareth Morgan provided and commented on a rare (propaganda) film on seaplanes at Zeebrugge (with German subtitles!), including a flight of three Freidrichshafen FF33 seaplanes stopping and verifying the papers of a merchant ship, and purporting to capture a British (marked) seaplane, which looked remarkably like the same FF33 seaplane.

Members also viewed a film on aviation sites on the Western Front (provided by Adrian Hellwig), titled "*Where they flew and where they fell*", showing the flights of various notable pilots, their aerodromes then and now, and where they died and were buried.