



General Meeting, Saturday 21 May 2016

Minutes

Venue: Roseville Memorial Club **Chairman:** Gareth Morgan
64 Pacific Hwy Roseville NSW 2069
Tel 9419 6849

Commence: 3.00 pm (as our guest speaker spoke before the meeting)

Apologies: Peter Chapman (in NZ), Adrian Hellwig (in Qld), Keith Keohane, Alex Stewart, Michael Garside, Gerry Weingarh (in Germany).

1. Attendance: 20

2. Minutes: The Minutes of the General Meeting of 20 February 2016 were confirmed.

Accepted: (M) Gordon Lasslett

(S) Stephen Drew

3. Discussion Points:

a) *Journal matters*

Members present applauded the first Journal for 2016 as an excellent read, again with great artwork and illustrations. Editor Peter Chapman reports that the November Journal has enough material, including a large article from Gareth Morgan on identifying and commemorating Australians who died serving in the RFC, RNAS and RAF in WW1. More articles from a wider range of members are however still sought.

b) *Mark Lax Award*

Gareth Morgan announced that the Mark Lax Award for 2015 was given to Gary Sunderland for his two articles, in particular that on designing the Albatros aircraft.

c) *Newsletter*

Members present applauded that the May Newsletter as being an excellent read, with articles, illustrations and links terrific. Particularly noted was the informative article on Louis Bennett Jnr and his amazing mother, as well as the extensive book reviews. Editor Adrian Hellwig invites members to always submit interesting items to him for the Newsletter. Photographs of models are always appreciated with articles on models.

d) *Matters arising from the committee meeting*

Committee member Paul Ewoldt, now President of the Aviation Historical Society of Australia (NSW) Inc (AHSA) spoke on the future plans for the Australian Aviation Museum.

Paul advised that due to pressure from the owners of the Bankstown Airport, the Museum will close to the public on 1st June 2016. The airport has had a recent history of protracted problems with developers. As there is no suitable building available yet at Camden Airport (originally the planned site for relocation) all exhibits, libraries and artefacts are to be stored pending their future display at a suitable venue.

Paul also kindly invited members to a final BBQ and farewell to the Museum, details to be advised.

The Society has already removed, by arrangement, all Society exhibits and artefacts, other than a small exhibit of WW1 models, which are excess to the Society's needs and are to remain with the Museum's exhibits, together with the cabinet they are in.

e) *The Society's excess aircraft models and call for models of Australian aircraft*

The Society's assets, in excess of 105 artefacts and over 110 models are temporarily stored at Gordon Lasslett's premises, pending assessment and valuation of the artefacts by Mark Lax and Gareth Morgan.

Consideration is being given to restoration of these artefacts, and a permanent venue to store/display.

Gordon Lasslett advised that the Society now holds many duplicate models of aircraft, and consideration is being given to the sale of some which are excess to the needs for display, education etc. For instance there are 12 Albatros D VIIIs and 13 Fokker DR 1s. He recommends keeping a core of German, French and British models (as well as other air services). Some of the excess models will be brought to subsequent meetings, and offered for sale to members.

It was noted when preparing the Anzac Day display, that the Society lacks significant models relevant to Australian flyers, such the Sopwith Triplane of Capt R A Little, and a call now goes out, for modellers to construct some, which might then be loaned for, say, display purposes.

Consideration will be given by the committee as to which models to be declared excess to needs, and then offered for sale to members.

Andrew Smith has recently brought in to the collection some valuable model sets donated to the Society some years ago, including wooden sets from the 1930s.

f) *Website matters*

Andrew Smith reports that the website is going well. He has done further work adding three photo collections to the website, such as those of Jack Wright and

Jack Allport. There are now 24 photo collections added to the website, with a total of in excess of 1500 photos, and collections of letters, such as those of Lt Lord of the half flight. Adrian Hellwig will send to Andrew Harold Evans' photos, and his lengthy interview with Harold Evans.

Andrew also reports that the Society's Facebook page has 1100 followers, now more than Cross and Cockade! (and commented that it would be good if as well they all became members).

g) *Australian Airmen of the Great War Database (The Barry Videon Database)*

An update was given by David Perkins to the general meeting. He will follow up with the server various problems with the database website brought to his attention by Andrew Smith, such as the data base automatically logging out after a short time, and then a member having to log back in again, as well as recommending that once a visitor to the database is finished, the link brings the viewer back to the ASWWIAH website. David believes these will be resolved by the next meeting.

h) *Speakers for 2016/17 meetings*

For the August 2016 meeting, Michael Garside will give a presentation on WW1 Commemorations and Museums in Europe (and his meetings with curators and others), if he is able to be off duty.

If Michael is not available, Andrew Smith will give a presentation on optimising members' use of the website, and other electronic publications, such as the Society's Facebook site, You Tube channel, and plans for the future.

Later a possible presentation by our patron, with members of AHSA (NSW) to be invited.

i) *Coming and future event (ACM Mephisto Tank/RAAF Museum Point Cook/members suggestions)*

AWM visit now planned for October, if so, date will be advised at August meeting. Gareth Morgan will make enquiries at AWM as to what can be made available, and will liaise with Mark Lax. Members of AHSA will be invited to attend.

If not October, consideration will be given to holding the Society's February meeting in Canberra, in conjunction with the visit to the AWM.

Point Cook tour planned once their new RE8 is repainted in 3 Squadron colours (believed to be off display until that is completed). Andrew Smith is visiting the RAAF Museum in June and will report to the committee on the current display.

AHSA members will be invited to attend Canberra and Point Cook visits. Depending on confirmed numbers, bus transport may be offered.

An Oakey Museum visit and Queensland meeting should still be considered, committee to liaise with Adrian Hellwig. No date planned at this point.

- j) *Society restoration project for 2016 (Clerget 9b and OX-5 engines)*
Gordon Lasslett reported on this for Alex Stewart. He referred members to the detailed full page report on this by Alex Stewart in the May Newsletter.

Gordon reported that since November there has been minimal work on the engines except for Paul and Christine Ewoldt, who have worked on de-rusting the Clerget. There has been little progress on any further dismantling of the Clerget.

Alex has advised Gordon that he is able to obtain a set of 20+ spark plugs for the Clerget for approximately US\$1,000.00. Alex checked with Tony Wickenberg from CAMS in NZ who said that the price was fair. The committee considered whether to provide funds for that, Gordon noting that only \$200.00 of the \$500.00 budget, originally provided for purchases related to the Clerget, had been expended.

The committee decided to ask Alex to provide a budget for upcoming purchases and the engine restoration, and further consideration would then be given to this proposed outlay.

There is a strong need for further volunteers. Gordon reported the concern that without further volunteers the restoration may go the way of the Albatros D.V restoration undertaken on behalf of the AWM in the 1960s. After the aircraft was reduced to pieces our society members lost interest.

Des Sheehan advised that Alex had consulted him concerning a grant for funding both restoration projects, as Des has drafted the application for a small grant for the Richmond plaque, and the prospects of completing and lodging a successful application for the engines, in the long term (for up to \$40,000.00) looked good. A budget will however be needed in any event for such application.

- k) *Other projects/appearances for WW1 commemoration –*
- i. Recognition of Australian Airmen who died/served with the RFC and the RNAS by the Australian War Memorial
All research for the list of names is finally complete, for more detail see President's report.
 - ii. Society's involvement in WW1 centenary commemorations –
Commemoration of opening of NSW Aviation School at Richmond – Progress funding/plaque etc
Progress held up awaiting relevant council approval, however funding application to DVA drafted, and will be submitted despite

no formal council approval, noting council appears to have given an indication of likely approval. For more detail see President's report.

- iii. Involvement and meetings re documentary on AFC
Refer detailed summary in minutes for November 2015. No further information from producers whom it is believed are still seeking funding.
- iv. Display for ANZAC Day 2016 –
Des Sheehan reported that the hotel management were very happy with the display, which was in place for 3 weeks surrounding Anzac Day 2016. The cabinet loaned by the AAM worked well, with the hotel electrician upgrading the cable and checking the lighting. AAM have kindly offered the cabinet to be on loan to the Society for future displays. Committee members involved learned a lot about how to set up such a display, for future displays, and also received a donation of \$400.00 to the Society from the hotel group involved (the ALH Group). We also now have a contact with the carrier who delivered and collected the cabinet (and also loaned some medals for the display).

D) *Pat Moy Award*

Gareth Morgan announced that the recipient of the Pat Moy Award (for 2105) will be Alex Stewart for his work in 2015 on the engine restoration committee. It will be presented to Alex at the August meeting.

4. Correspondence:

Most recent New Zealand Aerologs provided by Gareth Morgan.

Extensive correspondence by the President regarding the Richmond Plaque, with the President of No 3 Squadron Association, and the Western Front Association (as well as that noted in Presidents report).

5. Reports

- i) President: Gareth Morgan

The bulk of my Society-related activity were efforts to mark the forthcoming centenary of the NSW State School of Aviation at Richmond on 28 August. After contacting the relevant State MP's office, I wrote to Hawkesbury Council to explore the possibility of erecting a commemorative plaque on a stone in the park on Hawkesbury Valley Way adjacent to the RAAF Base. At the same time, I contacted a firm of plaque makers in Lismore to obtain a quotation, which was \$793 for a plaque with the School badge, a photograph, plus AFC and RFC pilot's wings. If we go ahead, RAF and RNAS wings will be added, together with the Society logo. The Committee decided that, due to the time taken to obtain Commonwealth DVA funding, the Society will pay for the plaque and then seek reimbursement.

There was no response from Council, but I was able to meet the Mayor at a function, where I reminded him of the project. A Council officer telephoned me to suggest that it would be easier to locate the plaque on an existing wall in the park. I agreed, and was told that the next step was to determine responsibility for walls in the park.

We are not alone in our efforts to mark the School centenary, as No 3 Squadron Association is planning a small ceremony; we will combine the events.

I emailed Council to seek a progress report, and when that didn't elicit a response, I wrote to the Mayor. I await a reply.

A Belgian historian who is writing a book on British Empire airmen buried in CWGC Cemeteries in Belgium contacted me through the website to seek information on Australians, which I was able to supply.

Research into the men who died in RFC/RAF service after transfer from the AIF is finally complete; an article in the Journal will follow. The next step is to ask the AWM if the men can be commemorated in some way, perhaps in March 2017, the centenary of the mass transfer of 200 men from the AIF to the RFC.

I have exchanged emails with the President of the NSW Branch of the Western Front Association (Australia) and have agreed to speak at their November meeting, to which ASWWIAH members are invited. In turn, we are invited to a WFA (A) Seminar on Saturday 18th June, from 9.30am to 3pm, at 99 York Street, Sydney. Speakers' subjects for that meeting are AIF Battalion Commanders on the Western Front, Australian Medical Officers in the British Forces, and the Gallipoli Campaign (full details in May Newsletter).

It was suggested that we have a joint meeting in the future, likely February 2017 or later.

ii) Vice President: Michael Garside – Congratulations by acclamation given by all members present to Michael for organising our speaker for today's meeting. Michael on duty so his report deferred to the August meeting.

iii) Webmaster and Membership Secretary: Andrew Smith – Website report as above.

Membership – 117 members have rejoined (including two just prior to this meeting), with 22 not yet rejoined. A fresh round of emails and letters will go out next week. Andrew has found the contact for Sir Peter Jackson and has been told he wishes to rejoin.

Cross and Cockade carry a regular advertisement for the Society, but we have to ensure it includes electronic membership.

Andrew will send an updated financial members list to Adrian and Peter so that Newsletters and Journals only go out to financial members.

He also reports that unfortunately 2 members resigned citing that they only joined to get access to the Great War Airmen database.

iv) Treasurer and Librarian:

Library matters

Gordon Lasslett referred to the Library report in the May Newsletter (referring to four new books and seven magazines), and mentioned that Adrian Hellwig has obtained a

dictionary of WW1 aviation engine and construction terms in English, French and German, and will provide a PDF version to the Library.

A copy of the valuable research DVD-ROM *Airmen Died in the Great War* was donated to the Peter Williams Memorial Library by Gareth Morgan. Unfortunately it appears impossible to copy or download for members, but work on that is still proceeding.

The Treasurer reported that the Society funds are now in very good shape, with \$10,983.00 in bank, even after recent Journal costs paid. Statement will be provided to next meeting.

v) Journal Editor: Peter Chapman – Report as per 3 a. above.

(vi) Newsletter Editor: Adrian Hellwig – As per 3 c. above.

vii) Liaison Co-ordinator: Greg Mullens – Greg will follow up how John Goble is travelling at the Glenaeon Village and report.

Greg reports that Maureen Baker is however travelling well. Greg also reports that Mike Crisp has returned to him the Society's Modellers Cup.

viii) Secretary: Des Sheehan – Has prepared the submission for funding the plaque from the DVA funding *Saluting Their Service*, which now just needs some supporting documents. Gareth has gained the support of No 3 Squadron Association for the project – see Presidents report. Tidying up inventory and other tasks noted above. Will update photographs of restored artefacts for inventory. Oversaw Anzac Day display.

Acceptance of Reports:

(M) Mark Lax

(S) Greg Mullens and Stephen Drew

5) General Business:

Andrew Smith proposes that Paul Ewoldt occupy the vacant position of second vice president, for communications, until elections of committee members in November. Committee had unanimously agreed on this proposal. All members at meeting agreed by acclamation.

This position is in addition to, and separate from, Michael's position as first vice president.

Complimentary copies of our Newsletter and Journal are to be sent to the Western Front Association, Gareth to advise Adrian and Peter of addresses.

Derek White thanks the Society for providing him with hard copies of the Newsletter, and for the speakers at the meetings (all of which he attends) and advises that he may attend less meetings in the future, as he and his wife will be moving to the mid north coast.

6) Raffle Draw – Numbers sourced publicly by Andrew Smith from the random number generator program on his computer.

Selected by Derek White.

Prizes selected from Osprey Books by Gareth Morgan.

First Prize: No 97 John Sutherland of Herston (Qld) FE2b/d v Albatros Scouts

Second Prize: No 45 Roland Jahne of Doreen (Vic) SPAD XIII v Fokker D.VII

7) Next Meeting:

Venue: Roseville Memorial Club. **Date:** 20 August 2016

Time: 13:30

8) Close formal meeting: 4.10pm

Prior to Meeting

Guest Speaker

Eric Barton DFC (accompanied by his son John) was the Society's guest speaker. Below is an abbreviated summary of some of Eric's address. He has an Honorary Doctorate in Veterinary Science, is a Founding Member of the Bomber Command Association in Australia, and the Vice President of the Pathfinders Association.

Eric was a Lancaster pilot in 186 Squadron RAF during WWII, flying 45 operational missions. In July 1945 he was awarded the DFC for, "Skill and fortitude in operations against the enemy".

More recently he and 6 other veterans received the Legion d'honneur at the RAAF Church at St Clement Danes, London.

Eric's interest in flying was started after he sat in the cockpit of the Red Comet Racer when it was brought to Australia. It was enhanced by his meeting famous flyers Amy Mollison and Amelia Earheart. He joined the RAAF at 17 ½ years and trained first at Temora, on Tiger Moths. When he was having difficulties in landing, his instructor told him that he should, ". . look out 45 degrees", which cured the problem, and was sound advice for all his later flying.

When war broke out he was sent to Canada for training, on twin engined Avro Ansons, originally with wind up landing gear. Only three Australians got their wings in his group.

At 19 years he crossed the Atlantic on the Queen Mary to join the RAF. When the Australians arrived at Brighton air station, they were welcomed on the german radio by Lord Haw Haw, who said "Why do you Australians come over? We'll send you a welcoming party". That night they were subjected to an air raid.

In more training he managed to nose over an Oxford. He was then posted to an Operational Training Unit (OTU) on Wellingtons. With their geodesic structure they were very strong aircraft, and later he flew one on D Day, dropping metal “chaff” to confuse enemy radar and anti-aircraft guns.

One time on Wellingtons, another Wellington flew up beside them, and the pilot put up two fingers. The other aircraft suddenly emitted a blue flame and accelerated away. It turned out it was a test bed for the PC Whittle jet engine.

He then trained for 4 engined bombers on Short Stirlings, a very big (and beautiful) aircraft, and nice to fly, although difficult to hold in a line whilst taxi-ing or taking off, and very slow in the air.

The front line bomber then became the Lancaster, Eric ending up piloting the famous “G for George”. He knew he was responsible for the lives of his crew, and that was easy at first, but weighed on him heavily later. The Lanc carried 12 tons of bombs, or a single 20,000lb “Grand Slam” bomb. Eric has been able to obtain records of all his missions from the UK Archives, and brought some along for members to peruse, reading out some of them. He also brought a piece of flak which knocked out their instrument indicators, and ended up in the seat of his pants.

186 Squadron was the only aerodrome fitted with FIDO – “Fog Intense Dispersal Of” which meant when fog covered England, they were the only squadron able to take off and land (using gas burners beside the strip). The only trouble was you still couldn’t see the ground, and the burners created lots of turbulence, resulting in a bad landing. Prior to D Day this system however proved vital.

Eric showed a pilots map, indicating the route to a bombing raid on Essen, with lots of dog legs to avoid flak batteries.

Eric received the DFC for laying mines in a Norwegian fjord, to sink two German heavy cruisers. This of course gives nowhere near the full scale of what he and his crew did. Two of the newest Lancasters flew across the North Sea at a height of 400ft, to avoid radar and night fighters, then laid the mines at 200ft - 7 mines each 10ft long. They had to use astro navigation, taking 4 hours 70 minutes across, with full hands-on flying. A night fighter attack resulted in the loss of a starboard engine, and they had to return at 200ft to avoid further attack. This resulted in a port engine sucking up sea spray, with now two engines lost. After discussion the crew agreed Eric should attempt to return to the nearest home base, instead of ditching, which he achieved.

Eric has also spoken in an Abbey in France, to thank the Free French underground, who saved and returned many aircrew. Eric does not think they received enough recognition for this.

Also in the UK he met Prince Charles, to whom he was able to point to his DFC and say “Your grandfather gave me this”.

This talk was video recorded by Stephen Drew who will provide a copy to our guest speaker and the Society for the website/library.

Post Meeting

Stuart Curry brought and displayed his collection of Zeppelin artefacts and maps, and addressed the meeting on their significance.

One German pilot's map showed the route over Newcastle-on-Tyne, where Zeppelins bombed and passed over his grandmother's village, which his grandmother recalled, sparking Stuart's interest in the Zeppelin raids.

He said he then found out that for 2 years Zeppelins basically bombed Britain with impunity, due to the great height they could maintain, and the lack of ammunition which could set fire to them. Eventually a system of breaking the skin first, and then letting oxygen in so that incendiary bullets could set fire to the airships, proved their demise.

One photo, amongst lots of pieces of Zeppelins and bullets, showed a sound mirror used by the RNAS to magnify sound, to detect incoming Zeppelin raids.