

AVIATION MUSEUMS

The Newsletter of the Australian Aviation Museums Association Inc.

REGISTERED BY AUSTRALIA POST – PUBLICATION NUMBER VBH91 3171

Multiculturalism, museums, and aviation

Multiculturalism. We've all heard of it, but just what does it mean? More to the point, what relevance (if any) does it have for those of us associated with aviation museums?

Chances are that we'll be hearing a lot more about multiculturalism following the Cultural Ministers' Council meeting last May, which met to consider how Australia's cultural heritage institutions might better reflect the population's cultural diversity. The Council considered a Plan — prepared by the National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia — which had been released by the Prime Minister in July 1989. The Plan recommended that "cultural collecting institutions should work to change the emphasis from the dominant cultural group to a balanced view which incorporates the full Australian cultural diversity".



The Queensland Air Museum's unique SNB-2, photographed at Brisbane in the early 1950s, soon after its conversion to C-18S standard. HENRY W PRYOR

It has become increasingly apparent that the dominant Eurocentric view which we all help to uphold is irrelevant, unsustainable and, in some instances, insulting to those peoples we depend on.

Collectively, Australia's cultural institutions constitute a form of national conscience. They help shape our cultural identity and sustain the values and attitudes which we consider to be most important. To date however, this consciousness has been largely shaped by museum personnel from the previously dominant Anglo-Celtic culture who, wittingly and otherwise, have helped perpetrate the idea that Australia is a mono-culture. Thus, the aviation exhibits at the Australian War Memorial — having scarcely changed in half a century — offer an exclusively Eurocentric world view in

which the Anglo-Saxons are given the high ground, both figuratively and literally.

The massive Lancaster bomber speaks loudly and unambiguously of our allegiance to Empire, as well as the victorious and morally righteous nature of the Allied cause. The enemy (non Anglo-Saxons) are carefully erased from this picture (together with the Chinese and Kooris who served with the RAAF as instructors, pilots and navigators), being represented for the most part by crumpled fragments of wreckage. The physical relationship of the aircraft exhibits serves to further underline and ingrain these subtle, cultural messages. The WWII Spitfire, for example, is juxtaposed not alongside the superlative Me262 or Me109 but rather, alongside the enemy's flimsy wood and fab-

ric craft, from a much earlier era.

To visit Canberra's Aeroplane Hall is to view the world from the winner's circle. Here there is scant room even for our American Allies. And as for the Japanese, well, they have been so effectively sidelined as to seem like they never even had an airforce.

The omission of certain group's of Australians in our cultural institutions can imply, of course, that these groups are of less value, importance or significance. The Australian War Memorial — though not alone in this regard — has long served as a role model for other Australian aviation museums. It is not surprising therefore that many state, regional and private museums should continue to mirror these cultural biases, without ever questioning the efficacy or relevance of their displays. In Victoria for example, which now has the country's most pluralist population, aviation heritage is defined exclusively in terms of British, American and Australian hardware. Twenty-three percent of that state's population was born overseas (most from non-English speaking countries) and yet, you won't find so much as a bi-lingual caption. Government funded institutions like the Australian War Memorial can afford, of course, to continue paying homage to the Anglo-Saxon ethic (and its Anzac derivative). However, those of us constrained by more earthly economic realities must eventually come to terms with the

■ Legislative Changes	2
■ Moorabin Milestone	2
■ Progress with DAS.....	2
■ QAM Acquires Rare SNB-2	3
■ Domestic Sales.....	3
■ Disposals	3
■ Donations	4
■ Exports	4
■ Imports.....	4
■ Recoveries.....	4
■ Conservation	5
■ Loans	5
■ Moves	5
■ Recession Casualties	6
■ NAM Policy Shift.....	6
■ Publishing	6

fact that our displays are probably alienating just as many people as they are attracting. In other words, they simply are not cost-effective and as such, wouldn't be tolerated in a commercial environment.

Just as a retailer has to tailor his/her stock to suit the custom then so too, do museums have to shape their product(s) to suit their clientele. Consider for example, that by the year 2000, a very substantial proportion of Melbourne's population will be of Chinese descent. In these circumstances, an institution like the RAAF Museum at Point Cook might do well to replace those hackneyed images of Bluey Truscott et al (leave them for the War Memorial) with the likes of Sqn Ldr Roy Goon (who taught Truscott how to fly), Doug Sue, F/O Daniel Wong and Wellington Lee. They might also consider it appropriate to give greater expression to WAAFs like Roise Yuen, in recognition of the fact that half their potential audience is female. Australian aviation is just as much a record of non Anglo-Celtic achievement and yet, the ancestry of such doyens as Hargraves, Houdini, Millicer, Pellegrini, Schneider, Parer and Scherger, is hardly even acknowledged. Consider

also that the world's oldest known airfoil — a boomerang — was made by a Nungah (from a racial minority group) and today lies buried in the bowels of the South Australian Museum. One can only speculate how the South Australian Historical Aviation Museum's attendances might skyrocket, were it to advertise the fact that its displays included (a replica even) of this priceless 10,000 year old artefact.

There is no getting around the fact that our displays, which speak exclusively to a "converted" minority, are largely ineffectual. Macho, Biggles inspired imagery simply has no place in a multicultural Australian society which is more interested in issues, and such matters as racial and sexual equality. Aviation museums are being marginalised by these changes as they fail to alter their product, to suit the changing audience. As the *Plan* makes clear, it's no longer enough just to have an endless array of photographs, models, memorabilia and (Anglo-American) machinery. And those who might doubt these warnings need only consider their static or diminishing patronage levels, and the fact that never a year goes by now with-

out at least one aviation museum closing its doors.

Could we in fact be "shooting ourselves in the foot" by continuing to ignore these compelling demographic and commercial realities? Maybe then, it's time we saw a lot less of Kingsford Smith, *Killer* Caldwell, Lockheed and De Havilland, and a lot more of Freda Thompson, Deborah Wardley, David Unaipon, Piaggio, Dornier and Shenyange.

Legislative Changes

The Federal Government has recently amended its Protection of Moveable Cultural Heritage Act by increasing (from 1950 to 1960) the threshold for an object of air transport built in Australia. The change, announced last March, further highlights the impotency of the Commonwealth's long-awaited heritage legislation. It again calls into question the quality of the Commonwealth's "expert" advice, since it betrays a seriously flawed comprehension of Australian aviation history. This latest amendment affords no protec-

tion whatsoever for such unique Australian designs as the Yeoman Cropmaster, the Victa Airtourer, the Sasin Spraymaster, the Fawcett 120 or the Transavia Airtruck.

Moorabbin Milestone

June 2nd, 1991 marked the completion of the Moorabbin Air Museum's second stage expansion programme. The occasion was marked by the dedication of the Beaufighter memorial which is also within the 12,000 square foot building extension. The expansion programme — completed at an all up cost of \$100,000 — will be officially opened in March 1992 to coincide with the Museum's 30th Anniversary. Formed in 1962, the Moorabbin Air Museum is now the oldest aviation museum in the country. The third stage of the expansion programme is scheduled to commence during 1993.

Progress with DAS

Although it has yet to notch up its first birthday, the AAMA has already established effective dialogue with a number of important government agencies. Chief among these is the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) which — through its AUSSALES Division — is responsible for disposing of all obsolete government aircraft and associated stores. The Association has successfully negotiated for AAMA members to be automatically notified about forthcoming disposal actions involving obsolete aircraft and related stores. The arrangement was formalised after Mr Peter Pearson's (DAS) address at our 1990 conference, and has already begun to pay dividends. As our financial members will now be aware, tender documents were issued in late May for the purchase of Canberra A84-248 and Vam-



New look display inside the Moorabbin Air Museum's recently completed second stage expansion programme.

pire A79-440, both of which were held at RAAF Amberley. This was followed in July by a very substantial schedule of equipment stores relating to such types as the Dakota, Winjeel, Neptune, CT4, Nomad and Canberra. The AAMA is thought to be the first community-based organisation to have ever negotiated such a mutually beneficial arrangement with DAS. Although there is no provision for preferential treatment, the systems ensures that collectors and museums have advance warning, and at least an equal chance of securing surplus government stores.

QAM acquires rare SNB-2

The Queensland Air Museum (QAM) has demonstrated, yet again, that the supply of interesting and salvageable aircraft in this country is not altogether exhausted. QAM members have recently returned from Northern Australia with the substantial remains of a SNB-2 (s/n 4213) which came to grief in the mid 1960s. BuAer 39194 joined the US Navy's Training Command at Pensacola, Florida in January 1943. It was used exclusively for training operations throughout the war, being stationed also at Corry in Pennsylvania, and Corpus Christi in Texas.

It arrived in Melbourne in April 1947 aboard the *USS Shangri-la* and was struck from the Navy's records soon afterwards. The SNB-2 was damaged at Archerfield in 1948 in a ground collision with an Anson, and was purchased by Thiess Brothers Ltd of Brisbane. The Beechcraft was subsequently added to the Australian civil register as VH-BJJ (on 31st March 1949), the designation C-18S being adopted as the closest civilian equivalent. Thus, VH-BJJ holds the distinction of having been the first civilian Beech 18 ever to operate in Australia. Beechcraft in fact were unco-

operative when Thiess wanted certification data to register the aircraft, as it was war surplus "and not representative of our latest civil model".

VH-CLG, however, is unique, being the only SNB-2 variant in this country. Its military, mining and airline associations combine to make it a most wor-

(A79-472) once owned by the Gold Coast War Museum.

■ The Australian War Memorial is negotiating to purchase Nelson Wilson's Kittyhawk A29-



Cold Turkey was our most militarily historic Dakota, a veteran *par excellence* which made the Australian War Memorial, Imperial War Museum, RNZAF Museum and even the USAF Museum C-47s seem pedestrian by comparison. Its wartime service spanned almost the entire Pacific conflict and, unlike General MacArthur's converted airliner (VH-CAQ) at Camden, it was used exclusively for frontline military transport operations. *Cold Turkey* was recently cut up by the Bankstown Fire Service. The AAMA made application (to the NSW Heritage Council) in 1990 to have the aircraft protected, but has yet to receive an acknowledgement. R W LIVINGSTONE

The Beechcraft was operated by the Queensland mining company for almost a decade before being sold to Connellan Airways in July 1957. Reregistered as VH-CLG, it was used to ferry supplies and personnel from Alice Springs to remote outback communities in both the Northern Territory and Queensland. It was during one such operation, in August 1965, that the C-18S was severely damaged. The main wheel detached from the fork during a landing run causing the starboard gear to collapse. Although the engine and fittings were salvaged at the time, the airframe has remained largely undisturbed by souvenir hunters.

Significantly, C45s, SNB-2s and JRB-1s were all used by the American military in Australia during the second world war.

thy exhibit and candidate for restoration.

Domestic Sales

■ Bob Jarrett (S.A.) has purchased the fuselage of **Mirage A3-16** from Ashley Briggs (AARG). The aircraft was grounded following a wheels-up landing at Tullamarine in 1974.

■ Moorabbin Air Museum has sold its **DH Dove**, VH-CLD, to the South Australia Historical Aviation Museum.

■ The Queensland Air Museum has purchased the RAAF **Ventura** fuselage (A59-96) formerly displayed at the Chewing Gum Field Museum, together with the **Vampire** FRB31

133. The Memorial's Curator of Aircraft is understood to have also visited the Soviet Union, seeking a **Mikoyan Mig-15**.

Disposals

RAN Mk31B **Wessex**, N7-216 (826), was installed in the National Maritime Museum's Naval Gallery in early June. The Museum, which is to be officially opened in November by President Bush, is thought to have acquired the aircraft on a no-cost basis. Significantly the AAMA was also asked by *Aussales*, last April to "test the water" amongst its membership to determine if there was sufficient interest to justify the disposal of **Wessex** airframes N7-214, 221, 222 and 220, now

held at Nowra. In the event, the Navy proved unwilling to part with the instructional airframes.

Donations

The Ballarat Aviation Museum has acquired the historically important AA-107 mockup. The swing-wing derivative of the CA-31 was being jointly developed by BAC/CAC when the supersonic trainer/strike aircraft project was cancelled by the McMahon Government. The donation was made in accordance with the provisions of the Taxation Incentives Scheme for the Arts.

Exports

- The West Australian Air Force Association Museum's Lancaster, NX622, is up for sale with a reserve price of \$1.5 million. The well planned announcement came just one

week before the Commonwealth's National Cultural Heritage Committee met to "rubber stamp" the Museum's export application. The decision to sell the aircraft has been widely condemned by aviation, heritage, service and political interests throughout Australia, including the Museum's own Air Force Association colleagues in the east. When questioned on the matter during a recent Senate Estimates Committee hearing, DASETT's First Assistant Secretary Mr Grahame Dempster (who advises the Federal Minister for the Arts and the National Cultural Heritage Committee on such matters) replied, "It is just another Lancaster bomber".

- Bob Jarrett of South Australia has reportedly sold his P-39K (42-4312) to English collector, Stephen Grey. The Airacobra, recovered from Woodlark Island (PNG) in 1982 is known to be the only 'K' model variant in existence.



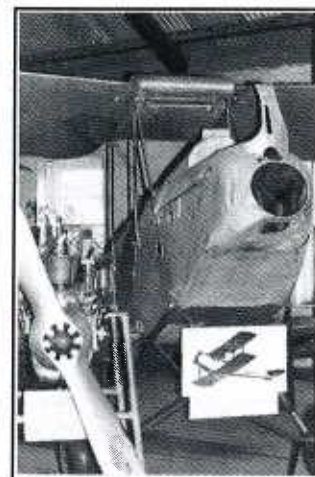
Katana (VH-INX) was our last DC-4. A long-term resident at Melton (Victoria), it was broken up earlier this year.

Imports

- In a remarkable development, the Liberator Memorial Fund Inc has released details of an international cultural exchange project which will allow for the recovery and return to Australia of a B-24 mainplane, needed to complete the restoration of their Moe airframe. The exchange, reminiscent of the earlier Boston recoveries, relies heavily on RAAF resources and the co-operation of the PNG National Museum. An advance party visited the site in PNG's Ramu Valley in late September to prepare the wing for airlifting. Helicopter Resources of Goroka have undertaken to transfer the dismantled mainplane to Madang (gratis), for onforwarding to Australia. The undamaged wing is to be removed from a USAAF Liberator located at Faita, a former 5th Air Force emergency landing ground. B-24D 42-41091 (403 BS, 43 BG) made a wheels-up landing at Faita on 23 December 1943, after having been damaged by fighters during a 61 plane raid over Cape Gloucester. It's unclear if the project will involve the recovery of Lt Edward Dickey's 432nd FS P-38J (#158), also located at Faita.

- Classic Aviation is expected soon to arrive in Australia with Lockheed Lodestar C-60A N56LH (c/n 2388), previously owned by *Wings of Yesterday*. First delivered to the USAAF in Texas in early 1943, it served mostly with the Air Transport Command in Washington DC. The Lodestar was put up for disposal in 1945, later appearing on the Civil Register as N17615. It flew for many years with the Texas Gulf Sulphur Company (1949-64), and with Transporte Aero Mexicana (1971-85) where it was registered XA-SAX. It last served as a freighter with Atorie Air of El Paso. A comprehensive profile of the aircraft appears in the June 1991 edition of *Air Progress*.

- Mike Claringbold (of PNG Boston and Vanuatu P-40F fame) has recently imported



Part of the National Motor Museum's fabulous aeronautical collection which was recently transferred to the South Australian Historical Aviation Museum.

T McCARTHY

from Thailand a Cessna L-19 together with three spare engines. Mike is also understood to have located a host of Harvard spares which he'll be using for exchange. The L-19 is already stored in his Canberra garage, awaiting his return from diplomatic duties.

Recoveries

An RAN minesweeper operating in Jervis Bay (NSW) has recovered the empennage of an RAAF Beaufort, thought to be either A9-27 or A9-268 which collided during torpedo trials on 14th April, 1943. The wreckage is understood to have been removed to the Naval Aviation Museum at Nowra.

Disposals

Bexgold Pty Ltd of Brisbane was the successful tenderer in the case of Canberra A84-248 and Vampire A79-440. The aircraft were sold by the Department of Administrative Services for \$11,012 and \$5,102 respectively, and join A84-219 which is already owned by Bexgold and displayed at the Alex Campbell Park near Amberley Air Force Base.

Conservation

Sydney's Power House Museum is to begin carrying out conservation work on its unique Cierva Autogyro VH-USR. The Museum's C30A — which has long been removed from public display — will eventually be exhibited within the Museum, possibly alongside Dick Smith's Jetranger. In what amounts to a significant departure (in this country, at least) the aircraft is to be wholly conserved, rather than restored. Funds for the project have been provided by an anonymous donor.

Loans

The History Trust of South Australia has recently agreed (see *Aviation Museums* No.2) to transfer the Birdwood National Motor Museum's entire aeronautical collection to the South Australian Historical Aviation Museum. The deal includes the Royal Aero Club of South Australia's former *Moth*, VH-ULO (c/n 1405), and the ex Guinea Airways *Moth* VH-ULJ. The collection comprises half a dozen aero engines, including a well provenanced Rolls Royce Kestrel once fitted to Demon A1-20. The *piece de resistance* however, must surely be the Witt engine — Australia's first purpose built aero engine. This remarkable example of indigenous technology was found gutted in a paddock near Euduna in October 1958.

Moves

■ Plans are in hand to get Albury's well known DC-2 landmark (c/n 1286), the *Uiver* look-a-like, down off its pole and under cover. The aircraft is understood to have deteriorated considerably since it was first elevated by the City's well meaning Rotarians in 1980. A well subscribed fund of around \$150,000 will be used to build another airport showcase, of the kind that proliferate in this

country. Unfortunately however — and as the Broome Shire Council has recently discovered through its association with Wackett VH-AIY — this peculiarly Australian display technique is anathema in terms of good conservation practise. Experience at Adelaide, Brisbane and Launceston terminals has shown that these showcases behave like incubators. With-

out constant monitoring (never provided for) of ultra-violet, relative humidity, temperature and air quality levels, these sealed micro-environments can actually accelerate the processes of decay. The City's Rotarians would, in such circumstances, be well advised to leave the aircraft on its pole until they can find more appropriate accommodation or develop ap-

propriate conservation controls for the planned memorial building.

■ The first Australian designed and built aircraft, the Duigan biplane, has now been installed in the Museum of Victoria's new \$25 million *Scienceworks* Museum at Spotswood. The aircraft, which was conserved by ASTA at Avalon, can now be viewed from ground and mez-



THE RETURNED & SERVICES LEAGUE

ANZAC HOUSE, 4 COLLINS STREET, MELBOURNE, VICTORIA, AUSTRALIA 3000
TELEGRAMS: LEAGEX MELBOURNE FAX: (03) 654 2262 TELEPHONE: (03) 650 5050

Patron: HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN

State President: B. C. RUXTON O.B.E.

State Secretary:

JOHN P. A. DEIGHTON, M.C.

MEDIA RELEASE

A rare Avro Lancaster bomber now on display in the Perth Air Force Association (AFA) Museum has become the focus of a growing public debate involving political, military, aviation and heritage interests from across the country.

The National President of the RSL, Mr Bruce Ruxton, is the latest person to condemn the planned export of the rare World War Two bomber — one of only a dozen now left in existence — approved last week by the Commonwealth's National Cultural Heritage Committee (NCHC). The Perth aircraft was donated by the French Government in 1962 "to serve as a reminder to all Australians of the great sacrifice made by Royal Air Force Bomber Command crews, many of whom were Australians".

The Museum plans to sell the aircraft for \$A1.5m, directing the proceeds to building maintenance and recurring expenditure costs. "The aircraft's symbolic, historical and cultural significances have, in no way, been diminished" said the RSL's National President in Melbourne yesterday. To proceed with the sale would be both "sad, and grossly insensitive", he added.

The Perth Lancaster, like the Canberra War Memorial's famous *G for George*, is the Museum's single most popular exhibit. Presently however, only 6% of Australians can ever visit the Memorial in any one year. The loss of the Perth Lancaster would only further disadvantage the population, particularly those people in South Australia, West Australia and the Northern Territory.

Aviation and heritage interests are particularly concerned at the implications of the planned export which, if allowed to proceed, would only add to other recent losses and help to establish a disturbing precedent. The AFA's Lancaster is the third historic aircraft from West Australia to be advertised overseas, in as many months. Questions have also been raised about the propriety of the Commonwealth's heritage advisory body — the NCHC — in authorising the export of an aircraft which was gifted by a friendly foreign government. "If this is how we express our gratitude, then we can rule out the prospect of any similar international goodwill gestures" said the National President of the Aviation Museums Association, Mr Laurie Ogle. According to Mr Ruxton "the Lancaster has symbolic, national and international significances which transcend the regional concerns of the AFA Museum".

The National Cultural Heritage Fund, set up by the Commonwealth Government in 1988, specifically designed to assist with the purchase and retention of restricted cultural items, such as the Lancaster, which are deemed to be of national significance.

Moves to have the Heritage Committee's recommendation reversed have already attracted considerable bi-partisan support with the Federal Opposition expected soon to pursue the matter in Parliament. French communities in Australia, offended by the planned sale, have also taken the matter up with the Federal Minister for the Arts, David Simmons.

B C Ruxton
State President

"The Price of Liberty is Eternal Vigilance"



Former Ansett DC-6B (VH-INA), now based at Abbotsford in Canada where it is being used by Conair as a firebomber.

zanine levels. *Scienceworks* opens to the public in March 1992.

Recession Casualties

The CAA's Historical Officer position, created during the early 1980s, has been abolished following the massive shake-up which has produced a 50% reduction in Authority staff numbers. Association members may recall the sterling work done by the Authority's first Historical Officer, John Walker, and his successor Sylvia Marchant. The abolition of

this key position — which took years to establish — is expected to result in the disbursement of valuable resources and expertise. Future historical enquiries will be handled by the CAA's Library staff. The development is thought to hold serious implications for the Authority's regional history collections, particularly the Essendon based Airways Museum. And just to add salt to the wound, Qantas has also seen fit to abolish its Historical Officer position, occupied for many years by John White of Sydney.

NAM Policy Change

The Federal Coalition is formulating a new policy position on the National Aviation Museum (NAM) issue. Current Coalition policy as expressed prior to the last Federal election states "We will seek private sector funding to establish a national aviation museum to be located

in the State of Queensland". The Shadow Minister for the Arts, Senator Baume, recently advised the Association that although "Our new policy has yet to be finalised... you can be assured that our position on the location of the Museum will alter".

Publishing

- *Great Air Stories*, R.K.Piper, Pagemaster Books, 1991 (160pp, illus., sbk., b&w, A5 format, rrp \$19-95). Daring RAAF escape and survival stories by that prodigious raconteur, Robert Kendall Piper.
- *The Decisive Factor*, David Wilson, Banner Books, 1991 (180pp, illus, sbk., b&w, pre-publication price \$25-00). Chronicle of 75 and 76 Squadron (RAAF) Kittyhawk operations in Papua New Guinea.
- *Six Aces*, Lex McAulay, Banner Books, 1991 (180pp, illus., sbk., b&w, pre-publication price \$25-00). Operational careers of six Australian aces who collectively destroyed 77 enemy aircraft during World War Two.

Membership & Subscription Enquiries

Membership of the AAMA is open to all at the rates of \$10 (individual) and \$15 (institutional). Enquiries and remittances should be directed to: The Secretary, AAMA, 296 Bank Street, South Melbourne, Victoria, Australia 3205. Phone (03) 669 9050 B/H, Fax (03) 663 8279



Beechcraft SNB-2s were used extensively in Australia by American military personnel during WWII. This sole surviving example (c/n 4213) was recently recovered from a remote part of northern Australia by the Queensland Air Museum.