



TAA / Australian Airlines 25 Year Club

Newsletter No. 106

May 2020

Editor: John Wren

President's Report

→ The **COVID-19** still marches on!! As you know from the last Newsletter the Museum was closed to the public and Volunteers on Thursday 19 March. The closure will remain in effect until we get some clear guidance from the government, and then the Committee will review all the data before deciding if it is safe for our Members, Volunteers and the public to return to the Museum.

Incoming Museum emails and mail will be monitored, but not landline phone messages. For those without computers, there will be a mail-out when the Museum is back in operation. The Newsletter will continue and provide updates. We apologise for any inconvenience the Museum closure may cause.

We hope all our Members / Volunteers and their families stay safe.

→ You will probably remember the great article we reproduced in the last Newsletter about the **Bristol Freighter** by member Ron Austin. We got a very big response to the story, and the South Australian Aviation Museum even asked if they could re-print it for their member newsletter. I hear other organisations have also run the story. Well done Ron.

Member Roger Lloyd also commented on the Bristol Freighter article "it reminded me that the fuselage of one of the "for spares" Pakistani Bristol Freighters was stored in our maintenance hangar at Mascot Airport in the early 1960s. The aircraft was still in Pakistan Air Force camouflage colours. What amused me was the name they had given it - "Pregnant Sahib". I assume the aircraft ended up at Sims metal."

→ We have been advised by the Avalon Air Show management that the Air Show will be deferred until November 2021 due to the virus, and the impact it has had both locally and overseas. This gives us a bit more time to prepare a really nice display.

→ Have you checked out <https://www.flightradar24.com/-37.76,144.86/8> recently? **Air traffic** over Australia is practically none existent as with parts of Europe [if you discount the freighters and light aircraft] whilst China and the US look pre-virus 'normal'.

→ Just a friendly reminder, if you are **having a clean up at home or downsizing** we will look after your donations of TAA and Australian Airlines memorabilia at the Museum. It would be a shame to have the family throw it out.

→ We have another great article from Ron Austin for you in this Newsletter. Also, a link to a fabulous story from Joe Favazza about acceptance of B727-276 VH-TBQ. Well worth a read.

→ "Boeing began the process of resuming 737 MAX production this week after halting production in January. During the pause, Boeing says it has implemented a number of processes to reduce the danger of debris being left in the aircraft after assembly. Boeing is still awaiting FAA approval of its design changes to the 737 MAX." [from Flight Radar]

→ For those of you that followed the exploits of our DC-3 VH-AES 'Hawdon' in member Nancy Blitz's book called "Hawdon", you will be pleased to know that it is being reprinted after much upgrading [words & pics] and it will probably be out in 4 or 5 months. Well done Nancy.

Newsletter

This is our 106th Newsletter issued by the 25 Year Club. We hope you have been enjoying the content over the years and, if you would like to write an article, just send it to the Newsletter Editor at the Museum.

The envelope your Newsletter arrived in has your 25 Year Club financial status printed on it, so you will know if you need to help us with another donation now, or when in the future. The Newsletter will be emailed to members who request it in lieu of surface mail [saves on postage]. The email group will also be able to click on links to various movies, and establish their financial status from the covering email. Surface mail will always be available.

‘Virus’ parking at Avalon

Recently, photographer Ingrid Hendrikson www.ingridhendriksenphotography.zenfolio.com went flying over Avalon in her husband’s Aviat Husky and took the picture below of all the JetStar and QF aircraft stored there. I’ve seen a few shots from the ground, but this one is so much better.



Treasure trove

Member Rob Finlayson has been busy sorting through his TAA pictures and decided to have a few printed off for the Museum along with a book jam packed with TAA / Australian Airlines aircraft pictures. Many thanks Rob – they will make a great addition to the Museum.



At left: the almost poster sized pictures Rob sent the Museum.

Below: the book of pictures also sent to the Museum.



TAA/TRANS AUSTRALIA/AUSTRALIAN

Blast from the past

Yards of ticket



If TAA's International Travel Supervisor George Kealy looks relieved, it's because he is writing the last stage of one of the longest airline tickets ever written in Australia.

The finished product covered 72 flight stages, and consisted of 18 four-stage tickets. It was 8 yards long!

The passenger, Rev. Father Brian Walsh, Director of the Australian Catholic Welfare Research Fund, was on a round-the-world itinerary to study the needs of various countries for the welfare funds. He was accompanied by Mr. J. B. Larson, on an equally long ticket.

The itinerary included travel on 27 separate airlines. It took two people a complete day to prepare the mammoth ticket.

● The picture shows George Kealy writing, with Peter Lewis and Gillian Wright looking on in disbelief.

Left: From Trans-air Aug 67. Airline tickets now are not so common as they used to be when everyone had their 'hardcopy'. This traveller may have been charged excess baggage charges just to have all his tickets with him!

Below: From Trans-air 1960. Now here's an unusual logo that a TAA DC-3 aircraft had for a while when operating a cargo route for NAC in NZ.

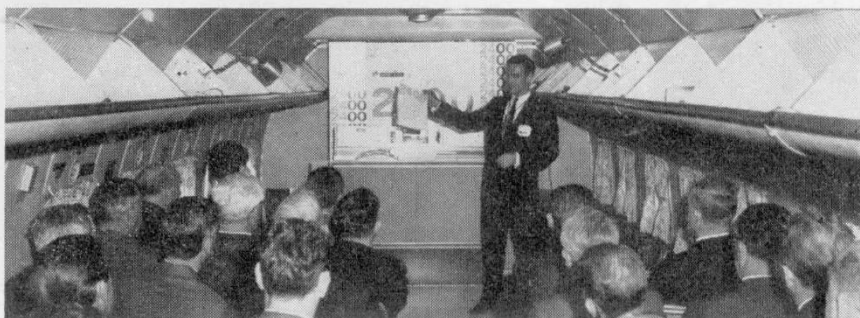
HERE'S A KIWI THAT DOES FLY



For some months a TAA DC-3 aircraft has been carrying cargo for the New Zealand National Airways Corporation. During this time the aircraft insignia has been modified to meet the occasion.

The usual energetic kangaroo of the TAA symbol has been replaced by a kiwi—proving that the strange bird can fly now and then. The change is typical of the close and friendly relations between the two airlines.

SHOWROOM IN THE SKY



Rank Xerox (Australia) Pty. Ltd. recently chartered a TAA DC4 aircraft to use as a "flying showroom" for demonstrations throughout Australia, as part of an "Airborne 2400" promotion.

The aircraft was used to transport two photo-copying machines to Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide, where demonstrations of the machines were conducted in the aircraft cabin, while the aircraft was on the ground. After the demonstrations, sales talks were held at the airports.

Left: From Trans-air Aug 67. When photocopiers first came out, they were a big deal and very expensive. Most people wouldn't even recognise the photocopier pioneer Xerox. So, a flying showroom added a WOW factor to customers.

I recall the first Xerox at TAA – you needed a 5 day course to operate / maintain the thing and heaven help you if you damaged the selenium drum which was worth a fortune.

Right: From Trans-air Sept 67. I often wondered how Sir Arthur Coles came to be our first ANAC Chairman and kicked off TAA. In the 20th Anniversary Trans-air there was an article from 'the-horses-mouth' detailing the steps, all taken in extreme haste. Interesting.

Below: From Trans-air July 71. The last TAA flight into Essendon [19 June 71] was operated by member Vince Hinschen [on left] shown here with the other crew of the DC-9.

The end of an era and the start of a new one at Tullamarine [TAA was first to operate into Tulla as well!]



In Retrospect . . .

by Sir Arthur Coles

A telephone call early in the Summer of 1946 to my seaside home at Flinders, and a subsequent meeting there with the then Minister for Air, Arthur Drakeford, was my introduction to one of the truly great and exciting chapters in Australian civil aviation history.

Mr. Drakeford told me that Cabinet had decided to set up the Australian National Airlines Commission to run an internal airline, and the Prime Minister (Joseph Benedict Chifley) had requested him to ask me if I would accept the chairmanship of that Commission.

The first meeting of the Commission on February 13 heralded the birth of a new era in the annals of world domestic aviation.

It was considered by many as an audacious move, but it was evidence of the thinking at the time in a number of world countries convinced of the benefits of nationalised civil air transport.

The supporters were few — the cynics many and widespread, "It won't work," they said. History was to prove them so wrong during the next 21 years.

One of the conditions under which I accepted the Chairmanship was that TAA would be run as a commercial business enterprise in competition with existing airlines. I was and always have been a great believer in competition keeping any business or service on its toes.

It is now gratifying to see how this vitally important aspect of the airline's character has been preserved.

The new airline caught the imagination and appeal of thousands of young men and women whose pioneering spirit was still very much alive after the war. They all wanted a place in this exciting venture.

On September 9, 1946, TAA became airborne with its first DC3 Skymaster flight from Melbourne (Laverton) to Sydney. Within three months, on December 2, 1946, the Skymaster "John Eyre" landed at Perth airport. This marked the completion of a plan to conduct a service between every capital city in Australia.

Trans-Australia Airlines was well in business backed by the enthusiasm, vigorous energy and drive of a youthful national enterprise.

No one could envisage the success story which TAA was to become two decades later.

In retrospect, it has given wonderful service to the nation and is a fitting tribute to all persons, past and present, associated with its operation in Australia's much reputed airline industry."

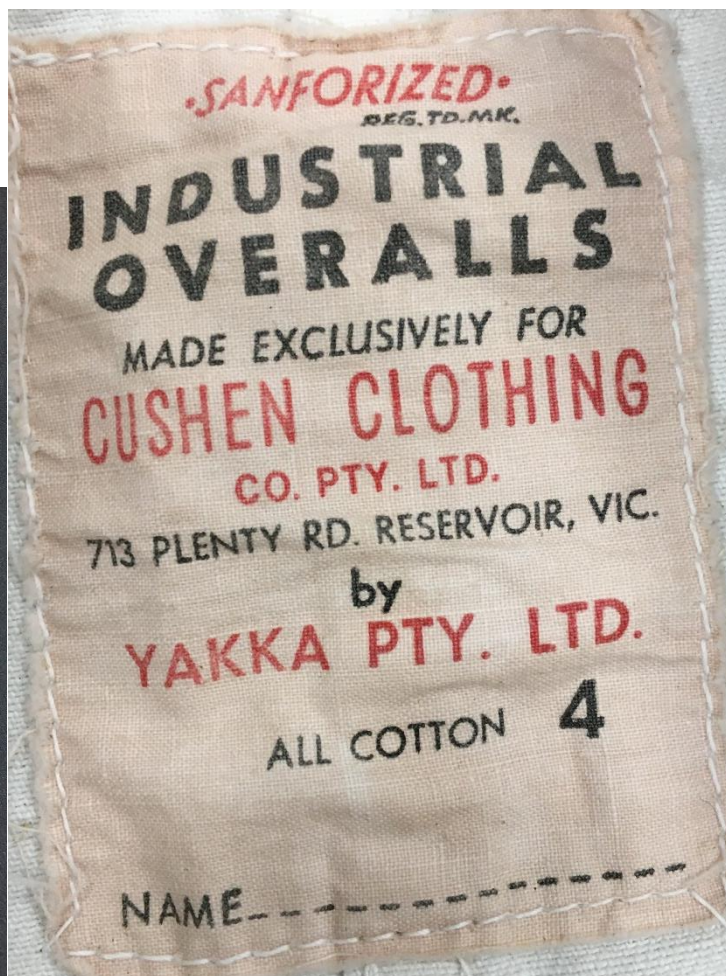


Crew members on the last domestic airline service into Essendon airport on June 19 (from left): First Officer Vince Hinschen, Captain Ivan Scown and air hostesses Jennie McKenzie, Helen Swinton, and Pamela Wells. The aircraft, a DC9, arrived from Sydney at 11.00 p.m.

Donations to the Museum

A very early pair of overalls [made in Australia!] showing some light evidence of wear. Not bad for approx. 50 years.

[both pics by John Wren]



Heartfelt story – “Anne’s Close Call”

It’s not often we print a non TAA story, but this one was special. Many thanks to Leigh Teasdale for contacting us and Peter Shaw for allowing us to print this amazing story.

“I had been an air hostess with ANA (Australian National Airways) since March 1946.

After my initial training in Melbourne I was transferred to my home state to Brisbane. I mainly flew the coastal route to Cairns and the gulf country.

On 2nd September 1948 I was rostered for ground duty at Archerfield (as Eagle Farm was not yet a licensed aerodrome. Archerfield was a grass paddock with no defined runways. The terminal buildings were built for the American air force.) The day had been uneventful and I was now packing up to go home when the captain of the 5pm Flight 331 “Lutana” DC3 to Sydney, told me the scheduled hostess hadn’t turned up for the flight. “Anne, it looks as though you will have to come with us” he said. “Could you put the passengers on board please?” After ushering the 10 passengers onto the aircraft, I gave them barley sugar and the daily paper, I checked their seatbelts and strapped myself into the hostess seat at the back. It was apparent by now the hostess was not going to show so I was designated to hostess the flight. Captain John Drummond and Co-pilot John Atkinson two exceptionally experienced pilots taxied Lutana VH-ANK out to the SW corner of the paddock.

The captain exercised his preflight checks and we were now ready for take-off. As the aircraft started to roll into wind, the throttle was closed just before lift-off and we were all wondering what the problem was. The

captain called me to the cockpit to explain. He had sighted the scheduled hostess running her hardest towards the aircraft. He said to me “would you mind jumping down and giving her a leg up please and do you mind walking back to the terminal building? The tail of the DC3 is not far from the ground so the exchange was fairly easy.

Within minutes “Lutana” VH-ANK was soon airborne into the NE wind headed for Sydney and I went home. It did not make Sydney. For 4 days there was an intensive search. It had crashed into the peak of Mt. Crawney south of Tamworth. All 10 passengers and 3 crew members perished.

Today, in a little town called Nundle not far from Mt. Crawney, there is a monument with the propeller of the ill-fated aircraft and a plaque dedicated to all on board. I will never to this day forget the moment I heard the news of the demise of the “Lutana”.

[After my 5 years as an Air Hostess I married a country GP and have lived in Kingaroy since 1953. In 1971 I learnt to fly at the age of 55. My husband had been in the Air Force and regained his license in the 1960s. My son Peter is a jumbo Captain and one of my daughters was a Flight Attendant with Qantas.

When recounting this story to a friend of my son’s, he said “It’s a great story Anne but in this day and age no one will ever believe you!! I assure you this is a true story.” [nee Chandler]

New & Improved!

Yes, by popular demand we have procured some more coffee / tea cups. And this time you get to choose your favourite picture on the front – as long as it is an A300, DC-9, 737 or F27. On the back of all of them is the TAA logo. The pictures are larger this time which makes the tea / coffee taste much better!

Our thanks to member Rob Finlayson [LAME - TAS] for the great pictures. You can see more of them at https://pbase.com/aviationimagesrf/taa_trans_australia .

The cups are still \$10 each from the Museum [when we open again] or they can be mailed out now. Postage is: 1 or 2 cups \$13.00. 3 or 4 cups \$15.00. All anywhere in Australia. [Pics by Terry Maocco]



Notice the much larger pictures of your favourite aircraft



And on the back of all the cups is the TAA and Australian Airlines logo.

TAA becomes a 'TV station'

This is another great story from Ron Austin who piloted the aircraft involved. Many thanks again Ron.

TAA BECOMES A TELEVISION STATION on 20th February 1963

"A project was proposed by the Australian Broadcast Commission to enable the Queen's visit to Canberra to be viewed in Adelaide on Saturday night the 20th February 1963.

To achieve this project the ABC television organization chartered a TAA Douglas DC3 freighter and installed a large television receiver and transmitter in the aircraft. A TV aerial was installed under the fuselage. This could be retracted for take-off and landing and in flight it extended about two metres below the aircraft and was connected to a small domestic type TV set up in the cabin work area, as part of the monitoring equipment. The DC3 became an ABC transmitting station.

Preparation for the event commenced on Wednesday the 17th of February. I was rostered with another Captain and a First Officer to fly the three day testing and the ultimate transmission flight on Saturday night. We tested our equipment by flying around in the vicinity of the South Australian-Victorian border; and from this location we could receive the TV transmission from the ABC station at Bendigo and relay the signal to Adelaide. Nowadays this may seem a very primitive way to connect two major cities, but in 1963, there was no coaxial TV link between Adelaide and Melbourne; the co-axial cable joined only Sydney, Canberra, Melbourne and Bendigo. We had only four days to perfect this type of transmission before the Queen appeared in Canberra at eight o'clock Saturday night.

Following a planned program, we spent three days flying, "on station" to ensure the link would work when required. We were fortunate the cricket Test was being played in Sydney giving us a valid subject to transmit to Adelaide. We received the TV signal from Bendigo and this picture was monitored for quality on our domestic type TV set. The large Siemens transmitter then relayed the signal to Adelaide; I was told this transmitter cost more than the value of our DC3!

On the first day we took off from Melbourne for the Bordertown area, which was the midpoint between Bendigo and Adelaide. In flight the technicians adjusted the lower aerial to give us a satisfactory picture in the cabin at our 8000 ft. altitude. Because the airborne Director did not know how well the relayed signal was received in Adelaide, their counterparts in the Adelaide studio had devised a number scale, which increased as the resolution improved. The Adelaide base called this progressive number direct to the technicians.

We flew around while the radio from Adelaide called "50-50-50" or "40-30". At the low points, the ABC Director would tell us to turn quickly or change altitude; we tried steep turns, flat turns, increases and decreases of altitude all to keep the beam strong in Adelaide. We were operating around 8000ft. and this seemed satisfactory. All the time the Director watched the Bendigo picture, and if that deteriorated in quality, he again called for additional flight manoeuvres.

As you can guess, we were operating in the busy airway between Melbourne and Adelaide and needed a clearance from the air traffic controllers for any altitude change. At times, we would request a climb to nine thousand feet but if there was no obvious gain in climbing, we would be called by the Director to descend again. It takes considerable time to obtain an altitude clearance but the air traffic folk were very patient. Steep turns, which gave the least time with the aerial deflected, were good fun for us, but the technicians in the cabin bent at the knees, their body weight increased by the G-loading. At times we would fly straight for minutes at a time, but conditions in the atmosphere do effect radio waves as they constantly change due to temperature variations, atmospheric pressure changes, time of day and "gremlins". This is why we were seeking a compromise between the two stations

On the first day we flew four hours before landing in Adelaide; we actually circled at the border for only one hour but the airborne and Adelaide teams needed a discussion on procedures. On the second day we flew for nine hours, six of which we were chasing the two signals. The third day was eight and a half hours flying.

On the critical day a test transmission was arranged for late afternoon on Saturday to be followed at night by the live broadcast of the Queen, after this we would break off and return to Melbourne.

Saturday turned out to be another nine hour day but not by design. When flight planning in Adelaide on Saturday afternoon we used Greenwich Mean Time for navigation reasons, whereas the TV schedule had to work for Eastern Standard Time for Canberra and Bendigo, and Central Time for Adelaide. Due to other pressures involved and the three different time zones we took off one hour too early.

We have all heard tales of fate and luck; well they were both in evidence on Saturday. As we climbed out over the Murray River, we pilots were in discussion as to who was liable to pay for this additional hour when the Director appeared and asked if we had a torch. Apparently, a radio valve had failed in the expensive Siemen transmitter and the heat had welded the valve to the valve base. The experts intended by-passing this base by soldering “pig tails of wire” on each contact of the new valve and then soldering these wires directly into the chassis. We had 3 torches on board as they are mandatory equipment for pilots. Using only these torches to light the area, the technicians completed their task and we came on-air with just five minutes to spare before transmission time. I might add that nothing was ever said about our one hour mistake, because without that buffer all would have been lost.

Adelaide had its view of the Queen and we returned to Melbourne feeling quite satisfied, the job was completed. You can appreciate why we often left our families for many days, not knowing for sure when we would return.”

A side of TAA few people saw or knew about

Member Joe Favazza has written a really informative article for us on an aspect few TAA people even knew about – build inspection of our aircraft; in this case at Boeing. It’s a really great story, with accompanying pictures, and takes you through the build process at the Boeing factory of B727-276 VH-TBQ. The story with pictures is a little bit long for the Newsletter, so we have placed it on our web site for you to read at your leisure. Most of the pictures will have never been seen before; and the shot through the MLG viewing port is definitely a first. See link: http://www.taamuseum.org.au/Documents/TAA_B727-276_VH-TBQ.pdf

[Pic by Joe Favazza]



The above picture [taken by Joe] shows VH-TBQ out on the flight line in the snow with just the faint TAA markings showing through the sludge. Notice alongside our aircraft is one of Ansett’s aircraft also being final prep’d for delivery.

Surprise email

We received an email from Barbara Cuffley [nee Dowdell] who wanted a picture of the DC-3 [Hume] that she flew Melbourne to Launceston on 15 March 1947 [as a 5 year old] to go with the Passenger Certificate. That's just 6 months after TAA started. It just so happens that the Pilot on the Flight was to later be our General Manager – Frank Ball!



Postage Stamps

Today you would see very few postage stamps on your mail. They are being taken over by machine stamped mass mail-out or 'postage paid' marks and, of course, emails are taking the place of postal mail, further reducing the need for stamps on 'snail mail' by a huge amount.

Various forms of mail services operated around the world for specific purposes; the church, guilds, financial services, trade groups etc. It wasn't until 1840 when the British issued the first adhesive postage stamp – the penny black, that regular mail services for the public were arranged. As they were the first, there is no country identification on their stamp. Perforations weren't introduced until the 1850s.

The first stamp produced and costed for 'airmail service' was on 16 May 1917 [Italy], however India organised the world's first mail service by aircraft [Allahabad to Naini, February 1911] closely followed by Britain, Denmark, Italy and the USA. Aerogrammes were pioneered by Iraq in 1933.

As you would probably have seen, the 25 Year Club have been successful in getting TAA featured on Australian stamps – the Nola Rose stamp, the Cocos Island series etc and there have been numerous first day covers and aerogrammes featuring TAA. The Museum has collected anything TAA / Australian Airlines –

including stamps, first day covers, aerogrammes and we are soon to bring the collection together in one large framed feature for proud display.

If you have any spare stamps, first day covers or aerogrammes that feature TAA or Australian Airlines, now would be a great time to have a dig through the cupboard [anti virus exercise] and let them see the light of day before sending them off to us for inclusion in our Museum display.

Just pop them into an envelope with some stiff cardboard so the snail mail doesn't destroy them, and send to: TAA Museum, 7 York St, Airport West VIC 3042. Many thanks.

Vale

Our sincere condolences are extended to the families and friends of past TAA/Australian Airlines work colleagues. Fond memories will remain. [FM = Foundation Member]

Bernie Drakeford	Engrg, Info Services Mgr	Aged 90	3/04/20
Capt. John Bayles	A300 Flt Capt	Aged 85	03/03/20
Capt. W.L. [Len] Wegemund	Flt. Ops.	Aged 93	09/04/20
Ian Garth	Computer Centre	Aged 83	15/03/20
Chris Felkin	Catering MEL		21/03/20
Cal Walker	Dispatch TAS		02/01/20
Len Heard	Flt Ops Director		01/05/20
Colin Haydock [FM]	Fabric Sect MEL		23/04/20

*** Note the change from Commonwealth Bank electronic transfer details to Qudos Bank details. ***



TAA/AUSTRALIAN AIRLINES 25 YEAR CLUB INC. MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION/RENEWAL

Name:Spouse's name:
Address:
City:State: Postcode:
Phone:
Mobile:Email:
TAA/Australian Airlines/QANTAS service: Start date: Finish date:
Primary area of work & where:
Preferences (Please circle) Newsletter: Mail / Email Other correspondence: Mail / Email
Additional comments:
.....
Donation: 1 year - \$20...3 years - \$60.....5 years - \$100.....Other amount \$.....Gift: \$.....

Cheque – payable to 'TAA 25 Year Club' mailed to:
Membership Co-ordinator, TAA 25 Year Club, Qantas FTC, 7 York St, Airport West, Vic. 3042
Bank transfer – to 'TAA 25 Year Club': Qudos Bank BSB: 704 865 Account No.: 02190853
Please include your name on bank transfers and, return this form by mail **OR** send by email to:
taamuseum@bigpond.com . **For enquiries:** Phone: 03 9280 8113 / 03 9280 8114.