



TAA / Australian Airlines 25 Year Club

Newsletter No. 82

March 2015

Editor: John Wren

STAARS (Simply TAA Retired Staff) Lunch – 18 November 2014

The good weather brought out 168 former TAA / Australian Airlines staff members for the final lunch for the year. It was Christmas wishes all round and I know “a healthy and prosperous New Year”. Some pics taken on the day are below:



DC3 VH-AES “Hawdon” (TAA’s first aircraft)

The old girl was flown down to the Avalon Airshow (end of February) and afterwards was placed in a hangar [not QF]. I spoke with Hawdon Operations Ltd’s Warwick Tainton, however everything was “hush hush”. We continue waiting. Capt. Alan Searle flew his last commercial flight recently however he tells me he will continue private flying, which includes ‘Hawdon’.

25 Year Club AGM (Annual General Meeting)

The Annual General Meeting was held on (Wed) **18th March 2015**. It wasn’t a large roll up of Members however the meeting was completed per the agenda with all reports presented and approved. A subsidized meal was provided after the meeting which went down well. The Skyways Hotel looked after us, as they always do.

A new Committee was elected – Sam Favazza, Paul Gluschenko, Dorothy Duan & Kevin Anderson [the latter two re-standing and elected unopposed] and Bert Lawes, Arnold Rogers, Jim Collins & John Wren continue on for another year. Leaving us by choice were Jim Meehan and Ron Adams. Ron will continue on as a most knowledgeable Volunteer, while Jim considers his position due to ill health. Welcome to the new Committee members.

President's Report

- ➔ Helen Richie (NSW member) has just finished scanning all the documents Qantas had on BCPA - an overseas airline run [for 10 years] by our shared boss, the Australian National Airlines Commission, with many TAA staff having two hats in both airlines eg John Watkins, Engineering Director of both airlines. Helen has done a marvellous job over many months – thank you Helen.
- ➔ Apparently, TAA didn't always take a picture of the Engineering Apprentice Graduation . So the large Apprentice display at the Museum is missing pictures of the 53, 63, 67, 68, 76, 77, 81, 83. 87 & 89 Graduation group picture. I don't suppose any of our apprentices took their own group pictures and would share a copy with us? We'd love to add your pic to our collection.
- ➔ You may remember I mentioned you could look at the JT8D Engine Simulator operating – for those of you with computers, at <http://www.taamuseum.org.au/Documents/Films/enginetrainer.avi> . This is our first try and we had problems. All sorted now, so have a look. It's great. You can also look at our great display at the Avalon Air Show at <http://www.taamuseum.org.au/Documents/Films/avalonairshow.mp4>
- ➔ We will be **revising the 'time line'** of our Museum display shortly – still a few matters to resolve first.
- ➔ We are working on a new project that may see some of the early history of TAA appearing regularly on a **"Heritage Channel"** on QF's aircraft. It fits right in with our film digitisation project.
- ➔ We were lucky to hear about the closure of the Kangan TAFE, and that they were going to throw away many of the items that had been given to them by TAA. The items are now safe at the Museum. A lot of work by our apprentices went into the cut-away components that were used for training purposes. We'll get all of the items on display in the coming months. See the separate article below with pictures. Many thanks to Kevin Anderson, Ian Wood, Dave Wren and Arnold Rogers who slaved away in the heat loading the 2 tandem trailer loads of 'good stuff' and unloading it at the Museum.
- ➔ The **movie film identification project** (identify and digitise our old film stock) is roaring ahead with over 2500 films identified. Similarly, the **slide digitisation project** has passed the 13,000 slides mark.
- ➔ **If you can help** with scanning documents / slides (we'll show you how if needed) or interviewing Foundation Members to include their story to our oral history, I would love to hear from you.
- ➔ We had 689 people come through the Museum last year on organised trips, where we provide a guide. There would easily have been over 400 individuals walk in 'off the street' – so over 1000 visitors last year.

QLD Annual Dinner – Sunday 23 November 2014

The annual dinner for the 25 Year Club, South Queensland was held at the Kedron-Wavell RSL club on Sunday 23 November 2014. We had 65 people attend this yearly function, and quite a few people who had not attended before, and this pleased the committee no end as there have been a few of the "oldies" who for health reasons do not attend any more. A good time was had by all and I might add that this function is always the best patronized of all the functions we hold throughout the year.

At the end of the afternoon prior to everyone departing we held our annual raffle which again this year (the prize - by popular demand) was a Franklin Mint metal model of TAA's first aircraft the DC-3 (Hawdon) of which all proceeds go to the RFDS who are our long time beneficiary. And this year being no exception we were able to donate \$500.00 to their cause, and what a surprise we all got when the model was won by Captain Stewart Arnold (retired) who has been a very loyal member of our club since its inception. When I was presenting the model to him he happened to make a comment to me that over the many years he has got 15000 flying hours on the DC-3 type and as I then said to the gathered members and guests the prize could not have gone to a more worthy recipient. Well done and congratulations Stewart. The next annual dinner date has been already booked and it will be held at the same venue at 1100 hours on 29 November 2015.

Qantas In-Flight Magazine

The November 2014 issue of the **Qantas In-Flight magazine** had an article (*see right*) about the arrival 50 years ago (October 1964) of our first 'T' Jet – a Boeing B727-76 (the '76' was Boeings designation for TAA). Not sure if it was a coin toss or some other factor at work, but Ansett's new B727 landed at Essendon Airport (Tulla was not on the drawing boards at that time) a few minutes before TAA's aircraft. So in a bit of one up man ship, TAA didn't immediately do a pre service lay-up, but rather took the aircraft on an around Australia publicity run to help usher in the jet age to Australian domestic travellers.

Along the same lines, the same picture, plus another of VH-TJA at the Renton USA flight line before the long ferry flight to Australia was published in the **Qantas Staff Magazine**. We were chuffed with that!

For the aviation nuts: the **newest QF B737-800** has an ochre pax window strip and the kangaroo on the tail has wings like the 1947 QF logo. They call it 'the flying kangaroo goes retro'. Something that wasn't in any of the press releases was the name of the new aircraft – "James Strong". You would have seen it if you went to the Avalon Air Show.



50 YEARS OF JET-SETTING

IN 1964. Australian air travel took a giant step into the future with the introduction of the first pure jet aircraft into domestic airline service. Trans-Australia Airlines (TAA) and Ansett-ANA took delivery of their first Boeing 727 jets on the same day. Government-owned TAA promoted its Boeing as the "Whispering T-Jet" with new standards in comfort, safety and speed. The first TAA jet service left Melbourne for Sydney on November 2, 1964. By this time, Qantas was already flying its first Boeing 707 jets on overseas routes. Qantas and TAA (renamed Australian Airlines in 1986) merged in 1993 prior to full privatisation in 1995.

25 Year Club Xmas Lunch

What a day! We had a little under a hundred people join us for a very enjoyable Lunch and catch up on 09 December at the William Angliss city facility before everyone disappears into the Xmas functions haze. It was also an opportunity to say thank you to all the Volunteers who have put in another tremendous effort at the Museum during 2014. I'm sure they were looking forward to the break until 13 January 2015 when we start all over again.

We had Foundation Members **John Grant, Lance Erwin and Ken Ziezing** enjoying a meal with us and we made a special presentation to Volunteer **Duncan Cameron** (who looks after our web site) of a '10 years service to the Museum' badge. Well done Duncan, and many thanks. See happy pictures below:



Foundation Members (L to R) John Grant, Lance Erwin & Ken Ziezing. In the background Committeemen Bert Lawes and Jim Collins.



Jim Collins, Frank Sullivan, Phil Hayes, John Grant & daughter

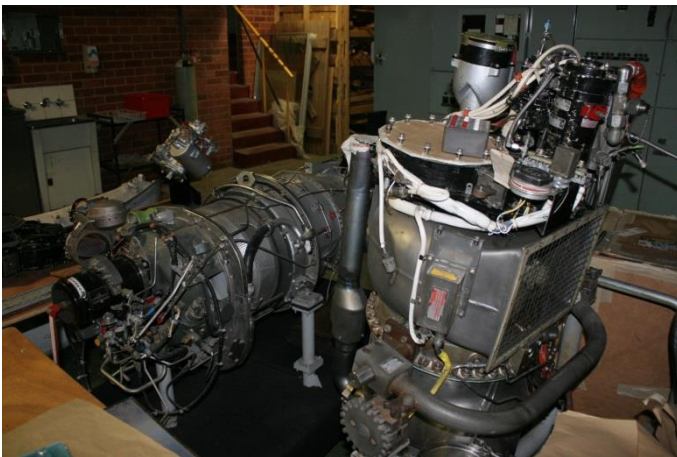
Newsletter

The Newsletter will be emailed to members who request it in lieu of surface mail. The email group will also be able to avail themselves of our movies that we have started making – watch this space. Approximately 200 members have now requested delivery by email, and if this is your preference please let us know. Surface mail will always be available. Our Newsletter is being printed with the assistance of the Office of Bill Shorten MP. Many thanks are extended.

TAFE Items

Unfortunately the local TAFE that looked after aviation training has folded with the demise of Ansett a few years ago and the Qantas engineering withdrawal to Sydney / Brisbane. Beautiful facility, but no aviation apprentices to train. So when we got word at ‘the eleventh hour’ of the closure (with all the training items to be dumped), we arrived with a tandem trailer. It was like being a kid at Xmas time again. There were TAA engineering items everywhere.

Some of the larger items we got were a Twin Otter PT6 engine and a DC9 APU (auxiliary power unit). There were a lot of component cutaways used for training, and made by our tradesmen and apprentices. Some still had the TAA name on the base in big bold letters. So over the next few months we will be tidying up all those items and displaying them in the Museum (see pic below of some of the components we got). This has happened at the right time as we are about to revise the layout of the Museum.



A TAA APU [front] and PT6 engine [back]



A small selection of TAA items yet to be sorted



Intricate cut-away component still with our Australian Airlines identification.



Aircraft service door and another selection of components on the table behind it.

UPCOMING EVENT

STAARS (Simply TAA Retired Staff) Lunch – 19 May, 18 August & 17 November

The STAARS (Simply TAA Retired Staff) lunch is held on a quarterly basis from 11:15am–2:00pm at the Moonee Valley Legends Bistro, corner of Thomas & Wilson Streets, Moonee Valley, where approximately 200 people attend. If you haven't been to a STAARS lunch or want more information, give Kevin Anderson (0419 511 179) or Lance Erwin (03 9386 4056) a call for details.

Tours

Watch your next Newsletter for the 2015 tours we will be running.

Brisbane 1965 Apprentice Reunion

Following a visit to the TAA / Australian Airlines 25 Year Club Museum at Airport West in MEL by Bob Merson (25 Year Club President Sth. Qld) after a flight in "Hawdon" to Wangaratta, a group of us were shown some records that were retrieved from the engineering school in MEL after its shut down. Among the many records were apprentice records, over many years, and this was of interest to Bob as he was an ex apprentice starting in 1965. After going through a box of records, ably assisted by Kevin Anderson, we were able to retrieve the records of all 1965 year apprentices who trained in BNE.

These records were invaluable to Bob as he was organising a 50th year anniversary of his group on the 18th January 2015 (the exact date of starting) at the Mango Hill Tavern on Brisbane's north side, and it was his intention if it could be organised for the 7 guys to be presented with their apprentice records (exam results, conduct, punctuality etc) over their 5 years of their apprenticeship.

As said previously, with the help of Kevin Anderson, the said records all arrived via mail to Bob and as a result, the records were presented to 6 of the 7 who were able to come to the function and with no one knowing about this excepting Bob. It was very well received by the boys who were all "gob-smacked" that these records still existed. The midday function went off very well with everyone and their wives taking part, and an enjoyable afternoon was had by all.

The 7 apprentices involved were, Bob Merson, Bill Chalmers, Alan Grose, Peter Scott, Terry Philip and Ricky Poulos with Graeme Rosemond absent as he was working in Jordan in the Middle East. There are 2 photos accompanying this article, one after the guys received their records and the other enjoying a few "sherbets."



TAA Viscount VH-TVR

We've received a nice story from **Peter Robinson** (Aircraft Maintenance) about one of our Viscounts (VH-TVR) that we acquired from Cubana (just before everything went pie-shaped between Cuba and the US). After the aircraft retired from TAA it ended up at Wobbies World for a long time, and now it is at the Moorabbin Museum [I was down at the Museum on 23/3/15 and they have nearly completed the interior; the exterior is a mess, and is next on their list]. We have helped in the restoration of the cockpit and some other areas [posters, uniforms, signage etc] to allow it to go on public display.

Peter's article:

"In the early 1960's, as an aircraft mechanic I was involved in the maintenance of Viscount Aircraft. One of them was VH-TVR. My claim to fame on that aircraft type was overhauling the flap system, together with my gang of four guys.

Because the Viscount spare parts inventory was run down due to the impending retirement of the Viscounts, replacement parts had to be procured from England. This caused some delay with returning the aircraft to service and I got the name of "FLAPS".

After the test flight and fixing of some small problems, the aircraft was put on line and prepared for service. Unfortunately as she stood there ready, a forklift ran into the back of the left wing and damaged the aileron and rear spar. What a tragedy after all the work to overhaul the aircraft to near new condition.

Information from Vickers England advised that the inner and outer wings were 'matched' and it would be unlikely that a spare wing would fit. Undaunted, Cliff Smith (Maintenance Foreman), well known for getting the job done, took the outer wing from VH-TVP to fit to VH-TVR. With true Australian grit he was primarily responsible for "making it fit" and the aircraft, after a successful test flight, was returned to service.

During the time that we were doing Viscount overhauls and previous to the foregoing, VH-TVR had a hangar visit to retrofit a rear cargo door on the right side just forward of the tailplane.

I became aware of the different configuration between VH-TVR and our other "800" series (the aircraft was technically spec'd by CUBANA). It was quite a job fitting the door and frame together with skins and other associated structure. So inevitably the job took longer than planned. The pressure was on, and at least 10 guys were put on riveting of the skins, 5 outside on the rivet guns and 5 inside on the "Dollies".

It was very hard to hear your partner, but the practice was to insert the rivet from the outside and the dolly man seeing the rivet protrude would put his dolly on and call out "RIVET". Sometimes because there were 5 sets of riveters, the "gun man" would question "are you right" and the dolly man would shout "RIVET". Unfortunately with the cacophony of 5 riveters shouting to each other it was hard to hear so I shouted loudly 'RIVET "..... and 5 gunners fired their guns . The problem was I was the only one on the rivet. Result - some ugly dents and everybody in chaos to apportion blame! Anyway we got it done and VH-TVR went happily back into service.

One hiccup though, as she was going into the hangar I questioned the attending Engineers and Drawing Office people if we had put the door in the wrong way because it was forward opening and if it came open in flight it would take off the right tail plane. They all said it was right but they rushed off to the drawing office to check. I bet their heart stopped for a while, but it was 'apples'.

Years later, probably about 1990' I got involved with a guy called Jack Ellis and he told me he flew VH-TVR out of Havana Cuba. The following is as I recall he related the events.....

Jack was seemingly contracted by TAA to fly the aircraft out of HAVANA at a time when there were hostilities with the USA. No TAA pilots were forthcoming; maybe for political reasons or other reasons.

Anyway Jack went over to CUBA and all the purchasing and handover went reasonably well except that the Cubans insisted that there must be a Cuban co-pilot on the delivery leg to Miami Florida and it was duly agreed. Prior to the flight a lot of luggage was stowed on board which the co-pilot assured Jack was OK. However as the pre-flight was being carried out a woman and some children came on board and the co-pilot encouraged Jack to "get going". As they taxied out for take-off a jeep with soldiers bussed the aircraft with the intent of stopping them, but 'Jack, and only Jack' went for take-off amid a hail of bullets and succeeded in escaping.

When airborne and out of Cuban airspace a very annoyed Jack rounded on the Cuban co-pilot demanding an explanation. Well it turned out the Cuban was absconding with his family! I do not recall the details of the landing in Miami and subsequent delivery flight but my guess is it didn't go that smoothly.

Now VH-TVR is in the Moorabbin Aircraft Museum ex Wobbies World and showing signs of its discomfort there. As I walked around the aircraft at the Museum I questioned if it was really was VH-TVR (as identified on the right wing) because I noticed the left wing is identified VH-TVP.

I was assured it was VH-TVR and then it all came back to me, the event in the 60's where the outer wing was replaced by Cliff Smith and the gang!" Ed: Thanks for the article Peter.

Our Aircraft

Ever wondered what happened to our old aircraft after we sold them. Sometimes they were sold many times, sometimes just once. B727-100 VH-TJD holds the jet record – still flying 49 years after first flying with TAA. Here's where they ended up as far as we know today, many still flying:

	Entered Service	WITHDRAWN from Service	Last known data
A300			
TAA		13/08/1998	Stripped for parts, abandoned at Abu Dhabi 2011
TAB		15/03/1987	Currently with 'Fly Air' in Turkey
TAC		9/10/1998	Seen stored at Marana 13/3/2007 reportedly for Midex Airlines (UAE)
TAD		24/10/1998	Currently with Midex Airlines (UAE) Reg:A6-MDB
TAE		24/10/1998	Currently with Midex Airlines (UAE) Reg:A6-MDC
B727-100			
TJA	Oct-64	14/02/1976	Last flew with Continental until 19/07/91. Scrapped 08/93
TJB	29/11/1964	12/03/1980	Last flew with Quassar de Mexico until 09/94. Scrapped Miami 08/95
TJC	24/08/1965	26/12/1976	Last flew with USPS 30/04/06. Scrapped 07/06
TJD	13/08/1966	31/03/1979	Currently with Marbyia Investments (Bermuda) as an executive aircraft. Reg VP-BAB
TJE	2/11/1969	15/07/1979	Last flew with HMS Airways (Jordan). Currently in derelict condition in Amman.
TJF	18/07/1970	15/01/1979	Currently with Starling Aviation. Reg. VP-CJN
B727-200			
TBG	7/01/1973	6/08/1992	Last flew with Aeroexo (Mexico). Broken up 2002.
TBH	1/12/1973	6/03/1991	Sold to Memphis Group in Greenwood Mississippi and broken up for parts 06/92
TBI	10/04/1974	26/05/1992	Sold to Memphis Group in Greenwood Mississippi and broken up for parts 05/94

TBJ	1/08/1974	6/01/1992	Last flew with Aviacsa 1995. Broken up for spare parts 1998
TBK	8/11/1974	22/11/1986	Now on a pole outside the HO of 727 Communications , Stilling, Denmark
TBL	7/05/1975	11/04/1987	Owned by A.R.T. 20751 Ltd and leased to Falcon Air. Reg. N908PG
TBM	26/11/1976	20/12/1992	Now operated by Aviacsa. Reg. XA-SLG
TBN	7/07/1978	30/10/1992	Now operated by Aviacsa. Reg. XA-SJE
TBO	6/02/1979	16/12/1992	Believed still flying with Aviacsa
TBP	5/06/1979	28/09/1992	Believed still flying with Aviacsa
TBQ	26/01/1980	24/11/1992	Last confirmed flying Aviacsa in 1998
TBR	26/09/1980	31/12/1992	Last flew with Aviacsa 2006. Fuselage used as a cabin trainer. The rest broken up
TJJ	16/04/1967	15/02/1982	Reported scrapped at Caracas after being last seen without engines in 2003
TJK	6/05/1967	29/06/1982	Currently with Logistic Air (USA) but remains stored at Marana
TJL	1/09/1967	29/09/1986	Scrapped in Indiana in 2007
TJM	9/04/1968	26/10/1981	Stored at Rosewell, New Mexico and now believed scrapped
TJN	7/11/1968	31/05/1982	Stored at Rosewell, New Mexico and now believed scrapped
TJO	23/07/1969	24/12/1981	Scrapped in Detroit in 2002
TJP	13/02/1970	29/10/1986	Operated by TAESA (Mexico)-crashed on take-off, Uruapan Airport, Mexico 09/11/99
TJQ	26/08/1970	24/04/1989	Owned by Logistic Air (USA) - observed stored at Marana intact 03/14
TJR	10/02/1971	7/07/1989	Scrapped at Roswell, New Mexico around 2009 after flying for DHL
TJS	8/04/1971	23/08/1989	Scrapped at Wilmington Ohio around 2011
TJT	4/08/1971	23/08/1989	Awaiting restoration to static display condition by Grissom AFB Museum, Peru, Indiana
TJU	26/10/1971	17/11/1989	Scrapped at Peru, Indiana after service with Airborne Express as Reg. N942AX

Vale

Our sincere condolences are extended to the families and friends of passed TAA/Australian Airlines work colleagues. Fond memories will remain.

Barry Hockings	Captain	10/11/14	
Des Leonard		16/11/14	Aged 91
Graham House	Marketing Support	03/12/14	
Mark Stewart	Captain	??/10/14	Aged 80
Len Murphy	Captain	17/12/14	
John (Jack) Curtis	Captain	10/01/15	Aged 91
Holly Hellwege	Clerical Assistant	25/12/14	Aged 47 [see our web site for more]
Keith Penniall	Captain	11/12/14	Aged 73
Dave Feather	Nav. Instructor	10/01/15	Aged 90
Lynne Collins	F.A. & Cust. Serv. Mgr.	31/01/15	
Elton Marsden	Maint. Planning	21/05/14	Foundation Member
Russell Page	Maint. Dock Planning	21/02/15	Aged 57
Ivan Harrison	Aircraft Eng. BNE	13/02/15	Aged 70
Charmaine Worth	Exec. Secretary	11/03/15	Aged 64
Eric Sandstrup	Captain	14/03/15	
Dietmar (Ditty) Arndt	Carpenter	20/03/15	Aged 74