



# **TAA / Australian Airlines 25 Year Club**

**Newsletter No. 86**

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**Editor: John Wren**

## **Merry Christmas and Happy New Year**



*Flight deck of  
TAA 727 Whispering T-Jet*

### **President's Report**

- ➔ Well, another year gone and the next, TAA's 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary [9 September 2016]. It has been a big year at the Museum with so much going on, new Volunteers starting, new display material constantly being added through generous donations, more tours / visitors and lots of projects completed and in progress to keep us busy next year.

The Museum Volunteers do a mighty job week-in- week out and usually don't flinch when I ask them to help with a new project. You can see improvements at the Museum all the time now, which is very encouraging and regular visitors [tour guides, teachers etc] comment on how the Museum is not just a static display.

The 25 Year Club Committee have been doing a great job and the enthusiasm can be seen in the Museum's advances. Our finances [that's mainly your annual \$20 donation'] are in good shape allowing us to further improve the Museum. Next year half the Committee will be up for re-election at the AGM on 16 March 2016. The Committee extend to all Members their warm Christmas wishes and all the best for 2016.

Planning continues for our 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary on 9 September 2016 [did you like the way I snuck mention of the date on twice] and you will be hearing a lot more about the details next year. Regrettably we have so few of our Foundation Members [started with TAA in 1946] who are mobile or still with us, this 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary will be very important to us all. [We had 4 Foundation Members at our Founders Dinner and Christmas Lunch this year, but we are hoping to have a bigger roll up next year.

Our host Qantas continues to support us at the Flight Training Centre opposite Essendon Airport with the Museum facility where we can graphically show where the current Qantas domestic fleet came from ie early beginnings as TAA; then Australian Airlines, and following the Federal Government's decision to amalgamate it's two airlines, as Qantas. Certainly the Qantas staff who visit whilst they are at the Flight Training Centre [Flight Attendants, Ground Staff & Pilots] are impressed by the scope and presentation of all the displays - and of course we let all Qantas & Jetstar staff into the Museum for free. Of interest, many of the Flight Attendant training courses bring the trainees to the Museum to see part of their heritage.

And most importantly, there's the TAA 25 Year Club members. We are always 'encouraged' by the looks on the faces of our local and interstate Members as they come in the front door of the Museum for the first time and see all the TAA and Australian Airlines 'stuff' from day one of TAA onwards. It just blows them away; and yes, we keep tissues for those that get a bit weepy seeing pictures of their old workmates and the myriad of TAA / Australian Airlines items.

And it never fails to impress everyone when an extended family come to donate a box of TAA items that meant a great deal to a passed loved one, and take the time to have a look around the Museum to cement the connection with the family member.

Lastly I would like to thank the Committee, the Volunteers, Qantas and all our Members for letting me represent you as President of the 25 Year Club & Museum for the last 2 years. It has been a fantastic experience. I wish you all a very safe, healthy Happy Christmas and prosperous New Year.

## **Xmas close down of Museum**

The Museum will close on Thursday afternoon **10 December 2015** and reopens on **Tuesday 12 January 2016**.

## **Newsletter**

The Newsletter will be emailed to members who request it in lieu of surface mail. The email group will also be able to click on links to very short movies. Surface mail will always be available for those without email access.

## Christmas Lunch

The TAA / Australian Airlines 25 Year Club Christmas Lunch held on the 12th November was a 'ripper', with Xmas decorations on our silver service tables and a very interesting picture presentation [running in the background] from the Museum's digital records.

The meals, as always were great, and by using the William Angliss facility, we were helping young hospitality industry trainees to hone their craft. We then looking at the picture presentation featuring the early days of TAA. This proved so successful that it was shown at the STAARS function the following week.

The 25 Year Club President (John Wren) thanked our Committee and all the Museum Volunteers for their continued dedication throughout the year, along with Qantas for the brilliant Museum facility. A special welcome was extended to Foundation Members Ken Ziesing, Lance Erwin, Bluey Kennedy and Bob Russell [below, left]. We also had Life member John Beaton attending. Interstate (TSV) Member Geoff Tozer also enjoyed the day. Pics taken by Kevin Anderson; below right, from left Jim Collins, Lis King, Murray Watson (back of head) and Duncan Cameron.



## Annual General Meeting [AGM] Wednesday 16 March 2016

Don't forget our Annual General Meeting, which is being held at the Skyways Hotel at 11:00 am on Wednesday 16 March 2016. [The Airport West tram stops diagonally opposite the Skyways Hotel, with the Westfield Shopping Centre behind.

A two course meal will be served after the AGM at a cost of \$5 (payable on the day). This meal is subsidized by the 25 Year Club. Drinks (at your own cost) are available from the bar.

Please let us know (Phone 9280 8113) if you are coming so we can arrange the catering / seating.

## Mysterious F27 Galley

Our previous Newsletter ran an article about a mysterious TAA F27 Galley; which prompted Member John Jardine to write in with the following story:

“As a follow up to the story regarding the Fokker F27 Galley found in a garage in Frankston, I thought all 25 Year Club Members would like to know that the Galley in the photo was built in the Sheet Metal Shop at

Essendon around 1970. There were 16 made in total. 8 left hand and 8 right hand. The sheeties who built these galleys were: Alan Evans, Brian Taylor, Barry Spark, Jim Bevis, Alan Jones and myself John Jardine.

Previously we had built galleys for the early MK 1 Fokker's. These particular galleys were curved to suit the shape of the fuselage and had to be extremely accurate so that they would actually fit into the aircraft. Accuracy was made more difficult as the entire galley was made from flat sheet metal so that all angles, channels, hat sections etc that made up the frame had to be folded. I was still an apprentice when these galleys were built, but I remember they all fitted into the aircraft perfectly.

The sheeties who built these galleys were absolutely top class. From memory they were: Mal Evans, Jim Shepherd, Keith Sampson, Alan Evans, Cliff Smith, Bob Semmens plus others. I was fortunate enough as an apprentice to be surrounded by these highly skilled tradies who were only too happy to teach me how to do things properly. Sadly except for Mal and Alan Evans the others have all passed on.

A few years later we got an order to build a special pair of galleys for VH - TFM. These were the first galleys manufactured using extrusions instead of flat sheet metal. The extrusions came in various shapes such as right angles, channels, hat sections etc and basically only needed to be cut to length and joined to make up the frame. It was also the first time a product called Thiokol (PR1422) was used to seal all mating surfaces. Neil Anderton was the Design Draftsman who made the drawings for these galleys and it was his idea to use that awful stuff. If you got it on your hands you needed an angle grinder to get it off!

Many years later Neil and I went to Jamco in Japan to inspect some galleys they were building for Australian Airlines. We stayed at the Tokyo Hilton and my room number was 1422. Scary!!!

The Mark 11 Fokker Galleys as per the photo were smaller than the pair for VH-TFM. They were designed to sit on a pallet. They had fittings on the bottom the same as cabin seats. The pallets had chair tracks attached so that the galleys could just click into place the same as a seat. The seats also sat on pallets so that if the aircraft was to be used as a freighter, the seats and galleys were simply fork lifted out, then put back for passenger use.

The Galley in the photo looks in remarkable condition for its age, probably built around 1970. I was a Leading Hand when these galleys were built, but that job was made very easy by the skilful Sheeties who built them and the very skilful draftsmen, Dick Button and Neil Anderton who designed it.”

*{Ed. Thanks to John Jardine for the above article}*

## **DC3 outback flying**

Pat Merlehan sent in the following article reflecting on her early days with TAA in Brisbane:

“As Patricia McMahan, I was accepted into Trans Australia Airlines in 1957. After approximately 6 months training in Melbourne I was transferred to Brisbane and so began my introduction to western Queensland.

Although training had been done in Melbourne, further training was undertaken with a Senior Hostess as to how things were done in Queensland.

Flights 456/455 [DC3] went from Brisbane to Rockhampton, Mackay, Proserpine, Ayr, Townsville, Ingham, Innisfail, Cairns, and back the same way. We overnighted at the Cairns Hostel. The duties we undertook started in Brisbane. ALWAYS count all components for the trays for 21 passengers not forgetting to check the 1” high pepper and salt. Brisbane Catering was great – except when it came to teaspoons! Somehow,

teaspoons had a life of their own. They were always in short supply. To be told when the a/c was going to be away for several days ‘Haven’t got any teaspoons, Luv’, and to be handed a bundle of ‘paddle pop sticks’ in lieu certainly happened. Brisbane provided a hot breakfast which was packed in thermos cylinders. Tea and coffee – there were no tea bags then – was made by the hostess. With no boiling water is it any wonder the passengers drank coffee rather than tea? The meal thermos; hot and cold water were all anchored to the floor with bungee cords. The expectation was that they would be lifted onto the buffet for access. The other expectation was that the hot water urn would be replenished at both Rockhampton and Mackay which called for said urn to be carried to the ‘passenger terminal’ emptied and refilled. As cups had been used for breakfast they required to be washed before morning tea. I think lunch was out of Mackay. Once we arrived in Townsville cabin service and catering were welcomed with open arms. Apart from meals provided at certain ports there was nothing else available. It had to be loaded out of Brisbane.

For the Darwin Flights we loaded a double supply of everything. I think Cloncurry’s milk supply was the most interesting. There was not fresh milk in the west – that did not happen in Mt Isa until 1959. Cloncurry needed to provide milk for the Gulf Run which originated there. It went to Normanton and Mornington Island on alternate weeks. Back to the milk - with nothing else available it was powdered milk, mixed and put in a beer bottle with a paper stopper!! Anyone experienced with powdered milk during that era should remember that it did not mix very well. When paper stopper was pulled out a great glug of unmixed powder was in the neck of the bottle!

We worked under ‘flying hours’ and had to maintain our log books which were checked each month. We operated what were known as ‘channel’ trips via the large cattle stations down to Birdsville; Broken Hill and Leigh Creek and one northern one to Boulia. The longest trip in the mid- fifties was to Tenant Creek in the Northern Territory. It was 11 flying hours – no mention of working hours! It operated Wednesday/Thursday and the only guarantee was that was our work for the week.

Darwin on the DC4 was a twice a week service with one returning to Sydney where we stayed overnight at the Coogee Hotel before returning to Brisbane the following day. The supplies loaded for Darwin were expected to cover the following day southbound trip.

Once a month an overnight Melbourne was rostered; this was considered a reward for the ‘old pubs’ which were our accommodation around western Qld. We departed Brisbane at 8am on 411 and did not return until late the following day on 408. The time was spent getting to know Melbourne. I spent three summers flying out of Brisbane. There were those who were air sick every summer but soldiered on.

When a major reunion is held in Brisbane it is amazing how many come. Queensland was different, but also held an attraction even if the hostesses from the south only came for a ‘temporary transfer’.”

*[Ed. Pat is a great supporter of our Museum and now adds ‘author’ to her many talents. Thanks Pat.]*

## Murder Mystery lunch



Bulleen Heights Probus Club recently had a Murder Mystery lunch featuring none other than our own Don & Anne Marie Withers and Robyn Nichols performing in the role of Captain and Flight Attendants before a vast enthusiastic audience, and were dressed in spare uniforms from the Museum collection. They came up well don't you think; and the audience apparently agreed. Well done. [*Ed. We never did find out 'who dun it'.*]

## Dates - 2016

1. STAARS will be meeting at Moonee Valley Race Course on 16 Feb, 17 May, 16 Aug & 15 Nov
2. Museum opens 12 Jan
3. AGM 16 Mar
4. Tramboat Cruise 30 Mar [subject to confirmation]
5. Tramcar Restaurant 19 May [subject to confirmation]
6. 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Dinner 9 September
7. Xmas Lunch 10 Nov

## Changes at the Museum

We have had the Australian Airlines sign [from the airport] for some time 'out the back'; and recently it was installed just inside the front door. Looks nice:



As you see the sign on entry to the Museum.



And as you are leaving.

## STAARS Lunch – 17 November

Another successful STAARS Lunch [the last for 2015] was held at Moonee Valley, and the numbers were up [193] with the good weather and Christmas just around the corner. We were saddened to hear Alf Harder [LAME MEL] passed away after suffering a heart attack a few weeks before. His family arranged for everyone attending to have a drink on Alf. Below are some pics taken on the day:



Ray Johnson, a visitor from Brisbane caught up with some old mates over lunch.



Everyone enjoying the meal and good company in the recently renovated dining room.



Here's a before and after shot for you – John Jardine [*left*] & Alan Evans in the workshop; and the pair of them [*right hand picture*] at the STAARS Lunch enjoying a reminisce over the pic.

## Brisbane Christmas Lunch

Sunday the 29<sup>th</sup> November at the Kedron Wavell Services Club, (Brisbane) saw the Annual Members Luncheon of the South Queensland Chapter of the TAA/Australian Airlines 25year Club. A total of 48 Members from various departments enjoyed the Luncheon and a recall of those wonderful years gone by.



Pics provided by Dave Walsh

## Vale

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

<b>Wilhelmus (Wim) Wubben</b>	LAME / Type Specialist	Aged 91	17/09/15
<b>Maurice (Moss) Coulthard</b>		Aged 86	22/09/15
<b>John Dodorico</b>	Traffic		29/09/15
<b>Clarry May</b>	Despatch Controller		05/10/15
<b>Stanley Rutland</b>	LAME	Aged 88	xx/09/15
<b>Barry Stewart</b>	Capt.	Aged 86	
<b>Stan Berry</b>	Tarmac Foreman	Aged 95	xx/10/15
<b>Gordon Thurn</b>	Snr. Check Capt.	Aged 92	17/10/15
<b>Bob Goakes</b>	Pilot	Aged 61	xx/10/15
<b>Alan Huntley</b>	Reservations		17/05/15
<b>John Haines</b>	Adelaide	Aged 72	05/11/15
<b>Alf Harder</b>	LAME	Aged 89	13/11/15
<b>Len Fullarton</b>	HO	Aged 90	16/11/15
<b>Jutta Salter</b>	Darwin		24/10/15