



TAA / Australian Airlines 25 Year Club

Newsletter No. 95

December 2017

Editor: John Wren

This Air Age

Christmas Number — 1954



Santa arriving on our 9th birthday back in 1954. It was also the year that TAA flew the Queen around Australia [the first Australian airline to do so] in our Convair 240 aircraft which was 'pressurised'. We also introduced the Vickers Viscount to service. Lots happening in those early years.

71 years on, here we are celebrating another Christmas, not as an operating airline but incorporated into Qantas as their domestic fleet. And the Museum's small band of Volunteers are keeping the TAA name alive and well.

Looking back we can all be very proud of the rich heritage that was TAA.

General Manager's Xmas Greeting to Members of Staff

I send you all a sincere wish for a very happy Christmas and an enjoyable 1955 together in TAA.

All of us should feel proud of the loyalty and co-operation among the staff which has put TAA in the forefront of civil aviation in Australia.

This will be our ninth Christmas as an organisation, and the last twelve months have added much public goodwill, and some tradition, to the intangible assets which can not be shown in our annual reports.

Early in 1954 we had the honour and pleasure of carrying Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth and His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh on six flights while they were in Australia.

The way in which these duties were performed reflected great credit on the entire staff, and will form an important part of our history.

ON October 31 at Mangalore three fine men — Captains Macdonald, Fisher and Nickels lost their lives while helping us to maintain an unbroken record of passenger safety.

I am sure each one of us will spare a few moments on December 25 to remember them and their families.

This month we introduce the turbine powered Viscounts to Australian air passengers. This is real progress and will set a popular new standard of air travel as it already has in Europe.

THE coming year will bring its triumphs and its hard work. We shall have to face vigorous competition, but we believe we have the finest aircraft and we will continue to impress our passengers with cheerful service and efficiency.

For the team spirit, loyalty and devotion to duty of the staff in 1954, I give you my thanks.

Our Chairman Mr. Watt, and members of the Commission join in extending seasons greetings and wishing good fortune and happiness to you all.

VISCOUNT AND SANTA

About 550 children, and 600 parents, attended the Essendon Christmas party at Melbourne Airport on December 4.

For all, it was a day of excitement. First the arrival of Santa Claus in a DC-3, then the Viscount "Gregory Blaxland" sweeping in only 10 minutes later.

The children were fully armed with balloons, party caps, toys, drinks and ice-cream before Father Christmas (better known at Essendon as Frank Sinclair) was ready to be escorted from his aircraft into the party.

Inside the igloo hangar the children found plenty to amuse them. There was a

miniature circus, a clown, and buggy rides.

Scottish pipers and dancers, who escorted Santa, stole the limelight for a time with their bagpipes and reels.

The party was officially organised by a committee led by Hec. Stearman (instrument supervisor), but a lot of help came from others at Essendon, and the mothers of many of the children.

See pictures above and below.



★ **Wishing you all a Merry Christmas** ★

Christmas Lunch 2017



Our Xmas lunch was attended by over 100 members; with all the arrangements and food turning out really well. At left can be seen the giant screen where various TAA movies from our 'film to digital conversion' project were shown in the background whilst the President had the honour of presenting **Bert Lawes with a 25 Year Club Life Member Certificate**. Well done Bert.



Above, at right, Bert is congratulated by Alan Whatman. Also pictured are two of our **Foundation Members Lance Erwin [right] and Ken Ziesing [seated middle]** chatting with Charlie Radford.

Committee Members

Finally, we got all the Committee Members together for a photo. Note that Ray Splatt had to retire mid-year and Ian Wood kindly stepped in to fill the position until the next elections. Thanks to Ray for his service on Committee and Ian for stepping up to help out. Committee pictured below:



Left to right Jim Collins [Treasurer], Arnold Rogers [Secretary], Sam Favazza, Terry Masocco [Vice President], Kevin Anderson, Paul Gluschenko, Ian Wood and John Wren [President] – all in front of the Museum picture gallery with a mannequin wearing one of our first Hostess uniforms.

President's Report

- ➔ TAA has received the Southern Cross Award from the Australian Aviation Hall of Fame [AAHOF] at a gala Dinner on Saturday 25 November 2017 at the Historic Aircraft Restoration Society [HARS], Illawarra Regional Airport [Wollongong]. The Hall of Fame was founded to honour those individuals and organisations whose outstanding contributions have advanced aviation significantly, thereby inspiring our future generations. Other notables to receive the Award previously were Qantas and the RFDS. This is the AAHF's 6th annual Induction and the first with a dinner at HARS. [See full report elsewhere in this Newsletter]
- ➔ The **70th Anniversary posters** are into a 3rd reprint and in stock again. If you haven't got around to it yet, or want a great Xmas present, you could order one through the Museum - the unframed small poster [\$15] and the larger unframed version [\$25] when collected from the Museum. A truly great TAA memento.
- ➔ For the history buff's – have a look at our web site for an article on TAA's Bristol Freighter. http://www.taamuseum.org.au/TAAircraft/aircraft_BristolFr.html
- ➔ This is the final Newsletter for the year, I hope it finds you wiser and healthy in readiness for the Christmas celebrations with family and friends and the New Year – 2018. From the Committee and the Museum Volunteers – we wish you and your families a very merry Christmas and happy New Year.

Australian Aviation Hall of Fame

TAA received the Southern Cross Award at the official Induction Ceremony held during the Gala Dinner on Saturday 25 November 2017 at the Historic Aircraft Restoration Society [HARS], Illawarra Regional Airport [Wollongong]. The AAHOF recently relocated to the HARS facility from Wagga Wagga.

The AAHOF was founded to honour those individuals and organisations whose outstanding contributions have advanced aviation significantly, thereby inspiring our future generations. Only one 'company' award is made annually, so TAA is very honoured.

Attending to receive the award for TAA was John Wren [President] and Terry Masocco {Vice President}. On arrival we had a tour over the HARS facility with our number one aim – to see Hawdon [DC3 Reg. VH-AES that flew our first revenue flight on 9/9/46]. Hawdon was gleaming after hundreds of hours polishing her for the special night. We ran into Dave Wilshire complete with gloves and polish equipment applying the final touches. They are following up on a new product that coats the aircraft skin so that the polished appearance remains for a reported 10 years. One propeller blade was to be changed and the auto pilot was also to be replaced for a more modern unit. There was talk of an avionic suite being fitted as well. They are still in-the-process of getting CASA approval for flight.

Next we moved to the Convair [VH-TAA] aircraft that is painted in TAA colours. We had sent data to allow an old set of Hastings Deering mobile stairs to be painted in TAA colours as well, and this was positioned at the rear stairs. [Our 240 model of the Convair had rear centre integral stairs and a small service door at the right front. The HARS Convair 440 has integral forward stairs [like our DC9's] and an aft door that they had the mobile stairs positioned to. As you would know from previous Newsletters, the HARS Convair suffered an inflight engine shut down 10 minutes after take-off heading for the Avalon Air Show. The engine has just been replaced and will be tested next week. We gave HARS 2 CD's. One was a copy of our digitally converted film of our first Convair delivery via Europe and the other was a compilation of TAA Convair pictures, data, manuals, advertising etc. HARS are looking forward to a second Convair arriving soon from the US.

Speaking of arrivals, a RAAF P3 Orion has just been added to their collection last week, two F27 aircraft will be coming from NZ in addition to the Convair mentioned above. We also saw the Southern Cross replica [nearly ready for flight testing], a recently arrived DC4 needing a lot of restoration, and of course the famous Connie.

The gala dinner was nice – we had Ian Watkins [son of our former Engineering Director] sitting at our table. Inducted on the night was James Strong, and his son Nick Strong attended with his partner Sarah to accept the Award. Nick spoke warmly about TAA / Australian Airlines and after the event he indicated he would donate some of James’ memorabilia to our Museum in the new-year which will be warmly received.



HARS hangar with DC3 VH-AES ‘Hawdon’ all polished up. Note the tyre covers. The aircraft looked good and reportedly almost ready to fly again; and was centre stage in view of TAA receiving the Southern Cross Award.

HARS Convair VH-TAA showing the TAA livery and the forward integral airstairs which was not on our 240 aircraft. Being a fresh paint job, the aircraft looks really good. Not a lot of patches.



Rear of the HARS Convair showing rear door [which our aircraft did not have] and the drivable airstairs in TAA livery. Note the registration on the tail – VH-TAA.

Shown here is the HARS Connie that they seem to be famous for. It has only just returned to HARS after a visit to the painters for a complete re-paint.

Below: Nick Strong, son of our former GM James Strong and partner Sarah, accepting the AAHOF induction Certificate. *Right:* John Wren accepting the AAHOF 'Southern Cross Award' on behalf of TAA after file footage of TAA was shown to the audience.



Left: Presentation of the Southern Cross Award by [R to L] Steve Padgett, Chairman of AAHOF and Greg Atkin, Manager Aviation & Military VIVA Energy [major sponsor] to John Wren for TAA. The framed Award will be on display in the new-year at the Museum.

In case you were wondering VIVA took over Shell aviation fuel, amongst other things.

Members can look at more pictures of our DC3 Hawdon and the Convair [amongst other things taken at HARS on the day at our Museum web site:

<http://www.taamuseum.org.au/MuseumFront/SpecialEvents2.html> .

TAA Stamp issued

Australia Post have issued a **stamp featuring TAA** for the Cocos [Keeling] Islands. You will recall that TAA flew once a fortnightly services at the request of the Federal Government. Below is a picture of the stamp set and the following was taken from Australia Post “Stamp Bulletin”:

“This stamp issue looks at Cocos {Keeling} Islands civil aviation history. Each of the four stamps represents a ‘chapter’ of this history, from 1939 to the 1970’s.

The Consolidated Model 28-3 design represents the first ever flight to the Cocos [Keeling] Islands, a survey for a new route in the event an alternative route to deliver airmail to England was necessary if war broke out in Asia and interrupted the Empire route. It was undertaken by the NC777 Guba, a civil version of the Catalina flying boat.

The Avro 691 Lancastrian VH-EAS shown in the stamp design represents another survey flight, this time in 1948. Qantas Empire Airways made the flight to ascertain the practicality of the ‘Wallaby Route’, which it wished to operate between Sydney and Johannesburg. The success of the survey flight led to scheduled services commencing in 1952.

The third aircraft type operated by Australia on the Wallaby Route, after the Constellation and Super Constellation, was the Lockheed L-188 Electra. Qantas Electra’s began flying the route in 1963 and gave way to Boeing 707’s in 1967, at which time Cocos was no longer a stop on the route. The aircraft in the design is VH-ECB Pacific Explorer.

In the early 1970’s operating under the ‘two airline policy’ Ansett Airlines of Australia and Trans-Australia Airlines [TAA] flew charter flights between Cocos and Perth using Boeing 727’s. Schedules meant that in reality aircraft from the two airlines were seldom, if ever, at Cocos at the same time. The aircraft in the foreground on the stamp is VH-TJA James Cook, a TAA Boeing 727-76.”



Newsletter

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 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 establish their financial status from the covering email. Surface mail will always be available.

Franklin Street HO



Just recently I [Ed] went past the old Franklin Street HO and asked the building workers what they were doing to the building. Apparently the VIC Government Department of Justice has taken all the building and will move in when alterations are completed soon. In the picture at left [from Jim Collins] you can see how our 15 Floor HO, which was very tall in its day, has now been surrounded by the next generation buildings of our ever changing Melbourne city.

25 Year Club Queensland Branch

The South Queensland Chapter of the TAA / Australian Airlines 25 Year Club held their 2017 Members Annual Luncheon on Saturday the 25th of November. The Kedron Wavell Services Club provided the venue for the Fifty-four Members and Guests who attended.

The excellent food was complemented with the conversation about those wonderful years with TAA and Australian Airlines. I am sure you will be able to make out some faces that you recognise from early days. Let us hope that we will all be there again next year. Pictures at top of next page:



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}

Tom Bennett	Capt.	_____	_____
Peggy Anderson	_____	aged 95	
<input type="checkbox"/> Harry Page	Super. Flt Servs	aged 97	14/07/17
Wally Maxwell	LAME - Tulla	_____	_____
Cec Austen	Capt.	Aged 98	29/10/17
George Ellis	Super. Power Plant	_____	08/10/17
Jeff Fry	FE LAME	Aged 77	27/11/17



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': C'wealth Bank BSB: 063 007 Account No.: 0090 1577

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.