



NHILL ANSON NEWSLETTER

Issue No. 14. 20-12-2011

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- Merry Christmas

Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting of the Nhill Aviation Heritage Centre was held on Thursday 17th November 2011 at the Soldiers' Lounge. President Rob Lynch presented the following report. (Edited).

PRESIDENT'S REPORT **2010 - 2011**

My report this year will update you on the activities of the Nhill Aviation Heritage Centre for the last twelve months as well as the progress of the restoration of the Avro Anson aircraft.

It seems every corner we turn there appears another aspect of Nhill's aviation history waiting to be discovered. Sometimes it becomes a little overwhelming trying to piece together the information coming to light but I believe if we work on this one piece at a time then it will eventually begin to take shape.

When Mick Kingwill started the Avro Anson restoration he stated that he would start at the tail and work forward, a task the untrained mind would have probably not attempted. He set a great example for us to follow because we are now all involved in discovering, researching, restoring, preserving, recording and highlighting this fascinating part of Nhill's history.

The NAHC Board continues to work together in a coherent manner, and regularly assesses its performance. A major review was conducted by friend and mentor Jean Roberts who travelled from Melbourne to provide professional facilitation. The review led into a strategic planning session and set the stage for the next two-year program.

In December last year we commenced cataloguing our growing collection of memorabilia using the newly developed Victorian Collections free online cataloguing system. Joan Bennett, John Deckert, Trevor Borgelt and Chris Weeks attended workshops learning to use the system. This service is provided by the Victorian Government. It is important to know the origin of each item, its significance and most importantly for a museum display, the story behind it. With assistance from Peta Knot of Museums Australia we have developed a collection policy and a set of rules to keep us focused. I believe Museums Australia will be a great help to us as the 'Centre' develops.

A number of representatives of community organisations including myself as chair person have been involved in an advisory committee to the Hindmarsh Shire to develop a Nhill Aerodrome Master Plan. The concept of a Master Plan was initiated by the then Director of Infrastructure Andrew Bainbridge at a Community Consultation convened by the Nhill Aviation Heritage Centre. I am pleased to say that the new Director of Infrastructure Doug Gowans has taken up from where Andrew left off with a great amount of enthusiasm and I thank Doug and the Hindmarsh Shire Council for the support they have put behind the Master Planning process which is presently nearing completion. The master plan will be a crucial component in future development of the aerodrome and a great assistance in applying for government funding for our projects.

During the year we asked the Hindmarsh Shire to assist us to obtain Deductible Gift Status with the Australian Tax Office. At this point this has not been achieved, but we will continue in our endeavours because Deductible Gift Status will help the NAHC to obtain funds from philanthropic and corporate sponsors.

Thank you to Nathan Wheeler for initiating fundraising by collecting old batteries. This venture has been well supported by the community and has created an important revenue stream for the Avro Anson restoration project.

Thank you to Kevin O'Reilly who is very passionate about the NAHC and what we are trying to achieve. A portion of the sales revenue from Kevin's book "In Just Five Years" is financially supporting this organization. During the year Kevin started developing a Nhill Aerodrome brochure for the Hindmarsh Shire Tourist Information Centre. Kevin also organized Roger Meyer, the President of the Civil Aviation Historical Society at Essendon Airport, to speak at our recent public information night held at the Senior Citizens rooms.

Roger Meyer brought to our attention another aspect of our aviation heritage, the Aeradio building at the aerodrome. I think we all knew it was a building of interest but few of us were aware of its rarity and significance in regards to early aviation in Australia. As Roger discovered during an inspection of the building, it is not only the building itself but the surrounds that contain rare remnants of this early navigation facility.

Kevin O'Reilly has embarked on writing another book on aviation history. It started out to document early aviation in the Wimmera and Mallee but it appears that this may be expanded to include most of Victoria. We can only marvel at Kevin's energies and dedication to his passion for aviation history.

Grant funding will continue to be vital to us achieving our goals and we are always looking for grants that may fit our projects. We applied for several grants throughout the year and were successful on two occasions. We received \$2000 from the Horsham Sports and Community Club to assist in payment for the fabric covering of the Avro Anson and \$1000 from the Hindmarsh Shire Community Grants program for the development of a Heritage Walk at the site of the former World War II Air School on the Nhill aerodrome.

A recent development that must be reported is the work being done on the old WWII Flight Office at the aerodrome. Through the support of the Hindmarsh Shire Council we obtained federal government funding to go towards the construction of a museum hangar for the Avro Anson. Unfortunately, we ran into several hurdles with the State Government portion of the funding and a time constraint forced us to apply for a variation to the federal grant. Thanks to the work of Director of Community Development Phil King and Community Development Officer Charmayne Parry of the Hindmarsh Shire, we were successful in our application to change the way the grant money was used and so now refurbishment of the Flight Office is well underway.

The support received from the Hindmarsh Shire Council and staff has been fantastic. Their commitment to our organization is very evident and is an important part of the community support we need to succeed. We have had many meetings over a coffee with Charmayne Parry and are encouraged by her enthusiasm for our projects.

In August we met with Jo Burke CEO of the Wimmera Development Association. Jo was very supportive of our group and gave us some timely information and advice on how to proceed.

We have formed a subcommittee that is planning a Fly-In for October 2012. Len Creek is chairing that committee and the plans are progressing steadily.

Board member and Project Officer, Mick Kingwill, has continued to put an enormous amount of work into the restoration of the Avro Anson. His workmanship is exceptional and the speed at which the restoration is taking place is testament to the dedication and time he is spending on this project. Parts have been sourced from collectors and restorers around the world and some from auction. We recently acquired a quantity of engine parts and we believe we now have enough to build two complete engines.

Thank you to the Nhill business community for their support of this project, particularly those that have been very generous with materials for the Avro Anson. We source whatever supplies we can locally.

The Nhill Aviation Heritage Centre is very fortunate to have received a number of donations throughout the year; some are for the Avro Anson and some are aviation memorabilia. We are also grateful for the many cash donations and a particular thank you to the anonymous donor of \$5000 for the purchase of propellers. All donations are very much appreciated.

I must thank the Board members for their input and hard work this last year. Unfortunately, two Board members, Lesley Stephan and Chris Weeks, resigned from their positions for personal reasons. I thank them for their time and input whilst on the Board and wish them well in the future.

Finally I would like to mention the importance of membership to our organization. Membership not only provides us with the important funds to administer the organization but is also important to show that we have community support. Your membership of the Nhill Aviation Heritage Centre will assist the Board to continue with projects aimed at preserving the aviation heritage of Nhill and District.

We are aiming to have more interaction with our membership through information/speaker nights and actual hands-on activities related to our various projects. I ask all members to encourage anyone interested in our project to become a member. Remember this is a community project that will ultimately be a community facility for the benefit of our town and future generations.

Rob Lynch. President



Annual Meeting

Councillor David Colbert, NAHC President Rob Lynch and NAHC Secretary Trevor Borgelt discuss the procedure for the evening just before starting the Annual Meeting.

Most Recent News on the Flight Office

It is true to say that there has been another curve in the road towards our ultimate goal of building an Aviation Heritage Centre at the Nhill aerodrome.

Following the initial application for funds, the Hindmarsh Shire was granted \$57,000 by the Commonwealth Government. Unfortunately, matching State funding was delayed by an election and the subsequent changes made by the new government. Meanwhile the Shire held the Commonwealth grant in its coffers. Towards the end of September, the Shire was informed by the Commonwealth that the money had to be spent by the end of December this year, and if it was not spent then the full amount would have to be returned.

That caused some hectic activity because there was no way known that the Shire, or the Nhill Aviation Heritage Centre would let that money go back to the Commonwealth if it could possibly be used for our project. Consequently, the Shire sought permission to amend the original application to allow us to use the \$57,000 to renovate the old Flight Office. (This renovation was part of the NAHC plan but it had not previously been a high priority.) Permission was granted and the NAHC Board, with the co-operation of the Shire, found a local builder Daryl Leyonhjelm to help us out. Daryl has gone out of his way to help us because he is very busy with his pre-Christmas building commitments.



Flight Office Restoration

Len Creek, Rob Lynch and Nathan Wheeler (at the back) strip the old lining from the building.

Progress is being made – the building has a new galvanized iron roof and spouting, and the old lining has been removed, insulation added and the lining replaced and the electrical wiring completely renewed. As it is important to keep the exterior of the building true to the original we have new wooden framed windows reproduced in Ballarat, and the Nhill Men's Shed will reproduce the doors. Rob Lynch, Len Creek, Trevor Borgelt and Nathan Wheeler have

put much physical effort into removing old lining, painting barge boards etc. and other labouring jobs.

We have been told that we can apply to the Commonwealth for our major project again, and the Shire assures us that our big project is high priority and that everything will happen during 2012-13. The Plan is to connect the restored Flight Office a new building that will house the Avro Anson and other memorabilia relating to the heritage of aviation at Nhill.



1. Taking a break from re-aligning the original twisted ceiling joists



2. The Flight Office just after the new roof was completed. It now has new windows, new electrical wiring and lining with insulation is almost complete. New doors will soon be fitted then comes the plastering and fitting of switches, lights etc.

The Board of the Nhill Aviation Heritage Centre wish all members and supporters a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Membership of the Nhill Aviation Heritage Centre

This newsletter is free to anyone interested in the Nhill Aviation Heritage Centre and any of its projects. However, this newsletter is also the only way the committee has of easily sending reminders to those who wish to support our cause by being a member.

Memberships run for a financial year and are \$30 per person. Payment can be made by cheque, money order or internet transfer. Confirmation of payment will only be made if an email address is included with payment or if a notice of payment is made by email to the treasurer:

treasurer@nhillaviationheritagecentre.com.au

A message to our supporters

Do you have a friend who would appreciate receiving this free newsletter? Just click on FORWARD and type in as many email addresses as you like then click SEND.

This newsletter is free. However, support for this important historical project is greatly appreciated and comes in many forms including phone numbers and email addresses, contact details of former WWII trainees, parts for the Avro Anson and general memorabilia, photos etc. as well as donations of cash and labour. Although it is our intention to recognise and acknowledge this assistance through the newsletter, specific details will not be published.

New email addresses are constantly being added to our list. If you do not wish to be part of our group then please contact admin@nhillaviationheritagecentre.com.au and make your request known.

Persons who wish to make comment about the Nhill Aviation Heritage Centre or any other related issue should also contact admin@nhillaviationheritagecentre.com.au. Such comments may be published in future newsletters if considered appropriate.