



NHILL ANSON NEWSLETTER

Issue No 21. 25-4-2013

Follow Progress on our Website

<http://nhillaviationheritagecentre.com.au/>

Highlights in this newsletter

- The Day Nhill Became an International Airport
- Link Trainers for Nhill
- Building project progress

The Day Nhill Became an International Airport

A few days before Christmas 1956 the following news item appeared in the Nhill Free Press.

Pakistani Planes at Nhill

Three planes of the Royal Pakistan Air Force landed at Nhill yesterday afternoon when one of them developed engine trouble on the flight from Adelaide to Laverton.

The planes were Bristol Freighters, modified to carry passengers, which left Pakistan last Tuesday to pick up the 76 remaining members of the Pakistan Olympic team.

One plane developed engine trouble, the motor cutting out twice, and it was decided to put down at Nhill. A change of spark plugs rectified the trouble.

Taking off, another plane struck a soft spot on the tarmac and became bogged. The wheel of the plane broke through the bitumen surface and sank about twelve inches into the ground. It was not damaged and after being extricated, the three planes left for Laverton shortly before six.

Nhill's aviation historian, Kevin O'Reilly, interviewed Charles Miller who added the following information to the story.

Charles Miller's visit to Nhill in December 1956.

I pursued my love of the air by becoming a civilian pilot and flew at every opportunity. I was in Darwin in 1956 where regrettably there was no aero club and so with other interested people, one was formed. A DH82 Tiger Moth was purchased through the Royal Victoria Aero Club and I was given the job of getting



to Victoria, collecting the machine from Tocumwal and flying it back to Darwin - quite an adventure in itself.

On enquiring at the Darwin airport as to the chances of “hitching” a lift to Melbourne, I found that a flight of three Pakistani Air Force Bristol freighter troop transporters was to fly through en route to Melbourne to collect members of the Pakistan Olympic team for their return home. (One can imagine how basic this long flight would have been in such aircraft - bench seats against the side of the fuselage and no sound or other insulation against temperature extremes.) When the planes arrived I was welcomed as a passenger who would know the terrain and there was competition amongst them to have me aboard, especially when it became known that I was a qualified pilot.

The Wing-Commander in charge of the flight claimed me and I flew in his plane. It had been planned that a night stopover would be made at Alice Springs, but after a look at the size of this well known inland “city,” they decided to press on to Adelaide for the night.

During the last leg of the flight from Adelaide to Melbourne, one machine reported a “rough runner,” and I was asked if there was anywhere a landing could be made while the fault was attended to. I was well aware that an RAAF base had existed at Nhill, in western Victoria and that the airliners used it from time to time when Essendon was closed due to poor weather conditions. After landing, the fault was duly repaired and preparations made to resume the flight. However, one of the machines became stuck when part of the old tarmac collapsed under the weight of the machine. People from the town began to arrive out of curiosity. (I have often wondered if photographs of the incident existed as many of the curious visitors appeared to have cameras.)

I managed to arrange a lift into town and was taken to the Shire offices to see if help could be arranged to release the plane. Ordinary farm tractors would not have sufficient traction to pull it clear, so the town grader was employed successfully.

The flight to Melbourne was completed, and to the best of my knowledge the flight back to Pakistan was uneventful. My flight to Darwin in the DH82 also took place without undue incident but the whole episode has remained in my mind over the years. Charles Miller.

Doug Casson, a retired Shire employee, was asked about grader drivers in 1956 and suggested that it would be almost certain that Doc Ansell, who operated an Allis Chalmers grader, would have pulled the aircraft from the bog. Doug also mentioned that 1956 was a very wet year and he and Doc Ansell spent much of their time repairing soft patches in bitumen roads.

Kevin O'Reilly tried hard to find photographs of this incident as well as someone who actually remembered being at the aerodrome on that day. It was only by chance that Ian Wheeler gave three photos to the Nhill Aviation Heritage Centre during the Fly-In last year. The Nhill Aviation Heritage Centre needs photos and stories about Nhill's aviation history. Contact John Deckert during business hours on 03 5391 1466.



Link Trainers

Board members have been negotiating for two link trainers from South Australia. These negotiations have progressed for almost a year and have now reached a successful conclusion that has resulted in both trainers being cared for by the Nhill Aviation Heritage Centre. The intention is to maintain one in good working condition and fully restore the other. Both units appear to be near complete but a substantial amount of work will be necessary to bring them back to operating condition. Unfortunately, any workshop manuals that may have been with the machines are now non-existent. It would be very much appreciated if someone has a manual that we could borrow.



Photos: Two Link Trainers in a private garage are moved about 50 metres on rollers during a 40° C day to be lifted into a furniture van. The units are now on pallets in a lock-up building at Nhill.

Link Trainer

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia.

The term **Link Trainer**, also known as the "Blue box" and "Pilot Trainer" is commonly used to refer to a series of flight simulators produced between the early 1930s and early 1950s by

the **Link Aviation Devices, Inc**, founded and headed by Ed Link, based on technology he pioneered in 1929 at his family's business in Binghamton, New York. These simulators became famous during World War II, when they were used as a key pilot training aid by almost every combatant nation.

The original Link Trainer was created in 1929 out of the need for a safe way to teach new pilots how to fly by instruments. A former organ and nickelodeon builder, Link used his knowledge of pumps, valves and bellows to create a flight simulator that responded to the pilot's controls and gave an accurate reading on the included instruments. More than 500,000 US pilots were trained on Link simulators as were pilots of nations as diverse as Australia, Canada, Germany, United Kingdom, Israel, Japan, Pakistan and the USSR.

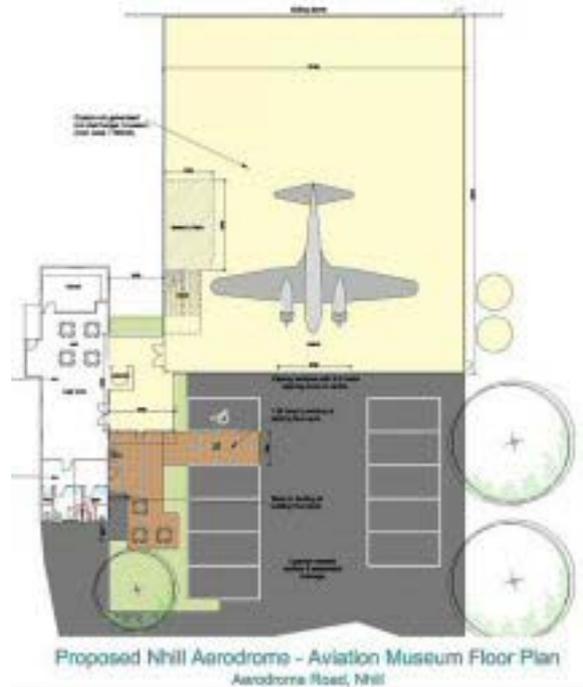
The Link Flight Trainer has been designated as an *Historic Mechanical Engineering Landmark* by the American Society of Mechanical Engineers. The Link Company, now the Link Simulation & Training division of L-3 Communications, continues to make aerospace simulators

Nhill Aviation Heritage Centre building.

At the last meeting of the NAHC the Board was advised of the need for fire suppression equipment. This was something that had not been mentioned on any occasion before and came as quite a shock. The additional cost is significant and has caused the NAHC to modify the project to a stage one and stage two situation. Stage two is now expected to be more expensive when done separately but the additional cost of fire control water tanks put the total project beyond our resources at this stage.

As previously advised, the NAHC have now been granted tax deductibility status for any gift of money or memorabilia. Donations will be most welcome and may be made through our secure Pay Pal facility by following this link

<http://nhillaviationheritagecentre.com.au/members-1.htm>



Comments Welcome

The NAHC welcomes comment about the organisation and any of the articles that appear in the Nhill Anson Newsletter. A restructure of the mailing system and the archives will take place during the next few months as time permits and there are still more items of interest yet to be published. Write to John at admin@nhillaviationheritagecentre.com.au

Free Newsletter

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.

Membership of the Nhill Aviation Heritage Centre Inc. is valid for a financial year: 1/7/2012 – 30/6/2013

Your support for this community organisation is highly valued and assists the Management Committee to continue with the projects aimed at preserving the aviation heritage of Nhill and District.

Join now for only \$30.00.

Click on this link to use our secure Pay Pal account:

<http://nhillaviationheritagecentre.com.au/members-1.htm>

OR BY Cheque payable to NAHC Inc. PO Box 42 Nhill Vic 3418.

Is this the first newsletter you have received?

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.

A message to our supporters

Do you have a friend who would appreciate receiving this free newsletter? Just copy the newsletter PDF link in your email and send it to as many people as desired. This newsletter is free. However, support for this important historical project is greatly appreciated.