



NHILL ANSON NEWSLETTER

Issue No 23. 5-9-2013

Follow Progress on our Website

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

Highlights in this newsletter

- Work Continues on Nhill Aviation Heritage Centre
- Aeradio Building progress
- Anson work proceeding
- Link Trainer restoration starting
- Advance notice of Annual Meeting

Sherwell - Ahrens start building

Work has continued on the new Heritage Centre building at the Nhill Aerodrome. Unfortunately rain has caused many delays and complications.

The building is being built by local construction firm Sherwell – Ahrens using local contractors where possible and Adelaide personnel when required. Stage one, the construction of the foundation, concrete blocks and building frame has been completed as is part of stage two which includes roof, walls , windows and doors.



Photos of the start of building construction taken by Whimpey Reichelt.



The new building will be almost the same size as the original Bellman Hangar built on the same site. During WWII Nhill had five hangars but only one now remains. At the end of the war there seemed to be almost frantic haste to dismantle and sell everything at auction. The Nhill Aero Club is to be thanked for their efforts to have one hangar retained at the Nhill Aerodrome.

Nhill Aeradio Station

Roger Meyer OAM, guest speaker at a public meeting hosted by the Nhill Aviation Heritage Centre, has been invited to be convener of a committee to manage the proposed preservation of the Nhill Aeradio Station. Roger is President of the Civil Aviation Historical Society Airways Museum at Essendon Aerodrome and was an Engineer in the Department of Civil Aviation, which had seventeen of these Aeradio (short for Aeronautical Radio) stations constructed in 1938/39. Roger explained that the Nhill Aeradio Station is by far the best preserved example of these buildings remaining in Australia – mainly due to it being built on concrete blocks rather than redgum.

At the first meeting of the Aeradio committee members met with Ian Ballinger, a building consultant specialising in Heritage building restoration and preservation. After an assessment of the facility it was agreed that a management plan be prepared and presented to the NAHC for comment. As the Aeradio building is part of the Hindmarsh Shire assets it will ultimately be asked to approve the restoration plan and assist with sourcing grant funding.

The Nhill Aeradio Station featured the most advanced Aviation Radio Communication and Guidance system in use between 1939 and 1970 and is a major component within the **Nhill Aerodrome Master Plan**, administered by the Hindmarsh Shire.

The Nhill Aeradio Station is unique because there has not been any pressure for alternate uses of the site thus providing the best opportunity for restoration.



An early 1950s photo courtesy of Roger Meyer and a current photo of the building prior to any restoration.

Avro Anson Restoration

Our Anson Project Officer, Mick Kingwill, continues to amaze me with his determination to complete the restoration of the Avro Anson in the shortest possible time. A visit to Mick on a once weekly basis is not enough to keep up with his progress. The nose cone has been attached, hundreds of rivets replaced and most of the equipment inside restored and fitted. During the last few weeks the main spar has been taking shape and all the various components added.



Another most pleasing event occurred the day we had a visit from Frank Hart from Mt Gambier who some years ago acquired an Avro Anson propeller. Frank made a donation of the propeller to the Nhill Aviation Heritage Centre in Whippey Reichelt's workshop where the engines are being restored. Several board members were on hand to appropriately thank Frank for his gift.



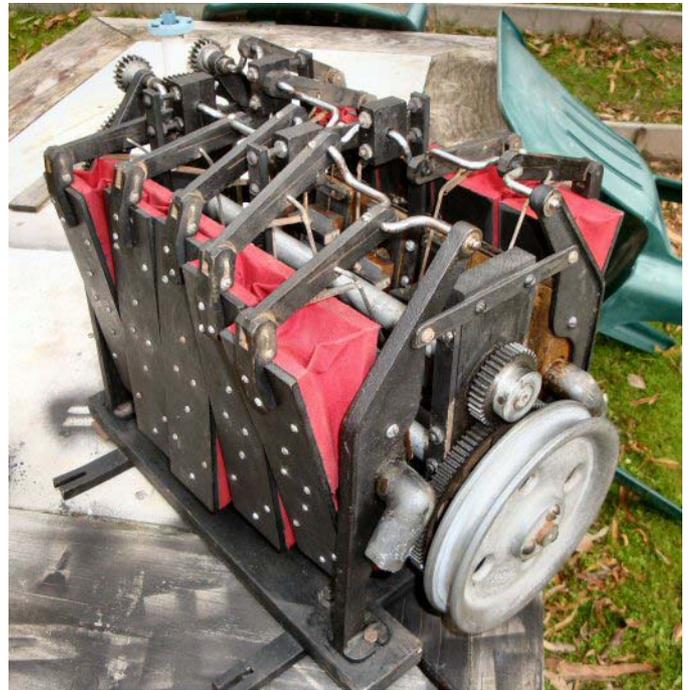
Len Creek has been busy preparing the rear stabiliser for covering with fabric. Some attention to the leading edge and a light sanding should have it ready for covering. However, due to the continual rain and moist weather Len has decided to leave any further work until he is sure the timber is completely dry. This may take another month or so as it is still raining every few days. Elevators fill the gap at the bottom but these may not be fitted until this assembly is fitted to the airframe.

Link Trainer Restoration

Work on the Link Trainer is slowly starting to show some results. Luckily, our project manager, Neil Thomas, has had considerable experience with Link Trainers having owned one himself during the early part of his career in the aviation industry.

Many functions of the Link trainers are powered by vacuum which means that there are numerous sets of bellows similar to a late 1800s pedal organ. Because our units are 60 years old and in original condition all of the special bellows material must be replaced. Neil has undertaken to do this work much to the delight of the other three members of the restoration group. His first effort, the restoration of a turning motor, is nothing short of amazing. Many of the parts of these machines are not designed for ease of servicing.

Although the time sheets are clocking up the hours we now have one machine sitting back on its reconditioned base with a reconditioned turning motor, serviced vacuum motor, reconditioned flight simulating bellows and numerous other small bits and pieces in the process of cleaning and servicing.



Two views of turning motor. Base prepared for painting. Bill and Neil with restored parts, bellows, turning motors and base.

Help required please.

The Nhill Aviation Heritage Centre Link Trainer has in the past been used for spare parts and as a consequence several parts are missing. We would appreciate any information and help in locating replacements in any condition. Please contact me by email: john@westprint.com.au

Memories of a Trainee Navigator

In July the NAHC received a letter from Rob Eckermann about his training in Avro Ansons and in particular one flight from Mt Gambier where he trained as a navigator.

My Most Interesting Flight in an Avro Anson by Rob Eckermann.

With Charles Ryan as pilot and me as W/T operator and two trainee navigators who were to do a map reading exercise, we left Mt Gambier in Anson No MG 917 on the morning of July 9th 1944. We flew to Donald in Victoria via Wandilow in South Australia. On the way back from Donald we struck a storm with strong westerly winds and very low cloud. For the map reading the pilot was asked to go down from the planned 1000 feet flight to about 100 feet from the ground where we broke through the cloud a long way off the planned course.

We struck the western side of the entrance to Halls Gap at about 45°. Our wizard pilot avoided the mountains on both sides by veering left then veering right and we found ourselves right in Halls Gap with mountains on both sides and clouds covering the peaks.

Avro Ansons are slow climbers so we threaded our way through Halls Gap and finally escaped after a long hard climb over the western rim of the Grampians. Our pilot took over the navigation and headed west till we found ourselves over Penola with almost empty fuel tanks. Being resourceful, Charles put the aircraft down in a small paddock not far from and to the west of Penola town centre. In all the excitement I forgot to wind in the trailing aerial but luckily we didn't lose it during landing. We had a meal on landing graciously provided by the Penola Hotel. The trainee navigators were driven back to Mt Gambier Air Base (4NWS) on the back of a truck.

The whole story concludes when the plane was refuelled late that afternoon and the pilot and I flew back to base after taking off by jumping the plane over the first fence and just clearing the second fence as we slowly climbed.

All's well that ends well. Rob Eckermann 442536.

After graduating as a navigator in July 1944 aged 18 Rob was posted to Williamstown in NSW where he trained in Beauforts and Mosquitos. They both flew and climbed a lot faster than the old Avro. The war ended before Rob received a posting.

Annual Meeting

Please note that the Annual General Meeting of the Nhill Aviation Heritage Centre will be held at the Uniting Church Hall on October 10 at 7.30 PM.

All welcome.

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 commencing 1st July.

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.