



On The Step



The Official Newsletter of the Seaplane Pilots Assn Australia

## Lord Howe Island Splash – In 2006 3 weeks to go

Volume 1 Issue 1

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Preparation is in full swing for the Sir Francis Chichester 75th Anniversary landing Splash - In at Lord Howe Island.

On April 2nd 2006 a large contingency of aircraft made up of predominantly seaplanes will leave the east coast of Australia for the long over water flight to Lord Howe Island, to commemorate Sir Francis Chichester's first east-west crossing from New Zealand to Australia, and yes in a seaplane.

He set out to fly from New Zealand to Australia in his *Gypsy Moth I*, fitted out as a seaplane. Its range was only 750 miles, and the crossing of 1,450 miles could be made only by making use of Norfolk Island and Lord Howe Island on the way. Having no radio, Chichester located these islands by sextant observations of the sun and, in the course of doing so, established a navigation system which became standard drill of Coastal Command during the Second World War. No target so small as those two little islands had previously been located by this method; and it was impossible to turn back in the event of error. *Gypsy Moth I* was forced to alight in the open sea at Norfolk Island and again in a lagoon at Lord Howe Island. There, in a gale in the night, it was blown upside down while at its moorings. It sank. Chichester managed to overcome this slight setback: he rebuilt the aeroplane, completely dismantled and re-assembled the engine and finished his flight to Australia.



An illustration of the ability of these pilots is the remarkable feat of navigation achieved by Sir Francis Chichester flying his *Tiger Moth* over the open ocean in 1931. He took off from Norfolk Island headed for Lord Howe Island 903km (561 miles) away. An error of more than one half degree would have been fatal but he landed safely on Lord Howe Island after a flight of 7h 40min. (Guinness Book of Aircraft Facts and Feats)

The Lord Howe Island Board (local govt) have been working on this commemoration for some years, it has now been ratified, approved and with OUR help a major milestone will be recorded. Who else can the wonderful people call on to commemorate such a life changing event???? Seaplane pilots, builders and enthusiasts, that's who.. Interested in attending contact Perry Taylor qldco@seaplanes.org.au

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**"Show the Spirit Still Exists"**



**"To a man with imagination, a map is a window to adventure."**

Sir Francis Chichester

**Lord Howe Island Board  
&  
Seaplane Pilots Assoc. Aust  
Present  
Splash-In 2006**

**3 to 7 April 2006**





## From the News desk.....

### NSW Maritime Rose Bay Commercial Operators Code of Operation nears completion

On Monday 27th February, representatives from SPAA and the Rose Bay commercial operators met with NSW Maritime to sign off on a Code of Operation for Commercial Seaplanes operating in Rose Bay. All Sydney Harbour users are encouraged to have a code of conduct. The purpose of the code is to prescribe guidelines to enhance marine safety, while there is no specific legislative provision requiring operators to operate in accordance to the code, failure to comply may be viewed by the courts as evidence of poor airmanship or negligence.

The code of operation includes issues concerning operation of the aircraft on the surface of the water, how community concerns are addressed, required licenses by pilots, environmental issues, refueling, hours of operation, maintenance and radio communication.



### Catalina Flying Memorial meets Woollahra council

Unfortunately, we have been dealing with a lot of different Government Departments including the Woollahra Municipal Council, NSW Maritime and the Dept of Lands.

Late last year we had to submit a D.A. to all these people. We were in the situation where I could not ask people for donations unless we had a D.A. approved or at least some indication that it would be sympathetically received but without any donations we were not able to submit the D.A., which was going to cost us some \$35,000. This situation was exacerbated by the Mayor of Woollahra becoming violently ill, Christmas and New Year intervened and my taking a holiday. Whilst nothing was being done the Council held a meeting and decided to request Maritime to remove the floating vessel and sink it out at sea.

Fortunately at the last moment a Good Samaritan arrived with a keen sense

of history and heritage, paid all our bills and gave us a donation of \$100,000. This anonymous donor is a member of the Seaplane Pilots Assn. Australia and is now taking on the job of getting the Museum going.

At another meeting of Woollahra Council we were given a period of 3 minutes to address the Council and so ably assisted by the presence of Nancy Bird Walton and Flight Lieutenant Bill Hastie, retired Catalina pilot, and some of the other old boys we were able to stay the Council's hand and we have been given the opportunity to submit a proposal within the next few weeks. Anyone can help - please contact Philip Dulhunty on (02)9870 7277 0413 431 441 or Col Evans 0418 872 584 as soon as possible.



Philip Dulhunty OAM

### In Next Months Issue.....

- A Report on some Fantastic New Seaplane Designs ready to make a splash
- Float Trikes
- All the latest Seaplane News
- Tasmanian State Coordinator Kyle Gardner gives us a report on his SeaRey Progress
- News and Pictures from Lake Boga Splash-In
- Lord Howe Island Splash-In
- And Much Much More
- You must subscribe to get your copy by going to <http://www.seaplanes.org.au/JoinSPAA.html>
- Subscription rates are only \$50.00
- 





## From the News desk.....

**2005 was a big year at the Seaplane Pilot's Association and 2006 is off and racing ..... so busy in fact that we are late in notifying you that the 2006 subs are due.**

*Send us your subscription by the end of March and we will send you a Seaplane Pilots Association Hat & SPAA Sticker absolutely FREE.*

Of significance, there are a dedicated team of individuals who have been working hard to:

- Create an improved and more effective means of communicating with our members.
- Providing greater benefits, interest and information about Australian Seaplanes
- Promoting & protecting the rights & freedoms of Seaplane Flying in Australia
- Expanding our support mechanisms for members
- Developing a structure of state co-coordinators
- Growing our membership numbers



In the last half of 2005 headed up by our Secretary Chad Boot (the webmaster) the new SPAA website was created. We are continuing to develop the features of the website which now represents a quantum leap in our ability to communicate with our members and to provide greater benefits for them.

One feature is that it is now easy for you to join/renew your membership/subscription, online.

### ***Why You Should Join/Renew Your Membership***

**Firstly** - Because flying Seaplanes is just amazing fun.

**Secondly** - Certainly one of the greater challenges facing Aviation, Seaplane operations and the SPAA today is the growing pressure from, special interest groups, regulators and government agencies who wish to introduce greater restrictions and limitations on these activities. Examples of these pressures include the sell off, of airports to developers e.g. Bankstown, Hoxton Park, Camden and Warnervale. Additionally as boating numbers and users increase on our waterways, the introduction of speed restrictions and special use zonings on waterways, all have impact on the freedom of use of our Waterways. There is no doubt that life has become more complicated and now, more so than ever before, your executive are spending significantly more time meeting with regulators and agencies, in a bid to maintain our freedoms. Therefore, more than ever before, we need to be a united and strong association..... we need your support as members and you need us. Because if we are apathetic, we risk losing the very freedoms that we have enjoyed and fought so hard to achieve. It is those freedoms that make Seaplane flying so much fun.

So please join/renew now. Pledge your support by joining our ranks..... we can only survive through a co-coordinated, unified & well supported association, which is respected and valued by Maritime & Aviation authorities.

We extend a warm welcome to you & we trust that you will enjoy the services, facilities & benefits we offer. We particularly invite you to participate & contribute as much as possible, as the more that you & our members do, the stronger our association will grow.

### ***Following confirmation of receipt of your subscription, you will soon receive the following.***

Your Username & Password to enable your access to the Members only features (Forum) of the SPAA website.

Seaplane Pilots Association Membership Card

Complimentary Seaplane Pilots Association Car/Aircraft Sticker

Complimentary Seaplane Pilots Association Cap

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## Newest S-LSA is an Amphibian: Sport Aircraft Works' Mermaid

**It's official:** The FAA has granted S-LSA status to the newest amphibious airplane in the world, the Mermaid, distributed by Sport Aircraft Works.

Latest report from Danny in Florida:

To gain FAA certification, electronic telemetry instruments and sensors were

fitted to the aircraft to give accurate flight reports, stresses, temps, pressures, control deflections and heaps of relevant info.



The three weeks it took to install the equipment, flight testing and they are now half way thru removing the telemetry and reorganising aircraft to fine tune engine installation.

Good news is, during test flights aircraft in level flight 101 Knots indicated is the "average Cruise" speed, and prop is still not optimum.

Cowl modifications are being made to ensure Oil temp is under control, fresh air naca ducts are being installed to nose to augment fresh air flow for us tropical aviators and more mods are being finalised.

WHEN do we get first one? We are all getting a bit impatient, but far better for the factory to fine tune than give it to us with gremlins, not long now.

HOW much? as per CZAW website, we add freight and GST, HOWEVER we will recommend some "Extra's" as mandatory, e.g. Corrosion protection, strobes and a few others.

We are obtaining quotes for freight from factory, then another A\$1700 is added to freight for Australian forwarding, container delivery and recovery, spray, fees, clearances and all this will be forwarded to you when contract is written, so it is roughly US\$5000 sea freight and then add the A\$1700 which "MAY" be per aircraft????, hopefully with 2 aircraft in a container it will be half???

Insurance for sea freight, allow A\$1000, depending on options, I have quotes from \$700 each.

Flight Insurance: we have brokers working on that, but for water operations, it will be ridiculous.

Most of us only insure for land (that's how they describe Flight but not landing on water) operations and carry our own risk on water... Reason for water loading?? Yes, Commercial operators have a "Bad" track record, like Helicopters, so we get branded with same label. But, we are working on it. Normal hull rates, say 2.5% depending on experience.

CASA certification: we "expect" follow on certification from FAA certification, but we all know CASA.

more news as it is released.

Keep updated with CZAW site <http://www.airplane.cz>

or Danny at Skyshops <http://www.sportaircraftworks.com/mermainmain.html>

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## New SPAA Lord Howe Island Splash-In 2006 Now Available

A new T-Shirt to commemorate the SPAA's Lord Howe Island Splash-In 2006 is now available. The T-Shirt is high quality and made by surf wear company Billabong, the T-shirts are \$30.00 each and can be ordered by emailing [shop@seaplanes.org.au](mailto:shop@seaplanes.org.au).





## Cesare Baj European SPA President lends support to SPAA

Your SPAA executive is constantly active in meeting with the maritime authorities in the pursuit of reducing the restrictions and limitations on seaplane activities and to educate both the authorities and boating public in seaplane operations.

Cesare Baj President of the European SPA this month lent his support to SPAA's efforts in showing the authorities how seaplane operations are carried out safely in other busy waterways around the world, in this case Lake Como in Italy. His letter is reprinted below for your information.

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Como, 25th February 2006

As President of Aero Club Como, the oldest European seaplane operator, and President of the European Seaplane Pilots Association, I'd like to take the occasion of offering a few considerations on the seaplane activity in the Italian "Lake District", i.e. the pre-Alpine area of Lombardy, composed of all major Italian lakes (Lake Maggiore, Lake Como, Lake Lugano, Lake Iseo and Lake Garda) and dozens of minor lakes.

This area counts just one large town on the shores of a lake, the city of Como. Our seaplane base is situated in the middle of the city centre, at 4 minutes' walk from the cathedral square and the historical centre (the ancient Roman town). The area of the lake where our seaplanes operate is embedded in the port area of the town and can easily be considered as the busiest area on all Italian inland waters.

On this particular surface Seaplanes started to take off and land in 1913 and since April 1930 (foundation of Aero Club Como and construction of the hangar) our seaplane activity has developed and has been operative every single day since (except the very last period of world war II, when the Germans in retreat removed or sank our aircraft).

Consider the volume of our activity: presently about 4000 hours flown yearly, with 10.000 or more takeoffs/landings.

It can be said that the presence of Aero Club Como and its seaplanes are considered by the local population and the administrations a real wealth.

Our activity is a part of the regional and local system of "Protezione Civile". We also have a permanent seat in the Provincial Council for the Development of Tourism.

On this regard, I enclose the letters and declarations of:

- the ex mayor of the city of Como;
- the president of the Chamber of Commerce ;
- a foreword of the present mayor of Como published in the book on the history of aviation in the province;
- a foreword of the President of the Provincial Administration of Como published in the same book.

During 75 years of continuous operations in the busiest inland water area of Italy, we never had problems even if living together with heavy traffic of large public boats, commercial operators and thousands of small private boats.

As far as the environmental impact is concerned, it has been proved that the impact of seaplane activity is negligible, as can be deduced from the documents issued by the US Seaplane Pilots Association.

It is a fact that birds love seaplanes. These creatures concentrate in the area where we make our activity. As our seaplane base has become a place where birds can be easily observed, we issued a guide to bird recognition, with the help of the local representatives of LIPU, a national bird watching association.

I enclose the declaration of the Como branch of the WWF, whose representatives made an assessment of our activity.

Seaplanes are by far the safest flying machines existing. In our 75-years history we never suffered any accidents with consequences for the occupants (no casualties, no injuries).

As far as regulations are concerned, I can briefly explain our legislative environment, certainly influenced by the fact that in this country water aviation never came to a stop since the beginning of flight.

Operations outside registered water aerodromes are allowed in Italy without any nihil obstat nor concession wherever motor boat traffic is allowed.

Touch and go operations are considered flight operations, thus regulated by the sole aeronautical authority and in fact allowed everywhere.

The Lombardy region stated that no park authorities can regulate aviation activities (except in case where a modification of the territory or building activity is required).





See enclosed article of the regulations of seaplane activity outside registered water aerodromes and a statement of the Region of Lombardy on the regulation of aviation activity by park authorities.

In Italy we tend to consider general prohibitions of seaplane activities as an abuse. Local and temporary restrictions can be accepted in certain cases, but have to be well motivated and discussed with the operators.

A seaplane is a machine registered in the national aircraft register and no authority, except the aviation authority holding that register, can issue a general prohibition of its activity. In addition, any local or temporary restriction should be discussed with the aviation authorities.

Apart from any legal considerations, it is hard to find a reason why seaplane activities should be restricted. Seaplanes add value to the territory, are an important part of the national heritage of all European countries, are environmentally friendly machines, offer to lots of people the opportunity of enjoying the territory in a special and unforgettable way and are a means of local economical growth. Seaplanes are very rare and appealing and can make a place unique, as Como is now considered unique because of their presence.

In many cases seaplanes have also a historical meaning, having played an important role in beneficial activities as search and rescue, fire fighting or transportation in remote areas (in Australia this was the case of the links with Lord Howe island). This important tradition must not be lost, and this is even more true when the same activity can have interesting developments in our times.

Considering our experience, I strongly recommend that seaplane activities will be not only allowed, better if on sheltered water surfaces, but encouraged as a means of economic, cultural and social growth of the entire local community.

Yours sincerely

Cesare Baj

President - Aero Club Como

President - European Seaplane Pilots Association

Author of "Seaplane Operations" and several other books on water aviation



Como seaplane base is located in a busy area of the town of Como and in the very busy port of Como. At the top left, "Piazza Cavour", the main square of the town.





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