

On-the-Step

Issue 38
February 2014

Newsletter of the Seaplane Pilots Association of Australia



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

You may have been wondering when this issue of On-the-Step was going to arrive, but I assure you no one was worrying about its arrival as much as I. While I do enjoy putting the news-sheet together and hopefully getting some good stories to you, actually getting it out in anything like a timely manner is a struggle. Any offers of assistant editor will be greatly appreciated.

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We have an emphasis on history in this issue, sparked by the upcoming Centenary of the First Seaplane Flight in Australia. I hope that many of you will participate on 11th May, either flying your seaplane, on the ground meeting the public or marshaling. Please contact me and let me know how you can be involved.

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It seemed fitting that we also include in this issue, a story on the history of Rose Bay's long involvement with seaplanes. Also we have a story of an historic Catalina flight in England with a strong

Ozzie connection.

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I received a phone call from a member "stranded" in Mallorca on his yacht, dreaming of a seaplane flight across the Atlantic. I look forward to many informative reports as Duco Pullo works towards his seaplane dream. I am delighted that two great stories in this issue have been sent by new members to the SPAA. Members old and new, don't hold back, send those stories in.

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Please note we have a new Pittwater Area Contact. You will find Rohan Walter's contact details on the back page. Any recreational pilot considering flying into Pittwater should call Rohan before hand to get the latest in procedures, weather etc.

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There's a beautiful new (well old but new) seaplane gracing our skies and waterways. It's Peter Lynch's beautifully restored Grumman Mallard. Some of you may have been lucky enough to have



already seen it, possibly at the Evens Head fly-in a few months ago, but for those that haven't, and can get along to our Seaplane Centenary Celebration, you may get the chance. Read the story of Peter's acquisition.

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If, like me, you have thoroughly enjoyed Dan Nicken's story of "Vee-Chee" you'll be looking forward to its next part. Well unfortunately you will have to wait until the next issue of On-the-Step.

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Finally, as its a new year, please consider visiting our website and clicking on the "Donate" button. All SPAA work is voluntary, but our work with the many agencies to better your experiences does have costs.

Fly Safe & Wheels Up for Water



30th March 2014 is the start date for a two month circumnavigation flight of the Australian coastline by a group of four seaplanes. Flying clockwise from Brisbane they will be traveling over 14,000 km in 2 and 4 seater amphibious aircraft and landing at over 100 locations.

Flying much lower than commercial aircraft, their small maneuverable freedom machines will give access to see parts of this unique and beautiful country in a way that few if any have ever seen it before. From over-flying Sydney Harbour at 500 feet to staying in luxury resorts to outback camping

in the remote top end, it promises to be a once in a lifetime experience.

Filming with high definition cameras throughout the journey a professionally produced documentary will be made at the end of the trip. For a 3 minute promo clip see http://youtu.be/TWzSle_p1BE

The group have teamed up with Make-A-Wish Australia to raise awareness of this charity that makes wishes come true for disadvantaged and seriously ill children. Already committed to flights for children in Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne they will be sharing the thrill of seaplane flying through joy flights with as many Make-A-Wish children as possible along their route. - For further information contact David Geers.





LYNCH'S LOVELY LADY

MY GRUMMAN MALLARD J-35

Now VH-CQA

by Peter Lynch

Inspecting J-35 at Sandpoint Idaho, pre-purchase!

I started flying in September 1992, purchasing my first aircraft, a 1964 PA-30 Piper Twin Comanche in 2000. This aircraft catered for me and my family's needs for many years but with three kids and a dog it was obvious we would eventually outgrow the Twin Comanche. I started looking around for something bigger. Well I'm not sure exactly how the process ended where it did, maybe it was related to an experience of travelling to Lord Howe for a family holiday in 1974 in a Short Sunderland but it seems a Grumman Mallard would fit the duty!

I started looking around for what was available in 2010 and by August 2011 I'd purchased J-35 a 1948 Piston engine Grumman Mallard located in Northern Idaho USA. The airframe was in excellent condition with low hours ~ 7,000 with no salt water use for the last twenty years. The Engines were in good condition low operating hours but high lifetime hours, and props in need of an overhaul. The interior was fair but in need of a refit. At the time I purchased the aircraft the AUD to USD was \$1.08 so I continued to take what benefit I could, from the high exchange rate which I believed would retreat again at some point. Therefore while it was still in the USA I decided to get both engines fully overhauled by the experts, Covington Aircraft in Oklahoma. The aircraft was flown from Idaho to Oklahoma in September 2011 on a ferry permit as the props were due for overhaul. While the engines and props were being worked on I got a new ADSB compliant Garmin GTN 750 and GTX35 transponder fitted and went totally electric with a new AH. The aircraft left Oklahoma and arrived in Florida in

March 2012.

J-35 leaving Sandpoint Idaho for Oklahoma <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3w4xsKIPVRo>

Now that the aircraft was getting closer I needed to get ready, I got my floating hull endorsement with Kevin Bowe, QLD in October 2011. I now needed to get some training on the actual aircraft in the USA including intensive water work, this was another reason I sent the aircraft to Florida after Oklahoma. In order to train in the states I had to go through the whole TSA security clearance process including fingerprinting, then had my Australian qualifications recognised, sat the USA theory exams and was issues with an FAA PPL. I did over 40 hours on my Mallard in Florida in two stints one in March and the other in May 2012. The guy who trained me was Wayne Luginbuhl who was also the AIP I had in charge of overseeing all the work on the aircraft. He has a large number of hours on Mallards and heaps on Grumman Albatross during his time flying with the US coast guard. My aim was to ensure I was not only legal but absolutely comfortable and competent on the aircraft as it would be the only piston version in Australia.



The Legend himself, Kevin Bowe during the floating hull endorsement north west of Caloundra

During my time in the states flying the J35 I got to take it to Fun n Sun at Lakefield Florida and then fly the aircraft all the way from Fort Lauderdale Executive airport (KFXE) to Merced in California (KMCE). The flight across the states was awesome. On the first day we flew up the pan handle from KFXE and refuelled at Pensacola (KPNS){3.5 hrs}

then on to Dallas David Wayne Hooks Memorial (KDWH) {3.3 Hrs} for more fuel before landing later that night at El Paso Texas (KELP){4.5 hrs}. The next day we flew to North Las Vegas (KVGTT){4.2 hrs} , where I got to test drive a 600hp Carroll Shelby 50th anniversary mustang Cobra Super Snake, wow! Hit the strip that night then home early enough to get a good sleep. The next day we flew to Merced California,(KMCE){2.7 hrs}, the aerodrome where J35 would be prepared for the ferry flight to Australia.

Returning From Sun N Fun Florida

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4yxTl--gkio>

Flying across the USA

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vfZGCM47TRE>

The interior was stripped out to reduce the weight by ~700lbs down to 9,025 lbs. It was fitted with 3 x 200 gal ferry tanks allowing it a total capacity of near 1,000 gallons. J35 departed San Jose (KJSC) on the 25th of July 2012 piloted by my trusted instructor and AIP Wayne

Luginbuhl off sided by Jim Hazelton, with an over-weight approval of 124%, giving a MTOW of 15,500lbs. First leg to Hilo, Hawaii took 14 hrs, next day onto Kirraballi Island Cassidy International, taking 7.5hrs, Next day onto US Samoa, followed by Norfolk Island then the last leg saw the arrival at Gold Coast Airport to clear customs and immigration. I met the plane at YBGC then flew it onto Archerfield that afternoon, on 30th July 2012.

Once J-35 was at Archerfield it was all about de-tanking the plane and restoring systems to normal following the ferry flight. It was in late September before the aircraft would fly again with the interior partially fitted. I kept it on the US register through to March 2013 at which time the interior was renovated and then it was eventually placed on the Australian Register in Experimental Category, in August 2013, as VH-CQA. It wasn't until November 2013 that J-35 had its first swim in Australia at Somerset Dam just west of Brisbane. I've had a few swims in Somerset and more recently my family and I joined an old University buddy and his family for a day of water sports at Copeton Dam near Armidale. Copeton is a

fantastic spot!

J-35's first swim in Australia, Somerset Dam

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rAfK7slMnfw>

A trip to Somerset and back from YBAF

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T7yxv5eaddQ>

Trip to Copeton Dam

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eVLMXeRPrYc&feature=c4-overview&list=UUAG0DfIBtJ2wRlybUpkYSGg>

More recently we attended the Great Eastern Fly In (GEFI) in January 2014 held annually at the Evans Head Memorial Aerodrome. Our company Evans Head Airpark Pty Ltd is purchasing the Aerodrome to re-develop it as a multifaceted Residential Airpark. J-35 is being used to promote the project at various fly ins and aviation gatherings around Australia, this activity will increase as the project gets

closer to fruition. We are currently

preparing a Development Application for the project and hopefully by the end of this year we will be at such a stage that we may be able to commence construction. At GEFI this year we had the pleasure of meeting with some members of the Seaplane Pilots Association and even participated in a mass seaplane departure on the Sunday afternoon. David Geer



J-35 arriving at Gold Coast Airport after crossing the Pacific is given a fire truck welcome



The Interior was quite bare when the aircraft arrived in Australia, it arrived separately in a sea container

has posted a god video clip of GEFI on his YouTube site, the link is below.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=roE5sNNVhI8>

The interior after the restoration works 2013



Looking rearwards through the cabin from the cockpit



Dropping onto Copeton Dam for some Waterskiing



Engines running ready for taxi, GEFI 2014

Seaplanes

Duco W.J.Pulle, Mallorca Dec 2013

The word 'Sea-plane', brings together two words: the 'sea' and 'planes' both of which remain the subject of intense passion and source of inspiration for many human beings. For me, this was, and still is the case, hence I will start with the word 'planes' as they have played a prominent role in the early phase of my life and this passion has been rekindled in the present phase of my life. When trying to explain the passion of flight and a way of living (and perhaps dying) I always refer to my most treasured book, 'Jonathan Livingston Seagull' [1] which is the story of a seagull's quest to achieve perfect flight and the 'human' cycle of: learn, commit, and do, which to this day, remains a source of inspiration to me. The word 'sea' brings visions of boundless freedom, white beaches, pristine lagoons all of which are true (if you ignore being exposed, as I have, to force 10 winds, chased by pirates and a massive Tsunami)



Canadair CL 215 aircraft



First powered seaplane, flown by H. Fabre, 1910, France [2]

and reminds me of the words by Arthur Ransome: 'The desire to build a house is the tired wish of man content thence forward with a single anchorage. The desire to build a boat is the desire of youth unwilling as yet to accept the idea of a final resting place'. To me the word 'boat', can be replaced by 'seaplane', as it is the ultimate vehicle of 'freedom' which is what the words 'sea' and 'plane' really represent in my view. The above by way of introduction.

I found myself pottering along the North-East coast of Mallorca in my yacht BRIET on my way back to Australia (for the second time), thinking where to lay-over for the winter. Suddenly the unmistakable roar of Pratt-Witney engines appeared and my first thought was that the moment of seeing my favourite aircraft (a Catalina of course) in actual flight had arrived.



Aircraft at Pollenca, 1923 [3]

Instead two Spanish Canadair CL 215 aircraft appeared, which were on a 'downwind' leg for landing at the 'bay of Pollenca' (which is where I was). No pilot can resist see the endeavors of a colleague (particularly) during landing, so I watched this spectacle and promptly decided that this was the place where to spend the coming (European) winter.

My choice appeared warranted, as subsequent research learned that I had arrived at the European cradle of seaplane flying. Keep I mind that the first powered

seaplane arrived on the scene in 1910 and looks kind of fragile, but it flew 1650 ft (altitude unknown, but I would have kept it very low).



The seaplane used to set up a training navigation school here in the bay of Pollenca in 1923 (see photo) looks (in comparison) ultra-modern. Although I would be a trifle concerned about the airworthiness of the aircraft shown in the picture. It would appear that the fabric on the upper port wing is missing.

Business at the time, did not flourish (as is apparent by the state of the aircraft, shown) hence the founder and pilot Mr. Abad, abandoned his business activities in the bay and left for the main land. However it was only the second such school in all of Spain, and this event is now commemorated in the bay each year, hence the appearance of the two CL 215 aircraft this year. Last year a similar event was organized, see photo, which does show a plane in better shape.

To me the planes concept is basically sound, using an engine in a pusher configuration seems like the right way to go about designing a seaplane. But perhaps I am biased, as my love affair with a LA-200 started when coming across this aircraft in 2010. It was towards the final leg (Fiji-New Caledonia) of my first world circumnavigation that my passion for flying a seaplane was rekindled. Perhaps the conditions were right, as sitting at the helm of my yacht over a 40000 mile journey, and sailing at an average speed of 5 knots, gives one time to think.

So to the future : the challenge is to fly a sea-plane over a long distance, preferably from Canada to Europe and perhaps all the way back to Australia. I would be very interested to meet with fellow members and discuss this, maybe it is a bad idea, but people

said the same about sailing a 34ft yacht around the world. A seaplane travels at least 20 times faster than my yacht, hence it has to be possible. A friend of mine, Glen Cook, wants to circumnavigate Australia to photograph all the beaches, see promotion video [4], which I flew earlier this year. This activity (if the funding appears) will also be a challenge to undertake and piloting this event will help prepare for the longer flight I have in mind. However he wants to use a Cessna 210, whereas I would love to use a seaplane for this venture. Maybe there

is someone else out there, who wants to share my dream, as I am happy to observe that there other pilots like me who think that flying a seaplane is the only way to go!

The Author - Born 1946, Arnhem, The Netherlands and raised in the 'Blue Mountains', Victoria.



Attended Aviation College in Europe and subsequently obtained a B.Sc, M.Sc, and PhD in Engineering. Is a professor of Electrical Engineering, has worked at the Australian Defence Force Academy for 12 years, before moving on to other prominent European Universities. He retired from

mainstream Academic life, 12 years ago, but remains a guest professor at RWTH, Aachen , Germany.

He has circumnavigated the world in his yacht BRIET, is a master-mariner, aviator and has three children: Arne, Steven and Merel scattered around the globe.

[1] 'Jonathan Livingston Seagull' , a story, R. Bach, 1972, ISBN 0 333 23647 4, London [2] Photo M.Berllis, website

[3] Website 'Mallorcaphotoblog', 2012

[4] Video Glen and Shirley Cook: <https://vimeo.com/81059833>

There has been quite a bit of discussion about what involvement SPAA members should have in marine rescue. The idea of being another eye in the sky, if you happen to be flying in an area of interest, or even a radio repeater when a distressed craft is out of radio range seems like a good one, but being involved in rescue operations requires a lot of training which I don't believe any of us have. Fitting of a marine band radio into the smaller amphibians has its problems and it is understandable that uptake has been slow. However many of us have mobile phone capability while flying and, at very least we should make sure we have the ability to contact the Marine Rescue bases in our area. We will be addressing this subject in more detail in coming issues but, in the mean time, when flying coastal NSW we recommend that you carry with you a copy of the contact list below. If you have similar information for other states, please forward it to us so we can share it.

Unit Name	Telephone
Point Danger (24 hours)	07 5536 9333
Brunswick	6685 0148
Cape Byron	6680 8417
Batina (24 hours)	6681 4700
Evans Head	6682 4888
Iluka/Yamba (24 hours)	6646 6311
Wooli	0437 423 797
Woolgoolga	0417 403 520
Coffs Harbour (24 hours)	6652 3155
Nambucca	6569 4446
Trial Bay (24 hours)	6566 5240
Port Macquarie (24 hours)	6584 1966
Camden Haven	6559 7356
Crowdy Harrington	6556 1564
Forster Tuncurry (24 hours)	6554 5458
Port Stephens (24 hours)	4981 3585
Lemon Tree Passage	4982 4981
Newcastle	4927 8237
Lake Macquarie (24 hours)	4971 3498
Norah Head	4396 6162
Toukley	0414 460 436
The Entrance	4332 3055
Central Coast	4325 7929

MARINE RESCUE NEW SOUTH WALES

Unit Name	Telephone
Terrigal	4325 7929
Hawkesbury	9985 9012
Cottage Point	9456 3055
Broken Bay	9999 3554
Sydney (Terrey Hills) (24 hours)	9450 2468
Middle Harbour	9969 3270
Port Jackson	8337 5033
Botany Bay	9668 9888
Port Hacking	9668 9888
Port Kembla (24 hours)	4274 4455
Shellharbour	4297 3999
Shoalhaven (24 hours)	4447 4466
Jervis Bay	4441 5433
Sussex Inlet	4441 3555
Ulladulla (24 hours)	4455 3403
Kioloa	4457 1109
Batemans Bay (24 hours)	4472 3060
Tuross	4473 8111
Narooma (24 hours)	4476 1443
Bermagui	6493 4506
Merimbula	6495 3331
Eden (24 hours)	6496 2167
Alpine Lakes (24 hours - phone only)	0429 026 883



A Note From Our Chairman on Membership of Volunteer Marine Rescue

As you are well aware I have always been involved with the Volunteer Coastal Patrol, now formed into Volunteer Marine Rescue. The advantages and PR for seaplane operators is positive and includes facilitating easier interactions with public officers you may encounter.

Normally volunteers join a particular VMR Base: ie Port Hacking, Pittwater, Gosford, Swansea, Narooma, etc. (there are 100 bases in NSW and I have sent the complete list previously to you. This should go to all members. There would be lists for bases in every other states.

However rather than SPA members join one specific base, arrangements are being discussed with Stacey Tanos for a special membership of seaplane volunteers who could serve a number of bases within cooee of their home base (Bankstown, Warnervale Port Macquarie, etc)

If you are interested in involvement along these lines please provide me with details of their aircraft (Rego No.) and where it is normally based (phone no. etc)

Phil Dulhunty

JACK PETER'S SAFETY JOTTINGS

Let's talk about safety in flying our seaplanes.

Preflight:

When possible, we should get another pilot endorsed on our aircraft to do a pre-flight, they might pick up something you have missed for some time.

Route Check:

In the airline game we had these all the time, we studied, learnt all those things we may have forgotten. I used to ask some questions like; what is the most likely event that will kill you, CFIT was the answer, going into an unfamiliar port what do you do, study all aspects of the airport, approaches, high ground, and brief the crew, YOU.

So we should all get one of our instructors to fly with us and make the odd comment.

CFIT:

Controlled flight into Terrain. You are flying to a destination, it's raining, and you have descended to "your lowest safe altitude"

You are looking out intently, your ipad and map is sitting beside you, you know there is a mast "somewhere" or a hill, then "bang" just to your left goes the mast !!

This is called nearly ! CFIT has killed many more pilots and passengers than any other cause.

UCFIT

Uncontrolled flight into terrain. You have arrived, the water looks good or your landing area looks good, the wind is up, so you join for a nice down wind, wow I'm really moving, looks like about 90kts, in fact your ASI is still only 60kts reducing, your GS is high.

So you pull the power back as you turn onto base, turning at 25deg increases your stalling speed to (Searey) about 50kts, you are indicating just under that, "bang" you are looking at the ground or water 500ft below, your aircraft is stalled and in a terminal dive, there is nothing you can do about it, unless you are very good and very lucky.

Amphibian "is the gear down or up"

Always look at your gear position on short final, am I landing on land or water? Its very costly if you get that wrong !

Good safe flying Jack P

100 YEARS OF WATER FLYING SYDNEY CELEBRATION

On 8 May 1914, Maurice Guillaux made Australia's first seaplane flight in a Maurice Farman Seaplane. The flight started in Sydney's Double Bay, adjacent to Rose Bay the site of the current seaplane base, and flew a circuit of Sydney Harbour. The story of that first flight can be found in the previous issue of On-the-Step (Issue 37, December 2013).

We could not let the 100 year anniversary of such a significant event pass without holding a special celebration.

As best we can for a small group, we want to make sure the public appreciate the significance of the day, and then we want to make sure we make it an enjoyable celebration for the seaplane pilots. On the morning of Sunday 11th May we will plan a gathering of seaplanes off the Sydney Harbour Heads. Performance matched groups will then fly circuits of Sydney Harbour using R405. Depending on conditions and timing the larger seaplanes will alight on Rose Bay

and moor close to the shore or beach for public viewing. Some shore based displays will also be arranged for public viewing. Planes will depart Sydney Harbour between 10:00 and 10:30 and proceed to Rathmines seaplane base on Lake Macquarie for a barbecue lunch and a bit of fun flying.

We will be sending out regular bulletins giving details of the arrangements as the date approaches.

To make this celebration an event worthy of such a special occasion and worthy of the media coverage we are planning, we will need many seaplanes to attend so please set this weekend aside.

Please indicate if you think you will be able to attend by emailing your details to president@seaplanes.org.au.

We want to see you there!!



SNOWY EXCURSION

Ben Hutchinson is planning a Snowy excursion to occur the week prior to the Wings Over Illawarra (3rd-4th May) but the itinerary can be changed so that it now takes place during the interim week before the Sydney Seaplane Centenary Celebration (11 May). The trees may have lost some of their colour but I'm sure the bonus of the Seaplane Celebration will more than compensate.

Please feel free to circulate this proposal to others as aviators (both land & sea-planes) who'd like to participate in this informal bash, are most welcome.

My contact details are:
email: benhut@bigpond.com

Jindabyne Aero Club & Snowy River Mens Shed
Invite you to Jindabyne Randall Community Aerodrome
Sat & Sun 26 & 27th April 2014,
21st Anniversary OPEN WEEKEND

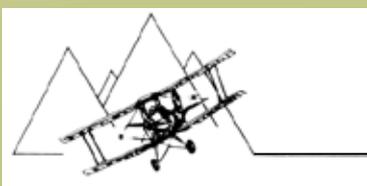


There's a Jet coming!

S211 Jet high speed fly by & manoeuvring display Sat 2pm
Catering by Lions Club and a range of other food outlets
Adventure Flights in the Nanchang Warbird
Trial Introductory Flying Lesson - anyone can do it!
Vintage & Experimental Aircraft on display
Model Aircraft on display
Helicopter scenic lake joy flights
Snowy River Mens Shed open for inspection
Hip Replacements band playing 3pm Sunday-BYO chair

Accommodation Ph. 1800 245 141
Aero Club - 0400 196 115 or 0467 783 011

Fund raising event Saturday night at Rydges Horizons Resort - \$50 advance ticket purchase necessary, includes BBQ dinner dance with live music



JINDABYNE AERO CLUB Inc.

Po Box 60, Jindabyne NSW 2627
www.jindabyneclub.org.au

ABN 24 811 054 990



PROJECT HAWKER 2013



With the great majority of Australia's population living around its 66,000 km coastline dotted with lakes, rivers and lagoons, you would expect that we would have a very strong relationship with seaplanes. Its not the strength of relationship seen in North America but, from a world perspective, its pretty strong. In the early history of aviation Australians took a disproportionately strong role. Names such as Hargrave, Hinkler, Smith and Hawker come to mind but there were many more.

In August of 2013, one of Bert Hinkler's great aviation achievements was celebrated in Britain. It was the 100th Anniversary of the Circuit of Britain Race, a challenge sponsored by The Daily Mail,

for the first pilot to fly around Britain in a waterplane. Of the four pilots who entered the race, Harry Hawker, an Australian, was the most successful. Not only was he the only entrant to start the race, he flew over 1000 miles of the 1540 mile race before crashing just north of Dublin. This was the longest distance flown over water at the time.

To commemorate Harry Hawker's heroic flight, the oldest airworthy amphibian still flying in the UK, the IWM Duxford based Catalina G-PBYA planed to complete the same circuit. The plane and crew followed, as closely as possible, the 1913 route over a five day historic flight. The 2013 Circuit of Britain challenge was mounted by Catalina Pilot Jeff Boyling who, like Harry Hawker, was born in Australia and shares a passion for aeronautical adventure

By marking this occasion Jeff hopes to inspire younger generations with the wonders of flying and keep "the golden era of aviation" alive today.



The following are extracts from the Project Hawker website giving reports from the commemorative flight.

Day 2 - The visit to RAF Lossiemouth was meant to be brief but at least the crew met the local RAFBF Team plus spoke with the Ops staff to ensure the flight would not disrupt any fast jet traffic. With engines started it was a short taxi out but a long hold. A GR4 Tornado had taxied out beforehand and the hump in the runway meant it had disappeared from view. After what seemed like ages it re-appeared and roared past allowing the Catalina to line up and depart in a somewhat slower but more graceful style.

Heading west Inverness ATC had requested a flypast but alas due to time pressures and the route it had to be sadly declined. It was then on to Cromarty, another Control Point and a great sight with "haar" on the hills either side of the Firth. The plan was to fly into the Firth so as to announce the Catalina's arrival. Jeff did this and continued the few miles on to Invergordon, a former RAF Coastal Command. .

The route planned by Jeff took the Catalina back over Invergordon and then the Council Offices in Dingwall before hopefully flying down the Great Glen at low level. The weather on the east coast was no longer to be seen and now there was excellent visibility and a much higher cloud base. A low level passage was definitely possible but the temptation to fly really low was resisted. RAF Lossiemouth had stopped any fast jets and those sightseers on scenic launches wondered what was happening as the Catalina flew past, low and slow.

By good planning, Oban was reached in time for the closing of the Highland Games. In fact flying over the Games it was clear to see a pipe band in full swing. However, dropping down over McCaig's Tower to the harbour gave the crew a surprise. Moored in the harbour was a huge cruise ship. Worse still, it was right in the display area! Luckily, the air

display was planned for the Friday so the crew flew back to Oban airport.

The wind favoured Runway 19 so Rod flew a mini Kai Tak approach but decided to go around on short final. As a result, those on the ground had a lovely close up as the Catalina powered away for a successful second attempt. Gordon Bickerton was on hand to capture it. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IkclFR5cajo>

Once on the ground it was a tight taxi on the apron but there were a number of excellent airport ground staff to protect the Catalina's 104 foot wingspan. Passengers on the local Hebridean Airways flight must have wondered what was happening.

Day 3 - In 1913 it had taken Harry Hawker and Harry Kauper flying the Sopwith Waterplane two days to reach Oban. They had stopped at five Control Points along the way and Oban was now the sixth. The Catalina G-PBYA had reached Oban and taken two days as well. In that time the Catalina



crew had overflown London, landed at Southampton, RAF Leeming and RAF Lossiemouth, undertaken six air displays not to mention a couple of flypasts and a couple of wreath laying ceremonies. It was time for a break!

On the Thursday evening the crew dined at EE-Usk, a local seafood restaurant, and celebrated the achievements of the flight so far. On the way to the restaurant they had stopped and admired some of the history on the esplanade. Jeff pointed out the Great Western Hotel which had been the Oban Control Point in 1913 and which was still in existence. A neighbouring hotel had a small photographic display of wartime Oban and of course Catalina's were a large part of the scene. Also, the Barriemore Hotel had featured in



1913 as a backdrop to the two Harry's pictured on the floats of the Sopwith Waterplane.

The crew awoke on the Friday morning well rested. Breakfast was a full Scottish affair and the staff at the Barriemore Hotel ensured the crew and support team were well prepared for the day. The plan was to conduct an air display in the morning and a local flight at the end of the day after the Catalina had been open for inspection to the public. Alas the weather was not the blue skies of the day before. Instead there was low cloud and the distant islands were obscured. Unfortunately, rain was on the way. However, at this stage the conditions were still within display limits.

Consequently, the "rest" day in Oban started with an air display over the harbour flown by John Warman with Jeff and David as crew. The approach to the harbour was from the west past McCaig's Tower. Fortunately, the cruise ship had slipped anchor during the evening and departed for the outer isles much to the relief of Jeff!

Oban has a compact harbour and the display required some manoeuvring around the harbour as well as over the marina at Kerrera Island. Given the challenges faced on Thursday, John and Jeff decided that the return to Oban Airport would be via Runway 01. Although it had a slight tailwind component it was an easier approach to fly.

The weather was now deteriorating and the decision was taken by John and Jeff to bring the afternoon local flight forward. Alas, despite numerous telephone calls, not all the intended guests invited to enjoy a flight were present but there was no shortage of volunteers. Once David

had the passengers on board the Catalina departed from Runway 19 and a circuit of Kerrera Island was flown by Jeff. Those on board were able to see some of the remnants from WW2 such as the hangar at the marina and the concrete apron at Ganavan. As the rain arrived it

was over all too soon and then it was back to Oban Airport. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XKXHJJCKcFE>

The aircraft was then open for inspection. Given the limited airport parking, a shuttle bus was in operation to bring the locals from the town out to the airfield. Despite the rain they turned up. There was a display in the main terminal building and various stands selling goods in the equipment hangar.

Jeff had brought along two display boards. One covered the 1913 Circuit of Britain Race and the other provided details of the Catalina G-PBYA, RAF Coastal Command bases in WW2 and the story behind Miss Pick Up.

One of the eagle eyed spectators queried why the starboard landing gear ram was hanging loose. Alas, a bolt had sheared at some stage after the last landing or whilst taxing in. This meant the Catalina was grounded. Float problems for the two Harry's had nearly ended their attempt on the Circuit of Britain in 1913. Was this sheared bolt to be the end of Project Hawker 2013?

The good news was there were five crew on hand to weigh up the options. A call to Duxford soon had Garry Short, the Chief Engineer for Plane Sailing Air Displays Ltd, driving north overnight with a replacement bolt plus tools. Jeff's wife Liz organised hotel accommodation for Garry. In the meantime the visitors continued to enjoy hearing about the Catalina and what Harry Hawker had attempted in 1913.

Day 4 - Sector 1. Oban to Dublin Weston Airport

Chief Engineer Garry Short had driven to Oban overnight arriving in the early hours of the morning. He joined the crew at the Barriemore Hotel for breakfast and Jeff reviewed the plans for the day with the crew and support team.

While John and David prepared the aircraft, Garry assisted by Crew Chief Shaun Jarvis soon had the landing gear ram bolt replaced and the paperwork signed off. In fact they ensured the Catalina was able to depart Oban on time.

John flew the initial departure so that the gear could be tested. The gear retracted without problem and it was cycled again while undertaking an orbit over Oban Airport. The good news was it definitely worked! Jeff then took control and overflew the local cemetery where floats were lowered to pay respect to Donnie MacFarlane a WOP/AG of 158 Squadron. Donnie had been a stalwart of the local service community and sadly he had died the day before receiving his Bomber Command Clasp. It was a simple task for the Catalina crew to overfly the cemetery but a gesture greatly appreciated by this airman's family.

The two Harry's had been delayed in 1913 by a flooded float so the efforts of Garry and Shaun were greatly appreciated. Flying conditions were slightly better than the previous day. After the cemetery flypast the Cat dropped down over Oban and departed to the south passing inside Kerrera Island and then west of Jura onwards to North Coast VRP. Turning south it was a case of flying past Kiells where the Sopwith Waterplane had set down for running repairs in 1913. There was a sense of remoteness about the place so it must have been even more isolated 100 years previously. What charts did they have to navigate by or was it a case of an atlas? The Catalina crew had up to date charts backed up by a pair of Garmin GPS units.



After Islay it was on to Larne. Hawker had set down here as well but the crew were under some time pressure today so they flew on. Flying at 700 feet and with mountains to the west, it was not surprising that communication with Belfast Radar was not easy. However,

communication was eventually established and then lost. The crew continued their coastal route towards Killeel and the Irish Airspace boundary. Contact was established with Dublin Radar and clearance to enter the Class C Airspace granted. It was on to Loughshinny where Hawker and Kauper came to grief in 1913. However, the Catalina was not on a re-enactment flight! Jeff flew an orbit over the harbour to the delight of the locals who had their own special celebrations planned for the Sunday.

The Catalina then descended below 500 feet so as to remain clear of the traffic on final approach into Dublin. John then took command to perform another air display this time at Dun Laoghaire, the 7th Control Point which sadly the two Harry's never reached. Hopefully, the crowds at the ferry terminal, marina and the Royal St George Yacht Club appreciated the performance.

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<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BQ3WKazhOow>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=415uFN4P7KA&feature=youtu.be>



Letters to the Editor

As a stand-in editor, it is really encouraging to receive emails from readers giving feedback, positive and negative, and expressing your opinions on seaplane matters. I will be publishing your messages in On-the-Step, when you permit, and when I feel the content is suitable. Please send your messages to editor@seaplanes.org.au.

Thanks to Bruce Hinds for kicking it off.

From: brucehinds@

Subject: Re: On-The-Step November 2013

Date: 3 December 2013 09:58:29 AEDT

To: "Keith Clark"

Wheels in the water!

Good piece about Check Check and Check again, we can't emphasize that enough. However one thing that you don't mention is that it is almost as important to put your wheels up after takeoff from an airport. You do say it's not near as tragic to land wheel up on land, but I like to make the point that in a float plane, you are better off wheels up ANYWHERE other than on an improved surface.

I've noticed that many amphib pilots will leave the wheels down when doing touch and goes or when flying from one airport to another. Heck, that way they don't have to cycle the gear and there is no drag penalty. BAD idea! Just as a good approach helps us make a good landing, good habits help us to complete the proper procedures. Thinking of it that way the landing is much more than a touch down, it incorporates the approach and descent. Extending that thinking, let's think of the complete circuit when doing the touch and goes, or any flight. The traffic pattern is much more useful to practice raising the gear after departure and completing all the procedures. It's all about timing, practice and creating good habits.

If we leave the gear down all we're doing is practicing the landing, even if we're doing the check list, it's matter of fact since we know we left the wheels out so we're not exercising the muscle memory that is important in development of the needed procedures! Then, follow the completed procedures with a check list to verify!

Just my two cents . . .

Bruce

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On-the-Step On The Step is distributed free to all members of the Seaplane Pilots Association of Australia (SPAA)

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