

On-the-Step

Newsletter of the Seaplane Pilots Association of Australia



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

CALLING ALL WATER-RATED INSTRUCTORS!

We are updating our SPAA register of Floating Hull and Float Alighting Gear instructors. If you would like to be listed as one of our 'SPAA-approved' water rating instructors, then please contact me by email at president@seaplanes.org.au or by phone, on 0448 744 763

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INSTRUCTOR QUALIFICATION

CASA Part 61 licensing changes have meant that 'design feature' instructors need to update their qualifications to continue instructing in water operations. Please be aware that you must organise your own re-qualification prior to instructing under Part 61 rules.

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SPAA CHRISTMAS PARTY AT SOUTH GRAFTON

Grafton Aero Club will host the SPAA Christmas Party on December 3 and 4. Look for further information in this newsletter. It should be a great weekend, so don't miss it!

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RATHMINES CATALINA FESTIVAL WEEKEND

A large gaggle of amphibious aircraft attended the 2016 'SPAA Rathmines Splash-in' during late October. Many thanks to our members who safely travelled long distances and volunteered their time and energy to make the whole weekend such an outstanding success. In particular, we must thank Donna Handley who organised the event, and Philip Dartnell who very ably assisted with catering and other activities.

Our Return of the Catalina movie screening on Friday night was very well received, and Michael Smith's honest and emotional account of his global circumnavigation flight on Saturday evening was a particular highlight. The action packed weekend culminated in an amazing Airshow at the Rathmines Catalina Festival, and the Sunday crowd really enjoyed getting "up close and personal" with an incredible collection of seaplanes on the hard stand.

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'OZKOSH 2016' ANNUAL SAAA FLY-IN

Rohan Walter was the driving force behind SPAA's presence at Narromine for OzKosh 2016, thanks Rohan! At the event, Bob Priddle graciously offered his Lake Buccaneer as our feature, and Greg Doyle volunteered some of his company allocated space for the SPAA display. Bill and Lyndal Coote attended throughout the week, whilst I managed a quick visit on the Saturday. The Buccaneer attracted lots of attention, and the display was great publicity for SPAA.

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AUSTRALIAN GEOGRAPHIC 2016 AWARDS NIGHT

It was an honour to be present at this ceremony in Sydney on 27 October, where SPAA's Michael Smith was named 'Australian Adventurer of the year'. Michael's inspirational journey has captured the imagination of many, although few might understand how closely he avoided disaster. Michael has told me that he would not like to see others to come to grief emulating his exploits.

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SPAA'S PURPOSE:

SPAA exists as an organisation to represent and encourage all Seaplane pilots in Australia. To effectively lobby for and represent our membership, SPAA must always facilitate safe and neighbourly behaviour by our members. SPAA cannot condone or support reckless 'seaplane adventures', particularly where normal safety margins and/or regulatory compliance are compromised.

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WATERWAYS ACCESS AND SPAA MEMBERSHIP

Please encourage all active Seaplane Pilots to become financial members of SPAA and comply with our SPAA 'Code of Operation'. This will help with our efforts to negotiate the removal of permit requirements on specific waterways.

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Safe flying!

MALCOLM BURNS

RATHMINES NSW

0448 744 763



In the editor's opinion, and in most that attended, this year's Rathmines Catalina Festival was a great success in all respects. Despite the fact that the HARS Catalina doesn't like to get its bottom wet in salt water and was limited to a number of low level fly pasts, the crowd was as enthusiastic as ever about its appearance at the Festival.

The SPAA had its best seaplane turn-up ever at the Festival with most of the thirteen aircraft arriving on the Friday and Saturday morning to utilise what must be the most amphibian friendly site in Australia and to participate in the fabulous social program that Dynamite Donna (Donna Handley) had arranged for us. Excellent events were held on Friday and Saturday nights with tasty meals provided by the Rathmines Bowling Club, a great movie, The Return of the Catalina, and another wonderfully inspiring presentation by Michael Smith.



4 Buccaneers, 1 Renegade, 3 Seareys, 1 Super Petrel, 1 Seamax, 1 Colyaer Freedom, 1 Catalina ultrlight, 1 Cessna 206 amphibian



A big thank you to Brayden Norbury's wife Veerle, and their three children: Freya, Kiera and Tristan for taking on the SPAA merchandise sales and the gold coin collection.



The Catalina fly-past always still draws a large and enthusiastic crowd



The departing seaplanes at the end of the Festival was also a great attraction for the spectator.



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Christmas

Party

DECEMBER 3RD & 4TH

Hosted by Grafton Aero Club

Saturday Lunch 3/12/16

Enjoy sausages fried onion, locally famous Mann River Burgers with all the trimmings

Bacon, egg, cheese, pineapple, tomato, lettuce, onion and a variety of salads.

Tea & Coffee (\$10)

Christmas Dinner Saturday Night

Baguette breads , fresh prawns, baked glazed Ham, chats potatoes , variety salads, several desert dishes.

Tea & Coffee (\$25)

Sunday Breakfast 4/12/16

Cereals , Fruit , bacon , sausages ,eggs , hash browns , fried tomato , bake beans, toast,

Tea & Coffee (\$10)

Sunday Morning Tea

Big River Sailing Club

Based at Harwood, north of the Sugar Mill near Yamba on the Clarence River

**Register at www.seaplanes.org.au
Contact Donna Handley and find out about accommodation options on 0409 172 776, donnadqn@gmail.com**

Oshkosh 2016

an eye opening adventure.

Lynden Williams

I was very fortunate to be asked by an American HU16 owner and instructor to help crew his aeroplane from Carson City NV to Oshkosh to coincide with this year's EAA event.

Three of us headed out with the intent of the instructor giving a route check to the other pilot whilst I was in the right hand seat and my route check on the way back from OSH.

Our journey began early Friday morning 22nd August from Carson City with full tanks (1091 US gallons) giving 9 hours endurance plus reserves. Being VFR it was good to have the assurance of being able to divert if the weather became unpredictable.

Flying in the USA appears to be relatively straight forward if you choose VFR. It is basically drawing a direct route and modifying your track to avoid restricted airspace or control zones. If there is a need to transit a controlled airport a call before 10miles is suffice.

The early morning departure ensured relatively smooth flying conditions especially crossing the Rockies. At this time of year the thermals are prevalent aided by ground temperatures in excess of 100deg f.

En route the scenery was spectacular. It encompassed desert to rugged Mountain peaks with remnants of last season's snow tucked away in shaded areas.

Our first port of call was Pueblo Memorial Airport Colorado which was a lunch and a fuel stop.

The aircraft was operating beautifully with fuel burn and oil consumption as planned.

Next stop was Kansas City, which although slightly North of our direct track, fulfilled the invitation of a retiring Delta



Captain to celebrate his final commercial flight earlier that day.

Needless to say stories were running thick and thin and not much different to those one might hear in GA in Australia.

Next morning our plan was to fly direct to Minneapolis however Mother Nature intervened with severe storms and low visibility necessitating a diversion to Waterloo Iowa.

Our transit was close to 5 hours but enabled us to have lunch in the city, meet others enroute to OSH who had also diverted and tour the local warbirds collection.

Finally on our way the weather had improved but not at our destination Anoka Minneapolis.

We parked the aircraft overnight at St Cloud and proceeded to our overnight accommodation by car.

Next day was to be very busy. The owner of the HU16 (blue and white long wing) and the two Howard 500s plus our HU16 (US Navy colours) had to be transferred to OSH.

Notams for OSH have set procedures for aircraft type, vintage, whether warbird, slow or fast, land or seaplane. OSH becomes the busiest airport in the world during the event.

Regretfully not having been to OSH before I was excited to see for myself all the stories I had heard.



I am still not sure whether it was for the benefit of amusement but I suddenly found myself in the left hand seat piloting the blue and white long wing HU16.

Departure from Anoka was as anticipated but all changed approaching OSH. To avoid light aeroplanes (many being turned away as the facility was full) it was decided to stay high until over Lake Winnebago and then fly as notammed over Warbird Island for landing on Rwy27.

Aircraft were visually seen in all quadrants and others still not found! A calm voice from the tower gave a clearance to land but to vacate the runway as soon as possible due to following aircraft. This entailed literally pulling onto the adjacent grass and substitute taxiway where welcome to Oshkosh became evident with frantically baton waving controllers dressed in pretty pink safety vests ushering the way to our reserved parking spot.

Because of the volume of traffic normal communication is minimal usually with the controller the only one transmitting. It is a matter of listening and obeying. Once on the ground it was a requirement to display signage in the cockpit window indicating the parking area (in our case SP for seaplane) and then the ground controllers indicate the preferred route.

The statistics for this year are not to hand but 2016 was supposed to be an increase on 2015 where there were more than 10,000 aeroplanes, over 2,500 static displays and 3,000 plus takeoff and landings in a day.

Highlights for me were the amazing number of aircraft I had heard of but never seen.....there to be seen in pristine and flyable condition. The most monumental was the Martin Mars "Hawaii" An incredible fire bombing seaplane almost physically the size of a B747 and capable of dropping 7,000gallons of water in one sortie. Also viewing plans for new composite

seaplanes predicted to be coming onto the market although most appeared in need of forward thinking investors to make the project viable.

Mustangs in formation were the regular early morning alarm to awaken temporary residents camping on the field. Our tent albeit under the wing of the Albatross and near the threshold of 36/18 seemed to shudder from the mighty Merlin (or variant) as a precursor to the deafening noise created during departure.

Our vantage point enabled us to see very close to hand arrivals and departures from anything flying! It was very impressive to see a Galaxy and B744-800 arrive within close proximity and for the Martin Mars dropping a full load of water onto a "fire" midfield. Day and night aerobatics were outstanding with all displays worth capturing again.

Fortunately the week was relatively incident free which is amazing considering the huge volume and intensity of traffic displaying or en route. Sadly an A-26 Invader had a nose wheel collapse (images available on Google) and a powered parasailer got caught in a crosswind gust. Thankfully no injuries other than pride.

The week was full and every minute worthwhile. The enthusiasm of all participants big and small was amazing.



A FASINATING STORY OF A SPECIAL PLACE



I trust you will forgive me for what could be seen as a fairly self indulgent article, but I hope that this story of a region close to my heart is of interest to any seaplane enthusiast, particularly those who have visited and flown in the Great Lakes region on the mid North Coast of New South Wales.

As someone who was captured by the images of floatplanes moored at a small wharf outside a log cabin on some picturesque North American lake, I dreamed that one day I could be part of such a scene. Having gained one part of that dream, my own small seaplane, I couldn't believe my luck when the opportunity to own a seaplane friendly house by a picturesque lake became available.

As my wife and I have got to know more of the local residents of the small community around "our lake", we began to hear bits of stories of seaplane activities closely linked to the history of these lakes.

The Great Lakes have seen a number of seaplane gatherings over the years. The earliest SPAA gathering that I have found records of was back in 1978 when around five float planes gathered and spent a weekend on Smiths Lake.

More recently there have been several gatherings at Tiona Park on Wallis Lake and several at an old boathouse (now cafe called "Frothy Coffee") on Smiths Lake.

But I have learned that this boathouse played a large role in the development of this region and it involved much larger "seaplanes" than visit its waters these days.

The need to burn a pile of old tree stumps on my property, brought me to meet Charles Degotardi (Jnr), the local bush fire brigade captain, who it turns out is the son of Charles Degotardi the entrepreneur at the centre of this story. He has confirmed this fascinating story.

Mike Scanlon of the Newcastle Herald discovered this story back in July 2011 and I reproduce his words below.

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Smiths Lake village was a large farming area prior to becoming a residential development initiated by Charles Degotardi. The boatshed on the shores of Smiths Lake was constructed in the early sixties under the guidance of Charles Degotardi to assist passengers arriving by sea plane to buy this newly released residential land

The boatshed still exists today and is known as "Frothy Coffee", it is a kiosk adjacent to the public boat ramp of De Bert's Reserve.



Boarding pass for a flying boat ride to paradise?.

Buckle up for one of the strangest tales of mid-north coast aviation.

Believe it or not, 50 years ago huge flying boats briefly took a starring role in opening up Smiths and Wallis lakes, north of Seal Rocks, for development.

The two-storey-high aircraft with 35-metre wingspans spearheaded lakeside growth by regularly ferrying passengers from Sydney's Rose Bay to the then distant region for real estate promotions.

The giant seaplanes, once best known for their flights to Lord Howe Island, were chartered by a high-octane salesman named Charles H. Degotardi, the man credited with getting the Lakes Way road tar-sealed in 1970.

The eventual destination of many intrepid travellers after water landings was scenic Coomba Park. Located at the top of the 25-kilometre-long Wallis Lake, this still remote bushland backwater nestles in quiet solitude among kangaroos, wallabies, pelicans, sea eagles and feral deer.

Former Great Lakes Shire president Jim Gilbey said he'd heard of the unique adventure flights, but they might have only lasted six months.

"What I do know is that the seaplane provider also organised

waterskiers to put on a show to welcome the air passengers,” Gilbey said.

It’s hard to appreciate today the impact these lumbering yet majestic flying boats, each capable of carrying 42 passengers, would have had as they landed unexpectedly on usually tranquil waterways, accompanied by four roaring engines, water hissing along the hulls and spray hitting the windows.

“It’s all true. It happened,” Newcastle’s former “Mr Travel” Roy Earl told H2 Review this week, speaking about the mighty 1940s vintage flying boats.

He said property developer Degotardi was a prominent figure in opening up the Smiths and Wallis lakes areas.

“This all happened probably in the early 1960s,” Earl said.

“The big flying boats hired from Ansett Airlines were maybe mostly Sandringhams. Extraordinary aircraft from a now-gone romantic era of flight.

“You’d come by bus around a corner on the Lakes Way, on Smiths Lake, and there suddenly you’d see the high Ansett logo on the tail of a flying boat sticking up.

“What a sight! The idea of the flights – all from Sydney – was Charlie Degotardi’s. He was a dynamo.

“The Rose Bay seaplane would land up there and Charlie would be dressed up in apron with barbecue ready. What a super salesman. He was way ahead of his time with his ideas.

“Simultaneously, bus passengers from Newcastle would arrive. Charlie would hire two buses and time their journey so the Sydney plane and buses arrived together. I was working with Jayes travel agency at its original site then in Scott Street, diagonally opposite the railway station.

“Charlie would also hire two Jayes girls to hand out brochures on site. One hostess even later bought land there. It was good business.

“But if Sydney people later thought ‘Let’s have a look at our property’ they’d find out with a shock it was a five- or six-hour trip just to get up there over the early winding gravel roads.

“Initially no one wanted the lakeside land, then it caught on. Flying boats also landed up on the Clarence River before there was an airport.”

Former Australian waterski champion and Forster resident Graham Barclay, now 79, remembers the unusual real estate promotion, especially at remote Coomba Park.

“Degotardi paid us, the Forster Ski Club, to put on waterski exhibitions. My wife Fay also took part in them,” Barclay said.

“Those take-offs and landings by the Ansett flying boats were fantastic. Planes landed in deep water at both Smiths and Wallis lakes. Degotardi as a salesman was 40 years ahead of his time in his thinking.

“He even entertained NSW premier Bob Askin and his whole cabinet up there for a Christmas party at his home.”

Coomba Park resident Lyn Hanna recalled that in 1959, Degotardi built a boatshed on Smiths Lake, now the site of the popular Frothy Coffee café, to which he flew prospective Sydney land buyers.

“Flight tickets were free if passengers put down a deposit on the land,” she said, quoting from a district history book by author Wendy Williamson.

“Prospective Coomba Park land buyers came either by DC-3 aircraft to the Wallis Island airfield or by flying boat landing on



Flights to the Great Lakes land sales departed from Sydney’s Rose Bay flying boat base.



Charles Degotardi's newspaper add promoting his Great Lakes land sale.

SANDPIPER SPLASH AEROUND
21st-23rd April, 1978

Once again the Seaplane Association members and their friends gathered. This time at Smith's Lakes 25 kilometres south of Forster, NSW. Nine seaplanes splashed down on the lake and tied up in the shade of the paper bark trees on the beach alongside the Sandpiper Lodges. Cabanas were booked for accommodation and the scene was set for another fantastic gathering.

Those who gathered on the Friday evening enjoyed a barbecue under a full moon and five eighths low cumulus cover at the Sandpiper. On Saturday morning the Splashing Competitions were held. These included spot splashing, water bombing and the shortest take-off, unfortunately the Super Cubs being excluded for obvious reasons!

It must be noted that the spot landing was won by a lady student pilot . . . better luck next time fellas.

The afternoon was given to chicken luncheon on Smith's Lake Sand Bar and afterwards splashing around in the surf.

On the Sunday the theme was relaxation, doing what ever pleased. The quiet peaceful weekend was only interrupted by a minor clash with some of the local residents who proclaimed that the seaplaners and their planes were a hazard to their safety and detrimental to the environment. The seaplaners greeted them courteously and pointed out that seaplanes cause less environmental disturbance than noisy speed boats. It was also quietly suggested that the gouged hills caused by sand mining, and the never ending spread of residential development itself caused more threat to their little haven than the very occasional seaplane landing and taking off. After expounding these ideas to the residents, the floaties rapidly charmed the majority of the protesters with a few joy flights and a general thoughtful use of throttle when beaching and taking off.

Once again a wonderful time was had by all, with the hopes that the next splash-in at Port Macquarie would be even more successful and enjoyable.

A 1978 SPAA journal article on an early seaplane gathering on Smiths Lake



Note from the author.

The Great Lakes offers some wonderful seaplane flying and the residents are predominantly very welcoming of seaplanes on the lakes. If you decide to visit this area PLEASE be conscious of the local residents, many of whom are retirees, and of the environment. Keep well clear of residences around the lakes, be considerate and courteous and spread your activities around the lakes rather than concentrating operations in one area.

Wallis Lake, then transferring by company boat to the decorated wharf at Coomba Park.”

Hanna said the passengers were wined and dined at a cottage called the Coomba Park Country Club. The cottage was destroyed by fire in 1968. Two sisters, Thelma and Lorraine Crapp (the Olympic gold medallist) were among those paid to waterski along the lake to entertain the diners.

Degotardi had a lot of land to sell, having bought about nine kilometres of Coomba waterfront land.

Earlier, he had developed land in the Blue Mountains and later Bundeena, south of Sydney.

“Coomba is still a special place,” Hanna said. “Everyone here calls it paradise.”

A VERY OLD TRIP REPORT ROSE BAY-LORD HOWE ISLAND

In searching for information on the use of flying boats in the early property sales around Smiths Lake I was surprised to find this article describing an Ansett Airlines Sandringham flight to Lord Howe Island. It turns out that Smiths Lake was the only emergency diversion water landing spot for the flight. The article also gives us a great insight into one of the last great flying-boat scheduled air service. I hope you enjoy

Introduction

I left high school at the end of 1970 and started work for the then Department of Civil Aviation in early February 1971. This meant that I was due for holidays in January 1992! My very first holiday by myself!!! So what the big question was where to go? It so happened that a mate of mine, Frank had a sister (Ros) who was working at Pinetrees Guest House on Lord Howe Island (LDH), so why not go visit? Lord Howe is a tropical paradise some 400nm north east of Sydney, see the link below for details AND we'd get to fly the Sandringham!!! A quick exchange of letters (which took a couple of weeks, no email or even phones to Lord Howe, SW radio only, then) arrangements were made to stay pretty cheaply in staff quarters.

Next step was to contact Ansett Airlines of NSW (A of NSW) at their main office in Campbell Street Sydney. A of NSW was a subsidiary of Ansett Transport Industries (ATI), Ansett Flying Boat Services was a subsidiary of A of NSW. Although this trip report is about the Lord Howe trip, most of the photos were taken on the 3 charter trips I did with the Aviation Historical Society of Australia (AHSA) because it was dark on the trip over to LDH and I had a better camera by the time of the charters.

Operational Considerations

Flying boat operations are a bit different! They need to take into account water as well as air operations. Also LDH is a very small and isolated island outpost, so the operation is a bit like outback flying in some ways. The Sandringhams used the lagoon on the western side of the island; they were not open ocean flying boats.

The lagoon is quite shallow, with large coral heads and the boats can only use it around an hour or so each side of high tide, so arrivals were scheduled around the high tide. This meant that the schedule to Lord Howe was somewhat screwy. Flights would leave Rose Bay (RSE) at whatever

time was necessary to put them at LDH around the daylight high tide. Night take offs and landings were possible at RSE but strictly prohibited at LDH. I seem to remember that night take offs were preferred to night landings, but am not sure, any more.

The sector time was around 3.5 to 4 hours and height was below 10,000 feet, sometime well below (unpressurised remember), depending on weather conditions. Boarding at RSE was usually from a floating jetty directly into the boat, sometimes by launch to the boat moored at a buoy. I never discovered why the two methods were used. At LDH it was always by launch.

The only diversion water airport available was at Smiths Lake, about 300km north of Sydney near the beach resort towns of Foster & Tuncurry. Barrier Reef Airways, later Ansett maintained facilities there from the start of post war flying boat operations in the late 1940s until they ceased in 1974. LDH had a flight service facility, which also doubled as the Met Office. In normal operations flights would only leave RSE if the weather was clear at the island as the normal diversion point was back to RSE. Smiths Lake was strictly an option of last resort as it is quite isolated, even now, let alone in 1972. Fuel was carried for the round trip as fuel was not normally available at LDH.

The Actual Flight

Date: March 1972

Flight No?

VH-BRF

EDT: 2:00am

EAT: 6:00 am

The week before Easter 1972 Frank and I were dropped off at RSE by my grandfather about midnight. The small terminal was moderately busy with check in, but with only about 40 pax (don't remember the exact number) carried on each flight, the single desk served adequately.

The terminal was basically just one room with loos at one end, horrible brown/green lino (much favoured by the Australian Government, at the time) on the floors and hard wooden seats in serried ranks. The best bit was that you could sit near the window that looked out over the brightly lit dock and watch the pre departure activity. I don't even remember a vending machine.

noise dropped to zero and we started to climb out. We turned left (W) and crossed the north shore of the harbour, at a perfectly safe height, over what is now part of Sydney Harbour National Park, near Georges Heights and headed back toward the Harbour Bridge, over the Lower North Shore suburbs (incidentally where I now live). We turned left (S) again and ran down passed the bridge, east of the



With the cargo loaded and the fuel lighter pulling away the flight was called (literally) by the Purser at about 1:15 am. Considering the hour it was a pretty lively and happy throng (of 30 odd people) who made their way out of the building, along the path and down the gangway onto the pontoon. Boarding was thru L1, the large forward door.

We were seated on the left hand side, about half way back in the rear downstairs cabin, 4 abreast! [Unbelievable in contrast to today's 10 abreast]. Carryon under the seat, no overhead racks. Within a short time everyone was seated and the safety briefing was done before engine start, for reasons which will become obvious!

The engines started with the typical Pratt Wasp roar and conversation became limited to shouting in the ear of the person next to you. We were still tied to the dock, of course, no brakes on a flying boat. Full power and mag drop checks were done, engines to full (I assume) power, lines away and we shot off out of the dock and straight up Sydney Harbour, basically due north. The crash boat flashed passed the window a few seconds later. The noise of the engines was drowned out by the noise of the water rushing passed the hull under our feet. You could feel the boat lift a bit, then stop, we were "on the step" (I was later informed), the water noise decreased somewhat as we continued skimming across the water, to the point where I was becoming worried about Middle Head, how high was it again?

In due course, seconds in fact, hours it seemed, the water

Opera House. Turning left again (E) we flew across the eastern suburbs, slumbering in the night. On reaching the coast the engines were throttled back, so that the noise was merely loud and we turned approximately North East and headed for Lord Howe, and that was the last thing to see out the window until we approached the island.

There was a refreshment service shortly after we left RSE, sandwiches with tea, coffee or juice.

About 3.5 hours later, dawn was struggling up from the depths of the Tasman Sea as we approached the island from the south west. We flew passed the southern end of the island and turned north and followed the east coast passed the mountains, beaches and forests. It was in fact the down wind leg of our circuit. We turned base parallel with the north coast and turned on to final just north of the mountains that guarded the northern end of the lagoon. As we turned I could see the northern half of the lagoon in sunlight and the southern end quite dark in the shadow of Mounts Gower (875 m) and Lidgbird (777 m).

We descended, skimming the tops of the northern hills, onto the lagoon, with a mighty splash, with water spraying up over the wing, the lower deck windows and underside of the wing got a through wash, although it was not rough landing by any means, quite smooth in fact, and rolled (floated?) out to the south.

After a 180 degree turn, quite fast and a bit exciting, we taxied back to the mooring buoy near the jetty in the northern part of the lagoon, where the Purser soon had us

moored to the buoy.

Shortly after the boat was secure the airline's launch came along side and stopped outside the large L1 door and disembarking started, strictly as called for by the crew. We were in the second load, I think. A short ride later we were on the jetty being met by Ros and her boss. We waited a short while for the bags to come off, we were then loaded into the guesthouse's mini bus and the eight or so of us were hauled off to Pinetrees, arriving about 6:30 am (local, GMT +10.5, from memory).

As breakfast was about two hours away we were served tea and toast (and the freshest pineapple juice I've ever had!) and given the introductory spiel all guest were given before we were escorted to our rooms to unpack and get ready for breakfast. The whole rhythm of life on the island was geared to the flying boat arrival/departure times so every establishment on the island was ready to deal with guests arriving/departing at any time during daylight hours. In fact in talking to Ros a bit later it turned out she and the cook were up at 4:00 am to get departing guest up and give them a light breakfast before delivering them to the wharf as we arrived.

Thus started 10 days in paradise!

The Return

The return trip, 10 days later was not as exciting for some reason. The trip to RSE was in VH-BRC and we were seated upstairs. We embarked at about 1:00 pm and were soon ready to go. We taxied to the southern reaches of the lagoon, turned and started our take off run to the north.





Australian GEOGRAPHIC

Adventurer of the Year 2016

CONGRATULATIONS MICHAEL SMITH

OCTOBER 13, 2016

For becoming the first person to solo navigate the world in a single-engine flying boat, Michael Smith is the Adventurer of the Year.

IN APRIL 2015, PILOT Michael Smith left Melbourne to begin his trip in a Sea-Rey (sic) Amphibian aeroplane called “Southern Sun” to loosely follow the Qantas Empire Flying Boat Route of 1938 from Sydney to London. However, on reaching London, Michael decided to continue flying across the North Atlantic, North America, the North Pacific and upon arrival in Longreach on Wednesday, 11 November, became the first person to solo navigate the world using a single-engine flying boat.

Enchanted by the luxury, glamour and romance of the Qantas flying boats of the 1930s, Michael wanted to retrace their historic route between Australia and England as closely as possible in his own amphibious aircraft.

The original plan wasn't to fly around the world, but after arriving in London and planning the journey home, Michael yearned for more.

He then extended the trip and crossed to North America before flying across the Pacific to Asia and back to Australia. Rather than a few months, the expedition had turned into a record-breaking, seven-month journey: 210 days, 25 countries, 80 stops and 480 hours flying.

Could this really be a major seaplane manufacturing opportunity for NSW's Central Coast.

This article from the Central Coast newspaper has a lot of people excited but others are skeptical.

Therese Murray, Central Coast Gosford Express Advocate, September 27, 2016

Amphibian Aerospace Industries to create thousands of jobs with Central Coast manufacturing facility

AN international aircraft builder will be jetting into Central Coast Airport at Warnervale to spend \$100 million on a new manufacturing centre and create thousands of much-needed jobs for the region.

Announcing the airport coup at Warnervale today, Premier Mike Baird said Amphibian Aerospace Industries (AAI) would relocate its offshore manufacturing to the Central Coast and become the first transport category aircraft manufacturer to set up in Australia since the 1940s.

The move will create 240 direct jobs in aircraft manufacturing, plus thousands of indirect jobs in auxiliary industries including parts supply, instrumentation, interior fit-outs and avionics.

"This is a great day for the Central Coast," Mr Baird said. "This announcement means thousands of jobs for the region with a significant flow-on to the Central Coast economy."

AAI builds the HU-16 and G-111 Albatross amphibian aircraft and will move its operations from the US to Central Coast Airport under a 40-year lease.

Amphibian Aircraft International president Khoa Hoang said the company would invest \$100 million in building the manufacturing facility at Central Coast Airport to upgrade the Albatross with new turboprop engines, a state-of-the-art full-glass cockpit and extra comfort features for its customers worldwide.

"We could do this from numerous countries in the world, but chose Australia because there is great available aviation engineering talent, we have support from the government and it is a stable political and legal environment," he said.

"It just made good sense to us to choose the Central Coast. It's close to Sydney and Newcastle, it's in a great location and it offers our employees a great lifestyle."

Mr Hoang said that while some staff would come from aviation-skilled backgrounds and move to the Coast, there



Amphibian Aerospace Industries will build similar aircraft to this one on the Coast.

would still be plenty of jobs for the local community.

"About 70 per cent of our employees will be sourced locally for trades, production lines, panel beating, upholstery, distribution, parts sorting, warehousing, inventory, maintenance, administration and finance," he said.

Central Coast Council administrator Ian Reynolds said the announcement was the culmination of more than 12

months of negotiations.

"There were a number of locations that AAI were investigating and we're pleased to have successfully attracted AAI to the Central Coast, Mr Reynolds said.

He said it was part of a wider vision to make the airport a hub for light to medium commercial general aviation.

"Having an anchor tenant like AAI at Central Coast Airport will help put our region on the aviation industry map," Mr Reynolds said.



A concept plan for AAI site at Central Coast Airport.

Mr Hoang said his company would use Central Coast Airport "minimally" for aircraft testing.

He said there was significant international demand for the Albatross amphibious aircraft type, which can land on water, snow or land.



Khoa Hoang, Amphipian Aircraft Group president, (right), signs an agreement with Rob Noble, Central Coast Council CEO, after the announcement of a new aircraft facility as Premier Mike Baird looks on. Picture: Peter Clark

“It is suitable for humanitarian aid, surveillance, search and rescue, detect and interject operations, passenger transport and utility functions in outer reach islands and other remote places around the world where airports are not viable,” he said.

TAKEOFF LOOMS

- * The process to get AAI up and running on the Central Coast will be staged over three to five years.
- * AAI must submit a development application and go through all the relevant planning processes for the facility, which would be on industrial zoned land.

SPAA CHRISTMAS PARTY

SEAPLANE PILOTS ASSOCIATION AUSTRALIA

SOUTH GRAFTON AIRFIELD
3 and 4 December 2016
Register at seaplanes.org.au
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POWERLINES
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AIRFIELD

WHAT'S ON THE HORIZON



THE PRIVATEER AMPHIBIAN

THE PRIVATEER is new amphibian being developed through the combined efforts of John A. Meekins, an entrepreneur whose dream is to improve the standards and safety of water-based aircraft, and Bill Husa, the original design/build engineer, who had extensive experience with Boeing and as consultant on prototype aircraft and to the commercial aviation industry, who has subsequently deceased.

Comp Air Aviation of Titusville, Florida, was selected to construct the Privateer. Comp Air who has over 23-years of experience have gone into producing hundreds of innovative aircraft (over 200 with turboprop engines), which embody modern construction techniques, advanced avionics installations, and adaptations to special operations.

The design of the PRIVATEER™ was developed to have a low center of gravity, thus reducing the chance of flipping over in adverse conditions. For runway operations, the PRIVATEER™ employs Tricycle landing gear, allowing conventional landing and taxiing.

The aircraft will be built of carbon fiber composites, making a light and strong airframe that is protected against the corrosion often associated with water-borne aircraft. Light structure, combined with the 724 HP Walter 601 series turbine engine, will deliver performance not seen by previous amphibians.

The six plus seat cabin (1 Pilot & 5-6 passengers) may have a three-place bench seat across the back of the cabin on production models.

The configuration of the PRIVATEER™ is scalable so variants will accommodate additional passengers.

The aircraft will have an empty weight of less than 3,600 lbs. and a range of 1,000 miles at Max Gross Weight, including a full passenger load.

The shroud design around the propeller should significantly the propeller efficiency and thrust available for take-off and cruise. A secondary benefit is that the shroud also makes the already quiet turbine even quieter by damping much of the acoustic profile. It is claimed the PRIVATEER™ prototype is nearing completion.

The predicted specifications are;

- PERFORMANCE:

Maximum Cruise Speed Sea Lvl - 195 knots
 Service Ceiling: Estimated - 25,000 feet
 Rate of Climb: Sea Level - 2,100 fpm

- TAKEOFF & LANDING PERFORMANCE:

T/O Distance at Max TOW: (5,600 lb)
 Water: 1,200 ft. (estimated)
 Land: 960 ft.

- EXTERNAL AIRCRAFT DIMENSIONS:

Height on Wheels: 12.3 feet
 Length – Nose to Tail: 43.0 feet
 Wing Span: 42.9 feet

- SEATING:

Typical Crew: 1 Pilot
 Passengers: Five to six

- INTERNAL CABIN DIMENSIONS:

Internal Length: 13.2 feet
 Cabin width : 4.1 feet

Seaplane Pilots Association Australia (SPAA) is a not for profit organisation staffed by volunteers.

Its goals are to:

- ***Promote the safe and responsible operation of Seaplanes.***
- ***Advocate for equal rights and access to waterways for Seaplanes.***
- ***Engage with the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA), Air Services Australia (ASA), industry stakeholders and other interested parties on Seaplane related matters and legislation.***
- ***Foster high standards of Seaplane training and airmanship.***
- ***Provide support and information to its members.***

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