



# **TAA / Australian Airlines 25 Year Club**

## **Newsletter No. 89**

## **June 2016**

**Editor: John Wren**

### **President's Report**

- Please find attached details of the **70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Lunch** that will be held at Moonee Valley Race Course on 9 September 2016 – 70 years to the day after TAA's first revenue flight.
- We would like to reach out to all ex TAA and Australian Airlines staff and let them know about the Museum and our 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. If you know of an ex staff member who is not aware of the 25 Year Club / Museum, please send us their email address [or get them to] and we will send all the 2016 Newsletters free of obligation or cost to keep them informed.
- Our new 16mm 'electronic' projector has arrived from the US. It will allow us to digitise all the 16mm films that were saved over the years before they 'disintegrate'. We will make most of them available on DVD to those interested. Two new computers [and associated bits and pieces] have also been purchased to aid in the digitisation process [16mm film and Umatic tape]. We have already run a test with the successful copying of a Umatic tape about TAA's workshops [the original tape was used at airshows overseas to market TAA's engineering expertise and gain third party work]. It was shown at the recent STAARS luncheon and drew a lot of interest. Exciting stuff! Oh, and we still have loads of VHS and Beta tapes to be done as well. If you have read this far you are interested in the technology [or results] of this effort and you may be able to help. We need a Beta camera to play the Beta tapes so we can record them. Does anyone have an old Beta camera [working or not] they can loan [or give] the Museum?
- If you haven't been to the Museum for a while [or never] the week of our 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary would be a great time. We will be open on the Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday 6,7 & 8 September between 10 & 2. A lot has changed, and tons of new items added – come and get a surprise!
- We welcome new Volunteer Elizabeth [Libby] Watkins to the Museum. Libby comes to us from Wings Away [the ex TAA air hostess group] and will be helping with our uniforms collection.

### **Newsletter**

The envelope your Newsletter arrived in has your 25 year Club financial status printed on it, so you will know if you need to help us with another donation now, or when in the future.

The Newsletter will be **emailed** to members who request it in lieu of surface mail [saves on postage]. The email group will also be able to click on links to short movies. Surface mail will always be available for those without email access.

### **Dates - 2016**

1. 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations 9 September
2. Xmas Lunch 10 Nov
3. STAARS - 16 August & 15 November.

No other events were planned this year in view of all the effort being put into the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary preparations.

## HARS Convair

The HARS Convair [painted in TAA colours] is now not due to start its ferry flight to Australia from South Africa until August. Ageing aircraft can be tricky!

## Aircraft Model

You may recall that in a recent Newsletter we featured a TAA DC-6 model assembled by our own John Booth. Well, John asked if he could borrow the DC-6 to enter it in the Australian Open Plastic & Scale Model Championships at Sandown Park, Springvale on 11 June. The model won two first prizes!!! Well done John.



## TAA / AUSTRALIAN AIRLINES FIRST B737-376

[Ed. A great article from Joe Favazza]

This year (2016) we not only celebrate the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Trans Australian Airlines (TAA) but we also celebrate the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the renaming of Trans Australia Airlines (TAA) to Australian Airlines and the introduction of the first Boeing 737-376 Airplane into the Fleet.

The first of the twelve (12) B737-376 Airplanes, ordered by TAA on the 27<sup>th</sup> May 1985, was designated as PQ001, Line Number 1225, Serial Number 23477, and was originally to become VH-TAA (Conceptually Only) complete with the TAA 'Chocolate Block' Logo and Livery. This Airplane came off the Renton Production Line on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of April 1986 and following acceptance by the TAA Team, was given to the Boeing Flight Test Team for Testing and Certification of the Electronic Flight Instrument System (EFIS), Improved APU and other Enhancements. During Flight Testing It flew with FAA Registration N3281U (As well as Little Humdinger – to be explained later). The first Australian Airlines B737-376 was to be registered as VH-TAF and Powered by two (2) CFM International CFM56-3C1 engines

TAA/Australian Airlines was to be the **first airline in the world** with an EFIS Cockpit on the B737-300 airplane type.

Following initial Development of Specifications and Contract Signing by the TAA Technical Services Manager, John Cramond, a Team of TAA 'Representatives' was sent to Renton, Washington, USA to Manage, Inspect and Accept the TAA B737-376's. The initial Team ('A' Team) comprised:

- TAA Senior Avionics Engineer - Sladen Hope who was designated as the TAA Technical Representative Seattle;
- TAA Senior Inspector Avionics – Joseph Favazza who was designated as the Senior Engineering Representative Seattle; and
- TAA Surveillance Inspector – Mike Fisher who was designated as the Engineering Representative Seattle.

Boeing Secretary – Georgia Jamison was designated as the Administrative Assistant to the TAA TSD Manager and the TAA Technical Representative Seattle.

[TAA Senior Mechanical Engineer – David Patston took over as TAA Technical Representative Seattle in mid September 1986 and TAA Production Inspector Airframe – Frank Farrugia arrived Late August 1986 to assist Mike Fisher. TAA Production Inspector Avionics – Peter Patti and TAA LAME - Stewie Coutsevalas arrived in Mid November 1986 to take over from Joseph Favazza and Mike Fisher.]

In early 1986, the new General Manager of TAA James Strong, together with his Public Relations (PR) Team decided to change the name of TAA to Australian Airlines with effect 4<sup>th</sup> August 1986, however as the roll-out of the new Australian Airlines Livery was scheduled for the 8<sup>th</sup> June 1986 at the Renton Facility, and TAF would still be in Flight Test, James Strong quickly needed a B737-300 airplane to be painted in the new Australian Airlines livery. Please Step Forward PQ001 (VH-TAF)! It could be painted and continue in Flight Test complete with the new Livery. Another Advertising Coup for our PR Department!

Actually VH-TAF did not enter service in Australia until 20<sup>th</sup> October 1986, instead, the Second Production Airplane, VH-TAG, was the first Australian Airlines airplane to go into Australian Airlines service on the 20<sup>th</sup> August 1986.

So a secret plan was hatched between TAA and Boeing to paint PQ001 (VH-TAF) and store her in a secure area away from the prying eyes of Ansett (who had a sniff of something big going on), the media and the public.

PQ001 (VH-TAF) was duly painted at the Renton Paint Shop during the wee hours of 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> June and then 'stealthfully' moved, and then hidden in one of Boeing's huge hangars at Renton, complete with Boeing security guards with express orders to let nobody in except the Customer, i.e. us.

James Strong arrived at Seattle on 4<sup>th</sup> June and visited the Boeing Renton assembly lines on Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> June and on Friday the 6<sup>th</sup> June, James expressed a desire to see PQ001 (VH-TAF) in the new Australian Airlines livery. Sladen Hope and James Strong were met by yours truly at the door to the secret location where the newly painted PQ001 (VH-TAF) was being held when suddenly, as we neared the 'Boeing security guarded' door, two (2) Ansett employees exited expressing their delight to James Strong at having sneaked in and seen the new Australian Airlines livery. Their comment to me was "Great Paint Job Joe".

It was about this time that I thought my employment at TAA / Australian Airlines would come to an end. However James Strong, the great person that he was, just laughed it off. Phew! I dodged another bullet.

Of course, this was before emails, facebook, twitter and the other social media, so Ansett would not have had time to transmit any images back to Melbourne and in any case the unveiling was to happen on Sunday the 8<sup>th</sup> June. I remember being lambasted several times by James Strong whenever I met him in the years following the incident, once in London would you believe!

Of course, the unveiling went ahead on Sunday. VH-TAF (still not painted with the new registration) looked truly magnificent as she rolled out alongside Lake Washington. The roll-out was attended by the TAA Seattle Team, Boeing, Australian Press Members and of course Ansett representatives (as well as those who sneaked a look at the new livery before unveiling). A great day was had by all.



Now the story about 'The Little Humdinger'. Well, you see, when PQ001 left Final Assembly and into Flight Test, she was coated with the standard yucky Boeing acrylic green, no TAA registration, only the FAA Registration 'N3281U' stuck letter by letter in the rear passenger windows so it was very difficult to pick out as 'our' airplane whenever it taxied or flew, which was somewhat disconcerting for the TAA team.

One day when Mike Fisher and I were in the Cockpit/Cabin area of PQ001 (VH-TAF) inspecting and talking with some Flight Test technicians, we asked them how easy it is to start the APU, to which they replied (Please imagine this being said with a strong southern U.S. twang), "Well you just flick this little bitty battery switch to 'on' and then switch the APU switch to the start position and that little humdinger, she just lights up". So we thought that 'Little Humdinger' should be the unofficial name of PQ001 (VH-TAF) and duly asked our friends at Boeing to manufacture three (3) large adhesive signs of which 2 were placed either side of the cockpit area and the third inside the aft accessory access area. The latter was to stay in place for many years thereafter. A reminder of her Flight Test days. There was no further confusion as to whether the 'green' airplane in the sky was ours.

PQ001 was identified as VH-TAF and Delivered (Accepted) at Seattle Delivery Centre (Boeing Field) on the 3<sup>rd</sup> October 1986, departed Seattle on the 5<sup>th</sup> October and entered into Australian Airlines revenue service on the 20<sup>th</sup> October 1986. Joseph Favazza and Mike Fisher were at Seattle for the Inspection and Acceptance of the first eight (8) B737-376 airplanes, i.e. VH-TAF, TAG, TAH, TAI, TAJ, TAK, TAU and the Final Inspection of VH-TAV. After a very busy but satisfying assignment, Joseph Favazza and Mike Fisher flew home on VH-TAU under the proficient Command of Flight Crew: Captain Graham Lowther, Captain Ron (Moose) Anderson and First Officer Allan (Noise) Burgess. The Flight Engineer was Steve Kinson.

## Hawdon report

Well, a lots happened. The aircraft left Melbourne on 11 June 2016 and flew to HARS where it joins other DC-3's in the HARS collection – see picture below.



We also got an email from Alan Searle [below], which is self explanatory:

"In response to the Newsletter number 88 April 2016, regarding the historical DC3 aircraft VH-AES 'Hawdon', I wish to offer an update on the present situation, and as the Newsletter Editor, the membership may be advised.

No doubt the membership is aware of the financial difficulties of keeping such an aircraft flying. Since 1987 Qantas have supported the group of volunteers by allowing maintenance to be done at Tullamarine, assisting with spare parts and insurance etc. until a couple of years ago when Lyle Strambie advised that Qantas could no longer afford to continue as a sponsor. That position has been re-enforced by the person that replaced Lyle a year ago.

As hangarage for the aircraft was a desirable aim, QF appointed David Crotty [QF] to search for hangarage for the aircraft. His findings were that there was nowhere in the QF system that this could happen for either an operating aircraft or for dismantled storage.

Accordingly we were able to obtain temporary accommodation at Avalon and began negotiations with a prospective sponsor. These negotiations continued for a year and on the evening before signing the documents, the prospective sponsor withdrew.

The majority of our volunteers are getting older and the future of maintenance and piloting is not guaranteed. Without sponsorship the board had to take action to protect and preserve the aircraft for the future. Several organisations and museums were contacted. Subsequently the Historical Aircraft Restoration Society (HARS) offered to take the aircraft and negotiations began regarding the best way to effect the transfer.

HARS are based at Wollongong at Albion Park aerodrome. They operate many aircraft and have a very successful restoration, hangarage and museum facility. The Hawdon board members are convinced that this move is in the best interest of the preservation of this historical asset.

Originally Australian Airlines arranged for the company Hawdon Operations Ltd. to be the aircraft owner. One of the requirements of the contract of sale was that, in the event of disposal, Hawdon Operations are to offer Australian Airlines (now Qantas) the first right of refusal in order to be able to influence the future ownership. With Qantas's knowledge, the procedure for the HARS handover is that the company Hawdon Operations Ltd will remain as a viable company and so the ownership and requirements of the original contract of sale remains intact. Two of the current Directors [QF] will remain and HARS will appoint some Directors to the Hawdon Board. Dave Wiltshire and myself have now retired as board members.

The ferry of VH-AES occurred on Saturday 11th. June, from Tullamarine to Wollongong via Temora (for fuel). Several volunteers were able to travel on the flight. Cheers ..... Alan Searle.”

## Life of a Hostie

I want to be an Air Hostess Was the common cry, If I can't be an Air Hostess I know that I will die. They look so spick and span and neat, Their social life's a whirl! Their uniform you cannot beat To be a glamour girl	4. My arm is dragging in the dust Two full stripes I now bear, This glamour job that seemed a must Is giving me grey hair. No, actually this isn't so, I really love to fly I'll have to keep it up though until the day I die.
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At last I am an Air Hostess Just got my wings you see Now I can with confidence	5. I search daily on the aircraft For a millionaire or two, But none fit my requirement
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Ask "coffee, milk or tea."  
 I flash my golden wings with pride  
 'Cos I am raw no more,  
 No paltry badge for me to hide  
 I am no longer raw

Well I can dream – don't you.  
 So till Prince Charming comes along  
 and carries us away,  
 We'll chant the motto loud and strong  
 Come fly with T.A.A.

They call me Senior hostess now  
 I sport a new half stripe.  
 My patience – well it's wearing thin  
 The pax give me the gripe.  
 They're giving me a girl to train,  
 Oh brother! – what a laugh !  
 They tax my pay, my feet, my brain  
 Just 'cos I half my half.

But lets face it ladies – would we change  
 Go back to 9 to 5  
 No jolly fear, for in this job, you really are alive,  
 Your gadding around from A to B, seeing different places  
 You learn to read pax muddled minds  
 And decide you like their faces.  
 Confucius say, that he who moans, enjoys his life the mostest,  
 And who could fill this niche, than a T.A.A. Air Hostess.

[Ed, Poem written by "unknown" during the time of Kay Barton's career in MEL with TAA].

## Vale

Our sincere condolences are extended to the families and friends of passed TAA/Australian Airlines work colleagues. Fond memories will remain. [FM = Foundation Member]

Capt. Brian Warren <b>FM</b>	Flight Ops BNE	Aged 87	20/05/16
Dennis Savage	Maintenance MEL	Aged 88	11/05/16
John (Jack) Harrison	Schedule Planning	Aged 91	03/04/16
Leighton Passant	Finance HO	Aged 74	31/05/16
Gordon Walters	Catering	Aged 71	04/06/16



### TAA/AUSTRALIAN AIRLINES 25 YEAR CLUB INC. MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION/RENEWAL

Name: ..... Spouse's name: .....

Address: .....

City: ..... State: ..... Postcode: .....

Phone: ..... Mobile: ..... Email: .....

TAA/Australian Airlines/QANTAS service:

Start date: ..... Finish date: ..... Primary area of work & where: .....

Preferences (Please circle one for each) Newsletter: Mail / Email Other correspondence: Mail / Email

Additional comments: .....

Donation: 1 year - \$20.....3 years - \$60.....5 years - \$100..... Other amount \$..... Gift: \$.....

**Cheque** – payable to 'TAA 25 Year Club' mailed to:

Membership Co-ordinator, TAA 25 Year Club, Qantas Building, 7 York St, Airport West, Vic. 3042

**Bank transfer** – to 'TAA 25 Year Club': BSB: 063 007 Account No.: 0090 1577

\*Please ensure you include your name on bank transfers **AND** to confirm your bank transfer:

Return this form by mail **OR** Send an email to: taamuseum@bigpond.com

**For enquiries:** Phone: 03 9280 8113 / 03 9280 8114 Email: taamuseum@bigpond.com



## Radio interviews



*Doug McKenzie in the sound proof booth with Michael Densley at the controls during recording.*

You will recall that we have been doing recordings at Vision Australia Radio 1179 AM in Melbourne] for a program called ‘Planes, trains & Automobiles run by Michael Densley [a member] in part to make the public aware of our forthcoming 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and, to let them hear firsthand from some of TAA’s former staff talking about their time at TAA. [To determine the frequency near you in Australia, go to <http://radio.visionaustralia.org/our-networks/melbourne> ]. Recently Doug McKenzie [TAA Flight Engineer] did another great recording and we are placing them on our web site. Well done Doug.

## 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Poster



Pictured at left is Greg Thom with his absolute masterpiece – all hand drawn in his distinctive style [we have other works from Greg at the Museum – he recently donated a painting of a TAA Electra which will look great with our other aircraft paintings.]

Greg had some help from his brother Graeme with the signwriting.

We plan to frame prints of the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary poster, so if you’re interested, email us at the Museum for details. Early Christmas present anyone?

We were looking for something unique to help us celebrate our 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, so we asked our own Greg Thom if he would help by drawing a poster with all the major aircraft TAA flew from the DC-3 to the Airbus A300B4. At the top of the poster is the Trans-Australia Airlines font used on the first DC-3.



## TAA 70th Anniversary Celebration Luncheon



Please join us to celebrate the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the greatest Australian airline of its time

**When:** Friday 9<sup>th</sup> September 2016

**Where:** Moonee Valley Racecourse Reception Centre  
McPherson Street, Moonee Ponds

**Parking:** in Members Car Park – entry via McPherson St.

**Time:** 12 – 4pm

**Cost:** \$54 per person (3 course meal included)  
Drinks at Bar Prices

**Bookings close: Friday 26th August 2016**

Booking Form for individuals and table groups [ of 10 ] bookings:

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Name(s): 1 ..... [Mobile # for contact with everyone]

2 ..... 3 ..... 4 .....

5 ..... 6 ..... 7 .....

8 ..... 9 ..... 10 .....

Bookings: email to: [taamuseum@bigpond.com](mailto:taamuseum@bigpond.com) or phone TAA Museum on 9280 8114 on Tue/Wed/Thur from 10am to 2pm.

- Cheques: payable to 'TAA 25 Year Club' and mailed to TAA Museum Qantas FTC, 7 York St, Airport West VIC 3042
- Bank Transfers: TAA 25 Year Club; BSB: 063 007 Account: 0090 1577

Please include your name on the bank transfer, and return the form by post; or email [taamuseum@bigpond.com](mailto:taamuseum@bigpond.com)