



August News Letter 2013

I do apologies for our news letter in the normal format being two issues behind.

Museum Australia Victoria Awards

As announced at the last meeting we received a message from Museum Australia Victoria,

“I am delighted to be able to announce that the Box Cottage Museum has been short-listed for one of the new cataloguing prizes to be announced at this year’s Victorian Museum Awards. There will be two prizes announced for VC cataloguers – one for the highest amount of items catalogued by organisations with paid staff, and the other for the highest amount of items catalogued by organisations with volunteer staff.”

This meant that the Society was top 5 out of 150 finish in the MAV Awards for small Museums, when ask by the compare of the event for volunteers to hold up their hands, the weren’t many hand up. We did feel lonely, However we had an interesting night and the Winner was in the “**Volunteer Run Organisations Category**”: is Greensborough & District Historical Society. Congratulations Joan and Carol for the nomination and for all their hard work.

Mentone Park Primary by Joan Moore

Bill and I went to Mentone Park Primary School Grade 3 & 4 , Monday 12th, to talk about Life in Moorabbin's early years. Students were interested to see pictures of the olden days and try out the butter turn and the stereo scope viewer.

August Open Day.

Please all members remember our Open Day the 25th of August . With Dignitaries and a few visits expected we will help on the day. Meeting starts at 1 PM, Museum opens at 2 PM and official welcome at 2.30 PM.

Septembers open day will be on the 29th Meeting starts at 1 PM.

The AGM will be in October and as Bill will not act as Sectary under the new rules of association and Dennis is not going to be Treasurer in to the next year, we will be in a bad position if we have no nominations. Please think about this.

Harry Hawker's War. By Jim Dale

Harry Hawker before the First World War was a household name in the Great Briton and Australia, he had already broken numerous records, as well as techniques of flying aircraft that would save numerous lives in the future. But after Harry's return to England in 1914 after his visit to Australia, it was not long before war broke out with **Germany**.

Sopwith and Hawker's main **competitors** in the pre-war period were Bristol, Avro and De Havilland aircraft companies. However a world war brought new competition and new competitors onto the scene. Harry Hawker had already been known for innovation and technical genius and is country boy from **rural** Victoria and a well-known Melbourne motor mechanic, he was now up against the geniuses of German aviation.

First was Count Ferdinand von Zeppelin, personal friend of the Kaiser and inventor of the Zeppelin rigid airship. The Zeppelin **raids** on London and Britain were damaging the morale of the British public, something had to be done quickly to remedy the unprotected skies of the cities and towns of the UK. Problem being the altitude the airships could attain which was out of the range of most aircraft of the day.

Harry in his pre-war record breaking period managed to get a prototype Sopwith aircraft over 11,000 feet and to get to the attacking airships Sopwith aircraft now had to get to that altitude on a regular basis. The first airship shot down over the England was not a Zeppelin but a **Shultz and Landz** airship built of timber.

Comment [u1]: After the assassination of the grand Duke Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo Bosnia.

Comment [u2]: All these companies operated out of the Brooklands racecourse.

Comment [u3]: In 1900 Moorabbin was still a rural community the next large town was Cheltenham.

Comment [u4]: The first bombing of Britain, Dover 21st of December 1914 by seaplane. Forth bombing of Britain was the 19th and 20th of January 1915 on Yarmouth and east Anglia, 23 bombs dropped, for killed 16 injured. Fire over England H.G. Castle

Comment [u5]: In a military capacity, the tabloid is chiefly famous for the attack on the Zeppelin sheds at Dusseldorf. Flying from Antwerp, Flying from Antwerp Flight Lieutenant RLG Martin destroyed the new Zeppelin Z IX bombing from a height of 600 feet this was the first German airship to be destroyed by a British aircraft. December 1961 Aero modeller.

Comment [u6]: SL11 was shot down by Lt William Ieefe Robinson of the 39th Squadron RFC. Third of September 1916 12,000 feet South East of woolwich. Fire over England H.G. Castle

It was not long after this success that more Zeppelins were destroyed on their attack runs, leading to larger and higher flying airships. Eventually airship attacks petered out and were taken over by long-distance bombers mainly Gothas and Giants, the last the Zeppelin attack was on 6 August 1918. But by this time the airships could climb to over 20,000 feet making the crewmen's life during the Zeppelin flight a breathless, terrifying, freezing world.

Comment [u7]: Norfolk, no bombs and no fatalities.
Fire over England H.G. Castle

The most direct threat and opponent to Tom Sopwith and Harry Hawker was Anthony Fokker. Fokker was born in Java on a plantation to a very well off Dutch family, but found fame as the designer of fighter aircraft for the Germans. The power and maneuverability of Fokker's aircraft were the favorites of German fighter pilots like Baron Manfred Von Richthoven and his flying Circus. Fokker had also developed a method of shooting through the propeller in time with the rotation.

Comment [u8]: The name came from the colourful designs the pilots use to intimidate and draw the attack from the French and British pilots.

The design of the Fokker Tri-plane was never drawn on a Fokker draftsman's board. When a Sopwith Triplane was captured in one piece in France, it was taken directly to Fokker. Fokker recognised the genius in the design and instructed his engineers to copy the aircraft as it was. In the 1960's one of Fokker's designers was asked if he had the drawings of the Tri-plane so models could be made of it. He admitted the copy of the Sopwith design and had to do the drawing for the first time.

Harry's good friend Harry Kauper using two Vickers machine guns interrupted the firing when the propeller was in the way, giving the same effect. Hawker also on delivering aircraft to the front line would talk to the pilots flying Sopwith's planes, taking their ideas and advice back to the workshop at Kingston on Thames and with Fred Sigrist managed to keep ahead of Fokker's design.

Comment [u9]: Kauper was Harry Hawker's mechanic on his return visit to Australia in 1914. He was also one of the three Harry's born in Hawthorn worked at the Tarrant garage with Hawker.

It would be nice to think that during this period when ferrying Sopwith planes to the front line, Harry Hawker met Charles Kingsford Smith, Charles Ulm and Bert Hinkler (who he already knew at Sopwith) and Sir John Monash. But as far as I'm aware there are no records of Harry having a meeting with any of these other famous pilots or General Monash.

Comment [u10]: Fred hired Hawker in 1912, a partner with Sopwith and Hawker and a director of HG Hawker. Managing director of parts subsidiary to Hawker.

In the final stages of the First World War in the battle of Amiens and the Hindenburg line, fighter aircraft built by Sopwith and designed by Harry Hawker, were essentially in the creeping barrage combining ground troops, shelling, tanks and aircraft. These two battles coordinated by Lt General Sir John Monash began the end of the war. Tom Sopwith (MBE) and Harry Hawker (MBE) were awarded for their efforts during the war in the contribution to save the lives of British, French, Canadian, American and Australian pilots.

Comment [u11]: Besides field guns, ground troops and armoured tanks the main component of a creeping barrage designed by Sir John Monash was aircraft taking the front line of the opposition troops.

Comment [u12]: John Monash, the outsider that won a war.

Comment [JD13]: Sopwith was knighted after 1945

Due to the incredible debt the British government went on a program to retrieve most of the costs of the war on companies that profited from the war. Of course one of those being the Sopwith aircraft company, forcing Tom Sopwith to liquidate the company and with Harry Hawker and Fred Sigrist started H G Hawker engineering. This was to become Hawker Siddley and when asked why he (Sopwith) had named his new company after Hawker, he stated that "He (Hawker) was largely responsible for the company's success".

Comment [u14]: All these nations air services use Sopwith aircraft in their squadrons.

Comment [JD15]: Pure Luck

But in the end, a country boy, a blacksmith's son from Moorabbin, Victoria won the War over two of the great names of German aviation.