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VH-CAT on display at Bankstown

The Bankstown Airport passenger terminal building played host to the Sydney Aviation Model Show over the weekend of the 14th & 15th November 2009. As part of this event, the Catalina Flying Memorial Ltd (CFML) towed VH-CAT from its present tie-down position a short distance away to a place on the tarmac immediately adjacent to the terminal building, allowing access to model show visitors.

For a small fee, visitors were invited to climb aboard and sit in the pilot's seat and climb about from bow to stern. The CFML was also allocated a desk inside the terminal building among the various displays of model aircraft and other aviation paraphernalia.

This desk was ably "crewed" on the Saturday by Terry Woolard and Gwen Cleworth, wife of Bob, author of those excellent books *"Cats at War"* and *"The Fabulous Catalina"*. Copies of these books, along with a range of other Catalina and Seaplane Pilots Association Australia merchandise (DVDs, polo and t-shirts, caps etc) were available for sale from our desk. Terry did an excellent job at our stand at the Catalina Festival in October and was again on hand during this event to bring his passion and enthusiasm for our project to the public. On Sunday, we had Bob's Granddaughter Emily on the desk. Emily was a great help to us with our display at the Powerhouse Discovery Centre Open Day back in July, where her enthusiasm achieved very pleasing sales figures. Needless to say, Emily repeated this performance at the model show.

Bob Cleworth again brought along the Catalina Squadrons banner, used to front Catalina veterans who march on ANZAC Day in Sydney. This was tied in a prominent position to the fence sounding the Terminal building, this adding significantly to the ambience of the occasion.

At 1.00pm each day, we thrilled the crowds by running up the engines and allowing a number of visitors on board (for a \$15 fee) while this was going on.

We were also privileged to have received visits from the relatives of some of the Catalina veterans including Ian Daymond, son of Squadron Leader Bruce Daymond, DSO DFC, ex-209, 240 & 628 Squadrons RAF and Bruce Parker, son of Flight Lieutenant Bernie Parker, AFC, ex-43 Squadron RAAF. Bruce Daymond's daughter Deborah visited us at last model show back in May. It only remains now for Bruce Parker's sister, Kerry Smith to pay us a visit to even the score! Kerry and her husband Ray have been very generous donors to the CFML, so it would be great to see them united for the first time with VH-CAT in the near future.

A total of \$1652 was raised over the two days, compared to \$1455 at the same event back in May – a 13.5% increase!

This result is particularly pleasing given that:

1. in May, there were no other aircraft open for display, so we had no "competition". (This time round there was a DC3 open for inspection also, and at half the price!)
2. according to all the model aircraft vendors I spoke to over the two days, their takings were significantly down compared to May's event. So despite the fact that apparently fewer people visited the show this time around, our sales figures were better!

The money raised may seem small in comparison to the effort put into our show. However, we cannot lose sight of the less tangible, but perhaps most significant benefit of the event – the promotion of our project to the wider public. This is all the more effective when they not only see the aircraft, but hear the sound of those Pratt and Whitney 1830s. This is what captures one's imagination, and once we get VH-CAT up and flying again, we can further tease that imagination with the sights and sounds of water take-offs and landings.

Before closing, mention should be made of all the volunteers who helped out over what proved to be a very busy and rewarding weekend:

- Graham "Goldfish" White and Richard Purdy for being on hand to run up the engines and to show people around the aircraft and answer questions from a curious public
- Ex-20 Squadron WAG 426123 WOFF Noel Lyon, who assisted in a range of odd jobs that needed doing
- Bob Cleworth who assisted with a number of tasks on the day
- Gwen Cleworth, granddaughter Emily and Terry Woolard (Terry travelled all the way from his home at Lake Macquarie to help out) for keeping the desk going and helping to achieve such pleasing revenue figures in spite of the odds
- Len Linfoot, Dave Hansen, Ken Hughes, Brain Lynch and Bruce Richardson who were on hand to tow the aircraft to and from the terminal building and help set up our stand on the Friday before the event. Most of these guys were back over the entire weekend to man VH-CAT to ensure that visitors had a safe and informative experience with our "old girl"

- Gordon Finn, who was not only responsible for excellent photography, but also assisted with a variety of tasks and was also on hand to the “bitter end” to pack up everything at the end of the second day. Mention should also be made of the fact that Gordon lives in the Hunter Region and came down for the weekend at his own expense (this included motel accommodation).

And Phil Dulhunty and I were there of course, making general nuisances of ourselves!

Now, this article wouldn't be complete without some photos, so here we go. Enjoy.

Colin Cool, Editor



The CFML stand (before it opened for business, of course!)



Volunteers at work at our stand. L-R: Gwen Cleworth, Terry Woolard, Colin Cool (obscured) and Noel Lyon (back to camera)



Emily, Bob Cleworth's granddaughter, doing a great job yet again



You can't see our stand for the customers!



Meanwhile – out at the aircraft... L-R: Terry Woolard, Len Linfoot, Brian Lynch, Colin Cool, Graham “Goldfish” White, Jack Peters and Dave Hansen



Catalina Veterans Jack Settle (L) and Noel Lyon



Bruce Parker, son of Catalina Veteran Bernie Parker, AFC, sits in his father's seat. Bernie was a pilot with 43 Squadron, RAAF



The daily engine run



Inside VH-CAT during the engine runs. A feature of this event was people sticking their cameras up to the windows or around the pilot's head to capture a shot of the roaring motors.



Visitors on board VH-CAT during the engine runs with their cameras jostling for the best "possie"



**A hive of activity (not to mention much deep and meaningful conversation) on the tarmac under the wing of VH-CAT.
A blend of veterans, volunteers and visitors.**

CFML Mission Statement

The CFML management team have been working, albeit slowly towards building a solid organisation that will see the CFML achieve its goals. This includes the building of a management team, business plan and mission statement. All of these things are a work in progress. However, one milestone achieved recently was the development and signing off of a Mission Statement for the CFML. This is now available on the Home page of the CFML website and it is appropriate and necessary to communicate it to the CFML membership. So here it is:

To acquire, restore and operate a Catalina PBV amphibian aircraft from the historic Air Force base at Rathmines NSW.

To instruct, educate and entertain the general public through flight demonstration, special events and activities by the use of the aircraft as a flying memorial to Australians who served in Air Force flying boat squadrons during World War 2.

To encourage Australians of all ages to become actively involved in the preservation and operation of the aircraft

To support the establishment and operation of the Rathmines Catalina Museum by using the museum as a functional operating base for the aircraft and in doing so, being the centrepiece of all museum exhibits as a static display whenever it is not flying

The mission statement is important as it succinctly articulates the CFML's identity and goals in a manner suitable to a wide audience including members, volunteers and potential sponsors. As such, its existence is an important step forward in the evolution of the CFML into an effective operating entity.

Colin Cool, Editor

New Members/Donations

The Catalina Flying Memorial welcomes the following members to the Aussie Cat Club:

One-Year Members

Dr Peter Southwell-Keely
David Fitzgerald
Ian Lucas
Martin Thomas
June Donkin

The CFML is also extremely grateful for the following donations:

- Kerry and Ray Smith - \$5000 (they also donated this same amount 12 months ago!)
- Castle Hill RSL Sub-Branch - \$1,000
- Wayne Hanley from Flamesafe Fire Protection – two new batteries and four fire extinguishers for VH-CAT
- Graham White – 200 litres of Avgas for VH-CAT
- Garry Schroder from SX Trailers – Trailer legs (which will eventually form part of the jack assembly for VH-CAT)
- John Woodman – front section of blister Perspex for VH-CAT
- Daniel Ind from Plastix for Perspex sheets (for windows for VH-CAT)
- Robert K. Baker - \$50

A very big thank you to all of the above for their support!

People – Ken Hughes and Tony Pitt

Ken Hughes, well-known, well-liked and much respected seaplane pilot, who doubles up as the Catalina Flying Memorial's Engineering Operations Manager suffered a mild stroke on 15 November. As the CFML's Engineering Operations Manager, Ken leads the team that has been working on VH-CAT for the last five months.

Fortunately for Ken, his wife's concerns led to him being immediately whisked off to hospital where he was administered a trial drug. The promptness of this action meant that the effects of the stroke were minimal, with no apparent after-effects. This came not only as a blow to Ken and his family, but also to our volunteers at Bankstown who came to greatly like, trust and respect Ken as their team leader and mate.

Ken is recovering well, but in the meantime, needs plenty of rest and will be returning to the medical specialists in January for follow up tests that we hope will

see Ken allowed to drive and fly again. We wish Ken and his family the very best and a speedy and full recovery.

In the meantime, our band of workers at Bankstown soldiers on under the able guidance of Len Linfoot. Thanks Len – keep up the good work!

In another blow to our project, Tony Pitt, The Engineering Manager at Airag and CFML volunteer who has been providing the CFML the guidance it needs regarding the scope of work for VH-CAT's Certificate of Airworthiness (C of A), will be moving back to his childhood home of Taree at the end of the year. Tony's qualifications, experience, extreme helpfulness and friendship have been invaluable to the CFML, and so will be surely missed. We wish Tony all the best as he transitions to his new life.

The situation presented by Ken's illness and Tony's imminent departure are a significant setback for the work being undertaken at Bankstown. Whilst we have good reason to hope that Ken will be back on board some time in the future, compensating for Tony's departure will be challenging, to say the least. We are desperately short of people (eg, LAMEs) with the licences required to supervise our volunteers, provide guidance on the work required to get our C of A and to sign out inspections etc.

If you think you can help fill the void soon to be created by Tony's departure, please give us a call ((02)-9870-7277) or drop us an email (philip@dulhunty.com).

Colin Cool, Editor

VH-CAT's stay at Bankstown extended

And now for some good news! Our free tenure at Bankstown Airport has been further extended to 30 June 2010. Originally, VH-CAT was generously granted 6 months free parking at Bankstown by Bankstown Airport Limited (BAL) following its arrival there on 7 December 2008. As this period drew to an end, we requested an extension to this arrangement, the result being that we were granted an extension to the end of October.

The slow progress of our restoration program meant that we needed yet another extension to this arrangement, and this was granted. So we are now settled until at least 30 June next year. We greatly appreciate the generosity and understanding of BAL in their decision to let us stay on.

Colin Cool, Editor

Looking back (and forward)

Now that we're nearing the end of yet another year, it's perhaps appropriate that we embark on a little reflection, then ponder the year ahead.

The last 12 months has been what I would consider a period on consolidation for the CFML. From the commencement of the project in early 2007 to get VH-CAT to Australia to its arrival in December 2008, the focus of the CFML had been solely on getting the aircraft here, and little else.

I believe this was attributable to the absence of the team structure during this time required to address all those other important things like fund raising, PR, a business plan, restoration plan, CFML organisational structure, Aussie Cat Club Membership structure, just to name a few. Throughout 2008, Phil Dulhunty almost single-handedly dealt with the recovery from the engine failure in Portugal back in 2007, searching the world for new (or should I say, zero-timed) engines then getting them shipped to Portugal for the successful ferry flight in November last year.

Then, with the assistance of generous donations of money by Nev & Gabby Kennard, and a number of others, not to mention the services of that professional ferry crew headed by Jim Hazelton, the aircraft finally got here.

However, throughout most of 2008, it was pretty much a one-man show starring Phil Dulhunty. Phil couldn't possibly manage all the other things that needed to be done, but fortunately, 2009 saw some (not all!) of the assistance required to do all that other stuff come along.

As a result, the last 12 months has seen:

- The mobilisation of our volunteer workforce assigned to work on VH-CAT
- Our participation in a number of events that have enabled us to promote our project and raise some money, specifically the Sydney Aviation Model Shows held at Bankstown in May and November, the Powerhouse Discovery Centre Open Day in July and, of course the Catalina Festival at Rathmines in October
- The development of an organisational structure for the CFML
- The development of a Mission Statement for the CFML
- Work has commenced on an Operating Plan (Business Plan)
- The CFML has a functional base for its volunteer workforce in the form of its clubhouse at Bankstown
- A establishment of a management team that is striving to build the CFML into an effective operating entity equipped to meet the challenges of the future and at the same time, working to meet the aims of its Mission Statement

Whilst these represent significant achievements, the "Global Economic Downturn" was obviously a huge setback for us - we are finding it more difficult to attract sponsors and donors, (even those who had previously indicated their financial support). We have been relying on the enthusiastic and generous support of a small team of volunteers and the generosity of Bankstown Airport who are allowing us to park there free of charge.

With the shortage of money, progress of work on the aircraft has been slow to say the least. We still have vital positions within the management team that need to be

filled, especially that of Fund Raising and PR Manager. We need someone who specialises in this field if we are to raise enough money to keep going.

My Christmas wish in 2007 was for two new engines. In 2009, my wish is for the specialised people we are currently short of (or totally lack) like the fund raising/PR guru, LAMEs and so on to come raining out of the skies above.

So please get in contact with us now if you think you can help us on the next stage of our journey.

So what lies ahead in 2010? The best answer I can give to that one is: It all depends on money, of course. At the very least, we can look forward to a continuation of the consolidation work being undertaken by the CFML management team and the continuation of the work of our Bankstown volunteers, albeit incrementally.

There is a small bunch of us who are determined to do our best to see this project succeed, albeit against formidable odds. It is important for you all to understand that this project is no mere feat. In effect, we are faced with simultaneously restoring a 65 year old aircraft and building a business with an operating budget in the order of \$200,000 per year. This IS achievable. For example, we could have five corporate sponsors each donating 40,000 tax-deductible dollars or four major sponsors donating \$40,000 plus \$40,000 in small donations, our reliance on sponsorship reducing over time once we start carrying fare-paying passengers.

We need over \$50,000 just to get the C of A to enable us to fly the aircraft in Australia. An operating Catalina won't suddenly appear at Rathmines at the snap of the fingers. We need money, and lots of it if we are going to achieve the aims of the project.

It is my hope that this time next year, I can report that we:

- have our management team finalised
- have our Operating Plan in place
- have succeeded in securing the funds we need to get our C of A
- have our C of A, and finally
- were able to get VH-CAT up to Rathmines and up on display on the hardstand up there for all to see at the 2010 Catalina Festival.

Can you help us get there?

Colin Cool, Editor

Best Wishes for the Festive Season

Well, it's hard to believe, but the festive season is almost upon us yet again, which means for many time for a break, celebration, reflection and some contemplation on the year ahead. This is third time now that I've found myself closing off yet another year with a December newsletter with the same final "**Best Wishes for the Festive**

Season" segment. It only seems like yesterday when I penned the December 2007 newsletter. In this, I expressed the Christmas wish that Santa would bring us two new engines to replace the ones we removed the previous month following the engine failure in Portugal. So we ended that year on a low.

12 months later (and 12 months ago), we were all coming down from the tremendous high that came with the arrival of VH-CAT at Bankstown on 7 December 2008. And this year ends a period of consolidation.

For the members of the Catalina Flying Memorial Ltd (CFML), especially those who have worked so hard to help maintain the momentum of the project there has certainly been much to reflect upon.

Looking toward the New Year, we look forward conquering some of the challenges discussed above.

To all CFML members, sponsors and volunteers – we wish you a very merry Christmas and a happy New Year and above all, a safe holiday season.

Colin Cool, Editor and general Dogsbody

News or comments

If you have any news or comments regarding the website, please forward to Colin Cool (colin.cool@jemena.com.au) or Jill Brandon (info@catalinaflying.org.au).