

What's News?

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Catalina Festival Ball a huge success!

The second annual Catalina Festival Ball was held on Saturday 11 July in the Community Hall (formerly the RAAF Base Mess Hall) at Rathmines.

The evening was a huge success financially and artistically. The RAAF Swing Band from RAAF Richmond kept the floor full of enthusiastic dancers and a fine three-course dinner was served.

Greg Piper MP, Lake Macquarie City Council Activities Mayor and state member for Lake Macquarie and his wife were official guests. Mr Piper, who is a strong supporter of our project made a personal donation of \$500 on the night. A number of raffles and auctions were very successful and in all, \$4,880 was raised (including Mr Piper's \$500).

Special thanks go to the following people:

- Barney Riordan from the Luskintigers, who donated two flights in a Tiger Moth
- Bill Hitchcock, who donated two tickets to his theatre restaurant
- Pam Pearson from the local Rathmines IGA store, who donated staff to serve the dinner and drinks
- And last, but by no means least, Mike Usher and his wife Lyn, who organised the affair and in the process, equalled or exceeded last year's event by pulling off a big success.

A very enjoyable evening was had by all.

This article was based on information kindly provided by Mike Usher and Bill Hitchcock. Enjoy the photos below.

Colin Cool, Editor.



Catalina Festival Ball
RATHMINES

A fund raising celebration of the World War II Royal Australian Air Force.
Seaplane Base and the men and women who served there.

Saturday 11th July, 7pm

RATHMINES COMMUNITY CENTRE
Entertainment By:
ROYAL AUSTRALIAN AIRFORCE BAND
"RICHMOND DETACHMENT - SWING BAND"

THREE COURSE DINNER
Including Hors D'oeuvres & Refreshments on arrival
\$60 per person, ring 4975 1955 to book your table
AUCTION & RAFFLES
DRESS: FORMAL * BYO DRINKS & GLASSES

PROCEEDS TO FUND THE CATALINA RESTORATION

The Flyer



All is ready for the big night!
(Photo courtesy of Mike Usher)



Frank Williams (L) and Barney Riordan from the Luskintigers
(Photo (minus enhancement) courtesy of Mike Usher)



RAAF Swing Band in full flight (or is it swing?)
(Photo courtesy of Mike Usher)

Catalina Flying Memorial Exhibition at the Powerhouse Discovery Centre (Castle Hill) – another huge success!

The Powerhouse Discovery Centre at Castle Hill, a satellite facility of the Powerhouse Museum conducted an Open Day on Saturday 11 July 2009 with the theme *Flight: Air and Space*. The Catalina Flying Memorial Ltd was on deck with a stand at which we displayed our model Catalina, a wide range of photos and articles, not to mention having available a range of merchandise (DVDs, books, t-shirts etc) to sell with the hope of collecting a few donations.

Above all, the event provided another opportunity to expose our Cat and to further the knowledge of the general public on the Catalina and the exploits of the men that flew her.

A total of \$590 was raised during the day, \$540 from the sale of merchandise and \$50 when we signed up a new member! This amount significantly exceeded our expectations.

We were also treated with visits from a number of Catalina veterans including WAGs 426123 WOFF Noel Lyon and 423947 FLTLT Dick Udy and navigator 412083 FLTLT Doug Nolan.

A special thank you to those who helped out at the stand on the day, namely:

- Phil Dulhunty (of course)
- Bob Cleworth
- Bob's granddaughter Emily (whose application of her past experience in retail and great enthusiasm for the Catalina cause were major factors in achieving the much better than expected sales figures!)

I was also hanging around doing stuff.

Thanks must also be extended to the staff of the Powerhouse Discovery Centre, in particular Christopher Snelling and Terry Blanch for their support and inviting us to participate in the Open day.

And now for some more photos, courtesy of yours truly.

Colin Cool, Editor



Our Display (note how the Cat's eyes reflect the flash!)



A typical scene at our desk – Emily working hard on another sale, while Grandad Bob Cleworth chats with the relative of a Catalina veteran in the background

Things are underway at Bankstown

As some of you know by now, a volunteers meeting was held at Bankstown on Saturday 20 June to kick off the work that will get our Cat cleaned up and ready for the program of work that will see the issue of an Australian Certificate of Airworthiness (C of A). The meeting was a big success with approximately 25 people in attendance.

The objectives of the meeting were to:

- enable volunteers to meet each other
- determine the type of work people prefer to do and try and match this with what needs to be done.
- determine the availability of volunteers so that we can get a clear picture of the workforce and times that will be available to get the required work done.

At the end of the meeting, the volunteers were treated to an engine run up. And speaking of treats, Christina Mumford and her niece Julie provided a superb morning team comprising delicious home-made cakes and biscuits.

The CFML are very fortunate (and lucky) to have the services of David Sieber to supervise the work of our volunteers. Dave is a LAME who, from 1972 to 1974 worked for Ansett at Rose Bay on the S25 Sandringham VH-BRC and Sunderland VH-BRF flying boats.

During the meeting it was decided that work on VH-CAT will take place every Saturday so long as there is a program of work to be carried out, and on other days as the need arises and availability of volunteers allows. It was most gratifying to see the overwhelming enthusiasm of the volunteers present, and we will aim to make the most of this rich resource by having a system in place to communicate with and mobilise our volunteer workforce in the most effective and efficient manner.

The first day of actual work took place two weeks later (4 July) when the aircraft was towed over to the wash bay and 12 volunteers turned up with hoses, scrubbing brushes etc to give VH-CAT a good wash. A week later (11 July), a small number of volunteers, working under the direction of Dave Sieber, inspected the hull and tailplane and busily went through the aircraft cataloguing all the components (serial numbers etc) – all required in the journey to our C of A.

Unfortunately Dave Sieber was not available to attend Bankstown on 18 July, but that didn't halt activities. Whilst no work could proceed on the aircraft, a small number of volunteers led by Ken Hughes went through our 40ft container which holds all our spare parts, cataloguing and photographing each item. This container was shipped over from Portugal last year when the ferry flight of VH-CAT got underway and is currently located at the Australian Aviation Museum Bankstown (at the south-west corner of the airfield) free of charge. The Museum is a strong supporter of the CFML, and many thanks are due to them.

So as you can now see, things are starting to happen at Bankstown, with so much owed to our enthusiastic band of volunteers and we will work hard to ensure that the initial momentum achieved is maintained.

Colin Cool, Editor



The Volunteers Meeting – 20 June 2009

This shot was taken prior to the arrival of some late-comers. Behind the camera is Phil Dulhunty. Out of shot is Colin Cool, who was facilitating the meeting. (That laptop you see on the table is the one that's churning out this newsletter!)



The engine run-up – 20 June 2009



VH-CAT gets a good scrub – 4 July 2009

2009 Catalina Festival – 24 October 2009

Preparations have begun for the third annual Catalina Festival at Rathmines. This year's event will be held on Saturday 24 October 2009. More information will be provided as it comes to hand. Another great fund-raiser for our project!

Stan Sismey passes on

WWII Catalina pilot and cricketing legend 403605 Squadron Leader Stanley George Sismey, OAM passed away on 19 June 2009 aged 92.

Born at Junee, New South Wales on 15 July 1915, Stan Sismey was a useful lower middle order right-hand batsman, and a fine wicket keeper, one of the last to stand up to all but the fastest bowlers.

His keeping in first grade cricket for the Western Suburbs club in Sydney, gained him selection for New South Wales in 1938/39, but after holding his place for two seasons, he joined the Royal Australian Air Force and was speedily promoted through the ranks.

In 1944, as a Squadron Leader, he was piloting a Catalina flying boat off the Algerian Coast when he was shot down, and spent eight hours in the Mediterranean, before being rescued, unconscious, by the Royal Navy. He spent the remainder of the war as a test pilot in Scotland, claiming that there was so much shrapnel in his back, that the compasses of the aircraft he flew were affected. At this time he also met and married Elma McLachlan.

In 1945, he was the main wicket keeper for the Australian Services side, which toured England under the captaincy of his best man, the Western Australian batsman Keith Carmody. Stan kept wicket in all five of the unofficial Victory Tests against England that summer, under Carmody's captaincy, catching eight batsmen and stumping two. He also led the RAF side in several matches that season, and played for the Services on their long homeward journey with more unofficial Tests in India and matches in Ceylon (Sri Lanka). During this part of the tour he had frequently to leave the field as pieces of shrapnel worked their way to his skin.

On returning to Sydney he found his place in the state side taken by Ron Saggars, Australia's reserve gloveman, but was back in the side in the 1949/50 season when his keeping earned him selection, for what was effectively an Australian Second XI, touring New Zealand under the captaincy of his state team-mate, former Test batsman, Bill Brown.

A banker by profession, Stan did not play for New South Wales after the 1951/52 season, but spent the following summer in Scotland. Here he played for Clydesdale CC, having a highest score of 51, and made one appearance for Scotland, in a first class match v Yorkshire at Hamilton Crescent. He held two catches in a match which was drawn in the hosts' favour.

Returning home, Stan was a NSW selector from 1958/59 to 1978/79, being Chairman for the last ten years. He was then President of the NSW Cricket Association for 10 years, being made a Life Member on his final retirement.

In his 32 first class matches he scored 725 runs at 17.68, with a highest score of 78

for the Australian Services v HDG Leveson-Gower's XI at Scarborough in 1948. He dismissed 106 batsmen with 88 catches and 18 stumpings.

Stan Sismey is survived by his wife, Elma, and their daughters, Pam and Carol.

New Members/Donations

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

Life Members

Eric Charles (who made an extremely generous donation of \$10,000!)
B K Purdy
Bradley Hair

One-Year Members

Brian Lynch
Patrick Noonan

Donations

Mr Greg Piper MP - \$500
Ken Hughes - \$100
John Bourke - \$25

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

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).