

WWDHS NEWSLETTER No. 433 Oct. 2018 – Nov. 2018 ISSN 2207-1016

Meetings: Museum of the Riverina, Willans Hill

Monday 15 October 2018
Committee Meeting, 6.15 p.m.
General Meeting, 7.30pm.

Monday 19 November 2018
Committee Meeting, 6.15 pm
General Meeting, 7.30 pm

GUEST SPEAKERS

15 October 2018: Peter Cox: on his Pub Crawl walking tour

19 November 2018: Jenny Lewington: Uranquinty History and her displays at the Uranquinty Hall

18 February 2019: Graham McKenzie will be talking about Varcoes, his father's mother's family who came from Cornwall to Hillston via Dandenong, Hindmarsh Island, Mount Gambier and Deniliquin.

20 October, 2018: Wagga Wagga and District Family History Society: Fund Raiser.
Cakes, books, craft, plants (including orchards) are all for sale

27 October 2018: Wal Fife Room Open Day, Mount Erin (Kildare Catholic College)
Erin Earth and Mount Erin Heritage Centre are also having an Open Day

Monday to Saturday, 11am to 2 pm: Wagga Rail Heritage Station Museum

WWDHS Patrons: Michael McCormack, Deputy Prime Minister and the
Federal Member for Riverina,

WAGGA WAGGA & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.
PO BOX 90, WAGGA WAGGA. 2650.

President: Casual Vacancy
Vice-President: Peter Gissing Ph 6922 3213
Vice-President: Geoff Burch Ph 6921 2186
See our web site for additional details.
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Committee meetings: 3rd Monday of the month
6:15pm at MOR, Willans Hill site.

General meetings: 3rd Monday of the month
7:30pm at MOR, Willans Hill site.

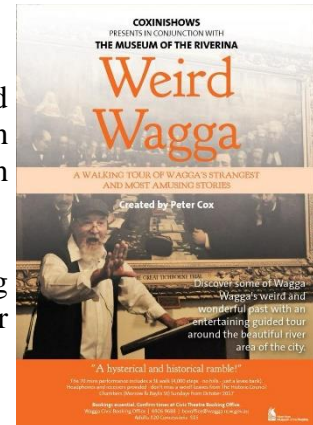
Annual Subscriptions: Single: \$20, Couple: \$30.
Corporate: \$50. Due by 1st July each year.

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Speaker for October, Peter Cox

Peter Cox, a retired drama teacher, has directed over a hundred school, community and professional productions. He is best known for directing Catherine Alcorn's *Divine Miss Bette* and for his role in creating the film *Backyard Ashes* in partnership with Mark Grentell.

More recently he has been conducting weird and wonderful walking tours in Wagga. He will be speaking to the society about his pub tour of Wagga Wagga.

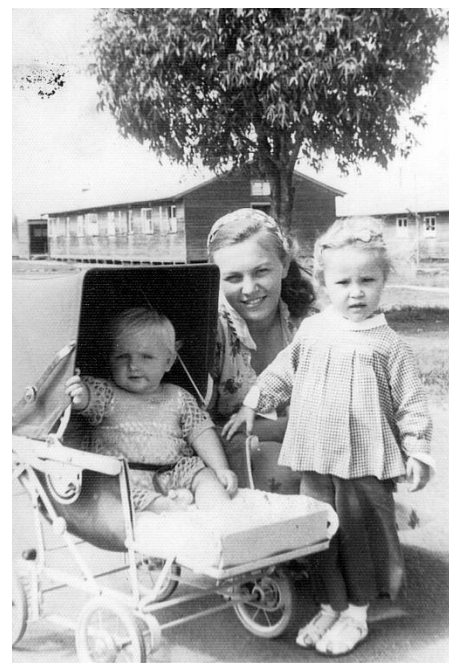


Speaker for November: Jenny Lewington

The Lewingtons have been farming near Uranquinty for more than a century. Their property includes the former site of the RAAF Base and the former site of the Uranquinty Migrant Centre. Jenny is passionate about Uranquinty and Uranquinty history. She welcomes the visits of former residents of the former RAAF Base and the Migrant Centre; she has organised an historical display in the Uranquinty Hall; she is the editor of the *Uranquinty Newsletter* and is currently writing a history of Uranquinty. She has an amazing collection of photographs.



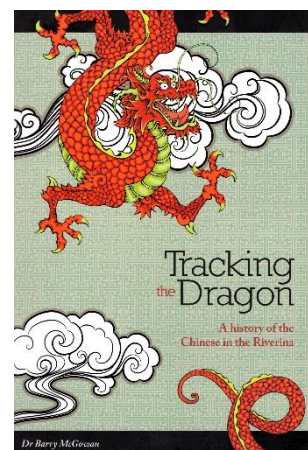
Left: Number 5 Service Flying Training School at Uranquinty during World War II



Left: Hot, dry environment at Uranquinty Migrant Centre. Georgiana Gina in foreground.
Right: Lithuanian-born Aldona Saponka with daughter Regina (born in Wagga Base Hospital in April 1949) in the pram and the daughter of a German-Yugoslav couple standing beside her

Obituary: Dr Barry McGowan

Canberra historian, Barry McGowan died of cancer on 1 September 2018. He was passionate about the history and heritage of Chinese people in rural and regional Australia and was keen to show that the Chinese had a pioneering role in the nation's pastoral and agricultural development. His well-known book in Wagga Wagga, *Tracking the Dragon*, began as a history of the Chinese in the NSW Riverina district. He then expanded it to write about the Chinese in the Tumut, Adelong, Temora, Wagga Wagga, Hay, Deniliquin, Hillston and Narrandera districts of NSW, and the Rutherglen/Wahgunyah districts of Victoria. He concentrated on their positive contributions rather than their victimisation. McGowan received a Medal of the Order of Australia this year for his services to community history.



Wal Fife Room Open Day: 27 October 2018 (a.m.)

Wal Fife Room at Mt Erin (Kildare Catholic College) is a replica of the late Wal Fife's office as it was at his home at 'Gundry' during the last twenty years of his working life. He had kept his manuscripts and publications intact to make sure that present and future generations would be able to see how an MP's office was maintained at his home. He has made all the material available for research. The Wal Fife Room will be open on the same day that Erin Earth gardens and the Mt Erin Heritage Centre will be open, 27 Oct).



Annual General Meeting, September 2018

At the Annual General Meeting, Museum Manager, Luke Grealy, spoke about the Museum's \$3.2 million cultural fund grant. The staff at the Museum on Willans Hill are busy photographing, documenting and cataloguing every item in the collection before the items go into storage during the renovations. Plans for the new museum include the fitting out of the Cook's Galley, the most significant object in the collection, with new technology (movies, interactive services etc) and moving it inside where it will be more accessible; protecting the agricultural machinery; turning the old school into a Reminiscence School with blackboards and forms but wired up with modern technology, and the Entwine Project, History Loves Botany, which would connect the Museum with the Botanic Gardens through landscaping and signage. The plan also includes a new office/meeting room for our society. It is hoped that it will all be completed by mid-2020.

Digitisation of Newspapers

At the annual meeting it was mentioned that a major project for the digitisation of *Wagga Wagga Advertiser/ Daily Advertiser* and *Wagga Wagga Express/ Daily Express* is now completed and paid for. Special thanks are due to Michael McCormack, our patron, and Peter Gissing for his intervention and commitment through the whole period. The main partners in the project were Charles Sturt University Regional Archives especially Wayne Doubleday, Manager, and Wagga Wagga City Council including Luke Grealy, Madeleine Scully, Claire Campbell and Edwina Marks. The Family History Society, RSL Club and Royal Australian Historical Society have also assisted. It was a significant achievement!

Wagga Wagga and District Historical Society Inc.
President's Report September 2018.

Dear Members,

This last Year, September 2017 to September 2018 (between AGM's) has, for me been extremely busy. Not only have I taken on the role of Treasurer (for the second year in succession), I have also taken on the role of President, in the assumed absence of the two Vice-presidents for at least 12 months.

Previously to these twelve months, Geoff Burch and Peter Gissing, as the two Vice Presidents, had done a fantastic amount of innovative work and for this I am sure we are all extremely grateful. Neither had taken on the role of President but they worked well as a team. It was VERY unfortunate that both of them had to refuse the roles of President and of Vice President through illness at the last AGM. I am really glad that Peter recovered much quicker than I expected; he since picked up on all the projects that he had been so good at instigating with Geoff.

Geoff on the other hand copped it heaps and I am really VERY glad to see him back on deck. They were going to be difficult shoes to step into and only Geoff Haddon had stepped up to the mark. As Treasurer I had been a little more active in the organisation, so, I stood against Geoff, promising him that I would back him the following year. Geoff no doubt would have been able to fill the role of President but had not long been in the organisation. I thought it better to give him a little more time. I am really glad he became Vice President; he has supported me competently whenever asked.

Geoff Haddon, I strongly recommend that you stand tonight for the President's position. Through all the upheaval I strongly acknowledge and appreciate the support of Margaret Hill as Secretary. There have been many an email between us and she has always fulfilled the role professionally. She even helped me fill in a funding application for Ladysmith Tourist Railway. Thank you very much Margaret.

For those not in the know, I would also like to acknowledge the help of my P.A. Yes, I have a personal assistant who has helped me often when I needed it, even though she has had her own major projects to attend to. After tonight I relinquish the two major roles in this organisation to revert to being Mr Sherry Morris.

To the rest of the committee, I say thank you for your work and support both of the Society and for supporting me.

To Sherry for continuing to publish the Newsletter every two months. I feel that this is one of the major tasks in this association.

To Geoff Haddon for continuing to handle the dissemination of the surface mailing of the newsletters and for filling in at meetings that I could not attend. He has organised excursions to the Wagga Museum Underground, to CSU Archives and to the Temora Railway Station Museum and the Temora Rural Museum.

To Peter Gissing for continuing the work involving the Strategic Planning of the Association, for the work and for participating in meetings with Council, especially their Museum Building Program, sometimes he is representing the Society and sometimes as a member of the public. For his regular contributions to the Daily Advertiser, especially the 25 and 50 years ago articles. For designing a methodology for dealing with un-financial members and also, for his contributions to, and management of, the Society's Web Site.

To Leanne Diessel for continuing to handle all the research requests that come to the Association.

To John Diessel for taking on the role of recording the guest speakers every month on our digital recorder.

To Judy Buik who has been looking after our Archives and has been burdened with implementing our new Collection Policy recently passed by the Committee.

To Craig Dixon who has approached the Council and done considerable research on the World Wide Web towards obtaining State Heritage Classification for the Best Cemetery at Ashmont.

To John Mueller who has done a lot of work in the past to increase membership and I sympathise with him having a stroke. I congratulate him on his efforts to recovery.

To Brian Andrews who has brightened my day with his quick wit and great sense of humour.

To Rhonda Reedy who has organised the Supper Committee each month.

To Tony Dunn who has helped me by driving Margaret Joan Jenkins home most nights while I have wanted to stay to attend to the after-meeting matters and also to Tony for his talk about his family.

And last but certainly not least, to Henry Gardiner who has been the Public Officer for many years but has recently given his notice. Henry, I also thank you for the personal support that you have given me behind the scenes.

I wish **all** the Committee and all the members of the Society, all the very best that they could wish for themselves.

I move that this Report be received.

- Peter Morris, 17th September 2018.

The following were elected as the WWDHS Committee:

President: Casual Vacancy

Vice President: Peter Gissing

Vice President: Geoff Burch

Secretary: Margaret Hill

Treasurer: Craig Dixon

Public Officer: Peter Morris

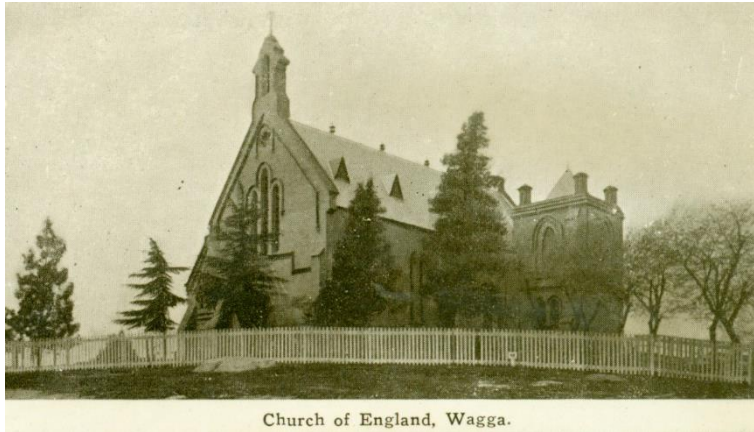
Committee: Brian Andrews, Judy Buik, Leanne Diessel, Tony Dunn, Geoff Haddon, Di Lovett, Peter Morris, Sherry Morris.

Museum Advisory Committee: Peter Gissing and Geoff Burch

Congratulations to Craig Dixon who is the new Treasurer and to Di Lovett, a new member of the Committee. Well done!

A big thank you to Henry Gardiner for his sterling contribution to the society particularly as former President (including when the society handed over the responsibility for the management of the museum to Wagga Wagga City Council), also a committee member and Public Officer for many years.

Welcome to new members this financial year: Lee Broadley, Hugh Condon, Peter Cox, Edward and Kay Dale, Di Klimpsh, Margaret Littlejohn, Graham McKenzie, Karen Peacock, James Ross, John Rand, Jeff Shute, Liz Wall, Brian Walsh, and Pam and John Whiles.



Church of England, Wagga.

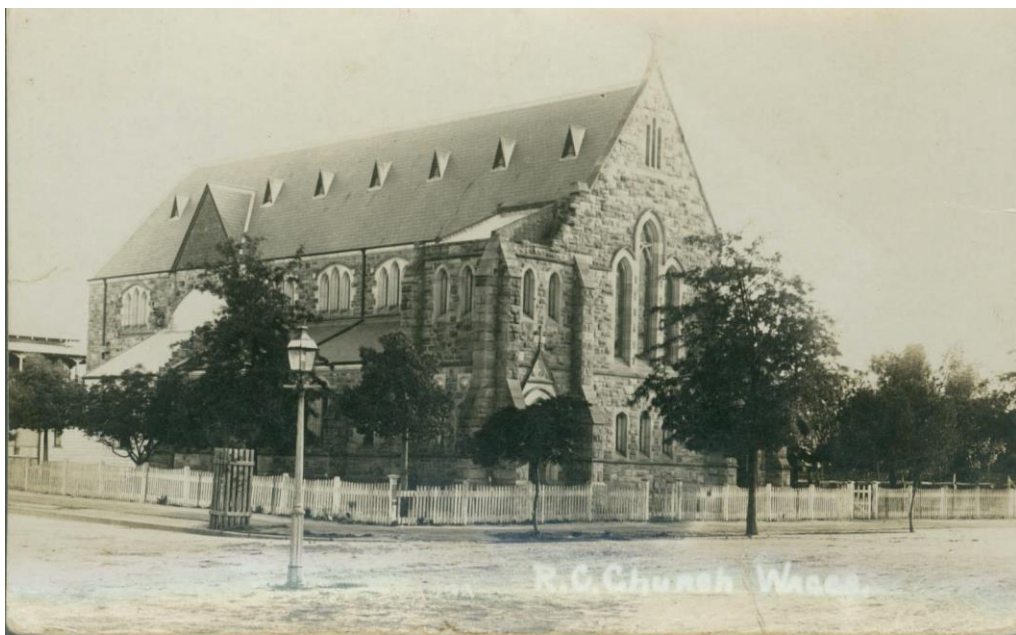
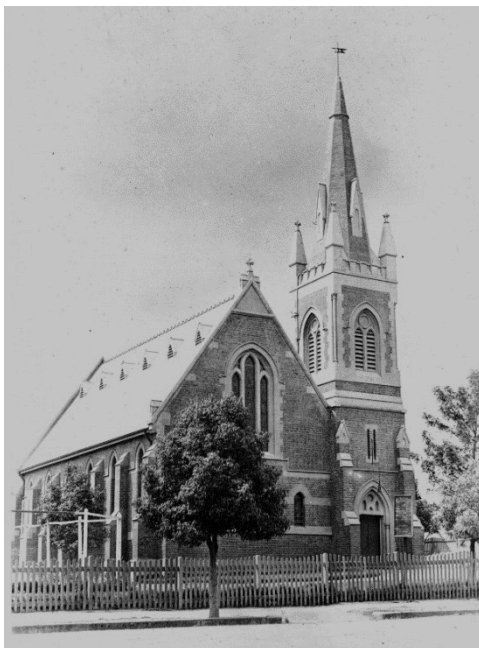
WAGGA CHURCHES EARLY 1900s

Left: Church of England

Middle left: Presbyterian

Middle right: Methodist

Bottom: Catholic



AUSTRALIA'S FIRST MAJOR CIVIL AIRLINER DISASTER

By Sherry Morris

On 21 March 1931, the airliner named *Southern Cloud* departed from Mascot, with the pilot and his assistant and six passengers, on an Australian National Airways' scheduled flight from Sydney to Melbourne. The aircraft never arrived in Melbourne. Despite extensive search efforts, the tragic disappearance remained a mystery for twenty-seven years.

Australian National Airways

During the 1920s and early 1930s, aviation was expected to play an important role in Australia's future. The exploits of the pioneer aviators in their efforts to fly at faster speeds over longer distances were followed with great interest. The aviators themselves were treated as celebrities and crowds flocked to see them and their planes. They attracted support for their new adventures and for commercial opportunities. Riding on a wave of popularity after their record-breaking flight across the Pacific Ocean in the *Southern Cross*, Charles Kingsford ('Smithy') Smith and Charles Ulm established their own airline company, the Australian National Airways Ltd (ANA) which they registered in Sydney in December 1928. It was one of the earliest commercial airlines. It planned to operate passenger, mail and freight services between cities and towns in eastern Australia and to train pilots. Kingsford Smith and Ulm were joint managing directors.

Five tri-motor Avro X aircraft were ordered from A.V. Roe and Company in England for their new company. These planes were licenced production versions of the Fokker on which the *Southern Cross* was based. They were named *Southern Cloud*, *Southern Star*, *Southern Sky*, *Southern Moon* and *Southern Sun*. A large hangar and maintenance workshops, suitable for their new fleet of aircraft and their intended operations was constructed at the Mascot Aerodrome in Sydney. Regular services from Sydney to Brisbane and from Sydney to Melbourne via Canberra and later a flight to Tasmania were established. The flights were promoted as fast, efficient and safe as well as an opportunity to fly with the famous aviators. By March 1930 they had carried over 1000 passengers and 1200 kilograms of freight. The engineering and maintenance staff at the Mascot hangar had to be increased to forty-two, working in shifts.



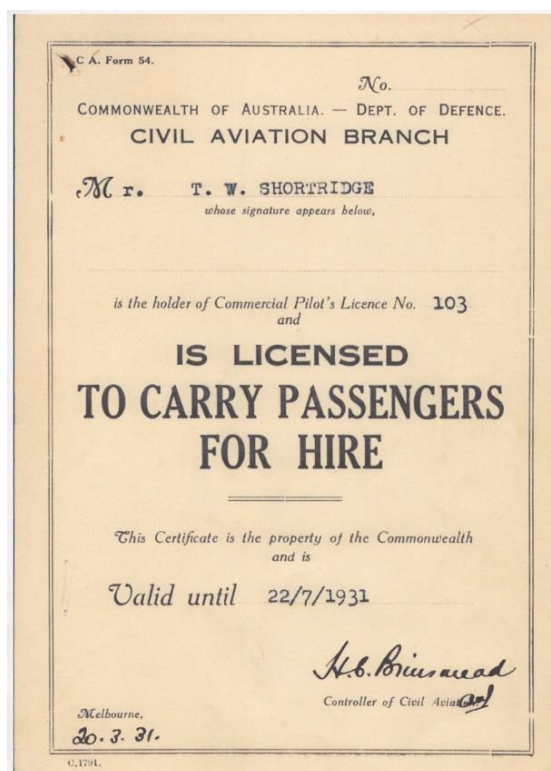
Above: Mascot Aerodrome c.1931 on the left and the *Southern Cloud* on the right

The ill-fated Southern Cloud Flight

Just after 8 a.m. on 21 March 1931, the *Southern Cloud* took off from Mascot Aerodrome on its flight to Melbourne, a 450-mile (724 kilometres) route crossing the Great Dividing Range and passing near Australia's highest mountain, Mount Kosciuszko (7314 feet). It was cloudy and raining lightly and unsettled weather conditions were forecast but it was still quite suitable for flying. It was a bumpy and noisy trip (with engines just not far from the fuselage).

The pilot was Captain Travis William Shortridge, known as 'Shorty' to his friends. He was a handsome, suntanned man, aged 33, with curly dark brown hair and grey-blue eyes. Shorty was born in India to an English mother and an Irish father. He was a graduate of the Royal Military Academy at Sandhurst and had been a Lieutenant in the Irish Fusiliers, where he learnt to fly. He transferred to the Royal Air Force and then to the Royal Australian Air Force when he moved to Australia in 1927. Two years later he became a commercial pilot. He had two daughters, Elizabeth (his wife's daughter) and Yvonne.

Shorty's co-pilot was Charles Dunnell who had begun his pilot-engineer apprenticeship with ANA in 1929 despite the misgivings of his family and was part of the company from its beginnings. He moved to Coogee to be closer to Mascot.



Above left: Travis (Shorty) Shortridge, pilot of the *Southern Cloud*
Above right: Shorty's Pilot's Licence dated 22 July 1931

There were six passengers. Bill O'Reilly from the Sydney suburb of Randwick had been on several flights. He was tall and slim, aged 25, with blue eyes. The family had lived in Cobargo on the south coast of NSW (where his father had been a stock and station agent) before moving to Sydney. After completing his Leaving Certificate at St Joseph's College, he studied accountancy and then joined a private company before starting his own business. He had expanded his practice to Melbourne and had some business to conduct there. He had a brother John and sisters Marjorie, Olga, Nancy and Kit.

Clara Stokes (usually called 'Claire') had lived in Cremorne in Sydney, with her father Reginald (an engineer with the Water Board), mother Annie and sisters, Helen, Hestor, Mary and Lillian, her twin). She and Lillian had moved to a flat in Rose Bay, so they would be nearer East Sydney where they were both attending the Art School. After finishing school, she took a job with the badge-engraving firm, Amor and Company. Small and petite with brown hair and brown eyes, she was 25 years of age and loved music and reading. She was flying to Melbourne to see an old friend who was about to have a serious operation because she was going blind. It was her first flight, so she was very nervous. She and her friend, John Watson, travelled out to Mascot in a bus and after she boarded John stood beside the plane and talked to her through the window to keep her calm.

Herbert (Bert) Farrall, the third son of Harry Hussey Farrall and Elizabeth Emma Farrall nee Nixon, was born on 6 November 1892 in Cobram, Victoria. He had two older brothers, Ralph and Harry junior, three younger brothers, Roland (Roley), Theo and Clarence and only one sister, Lillian. In June 1918 he married Elsie May Woodward at St Mary's Roman Catholic Church in Ascot Vale, Victoria. He was returning to Melbourne after conducting some business for his firm, Irrewarra Cream Company, in Sydney.

Clyde Hood was an American producer and at the time of the flight was involved with the Sydney State Theatre Ballet. He had booked the flight, so he could visit his wife, the South African stage star, Bertha Riccado.

Forty-year old Miss Elsie May Glasgow (pictured right) was from a family of ten including a brother named Frederick. She was a cook and a maid and was flying home after a holiday with her sister in Sydney. Julian Margules was an engineer.



Below: The Southern Cloud



Within an hour or two of the plane's departure, the meteorologist on duty at the Sydney Weather Bureau had contacted ANA to warn it that the weather on that route would be much more severe than forecast as a cyclone was brewing. It was expected to be the worst weather for almost thirty years. Unfortunately, the *Southern Cloud* was uncontactable as domestic flights at that time did not carry radios. There was no communication between the air and the ground. Shorty Shortridge was unaware that they were headed for driving rain, strong winds, even cyclonic conditions.

A Massive Search

When the Airline failed to arrive in Melbourne, a massive search began. As soon as it became known that the *Southern Cloud* was missing, the ANA suspended all its scheduled flights so that all its pilots and aircraft could search over the route the *Southern Cloud* would have followed. Charles Kingsford-Smith and Charles Ulm offered a reward of £50 to anybody finding the missing machine.

The Royal Australian Air Force assisted. Aerial searches were carried out over a very wide area. About thirty planes were engaged, and, during the first week, an intensive search was carried out over those areas which at the time were considered to be the probable location of the plane. It covered an area of about 14,000 square miles between Wilson's Promontory, Bright, Tocumwal (NSW), Bendigo and Warrnambool. Particular attention was paid to mountainous and forest areas.

Later the area of the search was extended to cover all areas which it seemed the plane might possibly have come to earth over the mountainous districts lying to the east of this area and extending as far northwards as the line from Albury through Cootamundra to Lithgow and Sydney (including Goulburn, Braidwood, Cooma, Tintaldra, Holbrook, Gundagai and Yass). The search in this latter area was, of necessity, more general and was carried out in the hope of being able to find the machine in some fairly conspicuous position or of seeing signals made by the occupants if still living.

In all sixteen RAAF pilots and twenty-eight trained observers were employed. In addition, Civil Aviation officers piloted the Branch's two DH 50 planes. ANA and other aircraft owners and pilots voluntarily joined the search under the direction of the Civil Aviation Branch. The RAAF ceased searching after eighteen days believing that everything possible had been done to find the plane. It admitted that ground parties could still find the wreckage, but it feared that all hope must be abandoned of finding the occupants alive. The ANA continued with the search for several weeks longer.

The police directed the ground searches. Reports of sightings of the *Southern Cloud* came from almost everywhere. Some were reports of seeing or hearing the plane in various parts of the flight path, but many were in places nowhere near the flight path, even in places where the plane could not have reached because it did not have sufficient fuel to get there. Fishermen and bushmen were reporting they found items from the plane. Ground searches followed every lead hopeful that the information they received was accurate and the plane had come to earth in the area to which they directed their searches.

As soon as the plane was reported lost, most of the Farrall family travelled from place to place organising search parties and interviewing cattlemen who knew the hill country. They covered

thousands of miles by car. On 3 April Bert Farrall's father, Harry, wrote to the Prime Minister, James Scullin, asking his government to offer a reward. He wrote:

Surely your Government might offer some inducement to any party of bushmen or others who could locate the plane – even if the 8 people were dead it would put eight families out of their misery and anxiety – say offer a reward of £1000 – it seems scandalous that neither any Governments or churches have not taken any notice of this remarkable and appalling calamity. Anyhow I put it to you to do this at once, if not for the suffering relatives of all the lost ones, do it for the honor of our country.

The Prime Minister offered his 'sincere sympathy' for the loss of his son but advised Mr Farrall that a 'reward would not add to diligence displayed by all sections of the community in their efforts to locate the plane'.

Bert Farrall's sister, Lillian, also appealed to the Prime Minister for assistance. She asked him to make further searches along the coastline from Sydney to Melbourne, but she was told 'it would serve no useful purpose'. She later requested assistance with rationing the Mount Disappointment South Cloud Search Party but she was told that the government had already given considerable assistance over land and water through the Air Force and although the Commonwealth Government was prepared to assist where it would be likely to trace the plane, he doubted that her efforts would be successful because of the rugged and mountainous nature of the country in which her party was operating.

The Farrall family continued to search unceasingly through the bush to find the wreckage. Harry finally gave up hope and inserted a death notice in a Melbourne newspaper on 11 September 1931.

The American producer Clyde Hood's friends also wanted to continue the search and asked the Prime Minister, through the Consul General for America, for the views of the Aviation Department about the practicality of such a search and for suggestions about where to conduct a search. The Consul General was told that the Controller of Civil Aviation reported that the consensus of opinion of his branch, the ANA and other participants of the search was either that the machine came down in the sea or at some point in any of the thousands of square miles of forests or mountainous country within a radius of 500 miles from Sydney. If it was in the sea the only hope was to search for wreckage that may eventually drift onto the beaches. If it had come down on land the Controller of Civil Aviation felt that it would be 'useless and unwarranted' to continue searching in view of the nature of the area and the vast expanse to be covered. He was also advised that a full investigation was being carried out by the Air Accidents Investigations Committee and suggested that the friends of Mr Clyde Hood wait for its report before taking any action. Nevertheless, there was no objection if the friends and relatives of Clyde wanted to initiate an independent search and the Commonwealth Government was prepared to extend all possible facilities and assistance in connection with their efforts to trace the missing machine.

There were some sightings at the foothills of the Snowy Mountains near Tumbarumba. A shepherd at the top of the Maragle Valley claimed he found a sick bag with a message 'flying low, visibility very bad'. Three men reported they heard a plane and a loud bang near Mt Black Jack. Several people noted a low-flying plane. People in Tintaldra saw smoke and lights flashing. All these reports were ignored.

Department of Defence, Air Accident Investigation Committee

On 1 April 1931, Honourable Minister of State for Defence directed that the Air Accidents Investigation Committee should commence an open investigation to determine the cause of the disappearance with special reference to:

- The airworthiness, equipment and loading of the aircraft at the time of departure;
- The qualifications and medical fitness of the pilots in charge of the aeroplane;
- The weather conditions existing between Sydney and Melbourne on 21 March 1931 and whether the pilots concerned had previous warning of the cyclonic conditions in the area towards which the machine was in flight;
- Recommending action which may prevent a recurrence of accidents of this nature.

The Chairman of the Committee was Lieutenant Colonel H. B. L. Gipps. The members were Wing Commander E. Harrison and Captain E. C. Johnston while the Secretary was Flight Lieutenant T. A. Swinbourne.

The inquiry opened on 10 April 1931 at the Commonwealth Bank Chambers, Sydney. In the first four days evidence was taken from ANA staff including Managing Director, Charles Ulm, Chief Engineer, Ground Engineer, Aircraft Foreman, Engine Foreman, Aircraft Inspector and three pilots. The committee carried out a detailed inspection of the company's workshops at the Mascot Aerodrome and closely examined an aircraft similar to *Southern Cloud*. It was favourably impressed with the thoroughness of the system of maintenance and inspection in force at the establishment. H. E. Camm, (Assistant Meteorologist, Weather Bureau) and T. E. Johnston (Senior Aircraft Inspector, Civil Aviation Department) were also interviewed.

From 16th to 17th April 1931 the Committee resumed the Inquiry in the Board Room, Commonwealth Offices, Treasury Gardens. Charles Ulm, a pilot and motor driver from ANA as well as the Superintendent of Flying Operations, Civil Aviation; Deputy Director of Medical Services and Director of Organisation and Staff Duties from the RAAF; Director of Signals and Communications, RAN; and the Assistant Director of the Meteorology Bureau.

The Committee praised the efforts and scope of the search particularly the Civil Aviation Branch which directed operations with the full co-operation of the RAAF, ANA and numerous aircraft owners and pilots who quite voluntarily made their resources available and accepted the directions of the Civil Aviation Branch. Numerous ground parties were locally organised mainly over mountainous and dense forest country. The Committee was satisfied that everything humanly possible had been done to locate the machine and succour the occupants.

Air Accidents Investigations Committee found that:

1. From the evidence available it could not be established what happened to the aircraft after the departure from Mascot and pending the finding of the aircraft the committee cannot definitely assign any cause for the loss. It was of the opinion however that the extreme weather conditions contributed greatly to the loss.
2. All possible efforts were made, and action taken to locate the missing plane.
3. The aircraft and engines were airworthy; the instruments were in working order and satisfactory, and the loading of the aircraft was safe and within the maximum prescribed.

4. The pilot, T. W. Shortridge, was a highly qualified pilot, was licensed and was medically fit and his assistant was capable of performing any duties he would normally be called upon to do.
5. The weather conditions between Sydney and Melbourne were particularly severe. There were violent line squalls with the change of wind (60-80 mph), almost continuous low clouds and rain between Goulburn and Melbourne with thunderstorms and hail near the Murray River and snow in the tablelands. The thunderstorms probably marked the junction of two wind streams and were present at isolated points of the junction. The cloud was probably some thousands of feet thick. Visibility was bad all the way from Goulburn to Melbourne. The pilot had no warning of the extreme conditions and, under current arrangements, abnormal weather could not have been foreseen prior to the departure of the plane.

The Committee recommended that:

1. Investigations be made into wireless direction finding services throughout the world to ensure that the most satisfactory service should be adopted as a permanent scheme for Australia; that because the matter was urgent, the committee recommended that the RAAF assist in the immediate installation and operation of wireless on aircraft engaged on Sydney-Melbourne-Launceston route where bad weather conditions often occurred and blind flying was often necessary; and that as soon as practicable the carrying of two-way wireless and a qualified operator should be made compulsory in aircraft engaged in regular scheduled passenger services.
2. All aircraft operating over scheduled passenger air routes should be required by regulations to carry Verey lights (flares), pistol, and an adequate supply of Verey light cartridges.
3. All such aircraft should be required by regulation to carry three ground strips as a means of signalling to other aircraft; and that a definite code of signals should then be laid down as standard for this class of signal.
4. All such aircraft should be painted a conspicuous colour in order they may be more easily detected from the air in the event of a forced landing. That the closest of co-ordination, both in a professional and administrative sense should be maintained between the aviation authorities and the Commonwealth Meteorological Bureau. It also recommended that an additional chart be drawn up by Weather Bureau and an aviation forecast made from it and distributed widely next day.
5. Consideration should be given to the advisability of carrying a duplicate compass when no wireless navigation aids are available and to fitting a duplicate altimeter where it can be seen by the pilot.
6. The practice of ANA pilots in consulting weather maps published in the press and reading the forecast therewith was not satisfactory. It suggested that weather reports should be provided earlier, before 6 a.m.

The Aftermath

Within a few years, the recommendations of the Committee were implemented. New airline operating standards, including the adoption of radio communications, were introduced. By 1934, all planes were compelled to carry two-way wireless and a qualified operator. There was better weather forecasting and radio contact. As a result of the recommendations, aircraft travel was made safer for generations to come.

Unfortunately, ANA was unable to survive the loss of the *Southern Cloud* particularly after the *Southern Sun* was also lost in another accident. With the sharp decrease in passenger numbers on ANA flights after the ill-fated flight, the expense involved in the search and financial difficulties as a result of the Great Depression, the company was forced to cease its interstate service. In June 1931, the ANA's directors suspended all services. In February 1933, after several failed attempts to salvage the company, ANA entered voluntary liquidation. To recover their reputation, Charles Kingsford Smith and Charles Ulm tried to obtain new records. In December 1934, Ulm died in an attempt to set up a new Trans-Pacific record but disappeared in the attempt. Kingsford Smith disappeared in November 1935 over the Bay of Bengal while trying to break the England-Australia record in a single seater plane.

The Discovery

The wreck of the plane was finally found in 1958 on a wooded slope of the Snowy Mountains in the Kosciuszko National Park, roughly halfway between Sydney and Melbourne. It was discovered by New Zealander, Tom Sonter, a twenty-six-year-old carpenter who was working on the Snowy Mountains Scheme.

Being a keen hiker and photographer, he decided to go for a walk during a half day off. When he ran out of time to get to the top of the mountain, he decided to look for a short cut. He then happened to push his way through a patch of undergrowth and saw a piece of steel poking through the leaves of saplings that looked like the tail of an aircraft. On further investigation he discovered it was a plane embedded in the side of a rugged slope overlooking the Tooma River gorge and about thirty miles (48 kilometres) south of Cabramurra.



Tom Sonter described the wreckage to Cooma police. From parts of the fuselage he had retrieved from the wreck, Civil Aviation Department spokesman identified it as almost certainly from the *Southern Cloud* as he recognised 'Avro XAV Roe and Co' stamped on one piece and 'Inspected 3/29' on another piece. Sonter then led Police Detective Sergeant W. T. Holmes and Senior Constable D. Blissett, both of Cooma to the wreckage and the Civil Aviation sent two teams of officials from Happy Jack. The three engines of the plane were buried in the ground, almost covered by silt, grass and undergrowth. Trees had grown through the metal frame. Instruments have been ripped out of the instrument panel by the force of the crash. Within days, officials and police confirmed that the wreck was *Southern Cloud*.

Within days, hundreds of people visited the site and collected souvenirs including a clock which was later donated to the National Museum of Australia.

At the wreckage someone erected a memorial, almost hidden by the trees. 120-centimetres tall sheet of wrinkled aluminium, embossed with the names of the pilots and the passengers killed.

The mystery was solved albeit by accident and there was ‘peace’ for the surviving relatives and loved ones of those who had perished. The wreckage virtually confirmed the conclusion of the Air Accident Investigation Committee. Shorty Shortridge, the pilot, had unknowingly flown into bad weather and winds much stronger than expected. He was unable to stay on course and was blown twenty-five kilometres off course and into the mountains. He may have realised at the last minute and tried to turn the plane around.

Several memorials have been erected. These include:

- Southern Cloud Park and Aviation Pioneers Memorial was erected by the Lions Club at Sharp Creek Street, Cooma on 13 October 1962 – designed by Andrius Rimka, this concrete building houses parts of the aircraft and a restored Lynx engine and stands next to Southern Cloud Park in the town of Cooma.
- Southern Cloud Memorial, Cooma Cemetery
- Southern Cloud Memorial Lookout, Tooma Road, Bald Hill, Tumbarumba, dedicated on 15 March 2008
- Cabramurra-Khancoban Road, Ogilvie Creek Fire Trail, Mount Black Jack, Cabramurra
- Crash Site near Shortridge and Deep Creeks on the Toolong Range – a small memorial made from parts of the plane.

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Southern Cloud Memorial Lookout near Tumbarumba



The Southern Cloud crash site

Some local reports of the crash

Tom Le Cerf—a shepherd at the top of the Maragle Valley—found a sick bag with a message 'flying low, visibility very bad' but the bag was apparently used to kindle a fire.

Tom Loudon and shepherds Dyer and Cross, camped separately near Mt Black Jack, reported that they heard a plane and a loud bang.

Prospectors Matt Bradley and Will and Harry Jenkins saw an aeroplane just above tree level disappear towards Mt Black Jack.

Tintaldra residents saw a column of smoke and lights from the same area.

Aerial view of the crash location from above this lookout



Aerial view of the crash site looking back towards China Walls



The Southern Cloud crash site is in this direction—23 km from the lookout behind this ridge, as shown above.

