

# THE QANTAS STORY

a history of  
Australia's  
international  
airline



# Beating the Mail Train . . .

IN November, 1918, a young man named Reginald Lloyd announced he was planning an airline to operate from Australia to England through the Middle East. He showed his mettle by setting off from Sydney with a convoy of motor-bikes and sidecars in January, 1919, bound for Darwin.

The route was Windsor, Wiseman's Ferry, Singleton, Muswellbrook, Murrurundi, Quirindi, Werris Creek, Narrabri, Moree, St. George, Mitchell, Charleville, Blackall, Longreach, Cloncurry, Katherine.

Travelling time was estimated to be ten weeks.

Then on to Timor, Sumatra, Singapore, Bangkok, Port Said—travelling time, six months.

There were lots of people who grinned when they read of Lloyd's plans, grinned and turned to the rest of the comic strips. Others, with liverish natures, took the trouble to become irritated.

One who grumped his disapproval was the Hon. William Webster, Postmaster-General of the Commonwealth, who was cornered by a transport magazine and pressed for his views. Said the P.M.G.:

"I have no statement to make."

The reporter and the Minister tossed an acid verbal ball back and forth, and it was clear the Hon. William had no faith in flying: "The whole question of aerial mails is absolutely impractical as far as this country is concerned."

He was told of the services starting up in other countries: "That's got nothing whatever to do with Australia."

The Hon. William reluctantly admitted that "aero mails might be of some practical value in densely populated countries where short journeys were entailed, but here in Australia, with our sparse population and long distances between big mailing centres, the whole position is as different as night is from day."

So there!

Then the P.M.G. fired a last, crushing salvo: "Let me tell you that, unless I am very much mistaken, Australia will be the last country in the world to require them. Good day!"

But the P.M.G., though he had lots of supporters for this view, had lots of opponents—principally the hundreds of pilots, engineers, and observers who were demobbed after the 1914-18 war, and who were bursting to get into the air again as a peacetime way of earning a living.

Those ex-airmen fell into two broad groups: the harum-scarum stuntmen whose only objective was to earn a week-to-week living by joyriding, and the more serious types who saw beyond this to a solid future for commercial aviation—and in this group was a young ex-Lieutenant, W. Hudson Fysh. He put his thoughts on paper thus:

## ADVANTAGES OFFERED TO AN AERIAL CO. IN N.W. QUEENSLAND

### A. Climatic Conditions.

*In the climate of N.W. Queensland, almost every day of the year should be a flying day. No fogs and stormy weather conditions such as one met with on the coast and in the South are experienced in the N.W. Local thunderstorms are of little hindrance to flying. Owing to the above facts it should be far more easy to establish a regular service in N.W. Queensland than in the Southern States.*

*During wet weather the Company's machines will be able to operate between the railheads when all car traffic is held up owing to the boggy, unmetalled roads. On occasions the car traffic is held up for weeks, and the roads are bad.*

### B. Country Flown Over.

*Before any regular aerial services can, with safety to the public, come into being, the initial work is the establishment of landing grounds at short intervals, and the Southern States are waiting for this work to be carried out before starting services. But the conditions in the South do not coincide with those in the N.W., where vast open plains occur, and the country represents one huge landing ground. As far as climate and country conditions, N.W. Queensland offers unique opportunities for the immediate establishment of an aerial service.*

### C. Distances, Railway, Road Communications and Population.

*The N.W. is a country of huge distances with bad communications. The Northern, Central and Southern Railway systems run out to Cloncurry, Longreach and Charleville, respectively, and there they end unlinked up, and with many hundreds of miles of the best pastoral country in Australia running over into the Northern Territory.*

*The car services in this Western country are expensive, and uncertain in the wet season, yet it is a country in which much big business in the way of stock inspecting, buying, and general transactions are carried on. This business is more often of an urgent nature.*

*Our charges can closely compete with the cars at present running, and much time will be saved. We can land at any station in the Downs country owing to the open nature of the country.*

*The population of the N.W. is one which, under the present communications conditions, should travel by aeroplane to a very great extent.*



#### D. Private Aircraft Owners in N.W. Queensland.

Owing to the advantages of the country, before long there should be numerous private owners of aeroplanes. The Company will offer special advantages to private owners. At present the difficulty to the private owner is the cost of employing a mechanic to keep the machine in order, housing of the machine, and general repairs.

The Company has obtained the Agency for several well-known machines, and will in the future offer the facilities of: instructing the owner in the art of flying; delivery of the machine tested and in flying order at any of the Company's depots; the use of the safe landing grounds, repairs and technical advice on the machine will always be available and, if the owner lives at or near to one of the Company's depots, the housing and looking after the machine and engine. Petrol, oil, and stores always available.

This will be a great convenience and saving to the private owner.

In those days of a million harebrained schemes, this level-headed assessment of what aviation could do for North Queensland was to become the basis for Qantas commercial planning.

The catalyst for the start of the airline was the offer by the Australian Government of £10,000 to the first Australians to fly from England to Australia in 30 days or less, in a British aeroplane.

Hudson Fysh, with a wartime colleague, Paul McGinness, had eyes on this large sum, but their backer died, and they had to drop the idea. The Federal Government, however, commissioned them to survey a route for contestants between Darwin and Charleville, and the pair set off in a Model T Ford into country where roads were something they had in the cities.

They rattled through Longreach, Winton, Cloncurry and on to Burketown in the Gulf of Carpentaria, and each bumping mile shredded any last doubts the pair might have had about the beauty of flying over such country.

They reached Darwin, where Hudson Fysh settled down to wait for the winning plane, while McGinness trundled off back to Cloncurry to set up another fuel dump for the plane on its flight to Melbourne—if any plane managed to make it from London in the first place.

But into Darwin came a Vickers Vimy, flown by brothers Ross and Keith Smith, with mechanics Bennett and Shiers. They left England on November 12, 1919, and landed at Darwin on December 10.

Hudson Fysh, representing the Government, checked the five seals fixed in London to the Vimy, and certified the Log Book.

Earlier the same year a young Australian soldier, Fergus McMaster, took his discharge from the Australian Imperial Forces in London and went on a tour of the Continent, observing, filling his mind with impressions and trends — including aviation.

The day he arrived in Sydney a telegram came to his ship asking him to hurry to Devoncourt

Station, near Cloncurry, to take over the management.

Devoncourt carried 10,000 head of cattle as well as sheep, and fat bullocks at £15 a head were very tempting to young stockmen who spent much of their spare time "poddy dodging" — Australianese for theft of unbranded calves.

### "Laird" McMaster

A Cloncurry dairyman whose waterholes were poisoned by dodgers for his efforts to get police help, spearheaded the formation of an Anti-Cattle Duffing Association, and Fergus McMaster, "Laird" of Devoncourt and 10,000 juicy bullocks, was elected Chairman.

One Sunday afternoon he had chaired a meeting of the Association in Cloncurry and was churning across the sandy bed of the Cloncurry River when he broke the front axle on his car.

He left it and tramped back to Cloncurry, dozing in the mid-summer somnolence of a Western Sunday. In the Post Office Hotel he met McGinness, a stranger, who was about to depart with a girl friend for a picnic on a nearby station.

To McMaster's surprise, the breezy McGinness offered to find another escort for his lady friend and forgo his picnic to help McMaster.

They pounded every garage door in the town, but all were closed. This did not stop McGinness, who prised open doors, shinned on to roofs and levered roofing away and eventually got enough tools to do the job.

After an afternoon of travelling back and forth to the river, they got the car roadworthy and McMaster chugged on his way, mightily impressed with the young Irishman.

The heat and effort left no breath for long-winded talk and, although the pair talked about McGinness' work, there was no mention of an "airline" that afternoon—but McMaster remembered McGinness' alertness and initiative, and the ground was well ploughed for the seeds McGinness and Fysh planted with the proposition they put to him when they cornered him in the lounge of Brisbane's Gresham Hotel in June, 1920.

Their idea was for a company to do joy flights and charter work in Western Queensland and the Northern Territory. McMaster listened, then said he would not only contribute some cash, but would personally move around and raise the rest of the capital. This was typical of McMaster, a man of great truth, vision and integrity.

After McGinness and Fysh left him, McMaster looked across the lounge and saw A. N. Templeton, a Longreach wool man. He told Templeton of the scheme and said he had no doubt that, although an outback air service was not a gilt-edge proposition, aviation should be encouraged for the sake of the nation.

Templeton promptly offered to match McMaster's contribution.

McMaster had a free afternoon, so he walked down to John Thompson's bookshop in Queen Street.

Thompson had soldiered with McMaster. He offered to put in £100.

From the bookshop, McMaster went over to Eagle Street and told his story to Alan Campbell, Managing Director of the Queensland Primary Producers' Co-operative Association. Campbell, an old friend of the Scot, contributed and offered to act as a pro tem Secretary.

McMaster left him, and soon after bumped into T. J. O'Rourke. O'Rourke was a large storekeeper in the town of Winton. Although a generous man in many ways, he was a shrewd businessman and listened with a very wary eye and ear to McMaster's suggestions. He asked McMaster to walk back to his hotel—and there wrote out a cheque for £250 and said there was another £250 if needed.

And marked his cheque butt, "Donation".

With enough cash on hand, Fysh and McGinness went to Sydney and signed an order with the Australian Aircraft and Engineering Company Ltd. for the assembly of two Avro 504K biplanes.

The agreement, dated August 19, 1920, was in the name of "The Western Queensland Auto Aerial Service Limited".

Then the name was changed to "Australian Transcontinental Aerial Services Co. Ltd.", but this, too, was jettisoned in favour of "Queensland and Northern Territory Aerial Services Ltd." This was the name in the Certificate of Incorporation.

On Thursday, October 14, 1922, Fergus McMaster called on the manager of the Winton branch of the Bank of New South Wales and deposited £700 in an "Aerial A/c." and told the banker the money would be transferred to "Queensland Aerial Services Ltd." when the Articles of Association were drafted. The diary entry recording this visit is the first bank record of Q.A.N.T.A.S. money matters and the actual diary is still in the Winton bank. A bank manager records in his diary news he regards as specially significant—and the airline's plans were exciting enough to spur the outback banker to his big book.

The next entry is Monday, December 20, when McMaster called and took away the accumulated correspondence. Apparently there had been talks between the two visits because the diary records authority from the bank's Head Office to allow an overdraft of £600.

February 10, 1921, was a momentous day, for the bank manager at least, because he took time out to record that McMaster had "arrived in Winton by aeroplane".

One year later, exactly to the day, McMaster asked the rate for remitting £2,000 to Vickers, London. Quoted 45/-, the canny McMaster persuaded the manager to ask Head Office for a special, lower rate because the company wanted to remit another £8,000 later.

McMaster was a regular aerial commuter between Winton and Longreach, and the Wales bank there also has the diaries of the times, with entries concerning his activities.

First Longreach entry is December 8, 1921, when McMaster impressed the manager mightily by informing him that the Australian Government had "sanctioned £12,000 subsidy till middle of January. He wants extension of limit to £1,000."

Saturday, January 7, 1922: McMaster told the banker that a meeting was being held that night and they would be asking for an extension of the overdraft to £2,500.

First thing Monday, the manager recorded that he had attended the meeting at the Longreach Club: "Present were Fergus McMaster, A. N. Templeton, Dr. Michod and H. Fysh." The directors, in the convivial atmosphere of the club, increased their request for overdraft extension from the forecast £2,500 to £3,000.

On January 8, 1922, McMaster called and signed a guarantee for £3,500.

Friday, May 19, 1922: Colonel Horace Brinsmead (labelled by the banker as "Aerial Defences Department, Melbourne") visited the bank and said he "thought the Federal Government would assist the Coy. and probably guarantee the Coy.'s a/c for, say, £5,000".

The Memorandum and Articles of Association gave the names of the founders and the number of shares allotted to them:

John Thompson, 311 Queen Street, Brisbane, Bookseller, 50; Alan Walter Campbell, Union Chambers, Eagle Street, Brisbane, Company Manager, 50; Hubert Thornhill Weedon, Oondooroo Street, Winton, Solicitor, 50; Fergus McMaster, Dagworth Street, Winton, Grazier, 50; Ainslie Neville Templeton, Acacia Downs, Aramac, Grazier, 50; Paul Joseph McGinness, Winton, Grazier and Aviator, 50; Hudson Fysh, Winton, Aviator, 50.

Head office was registered in Winton, with Alan Campbell acting Secretary pro tem in Brisbane. Nominal capital was £100,000.

The plan was for a service from Charleville to Cloncurry and Camooweal to Katherine. The fleet was to have been the two 504Ks and an Avro triplane. But the A.A. & E. Company was unable to finish the second 504K, and the triplane sheared its landing gear in a trial landing at Sydney, and this left the little airline with only one plane.

## *Estimates went hell, west and crooked*

The fleet, with spare engines, propellers, workshops, tools, lathes, a truck, hangars, etc., was to cost £10,000. But as McMaster put it, "estimates went hell, west and crooked".



On January 27, 1921, E. C. Lake, acting Secretary at Winton, received a telegram: "Weather permitting McGinness leaving Sydney next Monday for Moree St. George Charleville Fysh flying Knight's machine regards."

Background to this double departure was the purchase by Knight, a Longreach stock agent, of a BE2E built at the Royal Aircraft Factory.

The other plane was the 504K from A.A. & E. Company.

McMaster, always willing to show the way and realising the need to demonstrate his personal confidence in the men and the machines, arranged for them to fly to Barcaldine so he could travel the last leg with them.

He arrived in Barcaldine by train some hours ahead of the aircraft and checked the landing ground—a small claypan surrounded by thousands of gidyea tree stumps—the best that Barcaldine could do.

He left a man to tend a smoke fire to guide the fliers and went to his hotel. It was a Saturday afternoon and many townspeople watched the north-west skies for signs of the aeroplanes. Then, a cry went up and, as one plane was sighted, then the other, there was a rush out to the aerodrome in cars, on horseback, on bikes, and on foot.

The two aircraft circled the field several times, then the Avro landed, taxied to one side, and left the way clear for Fysh in the BE2E.

At half past two, the aircraft, with McMaster as McGinness' passenger, took off for Longreach. McGinness gave him special instructions to keep his feet clear of the control wires running through the cockpit and McMaster barely moved a toe during the entire trip.

They headed for the Barcaldine-Longreach railway, and beat the mail train into Longreach, even though it had left Barcaldine some hours ahead of them. This in itself was enough to create tremendous interest in the two planes.

At Longreach, the pilots and McMaster were entertained at a "Smoko" (Australian beer-and-yarning) in the Shire Hall, with Dr. F. Hope Michod presiding.

Dr. Michod later became Vice-Chairman, then Chairman for a time, and was very likely the world's first flying doctor. The good doctor declared that Longreach was proud to have been made "a centre of aviation".

Then the planes took off for Winton, with McMaster and A. N. Templeton flying with McGinness, and stock agent Knight piloted in his own plane by Hudson Fysh.

They headed in the wrong direction because of a belief by McGinness that Winton was west of Longreach instead of north-north-west. This compass bearing took them into the rough Opalton Range country, and both Templeton and McMaster, knowing the terrain well, began passing hastily pencilled notes to McGinness warning

him to bear to the right, toward the open downs country.

McGinness pointed to his compass and shrugged his shoulders to indicate his reluctance to disbelieve his instruments. His passengers kept at him, but he could not be convinced, and slowed down to allow Hudson Fysh to take the lead so that Knight could correct Fysh if the course was a wrong one.

But Knight was bushed, and Fysh flew straight on. Convinced by this that they were going in the right direction, McGinness opened his throttle and took the lead again, Templeton and McMaster still bombarding him with scribbled admonitions.

McGinness had a big, clumsy Lands Department map, about two feet square. He throttled back and handed the flapping sheet over to the pair with a gestured invitation to them to prove their point or keep quiet.

The "backroom boys", feet entangled in control wires, fought the captive map, which bucked and thrashed like a mainstay. Finally McMaster folded it into the position McGinness demanded and handed it back to him.

McGinness tried to cope with it, could not—so calmly switched the motor off to have both hands free.

The Avro meantime began a glide from 10,000 feet. The effect on the passengers was comical. McGinness finally satisfied himself about the map and switched the engine on again. Templeton, sitting wedged tight alongside McMaster, cupped his mouth with his hands and bellowed in McMaster's ear: "Thank God!"

Barely were the pair over their scare when the engine began to burp, and McGinness indicated his main tank was empty and he was switching to the emergency tank on top of the wing.

Templeton and McMaster calmed down again — until they began calculating how long the emergency fuel would last. The compass was now pointing north-north-east, instead of west as previously, but no matter where they looked there were ranges and timbered country—and no sign of the Downs which they knew they must find to have any chance of a safe landing.

McGinness by now had been flying for almost three hours, and was beginning to have his first real doubts about direction. McMaster and Templeton strained for a glimpse of Downs country, and finally saw a patch of yellowish open country to the right. McGinness bore farther to the right, and slowly a tiny cluster of buildings began to grow on the horizon. They had no way of knowing if it was Winton, Kynuna or Middleton.

It was Winton, and in a matter of minutes they were over the town and circling the landing strip to the north of the town's water bore. They touched down alongside the white bed-sheet donated by an air-minded citizen to mark the strip, and Fysh landed a few minutes later. Neither aircraft had more than a few minutes' fuel left.

## *"Thank God or the pilot!"*

McMaster and Templeton clambered from the aircraft and shook hands. McMaster said: "Thank God or the pilot!" Replied Templeton: "Thank both and make sure!"

On February 16, 1921, the first meeting of the Provisional Directors was held in a room at the Winton Club—the only Board meeting held in the town. Present were McMaster, Templeton, McGinness and George Morgan Reade.

Knight had changed his ideas about flying, and offered to trade the BE2E for some cash and paid-up shares in the new company. This was agreed to.

The tempo increased as support came in from various sources. . . . On February 16 Dr. Hope Michod became a shareholder; on February 28 Winton Shire Council offered to pay half the cost of preparing a landing strip to a maximum of £20, and thus became the first local authority in Australia positively to support commercial aviation; the Alba Wool Scouring Company offered use of one of its Winton wool stores to house the aircraft free of charge. . . .

On March 7 Fysh wrote from Longreach:

*Yesterday I returned from a week's trip with the BE. We carried 76 paying passengers and gave two complimentary flights, one to an aboriginal at Blackall who thoroughly enjoyed it, and I think he is the first abo. to go up. At Well-shot 12 passengers were carried, and Mr. Murray shot two turkeys from the machine, thus opening up a new use for aviation in Australia. We had an excellent morning's sport, and I wish for nothing more fascinating. Not the slightest trouble was experienced in recognising stations passed over. Although I got many enquiries regarding the machines, the people are "cold" when it comes to taking shares.*

Soon afterward the company began the two years of joy-riding and charter work planned as a preliminary to a regular service. The head office was moved from Winton to Longreach, and it was then that Dr. Michod began his pioneering flying.

He did not limit himself merely to answering emergency calls, but set up a system of regular runs, guaranteeing to call on patients within a radius of 200 miles and, in the BE2E flown by Hudson Fysh, this outback medico laid the groundwork for today's Royal Flying Doctor Service. This was formalised under the direction of the Australian Inland Mission in 1928.

On April 19 Longreach Agricultural Show Society offered space near the showground for a hangar. Costs were already going up—altering the Alba Co.'s Winton shed cost Q.A.N.T.A.S. £85, but the Longreach hangar cost £117.

Late in April the company launched one of its early public relations ventures, when McGinness

was directed to tour the middle and upper Georgina country, with a base at Urandangi.

When word of the trip reached the Manager of Oban Station, he wrote to Q.A.N.T.A.S.:

*Your proposition to send an aeroplane to the picnic races at Urandangi. At the Committee Meeting of the Georgina Amateur Race Club I brought this matter before the Committee and the President, and all present were most enthusiastic and keen for the plane to come.*

*The Managers of Carrandotta, Walgra, Headingly and Barclay Downs promised to mark landing sites and write the Secretary of the Company enclosing rough sketches of the positions. I will mark a place at Oban. The Race Committee agreed that the men employed to put the racing track in order be instructed to mark and clear an aero landing place.*

*We have two tons of petrol at Oban, and no doubt the aviator could draw on that for what he requires, and the company return the same quantity to the station.*

Not only did McGinness attend the race meeting and take up a number of passengers, but he also rode the winner in the main race.

On April 26, Hudson Fysh, who was working the lower Diamantina and Cooper's Creek area south-west of Longreach in the BE2E, wrote:

*As you can see, business in this area is not good. However, I got a few station people interested, and one or two promised to take shares when we operate down this way.*

*I am cutting out every possible risk I can, and am not taking up any children.*

As Hudson Fysh said, it was not easy going, and raising the necessary capital was not always as smooth as it had been for McMaster in Brisbane.

At the Imperial Hotel in Longreach, McMaster bailed up a Scot, a wealthy grazier in the area. McMaster told his story, outlined all the possibilities he could think of, even the possibility of the Scot one day using the aircraft in case of sickness or accident on his station. The grazier became most appreciative and enthusiastic, and even suggested other possible uses that McMaster had either overlooked or not thought of.

McMaster got the Scot to the stage where it was now or never in asking him for a subscription, and suggested £200—thinking he might get £50.

The Scot continued to praise the plan, and said it was a splendid gesture to the country by those who were backing it—"But I will wait a wee while and see how it gets on."

## *The aeroplane people*

In April the company asked Charleville Shire Council to enlarge what was called "The Municipal Aerodrome". Not all Councils were as enthusiastic as Winton and the Charleville councillors had their doubts.



The company's Charleville agents told the Council the present landing ground was too small "to rise with certainty". They pointed out that the company planned to operate from the south, via Charleville, to the north, and a safe landing site was in the interests of the town.

One of the aldermen said the company was just a business concern, was charging 2/6 a mile for passengers, and could afford to pay for the clearing of the extra ground.

Another said the "aeroplane people" would not come to Charleville unless it suited them, and he objected to ratepayers paying the costs of business concerns; another supported the company; and finally the Council agreed to do the work and to charge Q.A.N.T.A.S. three guineas a week airport rent.

At the first meeting of shareholders at Longreach, the Provisional Directors' Report of May 21, 1921, was produced. Summarized, it said:

*Your Provisional Directors submit the following statement:*

- (1) *That 6,850 shares have been applied for, and the total cash received for same to date is £6,075, leaving an amount of £825 to be called in.*

*The plant consists of three aircraft:—*

*One Avro Dyak Biplane, three-seater.*

*One BE2E Biplane, two-seater.*

*One Avro Triplane, five-seater.*

*After meeting all liabilities, and making provision for contingencies, there was a credit balance of £881 on the 15/5/21.*

*Up to that date the Avro Dyak had flown 7,400 miles, had been in the air 111 hours, and carried 285 passengers, earning a gross revenue of £934. The Avro at the date of the meeting was at Urandangi, 600 miles west from Longreach, where it was on a special taxi flight with Mr. Brabazon, who wished to make an inspection of "Walgra" Station on the Georgina, and Austral Downs in the Northern Territory.*

*To the same date, the BE2E had flown 6,370 miles, had been in the air 98 hours, and had carried 296 passengers for a gross return of £827. The BE2E had just returned to Longreach after having completed a long tour, taking up passengers at Stonehenge, Jundah, Windorah, Adavale, Quilpie, Thargomindah, Farnborough, Eulo, Cunnamulla, Hungerford (N.S.W.), Claverton Station, Rosevale, Clover Downs, Dillalah State Station, Wyandra, Charleville, Biddenham, Oakwood, Nive Downs, and Tambo. Hudson Fysh introduced aviation well into the south-west of the State. Exclusive of salaries and repairs, it cost 61/- per hour, or 7½d. per mile, to operate the BE2E.*

*The Avro Dyak, a more modern machine, and carrying two passengers and pilot, cost 48/- per hour, or 8½d. per mile; with a full load, 4½d. per passenger mile. This was exclusive of salaries and repairs.*

*Your Directors placed a proposition—an Aerial and Motor Service to operate between the rail-heads, Longreach and Winton—before Captain Johnston, one of the officials of the Air Board, who lately visited this district.*

*The proposal was that the aerial branch would carry all first-class mail matter, and the motor branch to carry all second and third-class mail matter, and to distribute all intermediate mails.*

*It was pointed out that good landing grounds would be available at an average distance of ten miles apart. Captain Johnston (later to become Controller-General of Civil Aviation) was very interested in the proposal, and advised the company to lodge an application before June 30th.*

Alexander Kennedy, who had agreed to be on the Provisional Board to show his confidence in the project, retired, and this first meeting of shareholders appointed the following Board:

Fergus McMaster (Chairman), Grazier, Winton; A. N. Templeton, Grazier, Acacia Downs, Longreach; Norman F. White, Grazier, Warrandaroo, Longreach; G. Morgan Reid, Grazier, Winton; Fred Bode, Engineer, Winton; T. N. McIntosh, Grazier, Wollgorang, Burketown; Lieutenant P. J. McGinness, Aviator, Longreach; Lieutenant Hudson Fysh, Aviator, Longreach.

Two women came into the Q.A.N.T.A.S. picture very early, and kept the offices running in those first months. Miss K. Tighe did the book-keeping for the Winton office free of charge and Miss Harriet Riley did the secretarial work and gave the use of her office free.

Just as the wives of the Q.A.N.T.A.S. men played a tremendous part in those early days, so these two "office girls" did a lot to help the tiny company make its mark in the outback.

Despite the pessimism and lack of enthusiasm of officials such as the then P.M.G., the Hon. William Webster, there were definite signs of a ground swell building up to the start of regular commercial services in Australia.

In June, 1921, the Commonwealth Department of Defence called tenders for a service between Geraldton and Derby in Western Australia.

Principal clauses were:—

- The company had to be substantially of British nationality, and a £5,000 bond had to be lodged guaranteeing safety of the mails and due performance of the contract.
- The route had to be from Geraldton via Carnarvon, Onslow, Roebourne, Port Hedland and Broome to Derby, and return.

On July 14, 1921, McMaster received a telegram from Melbourne that Colonel Horace Brinsmead, the first Controller of Civil Aviation (one of Qantas' modern Lockheed Constellations was named after him), saw no immediate likelihood of Government support for a service between Charleville and Cloncurry, because plans were limited to a service Sydney/Brisbane, Sydney/Adelaide, but that Brinsmead's personal opinion

was that a suggestion for a limited, subsidised trial service by Qantas might be accepted.

This put some heart into the organisers.

McGinness was still having fun flying and, on August 1, 1921, sent a telegram from Ingham: "136 passengers, 8 special trips, and aerial honeymoon from Ingham to Townsville. Had forced landing cane-field, damaged machine in tall cane, no one injured."

The Avro had to be sent to Sydney for repairs.

On August 20 a meeting of the Longreach Sub-Committee was held under the chairmanship of Dr. Michod. Present were McGinness, Fysh, and others. Discussions centred around the drafting of a second prospectus aimed at getting capital before going to the Government for a subsidy on the lines forecast by Brinsmead. The meeting decided that Hudson Fysh should tour the south-western districts, and McGinness the north as soon as the Avro was repaired, but that if there was a delay to this he should go by car.

On August 30 another meeting was held, with a target of £15,000. The meeting resolved that "the citizens of Longreach pledge themselves to actively support in every possible way the purpose set out in the second prospectus of Q.A.N.T.A.S. and, in order to carry out the necessary propaganda work for receiving the capital, that Messrs. Kellett, Clark, Miller, Curtis, Avery, Taunton, Boyd and Bolderman be appointed a Propaganda Committee.

The prospectus pointed out that the Government was expected to allocate £25,000 for a subsidised air route Charleville, Blackall, Longreach, Winton and Cloncurry. It noted:

*The service is part of a scheme of aerial defence of the Commonwealth and, from a patriotic standpoint, should be encouraged and supported by every good citizen. The company proposes, if sufficient capital can be raised, to tender for such service.*

*While the Directors are of the opinion that the business is a good proposition and capable of development, owing to the favourable nature of the country operated over and the special facilities it offers for travelling, they would make a special appeal to the patriotism of the people in the districts to be served, and with the great benefit it will be to the Commonwealth as a whole. The personnel of the company will become members of the Australian Air Force Reserve. The pilots have now had six months' experience in pioneering the said route and the districts to be surveyed. This is important in the question of efficiency.*

On September 4, 1921, a letter from the Winton Committee to Dr. Michod at Longreach crowed that over £200 had been subscribed in the room—"thus beating your Longreach meeting".

Fysh, McGinness, McMaster and others fanned out across Queensland in search of the vital capital. They went to Townsville, Charters

Towers, Hughenden, then Cloncurry. This town was the surprise packet of them all, and £13,000 was subscribed in a very short time.

The Cloncurry Chamber of Commerce and Mines and the Council said:

*That immediate action be taken to place before the people responsible the claims of this town and district to be connected with the southern pastoral centres and with the south by means of a regular Government-subsidised aerial mail service.*

*It is considered that the claim of the Cloncurry/Charleville aerial mail route be one of the initial Government-subsidised services is urgent, and we would urge the immediate opening of this route.*

This was support on the grand scale, a backing that was repeated by people, important and otherwise:

*Dear Sir: Have read your advocacy of the floating of a western aerial service. I beg to state that I (a common worker) am willing to take up £10, £20 or £30 worth as soon as I receive a call to do so. So you can fire away and put the right person on to me to collect the money. Thanking you in anticipation, Yours respectfully, W. J. Bell (Railway Fetter).*

Bell was a worker on the Hughenden-Richmond railway. The Q.A.N.T.A.S. Board frankly had their doubts about the project being strictly gilt-edged, and told Bell so. On November 10 he replied:

*I have just received your letter dated 1/11/21. Thank you for your tip regarding the number of shares, etc., Aerial Service Limited. Your letter, which bears the imprint of honesty, had the effect of causing me to cut down my application for shares by half.*

*I had finally decided to take 50, but have now written and have applied for 25 only. My application and deposit goes forward by this mail. Again thanking you for your pains taken on my behalf. Yours respectfully, W. J. Bell.*

On September 28, 1921, Colonel Brinsmead wrote to Q.A.N.T.A.S. about the second prospectus. He reminded McMaster of his telegram in which he pointed out that Sydney/Adelaide, Sydney/Brisbane services would have priority, and that no recommendations for Charleville/Cloncurry would be made until these two routes were operating.

He declared that such a service would be very valuable, but emphasised that a subsidy depended on the size of the Civil Aviation grant, and suggested to Q.A.N.T.A.S. that collecting money to back a tender was a "little premature". He realised that the prospectus carried the proviso that all the subscriptions were to be refunded if the company failed to get the contract.

There were busy telegrams to and from Melbourne from Federal Parliamentarians lobbying for the company, and in the area itself there was much hurrying and flying between towns to rally a weight of support.



The critical point of the finances was evident in a telegram sent to the House of Representatives:

*Understand possibility Charleville/Cloncurry aerial service not be subsidised owing shortage funds. Hope you use your influence behalf these districts. In event not being able get Charleville/Cloncurry try secure subsidy Longreach/Winton otherwise all work and organisation done these districts wasted. Impossible carry on without assistance. Company has sufficient support tender for larger service. Meeting Longreach Saturday night next. Would appreciate communication from you regarding position.*

Shire Councils, Municipal Councils, Chambers of Commerce and bodies ranging from the Cloncurry Council to the New Settlers' League bombarded the Prime Minister (W. H. Hughes) with pleading telegrams.

In the midst of all these activities to launch an intrastate mail service, tentative moves to link England and Australia by air were made in London.

On November 3, an Australian Press Association reporter quoted Mr. A. B. Raper in the House of Commons on "air services". This energetic M.P. said he hoped to start a campaign to recover Britain's lost position in the air, and he urged an England/Australia air service. He said:

*If the British Government does not show similar enthusiasm, private enterprise will possibly find a way. It would be a good thing if some rich and patriotic Australians joined hands with Englishmen in promoting services.*

Raper said it was scandalous that Britain was so far behind France in the air communications with the colonies. If the right people came forward, the Government would perhaps guarantee a certain quantity of mail.

## Battling with "Billy"

On November 10, Australian Prime Minister "Billy" Hughes was confronted by the North Queensland aviation contingent. The interview was in his private office in the basement of Parliament House in Melbourne.

All Queensland's Representatives and Senators were there, and the group was headed by J. A. J. Hunter, Representative for Maranoa. Hunter was a prominent member of the Federal Country Party—not on the best of terms with Mr. Hughes.

Hughes had a very thin majority, and the Country Party had been voting repeatedly with the Labor Opposition on the estimates. Every item was challenged, and a division called on every item.

Hunter introduced the delegation, and announced McMaster as the principal speaker—but Hughes overlooked this and, bristling like an old

war horse, raked the Country Party from stem to stern and back again.

For 20 minutes this high-pitched barrage went on, and then Hughes signalled for McMaster to say his piece.

McMaster spoke very loudly, and positively bellowed into Hughes' great, clumsy earphone. This over-eager thundering went on for some time, and eventually Hughes removed his ear-piece.

## Not that deaf!

McMaster took this to mean that Hughes had decided not to listen any more, but the Prime Minister irritably barked:

*Excuse me, Mr. McMaster, I know I am deaf, but I am not so deaf as you evidently think!*

Hughes cackled away with great enjoyment at McMaster's discomfiture, then signalled him to start talking again.

McMaster continued in a lower key, and wound up with a persuasive plea for help. Hughes sat quietly in the dead silence that followed. Finally, he barked: "When are you going back to Queensland?" McMaster replied: "As soon as we secure your reply." Said Hughes: "You have my reply now. The Government has no money, and my reply is 'No!'"

McMaster scowled and declared that he did not intend to take "No" for an answer. The deputation backed out, leaving the triumphant "Billy" brooding over his black box.

Outside, there was a hurried conference. Quickly a new scheme was hammered out, and the deputation trooped in again to the testy Prime Minister.

He had given "no money" as the reason for the Government's refusal, then "why could not the Government offer instead some of the large number of surplus wartime aircraft—including many DH9s—shortly to come out from the U.K."

Again the pugnacious Hughes barked a strident "No!"

This failed to defeat McMaster and McGinness, and Fysh, out in the backblocks drumming up more support, laid down a barrage of telegrams suggesting ways and means of overcoming the fiery Welsh hurdle.

On December 16, 1921, notice was given of an Extraordinary General Meeting to authorise transfer of the Head Office from Winton to Longreach, and a full-time collector named Clarkeson was hired to gather in capital to back the bid for a subsidised service.

Late in 1921 the Government invited tenders for operation of a subsidised mail and passenger service from Charleville to Cloncurry.

On January 4, 1922, Q.A.N.T.A.S. sent its first cable to London, to the office of Dalgety and Company. It asked them to approach the de Havilland company for a quote for three aircraft capable of carrying three passengers and luggage, one hundredweight of mails, and a pilot, and three more to carry five passengers and luggage, one hundredweight of mails, and a pilot. Q.A.N.T.A.S. also wanted to know the chances of acquiring the Australian agency for de Havilland.

At about this time it was announced that tenders for the service would close on January 31—leaving would-be contractors little time to prepare their claims. On January 7 a meeting of

Directors decided that an overdraft of £3,000 be arranged with the Bank of New South Wales, and that Templeton, Michod, Peterson, Morgan Reade, McMaster, Brabazon, Ingles, Kennedy and McIntosh sign as guarantors.

The meeting also directed Hudson Fysh to go to Melbourne to look for other suitable aircraft and to complete the tender and lodge it with the Defence Department.

On January 25, Vickers, London, were queried by cable concerning the "Vulcan", and the same day Fysh wired from Melbourne recommending this eight-seater biplane with Rolls-Royce Eagle engine, costing £3,100 and cruising at 90 m.p.h. The aircraft, said Fysh, were still being built.

On January 29 Fysh wired again, finally recommending a tender based on a fleet of three of the aircraft, and on February 2 the great news came:

*Tender accepted this morning against heavy opposition. Have guaranteed experienced pilots England, and de Havilland DH4 for auxiliary. This absolutely necessary. Congratulations—Fysh.*

Fysh followed up with a letter dated February 3, in which he explained that he had amended the order to include the DH4, and told of the close shave Q.A.N.T.A.S. had had when another company tendered with four Vickers, and still another offered to extend to Cunnamulla without extra subsidy.

On February 8 Colonel Brinsmead wrote:

*I am very glad indeed to be able to congratulate you on the success of your tender for the Charleville-Cloncurry Service.*

*I have little doubt that, if you had not pushed so hard for such a service, it would have meant waiting, at the earliest, until the next financial year before same would have been forthcoming, and I sincerely hope that the success of your undertaking will be commensurate with the efforts you have put forward to obtain it.*

*As far as the type of machine that is best suited for the work is concerned, I feel sure that you will have no reason to regret having decided in favour of the Vickers type. It might be a little more expensive in the first place, but ultimately it should prove to be a much better financial proposition than the DH9s or any other machine that is designed for war purposes.*

*I hope that, now the contract is yours, all of your friends in the district will rally to the support of Q.A.N.T.A.S., and that they will not only give you their patronage when the Service commences, but their practical assistance in the way of finance.*

On February 27 the registered office of Q.A.N.T.A.S. was formally moved from Winton to Longreach.

Fysh took time to go to Point Cook, the R.A.A.F. Base, for a refresher course.

In March he signed a contract to buy a DH4 for £1,500. (The DH4 later inaugurated the service between Cloncurry and Camooweal. Later it was bought by a Melbourne company, and this clumsy machine, with its four-bladed propeller and its steel ladder on the outside of the passenger cabin, was still chugging around Essendon Airport in 1937.)

The same month a contract was signed with Stewarts and Lloyds for building of the Longreach hangar at a cost of £1,637. (The latest Qantas Line Maintenance Hangar at Sydney Airport will cost £800,000.)

Hudson Fysh was anxious to make sure that Vickers thoroughly understood Australian out-back flying conditions, and that they fitted "tropical" radiators, and in March he reiterated to the British company the need for these hot-weather modifications.

There were still pockets of wariness in local government circles. The Secretary of the McKinlay Shire Council wrote on March 29 to the company, saying that the Shire would not do anything about contributing to the building of airfields until it heard if other Shires would spend public money on construction of aerodromes.

On May 16 Colonel Brinsmead arrived in Longreach to survey the Charleville/Cloncurry route. He inspected Longreach strip, and promised that the Department would work on it to have it ready for the start of the service.

On May 6, the Aerial Derby of N.S.W. was flown at Victoria Park Racecourse, and Fysh, on scratch, came second on speed, with 69 m.p.h., but last on handicap.

A clipping from a newspaper of the time said:

*Mr. Fysh (Q.A.N.T.A.S.) in his Avro tri-plane was handicapped right out of the race, and failed to develop that turn of speed which must have suggested itself to the handicappers when they placed him on the scratch mark. Mr. Fysh accepted his defeat in true sportsmanlike manner.*

On May 25 word came that the Department had withdrawn the Certificate of Airworthiness of the tri-plane, and advised that it was most unlikely another Certificate would be issued. Brinsmead suggested the substitution of a Puma engine for the Beardmore, provided the bearers were strong enough.

The day before this news, Q.A.N.T.A.S. had moved into its new offices in the Graziers' Build-



ing, Longreach. The first offices were in Eagle Street, but these were burnt down, and a move was made to F. Cory & Company in Duck Street. Then came the Graziers' premises.

Five days later a meeting was held in the Council Chambers, Charleville. Brinsmead attended to discuss an aerial ambulance service, but nothing concrete came of the talks.

## Troubles pile up

Troubles began to pile up: drought, heavy floods, wool and cattle slumps in Australia, industrial troubles in England and America—all added to the load of the struggling airline, and McMaster, on June 26, received a letter from Longreach saying Vickers had announced an extra three months' delay in delivery of biplanes.

McMaster was asked to go to Melbourne to try to borrow two DH9s from Civil Aviation so that the service could start.

There was a real danger that, even if the company were able to get these planes to tide them over, the subsidy might be refused because the aircraft were smaller than the ones stipulated in the tender.

Even with the subsidy, their use would cut the passenger income considerably—but this did not mean as much to the Board as keeping faith with their supporters.

But the efforts to get even these small machines failed, and things looked grim indeed. Then, in July, the Federal Government helped the little company by suggesting it buy two Armstrong Whitworths (price £700 each). The Government offered to put up the money and to allow repayments by a proportionate reduction in the periodical subsidy payments during the first six months of the second year—provided the company undertook to relegate the Armstrongs to subsidiary services once the Vulcans and DH4 were operating.

The Chief Engineer, Arthur Baird—who was toiling with Trojan vigour alongside McGinness and Fysh to keep the 504K and BE2E clattering around on the joy-riding and charter work—went to Melbourne to inspect the Armstrongs.

To add to the gloom, the financial year ended on June 30 with a loss of £4,400—and the list of unfortunate events was given a Gilbert and Sullivan flavour by a cable from Vickers announcing that they could not get any English pilot to agree to the employment contract while Clause 8 remained.

Clause 8 required the pilot to sign the Pledge to abstain from intoxicating liquor.

The Qantas Manager, Marcus Griffin, wrote a memo to the Board about the Vickers order:

*It is unfortunate that the position as to delivery of the Vickers machines is so indefinite, as other-*

*wise a large amount of our capital account (£9,122) could have been placed on fixed deposit, and thereby produced a certain amount of income.*

*On the finalising of the Guarantee (£5,000) it will be necessary for us to transfer our account to the Commonwealth Bank. An estimated financial statement, drawn up to the 30th September, is attached. By this date the service should be in full running order, and then it is hoped that these depressing times of living entirely on capital will disappear for ever.*

On September 9 the Directors decided to issue another £5,000 worth of shares, to bring the total to £40,000. Price for joy flights was fixed at a guinea for ten minutes or part, and 2/3d. an air mile for "special trips".

## At last, a man without a thirst

The same meeting tabled a cable from Vickers that it had at last signed up an unthirsty pilot, Captain Godfrey Wigglesworth.

Minor evidence of a lack of confidence in aviation in some official quarters mounted: when Longreach Council was asked to install electricity in the new hangar, it demurred, and asked the company to pay half the cost and pay interest on the balance.

When pressed, the Council admitted it was not too hopeful about the future of commercial flying.

When the Post Office was asked to put a phone in the hangar, the demand came for two years' rent in advance, with a guarantee of five years!

Meantime, the first of the two Armstrong Whitworths arrived with Arthur Baird, and the Beardmore engine from the now uncertificated triplane was installed. Both Fysh and McGinness flew the Armstrong Whitworth on trials, and were happy with it. Vickers cabled that one Vulcan would be shipped on September 19 and another on the 30th.

But although both men test-flew the second Armstrong and declared the aircraft could satisfactorily operate the service, Brinsmead had other ideas and said so on October 2.

He instructed the company to delay commencement because he believed that two Armstrongs and an Avro "of considerable age" were not enough to guarantee a reliable service, even for the six weeks estimated to elapse before arrival of the Vulcans.

Said Brinsmead:

*Were I to concur with your request to substitute an Avro for a DH4 for the first six weeks (the most critical period of your undertaking), the whole responsibility for breakdown—if such occurred—would be on this Branch and, in view*

of the opinion previously expressed, no other attitude than that adopted would be possible.

Brinsmead said that the necessity for an engine overhaul, complete examination and "doing up" of the DH4 (the £1,500 machine bought in Melbourne) should not have been an unforeseen contingency for the company's technical staff, and "the responsibility for yet another delay to the regular service lay with them".

He urged Q.A.N.T.A.S. to do enough work to make the DH4 "fit to fly", and to leave reconstruction work—apart from the work needed to make it airworthy—till the future.

This, he said, should allow a quick start to the service, and do away with the otherwise necessary six weeks' delay. "This delay would be disastrous," said Brinsmead.

On October 2, the date of Brinsmead's letter, the second Annual General Meeting was held in Longreach, and a decision to again delay commencement was made—trusting to the "mercy" of the Government and the Controller.

More bad news was creeping on the hard-working Directors and staff. Brinsmead wired, asking if Q.A.N.T.A.S. realised that, because of the "loose draft" of the contract with Vickers, the Vulcans did not necessarily have to be fully loaded when performance-tested.

The company instructed its British agents to warn Vickers that Q.A.N.T.A.S. would refuse to accept the planes unless they performed within five per cent. of the contract figures.

Work went ahead on readying the DH4, and it was flight tested on October 25, 1922. Brinsmead was informed that the service could begin on November 2.

On October 25, Paul McGinness resigned, offering to stay on till another pilot was hired.

McMaster wrote to him on behalf of the Board:

*It is, perhaps, needless to say that we are looking to you to fly the opening trip of the service, leaving Longreach for Charleville on the 31st and returning from the latter town on Thursday, and trust you will have allowed for this in any arrangements you may have made.*

*We desire to place on record our appreciation of your service to the company, both in regard to the initial inauguration and the subsequent work in obtaining the subsidised contract and the raising of the capital, and the Directors view with regret the step you have taken in resigning your position as an employee of the company.*

## ***"One man who supplied the spark"***

Hudson Fysh, at the 27th Annual General Meeting in Brisbane in 1947, also paid tribute to McGinness. He said:

*You hear all kinds of versions (of how the company started and who started it), but I think if you really wanted to single out one man who supplied the spark of this company and who first had the idea, it is undoubtedly Mr. P. J. McGinness. He is the one who supplied the first spark, then the others came along.*

The restless McGinness, adventurous, quick and daring—he had a record of nine enemy aircraft shot down in World War I—needed variety and change as a daily diet. He could not accept the collar-chafe of a regular "milk-run" service.

And then, the start of the service—the second regular commercial service in Australia, and the first in the eastern half of the huge continent.

Typical press report:

CHARLEVILLE, Nov. 2, 1922:—*The inauguration of the Charleville-Cloncurry Aerial Mail Service took place at 5.35 a.m. this morning, with many of the town's most important personages present for the most auspicious occasion. The Mayor gave a short address suitable to the occasion.*

*Previous to starting the machine on its long journey to Cloncurry, Lieut. McGinness stated that it was two years since the first aeroplane arrived at Charleville, and a great advancement had been made since then.*

*The opening of the service indicated that Australia was endeavouring to keep pace with Europe and America.*

*No doubt this service in the near future was destined to be linked with Asia, Africa, Europe and Great Britain. Cheers were given when the machine started.*

LONGREACH, Nov. 2:—*The aeroplane commencing the first Q.A.N.T.A.S. Aerial Mail Service arrived here this morning at 10.15 a.m. The machine arrived at Blackall at 8.55 a.m.*

*Lieutenant McGinness (pilot) and engineer Baird reported a successful trip throughout. They were received with cheers by a large number of leading townspeople, and the mail bag was handed over to the Postmaster, Mr. Thompson, amidst applause.*

*Among the mail matter was a letter addressed to the Chairman of the Shire Council from the Mayor of Charleville congratulating the town on "commencing an organisation that, I feel sure, is destined to play an important part in the development of Western Queensland."*

Flying time Charleville-Longreach was 4½ hours, and this speed made the locals dizzy. There was a big crowd at the airfield, and speeches poured from Mayors, Councillors, Q.A.N.T.A.S. executives, pilots, and virtually everyone in the town who had an excuse for spruiking.

Longreach had been made an overnight stop on the service to Cloncurry because of the great heat of the Western mid-day, and this stop-over focused attention on the man who was to become



the first passenger carried by Q.A.N.T.A.S. on a regular commercial service—85-year-old Alexander Kennedy, one of the Provisional Directors, a stalwart, hard-working, bearded pioneer of Western Queensland for 53 years.

He had agreed to subscribe some cash and take a seat on the Provisional Board only on the promise that he got ticket No. 1. This was juggled and in due course he was marked down as the first passenger.

Next morning, soon after sunrise, Hudson Fysh—who was to fly the aircraft to Cloncurry—supervised the loading of mail and the old man's luggage. With Arthur Baird aboard they tried to take off, but had some trouble, and arrived in Winton at 8 a.m., 30 minutes late.

After refuelling and a quick cup of tea, they took off for Cloncurry via McKinlay. A short stop at McKinlay, and at 10.20 a.m. they headed for Cloncurry.

The plane landed at Cloncurry at 11.20 a.m.

For old Alexander Kennedy this flight was the stuff of dreams, because it had taken him no less than eight months to trek with his cattle from Longreach to Cloncurry 50-odd years earlier. Until he was 97 the old chap flew once a year on the Q.A.N.T.A.S. route as far as Cloncurry, or on to Mt. Isa.

Shortly before he died at the age of 99 he asked that he be cremated and made a vague wish that a company plane scatter his ashes over Calton Hills, one of the large properties he had owned in his pioneering days.

But his ashes and those of his wife were carried by Q.A.N.T.A.S. in caskets to Cloncurry, and then on to "Devoncourt" Station—also owned by him at one time. A granite cairn was erected at the turn-off to "Devoncourt" from the main Cloncurry/Camooweal road, a road which the old man had pioneered in the "seventies".

The first through-passenger, Cloncurry to Charleville, was a young woman, Miss McLean. According to the local paper, there was competition for the one seat, and the "winner" summed up her feelings on her arrival:

## *Morning tea at 5,000 feet*

*I was very pleased with the trip from Cloncurry to Winton, and had my morning tea while speeding along at a height of 5,000 feet.*

Miss McLean said that Hudson Fysh also enjoyed his cup of tea from the vacuum flask. Flying apparently did not trouble her, because soon after she tucked into a good breakfast at Winton aerodrome.

Up to this point Fysh and McGinness were the only pilots, and in November the company signed

up a Captain Huxley as a relief pilot for two months.

The probable performance of the Vulcan was looming as more and more of a problem, and Fysh urged the company to be very wary:

*Unless these machines can be guaranteed to give an absolute satisfactory climb in this climate we should not touch them at any cost, and we should be very careful not to get entangled in any way or be forced to take them over as four- or eight-seaters. The climb is the absolute essential.*

Thus the service started with aircraft short on the performance guaranteed in the tender, and with the depressing prospect of even more trouble with the costly Vickers investment.

The Armstrong and the DH4 were now thoroughly prehistoric, and most of their power was absorbed in keeping airborne, with little margin for passengers and freight.

As an even weaker second fleet there was the Avro—which carried a pilot and two passengers and practically no luggage—and the old BE2E—pilot and one passenger, no luggage.

These wobbly planes managed to keep to the weekly schedule in the first year and this performance gave heart to the Directors, because it emphasised the very good ground organisation and the skill and technical integrity of Arthur Baird.

The planes were slow and uncomfortable, the engine exhausts were open and right alongside the passengers. The "cabin" was open and windy—and most passengers were even windier than the cabin.

In winter everyone on board was frozen stiff despite leather coats, fur caps and goggles, and in summer they roasted.

McGinness and Fysh were iron men who had to cope with these conditions week in, week out, for twelve months and more.

On January 5, 1923, Marcus Griffin resigned as Manager of Q.A.N.T.A.S. at Longreach, and Hudson Fysh was appointed in his place. By the end of this month Fysh, in a letter to Brinsmead, was again spelling out his doubts about the Vulcan.

*I contend that a Vulcan in our conditions and on a hot day would not get off the ground with full load. I feel that this service and its conditions cannot be compared with the Western Australian service unless we have smaller machines.*

*A Bristol with a Puma engine is a high-powered machine (one of the West Australian Bristols with Puma flew a trip at 16,000 feet). Armstrongs and similar machines are low-powered.*

To back his doubts on the Armstrong's hot weather performance, Fysh gave these examples:

*McGinness one day flew round an airport at 700 feet and could go no higher—a few days later*

he went to 7,000 feet when the up-drafts were good.

Huxley left Longreach at 5.30 a.m. for Blackall and flew most of the way at 300 feet. The aircraft refused to climb with his two passengers, light luggage and full tanks.

On January 18, a very hot, still day, Huxley left Blackall and was forced down 16 miles from Longreach because of the aircraft's failure to climb and the over-heating that followed. He had two light women passengers, normal load, and tanks only quarter full.

The DH4 on hot days tended to hover in climb, and this could only be overcome by use of full throttle.

As I am writing this, the temperature stands at 110 degrees in the shade, only a slight breeze is blowing, and today both Huxley and Black would agree with me that it would be absolutely unsafe to fly either Avro or Armstrong Whitworth with load between the hours of 11 a.m. and 8 p.m.

Considering the above, is there any hope for the Vulcan out here? Unless the Vulcans will climb fully loaded to 6,000 feet in 13½ minutes, it is impossible for me to recommend their acceptance. Their original specified performance would allow a load of five or six passengers and cruise at under 1,650 revs. The cruising revs. of the Eagle engine were given in a crash report at 1,780 to 1,800 revs. This is totally unacceptable for us for our conditions.

To conclude, I stress that the first aim of this company is absolute reliability of machines and the safety of passengers, as it is only on these conditions that commercial aviation can be built. In fact, it is the all-important question, and that is why we appear so fussy about our machines.

Meantime the Vulcans had not performed satisfactorily in England, and Q.A.N.T.A.S. declined to take delivery of them.

Vickers were so satisfied with the planes, however, that they undertook to ship one to Melbourne, assemble it and flight test it for Q.A.N.T.A.S. entirely at their own expense.

Q.A.N.T.A.S. had nothing to lose and agreed to this in the hope that by some miracle the plane would turn out to be satisfactory.

On February 13, 1923, Brinsmead advised that the Vulcan was being assembled at Point Cook. He said that if Q.A.N.T.A.S. could not come to Melbourne for tests Wigglesworth would fly it to Longreach.

Brinsmead emphasised that he thought the Vulcan would not be a good eight-seater in the summer. He did not think it would comply with the contract with Vickers and, if Q.A.N.T.A.S. wanted to cancel, the Department would not object.

On February 24, an Armstrong piloted by Fysh crashed while taking off from Jericho. Fysh's report emphasises the troubles he and fellow

pilots had in flying these underpowered aircraft in the hard conditions of the outback:

I received an urgent call at mid-day, 24th, from Mr. Ballinger at Barcaldine. His son was seriously ill at Emu Park. I arrived at Barcaldine after a good run, and Mr. Ballinger was ready to start.

I had intended staying at Barcaldine that night, and going on to Emerald early next morning, but, owing to the urgency of the case, after making full enquiries regarding the landing ground at Jericho, I decided to go there and stay the night.

I ascertained that King, Roberts, Butler and Cole had landed on the ground at different times. I had a good run to Jericho, landed well, and the machine behaved splendidly right through.

After having filled the machine with sufficient petrol, and looked the machine over, she was left till next morning.

The morning was cool, but with a very light wind blowing from the N.E. After some delay, the engine was run up, and showed 1,225 revs. At about 9.30, and after the machine had been dragged back to get every foot of run, a start was made.

The take-off was into-wind. The machine took off well, but, when almost level with the tops of the trees, and some 50 yards from them, began to sink slightly owing to the sharp climb and puffy wind. Seeing now that it was impossible to clear the timber, I edged the machine to the left, and made a half turn to the left.

Turning more to the left to avoid further scattered high trees, I got the machine's nose up too far, and she stalled from a height of 30 feet and crashed to the ground.

The machine was dismantled and railed back to Longreach.

In March, Brinsmead told Longreach that Wigglesworth was not keen to do large-scale tests with the Vulcan in Melbourne because he wanted to save the engine so it would be in first-class condition after the flight to Longreach.

Brinsmead said that everyone who had seen the aircraft at Point Cook was delighted with the workmanship and finish. "People," said Brinsmead, "were agreed that nothing approaching same has previously been seen in Australia." This was exactly what Hudson Fysh feared!

Fysh warned the Board on March 12 that the sooner the Vulcan got into service the better, because the company was almost at the end of its tether with the current fleet. With one Whitworth out of action, and the strain on the remaining aircraft so great, there was a very real danger that the entire service would have to be suspended if the Vulcan did not come up to scratch.

On March 27 the fat biplane lumbered into Longreach, and the whole town turned out to see this tremendous craft.



Every member of the Board turned up, and each—whether he felt like it or not—indicated he was eager to be one of the first to go up.

## *Trouble with the Flying Pig*

The Pledge-signing pilot, Wigglesworth, wore carpet slippers as he padded round the aerodrome, and this did not, as McMaster recalled, "give them the confidence so necessary to the Directors and others making the flight".

There were enough Directors to make a full load and it was essential that they fly to declare their faith.

It was a hot, sultry, calm afternoon, and Wigglesworth barked an order for the Directors to get aboard. The Directors were important personages in their own right, and the sergeant-major bearing of the carpet-slipped English pilot upset them a little.

Q.A.N.T.A.S. always insisted on engines being revved and all controls tested before aircraft were taxied out for take-off. But with Wigglesworth such customs meant little. After slamming the door on the cramped Directors in the hot, stuffy cabin, he wandered about in apparently aimless fashion before climbing aboard.

He ordered "someone" to swing the propeller. The Vulcan was standing where he had left it on landing from Charleville and, without revving the engine or bothering about such items as wind direction and controls testing, he started off over the loose gravel.

It was immediately clear that the plane was overloaded—he scraped over the aerodrome fence by inches and circled in an effort to struggle higher. He made it to 500 feet and could not get any higher, but this was enough for him.

## *Carpet slippers around the cemetery*

Longreach hospital and cemetery form a triangle with the aerodrome, and Wigglesworth settled down to a struggling circuit of the three points at the 500 ft. maximum.

The heat and noise in the cabin were almost overpowering and, whenever the august Board of Directors looked down there were the hospital and the cemetery.

This nervous circuit of the two places where they fully expected to end up went on for more than an hour—although to the Directors it felt like several lifetimes—and by the end of 60 minutes a hasty aerial Board Meeting decided to

order Wigglesworth to land so that the passengers could totter to the Longreach Club to recover.

A special land-based meeting of the Board was held that evening, and the members, who by now were almost back to normal, unanimously voted to reject the Vulcan, which by now had been labelled "The Flying Pig".

After a few days the "Pig" chugged back to Melbourne—and thus ended the first experiments with aircraft designed and built for Australian commercial aviation.

The position was becoming very serious, particularly after the Jericho crash and the failure of the Vulcan. Fysh went to Sydney and Melbourne to hunt for replacement aircraft.

He recommended the purchase of a Bristol for £1,000—to help fill the gap—and two de Havilland 9Cs from the British parent company. The Board confirmed his choice on May 25 in a telegram to Brinsmead—whose British "liaison" was looking after Qantas interests there.

By June things were going from bad to worse, and the strain on the personnel was mounting. Hudson Fysh summed it up on the 23rd:

*During the eight months that this service has run, our mechanical staff has been right up against it from the start.*

He went on about the conditions—the aircraft were second-hand to start with, and only one was suitable for summer flying. The men worked long hours, including Saturdays and Sundays. Said Fysh:

*Meanwhile the work of carrying on is becoming more of a problem and, when one considers the indifferent and unstandardised plane which had to be kept airworthy and efficient, I consider that no other mechanical staff would have produced the same results.*

*I claim that our staff, under Mr. Baird, produces as good results with second-hand machines as we could have expected from a new plant.*

*Colonel Brinsmead told me recently that we had the best mechanical staff in Australia, and that we were fortunate to have the services of Mr. Baird.*

On June 6, Huxley, flying the DH4, clipped a telephone wire landing at "Gilford Park" with spares for the Avro, which was grounded there with two passengers. The wire wound around the propeller shaft. The plane crashed and was badly damaged. The loss of the DH4 increased the strain on the fleet almost to breaking point.

On November 17, 1923, Dr. Hope Michod was elected Chairman in place of Fergus McMaster, who stood down because of the demands his properties were making on him through droughts and generally bad seasons.

The Bristol arrived and was put into service, and Fysh forecast they would be able to carry on if he continued to fly the Avro as well as run the office.

On October 23 the subsidy-contract was renewed for another year.

Things chugged along quietly . . . de Havilland sent details of a "DH50" design; Fergus McMaster and Dr. Michod launched a dehydrated vegetable company with a factory in Sydney (years before the process became "news" in food circles); the Bristol was damaged in January; passengers carried in December/January were 45 (an increase due mainly to the DH9Cs); and, in April, 1924, a young cadet pilot named L. J. Brain was hired.

The same month the company asked Brinsmead to recommend a subsidy to extend the service to Mt. Isa/Camooweal.

On May 20 L. J. Brain did practice landings in the DH9 "satisfactorily".

The financial report for the year ended June 30, 1924, was a tonic: the first profit—£1,224, despite the write-off of a large amount of capital equipment, including the useless triplane.

An order was signed for two DH50s, and the first arrived and was flight-tested by Hudson Fysh on October 7.

On October 31, another of the series of flying milestones was reached by Qantas: the carriage of the first Australian Prime Minister to fly on an election tour.

Mr. S. M. Bruce, with Mrs. Bruce, flew from Winton to Longreach in a DH50 piloted by Hudson Fysh. Captain P. C. ("Skip") Moody flew a DH9C with the luggage.

This was a truly historic day. The "50" had a "proper" cabin and this spelt the end of the breed of hardy passengers who bundled up in open cockpits, capped, coated and furred to blunt the sharp winds in winter and equally uncomfortable as they perspired in high summer.

This civilising effect spread and, in January, 1925, all but one of the life assurance companies agreed not to prohibit policyholders from travelling on regular air services.

Q.A.N.T.A.S. had been corresponding with de Havillands, seeking to build the very successful 50s under licence and, in January, 1925, the British company agreed, with Q.A.N.T.A.S. to pay a royalty of £100 on each one built.

On February 7 the first official flight was made between Cloncurry and Camooweal in the DH4, flown by Lester Brain, with Frank McNally as engineer. The first passenger was the manager of Alexandra Station, C. Johnson.

The take-off was at 6 a.m., and touch-down at Camooweal 8.10 a.m.—non-stop!

The year passed uneventfully. Figures for September were: route passengers 35, taxi-passengers 11, freight carried 616 lb., passengers' luggage 1,050 lb., miles flown 9,778. (Average monthly mileage flown by Qantas aircraft now is 1.3 million.)

On December 2, Colonel Brinsmead, with two Inspectors, arrived at Longreach from Melbourne

in the Departmental DH50. After a short stop they flew on to Normanton in the Gulf country.

## *"A definite schedule was adhered to"*

On November 5, 1925, the company racked up the first 300,000 miles, and moved into its fourth year of regular air mail flying. That month, a local paper reported an electioneering trip by a Nationalist candidate:

*Though the journey was one of 1,642 miles, and entailed visiting such outback centres as Middleton, Boulia, and Normanton in the Gulf of Carpentaria, a definite schedule was adhered to right throughout the trip, Mr. Francis being on time for his addresses on every occasion. Places visited were Winton, Middleton, Boulia, McKinlay, Cloncurry, Normanton, and on to Julia Creek over the Townsville/Cloncurry railway.*

The year 1926 started well, with increased figures for passengers and freight. This year saw the start of a long cycle of drought and semi-drought conditions but, paradoxically, this meant money for Q.A.N.T.A.S., because of the large number of "taxi" flights made by graziers in search of feed. Cattle and sheep were dying in dozens.

One of the best customers was Fergus McMaster, who started a hunt for country on Christmas Day, 1925. He had heard of good rain in the Normanton area and knew that three experienced graziers from the south had recently taken up land there. McMaster decided to see these men on the off-chance they might be able to help him out.

He left Winton after a hasty Christmas dinner, arrived at Cloncurry at 3.30 p.m., picked up his drover and took off next morning for Normanton. He reached there at breakfast time and set off by truck to inspect the country, 40 miles out. By 4.30 that afternoon he was back in Normanton after securing feeding ground for 30,000 sheep.

But he needed more and heard of an 80,000-acre block on the Flinders River. He took off in the DH9C with Lester Brain as pilot. They found it impossible to make a ground survey of the block so decided to make what must have been one of the first air-inspections of grazing country.

At Camooweal on the morning of the 27th they headed for the Flinders. Brain had studied a map and the block was easily identified. He brought the DH9 to within a few feet of the ground and the entire 80,000 acres was scanned this way.

They were back in Cloncurry for breakfast. McMaster got a scheduled Q.A.N.T.A.S. plane for Winton, and arrived there at 9 o'clock next day—930 miles in 10 hours' flying time, and travelling time of under three days.

By March 31, 1926, the company aircraft had flown 338,565 miles.



On April 11 Hudson Fysh arrived in Melbourne and saw General Glasgow and Parliamentarians Colonel Cameron and J. A. J. Hunter, to press for a subsidy to extend the service from Charleville to Brisbane.

The group then talked to Brinsmead, who opposed it because he thought other routes deserved priority and also because the Minister for Defence opposed extensions or new services along existing railway lines—and, in any case, there wasn't any money.

On April 18 Fysh organised a deputation to the Minister, and offered to operate the service at 3/3d. a mile.

The points he made were:

- The need to build up a freight service—impossible without a city terminal.
- The need to have headquarters and workshops in Brisbane for manufacture and repair of aircraft.
- The wish of the company gradually to do away with the need of a subsidy by expanding services to profitable routes.

## *For the sake of the nation*

The Minister heard them out—then refused. Fysh then pressed for a Cloncurry/Normanton service—the Minister refused again. Next, a proposal to extend from Camooweal to Daly Waters—but the Minister claimed it would take two years to establish this and by then the railway “would have been extended there”.

McMaster favoured an extension to Normanton—not because it would bring in much revenue—but because of the need to develop the whole area. This “looking ahead” with a mind to the national good was typical of McMaster and his directors.

On May 20 Major de Havilland of the British company arrived at Longreach from Charleville to talk about Q.A.N.T.A.S. re-equipment and the company's manufacture under licence of the DH50.

His arrival coincided with a surge of passenger traffic and on May 24 the bookings were so “heavy” that three aircraft had to be operated from Longreach to Charleville to carry the amazing total of nine passengers, with another passenger turned away.

The drought was getting worse, and in May a grazier named Moffat located feeding ground near Dirranbandi for 8,000 ewes which otherwise would probably have died. Moffat flew 400 miles in six hours—something which caused other graziers to sit up and take notice.

On June 26, 1926, Q.A.N.T.A.S. was advised that the Government was considering an extension from Cloncurry to Normanton.

The balance sheet for the Sixth Annual Meeting showed a gross profit of £6,370/6/6, and a net profit of £3,848/16/1. The meeting decided to make provision for the Normanton extension in case it came off.

Figures for July were: Taxi trips, 3,442 miles, and forward taxi bookings 5,160 miles.

These figures were crowned on July 28 by the carriage of the Governor-General of Australia, Lord Stonehaven, and Lady Stonehaven from Winton to Longreach.

## *Beginnings of aircraft production*

The Governor-General had arrived in Longreach, where Lady Stonehaven christened the first of the DH50s (“Iris”) built in the company hangar under licence to de Havilland.

The passenger list for this flight was Lord and Lady Stonehaven, the Governor-General's A.D.C., and Mr. and Mrs. McMaster. The 107 miles were flown in one hour 20 minutes at 5,000 feet, and the Governor-General emerged from the aircraft thoroughly pleased with the trip. A local paper said:

*What will be the result of this policy (of flying)? It will mean that our Governor-General will know Australia as no other Governor-General has, because his predecessors had no possible chance of becoming intimate with the country.*

The Directors' meeting on August 18 praised Arthur Baird and the engineering staff, particularly for their work in building the DH50, and at the meeting it was decided to recommend to the Annual General Meeting that a dividend of 5% be declared—the first cash return to the investors in the tiny airline.

The report showed miles flown, 13,042, and total mileage 391,984—all without injury to passengers or crew. Highlight of this month was “Skip” Moody's flight with two graziers from Longreach to Armidale in N.S.W.—one of the longest flights made so far.

On October 30, Fergus McMaster was re-appointed Chairman in place of Dr. Michod, who had transferred his practice to Brisbane.

Early in the year, the Department of Civil Aviation nominated Q.A.N.T.A.S. to operate two flying schools, one in Brisbane, one in Longreach.

In December there were a number of applications to join the “Flying Club” Q.A.N.T.A.S. planned to operate in Brisbane, and early in the new year Arthur Baird went to Brisbane to choose a site, build a hangar and start the school.

As well as instructing, they planned to do joy-flights, taxi trips, and aerial photography (“oblique work only”).

Q.A.N.T.A.S. got a bonus for each pupil taught, and the cost to the learner was to be £34/13/-,

made up of: subscription £3/3/-, eight hours' dual-control instruction £24, three hours' solo £7/10/-.

The year 1927 opened quietly. Traffic was building up quite satisfactorily and, despite the drought, things looked good.

Then, on March 27, Fergus McMaster received the following telegram:

**FATAL ACCIDENT TAMBO THIS MORNING PILOT DAVIDSON PASSENGER ARCHIE BELL KILLED DONALDSON ROCKLANDS BADLY INJURED WILL YOU KINDLY ADVISE BELMONT.**

This was the first fatal accident in the six years of regular service, during which the aircraft had flown 450,000 miles.

The aircraft was a DH9C, and the only facts beyond dispute were that Davidson landed 35 miles south of Tambo and tinkered with the engine before taking off again. The aircraft was completely destroyed.

Donaldson died shortly after being admitted to the Tambo Hospital.

The Brisbane Flying School was opened with a display at Eagle Farm Aerodrome on March 26, and Lester Brain was put in charge of the branch. The company hangar cost £1,589.

The ensuing months were quiet and the Seventh Annual Meeting at Longreach on November 19 announced a profit of £4,019.

This was, for Q.A.N.T.A.S., quite tremendous, because the profit was arrived at after paying the expenses for the flying schools at Longreach and Brisbane, establishment of the extension from Cloncurry to Normanton (July 1), £3,281 for depreciation, and £1,800 for taxation. The general reserve now totalled £7,318.

These figures were remarkable, particularly with the drought over the whole of the pastoral districts and the depression conditions in the mining areas such as Cloncurry and Mount Isa.

The Report reminded shareholders that the Prime Minister (Mr. Bruce) had forecast extensions from Charleville to Brisbane and from Camooweal to Daly Waters. Obviously the company would be one of the tenderers. In readiness

for this, construction had started on two more DH50s, bringing the fleet to six.

## *Mercy comes to the Outback*

The big event in 1928 was establishment of a Flying Doctor Service ("Aerial Medical Service") with a base at Cloncurry. The Australian Inland Mission (Presbyterian) chartered the DH50 "Iris" and pilots from Q.A.N.T.A.S.

This was the fulfilment of many of the hopes—spoken and unspoken—of the McMasters, the Fyshs, the McGinness, the Bairds, Michods, Templetons, O'Rourkes, and the others who dug their hands in their pockets and came up with hard-to-get cash to launch the outback airline.

A regular Flying Doctor Service meant that the last great obstacle of the outback was down, and the aeroplane had surely come to stay.

Gradually it became less and less a novelty, more just another way to get around. True, there was the core of disbelievers, those who regarded flying as unnatural, unsafe, or unnecessary—or all three—but this proportion dropped steadily as the new airlines built up first-class records for safety and dependability.

The first million miles for Q.A.N.T.A.S. was entered in the log book in 1930, and the same year the headquarters moved to Brisbane.

In 1931 Imperial Airways reached down through Europe and Asia with an experimental airmail service. This was the shape of things ahead: an overseas route as first outlined by Q.A.N.T.A.S. heads in the very early days.

In 1934 the little Queensland airline—now flexing its muscles—joined with Britain's Imperial Airways to form Qantas Empire Airways and the name was bred from the initials of the Australian partner.

The joy-riding was over and, on December 10, 1934, Australian aerial commerce spread international wings with the start of the first regular airmail service Australia-London.

## A Ricketty 65 m.p.h. to Supersonic

**A**IRCRAFT are the business of airlines, and Qantas always has sought the ideal aircraft to fulfil Australia's part in international aviation.

The airline has used nearly 40 different aircraft types in its 64 years.

They are a key to the development of commercial aviation in Australia:

- Avro 504K, 1921, first Qantas aircraft, pilot and two passengers, 65 m.p.h. cruising speed.

- BE2E, 1921, pilot and one passenger, 65 m.p.h.
- Armstrong-Whitworth FK8, 1922, pilot and three passengers, 70 m.p.h.
- DH4, 1922, pilot and two passengers, 90 m.p.h.
- DH9, 1923, pilot and three passengers, 80 m.p.h., modified at Longreach to give passengers enclosed cabin.
- Bristol, 1923, mail carrier and aerial ambulance, 80 m.p.h.
- DH9C, 1924, pilot and three passengers, 80 m.p.h.



- DH50, 1924, pilot and four passengers in enclosed cabin, 80 m.p.h. One of these aircraft was converted to an aerial ambulance.
- DH50J, 1928, three aircraft built by Qantas with cabin accommodation for four, 105 m.p.h.
- DH61, 1929, pilot and eight passengers, 128 m.p.h.
- DH83 Fox Moth, 1934, pilot and four passengers, 120 m.p.h.
- DH80 Puss Moth, 1934, air taxi and mail plane, 128 m.p.h.
- DH86, 1935, 12 passengers, 140 m.p.h. These four-engined aircraft were employed when Qantas took over the Darwin-Singapore sector in 1935. Imperial Airways had operated this sector from December, 1934, on behalf of Qantas.
- DH90 Dragonfly, 1935, four passengers, 147 m.p.h.
- DH84 Dragon, 1937, six-eight passengers, 95-100 m.p.h.
- Saro amphibian trainer, 1938, used for conversion to flying-boat types.
- "C" class Empire Flying Boats, 1938—the year Qantas headquarters was transferred from Brisbane to Sydney. These aircraft introduced sophisticated standards of comfort for air travellers, were used on the Sydney-Singapore section of the flight from Australia to England, later extended to Karachi. Cruising at 135 m.p.h., the flying-boats carried 32 passengers, who were served restaurant-type meals, had plenty of room to move about, could even set up practice games of mini-golf in the cabin. The Qantas flying-boats formed the nucleus of the Royal Australian Air Force flying-boat squadron which was to play a major part in Australian defence during World War II. Empire flying-boats also did sterling work as troop-carriers. When the Japanese advance interrupted the Australia-England service, Qantas Catalinas bridged the gap by flying non-stop from Perth to Colombo across 3,513 miles of Indian Ocean.
- Lockheed 10, 1942, nine passengers, 140 m.p.h. Used on internal routes and in the evacuation of New Guinea.
- Lockheed 14, 1943, 16 passengers, 175 m.p.h. It flew the Melbourne-Townsville route — a vital wartime line of communications.
- Avro 691 Lancastrian, 1945, one of the first post-war additions to the Qantas fleet. Commercial version of the Lancaster bomber (14 passengers, 220 m.p.h.), these aircraft flew Australia-England, Australia-Japan, and Australia-Norfolk Island routes.
- S25 Hythe flying-boats, 1946, owned by B.O.A.C. and operated in conjunction with Qantas on the re-opened Australia-England route.
- DC3, 1946, 21 passengers, 140 m.p.h., "the workhorse of the sky". Qantas acquired a total of 17 of these famous aircraft, which were used on Australia-New Guinea, New Guinea internal, and Queensland internal routes.
- Wackett Trainer, 1947, instructor and one passenger, 95 m.p.h.
- Catalina, introduced for civil use in 1947 after war-time service, up to 44 passengers, 120 m.p.h. Extensively employed on New Guinea and Pacific Island services.
- Liberator, employed for civil flights, 1947, 16 passengers, 230 m.p.h. Flew Sydney-Singapore post-war, having succeeded the Catalinas in flying the Indian Ocean during the war.
- DC4 Skymaster, 1949, 50 passengers, 200 m.p.h. Another very reliable type of aircraft, used on a variety of overseas routes—to Japan, Pacific Islands, Singapore, New Zealand, Fiji, Hong-kong.
- Sandringham Flying-Boats, 1950, 33 passengers, 170 m.p.h., used on Australia-Pacific Islands routes.
- DHA3 Drover, 1950, 12 passengers, 140 m.p.h., New Guinea internal operations.
- Super Constellation, 1954, 82 passengers, 300 m.p.h. Qantas acquired a fleet of 16 of these fine aircraft, used them effectively to develop the Qantas world network, and to consolidate its status as a major intercontinental operator. This culminated in the first regular round-the-world service through the United States, inaugurated in January, 1958. While route development continued, Qantas opened new major overseas offices in London, New York, and San Francisco; and in Sydney a multi-storey building housed the headquarters staff.
- De Havilland Otter, 1958, 11 passengers, 127 m.p.h., a land or sea plane used for rugged work in New Guinea.
- Boeing 707, 1959, 110 passengers, 550 m.p.h. This giant aircraft cut flying time almost in half on Qantas round-the-world-routes. Qantas was the first non-American airline in the world to put Boeing jets into service—on July 29, 1959. The Company's fleet was later fitted with fan jet engines, enabling each aircraft to carry up to 126 passengers at greater speeds. In 1965 the incorporation of six larger Boeing 707-338C's into the fleet was begun. These aircraft are capable of carrying 184 passengers. They cruise at 600 m.p.h.
- Lockheed Electra, 1959, 63 passengers, 400 m.p.h. Qantas introduced these speedy, comfortable aircraft in December, 1959, replacing Super Constellations.
- Boeing 747B, 1971, up to 433 passengers, 570 mph. Qantas introduced these aircraft in September 1971 to replace our fleet of smaller Boeing 707's. They were known as the "Jumbo" as they were then the biggest commercial airliner in the world. Three versions — 747B, 747 Combis and 747SP.
- 1984 saw the introduction of the Boeing 747 — 300 series, 415 passengers, with stretched upper deck and 1985 the Boeing 767 — 200's ER (Extended Range), 211 passengers and 534 mph.