From the Editor

Tragedy Strikes

The cover photo on the last edition of the SPAA newsletter featured the relatively new Super Petrel LS. We included a short piece by the local distributor of the Super Petrel, Peter Frith, and an extended story by SPAA member Rohan Wittington detailing a trip in his Super Petrel. It was a great read, inspiring us all with the challenges, the joys and the satisfaction that are integral to seaplane flying.

Sadly, this was followed by tragedy.

Only a few weeks later, Peter Frith was demonstrating the same Super Petrel featured on last edition’s cover, when the aircraft crashed. Peter and his passenger, Richard Holgate were killed. See eulogies to both men on page 2.

An amphibious aircraft should be safer than an ordinary plane because they can land on water or land in case of emergency. However, the accident rate for seaplanes appears to be higher than ordinary aircraft. This is probably because they tend to do a lot of alightings and take offs from the water so they spend a lot of time close to the ground (water) and there are more hazards. There is less room for error when you are low rather than when you are up a few thousand feet.

I do not know what caused the crash that killed Peter and Richard, but every time I see a report of a seaplane accident I am reminded of the quote by Thomas Huxley the 19th century scientist and philosopher.

# # # Gear UP to "kiss the water" # # #

Ross Vining (VH-RRZ) - Editor
Tragedy strikes the seaplane community.

On 24 June, Peter Frith, the Australian distributor of the Super Petrel Amphibian, was demonstrating the aircraft to Richard Holgate on Lake Jindabyne. Tragically, the aircraft crashed into the lake and both men were killed. To date, there has been no official explanation as to the cause of the crash.

Richard was a well-liked, enthusiastic member of SPAA. He was our webmaster, the ACT co-ordinator and the RAAus Liaison Officer. He was passionate about seaplane flying; he built a SeaRey Amphibian, he had a FoxBat on floats and he was considering the purchase of a Super Petrel. He was also an instructor with RAAus. He leaves a wife and 3 small children. Below SPAA members share their memories of Peter and Richard.

Our thoughts are with their families.

**Ross Vining Editor**

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I recall the first time I met Richard, he had come to take his first flight in a SeaRey, and his normal quiet gracious demeanour was not enough to contain his boyish excitement and enthusiasm.

Flying SeaReys has taught me that you can learn a lot about yourself and others from your flying experiences together. The SeaRey experience has placed me in an extraordinarily privileged position. It starts the first time I meet someone who comes with that undeniable passion and dream to build an aircraft, then they place an order, then take delivery. Then all those hundreds of “contacts” during the build process, through to the first flight, training and the wonderful years that follow.

It is also a risky business because these people become friends. You can’t share a passion and experiences together without really getting to know each other. There is a part of each of us in each other.

The lesson learned yet again for me is that life is very fragile. Whilst taking every possible care it is also important to live life well, to die while living and not to live dying.

Richard was a real gem, We are so much richer for knowing him. His lovely quite nature, always considerate of others, softly spoken but “solid as a rock character” was impossible not to respect, admire and love.

We will miss him.

**Rob Loneragan**

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Although I didn’t know Richard it’s so sad to see that his little ones will be missing their dad, it breaks your heart. I did get to know Peter Frith and he was a really nice guy. He called me regularly to see how I was going in my Super Petrel and to discuss future trips we would have done together. RIP you guys you died doing what you loved.....

Peter’s funeral was very moving, it had some laughs and some tear-filled moments, for he was an extraordinary guy. It’s funny how you get to know more about a person in that one hour when we celebrate a life well lived than if we were to spend years just knowing of them.

Peter was a graduate of Duntroon Military College, served in the supply corp, loved motor bikes, motor boats, fishing, desert travel and camping, deep sea wreck diving and was an avid wine collector.

It would have been enriching to know him more when he was with us but tragically we are all the worse for his passing..... RIP Peter

**Rohan Whittington**

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It is with stunned sadness that I learned of this tragedy. I met Richard and his Dad at Moruya shortly after ordering my SeaRey kit. Theirs was the first flying Searey I ever saw. I was so excited when I heard they were coming. They damaged their undercarriage on arrival, yet they still had time for me and offered me a flight another day.

I met Peter Frith at the Easter Temora fly-in this year. He was passionate in his promotion of the Petrel and he did an impressive demo flight for the crowds.

Having meet both of those involved in this tragedy, it feels very close to home. I find myself staring into space contemplating the risks of the dream that unites us.

My thoughts keep leading to the same conclusion. It is vital to get the best training possible to avoid a similar tragedy.

**Marty Corr**
I started flying out of Warnervale in 1976. I had only just completed my unrestricted in 1977 when Bob, a mate that I did my flying training with, brought a Cessna 180 (VH-TPG) on edo straight floats. He said “Have a go at this!” Well, that was it for me, what freedom we just found. I completed my float endorsement with Vic Walton in TPG the same year.

I strayed a little from the water passion by buying a couple of Mooneys. However my love affair with the water continued through Bob, who would get me to fly his float plane to and from Myall Lakes or Runaway Bay when he was on business.

Then Bob got a C185 on edo straight floats. I loved flying that plane, so much more fun than my own land locked aircraft.

In April 1989 I found VH-AMP sitting on the bank of the river at Charmhaven, Tom Harrison owned it then. I rang him, we did a deal and I had my very own PA28 on EDO floats for the next 11 years.

I sold it in 2002 and since then I have taken a few land aircraft for a run but it’s just not the same as your own SEAPLANE.

I now live in Erina NSW on acres of water but don’t have a seaplane. Bugger!

Regards   David Parker - davidevr@bigpond.com

The Catalina Flying Memorial Ltd (CFML) are negotiating with a potential major sponsor to fund the restoration of VH-PBY. This is wonderful news. All seaplane pilots should support this organisation of volunteers working to preserve this important part of our aviation heritage. See their website at www.catalinaflying.org.au

Also, the Historic Aircraft Restoration Society (HARS) held a ceremony to honour the members of the Catalina Association of NSW which finally wound up on 30 June 2011 due to the advancing age of the remaining veterans who flew the Catalinas in WWII.

For some great historic pictures of WWII Catalinas go to the National Library at www.trove.nla.gov.au and search for “Catalina seaplane”.

Phil Dulhunty

Catalina Heritage

A Date for your diary

The biennial Safeskies conference is recognised worldwide as a leading aviation safety event.

Who should attend:
Pilots, safety and professional bodies, government regulators and safety investigators, air traffic management and other services providers and anyone with links to the Aerospace industry.

When: Wed 26 & Thurs 27 October 2011 in Canberra
For full details visit www.safeskiesaustralia.org

The Beaver Ballad

Here is a you tube slide show for you to enjoy - pictures of dozens of seaplanes (and others) from Alaska, Washington, British Columbia and elsewhere. It’s set to an easy listening musical commentary. Australia even gets a mention!
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3w_v0k57KhE

Jack Peters

David Parker (brown hat) with instructor Bill Benbow, beside his beloved Archer on Floats

Seaplane Splash-in - Lake Macquarie

The Catalina Festival at Rathmines is on Sat 5th November 2011. Don’t miss it. This will be its 3rd year and it is now Australia’s largest Seaplane splash-in.

It boasts * Ramp access; * Dock access; * AvGas Available; * Secure overnight parking for aircraft; * Accommodation available.

There is also a Flying Contest! Test yourself with * Spot landing; * Forced Landing; * Mooring accuracy competitions. Aircraft available for hire! (Conditions apply)

Prizes for best presented aircraft

All donations and gate money for the Festival goes to The Catalina Flying Memorial.

Adam Holt is co-ordinating operations for the day and plans to bring the Cessna Caravan and a Beaver as well.

More info from: Adam Holt Ph 0402 884 811 adam@seaplanes.com.au

No, it does not have seaplanes, but if you like aircraft, you will love this place. The Nationaal Luchttvaart-Themapark Aviodrome, or simply Aviodrome, is located in Lelystad airport, Netherlands.

It is a long leap from your average air show.

Experience 100 fascinating years of aviation. Aviodrome has an extensive collection of period aircraft and is a unique aviation theme park open throughout the year. A fantastic day for young and old alike.

A unique combination of permanent air festival, aerospace museum and family theme park, the Aviodrome boasts the largest replica in Europe: the Schiphol 1928 building, an exact replica of the 1920s Amsterdam Airport terminal building. And that is only the beginning, since this plane-freak paradise is packed with wonders from one end to the other.

Authentic aircraft from all over the world are presented in manicured displays that, together with many visual and sound effects, provide the right period atmosphere, along with one of the world’s largest collection of airworthy vintage planes of all denominations.

Apart from the impressive museum exhibition Aviodrome has much more on offer. A 250-seat movie theatre offers spectacular viewing of wide screen aviation films, lots of games, displays, action presentations and everything you would expect from a state-of-the-art theme park.

Plus one tiny detail you’d never find in a theme park: real planes.

Check out their website www.avidrome.nl

The writing all seems to be in Dutch but the movie trailers are in English. You can also see short trailers of the 3D and 4D movies.

Fly Nano

This material is abstracted from the website www.flynano.com

Nano is for fun flying – no passengers, no cargo - just you.

If you’ve ever had a pilot’s licence you’ll fly Nano right out of the box. The rest of you will need to learn the simple rules of the air.

FlyNano uses hi-tech materials for extreme lightness. There is an electric motor option with a “whispering low-speed prop”.


Specifications:
Wingspan 5m; Max T/O wt 200 Kg; Speed 70 – 140 km/h; Ceiling 3,000m. Range 70 km; Price €27,000

On The Step - Newsletter of the Seaplane Pilots Association of Australia - Issue 27 - July 2011 - Page 4
The SPAA now has an Intranet discussion forum. It is hosted and run by SPAA committee member David Geers. Here David answers some questions about this new SPAA initiative.

**Q:** What is the aim of the site?

**A:** To provide a discussion forum for seaplane pilots to share ideas, flying experiences, destinations, set up trips and promote safety.

**Q:** Who has access to this site?

**A:** Only registered members can post & read messages.

**Q:** How and can I invite new members?

**A:** Members need to be set up. E-mail or ring me with details david@computerdrive.com.au Ph 0418 10 35 35.

**Q:** is this site are associated with the SPAA.

**A:** Yes it is endorsed by SPAA.

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**What turns YOU on?**

Check out the Wikipedia entry for seaplanes. It's quite amazing, there are entries for hundreds of different models - mostly made between 1920 & 1950. It was an era of extreme innovation and invention.

But what is happening now?

Let's focus just on small personal seaplanes, rather than large, commercial, military or fire fighting types.

**What do YOU think are the most exciting seaplane developments in this category now? Is it:**

**The ICON?** A sports car for the beach, boasting sexy design by modern car designers and allegedly needing only 20 hours of training to produce safe pilots (according to their website).

**The Dornier S-Ray?** Dripping with heritage, the current design team lead by Iren Dornier, grandson of the famous 1920's seaplane designer Claude Dornier. They were inspired by the Libelle, a seaplane designed by Claude in 1922. They used modern computer aided design, multi-element analysis, a modern engine, instruments and materials to create the Dornier S-Ray.

**The Seawind?** As a home build or factory build. A high performance, luxury aircraft with IFR capabilities, looks fantastic.

**The SeaRey?** As a homebuilt, or soon as a factory built LSA, slowish but very versatile, copes with beaches, rough strips and water, hundreds flying around the world, and every one an expression of its individual builders personality.

**The Super Petrel LS?** Factory built, suitable for RA registration, ready to fly.

**The Nano?** It is being marketed like a toy. And I admit it looks like "fun". But, I suspect that experience will show that safe flying demands a more considered approach than their website suggests to me.

Or something else – What gets YOUR juices flowing?

Send your thoughts to editor@seaplanes.org.au
Jindabyne Airfield is nestled in the Snowy Mountains just above the township of Jindabyne and beside the beautiful Lake Jindabyne. The air is clear and cool, the water is fresh and there’s plenty of it. Perfect for amphibious seaplanes. No need to wash salt water out of the aircraft after operating on the Snowy Mountains lakes!

On 14/15 May 2011 Jindabyne Aero Club hosted an open weekend which included the opening of a satellite flight training school for both land and seaplane training. The school uses Jabiru J120, J170 and J230 aircraft for land lubbers and a brand new Foxbat Amphibian for seaplane endorsements and Trial Instructional Flights (TIF’s).

The weather on Saturday was atrocious and most flying operations were cancelled, but the weather on Sunday was perfect for all types of flying including seaplane operations. More than 30 aircraft of all shapes and sizes flew in and there was a good crowd of onlookers.

The Foxbat amphibian conducted 9 trial instructional flights throughout the day which delighted prospective seaplane pilots and plenty of onlookers at both the airfield and on the lake.

Be there in 2012 - Mid May - Mark it in your diary now.

Hi Ross
My favourite seaplane destination is Fitzroy Island. It has a beautiful resort where you can lunch in an open air restaurant. Joshua Hunt bought it for $100 million, went bust renovating it, then sold it for $8 million! Check out their website www.fitzroyisland.com

Highly recommended as a stopover for any seaplane.

I had 3 days in the Whitsundays but unfortunately could only do some water landings on the third day. But we made up for it by landing at Daydream Island, Hayman Island and beached at Airlie Beach itself. Will have to go back soon and have some more fun. Also highly recommended for the seaplane fraternity.

Paul Hewitt   {email = searey429@mail.com}

Dear Editor
This year I am entered in the Shitbox Rally. We have to drive from Brisbane to Darwin in cars worth less than $1000 ie a Shitbox. All funds raised (so far almost, $600,000!) go to the Cancer Council. There are over 100 cars entered and even Top Gear Australia has an entry. Details at www.shitboxrally.com.au

I am now thinking that the seaplane fraternity should organise something like this where we fly from point to point to raise money for charity. Not in "Shitbox" aircraft of course. Any ideas out there?

Paul Hewitt   {email = searey429@mail.com}

On a seaplane discussion site recently I found the following question posed by a pilot pondering what type of seaplane to purchase.

The Question?
I am interested in getting a seaplane, but which is better, a flying boat, or a float plane?
I assume a float plane can get to a dock easier. The areas I will be operating in have steep shores with trees or brush right down to the water, mucky bottoms and cold water most of the year. So I guess a float plane would be better. But I guess it’s easier to alight onto the water when you’re just about sitting right on it rather than in a float plane where you’re up on stilts. I would appreciate some thoughts from experienced pilots regarding water handling, turbulence, manoeuvrability, safety.

Answer #1
Certainly the floats are an advantage for both docking and beaching at steep shores. The boat hulls have an advantage of a much lower centre of gravity which significantly reduces the likelihood of rolling over. Also, you can’t slide floats around like a jet ski, which is what you can do with many flying boats. I also tell myself that the floats do nothing in flight except create drag while the boat hull is integral to the plane structure, but my flying boat is still terribly draggy so I’m probably fooling myself.

Answer #2
Well, I have had my Searey for 5 years and a Buc II for 15 years before that. I love my Searey and, if the wind is light, can bring it up to a dock easily and frequently do so.

ALL float planes were originally designed as land planes with the thrust line directed through the centre of drag. The subsequent adding of floats lowers that centre of drag dramatically and requires down force on the tail at all times with resultant trim drag, etc. Flying boats have a thrust/drag mismatch too, but at least they are designed for it. Roll rate is another issue. On a float plane, those two heavy floats act as mass counterbalances and can really slow your roll acceleration.

Safety-wise; well, I have flown both and feel rather precarious sitting up high on the water on floats, especially with a strong wind, I never feel that way in my Flying boat.
I always want my bird be an amphibian, that has so many advantages. I taxi it up onto my beach, put it under its canopy and tie it down. Then it can handle any monster storm that comes along. What are you going to do with a float plane? Tie it to a dock in the hail and hope? We can get two foot waves on our lake. Good luck!

Also, I like to go to land airports occasionally, especially for fuel. Sure beats hauling fuel drums from town and then up onto a wing. Sure, floats can be made amphibious but then you need a ramp. Float wheels are generally small and thin to fit up into small wells in the floats and so bog easily. My SeaRey can power up onto virtually anything. I believe the ease of beaching a float plane is overstated. All the float guys I know carry a pair of rubber boots.

So what do you think? reply to editor@seaplanes.org.au
We started Red Baron Seaplanes in 2004, after sourcing the aircraft, not working, on the Gold Coast. Our plan was to operate from Horseshoe Bay on Magnetic Island.

Initial attempts to make the plane airworthy resulted in a battle with an aircraft engineer and court action to recover the aircraft. Not a good start!

Then we took the aircraft to Innisfail where an engineer, Barry Foster, put it back together.

Finally, in November 2006, we began operations at Magnetic Island, working off the beach. We were a huge ‘hit’ and people travelled from Townsville to see us fly, spending money with other tourist operators. This was a ‘win-win’ for us and other businesses.

But, in January 2007, a group of local residents, dubbed the ‘secret seven’ by the local press, lodged an appeal with the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) to have our marine parks permit removed and stop us flying.

The GBRMPA affirmed our permit; however the "secret seven" then applied to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT). The initial hearing took 4 days and focused on 3 issues, environmental impact, safety and amenity (noise impact).

The complainants claimed we were so loud we were making ‘fish deaf’. No joke, they brought a marine biologist from Macquarie University to give evidence!

In November 2007, the AAT issued an Interlocutory decision, saying we had no environmental impact, but it questioned the safety of the ‘mode of operation’ because the aircraft had a propeller, and the impact of amenity (noise).

We were advised that if our aircraft was ruled as ‘unsafe’, the legal precedent had the potential to affect every float plane in Australia.

We ‘won’ the case in December 2007, but only after our barrister discovered that Horseshoe Bay was not in the Federal Marine Park and therefore the AAT could not hear the case in relation to this bay. The AAT did put some restrictions on noise etc, which, according to the management authorities, are not workable.

The case was widely published in the local media and from this we gained a lot of local support.

We now operate out of Townsville where we are a major tourist icon. We have a strong local customer base, both on Magnetic Island and Townsville.

As far as we know, no fish have gone ‘deaf’ in all the years that we have been operating.

Carol and Paul Mills  -  Red Baron Seaplanes
Ph 0412896770     cplanes@bigpond.net.au

Sadly there have recently been several seaplane accidents in Australia and North America. There appears to be a common thread running through them which relates to:

Lack of experience and training.

Low altitude turns either just before landing or just after takeoff.

In the wake of tragedies like this it is important for us to heighten our awareness of the risk factors around our operation of seaplanes and I offer the following suggestions/observations:

1. We should all have a regular (at least annual) check flight to ensure that we have not developed any bad habits or operational techniques.

2. All newcomers to Seaplane flying should seek the very best training they can find.

3. Heightened awareness of avoiding slow, low turns and in conditions that could precipitate a stall.

Fly Safe - Rob Loneragan  (President SPAA)
I had flown a friend to Moruya to catch a flight to Sydney. I landed my Cessna 180 floatplane in the river and, after our goodbyes, started the engine to return to Corunna Lake where my friend Patrick was waiting for me.

I opened the throttle to begin my takeoff run, the aircraft swung hard to port and I almost crashed into the breakwater. There are no brakes on a seaplane but I could have done with some!

I drifted back in the wind and tried again – same result! But just stopped in time.

I taxied slowly to the beach and discovered the problem - one of the pulleys controlling the water rudders had jammed the control cable.

It took almost an hour to fix with tools kindly supplied by local bystander.

By the time I got airborne the weather had worsened and as I approached Tuross Head I was losing forward visibility in low cloud and rain. I could have landed there but there were still a few lakes up ahead so I flew on until the headland at Narooma appeared out of the gloom. Lake Corunna was just a short hop from there, if I could climb up over the cliffs to reach it!

I thought of all the pilots who had crashed from "press-on-itis". An old aviation saying came immediately to mind – "there are OLD pilots and BOLD pilots but never any OLD BOLD pilots."

I did a slow 180° out over the ocean and headed back. Fairly soon I was back at the Narooma breakwater and flew landed in Wagonga inlet, close to the Quarterdeck restaurant (great for oysters and fish!).

I dropped the anchor close to shore in about 2 feet of water. I also used my marine radio to contact Marine Rescue at Narooma and inform them I had landed and was OK.

At this moment a voice called out from the shore, "Can I help you, I am a pilot myself and have a Beechcraft Bonanza at Moruya?"

"Thanks" I replied, "I need a taxi to Corunna Lake."

He replied, "I could take you, but first, you better anchor your plane in deeper water. It’s high tide now and tomorrow’s high is lower than this." I waded out up to my waist and reset the anchor.

My new friend, the Bonanza pilot, said we would have to go via his house to change cars as this one belonged to a friend who needed it back. At his house I was offered great hospitality but explained I was in rather a hurry as Patrick was waiting for me. We finally changed cars then discovered we were almost out of fuel and had to drive back to town to fill up. Unfortunately I did not know Patrick’s mobile phone number and I knew he would be getting concerned.

We finally arrived on the scene to find Patrick sitting in the Pajero facing down the lake with the headlights flashing on and off. He had phoned Moruya to find out if I was coming or not. Richard told him I had left over an hour ago and the flight should have been only 15-20 minutes.

Richard had phoned the air rescue organisation who contacted the Moruya Police and there were police cars calling on all the lakes and rivers between Moruya and Corunna.

We immediately called Moruya to say I was safe and that I had already been in touch with Marine Rescue at Narooma almost an hour ago and within five minutes of my landing in Wagonga inlet.

Interestingly, the reason I flew to Moruya was to enable my friend to catch the REX service at 4.40pm to Sydney. This flight was cancelled due to mechanical problems. A replacement aircraft was to come from Sydney but could not land at Moruya because of the abominable weather, so he spent the night at Moruya.

As they say “If Time to Spare – go by Air!”

Phil Dulhunty

Are you a member of SPAA? ITS FREE!

Whether you are a pilot, an aspiring pilot, or just love the idea of seaplanes we have great news for you.

Membership of SPAA now costs $0.00 There is no catch, and no small print. It is free because we want:

- people to know about the joy of flying seaplanes, and that, when operated responsibly, they have minimum impact on the environment.
- to encourage all seaplane operators to operate in a safe and responsible manner.

To join or renew your membership to the SPAA:
1. goto: http://www.seaplanes.org.au
2. Click the "Join" Button on the home page.
3. Fill out the membership form and submit.

Note: Membership details are confidential and will not be released to 3rd parties.

Many happy and smooth alightings

Jim Moline (VH-DUX) - Treasurer
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www.flynano.com