

The Beginning: Peter d'Plesse

PASSION FOR FLIGHT

Bass Strait forming a positive barrier between Tasmania and the Australian mainland, it's not surprising that Tasmania played a major role in the development of Australian aviation.

The Tasmanian section of the Australian Aero Club was formed in Launceston in 1926, with active flying operations commencing November 1930.

The Southern Section started flying from Brighton in the early



1930's. By 1935 flying members totalled 85 with prominent Tasmanian names such as Holyman, Gatenby, Boss-Walker, Fitzgerald, Davies, Mills, Miller, Reed and Youl.

When Cambridge was developed as Hobart's airport, the Southern Section transferred there in November 1935, occupying a new hangar and clubhouse facilities. Operations continued at Cambridge until disrupted by World War two.

Operations recommenced after the war and moves began to form the Southern Section into a separate club. Following



lengthy and difficult negotiations, a group of Hobart businessmen put their names to the Memorandum and Articles of Association of the Aero Club of Southern Tasmania. These gentlemen were R. O. Harris, L. Nettlefold, H. M. Heathorn, G. L. Roberts, D. McPhee, D. Meredith, C. E. Davies, K. J. McWilliams and G. Grant. Operations commenced on July 1 1947

The club's first aircraft was a de Havilland Gipsy Moth DH60M VH-ULM, an aircraft which was still operating in



Rex Shearing May 1946



the 1970's. The club operated another Gipsy Moth VH-ULN and Cirrus Moth VH-UAU. As performance and comfort of aircraft increased the Tigers, Austers and Chipmunks were replaced by Cessnas such as the 172, 182 and 206.

A driving force in establishing the club was Lloyd Jones, an ex RAAF flying officer who had been appointed Chief Fly-



L: Geoff Sansom checking out at Aeradio Cambridge prior to cross country flight 02/11/47. B: Jack Koerbin September 1946



ing Instructor of the Southern Section

in 1946. His dynamic personality and brilliant flying ability helped the fledgling club survive the early days. However, the personal challenge of flying still remains an alluring attraction for those who become involved.

