

## New name for airport terminal

THE man who designed, built and flew Australia's first all metal-framed aircraft will be recognised on November 24 with the naming of the Arthur Butler Terminal at Cootamundra Airport.

Arthur Butler was living in Cootamundra when he created the revolutionary aircraft and its metal frame was assembled at Hulford's Engineers and Plumbers in Parker Street (site of today's Toyota dealership).

Two Hulford wives - Jean and Grace produced the aircraft's fabric covering on their sewing machines.

But that's not all this brilliant pilot and engineer achieved.

In 1934 he formed Butler Air Transport (BAT) Co, based at Cootamundra, and his company won the contract for the Cootamundra-Charleville leg of the first England/Australia airmail service.

In between these two historic feats, Butler flew a Comper Swift, with a Pobjoy engine, from England to Australia in the record-breaking time of nine days, one hour and 42 minutes.

The tiny Comper Swift had a wingspan of 27' and an 85 horse power radial engine. Butler's flight record still stands today, as no other aircraft of this size has completed the journey in less than 10 days.

The local aerodrome was commandeered by the RAAF in 1939 and Arthur Butler based his operations to Sydney.

He built up BAT into the largest aerial services company in NSW.

In 1952, Butler Air Transport was operating flights between Sydney and Cootamundra five days a week.

A bitter shareholding war resulted in a takeover of his company by Ansett in 1958 and Butler was blocked by government regulations from starting afresh.

Instead, he turned his attention to isolated communities that would benefit from an aerial ambulance service.

He lobbied and raised funds and in 1967 the NSW Air Ambulance Service came into being.

Butler was also chairman of the Service's board.

In recognition of his services to aviation, he was appointed an Officer of the Order of the British Empire in 1958.

Following a debilitating stroke in the late '60s, Arthur Butler regained the use of his fingers by pounding on a typewriter.

He wrote the history of civil aviation in Australia, *Flying Start* published 1971, plus his memoirs and the story of his flight with the Comper Swift.

Painting became another of his interests and one of his works had the honour of qualifying for entry in the Wynne Prize.



Arthur Butler died in 1980 and, appropriately, his ashes were scattered from the air

Guests of honour at the naming ceremony will be Dr Nancy Bird Walton AO OBE and Arthur Butler's daughter, Anna Yeats.

### **ARTHUR BUTLER TERMINAL OPENING**

The Mayor and Councillors of Cootamundra Shire have determined to recognise the contribution made by C Arthur Butler OBE to the development of aviation during its early days.

Pioneer aviator Arthur Butler was based at Cootamundra Aerodrome 1927 to 1938, during which time his achievements included:

- Designing, building and flying the first all metal framed aircraft in Australia 1930.
- Setting a flight record from England to Australia of just over nine days in a Comper Swift 1931. Butler's record for this size of aircraft stands today.
- Establishing Butler Air Transport (BAT) Co (based at Cootamundra).
- Winning the contract to fly the Cootamundra to Charleville leg of the first regular Australia / England airmail service in 1934.

In recognition of his contribution to Cootamundra's history, Council will name the Cootamundra Airport terminal in Mr Butler's honour.

You are cordially invited to attend the ceremony on 24<sup>th</sup> November 2007 at 2pm at the Cootamundra Airport. The official naming will be performed by Dr Nancy Bird Walton AO OBE and the daughter of Arthur Butler, Ms Anna Yeats.

It is anticipated that Arthur Butler's book on his history making Comper Swift journey from England to Australia, *Flight to a Lady* will be launched following the naming ceremony.