

its fuselage and wings were entirely fragmented. Our family legend is that my grandfather's gold fountain pen, bearing the initials L.S.A, was found more than one hundred yards from the point of impact. A huge blaze burned for several hours.

A ceremony

The site of the accident is marked by a cairn with a plaque recording the crash; and a second one bearing the names of the victims. A precipitous scramble down the slope brings you to a cross bar mounted on two posts marking the exact point of impact of the plane. Little effort of imagination is necessary; the towering trees, the unchanged slope; it is all as close as could be to seventy years ago. When the fog comes in, syphoning and swirling up the slopes and around the trunks, you can see the two woodsmen, Logan and Murphy, who raised the alarm, peering through the thickest fog they have seen on the mountain and listening with increasing horror, as the whine of the engines becomes a roar and what is to follow becomes a certainty.

Saturday, 25 October 2008 marks the seventieth anniversary of the *Kyeema* crash. A moving ceremony was held, attended, surprisingly, by nearly a thousand people. Several organisations and individuals excelled themselves in the organisation, led by Mr Max Lamb and Mr Job. The smartly decked out and precisely drilled cadets of the Australian Air League beautifully performed all the honours; the Victorian Police Pipe Band played the soldier songs of the time, there was a fly-over – intended to consist of two DC-3s but, due to technical problems, finally made up of one, passing over twice; and a number of people spoke, one of whom, David Hawker, a descendant of Charles Hawker was speaker of the House of Representatives under the Howard government.

But perhaps most evocative of all was the female member of the Wurundjeri People who belong to that area, who performed the Welcome to Country. She spoke of the Land and of belonging to the Land and one gained a sense of the Land, up there on the high slopes, receiving in the dead and forever cradling their souls.

Post scriptum

The *Kyeema* victims did not die in vain. The sound and fury after the accident finally forced the government to bring in the beam navigation system on all major routes throughout Australia, ushering in a new era in civil aviation.

In turning on the GPS to return to Melbourne, I thought of the crew of the *Kyeema*. An aviation version of my device, as simple as a tiny screen and a suction pad could, today, be attached to the windscreen of the aircraft. A crisp-as-starch Oxford-accented voice would instruct the pilot at every turn of the route. The lady would be there at the point of entry into fog in the Melbourne basin; she would be there when Essendon Airport was looming up. And if the pilot should display the slightest tendency to overfly the runway, the slightest inclination to head toward the Dandenongs, lights would flash, beeps would sound, and that precise voice would be heard to intone 'Perform a U-turn at the earliest possible moment'.

By Anthony Abrahams

The writer is indebted to Macarthur Job for much of the technical information in this article.

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history can also now readily have access to the Almanacs. In the past only a few collections were publicly available. In many cases the earlier volumes, particularly from 1886 to 1932, held in collections had been irreversibly affected by bacteria and were quickly deteriorating.

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