

# Opinion OURS & YOURS

## Gatty flew into aviation history with his efforts

Tasmanian Harold Gatty deserves more recognition for his around the world flight, writes **John Livermore**

Standing on the wheel strut of the Winnie Mae, Tasmanian Harold Gatty had navigated the single-engine Lockheed Vega 3B aircraft, flown by pilot Wiley Post around the world in eight days, landing at Roosevelt Field, Long Island, New York, on the afternoon of June 30, 1931.

Harold Gatty was born in Campbell Town, in Tasmania's Midlands, on January 6, 1903.

His father was head of the local government school. In 1915, Harold entered St Virgil's College in Hobart. In 1917, he enrolled in the Leve's Bay Naval College and ironically, in view of his later achievements, struggled with both maths and navigation.

However, after joining the RAAF in 1920, as an apprentice, he found he could navigate by the stars.

Working later with United SS of New Zealand – between New Zealand and California – he studied Polynesian seafaring and celestial navigation. Using the scents of guano and cocoon he could locate islands and even smell freshly mown hay 80 miles out from New Zealand.

In 1926, he married Vera McCulloch in Sydney.

Struggling to get a job, he applied for a US visa upon his arrival in San Francisco on Christmas Eve 1927 after finding his seagoing papers were only valid for the British Empire.

Eventually Gatty opened his own

aviation navigation school in Los Angeles where he came into contact with local aviators.

At the time air navigation was primitive and to work out locations in a plane you were required to check land-based features such as roads, rivers and railways.

Working for Weems, a naval officer, Gatty improved Weem's tables of calculated position which had been used by US polar explorer Admiral Richard E. Byrd and Australian Hubert Wilkins in the Antarctic. Weem's curves could not be used at night so Gatty applied the well-known maritime system of dead reckoning.

Gatty also invented the air sextant, the aerochronometer to overcome the effect of rapid air speed on a calculation and the Gatty Drift Sight. This fixed the determination of ground speed of an aircraft and the angle of drift of the so-called crosswind effect.

All these inventions by Gatty were the basis for the modern automatic pilot.

In 1931, Wiley Post, who had lost an eye on his oil prospecting flights, offered Gatty the position of navigator on the Winnie Mae for Post's round-the-world flight. On June 22 the pair left Roosevelt Field dressed in suits, not flying suits, and with \$1 in their respective pockets.

The Winnie Mae had a cruising speed of 160mph and a maximum of

185mph as a supercharged Lockheed Vega 3B.

Post was the first pilot to use the fast-flowing eastbound jet stream which enabled the plane to reach 16,000 feet. After flying at times 50 feet above the Atlantic the pair reached Liverpool then went on to Berlin and to Moscow.

In Moscow the aviators were met by the USSR Society for Aviation and Chemical Defence. A dinner at the Savoy tested the tired pair with nine courses of food and plenty of vodka toasts.

The next day the Moscow airport crew pumped 324 imperial gallons of fuel into the Winnie Mae's large tank instead of the smaller US gallons and before the plane flew out the extra had to be siphoned off.

At Irkutsk, in Siberia, the Winnie Mae got bogged in what was a muddy lake and had to be dragged out by tractor. Following the Trans-Siberian Railway east, the route taken was over the Kamchatka Peninsula, they then crossed the Bering Sea at dangerous wave height.

After refuelling at Solomon, in Alaska, the plane's propeller was damaged. Gatty temporarily fixed it with a hammer and injured his shoulder in an engine backfire but navigated on to Fairbanks where the propeller was replaced.

On the afternoon of June 30 the Winnie Mae finally touched down on Long Island, after a trip of eight days, 15 hours and 55 minutes.



Following their huge feat, both Gatty and Post were awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross from US President Herbert Hoover at the White House.

In January 1932, Gatty was appointed a senior engineer in the US Air Corps with a waiver of US citizenship requirement. Gatty never

became a US citizen. However, in World War II he served in the US Army Air Corps and wrote the *RAF Book for Downed US Flyers*.

Gatty helped Trans World Airlines (TWA) develop a route to New Zealand in 1937 by challenging British claims to key staging post islands in the Pacific. This ensured an airlink from the US to New Zealand but upset the Australian government

which supported the British interests.

At this time Canberra preferred the imperial London to Sydney route which made Gatty an outcast from the Australian government's viewpoint. This resulted in Gatty being critically regarded for some time in official circles in Australia including among aviation operators.

Gatty moved to Fiji in 1947 setting up Fiji Airlines in 1954. He died near Nausori Airport in August 1957.

The restoration and improvement of the Harold Gatty memorial by the Northern Midlands Council, at the top end of Campbell Town, is a welcome development.

However, additional signage would also help draw visitors to the site to explain the important role of this world famous Tasmanian aviation pioneer.

Gatty has also recently been nominated by the Tasmanian Aviation Historical Society for the Australian Aviation Hall of Fame.

**John Livermore is the chair of the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport (Tasmania) and was the former dean faculty of Economics and Commerce at the University of Tasmania.**

## hot spots into the 21st century

## Time for a digital policy that brings rural and tourism

The mobile and internet services which should support our community on the Tasman Peninsula are failing our emergency services, businesses, residents and visitors to our region. As one of our state's most visited tourism regions, the Tasman is a major driver of our state's economic fortune. Yet we are let down with services not fit-for-purpose in the 21st century.

Our community is calling upon the federal government to fund the rollout of NBN fibre-to-the-premise in our major towns and to increase the number of mobile phone towers to eliminate black spots and increase the mobile coverage footprint within our municipality.

Unreliable internet and mobile services on the Tasman Peninsula are continuing to fail our community, writes **Rod Macdonald**

As a major tourism destination the Tasman caters to international, interstate and intrastate visitors. Attractions such as the Port Arthur Historic site, the Coal Mines Tesselated Pavement and many other spectacular landscapes bring more than 500,000 people, per year, to the region. The Three Capes Track adds more than 10,000 visitors to our region, and cruise ships bring in about 70,000 visitors per year. This visitation is the main economic driver and employment generator for

our region and Tasmania generally. Yet our mobile network doesn't cope and there are many black spots in these popular tourist areas.

The vastness of tourism within the Tasman has exposed the shortfall in our mobile network. While there have been some upgrades, under-provisioning and many blackspot areas have highlighted the desperate need for service improvements and to provide coverage in the areas where people live and visit.

The lack of coverage in many areas has created problems for public safety as well as the day-to-day lives of our residents. The black spots and loss of access to data on the network impacts the ability of our emergency services – ambulance, fire, SES and police – to perform their duties. In January our local SES unit couldn't respond to a call-out because they were unable to receive the message. Similarly, our ambulance volunteers have devices such as tablets, used to access medical data that are often rendered ineffective as they are unable to connect due to both black-spots areas and data shut-down for extended periods.

The Tasman is literally a 'one-road-in' and 'one-road-out' community and our electricity grid also follows this path, through heavily forested areas. We are vulnerable to natural disasters such as bushfires. An underground fibre-optic cable will help to maintain connectivity and provide essential communication services required for people's safety during these events.

Within our municipality we have more than 200 short-term holiday accommodation businesses and hotels at Port Arthur and Eaglehawk Neck, as well as several caravan parks, to support a growing demand for visitors. Significant investments are also being planned to upgrade existing hotels. A further development – consisting of about 40 villas, with day facilities and a

restaurant, has received planning approval. However, our NBN internet service cannot meet their needs.

During late spring to autumn, we have between 15,000 and 30,000 people per day visiting our region. Winter festivals in Hobart swell our visitor numbers during late June and July, to rival peak season activity. In the 2022-23 financial year our Gross Regional Product was \$125m, up by 47 per cent from 2012-13. This was well above the average state growth of 26 per cent for the same period.

Why is our region being treated so poorly when it comes to funding internet and mobile services? Businesses such as our passenger transport services find themselves unable to process EFTPOS payments.

This has caused some small businesses significant losses in sales. Payments they had thought had gone through, but simply failed, are also a major headache for the owners of these mobile businesses.

Our NBN service depends upon fixed-wireless towers and this has exposed a gap between the service speed (especially uploads) and quality needs of residents and businesses.

For example, the owners of Lufra Hotel, in Eaglehawk Neck, are planning a multi-million dollar refurbishment. However, the existing internet coverage is insufficient to operate their business software, let alone cater for services such as online conference facilities and connectivity

to the 42 accommodation units they are planning to upgrade.

The Tasman municipality is changing. It is already a major tourism region in our nation, but is being held back by short sightedness and a failure to acknowledge its prominence and the role it plays within our state's economy. We have new subdivisions, already serviced with pits and pipes to accommodate NBN fibre-optic cable, waiting to be connected. It is time for federal and state governments to support us and formulate a digital policy that brings rural and tourism hot spots, such as the Tasman, into the 21st century.

**Rod Macdonald is the Mayor of the Tasman Council**

### Talking Point

The hot topics that have Tasmanians talking. Have your say, email [talkingpoints@themercury.com.au](mailto:talkingpoints@themercury.com.au)

## Strength behind the silent, quiet type

The best ideas aren't always the loudest, writes **Gary Martin**

For too long, introverts have been boxed in, brushed aside and branded as the quiet ones in the corner. Their calm is mistaken for coldness, their pause for passivity and their preference for solitude as something that needs fixing.

In a world that equates volume with value, the bold and the brash have been favoured and charisma treated as currency while those who operate at a lower decibel are quietly

But the tide is turning – the quiet are making themselves heard. Introverts recharge in solitude, preferring depth over small talk and valuing meaningful connections.

Unlike extroverts who thrive in crowds, introverts find excessive socialising draining and need time alone to refuel. They are reflective, observant and deliberate – qualities often overshadowed by louder personalities.

While extroverts are energised by interaction, introverts focus on their words and relationships with care.

Yet in environments that reward visibility over thoughtfulness, their strengths are often overlooked. Nowhere is this bias more apparent than in the workplace.

Leadership is too often awarded to those who are the most outspoken rather than the most competent. The myth that good leaders must be extroverted has left introverts underappreciated and under-utilised.

Their ability to listen, think critically and lead with quiet confidence is sidelined in favour of those who speak first and loudest.

The meeting room remains a battlefield where introverts must fight for airtime.

While extroverts voice ideas back and forth, introverts search for a space to interject only to often watch their carefully considered thoughts become afterthoughts. The pressure to "speak up" ignores the reality that speaking less does not mean thinking less.

When introverts do enter the conversation, their words are measured and meaningful and often cut through the noise with clarity.

Yet too often, by the time they get a word in, the moment has passed or their insight has been steamrolled by louder voices.

Social settings bring similar struggles. Declining an invitation is treated as defiance rather than self-preservation.

The assumption that happiness is found in the noise of a crowd rather than the hush of solitude forces introverts into the defensive to explain why quiet is a choice and not an objection.

The expectation to mingle and

network can feel like an endurance sport, with small talk draining energy like a slow leak in a tyre.

A night out that recharges an extrovert can deplete an introvert, making the pressure to constantly "put themselves out there" exhausting rather than invigorating.

The world still romanticises the idea of being the life of the party while misunderstanding those who prefer to observe from the sidelines. The idea that introverts are anti-social, unfriendly or even rude persists despite evidence to the contrary. They are not avoiding people – they are avoiding overstimulation.

They do not dislike company though prefer it in smaller, more meaningful doses. They do not lack confidence but do not feel the need to broadcast it.

Despite assumptions, introverts are neither socially inept nor lacking to connection. They simply favour depth over breadth, choosing a few close relationships over fleeting encounters.

But they are no longer allowing themselves to be sidelined – by redefining engagement rather than competing in volume.

Introverts are pushing back against the belief that leadership must be loud, success requires endless interaction and a lack of outward enthusiasm signals a lack of passion.

They are advocating for workplaces that value thoughtful input over knee-jerk reactions, classrooms which recognise quiet participation as engagement and social spaces where silence is not dismissed as awkwardness.

The assumption that success belongs to the biggest personalities is fading, and the quiet revolution is gaining momentum.

The myth that confidence must be loud is being dismantled and replaced by an understanding that leadership comes in many forms.

Introverts are stepping forward – not by becoming something they are not but by demanding their strengths are no longer seen as shortcomings.

They are done with being echoes in a world that amplifies the loudest voices.

They are proving that a well-timed, thoughtful statement often carries more weight than a flood of unfiltered opinions.

They are demonstrating that patience and perception are just as valuable as energy and enthusiasm. They are reclaiming their space – not by making more noise but by showing that silence can be just as powerful.

The world has long mistaken silence for absence. Yet the quietest voices often have the most to say.

And this time, they are making sure they are being heard.

**Professor Gary Martin is a workplace and social trends specialist**



Clockwise from main: Pioneer aviators US pilot Wiley Post and his Tasmanian navigator Harold Gatty, top left and right, with their famous record-setting plane the Winnie Mae in 1931 that they set off in to break the aerial circumnavigation of the globe; and Gatty too, and the memorial statue to Harold Gatty at Campbell Town on Midland Highway. Pictures: Supplied