

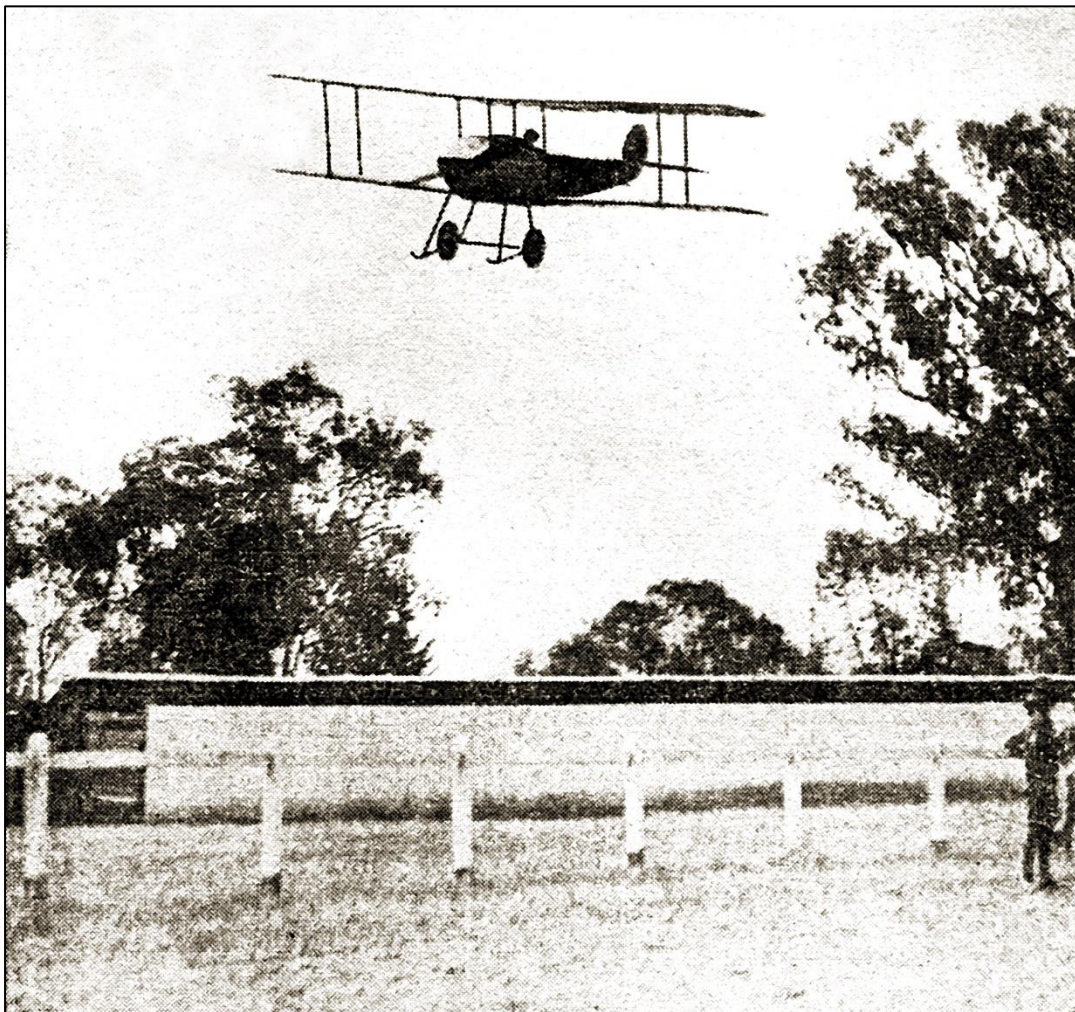
Famous Aviator in Albury

Greg Ryan

A crowd of 5000 flocked into the Albury Racecourse 110 years ago, March 7, 1914 to see 25 year old Harry Hawker in his Sopwith biplane. Special trains brought spectators from far and wide to watch his aerial display, including a flight to 7800 feet breaking a record for the greatest height achieved in Australia.

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|  <p><small>MR. HARRY HAWKER, Australia's Aviator.</small></p> | <h3>HARRY HAWKER IN ALBURY!</h3> <p>PERSONAL DIRECTION CLAUDE KINGSTON.</p> <p>ALBURY RACECOURSE, SATURDAY NEXT, MARCH 7.</p> <p>One Flying Exhibition Only by HARRY HAWKER (The Famous Australian Aviator) winner of £1000 "Daily Mail" Prize.</p> | |
| | <p>PROGRAMME:</p> <p>1.—TRIAL FLIGHTS. 2.—AERIAL MANOEUVRES, including Polishing and Stopping. 3.—PARADE FLIGHTS. 4.—AERIAL RACES. 5.—AERIAL RACES. 6.—AERIAL RACES. 7.—AERIAL RACES.</p> | <p>CHILDREN'S TICKETS.</p> <p>Children under 14 years may purchase admission tickets from schools or churches at Special and Original Admissions for 6d each, including one penny post of money sent to the public, on sale at 10.15 p.m. only.</p> |
| | <p>Grandstand, 2s. 6d.</p> | <p>Passenger Flights, £20 Each.</p> |

An advertisement in *The Border Morning Mail*



A photo of Harry Hawker coming in to land at Albury Racecourse

A *Border Morning Mail* journalist described the spectacle. His full article can be read on the Trove website – below is a small sample:

“Up, up, up, circling in what must be a radius of several miles, the biplane wings its steady way, performing intricate aerial manoeuvres such as surely eagle never attempted ...

“His last flight of the day, rising as before, the biplane soared and dipped in extraordinary proximity to the assembled many. Now it would apparently fly over a fence, now a tree was the target of his joyous frolic ...

“And now Hawker climbed to the clouds, a thin trail of vapor from the exhaust in his wake. At a speed not less than ninety miles an hour, the wonderful triumph of mechanical man winged its glorious way ... Approaching 8000 feet above the earth, swifter than swiftest bird, higher than the loftiest Alpine peak, frolicking at tremendous speed one and a half miles above earth!

“Hawker revelled joyously above the clouds, and then commenced one of the most audacious and awe-inspiring displays ... figure eights, aerial gyrations without number above the astounded spectators ... hither and thither, backwards and forwards, up and down, fast and slow, floated and soared, glided and slithered, this human machine with wings of bird and sinews of steel.

“And now it was decreed that all this should end ... at a distance of a quarter of a mile, skimming along close to the earth, it appeared as if Hawker was going to steeplechase a two-rail fence in his foreground. Suddenly a dense cloud of grey dust shot high into the air, obscuring machine. A groan of horror arose from the shocked onlookers, and as the dust subsided it was seen that the biplane was standing upright on its nose, its tailplane poised aloft ... A moment, and Hawker jumped out, the least concerned of all that vast multitude; and a great burst of cheering arose.

“How the accident occurred there were various explanations ... Hawker’s own explanation was ‘It was either stand her on her nose or run her into the fence,’ and he chose the former alternative.”