

Dalkeith Llewellyn Hilder

My Report by Emma Carr (great granddaughter aged 12)

Dalkeith Llewellyn Hilder was born on 27th November, 1911. By the time he was 7 years old both of his parents had died and he was taken to an orphanage in Sydney. Life back then was hard for Dalkeith and after a short amount of time in the orphanage he ran away and found his way to Grenfell where his grandmother lived. His grandmother raised him.

At 7 he began selling newspapers to help his grandmother support him. From then on Dalkeith worked his whole life. He started school at the age of 7 in Grenfell and left school altogether when he was 14. He worked very hard earning and saving money and educating himself as well as attending technical college courses. He married in 1934 and settled in Kurri. By this time, he had developed a keen interest in aeroplanes. He set to work building an aeroplane to his own design. He built his aeroplane in the front room of his home. When it was completed, walls had to be knocked down to get it out of his home. It was the first plane to be built in Australia and to be passed by the Department of Civil Aviation as flight worthy. One day he had engine trouble while flying and to everyone's amazement Dalkeith landed his plane in King Street, Newcastle.

In 1939 he gained his licence as an aircraft engineer. At this time he was also a technology teacher.

By 1946 he had shifted to Newcastle and used to go for walks along the wharf. He listened to the fishermen complaining about their equipment and put his mind to developing a better fishing reel. It became very popular and was known as the Surf Master. In 1954 he also developed a campervan.

Dalkeith remained interested in everything to do with aeroplanes. He bought his own Dragonfly and developed Newcastle's first aerial photography business. He used to take the doors off the plane and hang out to take photographs. He was highly involved in Industrial and commercial photography. In the 1950's Dalkeith decided to build his own airstrip. In 1956 he began clearing land at Pelican and planning the airstrip. He established a flying school and an airport called AeroPelican. In 1971 passenger flights began allowing people to commute between Newcastle and Sydney. Of course, Dalkeith's success made headlines in the newspapers.

Dalkeith Llewellyn Hilder was a business builder. He worked hard at establishing and developing businesses and passed away at age 64 in 1976.

2013