



John Ely

John worked with the Aerodist measuring program in the field from 1966 to 1974. John started in Aerodist as a field assistant but is best remembered as a leading electronics technician and master operator. He worked with the Aerodist measuring party in most field seasons during the above period; in New South Wales, Queensland, the Northern Territory and Western Australia. John worked on all Aerodist offshore measuring surveys in Queensland (1966, 1968, 1969 and 1971) as well as on the offshore survey from Onslow and Port Hedland in Western Australia in 1973.

John Herbert Ely was born at the inner Melbourne suburb of Richmond in 1939 and grew up in the nearby suburb of Northcote. In 1955 John commenced an apprenticeship course as a radio and television technician at the then Royal Melbourne Technical College. Here John studied under renowned College principal Ronald Reay MacKay (1905-1963) who was previously the head of the College's Radio School. John graduated as a radio technician at the end of 1959; about the time the College was renamed the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology. Between 1960 and 1964 John was engaged as a technician on television servicing and repair work in Melbourne. In 1964 John joined the then Trans Australian Airlines as a technician working mainly on weather radar.

Around May 1965 John joined Nat Map's Geodetic Survey Branch as a field assistant. Here he was engaged in first order geodetic traversing in Western Australia and South Australia; namely the Gary Junction to Young Range traverse and the Neale Junction to Voakes Hill traverse. Later that year John worked on the beaconing of and the traverse connection to the Johnston geodetic station in the southern Northern Territory. In early 1968, John left Nat Map for a few months but resumed duty in October 1968. In 1970 John worked with Rom Vassil for some months on the WREMAPS1 laser terrain profiler in Adelaide. Here John was involved in acceptance testing, initial aircraft installation, operational testing and training on the system's operation and maintenance procedures. Nat Map operated the WREMAPS1 laser system until 1979 and John was involved from time-to-time with laser terrain profiler field operations and maintenance. During the summer of 1970-71 John carried out survey operations in the Prince Charles Mountains as a member of an Australian National Antarctic Research Expedition.

From around 1974, John headed Nat Map's electronics technical support section as a senior technical officer. In 1976 John was involved with the initial high altitude aerial photography program using a Wild RC10 aerial survey camera and a Gates Learjet platform. During the

1970s and 1980s John and his fellow technicians were involved in the maintenance, servicing and repair of various items of technical equipment in the Dandenong office. This equipment included: JMR Doppler satellite receivers, the Digital PDP 1140 computer that ran Nat Map's digital mapping system; numerous computer workstations, photogrammetry laboratory equipment, the Wild RC10 aerial survey camera; and the Hilger and Watts goniometer used for aerial survey camera calibrations.

Between 1979 and 1985 John undertook a course of part-time study in psychology and biology at Monash University for which he was awarded the degree of Bachelor of Arts. In the late 1980s John was involved with the Australian Surveying and Land Information Group's PRAM III-based Laser Airborne Profiling System. This involvement included initial testing and aircraft installation. John also worked with this laser system in the field; including a period of field duty in 1989 on the Indonesian island of Sulawesi (formerly Celebes). John left AUSLIG in 1992. He continues to live in rural Tynong North to the east of Melbourne with his wife of some 44 years Carol who is a talented dancer and professional librarian.

Source

McLean, Lawrence William (2015), *The Aerodist Years: Recollections of the Division of National Mapping's Airborne Distance Measuring Program 1963-1974*, accessed at : <http://www.xnatmap.org/adnm/ops/prog/aaerod/adist6374/intro/intro.htm>.