

Chiltern Airwords



**MiG 17(Lim-5) N1713P of Red Star Aero Services in Russian Air Force colours
seen at Oshkosh, Wisconsin 25 July 2019. *Photo; John Roach***

**The Chiltern Aviation Society Magazine
September and October 2019**

CHAIRWORDS

Following Eva's fascinating update on current light aircraft navigation and flight planning equipment in use at Denham, for our August meeting, I was reminded of an event many years ago during my early BEA days. A close colleague, John Buckell, who had just obtained a PPL invited me to take a flight with him at Fair Oaks on 3rd May 1956. Never one to turn down the chance of a flight I found myself boarding Auster G-AIGU on a bright sunny morning. John was a big chap and somewhat hamfisted, so it was a tight fit as we settled in the tiny aircraft. Soon we were off into the clear blue yonder. However, as soon as we had left the circuit John became concerned. "Where the hell are we," he muttered. Luckily, he suddenly spotted a landmark. With his lack of finesse, the Auster jerkily swung round and we headed back into the circuit, landing bumpily after 30 minutes. I politely declined any later offers of a 'flip.' Sadly, John died of natural causes at an early age; a great character and I still miss him. **Keith Hayward.**

EDITORWORDS

Note to contributors; This issue was a bit of a struggle as we have run out of feature articles. So dig deep in to your memory banks and send your anecdotes. When emailing articles for Airwords, to cas.clubsecretary@outlook.com please send the words and any photo captions in MS Word, Times New Roman, Font Size 11 format. **Please send photos and images separately ideally in JPEG format, as this saves hours of formatting. Lawrence Hayward.**

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CHILTERN AIRWORDS; Please note Chiltern Airwords is produced purely for CAS members' own private study and enjoyment and it is not for sale. Opinions expressed in Airwords are those of the author and not necessarily those of the CAS Committee.

THE CHILTERN AVIATION SOCIETY (CAS); Founded in 1968. Associate member of Air Britain Historians Ltd. **President;** Philip Birtles. **Patron;** David F. Ogilvy OBE FRAeS. CAS Membership £15 PA. Non-Members also welcome at our monthly programme of talks for a small contribution of £2 per event.

MEETINGS: Fourth Wednesday of the month (third in December) 8pm to 10 pm at *Ruislip Methodist Church Hall, Ickenham Road, Ruislip, Middx, HA4 7BX*. Plus, our Mid-month Pub Socials, Wednesdays, 8pm *The Coach & Horses Pub, 1 High Rd, Ickenham, Uxbridge UB10 8LJ*. Please contact CAS for exact date of the mid-month.

2019 PROGRAMME;

WED Sept 25th - The North Atlantic Challenge - **Jim Davies** (Confirmed)
WED Oct 23rd - President's Evening - Philip Birtles
WED Nov 27th - HQ Aviation Helicopters – Quinten Smith
WED Dec 18th - Members Evening (confirmed)

I WANT THEM DRAGONS – TED HILLMAN, AVIATION ENTREPRENEUR - BY KEITH HAYWARD

Edward Henry Hillman, an ex-World War I Sergeant Major and 1930s aviation entrepreneur, was a real rough diamond – and proud of it. With practically no education he built up a bus and coach business in Essex in the early 1930s and was quick to realise that the future of the mass travel business was in the air.

He moved in the circle of big businessmen but to him all were equal, and he would address all his contacts, including the Chairman of Imperial Airways, as ‘mate.’



His first aviation venture was to purchase a field in Maylands, Romford Essex in 1932 and run joyride flights with a DH Fox Moth. These were very popular, and he soon realised that there was a market for second class air travel by cutting out the frills. He set about establishing routes to Paris, Brussels and Le Touquet. For these operations he needed a larger aircraft, so he went to see Geoffrey de Havilland at Stag Lane. ‘Look’ere mate, I need an aeroplane that will carry ten people with two of them Gypsy engines of yours.’ He then promptly sketched out his requirements on a sheet of paper. The answer was the famous DH84 Dragon Biplane. In December 1932 he received his first Dragon G-ACAN and early in 1933 operated this aircraft to Le Touquet and Paris as Hillman’s Airways, resplendent in a light blue and white paint scheme. Brussels was soon added to the network and further Dragons were delivered. Right in ‘the thick of it’ Ted Hillman, his face getting increasingly red, would be rushing about selling tickets, controlling queues of passengers eager for air experience flights and chasing after his pilots to ensure that they departed on time. He even bought out crew refreshments to the aircraft to ensure that no time was wasted! He was the traditional ‘Ball of Fire’ but he certainly got results.



On 1st June 1934 he transferred his base to Stapleford Essex and commenced mail flights to Belfast and Glasgow. However, the pace was becoming too much for him in his middle years and he suffered a fatal heart attack on 31st December 1934. On 30th September 1935 his company merged with United Airways and Spartan Airlines and finally officially became British Airways Limited on 29 October 1935. Thus, the Hillman name disappeared.

During its short life Hillman’s Airways was involved in a unique incident. On 21 February 1935 Captain John Kirton took off from Stapleford in DH Dragon G-ACEV at 10:00 hrs bound for Paris Le Bourget and carrying just two passengers. These were two very wealthy American sisters, the daughters of the US Consul General in Naples. As they climbed away towards the coast there was some turbulence and the girls asked the pilot to close the connecting hatch separating the cockpit from the small cabin. 40 minutes later Captain Kirton, wondering how his two passengers were coping with the bumps, looked aft to gaze into an empty cabin. The door at the rear was unlatched. Horrified, Captain Kirton turned about and returned to Stapleford. Searching the aircraft on arrival it was confirmed that their luggage was still on board and a sealed letter was found in the cabin. The note confirmed that this was a case of suicide. Both girls, aged 23 and 20, had been suffering from severe depression. Their bodies had fallen in Upminster, Essex, and two workmen had spotted two bundles falling from the clouds. A tragic story indeed which Captain Kirton found hard to come to terms with. As far as the airline was concerned, Hillman’s Airways had made its mark in establishing cheaper fares for a market not tapped by Imperial Airways; Ted Hillman will be remembered for those pioneering days in the 1930s.



THE MIG-17 BY LAWRENCE HAYWARD



Who thought the photo on the cover was a MiG-15? I certainly did, but apart from brushing up on my recognition skills, the photo made me think about how the Soviets came to have such advanced aircraft in the early post-war years and how stupid UK Governments have been in the past (no change there someone might add!). When Frank Whittle invented the jet engine and had his design patented, rather incredibly it was available for anyone or any nation to inspect and not even classified as secret! Whereas the Air Ministry showed little interest in jet engines prewar, the Germans took up the challenge and used Whittle's ideas and went on to develop jet aircraft such as the Messerschmitt Me 262. The British and Americans then had to play catchup to develop their

jet fighters. The Soviets were even slower in the race and mostly relied on captured German technology and axial turbojets. Captured German engines were not really the answer as even in the Me 262 they lasted only 25 hours before a major service. The Russians did make use of captured swept wing technology but without a proper engine they were rather stuck. Meanwhile as WW2 came to an end, Britain regained its lead in coaxial engines and some centrifugal jet engines. The leading jet engine of the time was the British Rolls-Royce Nene, which with nearly 5,000lbs of thrust had double the power of any German engine as well as other advantages. No doubt the KGB had orders to obtain the plans for the Nene by any means possible, but they need not have bothered as unbelievably Prime Minister Clement Attlee gave the Soviet Union examples of the British Rolls-Royce Nene just after WW2 as a gesture of goodwill! I imagine the Russians must have cried laughing all the way back to their design office and within a very short time the legendary MiG-15, made its first flight on 30th December 1947. The Nene engine was copied and built in its hundreds and for that matter not even under license! It fitted perfectly and the combination of a great design and a great engine was to be a world beater. The impact of the MiG-15 on the Korea war was drastic; facing the US F-86 Sabres it could match them for speed and had longer range and more powerful guns in the shape of its one 37 mm cannon and twin 23mm cannons compared to the Sabre's six 12.7mm machine guns. This meant that although the Sabre pilots could hit more often the MiG pilots could open fire at far greater range. Thanks for that Mr Attlee! The MiG-15 was produced in huge numbers and some were still being used more 40 years after the first one flew.



Then in 1949, the Soviet Union pressed forward with designs for a follow-on MiG-17 aircraft. Designers at Mikoyan-Gurevich began modifying the earlier aircraft's form to increase performance and handling. Among the changes that were made was the introduction of a compound swept wing which was set at a 45° angle near the fuselage and 42° farther outboard. In addition, the wing was thinner than the MiG-15 and the tail structure altered to improve stability at high speeds. For power, the MiG-17 relied on the same Klimov VK-1 engine. First taking to the sky on January 14, 1950, with Ivan Ivashchenko at the controls, the prototype was lost two months later in a crash. Dubbed the "SI", testing continued with additional

prototypes for the next year and a half. A second interceptor variant, the SP-2, was also developed and featured the Izumrud-1 (RP-1) radar. Full-scale production of the MiG-17 began in August 1951 and the type received the NATO reporting name "Fresco." As with its predecessor, the MiG-17 was armed with two 23 mm cannon and one 37 mm cannon mounted under the nose. While the MiG-17 fighter and MiG-17P interceptor represented the first variants of the aircraft, they were replaced in 1953 with the arrival of the MiG-17F and MiG-17PF. These were equipped with the Klimov VK-1F engine which featured an afterburner and significantly improved the MiG-17's performance. As a result, this variant became the most produced type of the aircraft. Three years later, a small number of aircraft were converted to MiG-17PM and utilized the Kaliningrad K-5 air-to-air missile. While most MiG-17 variants had external hardpoints for around 1,100 lbs. in bombs, they were typically used for drop-tanks.

As production progressed in the USSR, they issued a license to their Warsaw Pact ally Poland for building the aircraft in 1955. Built by WSK-Mielec, the Polish variant of the MiG-17 was designated Lim-5. Continuing production into the 1960s, the Poles developed attack and reconnaissance variants of the type. In 1957, the Chinese began license production of the MiG-17 under the name Shenyang J-5. Further developing the aircraft, they also built radar-equipped interceptors (J-5A) and a two-seat trainer (JJ-5). Production of this last variant continued until 1986. All told, over 10,000 MiG-17s of all types were built.



Though arriving too late for service in the Korean War, the MiG-17's combat debut came in the Far East when Communist Chinese aircraft engaged Nationalist Chinese F-86 Sabres over the Straits of Taiwan in 1958. The type also saw extensive service against American aircraft during the Vietnam War. First engaging a group of US F-8 Crusaders on April 3, 1965, the MiG-17 proved surprisingly effective against more advanced American strike aircraft. A nimble fighter, the MiG-17 downed 71 American aircraft during the conflict and led the American flying services to institute improved dog-fighting training. Serving in over twenty air forces worldwide, it was used by the Warsaw Pact nations for much of the 1950s and early 1960s until being replaced by the MiG-19 and MiG-21. In addition, it saw combat with the Egyptian and Syrian Air Forces during Arab-Israeli conflicts including the 1956 Suez Crisis, the Six-Day War, the Yom Kippur War, and the 1982 invasion of Lebanon. Yemen also had a number of MiG-17s in the 1990s, some of which were seen as derelict at Khormaksar airfield, Aden. Though largely retired, the MiG-17 is still in use with some air forces including China (JJ-5), North Korea, and Tanzania.

FEEDBACK ON MAY 2019 MEETING BY DAVID KENNEDY

Our May 2019 speaker, Chris Goss, gave a talk on the Dornier Do 17 bomber which was most illuminating. How he retains so much knowledge, not only on that particular aeroplane but also the whole combat history of the German Luftwaffe and their war machine is quite amazing. Further to this talk I have come across two excellent books on the German Luftwaffe that members may find most interesting. Firstly, *The Rise and Fall of the German Air Force* which was first published by the Air Ministry as far back as 1948, and now in the National Archives. It reveals that in their opinion the success of the Luftwaffe in the early years of the Second World War was partly to blame for its ultimate defeat, according to this report compiled by British Intelligence officers. The content is a detailed contemporary analysis of the Luftwaffe's operational performance and the character and achievements of its senior officers, including Goering and Hitler, whose decisions and actions are identified as significant factors in Germany's loss of air superiority. Originally priced at £9.99 *The Rise and Fall of the German Air Force* it's available on the discount book market for £4.99.

Equally fascinating is a publication, and relevant to our May speaker, entitled *German Night Fighter Force 1917-1945*. The German author is Gebhardt Aders who concentrates on the offensive capabilities of the Luftwaffe from the 1930s which reveals that the German night defence fighters were not employed until the success of British bombing raids made it necessary in 1940. Organisational problems and the Allies superior radar technology continued to make air defence problematic thereafter. Originally published in German, but now English, this book assesses the development of the Luftwaffe's Night Fighter Force and its considerable operational and technical achievements during the war. It gives a good insight to the German side of things and is lavishly illustrated with photos including the heavily armed nose of the Dornier Do 217, which Chris Goss touched on briefly in his talk. Perhaps he may be enticed to return and give a full account of this improved Do 17 aircraft?

This book of 284 pages was originally priced at £35 but may now be obtained for £11.99 on the discount book market. Regarding discount books, I highly recommend PostScript, which deals in discounted books by post. Their catalogue contains a fair number of military and aviation books at very reasonable prices, which are only available while stocks last. The link to their website is below. If you wish you may sign up for their catalogue and get this monthly. Any problems call Geoff Donald on 02084293865. <https://www.psbooks.co.uk/>

THE WORLD'S LARGEST AIRCRAFT TAKES TO THE SKIES BY LAWRENCE HAYWARD



The Stratolaunch aircraft is a mobile launch platform that aims to enable airline-style access to space. The reinforced centre wing can support multiple launch vehicles, weighing up to a total of 500,000 pounds. With a dual fuselage design and a wingspan greater than the length of an American football field, the Stratolaunch aircraft took flight on 13th April 2019 at 06.58 PDT from the Mojave Air Space Port. Achieving a maximum speed of 189 miles per hour, the plane flew for 2.5 hours over the Mojave Desert at altitudes up to 17,000 feet. As part of the initial flight, the pilots evaluated aircraft performance and handling qualities before landing successfully back at the Mojave Air and Space Port. “What a

fantastic first flight,” said Jean Floyd, CEO of Stratolaunch. “Today’s flight furthers our mission to provide a flexible alternative to ground-launched systems. We are incredibly proud of the Stratolaunch team, today’s flight crew, our partners at Northrup Grumman’s Scaled Composites and the Mojave Air and Space Port.”

The team conducted standard testing exercises and performed a variety of flight control maneuvers to calibrate speed and test flight control systems, including roll doublets, yawing maneuvers, pushovers and pull-ups, and steady heading side slips. It also conducted simulated landing approach exercises. Stratolaunch was founded in 2011 by Microsoft co-founder Paul Allen who died last year. “We all know Paul would have been proud to witness today’s historic achievement,” said Jody Allen, of Vulcan Inc. and Trustee of the Paul Allen Trust. “The aircraft is a remarkable engineering achievement and we congratulate everyone involved.”



Sadly, the future of Stratolaunch is now in doubt since the death of company founder Paul Allen in October 2018, with speculation that Stratolaunch Systems could cease operations. Allen had been the source of funds for the capital-intensive development program since the project began in 2010 and the company founding in 2011. In January 2019, even before the first flight Stratolaunch announced it was halting development of its air-launched family of launch vehicles. On 31 May 2019, the company announced that it would cease operations and that sale of its assets was being explored. An asking price of US\$400 million was reported, which would include the sole aircraft, the company facilities, equipment, the designs and other intellectual property. In June 2019 the Stratolaunch Systems company and assets were put up for sale by Vulcan for \$400 million. Let’s hope someone takes over the project as it would be a great shame for it to be a mothballed oddity abandoned in the Mojave Desert!

A PHOTOGRAPHIC FIND – BY BRIAN A L JONES



scheme, while the two road tankers are undertaking different tasks. The Shell tanker is pumping the fuel oil (diesel) which the aircraft will carry to provide power in the beleaguered city, while the RAF Bedford tanker would be tasked with topping-up wing tanks for the impending flight. None of the four Lancasters can be individually identified from the seven similar aircraft which FR deployed in Germany. They included four manufactured by Avro Canada (G-AKDO-G-AKDS) and G-AHJU, G-AHJW and G-AHVN.

While British South American Airways (BSAA) would play a significant part in the Air Lift to Germany's then capital city, (using Avro Tudors 2,562 sorties were flown) they had earlier adopted a fleet of other Rolls-Royce powered aircraft. Those (Lancasters, plus Lancastrians and Yorks) provided the transition from WWII bombers and transports to a wide-ranging civilian fleet of aircraft pioneering new routes without the supporting infrastructure that we have come to expect as normal. BSAA Lancaster freighter G-AGUL, *Star Watch*, stands with its bomb bay



doors open while departure preparations continue. Could that be young Mr. Hayward bending over near the rear entrance door? The aircraft has a Lancastrian behind and a BSAA York to the right rear. Built at Castle Bromwich by Vickers Armstrong, the Lancaster B. Mk 1 was delivered to RAF Kemble as RF270. Registered G-AGUL and received by BSAA on 29 December 1945 it was modified to civilian standards at Langar with a Lancastrian type nose cone and bulged bomb bay to increase freight capacity. It left Heathrow on 12 April 1946 for Montevideo, Uruguay, on its first service.

G-AGUL was written off on 23 October 1947, when it crashed on landing at Heathrow during a night training flight and was damaged beyond repair. Incorrectly identified in original captions by Etienne as being taken at BSAA's operational and maintenance base at Langley airfield, then situated in Buckinghamshire, the location for this further photo of G-AGUL is in fact the Northside apron of Heathrow.



Above Left; *Star Watch* with two mechanics with a starting trolley, while a Hillman 'Tilly' or Standard pick-up truck heads away along the perimeter road towards the Control Tower. Above Right; Thrusting through a clouded sky, Handley Page's C Mk VIII transport adaptation of the Halifax bomber used Bristol Hercules engines. Notable is the pannier fitted over the position of the former bomb bay to increase carrying capacity.



Above Left; A survivor from pre-WWII operation by Imperial Airways, an Armstrong Whitworth Ensign airliner undergoes maintenance, probably at Whitchurch, Bristol, the British Overseas Airway's temporary dispersed base. Camouflaged G-ADTA *Euryalus* wears British Airways titling, a Speedbird logo and has Wright Cyclone engines fitted. It had a short wartime life, however, as it crash landed at Lympne on 23 May 1940 after escaping from France. It was then transported to Hamble, where it was original built, and written off and cannibalised to repair G-ADSU *Euterpe*.



Left & Above Right; In early 1940, three KLM DC-3s stand on the apron at Schiphol in the vivid 'neutrality' orange colour scheme, applied in the hope of providing immunity from air attack in the War which was already enveloping a large part of Europe.

Prior to the invasion of Holland and Belgium on 10 May 1940 by Germany, some KLM aircraft, including DC-2s and DC-3s, flew to Britain and were absorbed into BOAC's wartime operational fleet.



Above Left; Fourteen Vickers Warwick 1 transports, registered G-AGEX – G-AGFK, were used by BOAC on routes to North Africa and the Mediterranean between November 1942 and August 1943, when they were transferred to No.167 Squadron RAF. This photo shows G-AGFK over a recognisably English landscape. It is remarkable that there were no losses of the fleet during the civil operations.

Above Right; Hall Hibbard, one of Lockheed's senior designers / engineers, poses at Burbank, California, in 1940 in front of one the Hudsons produced there for the RAF. Hibbard made major contributions to the development of Lockheed line of airliners, commencing with the Model 10 Electra, which first flew in 1934. Possibly of equal interest to motoring enthusiasts is the car which Hibbard is leaning on, that being a 1940 La Salle Hardtop Coupe, a General Motors product from its Cadillac Division. The car is finished in an early production line use of Metallic paint. Below, a Sunderland of 95 Sqn early 1941 prior to moving to West Africa.



References; Etienne du Plessis photos via <https://www.flickr.com/photos/8270787@N07/page1> It appears that Etienne du Plessis has built up a large collection of over 3,000 photos but they are not necessarily his photos, taken by him, as regular 'surfers' of the internet will recognised many by Charles Brown and Life Magazine to name a few.

A LETTER HOME - BY ROGER WHITE

During National Service I was an aircraft-electrician serving on a maintenance base in Safi, Malta. In early 1957 I was detached for three months to El Adem near Tobruk, to join a Mobile Repair Unit charged with preparing a damaged Shackleton for return to its base in Luqa, Malta. The aircraft had suffered a broken back just aft of the side door following a heavy landing incident a year earlier. The repair crew were to fly back to Malta in the repaired aircraft - our reward! My letter to my parents dated 28th April 1957 explained:



The flight back to Luqa was most interesting. After a day of final checking and polishing of the aircraft to create a good impression on the flight-crew, we awaited their arrival from Luqa by Shackleton of course. It arrived at 4.30 pm with a disgusting landing- just the type of landing which smashes a tail wheel. Our own aircraft was inspected, and we were relieved to find the crew satisfied. The other Shack flew off immediately and we all had a meal in the transit mess. At six -thirty we drew up the ladder for the last time and secured ourselves to our seats. There were five in the crew, five of us ground crew and

Flying Officer Ferrier, totalling eleven in all (in WL759 see in the photo above). The taxiing away from the pan was amusing, since quite a crowd had gathered to see off the recent El Adem landmark. We stood at the head of the runway for twenty minutes while each engine was revved and checked for oil pressure and things.

To our horror we then turned around and taxied slowly back to the pan amid great cheering from the crowd. She had decided not to leave them. Apparently, No.2 engine had ignition trouble and the pilot would not accept it as serviceable, so Frank (the engine chap) went forward and conferred with the pilot. The result was much revving of No.2 until miraculously the fault cleared itself!

Once more we rolled out to the runway and were soon rushing down same with much bumping and creaking. We were very soon off the ground and by the time we were over Barton block, our recent billet, we were well up and turning to the left. By this time, it was nearly quarter past seven and just growing dark. but the wrinkling on the top-side of the wings could be very clearly seen. It was rather disconcerting too. The skin of the wing gets stretched when the wings are drooping on the ground so that when they begin to lift and bend upwards the skin wrinkles! After half an hour or so when were well over the Med the pilot said he was going to stall the aircraft a few times to check the stalling speed. Accordingly, we grouped ourselves as close as possible to the wings and took hold of something solid for our safety. (We were already wearing Mae Wests all the way incidentally). Stalling was a novel experience for me in such a large aircraft. We felt the engines cease pulling and grow silent: the peculiar braking sensation followed, the glowing exhaust stubs changed from white to dark red then the airspeed indicator dropped rapidly down to just above 60 knots. At this speed the wings began to flap violently up and down and suddenly the nose dropped right down. the engines roared again, and we dived to regain speed and thus lift. We stalled four times in all. In addition to these tests each engine was stopped and restarted in flight. By the time we reached Malta it was dark, and to my relief the landing lamps behaved themselves. We made a good landing and the tail-wheel did not collapse. All our smuggled goods and other kit was put on to a lorry and brought with us to Safi where we arrived at 10.30 local time. That was the last I saw of old WL759, but I sincerely hope it will reach Safi in the near future.

NB. In fact, WL759 never came back to Safi, flying straight back to UK for major modifications. She was finally scrapped in Changi in 1968.

HERE'S TO LANDING AS OFTEN AS YOU TAKE OFF - BY JOHN DOBSON OF U3A



Former Diplomat John Dobson, who now chairs Plymouth's University of the Third Age (U3A) is surprised to have survived hair-raising flights on Aeroflot, while he was in Moscow after the fall of the Soviet Union.

“You can board now” said the dour assistant, a spectre in the departure lounge of Vnukovo Airport, then a small domestic airport serving the southern region of the Soviet Union. We had been waiting some five hours after the scheduled departure time, but that was not unusual. The flight would have been recorded as “on time”. The lounge was dark and uncomfortable without any refreshments area and only a distant toilet. The one pleasant

feature was a small aquarium, containing a few dozen exotic fish. The spectre having vanished, we all picked up our bags and proceeded to the exist door. Luckily some knew the way from the lounge to the aircraft. There were no walkways or buses to help us, so we trudged across the tarmac towards a Tupolev Tu 134 plane (*see photo*) which had its lights flashing, avoiding other aircraft whose engines were just starting up. Two men passed us carrying the aquarium I had seen earlier. This was their carry-on luggage. In fact, everything was carry-on luggage. You never deposited anything at the check in desk in Moscow as you would almost certainly never see it again. Arriving at the aircraft we waited and waited. It was January 1992 and the temperature was hovering around -15C. Eventually a surly flight attendant opened the aircraft door and glowered down at us, eventually allowing us to climb the steps into the fuselage. There were no allocated seats, so it was every person for themselves. A few seats had seat belts but most had none. If you were lucky, your knees didn't have to support the seat in front because of its broken back support. After a few minutes the plane was full, including the two toilets at the rear. These ‘seats’ had been sold for cash by the pilot. We soon learned how important it was to control food and liquid input before taking a flight in Russia. The plane took off with the usual steep ascent. The men holding the aquarium, who were seated close to us, had forgotten about gravity, because the level of water followed the ascent angle, allowing most of the fish to jump out. The rest of the flight consisted of frantic attempts to rescue their precious investment as the fish flapped around the luggage piled high in the central isle. When we eventually landed, there was the usual wild applause, more of relief than appreciation.

I had started my job in the Moscow Embassy, a few months before the collapse of the Soviet Union on 25th December 1991, when suddenly one country became fifteen sovereign states. These new countries were serviced by our Moscow Embassy until London could establish an embassy in each capital. Distances from Moscow were vast and only form of travel possible was by air and the only service was by Aeroflot. Every Aeroflot flight had its own memorable characteristic, but one in particular stands out. It was our first journey to Baku, the capital of the new sovereign state of Azerbaijan. We left Moscow with the usual delay but on route the captain announced that we were stopping at the town of Mineralnye Vody in order to refuel. We landed and were instructed to remain on board during the process. The fuel bowser drew up alongside the Tupolev and the refuelling began. Looking down from my window I was horrified to see workers around the bowser lighting up their cigarettes whilst chatting. For the next 30 minutes I felt as if I was sitting in a cylindrical coffin! To my relief the bowser eventually drove away, and we were still alive. We waited to take off and waited. After a while there was some shouting and swearing coming from the pilot's cabin, which continued for about 10 minutes and then died down. A calm voice then came from the pilot asking if there were any westerners on board. What did this mean? Were we about to be taken hostage? He was inviting us to contribute \$100 each to cover the cost of the fuel. The earlier shouting was between the pilot and the owner of the bowser who was demanding payment otherwise the plane would not be able to leave. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, ownership of facilities was vague, and the owner of the fuel bowser knew that he would not get paid unless the pilot provided the cash. We cobbled together about \$500 and the plane was allowed to leave.

After each trip I would submit my expenses claim to London. I often wondered what the accountants thought of my \$100 claim for aviation fuel following the trip to Baku. A popular vodka toast in Moscow at that time was ‘Aeroflot Toast’ - “May the number of take offs equal the number of landings”. During my three years in Moscow, my wife and I made 124 take offs and I'm glad to say 124 landings! **Credit;** Third Age Matters Magazine

THE WORLD'S FIRST SCHEDULED AIR SERVICE BY BRIAN JONES & PAUL KENDALL

The Times newspaper report from 26th August 1919 out of the newspaper archives

THE LONDON- PARIS AIR SERVICE

FROM THE TIMES AUGUST 26, 1919

Yesterday three aeroplanes starting from Hounslow inaugurated the London-Paris Air Service, which it is intended to run daily. The first machine to leave was the Handley Page, which left Hounslow at 8.40 yesterday morning with 11 passengers. She was piloted by Major Foot, and the passengers included Mr L A Northend, of *The Times*; Major C C Turner, *Daily Telegraph*; Mr E A Perris, of the *Daily Chronicle*; Mr Harold Begbie, *Daily Chronicle*; Mr Tourtell, *Daily Express*; Mr Bartholomew, *Daily Mirror*; and Mr Crosfield, *Daily News*. The second

machine to leave was the Airco 4, which left at 9.10. This machine, in addition to the passenger, Mr G M Stevenson-Reece, *Evening Standard*, and Lieutenant Lawford, the pilot, carried a full load, including a number of daily newspapers, a consignment of leather from a London firm to a firm in Paris, several brace of grouse, and a considerable number of jars of Devonshire cream.

This machine was due to arrive in Paris at 11.40, and did so to the minute. She left on the return journey at 12.40, and arrived at Hounslow at 2.45. The machine, like the Airco 16, is owned by the Aircraft Transport and Travel Company. The third machine to leave was the Airco 16, piloted by Major Cyril Patteson, who carried Marshal Foch to England on a recent visit. The Airco 16 carried four passengers, and arrived at Paris at 2.45, having left Cricklewood at

12.30 pm. Her return journey will be made today. Both the Airco machines were fitted with Rolls-Royce 275-hp engines, and their speed is about 120 miles an hour.

The fare for this London-Paris trip is £15 15s. The journey cannot be guaranteed every day, owing to the bad climate, and engine failure cannot be entirely eliminated, and forced landings and delay may occur. The route will be Maidstone-Boulogne-Beauvais-Paris.

Arrangements have been made for copies of the latest edition of *The Times* to be carried daily by the service, and these will be available for delivery to subscribers at a special rate. Details upon application to The Times Office, 2, Rue de la Chaussee d'Antin, Paris, or to the Publisher of The Times, Printing House Square, London, EC4.

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Handley Page would seem to have the claim to the first commercial service to Paris, whereas the Airco (DH) 4 usually appears as first in published accounts. I have just checked in the book by David Scott on George Holt Thomas. (As you might recall David Scott came to the society a few months back to give a talk on George Holt Thomas). Quoting from the book it says;

*The most important date for air transport was 25th August 1919. The ban on international travel was, at last, lifted. AT&T were determined to be first to fly the first 'international scheduled flight' Some confusion on this has arisen as, on the day, (25th August) Lt. E.H Bill Lawford flew an extra flight to the advertised scheduled one. He departed Hounslow in an AT&T Airco D.H.4A G-EAJC for Le Bourget. On board was G.M. Stevenson-Reece of the Evening Standard and its cargo of grouse, newspapers, leather and Devonshire Cream. Although Lawford operated the first flight, departing Hounslow at 09.05 hours, this was in fact **not** a scheduled service.'*

In fact, neither of the above mentioned were scheduled flights, just one offs. The first advertised schedule flight was on the 26th August 1919. This being the date of the first international regular scheduled daily airline service. This was flown by Major General Cyril Patterson in Airco D.H.16 G-EACT still bearing its temporary registration K-130. It carried four passengers including the editor of the Illustrated London News and an army officer. The flight was scheduled for a departure time of 12.30 pm but was delayed until after 1.00 pm by the late arrival, of the Controller-General of Civil Aviation, AVM Sir Frederick Sykes, who had wished to witness this event. *References:* The Times Newspaper and George Holt Thomas – a book by David Scott and Ian Simmons.



OSHKOSH 2019 – BY JOHN ROACH

EAA AirVenture Oshkosh is an annual gathering of aviation enthusiasts held each summer at Wittman Regional Airport in Oshkosh, Wisconsin. The Southern part of the show is located in the town of Nekimi. The airshow is arranged by the Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA), based in Oshkosh, and is the largest of its kind in the world. The show lasts a week, usually beginning on the last Monday in July. During the gathering, the airport's control tower is the busiest in the world. For 2019 more than 10,000 aircraft arrived at Oshkosh and other airports in east-central Wisconsin. At Wittman alone, there were 16,807 aircraft operations in the 11-day period from July 19-29, which is an average of approximately 127 take-offs/landings per hour. The total number of aircraft in attendance this year was 2,758 including 1,057 homebuilt aircraft (including a record 592 homebuilts), 939 vintage aeroplanes, 400 warbirds (6 percent increase), 188 ultralights and light-sport aircraft, 105 seaplanes (a 40 percent increase), 62 aerobatic aircraft, and 7 in other categories. Over 642,000 people attended including me! As you can imagine with so many people attending, all the hotels in the area get booked up years in advance, so we found it easier to fly in to Chicago and drive 100 miles south, to the show and book in to accommodation well away from the area, which does mean a certain amount of commuting in our hire car each day!

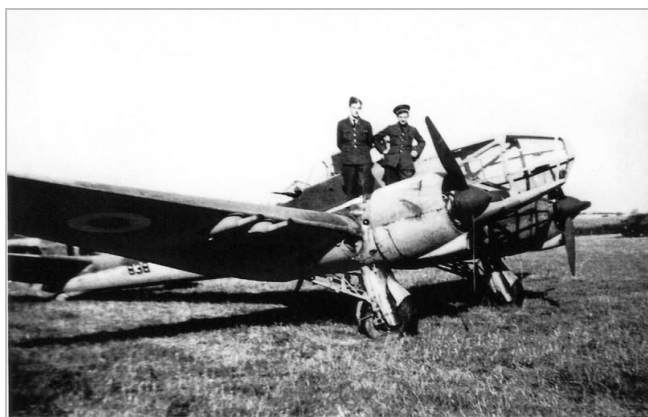




Photo captions for the previous page, From Left to Right top to bottom; Three DC-3Cs undergoing conversion to turbo power seen at Basler Inc Next, C-GBPD CL-215 of Viking seen during a firebombing display, then Aero Commander 560A, regn N30U in USAF colours. Next, N110JY Yak 110 (two Yakovlev 55 joined together with additional power from a jet engine! A Super Chipmunk N7DW. A strange looking D-EXTRA Extra 500.

This Page; A small part of the Howard Aircraft line up. The unmistakable F-35 of the USAF. Next an F-15 seen landing. The F-16s of the USAF Thunderbird display team. Next, a lovingly restored Fairey Firefly AS-6 marked as WB518 (NX518WB). Lastly, a NA F-82 Twin Mustang; the last American piston-engine fighter ordered into production by the USAF. Based on the P-51 Mustang, the F-82 was originally designed as a long-range escort fighter in WW2 but the war ended before the first production units were operational.

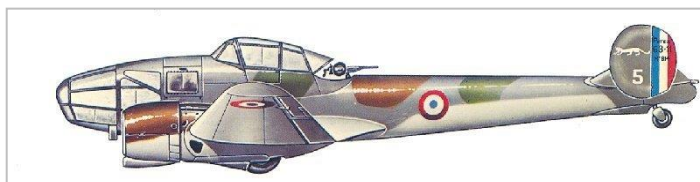
ESCAPE FROM FRANCE IN JUNE 1940 - BY LAWRENCE HAYWARD



Members who read the recent account of a stolen German Bucker Bu 131 that was flown to Christchurch Airfield in April 1941, by two Frenchmen, might be surprised to learn that it was not to first defection of an aircraft from France to Christchurch, as three *Armée de l'Air* crewmen did the same in 1940, when France was negotiating the terms of its surrender. Quite a number of pilots and crews of the *Armée de L'Air* decided not to surrender and took the brave decision to defect to the UK, in the short period of time before the Armistice actually came in to affect. Three Frenchmen who took this opportunity included 2nd Lieutenant Daniel Neumann, (pilot), his observer-navigator, Lieutenant André Jacob and Sergeant Marcel Morel, the 'Wop/AG'. These men were with *Group de Reconnaissance GR*

1/14, based at Bergerac airfield and equipped with twin-engined Potez 63-11 aircraft. On Monday 24th June 1940, GR 1/14 had been ordered to move to Toulouse-Francazal, no doubt to preserve the aircraft for what would become the Vichy Air Force, after the armistice. However, as it was pouring with rain that morning, the unit waited for a break in the weather. But the bad weather was to the escapees' advantage and at about 10.00 am Neumann and his crew had a quick chat, and unanimously decided to take off immediately in their Potez 63-11 No. 838 and head straight for England. Soon the aircraft disappeared into clouds and headed north and after an uneventful flight of two hours fifty minutes, in awful weather, the crew unexpectedly saw Christchurch airfield, through the clouds. As they were almost out of fuel they decided to land and on arrival received a warm welcome from the SDF personnel. In view of the expected arrival of many French aircraft at this time, all RAF Stations were ordered to be on the lookout for such aircraft and re-direct them to RAF Andover, as a collection point for the 'Free French' arrivals. In an attempt to direct the Frenchmen to RAF Andover in the afternoon, 2nd Lt Neumann was taken up in the air by F/O Cliff Wright in Miles Magister R1952, of the Special Duty Flight, no doubt to familiarize him with the route. However, for whatever reason the Frenchmen did not depart for Andover and instead stayed the night at Christchurch before flying on to RAF Andover the next day. Billets were found for the three men and it's likely the two French Officers were entertained in the *Nelson Inn* as this was in use as the Officers Mess, while Sgt Morel was probably entertained in the RAF Sergeants Mess.

A day or so after the men arrived at RAF Andover in their Potez 63-11, they then went to RAF Cosford where they stayed for a week, without their aircraft. Finally, the Potez and crew were reunited at RAF St. Athan, on a very fine afternoon on 3rd July, just at the moment when the drama at Mers El-Kebir was unfolding. This was when the Royal



Navy attacked and sunk the French Fleet in North Africa, which caused some embarrassment all round. Among the assortment of *Armée de l'Air* aircrew assembled on the base, there were several familiar faces and friends. Daniel Neumann found Andre Feuillerat from the *Group de Chase GC 3/7*. They were just two of the eighty survivors of the Mezergues promotion scheme of 1937-39 at the Ecole de l'Air, to have rallied to the Free French cause in England. These two rather discreet men had in common their crashes in the course their training at Salon-de-Provence. Meanwhile Sergeant Morel was happy to find Lieutenant Raymond Roques who he knew from the time he first arrived at GR 1/14 in



1938, at Mourmelon. On 8th July, General de Gaulle visited RAF St. Athan and gave a speech which translated to; "*To the day of the Victory, two hundred aviators under our uniform will be more useful to France than two thousand under English uniform*". The interpretation of the words General de Gaulle used, is that he meant no ill feeling to the British, and instead what he meant was that Free Frenchmen serving in Free French units would be an inspiration to other Frenchmen and encourage them to join, whereas Free French serving as individuals in RAF units would not have the same affect. As it turned out the Free French did have to wait awhile before such Squadrons were formed. However, when the crewmen heard the General speak, they were greatly encouraged to serve the FAFL faithfully until 'Victory'.

Photos; Top Left, The Potez 63-11 No.838 at RAF Andover. Middle illustration; markings of GR 1/14 included a panther on the tail fins; Next; Flt/ Lt Turner and Pilot Officer Le Bas of 149 Squadron, RAF with Lt Andre Jacob, Lt Roques (left) and Sgt Marcel Morel, who were attached to that Wellington Squadron in August 1940. Lieutenant Daniel Neumann later flew in Middle East with French AF flying Blenheims but was KIA.

A Short History of the Fleet Air Arm – Part 3 – The Naval Air Radio Installation Unit – by LP Hayward



In my short history of the FAA it's worth mentioning that there were many bases and units that supported the FAA on operations at sea, that have mostly been forgotten. One such unit is the Naval Air Radio Installation Unit, (NARIU), which I have extensively researched over the years. The NARIU was commanded by Lt Cdr Dennis H.C. Scholes, and it arrived at RAF Christchurch in July 1942 following its transfer from RNAS Worthy Down (*HMS Kestrel*) near Winchester. The reason for the move to Christchurch is unclear but Worthy Down was certainly a very overcrowded Station. With three Telegraphist Air Gunner

Squadrons of No. 1 Air Gunners School, a Fleet Air Arm Storage Section (aircraft depot) and a Vickers Supermarine Test Flying Works at Worthy Down, there wasn't much room for anything else. Prior to this the NARIU it is believed was formed at Lee-on-Solent and had been moved out earlier in 1942, so it was time to find somewhere more permanent. At this time, the Admiralty forecast that with the expansion of the FAA, it would need many new Shore Stations to house an extra 1,200 naval aircraft, by the end of 1943. The Air Ministry was therefore 'persuaded' to give up some RAF airfields and to provide lodger facilities for the FAA at others. Not surprisingly, due to the inter-service rivalry that existed even in wartime, the Air Ministry retained its best airfields and handed over the 'unwanted' ones! As RAF Christchurch had just been vacated by the RAF Telecommunications Flying Unit, it was an ideal airfield to add to the quota! In fact, Christchurch airfield had hardly changed from its pre-war state, apart from the addition of a few hangars and workshops and with a maximum take-off run of only 800 yards it was too small even for fully loaded medium bomber aircraft already in RAF service. The presence of the Airspeed factory, on the North side of the airfield, producing Oxfords and Horsas was also a factor, as the RAF didn't like basing Operational Squadrons on factory airfields.

Despite providing the Fleet Air Arm with lodger facilities, Christchurch airfield remained an RAF Station, initially under the control of No. 70 Group RAF. The Station CO, Sqn Ldr Theobald, who was appointed in late 1941, had approximately 150 RAF personnel under his command. He was responsible for the airfield, its defences, bulk fuel and the provision of fire cover but had no jurisdiction over the Royal Navy, which had a separate chain of command. All Royal Navy units lodging on non-Naval bases had their administration and accounting carried out by a parent Station. For the Fleet Air Arm at Christchurch, this was carried out through *HMS Daedalus* at RNAS Lee-on-Solent and as a 'tender' Christchurch became *HMS Daedalus II*. However, on 23rd May 1944 control passed to HMS Raven at RNAS Eastleigh and thereafter Christchurch became known as *HMS Raven*. In theory, Christchurch should have been *HMS Raven II* but so far there is no evidence that this title was ever used, possibly because the Naval contingent at Christchurch comprising of approximately sixty personnel including seven commissioned Officers. Of these about thirty-five belonged to the NARIU. The other twenty-five were part of the Naval Air Section (a term used by the FAA to describe the facilities and personnel that supported any lodger units, such as the NARIU, when they were not based at their parent base). As Naval Air Section personnel at Christchurch were part of *HMS Daedalus II* and later *HMS Raven*, they could be called upon to work at their parent base, if the need arose. On arrival, in 1942, the NARIU took over the workshops laboratories and hangars which had previously been used by the TFU and the Telecommunications Research Establishment scientists, changing some buildings to suit their own requirements. As with the RAF there was no accommodation on the aerodrome for the personnel. However, Sqn Ldr Theobald, was able to assist the newly arrived naval personnel by arranging billets for them. Many were billeted with local families in Mudeford and Stanpit, or in unoccupied properties next to the aerodrome. Most personnel had to walk from their billets to the aerodrome although some of the luckier ones were issued Phillips Roadster bicycles.

As most of the airfield infrastructure came under the jurisdiction of the RAF the NARIU had very little need for motor vehicles. However, it is believed that the Navy had the use of two General Service trucks (one 10 ton and one 5 ton), a 10 hp 'Tilley' pickup truck and a motorbike and sidecar. The RAF provided a Fordson N tractor and towed petrol & oil bowlers, for aircraft refuelling, as well as a Crossley Q30 'crash tender' for firefighting. Despite being called the Naval Air Radio Installation Unit, the NARIU was not just involved in installing radio equipment; in fact, it carried out a number of tasks that were very important to the Fleet Air Arm.

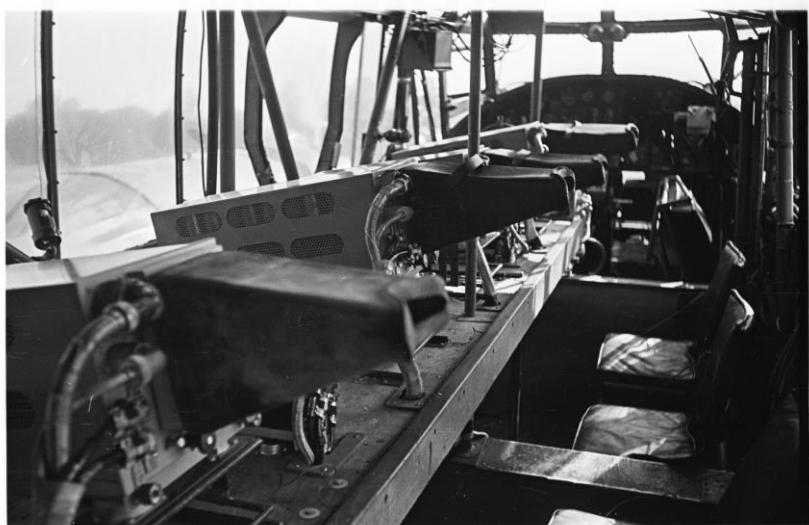
Many Fleet Air Arm aircraft were fitted with radio and radar by the Manufacturers or at Maintenance Units, but during the equipment's service life numerous modifications were introduced and more powerful or up-dated sets were developed. The Ministry of Aircraft Production authorized many retrospective modifications to aircraft on the production lines, but these took time to introduce and did not cover aircraft already in service. The NARIU as a MAP technical establishment was therefore given the specific job to design the new or additional installation specifications for existing service aircraft that were urgently needed. Representatives of the FAA, the manufacturers, and the MAP would then examine all trial installations. If the modifications were approved, the NARIU would prepare draft 'Technical Leaflets' and drawings for a 'crash' programme to get the required aircraft modified as soon as possible. Apart from the MAP, the NARIU also had strong links with the Royal Aircraft Establishment (RAE) at Farnborough and the TFU at RAF Defford, with aircraft being detached on many occasions from and to each establishment.

As the war progressed, radio and radar equipment became less of an afterthought and became more integrated into the design of aircraft, but in certain types of aircraft, repositioning of radio or radar equipment was still required for operational reasons. Lease-Lend aircraft from the USA were modified to suit FAA requirements, as were the RAF aircraft that were taken on charge for training. Often these requests necessitated changes to the structure of an aircraft and the unit's technicians would therefore design the modifications. Although Lt Cdr Scholes, as OC NARIU, was a skilled Radar Officer he spent much of his time supervising the unit's technical programme. Much of the design work at the NARIU being done by two talented Wrens, 3rd Officer M Cundy WRNS, and 2nd Officer F J Glendenning WRNS, both of whom were highly proficient in electronics. Before implementation, the required alterations to FAA radio or radar equipment would be flight-tested. For this purpose, the NARIU had two Test Pilots and from 1943 these were Lt Reginald Gardiner RNZNVR, previously with 784 Sqn FAA and Lt M.J.J. 'Jerry' Harris RNVR, who had been with 749 Sqn FAA and later CO of 710 Sqn FAA. Both pilots it's assumed were on 'rest tours' and had to contend with flying many different types of British and American naval aircraft. As no other aircrew personnel were available, naval ratings were 'borrowed' to act as flight assistants especially for the larger aircraft.

Apart from its trials work, the NARIU was also given the job of converting aircraft for the FAA, especially when only limited numbers of conversions were required. One of the first tasks of the NARIU at Christchurch, was to convert a number of Fairey Fulmars Mk II to NF, (Night Fighter), standard by fitting AI Mk IV (Airborne Interception) radar. In the early years of the war, the FAA had no real requirement for AI radar. However, following the introduction of *HMS Audacity* in 1941, Escort Carriers demonstrated their effectiveness in reducing the threat to shipping from U-Boats and Focke Wulf Fw 200 Condor aircraft. Many more Condors would have been destroyed had they not been able to hide in cloud when attacked by Grumman Martlet fighters of 802 Sqn from *HMS Audacity*. The Admiralty therefore issued the requirement for a Carrier based 'poor weather' fighter fitted with AI radar. Initially a single seat fighter was considered with AI Mk VI (which had a pilot interpreted radar display) but as the radars' performance was unacceptable an alternative had to be found.



In RAF service AI Mk IV radar was well proven and was therefore recommended to the Admiralty. But because AI Mk IV required a two-man crew, the choice fell on the Fulmar as it could carry the required load and had sufficient performance to catch the Fw 200 Condor. The first trial installation of an AI Mk IV set, in Fulmar N4072, was carried out by the TFU at RAF Hurn in January 1942 and thereafter the NARIU took on the task of converting other Fulmars to Mk IINF standard during the summer of 1942. As it happened the threat from Fw 200 Condors declined and the FAA did not immediately use the Fulmar Mk IINF in its intended role. However, in order to provide aircraft for AI training, the first Fulmars converted by the NARIU were issued to 784 Sqn FAA which formed in June 1942 at RNAS Lee-on-Solent as a Night Fighter Training Sqn. Some references suggest that a NARIU team went to Lee-on-Solent to do the first installations, which may have been an interim measure due to the impending move to Christchurch. A small number of Fulmars were also converted to 'NF' standard for 746 Sqn FAA that formed in November 1942 at RNAS Lee-on-Solent as the Naval Night Fighter Interception Unit. Originally the FAA had a requirement for eighty-six Fulmar Mk IINF aircraft with AI Mk IV radar but as the Mk IINF was a conversion of the standard Mk II, it is not known how many the FAA actually received, that were fitted with AI.



So far only about thirty Fulmars have been identified as having AI Mk IV fitted, which is consistent with a recently suggested total of fifty Fulmar Mk IINF aircraft required by 746 Sqn and 784 Sqn. (Many other Fulmars used by these two Squadrons were simply 'targets' for the trainees without AI being fitted). With the increased use of AI and ASV, (Air to Surface Vessel) radar, by naval aircraft, the need for suitable training aircraft soon became apparent. A number of Avro Anson Mk I training aircraft were therefore diverted by the MAP or transferred from RAF stocks to the FAA, for conversion to radar trainers and flying classrooms (*see*

photo left). Much of this conversion work on the Ansons was carried out at Christchurch by the NARIU in conjunction with Portsmouth Aviation Ltd, which had a factory in Scott's Hill Lane, Purewell and a hangar at Warren Avenue, beside the airfield. In the course of this conversion work at Christchurch, the main planes were usually removed and stored in one of the hangars, so that the aircraft fuselages could be towed along the Somerford Road, to the Portsmouth Aviation Ltd works. There the Ansons were fitted with the necessary fittings to provide 'work-stations' for two students and an instructor. Once completed the aircraft were returned by road for re-fitting of the wings. The NARIU then took over and installed the radar and radio equipment and after testing the aircraft were ready for delivery. In FAA service, they were known as the Anson Type C and were variously equipped with either AI Mk IV or ASV Mk IIN depending on the role of the Training Squadron to which they were delivered. The first converted Ansons with AI Mk IV went to 784 Sqn FAA from August 1942 before it moved to Drem in October 1942, in order to supplement the Fulmars already used for AI training. By January 1943 several crews from 784 Sqn had been sent to the NARIU either for familiarization or testing of this 'new' type. Modified Anson Type C trainers also went as radar trainers, to 735 Sqn, 737 Sqn, 766 Sqn and 783 Sqn most of which were based in the north of England or Scotland. In all approximately ninety-five Avro Ansons were modified in several batches from 1942 by Portsmouth Aviation Ltd and the NARIU at Christchurch.

During 1943 small numbers of Vickers Wellingtons were sent to the NARIU in order for ASV radar to be fitted. Two of these aircraft, L4303 a Mk I and Z8399 a Wellington II with Merlin engines were fitted with ASV Mk IIN and these were issued to 783 Sqn RNAS Arbroath which was the principal ASV Training Squadron of the FAA. In addition to the Wellington ASV trainers previously converted, at least three Wellington aircraft were received from 1943, for conversion to Wellington T Mk XVII flying classrooms for AI training.

Wellingtons MP543, MP547 and MP549, were all ex-407 Sqn RCAF Coastal Command and had probably been partly modified at a MU. Petty Officer Michael Boivin of the NARIU remembers that these Wellington aircraft arrived with the front turrets already replaced with Mosquito type bulged nose cones. The NARIU team was therefore only responsible for the installation of the AI Mk X radar set (American built 10 cm SCR720). What use the FAA made of these AI Mk X equipped Wellington aircraft is unclear, as they don't appear to have been used in their intended role. Records show that MP547 went to 762 Sqn FAA at RNAS Dale for only a few months, before joining the Station Flight at RNAS Yeovilton, while MP549 went to 765 Sqn FAA at Lee-on-Solent for less than a year. Possibly the FAA had intended to form an AI Mk X Radar Training Squadron but with the availability of the American dual-purpose ASH radar, the need for AI Mk X equipped Wellingtons declined. There have also been suggestions that the AI Mk X radar suffered greatly from electrical interference when fitted in these Wellingtons and this took some time to resolve.

During the time that the Fleet Air Arm used Christchurch airfield, there were many instances when Allied aircraft had to make emergency landings for a variety of reasons, such as battle damage, mechanical problems or the weather. As the major service unit using the airfield, the Navy personnel were often called upon to help. On 4th June 1943 Lt Reginald Gardiner RNZNVR had to belly-land a Fulmar Mk II DR724 at Christchurch owing to hydraulic failure, but luckily the aircraft was not written off and was later repaired. Lt Gardiner was unhurt. In October 1943, land adjacent to Christchurch airfield, which had been the radar trials ground for the Air Defence Research and Development Establishment, began the transformation into an Air Landing Ground in preparation for D-Day (See the following chapter). Although the initial construction work had only a minor effect on the existing grass airfield, it ultimately provided the NARIU with a new 1600 yd mesh runway, which would be available from early 1944. In one memorable incident an RAF Short Stirling bomber landed on the original grass airfield at Christchurch, with damage to its fuselage and with wounded crew members on board, after a raid. As soon as the aircraft landed the crewmen in need of medical attention were taken to hospital and the uninjured men made arrangements to return to their base by other means. The Stirling bomber was then left in the care of PO Boivin and his team, which carried out temporary repairs. A few days later, a lady pilot of the ATA arrived to collect the aircraft, so it was said, for a ferry flight to Speke. As she was so small, PO Boivin had to make wooden blocks to attach to the rudder pedals in order for her legs to reach them! As PO Boivin only arrived at Christchurch in November 1943 this incident may date from late 1943, rather than early 1944 when the new mesh runway was built. The Squadron to which the aircraft belonged is unknown but may well have been either 149 (East India) or 218 (Gold Coast) Squadron that used the type at this time. Probably because FAA personnel were seen working on the Stirling, a few local spotters reported that the type was now issued to the Fleet Air Arm! Shortly after arriving at HMS Daedalus II, PO F.A. Ablett also witnessed another arrival, an RAF target towing Defiant crewed by a Polish crew of two. At the best of times the short grass runway at Christchurch could catch pilots out with its dips and bumps and on this occasion the Defiant landed late in the landing run and bounced up in the air and came crashing down on an island in a lake beside the Airspeed Factory. The lake was in fact a dammed part of a stream that was made available to act as a water source for fire fighting if the factory was bombed. The crew got out of the Defiant OK but then had to get across the lake as best they could, arguing with each other in Polish!

Although the NARIU had mostly finished converting Fulmars to Mk IINF standard by 1943, it still converted a few Fulmars right up to May 1944. Despite the inferiority of the Fulmar Mk IINF at this stage in the war, the Admiralty was keen for AI equipped fighters to be used for operational trials. 784 Squadron therefore lent a few of its Fulmars to 813, 825 and 835 Sqns FAA during 1944 for operations aboard Escort Carriers protecting the Arctic Convoys to Russia. Some Fulmars were also lent to the Northern Ireland Night Fighter Flight at RAF Ballyhalbert in 1944. It is likely therefore that the 1944 conversions were required to make up the numbers still needed for training. The majority of aircraft sent to the NARIU were there only for a short time whilst modifications were carried out. However, the unit is thought to have had a few aircraft on semi-permanent strength. These are said to have included an Airspeed Oxford, an Avro Anson, a Fairey Barracuda, a Stinson Reliant and two Vickers Wellingtons. To keep these aircraft airworthy and those sent for modification, servicing was carried out by an Air Engineering Team of approximately twenty fitters and engineering staff under Lt D.I. Thompson RNVR.



On 1st March 1944, Lt Gardiner overturned a Stinson Reliant I, (FK917), after the aircraft bounced whilst attempting a crosswind landing. The Stinson was badly damaged but was repaired. The aircraft was said to belong to an RNAS Communications Flight at Christchurch but was flown by the pilots of the NARIU as one of their own.

On another occasion a rather silly accident happened when Arthur Ablett was working on the engine of a visiting RAF Tiger Moth. Arthur Ablett remembers;

“One day an RAF pilot on a ‘jolly’ (as unofficial flights were known in the services) arrived in a Tiger Moth to visit family or friends in the local area. The Tiger Moth was left on the airfield overnight but when the pilot returned in the morning it would not start. The pilot tried a few times to get the engine started without success so the FAA personal also tried but still without luck. I was therefore asked to help, so the aircraft was pushed into the Bellman hangar for me to check the engine timing. The process involved lifting the magneto cover which made the system live, so the switches were moved from ‘off’ to ‘on’ and the coil starter in the engine was fully wound up. Unfortunately, while I was working on the aircraft a friend of mine came into the hangar and asked if I was coming for dinner and happened to rest his hand on the propeller. However, moving it just a few degrees made the coil click into action and the engine started when I was standing between the propeller and the lower wing! Without the precaution of chocks in place, the aircraft then started to move forward and I was knocked over and dragged along by the aircraft while hanging on underneath. My friend was lucky too as he was missed by inches by the spinning prop and managed to jump out of the way. There was now nothing to stop the Tiger Moth moving forward and therefore it cross the hangar floor and smashing into the side of a Fairey Swordfish that was required for an important test the following day! Inside the Swordfish were three ratings working on it and they got out of it in double quick time! Luckily there wasn’t any serious damage to the Swordfish and only the fabric was ripped on the fuselage. Consequently, a Court of Enquiry was convened, and I was asked why an aircraft with fuel in it was allowed inside the hangar, and that no chocks were in place and various excuses were offered. Luckily for me the RAF pilot wasn’t supposed to be using the Tiger Moth and so he wanted no fuss and bother and hoped the matter could be forgotten, so in the end it was hushed up and not reported through normal channels!”

On another occasion Arthur Ablett was acting as a flight assistant in a Wellington aircraft flown by Lt Harris on a test flight that took them inland and north of Christchurch.

During the test flight the airspeed indicator in the cockpit went unserviceable, so it was agreed that Lt Harris would throttle back the engines bit by bit to establish his airspeed in the hope of finding the normal landing speed. Lt Harris asked me, as the only other person on the aircraft if I was any good at estimating air speed, as he was unfamiliar with the aircraft type. Sadly, I wasn’t and told him so! Lt Harris then instructed me to go aft and see if the air speed indicator in the secondary control panel was reading OK. Sadly the aircraft had no internal communications or even a radio so I was asked to press some form of switch on the secondary control panel that would light up a red light on the pilots control panel as a way of communicating and once the required speed in knots was shown on my panel I would press the light switch to show the pilot he was at the exact speed he required to land. However, I sat there watching the panel, but nothing registered at all on the air speed indicator no I never pressed the switch, as it was also unserviceable. Lt Harris continued to throttle back when suddenly the Wellington stalled and seemed to just fall out of the sky. Luckily for both of us Lt Harris regained control. After that he decided to land as soon as possible at the nearest airfield. A large airfield with crossed runways was spotted and Lt Harris lined up on approach to land. However, this was met by volleys of red very-pistol warnings and the RAF crash tender even moved on to the runway. Lt Harris then pulled the aircraft out of the approach and went around again, and this time selected the other runway to land.

As expected, the landing run was at high speed to avoid a stall and Lt Harris used the full length of the runway to bring the Wellington to a stop. This landing either caused the brakes to overheat or use up all the pressure in them because the aircraft then started to roll on its own accord down a very slight slope at the end of the runway at about 3 mph towards the boundary fence. I was told to jump down from the front nose hatch and try and put a chock under one wheel to turn the aircraft round. Once this was done, Lt Harris managed to taxi the Wellington back in the direction of the RAF technical site. The RAF kindly gave us lunch and repaired the aircraft, the fault being an 'olive' wasn't connected in the pipework behind the cockpit instrument panel, which prevented information being sent from the pitot tube.

Unfortunately, the previously mentioned incidents were not the last to involve Lt Gardiner as he was the pilot of Wellington Mk XI MP564, which crashed on landing on 25th May 1944. The Wellington was used as a 'trials' aircraft fitted with ASV Mk IIN. While landing in a NE direction over the harbour, it is thought that Gardiner's landing was prevented by an American aircraft or vehicle crossing the runway. In the attempt to go around again the aircraft suffered a starboard engine failure and suddenly veered to starboard at low level. The Wellington cleared the NE boundary fence, but the starboard wing hit the ground and the aircraft crashed in a field 500 yards beyond the aerodrome over the other side of the Lymington Road. The crash crew from the 405th Fighter Bomber Group was first on the scene, closely followed by AF (E) Douglas Jones and other Naval personnel. Despite both wings being torn off the aircraft, Lt Gardiner suffered only cuts and bruises and later returned to duty with the NARIU. However, AF (E) E R Horlick who was acting as flight assistant was thrown out by the force of the crash and ended up in a tree still strapped to his seat. He was knocked unconscious and remained in a coma for nearly two weeks. Because of his injuries, Horlick stayed in hospital for some time and did not return to the unit. The Air Engineering Team soon arrived to start clearing up the mess.

PO FA Ablett arrived at the Wellington crash site and remembers;

"The Wellington had been completely wrecked; all the debris from it was set out like an Airfix kit with the wings beside the fuselage and Mr Grey the farmer arrived on the scene worried about the clearance of the wreckage to enable him to get a crop in. His eyes lit up when informed that we had to get the fuel out. Due to the position of the tanks, access the fuel cocks was not accessible so we tried to puncture the tanks with the aircraft's pointed escape axe, but this was almost impossible with the self-sealing type of tank. The farmer was not pleased when he saw our attempts to let the fuel just soak into the ground. However, with the promise of as much free fuel as he wanted, he soon changed his attitude and sped off back to the farm to find as many containers as he could carry!"

Prior to D-Day, LAF (A) Joe Waterman, of the Air Engineering Team, often used to see black painted Westland Lysander aircraft arriving at Christchurch airfield but had no idea why they were there. There is the possibility that these aircraft were used in connection with the Special Operations Executive (SOE) for secret flights to France, to collect and take agents to the French Resistance. PO Boivin was occasionally tasked with escorting the 'passengers' out to the aircraft, who had arrived by civilian car. These Lysander flights are said by some sources to have occurred in 1942 however as LAF (A) Joe Waterman and PO Michael Boivin both arrived at the NARIU in November 1943 the flights probably continued up to D-Day. Operational flights by 138 Sqn RAF or 161 Sqn RAF, which carried out secret missions for SOE, have so far not been traced to Christchurch, so they could have been for training or even by an unrelated RAF Sqn!

At some time in early 1944, a number of Fairey Barracuda Mk II aircraft were received by the NARIU for various modifications. One Barracuda was certainly at the NARIU prior to D-Day as AF (E) Douglas Jones remembers that while on a test flight over the Solent with Lt Harris in a Barracuda he saw a ship towing a barge 'as big as a block of flats' and wondered what it was. He subsequently learnt that it was part of the 'Mulberry Harbour used to support the 'D-Day' landings. Despite being very busy with all kinds of radio and radar installation work at this time, the FAA personnel were always happy to help the Americans as much as possible, with the provision of tools and equipment. Lt Cdr Scholes therefore offered some of his FAA personnel to USAAF to help with various duties. Sometimes these tasks could be quite hazardous.

Due to shortages of US equipment, the 405th Fighter Bomber Group made their own bomb-racks but until sway braces were fitted, the uneven mesh runway often caused bombs to shake free on take-off. Before the rest of the wave of P-47D Thunderbolts could take off, these bombs had to be removed from the runway and as Petty Officer F.A. Ablett remembers, FAA personnel were ordered to drag the live bombs clear; a task for which they received absolutely no training at all!

In addition to the cover provided by the USAAF crash crew during their stay, the Royal Navy also helped by manning the RAF Station's own Crossley Q30 four-wheel drive crash tender and this duty was done by RAF personnel and Naval ratings detailed on a daily rota basis, rather than specialist fire-fighters. Regrettably in carrying out this roster duty on 29th June 1944 one of the RAF crew members and four of the RN crewmen were killed in the worst accident to occur in the history of the airfield and probably the Ninth Air Force in the UK. The sequence of events started, at about 06.45 hrs, when 2nd Lt. Vincent R. James of the 509th FS,

attempted to take off in a P-47D, 42-76425 'G9-G' with a full war-load but failed to get properly airborne and hit the roof of a bungalow in Foxwood Avenue. Luckily the bombs did not explode and although the aircraft was badly damaged, it did not catch fire and Vincent James was unharmed. However, the bungalow was severely damaged. Later the same afternoon, Lt. James was given a second mission to fly, which some accounts suggest was customary in the USAAF, in order that a pilot wouldn't lose his nerve after a crash. At approximately 14.00 hrs Lt James



once again attempted to take off in a replacement P-47D for an armed recce mission, complete with a full war load, including two 500 lb bombs. However, Lt James once again failed to gain sufficient height on take-off and his P-47D hit a second bungalow alongside the first he had crashed into earlier. This time, one bomb went off on impact killing Lt. James instantly and ignited fuel from the tanks. Then 0.5-inch ammunition began firing off, sending bullets in all directions. The full force of the blast also caught some civilians who were removing furniture from the first crash site. As if the situation wasn't bad enough, the explosion also blew Captain William Chapman, out of the air and caused him to crash as well, as P-47D aircraft took off in pairs! Luckily Captain Chapman was able to crash land his stricken P-47D on waste ground in Mudford. He survived with burns to his face and hands and other minor injuries but did not fly again in the ETO. In response to the emergency in Foxwood Avenue, the local NFS fire engine and the RAF Station crash tender were quickly on the scene. Some American personnel also rushed to the spot as did people from the Airspeed Factory. Unfortunately, as these people arrived in Foxwood Avenue, the other bomb that was lying in the road in an unstable state exploded. The RAF crash tender, manned by a mixed RAF/RN crew took the full blast, killing the four Naval Ratings from HMS Raven and one RAF Sergeant, who was the driver. Another RAF airman was badly wounded. Several Officers and men of the 510th FS tried to warn people in the vicinity, of the danger and while doing this they themselves were caught in the explosion; Lt. Arthur Williams caught the full force of the blast and was killed, Lt. Charles Mohrle was 'skinned' by bomb fragments and Lt John Drummond had his ear pierced by a splinter. Private First-Class John H Johnstone, who had been working nearby was badly wounded and died the next day in Hospital.

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To be continued....

CRASH OF HALIFAX IN COWLEAZE WOOD 31ST MARCH 1944 BY PAUL KENDALL



I recently read that there was a memorial commemorating the crash of a Halifax in woods near where I live in High Wycombe. After a bit of research, I found out that this memorial is located in Cowleaze Wood which is situated west of Stokenchurch, south of the M40. The Stokenchurch cutting is well known to drivers along the M40.

August Bank Holiday Monday in 2018 was a nice sunny day so I set out with my dog to look for the crash site. The site of the memorial is not well marked but I eventually came across it. Surprisingly the memorial is well kept. There are details of the flight & crew at the site.

Left: A Halifax like LW579, that crashed in Cowleaze Wood in 1944

Halifax Mk III LW579 / MH-V of 51 Sqn based at RAF Snaith, Yorkshire was crewed by Pilot Officer J Brooks (pilot); Flight Sergeant DP McCormack (navigator); Sergeant GW West (wireless operator); Sergeant DA Churchill (mid-upper gunner) and Sergeant S Glass (rear gunner). Sergeant Kelly was a 'spare' the regular bomb aimer, as Flying Officer K King, had been excused from the trip to Nuremburg because of an attack of shingles. Prior to Nuremburg, this experienced crew had survived – almost without incident – nineteen operations on which a total of 529 heavy bombers had been lost. But on the night 30/31 March 1944, it was their turn. Unlike ninety-four other crews, the men in MH-V did survive the carnage of the Nuremburg trip, but a safe return to base was to be denied them. It is not known whether the Halifax had sustained battle-damage during the raid, but seven hours and thirteen minutes after leaving Snaith Brooks was heading for an emergency landing at Benson. Eyewitnesses claim that when the Halifax made its approach all four engines were running and the undercarriage was lowered. It was dark and the cloud base was down – low enough to enshroud the wooded summit of a 900ft hill that lay across the path of the bomber. It is a matter of conjecture whether Brooks was unaware of the high ground that lay ahead or whether his aircraft had sustained damage which made evasive action impossible. What is not in doubt that is that the trees on the summit caught the bomber's undercarriage and dragged the aircraft to earth. It crashed at 5.20 am in Cowleaze Wood, Stokenchurch and exploded on impact. There were no survivors. 51 Squadron lost forty-two aircrew on that night. Thirty-five of those were killed and seven became prisoners of war. Flying Officer King, saved from the Nuremburg trip by an attack of shingles, survived the war. He died in 1976.



On 31 March 1994, the fiftieth anniversary of the crash, some 130 people gathered at the site to witness the unveiling of a small granite memorial to the crew. The ceremony was the culmination of the efforts of Dennis Churchill (son of Flight Sergeant DA Churchill) and David Sholl (nephew of Flight Sergeant GW West) to ensure that such sacrifices should not be forgotten.



Far Left: A Halifax with Merlin engines of 51 Sqn, based at RAF Snaith, in Yorkshire, showing the MH Squadron codes they carried



Left; The Squadron badge for 51 Sqn featured a swan as this was a play on words when it was formed as the Sqn was equipped with Avro Ansons from which they got the emblem 'Aswan'

WHY CHINA'S AIR FORCE LOVES RUSSIAN SU-35 FIGHTERS (AND KEEPS GETTING MORE)



For a nation that boasts of developing an advanced stealth fighter, it seems strange that China would need to buy warplanes from its former rival Russia. Yet Moscow is offering to sell more Su-35 fighters to Beijing – and Chinese media reports that Beijing may accept. China has already bought 24 Su-35s – an upgraded version of the Cold War Su-27 Flanker – in a 2015 sale worth \$2.5 billion, according to Russian news agency TASS. “We are expecting a response from China on our offer to purchase modern weapons and military equipment manufactured in Russia, including additional batches of Su-35 fighter jets,” Russia’s arms export agency told TASS last week.

Two days later, a Chinese military television channel reported that China may buy more Su-35s to replace older aircraft. China has about 3,000 aircraft – roughly the size of the U.S. Air Force – including 1,700 fighters. But many are obsolete Cold War planes, including several hundred Chinese copies of Russia’s 1960s-era MiG-21. Thus, even as China fields the fifth-generation J-20 stealth fighter – ostensibly the counterpart of the American F-22 and F-35 – the People’s Liberation Army Air Force is saddled with the logistical challenges of maintaining a huge fleet of old planes. Yet, China’s state-controlled Global Times newspaper also cited a Chinese military expert who believes there are other reasons to buy the Su-35. Fu Qianshao told the Global Times that “while China could indeed buy more Su-35s, they are not meant to replace older Chinese jets because the Russian aircraft is too expensive, and China has too many old jets. The replacement will most likely be done by domestically made warplanes, he said.”

“Having already bought a batch of Su-35s previously, China does not need more to learn from it technically, Fu noted. But if China indeed buys more, it would make the Chinese Air Force’s logistical support for the warplane fleet more efficient as there would be more spare parts and dedicated personnel, Fu said, noting that economic and political factors might also play a part in the potential deal due to China and Russia’s close relations, and a Chinese purchase would help boost Russia’s aviation industry.” The Chinese analyst has a point: Global airpower has been trending away from the mass air fleets of World War II and the Cold War, in favour of smaller numbers of highly sophisticated and expensive warplanes. If Beijing only bought 24 Su-35s the first time around for \$2.5 billion, then buying hundreds to replace the J-7 and J-8 fighters would be financially ruinous as well as numerical overkill. But interesting is the suggestion that an Su-35 purchase would support the aviation industry of Russia, a nation with a stagnant economy but a strong military research and manufacturing capability.

Still, given Beijing’s pride in its growing military and economic strength, and its ability to develop advanced weapons such as stealth fighters, it seems surprising that China must import warplanes, jet engines, anti-aircraft missiles and other equipment. China’s GDP is about nine times larger than that of Russia (Britain also buys American warplanes, but Britain’s economy is one-eighth that of America’s). For now, it may indeed make sense for China to buy fighters from Russia: the two nations, which once fought a border war and vied for supremacy in the Communist bloc, now enjoy friendly – but wary – relations. But given its ambitions, at some point China will have to rely on its own resources.



Source; Written by Michael Peck who is a contributing writer for the National Interest.

AIRLINE AND AIRLINER NEWS FOR JULY AND AUGUST 2019 BY JOHN R ROACH

Canada's air transport market took two steps toward more collaboration and consolidation June 27, as Air Transat executives agreed to accept **Air Canada's** (AC) purchase offer, while the proposed WestJet-Delta Air Lines transborder joint venture (JV) was approved by the Canada Competition Bureau to move forward. Air Transat parent Transat A.T. is urging shareholders to ignore a last-minute appeal from a high-profile, low-percentage shareholder looking to derail Air Canada's proposed bid as the Aug. 23 vote on the proposal nears.

Air France and KLM will swap their remaining firm orders for Airbus A350s and Boeing 787s and as they seek to gain fleet efficiencies through harmonization and accelerated growth of similar aircraft at both airlines, the Air France-KLM Group said June 28.

Australian regulators have given interim approval to a partnership between **Virgin Australia** and Virgin Atlantic that will see them cooperate in the Australia-UK market.

Airbus and EASA are developing an inspection program for A380 wing outer rear spars after reports of cracks on in-service aircraft. Singapore Airlines (SIA) will inspect four Airbus A380s following proposed airworthiness directives (ADs) published July 5 by Airbus and EASA. Airbus A380 operators affected by a new inspection requirement are not anticipating any disruptions resulting from the checks, nor have early results turned up any new issues.

Saudi Arabian LCC **flyadeal** has announced an order for 30 Airbus A320neos, plus 20 options, reversing a commitment with Boeing for 30 737 MAX 8s, plus 20 options.

Air China has ordered 20 Airbus A350s, adding to 10 in service and providing potential replacements for carrier's oldest long-haul aircraft.

Calgary-based **Canadian North** and Ottawa-based First Air have finalized their plan to merge, paving the way for the combined carrier to integrate operations as part of a strategy to serve 24 Arctic communities.

Wizz Air UK, a wholly owned subsidiary of Central and Eastern European LCC Wizz Air, will launch daily Airbus A321 flights from London Luton to Moscow Vnukovo and St. Petersburg Pulkovo airports from Oct. 1, becoming the second UK-designated carrier on the routes.

Hong Kong flag carrier **Cathay Pacific Airways** has completed the acquisition of LCC HK Express, which is now a wholly owned subsidiary of the oneworld member.

Italian infrastructure group Atlantia is set to join the consortium of investors led by railway company Ferrovie dello Stato (FS) to rescue **Alitalia**, paving the way to relaunch the Italian flag carrier, more than two years after filing for bankruptcy. The European Commission has approved the proposed merger of Spain's **Air Nostrum** and Ireland-based CityJet, a move that brings the creation of what will be Europe's largest regional airline one step closer.

Scottish regional airline **Loganair** posted a net profit of £812,000 (\$1 million) for the 2018-19 financial year, reversing a previous £7.4 million loss.

Spirit AeroSystems plans to continue producing **Boeing 737** fuselages at a 52/month rate for the foreseeable future, storing extra inventory now and burning it off once Boeing ramps production up sometime in 2020.

International Airlines Group (IAG) posted a second-quarter net profit of €736 million (\$814 million), up 19.5% from €616 million, before exceptional items, a year ago, as revenue gains overcame higher fuel costs.

Airbus has begun manufacturing the A220 aircraft at its Mobile, Alabama-based final assembly line, the company announced Aug. 5.

Passengers onboard a **British Airways** (BA) Airbus A321 safely evacuated the aircraft via emergency slides Aug. 5 after smoke filled the cabin on its landing approach in Spain.

Airbus is nearing a decision favouring an additional final assembly line (FAL) for the A321neo at its Toulouse headquarters, presumably in the facility used currently to produce the A380.

Utah-based **SkyWest Airlines** has ordered seven new Embraer 175 aircraft to operate on behalf of Atlanta-based Delta Air Lines, the regional carrier announced Aug. 7.

Belgian regional startup **Air Antwerp**, which is co-owned by Irish regional CityJet and Dutch flag carrier KLM, has secured its air operator's certificate (AOC) and will launch Fokker 50 flights to London City Airport Sept. 9.

Air Canada will deploy its initial Airbus A220-300s on two new routes that support its long-term strategies of growing transborder revenues and driving more intercontinental connecting traffic through its hubs.

Production of the Dornier's 328 turboprop regional airliner looks set to restart back in Germany

Boeing has confirmed it is sliding the 777-8 development program back after hitting major delays to the 777-9 flight test and certification campaign.

The US Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) has given turboprop manufacturer **ATR** permission to supply Iran Air with spares to keep its fleet in the air.

Airbus A350-900 operators will be ordered to inspect Rolls-Royce XWB front engine mount components after revised analysis by Rolls revealed that high stress in certain conditions could significantly reduce the parts' service life.

Delta Air Lines will resume flights to Virgin Atlantic's London Gatwick and Manchester hubs for summer 2020, while Virgin Atlantic will add Gatwick-New York JFK, as part of a transatlantic push and route reshuffle between the two partner airlines.

French leisure airline **Aigle Azur** is preparing to stop flying to Portugal at the end of October and sell this part of its activities to the IAG subsidiary Vueling.

Boeing plans to hire "a few hundred" temporary staffers at its Moses Lake, Washington, facility for work that must be done on stored 737 MAXs awaiting delivery to customers, the company said.

American Airlines' long-haul schedule changes for 2020 will continue to position Chicago O'Hare International Airport as a mid-country gateway to Europe and will test Royal Air Maroc's Casablanca operation as a potential link deeper into Africa.

International Airlines Group (IAG) CEO Willie Walsh said he has "no confidence" in London Heathrow Airport's expansion plans and described the cost of the project as a "heist."

Operators of Engine Alliance GP7200-powered **Airbus A380s** are set for a new round of inspections after a fracture was found in a fan hub of the Air France aircraft engine that failed in September 2017.

Indian oil companies have been restricting fuel sales to **Air India** because the carrier has been missing payments for several months.

The first Airbus A220-300 regional jet for **EgyptAir** has completed its initial test flight from the Mirabel assembly line & is scheduled to be delivered to Cairo in the next few weeks, the manufacturer said Aug. 23.

London Southend Airport is steadily expanding its route network into central and eastern Europe, with LCCs **Ryanair** and **Wizz Air** both announcing services from the UK airport to Bucharest. It is the first time Wizz Air has operated from Southend

Central European start up **FlyBosnia** has announced its first European route, after starting services to a cluster of Middle East destinations.

East African start up **Uganda Airlines** has launched operations with an initial scheduled service between Entebbe and Nairobi (Kenya), marking the start of a growth plan that foresees 20 destinations by the end of 2021.

Bulgaria-based airline **Holiday Europe** launched operations Aug. 24, with a flight from Antalya (Turkey) to Nuremberg (Germany) with 218 passengers after receiving an air operator's certificate.

Rolls-Royce and Widerøe are teaming up to research zero emission aviation as the Scandinavian regional airline aims for an all-electric fleet, in parallel with the Norwegian government's goal of zero emission domestic flights by 2040.

Leisure travel specialist **Thomas Cook** has agreed on the key commercial terms for a £900 million (\$1.1 billion) recapitalization, which will include ownership changes at the group's airline unit.

A fire that severely damaged an **Air China** Airbus A330-300 (c/n 1587) during boarding at Beijing Capital International Airport Aug. 27 was brought under control 57 min. after discovery, according to the Civil Aviation Administration of China (CAAC).

Norwich Airport is investing £7m to build a 54,000 Sq ft hangar and a 15,500 Sq ft workshop for August 2020 for KLM UK Engineering which plans to vacate an older hangar that will be taken over by SATYS Air Livery UK (Formerly Air Livery)

Gatwick Airport has started acting on plans to develop its existing northern runway, which is currently used as a standby, so smaller aircraft can depart alongside its main runway by the mid-2020s.

The scene at Kemble on 13th August 2019 depicting just a few of the airliners waiting the scrap man's axe. Photo; John Roach



HISTORIC AVIATION NEWS FOR SEPT AND OCT 1969,1979 AND 1989 COMPILED BY JOHN R ROACH

1969

September 1 – Kingdom of Libya Airlines is renamed Libyan Arab Airlines. It will operate under that name until 2006, when it will be renamed Libyan Airlines.

September 6 – Twelve men and a woman, some armed with machine guns, hijack two TAME airliners making domestic flights in Ecuador a Douglas DC-3-209 (registration FAE1969) flying from Quito to Manta with 16 people on board and a Douglas C-47-DL Skytrain (registration FAE4341) that also took off from Quito – shooting and killing one crew member and wounding another. They explain to the passengers and crew aboard the two airliners that the hijackings are in retaliation for the deaths of several students in May 1969 during anti-government riots at the University of Guayaquil. They divert both planes to a refuelling stop at La Florida Airport in Tumaco, Colombia, where they leave the DC-3 behind, and continue aboard the C-47 to refuelling stops at Panama City, Panama, and Kingston, Jamaica, before arriving at Santiago de Cuba in Cuba.

September 7 – Ninety minutes after take-off from John F. Kennedy International Airport in New York City, a male passenger pulls a gun and hijacks Eastern Air Lines Flight 925, a Douglas DC-8-61 flying to San Juan, Puerto Rico, with 96 people on board. He forces it to fly to Havana, Cuba.

September 9 – Allegheny Airlines Flight 853, a McDonnell Douglas DC-9-30 (registration N988VJ), collides in mid-air with a Piper PA-28 near Fairland, Indiana. Both aircraft crash, killing the lone occupant of the PA-28 and all 82 people aboard the DC-9.

September 10 – A young Puerto Rican man attempts to hijack Eastern Air Lines Flight 929, a Douglas DC-8 flying from John F. Kennedy International Airport in New York City to San Juan, Puerto Rico, with 202 people on board. He demands to be flown to Cuba, but passengers and crew members subdue him, and the airliner lands safely at San Juan.

September 12 – Philippine Airlines Flight 158, a BAC One-Eleven 402AP (registration PI-C1131), strikes a mango tree in Kula-ike in Antipolo City while on approach to Manila International Airport in Manila, the Philippines. It crashes, killing 45 of the 47 people on board and injuring both survivors. It will be the deadliest accident involving a BAC One-Eleven until 2002.

September 13 Three members of the Eritrean Liberation Front hijack an Ethiopian Airlines Douglas DC-6 flying from Honduras from Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, to Djibouti City, Djibouti, with 44 people on board, and forces it to fly to Aden, South Yemen. An Ethiopian security guard on board shoots and wounds one of the hijackers during the flight to Aden. The authorities arrest the hijackers when the airliner arrives in Aden. One person is killed during the hijacking.

September 13 A hijacker commandeers a SAHSA Douglas C-47-DL Skytrain (registration HR-SAH) making a domestic flight in Honduras from La Ceiba to Tegucigalpa with 35 people on board and forces it to fly to San Salvador, El Salvador.

September 16 – Two passengers hijack a Turkish Airlines Vickers 749D Viscount (registration TC-SEC) shortly after it takes off from Istanbul, Turkey, for a domestic flight to Ankara with 61 people on board. They force it to divert to Sofia, Bulgaria.

September 20 – On approach to Da Nang Airport in Da Nang, South Vietnam, an Air Vietnam Douglas C-54D-10-DC Skymaster (registration XV-NUG) collides with a United States Air Force Phantom 1.9 miles northwest of the airport. The C-54 crashes into a ploughed field, killing 74 of the 75 people on board and two people working in the field.¹

September 21 – A Mexicana Boeing 727-64 (registration XA-SEJ) strikes the ground short of the runway on final approach to Mexico City International Airport in Mexico City, Mexico, becomes airborne again, then crashes on a railway embankment, killing 27 of the 118 people on board.

September 24 – A United States Army sergeant who had boarded at Charleston, South Carolina, hijacks National Airlines Flight 411, a Boeing 727 with 79 people on board, shortly after it takes off from Jacksonville, Florida, to fly to Miami. He forces it to divert to Havana, Cuba.

September 26 – A Lloyd Aéreo Boliviano Douglas DC-6B (registration CP-698) crashes into the side of Bolivia's Mount Choquetanga, 110 miles southeast of La Paz, at an altitude of 15,500 feet, killing all 79 people on board including 16 members of the Bolivian football (soccer) team The Strongest. The airliner's wreckage is not found until September 29. At the time, it is the deadliest aviation accident in Bolivian history.

October The United States Marshal Service starts a Sky Marshal Division at its Miami Field Office in Miami, Florida.

October 8 -- A hijacker commandeers an Aerolíneas Argentinas Boeing 707-387B (registration LV-ISC) with 68 people on board just before it arrives at Santiago, Chile, at the end of a flight from Buenos Aires, Argentina, and forces it to fly to Havana, Cuba. The airliner then flies to Miami, Florida.

October 8 -- Four hijackers take control of a Cruzeiro do Sul Sud Aviation SE 210 Caravelle (registration PP-PDX) with 49 people on board during a domestic flight in Brazil from Belém to Manaus and force it to fly to Havana, Cuba.

October 9 – A hijacker commandeers National Airlines Flight 42, a Douglas DC-8 with 70 people on board flying from Los Angeles, California, to Miami, Florida, and forces it to fly to Cuba.

October 19 – Two hijackers take control of a LOT Polish Airlines Antonov An-24B flying from Warsaw, Poland, to East Berlin, East Germany, and force it to divert to Berlin Tegel Airport in West Berlin.

October 20 – Finnair introduces an inertial navigation system on its aircraft, becoming the first airline to dispense with the need for a navigator aboard.

October 21 – Enamoured with socialism and saying he is opposed to American involvement in the Vietnam War, tired of being "brainwashed" by capitalists, and self-conscious about his appearance, 17-year-old Henry Shorr, who earlier had been denied a visa to visit Cuba by the Cuban embassy in Mexico City, Mexico, draws a small-calibre revolver and hijacks Pan American World Airways Flight 551 – a Boeing 720B flying from Mexico City to Miami, Florida, via Mérida, Mexico, and Tampa, Florida, with 37 people on board, including Florida State Senator Thomas Slade, Jr. – as it is flying over the Yucatán Peninsula. He forces it to fly him to Havana, Cuba. He will commit suicide in Cuba in September 1970 at the age of 18.

October 28 – An Aerotaxi SA Beechcraft 65-B80 Queen Air (registration HK-1022) with five people aboard is hijacked during a domestic flight in Colombia from Buenaventura to Bogotá and forced to fly to Santiago de Cuba in Cuba.^[104]

October 31 – Facing a court martial for stealing \$200 worth of radios and wristwatches from the United States Marine Corps as retribution for \$200 in pay he believes his Marine Corps paymaster has short changed him, Raffaele Minichiello uses an M1 Garand rifle to hijack Trans World Airlines Flight 85, a Boeing 707 with 47 people on board flying from Los Angeles to San Francisco, California. He orders it to fly him to New York City, but during a refuelling stop at Denver, Colorado – during which he releases the passengers – Minichiello informs the crew that he actually wants the airliner to take him to Rome, Italy. When the jet stops at New York City's John F. Kennedy International Airport to refuel again, Federal Bureau of Investigation agents wearing bulletproof vests surround the plane, but they back off after he fires his rifle through the plane's roof. The airliner takes off and stops at Bangor, Maine, and Shannon, Ireland, before arriving at Rome, where Minichiello takes a carabinieri officer hostage, steals a police car, and escapes. Arrested at a rural church on November 2, he becomes an Italian folk hero.

1979

September Aer Lingus becomes the first airline other than Alitalia to be used by Pope John Paul II, when he flies aboard the specially modified Boeing 747 St. Patrick (registration EI-ASI) from Rome to Dublin and later from Shannon, Ireland, to Boston, Massachusetts.

September 3 -- Aeroflot Flight A-513, an Antonov An-24B (registration CCCP-46269), strikes a hill at a speed of 206 km/hr (128 mph) while on approach to Amderma Airport in Amderma in the Soviet Union's Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic. It breaks up, and its main wreckage comes to rest on a beach 20 to 30 meters (65 to 100 feet) from the edge of the Kara Sea. The crash kills 40 of the 43 people on board.

September 3 -- Both engines of a Sterling Airways Aérospatiale SN.601 Corvette (registration OY-SBS) catch fire while it is on approach to Nice Côte d'Azur Airport in Nice, France. It crashes into the Mediterranean Sea 0.6 mile southwest of the airport, killing all 10 people on board.

September 7 – Three members of the "Imam Sadr Movement" hijack an Alitalia Douglas DC-8-62H (registration I-DIWW) with 183 people on board during a flight from Beirut, Lebanon, to Rome, Italy. They demand information on the 31 August 1978 disappearance of Mousa Sadr in Libya. They release the passengers at Rome, then force the airliner to fly to Tehran, Iran, where they surrender after a statement they wrote is broadcast on radio and television.

September 12 – A man armed with what appears to be a pistol hijacks a Lufthansa Boeing 727-230 during a domestic flight in West Germany from Frankfurt-am-Main to Cologne. He demands a meeting with Chancellor of Germany Helmut Schmidt in the presence of the news media. Seven hours of negotiations ensue after the plane lands at Cologne; the hijacker then reads a message to political leaders calling for a more humane world before releasing the passengers and four of the seven crew members. After several more hours of negotiations, he releases the rest of the crew and surrenders. His weapons turns out to be a toy pistol.

September 14 -- Aero Trasporti Italiani (ATI) Flight 12, a McDonnell Douglas DC-9-32 (registration I-ATJC), crashes into Conca d'Oru at a height of 2,000 feet (610 meters) on Sardinia near Sarroch, Italy, while trying to fly around thunderstorms on approach to Cagliari Elmas Airport in Cagliari, killing all 31 people on board.

September 14 -- A Butler Aircraft Company Douglas DC-7 (registration N4SW) operating on a company business flight strikes trees on the crest of 6,401-foot (1,951-meter) Surveyor Mountain and crashes 39 kilometres (24.4 miles) northwest of Klamath Falls, Oregon, killing all 12 people on board.

October 1 – The United States Air Force transfers all of the Aerospace Defense Command's interceptor squadrons and bases and air warning radar stations to the Tactical Air Command.

October 7 – Swissair Flight 316, a Douglas DC-8-62 (registration HB-IDE), overruns the runway while landing at Ellinikon International Airport in Athens, Greece. The tail and left wing separate from the fuselage and the airliner comes to rest on a public road. A fire breaks out, and 14 of the 154 people on board die of burns or smoke inhalation.

October 16 – Three hijackers commandeer a Libyan Arab Airlines Fokker F27 Friendship (registration 5A-DDU) during a domestic flight in Libya from Hun to Tripoli and force it to fly to Malta, where they surrender.

October 27 – A Mexican government Beechcraft 200 Super King Air (registration XC-PGR) operated by the Office of the General Prosecutor strikes a power pole at a height of 14 feet (4.25 meters) north of San Ysidro, California, while on approach to Tijuana International Airport in Tijuana, Mexico, and crashes, killing all 10 people on board.

October 30 -- Sir Barnes Wallis, inventor of the bouncing bomb, geodetic airframe, and earthquake bomb, dies at the age of 82.

October 30 -- A hijacker claiming to have a bomb commandeers Pacific Southwest Airlines Flight 784 – a Boeing 727 with 108 people on board flying from Los Angeles to San Diego, California – demanding to be flown to Mexico. The airliner diverts to Tijuana, Mexico, where the hijacker surrenders.

October 31 -- Midway Airlines begins flight operations, using three Douglas DC-9s from Trans World Airlines to offer service from Chicago's Midway Airport to Cleveland Burke Lakefront Airport in Cleveland, Ohio, to Kansas City, Missouri, and to Detroit, Michigan.

October 31 -- Western Airlines Flight 2605, a McDonnell Douglas DC-10-10 (registration N903WA), mistakenly lands on a closed runway in fog at Benito Juarez International Airport in Mexico City, Mexico, strikes a parked truck, crashes, and bursts into flames. Seventy-two of the 89 people on board die.

1989

September 3 – Listening to a football (soccer) match, the pilots of Varig Flight 254, a Boeing 737-241 (registration PP-VMK) with 54 people on board, enter an incorrect heading into the flight computer before taking off from Marabá, Brazil, for Belém, Brazil. By the time they discover their error, they have too little fuel to reach an airport, they belly-land the airliner in a remote area of the Amazon jungle near São José do Xingu, Brazil, killing 13 passengers. Thirty-four of the 41 survivors are injured, many seriously; they are not rescued for two days.

September 8 – Vibration from an auxiliary power unit aboard Partnair Flight 394, a Convair CV-580 (registration LN-PAA) on a charter flight, spreads to the tail section, causing the rudder to jam to the left. The plane dives from 22,000 feet (6,706 m) into the North Sea off Hirtshals, Denmark, disintegrating during the dive and killing all 55 people on board.

September 19 – A bomb explodes in the cargo hold of UTA Flight 772, a McDonnell Douglas DC-10-30 (registration N54629), over the Sahara Desert. The DC-10 breaks up in mid-air and crashes near Bilma and Ténéré in Niger, killing all 170 people on board. Responsibility for the bombing is never determined.

September 20 – USAir Flight 5050, a Boeing 737-401 (N416US) with 63 people on board, aborts its take-off in low visibility on a wet runway at LaGuardia Airport in New York City and slides off the end of the runway into Bowery Bay, killing two people and injuring 21.

October Hainan Province Airlines – the future Hainan Airlines – is founded. It will begin flight operations in May 1993.

October 11 – A Syrian Arab Air Force pilot defects to Israel, landing his MiG-23MLD (NATO reporting name "Flogger") at Megiddo Airport. The Israeli Air Force later flies the MiG-23MLD at its re.

October 21 – TAN-SAHSA Flight 414, a 224 (registration N88705), crashes into a hill near Toncontin International Airport in Tegucigalpa Honduras, while on approach to a landing there, killing 127 of the 146 people on board and injuring all 19 survivors.

October 26 – China Airlines Flight 204, a Boeing 737-209 (registration B-180), crashes into a mountain after take-off from Hualien Airport on Taiwan, killing all 54 people on board.



As detailed above, on 11th October 1989, a Syrian Arab Air Force pilot defected to Israel his MiG-23MLD "Flogger". The aircraft's arrival was a complete surprise to the Israelis. The pilot, Major Abdel Basscii, was on a training flight as one of a pair of MiG-23s flying along the contested border over the Golan Heights between Syria and Israel. The pilot suddenly turned towards Israel and dived steeply and with the after burner on, looking for a place to land when he eventually saw Megiddo airport, where he landed successfully.

Photo Left; note how the aircraft in the photo, has new Israeli stars added, while retaining the previous Syrian AAF markings!

LASHAM GLIDING SOCIETY WINTER TALKS 2019/20

Mike Philpott, who lives in Ruislip is heavily involved with the Lasham Gliding Club, and he sent us a note to see if any CAS members might wish to attend any of the Lasham Gliding Club talks, some of which are not about gliding or even aviation! In Mike's words; Once again we have arranged another really good season of Saturday evening events this winter with something offered on most Saturday early evenings, which are free of charge, unless stated otherwise and you do not need to be a member at Lasham GS to attend. Visitors are also most welcome, except where stated. Some dates and talks might change, and some are not yet fully arranged but listed below is the current situation. Updated lists will be issued as the season progresses. Saturday talks will usually commence at 6 pm and will be held in the Brown Elephant briefing room at Lasham. Although most of the events are free of charge it is customary that a silver collection is made at the end of each talk for the Lasham Trust or other deserving cause of the speaker's choosing. Dinner is be available in the restaurant afterwards if required but booking is advisable at thegoldenglider@outlook.com. Alternatively call on 01256 384910. The bar is also available to members and visitors at all times. Lasham Gliding Society's address is Lasham Airfield, Avenue Road, Basingstoke, Hants, GU34 5SS. Telephone 01256 384900. All events are subject to short notice change so if you are travelling a long way please check first to verify that it is still taking place. The hosting team will be Nicki Marchant, Morag Saunders, Debbie Scholey, Chris Gibson, John Delafield and myself. We hope to see you at some of these events.

- Saturday 2nd Nov – An update by Andrew Blundell on how he founded Vertigo covers and the business success story that it has become.
- Saturday 9th Nov – Professor Ian MacAndrew; Low speed aerodynamics at high altitude and their use in UAVs.
- Saturday 16th Nov – WW2 veteran Rusty Waughman, returns to tell us about his role in the Berlin Airlift.
- Saturday 23rd Nov - A talk by Dave Latimer on the “Glide Britain” promotional activities for our sport that took place across the nation over the last couple of years. This talk was cancelled last year because of snow.
- **Saturday 30th Nov – 16:00 hours Lasham Gliding Society Special General Meeting, LGS members only.**
- Saturday 7th Dec – A talk by Tony Fendall entitled “Kronfeld on gliding and soaring”.
- Saturday 14th Dec – 1970s themed Lasham Dining in night. Fancy dress optional.
- **Saturday 21st Dec – No Lasham event will be organised.**
- **Saturday 28th Dec – No Lasham event will be organised**
- Wednesday 1st January 2020 – Traditional New Year's Day Charity “Fun” Run/Walk/Stagger /swagger around the peri track. Arranged by Marjorie Hobby. Meet at the Clubhouse for an 11:00 AM start.
- Saturday 4th Jan– We start off the new year evening talks with another talk by retired Detective Chief Superintendent Paul Stickler on historical murders in the 20th Century and before. Paul's talk was very well attended in previous years and this next episode will focus on the Kray Twins. More info on Paul's excellent web site: www.historicalmurders.com.
- Saturday 11th Jan – A talk by Neville Cullingford entitled “Blue Skies - the story of the Royal Observer Corps from 1925 to 1945”
- Saturday 18th Jan – A talk by Frankie Webb on the life of the famous Farnborough Aerodynamicist, Tillie Shilling.
- Saturday 25th Jan – A talk by Ben Flewett and Rachel Hine on their exploits among a group of people who rode small “monkey bike” motorcycles across the Andes.
- Saturday 1st Feb – To be confirmed, the juniors will hold an event on this evening.
- Saturday 8th Feb – A talk by Colonel (Retd) Jonathan Welch CBE on Improvised Explosive Devices in Afghanistan 2009 to 2012.
- Saturday 15th Feb – A talk Air Chief Marshal (Retd) Sir Richard Johns on the Royal Air Force past and present from a personal perspective.
- Saturday 22nd Feb – A talk by Allan Melmore on history of UK aviation fuel supply,
- Saturday 29th Feb - BGA Conference this weekend. - A Lasham event is planned for this date and will be notified in due course and visitors will be welcome.
- **Saturday 7th March – 16:00 hours Lasham Gliding Society AGM. LGS members only.**
- Saturday 14th March – A talk by Artyom Liss entitled “The end of the Media? What's happened to Journalism, and can we fix It? “.
- Saturday 21st March –A talk by G Dale on bailing out and also his recently published books.
- Saturday 31st March – Clocks spring forward on this night. Subject to confirmation we will welcome Alan Meredith – Chief Pilot for the British Antarctic survey for an update on flying in Antarctica. This is subject to Al's Antarctic duties finishing in time for the talk.