



NEWSLETTER

£10 Subscription due, please send to Gerry Sealy-Bell

Christmas Lunch

50 members, friends, guests and some of our widows attended an excellent Christmas Lunch at Greenacres on 16th December 2015. As usual the food was excellent as well as plentiful. Our thanks to Stephanie and Fiona and their staff for their friendly and efficient service.

Ian Mason started the proceedings with a variation upon grace, a letter written to a prisoner of war in 1943 which summed up the feelings of the family left at home. It was poignant and had everybody remembering those who had suffered in such a way.

During the meal as the Christmas Pudding was served Ian led us in 'We wish you a Merry Christmas' - a No 1 hit it will not be but it was sung with gusto. Following the meal we had the toasts. The Loyal Toast from Graham Laurie, Absent Friends from David Bray and The Chiltern Aircrew Association from our Chairman, Geoff Hulett. Ian again got to his feet (you can't keep a good man down) and treated us to some Christmas Cracker jokes which, how shall I put it, were probably better out of the way before the real celebrations started.

The conclusion was the raffle with many of the prizes donated by members and thank you for that. Tom Payne failed to win the whisky but otherwise the prizes were well spread around, including one for Tony Boxall from Woking, who won a bottle of white wine kindly donated by Tom. It was, he confessed later, the one he

had won in their raffle back at their 'Fly In' earlier in the year! Watch out for it to be returned at our May Buffet Lunch.

Finally it was good to see Des Richard again gracing our table. As you know Des spends most of his time caring for Janet, but it was a pleasure to see him again. It was also good to welcome Stuart and Miranda McKay who are always welcome as they are so generous with their time for the Chiltern ACA.

So another year over and good to see us flourishing even if we have lost too many 'good guys' this year. We will continue to enjoy the camaraderie, good banter, good food but 'We will Remember Them'.

See some of Roger Miller's photos on Page 5

AGM 20 Jan 16 Agenda

1. Chairman's opening remarks
2. Committee reports
3. Election of Officers
4. Any other business

Please be prompt as we would like to get the AGM over quickly. If you have any matters for 'Any Other Business' please ensure they are with the Chairman by Monday 11th January 2015.

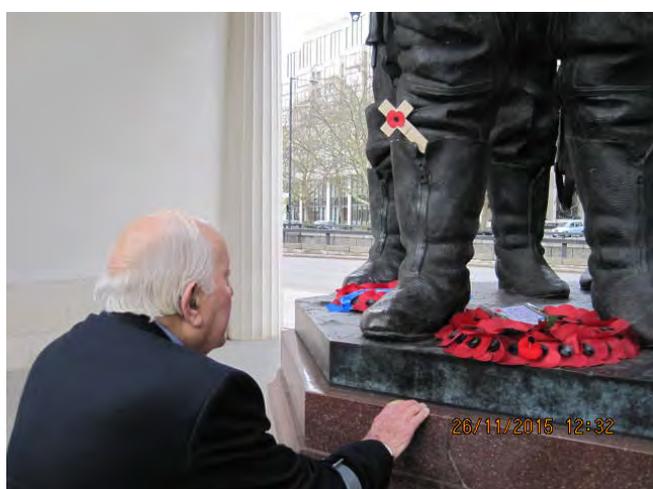


Remember 20th January 2016

"AGM & Members Meeting"

Greenacres 1030 for 1100am

Visit to London-26 Nov 15



I promised a fuller report on our visit to London. The old adage ‘a picture paints a thousand words’ is very apt here. We all visited because we wished to, some had direct personal reasons and others memories of those who did not make it back.

After the photo at the top of this column was taken, the other visitors applauded our veterans, it took us by surprise but nevertheless, was well deserved.

We cannot thank Mike Neville enough for his time he gave us both at the memorial and of course back at Portland Place, the home of The Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund where he gave an excellent briefing on their work.

Our thanks also to Ian not only for driving us but also for his very kind donation to our funds. We were able to reciprocate and have him as a guest at our Christmas Lunch.

No way to start Christmas

Accident: Mahan Air A313 at Istanbul on Dec 24th 2015, failed to stop at stand



A Mahan Air Airbus A310-300, registration EP-MNP performing flight W5-112 from Tehran Imam Khomeini (Iran) to Istanbul (Turkey) with about 150 people on board, had safely landed on Ataturk Airport's runway 05 and taxied to the apron, stand S6. The aircraft failed to stop on the stand and about 30 meters past the stand it broke through a concrete barrier topped by a railing causing the nose gear to collapse, the nose fell onto the roof of a bus driving along the road underneath. No injuries occurred.

No passengers were on board of the bus, the driver was the sole occupant of the bus and remained uninjured.

Passengers reported following the accident the captain announced they had suffered a hydraulic failure resulting in the failure of the brakes.

Airport officials commented the crew shut the engines down when the aircraft reached the parking position and encountered the failure of the brakes. Had the bus not been there by pure coincidence the outcome of the accident could have been far worse.

This brings back memories of the Airbus crash at Toulouse where sadly there were injuries, but looking at the photograph it is amazing it was not more serious. On 15 Nov 07 at 5 pm at the Airbus Technical Center in Toulouse. As the aircraft was undergoing the final tests before being delivered to Etihad Airways in the coming days, it had to pass an engine test ("engine run-ups") on the ground. It somehow broke loose and crashed into an anti-noise barrier.



As seen on the picture above the plane looks badly damaged, having the nose being slammed into the wall and the back touching the tarmac. The plane was "seriously damaged" according to Airbus, too, who also said that on top of the 9 people onboard (including 7 Etihad employees), 1 on the ground was also injured. Two of the passengers and another person on the ground were seriously injured. In all 10 people were injured and four people were taken to hospital, three of whom were in serious conditions,

Eighty firefighters rushed to the scene after the plane slammed nose-first into the barrier and the tail hit the tarmac. "For an unknown reason the aircraft began to roll and it climbed up the embankment in front of it," said Airbus France spokesman Jacques Rocca. The company said later, however, that only five people had been injured. The four-engine aircraft can carry between 380 and 472 passengers depending on the model and the cabin layout.

So what happened? The brand new Airbus 340-600, the largest passenger airplane ever built, sat in its hangar in Toulouse, France without a single hour of airtime. The flight crew of Abu Dhabi Aircraft Technologies (ADAT) were to conduct pre-delivery tests on the ground, such as engine run ups, prior to delivery to Etihad Airways in Abu Dhabi. The ADAT crew taxied the A340-600 to the run-up area. Then they took all four engines to takeoff power with a virtually empty aircraft. Not having read the run-up manuals, they had no clue just how light an empty A340-600 really is.

The takeoff warning horn was blaring away in the cockpit because they had all 4 engines at full power. The aircraft computers thought they were trying to takeoff but it had not been configured properly (flaps/slats, etc.). Then one of the ADAT crew decided to pull the circuit breaker on the Ground Proximity Sensor to silence the alarm. This fools the aircraft into thinking it is in the air. The computers automatically released all the brakes, so that pilots can't land with the brakes on. **'Simples!'**

Strange goings on at RAF Scampton!

Apparently when Lincolnshire County Council were widening the road past RAF Scampton's main gate in about 1958, the 'gate guards' there had to be moved to make way for the new carriageway. Scampton was the WWII home of 617 Squadron, and said "gate guards" were a Lancaster.....and a Grand Slam bomb!..

When they went to lift the Grand Slam, thought for years to just be an empty casing, with an RAF 8 Ton Coles Crane, it wouldn't budge. "Oh, it must be filled with concrete" they said.

Then somebody had a horrible thought No!... Couldn't be? ...Could it?... Not after all these years... out here open for the public to climb over, and be photographed sitting astride! Could it???Then everyone raced off to get the Station ARMO.

He carefully scraped off many layers of paint, and gingerly unscrewed the base plate. Yes, you guessed it, live, 1944 explosive filling! The beast was very gently lifted onto an RAF 'Queen Mary' low loader, using a much larger civvy crane (I often wonder what, if anything, they told the crane driver). Then it was driven slowly under massive police escort to the Coastal experimental range at Shoeburyness. There it was rigged for demolition, and when it 'high ordered', it proved in no uncertain terms to anyone within a ten mile radius that the filling was still very much alive!

Exhaustive investigations then took place, but nobody could find the long-gone 1944, 1945 or 1946 records which might have shown how a live 22,000 lb bomb became a gate guard for nearly the next decade and a half. Some safety distance calculations were done, however, about the effect of a Grand Slam detonating at ground level in the open. Apart from the entire RAF Station, most of the northern part of the City of Lincoln, including Lincoln Cathedral, which dates back to 1250, would have been flattened.

The Grand Slam was a 22,000 lb (10,000 kg) earthquake bomb used by RAF Bomber Command against strategic targets during the Second World War. It was the most powerful non-atomic bomb used in the war. Known officially as the Bomb, Medium Capacity, 22,000 lb, it was a scaled-up version of the Tallboy bomb, and closer to the original size that the bomb's inventor, Barnes Wallis, had envisaged when he first developed his earthquake bomb idea. It was also nick-named "Ten ton Tess". When the success [of the Tallboy bomb] was proved, Wallis designed a yet more powerful weapon...

This 22,000 lb. bomb did not reach us before the spring of 1945, when we used it with great effect against viaducts or railways leading to the Ruhr and also against several U-boat shelters. If it had been necessary, it would have been used against underground factories, and preparations for attacking some of these were well advanced when the war ended. —

On 18 July 1943, work started on a larger version of the Tallboy bomb, which became the Grand Slam. As with the original Tallboy, the Grand Slam's fins generated a stabilizing spin and the bomb had a thicker case than a conventional bomb, which allowed deeper penetration. After the hot molten Torpex was poured into the casing, the explosive took a month to cool and set. Like the Tallboy, because of the low rate of production and consequent high value of each bomb, aircrews were told to land with their unused bombs on board rather than jettison them into the sea if a sortie was aborted.

After release from the Avro Lancaster B.Mk I (Special) bomber, the Grand Slam would reach near-supersonic speed, approaching 1,049 ft/s (320 m/s), 715 mph (1150 km/h). When it hit, it would penetrate deep underground before detonating. The resulting explosion could cause the formation of a camouflet (cavern) and shift the ground to undermine a target's foundation. Unlike Tallboy, Grand Slam was originally designed to penetrate concrete roofs. Consequently, it was more effective against hardened targets than any existing bomb.

The first Grand Slam was tested at the Ashley Walk Range in the New Forest, on 13 March 1945. By the end of the war, 42 Grand Slams had been dropped on active service.



The devastating Grand Slam

Christmas Lunch Photos
 Courtesy Roger Miller



1. The tables are ready
2. Our guest from Woking and our driver Ian from Community Action Dacorum on Rod's table.
3. Bill George entertaining the ladies
4. Des Richard and Ian Mason discuss with Stuart McKay, Moth's perchance?
5. Did Gerry mention the Lancaster?
6. Haddenham were in fine form.
7. Tom Payne with Violet Dicker; that just sums up our lunch and the camaraderie of the Chiltern ACA!

Malcolm Clouett’s Memorial finally makes it

Ed: You may remember that during the series on Malcolm’s war time exploits, he visited Burma again and promised to have a memorial placed for his crew that did not survive the war.



Here is Malcolm’s story:

I wonder if Members would be interested in the following concerning 62 Squadron operating from Akyab, Burma in 1945:

In April that year I was posted with my crew to 62 Squadron, but on embarkation leave I was hospitalised with appendicitis, and they went on ahead without me. On 25th June, flying with another Skipper, they were killed on a troop-supplying mission.

During the monsoon season an exceptional number of Dakotas were lost, evoking a signal from the AOC 232 Group expressing his “dismay at the number of casualties incurred by the Transport Squadrons operating from Akyab ... in comparison with those of the American Squadrons. Instructions are therefore that crews, and especially new crews, are not to adopt a do- or- die attitude when flying in bad weather”.

However, he added, “ the Americans were based in Chittagong, a comparatively fair weather area”.

Last year, with a grant from the Lotteries Commission, I travelled to Akyab (now Sittwe) and enlisted the help of the Vicar of St. Mark’s Cathedral, The Rev. Daniel Hpwe Bu, in conducting a Service of remembrance for my crew.

I discovered that there was no commemoration of the work of the Squadron operating from their airfield in the defence of their Country against the Japanese, so subsequently I sponsored a Memorial Stone, now installed in the Cathedral wall. It is there now for posterity and a suitable memorial to the many RAF crews who gave their lives there.

Guy Buckingham remembers in ‘Oz



Floral Tribute to Guy at his funeral(Photo Tom Payne)

November saw the passing of Guy Buckingham (1921-2015), the man who introduced low-cost motor sport into Australia with the Formula Vee. This was an inexpensive open-wheeled racing car for beginners using a VW engine, suspension and transmission, devised in 1959. Guy played an important role in the bespoke manufacture and maintenance of Australian sports and racing cars during the halcyon days of budget motor sport from the 1950s until the 1970s.

Motor sport owes much to Guy and Chris Buckingham for producing a wide variety of low-budget specials, sports, and racing cars. But the Fang was their most popular road car and largest production model. Nota Engineering continues to be the longest lasting manufacturer of sports cars in Australia.

Words from the Powerhouse Museum, Sydney

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL 2016
(Please use capital letters)

SURNAME:

CHRISTIAN NAME (Known As:)

ADDRESS

POSTCODE:

TEL NO: MOBILE:

EMAIL:

DATE OF BIRTH:

RANK & SERVICE SERVICE NO or
LICENCE NO:

AIRCREW CATEGORY EXPERIENCE (inc SQN's)

TYPE OF AIRCRAFT FLOWN or OPERATED IN:

DECORATIONS, MEDALS etc:

PARTNER'S NAME:

CIVILIAN OCCUPATION

LEISURE PURSUITS & INTERESTS

MEMBERSHIP OF OTHER SERVICE OR FLYING ORGANISATIONS:

Would you allow your name, address, telno to be shown on the Membership List (YES / NO)

PLEASE RETURN TO MEMBERSHIP SEC: Gerry Sealy-Bell
31, Hempstead Rd, Kings Langley,
Herts, WD4 8BR

Programme 2016

Events at 1030 for 1100 at Greenacres unless (*)

2016

Jan 20 AGM and Members Meeting

Feb 17	'Seven short lives'	Stephen Potter
Mar 16	Flying Concorde	Gwyn Williams
Apr 20	The Cinderella Op	Dusty Miller
May 18	Guests Lunch*	1200 Noon

Your Committee**Chairman:** Geoff Hulett

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Chairman

I am pleased to say all our present committee are planning to continue for 2016, if you will have us? So please come along and support your committee at our January meeting. It will be an 'Open Floor' after the official proceedings. Happy New Year to you all.

Gerry

Welfare

Just to say how pleased we were to see so many of our widows join us for our Christmas Lunch. It was really good to see you all and in such fine form. So far I have not heard of any problems over the Christmas period, so may I wish you a very Happy New Year

David

Membership Secretary

I will be pleased to receive your £10 Subscriptions either at the January meeting or by post. If you chose the latter please do remember to enclose a stamped addressed envelope, your cheque and your membership card (if you can find it)!

Gerry

Secretary/Editor

As we prepare for the vote for this year's AGM I am pleased to report that neither Sepp Blatter nor Michel Platini are standing for office, as none of the present committee can afford any 'one off' payments - so it looks as if you are stuck with us!

After the success of our London Visit I hope to arrange a visit to the de Havilland Museum once it's refurbishment is complete later in the year.

Graham

Programme Secretary

The 2016 programme is slowly coming together but I always welcome ideas. You will note a couple of changes but we now have a full programme up to May.

Bill

Subscriptions 2016

£10

**Please send now to Gerry Sealy-Bell
with**

**Cheque, Membership Card and Stamped
Addressed Envelope**

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