



NEWSLETTER

Change of Date for Buffet Lunch - Now 19 Apr 17

February Meeting

It was the turn of the Army this month with Reg Palmer telling us of his wartime exploits with “324 Field Company, Royal Engineers”. He ran through his military career in a quiet, matter of fact manner but seemed to have a fantastic memory with a fund of stories to tell.

He was called up in 1944 from his home in Kent. He had shown a preference for The Royal Corps of Signals but in true service style was sent to The Royal Engineers! Perhaps they had taken some notice, as he found himself on Ayr Racecourse, training to be a Radio Operator (not so far from the Royal Signals after all!).

Post training this young 18 year old was sent to France in a landing craft. Sent North in a cattle truck and living under canvas, life had certainly changed. He had been taught to drive 3 tonners by the Army in training and was now given a scout car, with a Type 22 radio. One of his first jobs was to escort 20 German prisoners. After this it was North to Holland. The job was now to build bridges across the rivers and canals as they moved North for an eventual crossing of the Rhine. These bridges were ‘Pontoon Bridges’ and very often Reg as the Radio Operator would be ferried to the far bank and over the radio would line up the pontoons for the engineers to secure and in some cases he was on the German side of the river/canal when he came under fire!

As they moved northwards the Germans defended harder and harder but eventually they crossed into Germany. Reg was told he was a volunteer to attend a



Type 22 Radio

talk by Field Marshal Montgomery on Luneberg Heath. He finished his war in Hamburg covering the admin for the Regiment whilst the men blew up the submarine pens.

March Meeting

It will be a presentation by our very own Ian Stewart on the Handley Page Victor Mk2 on 15 Mar 17. Built locally at HP Radlett. It's first flight was on Christmas Eve 1952. 86 were built and they were finally retired from service on 15 Oct 93 (unless you count the accidental flight at Bruntingthorpe on 3 May 09!)



Remember 15th March
Join us for
“HP Victor Mk2 variants”
with Ian Stewart
Greenacres 1100 am

Click.....Wups!

An in-flight incident involving an RAF Airbus A330 Voyager en route to Afghanistan in 2015 has been categorised as “an extremely serious near-miss” by the director general of the UK Military Aviation Authority (MAA), following the completion of a service inquiry.

In an earlier report published in 2016, the MAA said aircraft ZZ333 entered a steep dive from a cruise altitude of 33,000ft after its captain accidentally jammed a camera into his sidestick control as he moved his seat forwards.



The incident happened over the Black Sea north of the Turkish coast and the report shows that the aircraft was out of its pilots' control for some 33secs, during which time it lost 4,400ft. Within 10secs of the forward stick input, the A330 had reached a 17° nose-down attitude. Its automatic high-speed protection system was triggered 3s later, with a maximum indicated air speed of 358kt or Mach 0.9, recorded. As the aircraft pitched down, the aircraft's captain – who was alone in the cockpit – attempted to disengage the autopilot and pull back on his sidestick. The co-pilot, who had been in the forward galley, attempted to return to his seat – although he was weightless, as the cabin encountered a maximum of -0.56g. “With his feet on the flight deck roof, the co-pilot reached down and attempted to disengage the autopilot by pulling back on his sidestick,” the report says.

With dual inputs being delivered, the A330's flight protection system was automatically engaged. Around this time, the captain's camera – which investigators found had last been used 3min 20s before the loss of control – was removed “by means of

a physical manipulation”. “From the onset of the pitch-down until the removal of the camera 33secs later neither pilot had control of the aircraft,” the report notes. “The initial recovery from the dive was the result of the aircraft's own protection measures, and not the product of pilot inputs.” They then set the thrust levers to idle and raised the aircraft's nose, before selecting take-off and go-around power and regaining straight and level flight at 31,000ft.

The report says the captain initially suspected an autopilot failure. considered switching off the A330's air data and inertial reference units, in order to bring it under “direct law” control. Had this been done, “the aircraft's self-protection measures for over-speed and pitch would have been disabled [and] the certified limit of 365KIAS would have been exceeded by a significant margin, potentially leading to significant damage to the aircraft”, the report says. “This was the first flight control/object/armrest interaction of this nature to be reported” to Airbus from over 190 million flight hours with the A330 family of aircraft. However, investigators found 26 instances where the autopilot had been inadvertently disconnected during a Voyager flight between April 2012 and March 2014. None of these had been recorded using a flight safety reporting system, it notes.

Damage to the aircraft, which encountered a maximum 2.06g during the recovery was limited to some dented ceiling panels and other minor damage, mainly to the entertainment system.. The captain's sidestick controller was also subsequently replaced, after Airbus assessed that the forces placed on it were beyond its design specification. “Up to 24% of the aircraft occupants were rendered temporarily unfit for duties following the incident,” the report adds, referring to those 25 passengers and seven crew members injured.

The inquiry also described the crew's decision to decline a Turkish air traffic offer to land at Trabzon some 60nm away, following a Mayday call and instead request a 500nm diversion to Istanbul as below the standard expected. They later accepted a 340nm diversion to Incirlik air base, despite having encountered “a highly unusual emergency and a potentially damaged airframe”.

“Without the excellent technology of the Airbus A330 flight control laws, the outcome could have been very different, with the realistic potential for

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the loss of the aircraft and 198 of our people," MAA director general AM Richard Garwood says in his summary of the incident.

"Modern technology may be capable of reducing crew workload to historic lows and aircraft can now protect themselves as never before, but the requirement for crews to understand and interact with the aircraft and its systems when things deviate from the norm remains as challenging as ever."

Ed: *Well there you have it, a simple act of taking a photograph nearly caused the loss of an aircraft and 198 lives. The report criticised the decision of the crew to not accept a diversion to Trabzon but to proceed to Istanbul, subsequently diverting to Incerlik. A normal descent from 33,000ft would take 110 miles and add to this the 'heart pumping' that would be going on in the cockpit for the next part of the flight, was that criticism justified? Yes with a possible damaged aircraft it is advisable to get on the ground, particularly so in the fighter role. Flying Transport aircraft is somewhat different, things are done slowly and methodically. The crew were not aware initially of what had caused the incident and even if they were, the aircraft would have needed a good airborne check, possibly a low speed handling check and so on. A mad dash to the nearest airfield may not have been advisable, particularly with the crew in the state they were in. Yes they could have orbited Trabzon but auto pilot "in", straight and level enables the crew to discuss what had happened and to investigate the flight manual in a calm or calm as possible manner. Transport aircraft and fighters are not flown physically or mentally in the same manner and this should be understood by those reporting on such incidents.*

One lesson that should be learnt is 'not ban cameras' from the flight deck but the 'best practice' of a clean cockpit i.e. if you use something like a camera or a manual, replace it safely as soon as you have finished with it. The BAe 146 had a huge bin on both sides of the cockpit, where such items could be stored with a clip lid. This ensured that whatever manoeuvre the aircraft does, the items are securely stowed. There were injuries, the crew needed time to assess those injuries, a breakneck descent would have done the passengers and airframe no good at all!

Yes we were lucky that the built in safety features saved the day but also remember the crews were new to this recently delivered aircraft and taking time to understand their situation, to my mind, was commendable.

So now you know, why I never became a Senior Officer! I was a Transport Pilot not a Fighter Pilot!

Setting Course

Way up here above the ground we stooge along and
look at the ground,

And we see the rivers far below, shimmering in the
sunset glow;

And little twisting roads and lanes, and long straight
lines where tiny trains

Are fussing through the countryside, with passengers
all snug inside:

Lucky people Going home.

See those fields like tartan checks, green and brown
and moving specks

Of workers scrambling on a bus: Wonder if they'll
think of us.

Heading eastward to the sea, as they are sitting down
to tea.

Hurry on, you earthbound folk – take your ease and
have your joke;

Lucky people. Going home.

You've done your job, we've ours to do we fellows in
the bomber crew

We're climbing now and flying – high a dusky shape
across the sky -

A part of one big bomber force, for Germany we are
setting course;

And there below in the evening light the shops are
shutting for the night

Lucky people. Going home.

But we up here and you down there, the housewives
in the market square,

The labourers busy on the farms and factory workers
making arms-

The aeroplanes and guns and tanks -

And every airman in the ranks; here's a thought for
you and me,

Here's to the time we shall all be

Lucky people. Going home.

By: Vernon Noble RAF via Keith Campbell who had a long trip home

Ed: This came to me in the latest Newsletter of The Bomber Command Association in Australia. When you think of it, it could have been written by any of the 55,573 killed out of a total of 125,000 aircrew in Bomber Command during World War 2. It also serves as a reminder of all those Commonwealth airmen who flew during the war.

Tales from the Tower

Ed: We welcome a new correspondent from Cheshire. Tony Brown is ex RAF and then a civilian Air Traffic Controller based for many years at Manchester International (known by many of you as Ringway). Tony also worked as part of the Air Traffic team at RIAT Fairford for many years. Currently he provides the Air Traffic input to the British Airways "Flying with Confidence" courses that are held at various airports around the country. Tony was also the controller cycling home, mentioned in Alistair MacPherson's Jodel story recently. Welcome Tony and we look forward to further tales.

It was a Friday afternoon with the usual tea time rush. I was in the air position (tower) and was given a 10 miles check on the Red Arrows positioning in for the Barton Air show the next day .

I had a couple of departures and told the Arrows to continue approach. At 4 miles with the last departure rolling and, assuming nothing, I asked the Reds to confirm that they would land in loose formation (Manchester has a very wide runway)?

"No we will do a break". was the reply. At this point radar gave me a 15 mile check on Aviogenex 123 (East European airline only recently allowed into U.K.). "Continue the approach" I say to him "you are number two to a military formation."



The Reds breaking

The Arrows break left and right and position downwind. "Keep it tight" I say in a somewhat high pitched voice. "We have the Aviogenex in sight "say the Reds. "What are they going to do to me?" asks the Aviogenex in an even higher pitched voice.

"Keep it really really tight" I say to the Reds and they do. Landing, clearing the runway and the Aviogenex gets his late landing clearance coming over the fence.

Half an hour later and this was at a time when anyone could ring air traffic, I answered the phone on the back



desk. A lady with the most upper class voice I have ever heard is on the other end. "Hello" she said "this Penelope Smyth. I am not ringing up to complain but I was in my car at the airport traffic lights and this red aircraft flew right over my head very fast. I asked my son Torquil what it was but he didn't know so I am ringing up to ask. "That was the Red Arrows Madam" say I "there were nine of them". "Oh no" she said "there was only one but I must admit it was extremely long" !!!!

Tony added, the Tu 134 had a bomb aimers position in the nose. The flight became notorious for leaving Ottringham and then veering south to overfly Finningley which was a nuclear base . "Confirm you are following the airway?" was the standard question followed by the standard "sorry".

Why I want to be a Pilot

I want to be a pilot when I grow up, because it's a fun job and easy to do. That's why there are so many pilots flying around today. Pilots don't need much school, they just have to learn to read numbers, so they can read instruments. I guess they should be able to read road maps so they can find there way if they get lost. Pilots should be brave so they won't be scares if it's foggy and they can't see, or if a wing or motor falls off, they should stay calm. Pilots have to have good eyes to see through clouds, and they can't be afraid of lightening or thunder because they are closer to them than we are. The salary pilots make is another thing I like. They make more money than they can spend. This is because most people think plane flying is dangerous, except pilots don't because they know how easy it is.

There isn't much I don't like, except that girls like pilots and all the stewardesses want to marry pilots so they always have to chase them away so they won't bother them. I hope I don't get airsick because I get carsick and if I get airsick I couldn't be a pilot and then I'd have to go to work!

(Essay by 10 year old boy)

George Biggs
1924 - 2017

George sadly left us on 2 Feb 17 after a long illness. Until his poor health, he regularly attended our meetings, both as a member and committee member.

He was brought up in central London where his father worked as a chauffeur at Buckingham Palace. He became mad keen on flying and age 11 he was also given a small printing press. These two interests dominated his life. He joined The Air Defence Cadet Corps in 1938. He attended St Marylebone Grammar School and should have been evacuated with the other pupils to Cornwall. He, however, when the staff were not looking, dashed down a side street and back home. He donned his Air Cadet uniform and at age 15 tried to join the RAF!

He took a job as an electrician and eventually got a job in an aircraft factory in Chelsea. He could not join the RAF until he was 17½ when he was called up to St John's Wood. The demand for aircrew had dropped so he was sent on a 6 month course to Aberdeen University. Then it was the familiar ITW Torquay, Tiger Moth's at Theale, Reading and then a wait at Heaton Park, Manchester to await flying training overseas. It was not until early 1945 he sailed on SS Andes for South Africa. A train to Southern Rhodesia based initially at Induna on Cornell's and then Cranborne near Salisbury on Harvards. He was awaiting his Wings Parade when they announced the H Bombs had been dropped on Japan. He came back to UK for demob but agreed to sign on for another 3 years. After a short refresher at Feltwell he was awarded his wings and as George said, 'my life changed forever'. He met his wife Florrie and her family took him on board. Posted to No 61 OTU to fly the clipped wing Spitfire XVI's. Three months later the unit moved to RAF Chivenor, he took compassionate leave to get married. Florrie was introduced to the pilots but within a short period 3 Spitfires had nose dived, 2 into the Bristol Channel and one on to Exmoor, all were fatal. The cause was traced to the Dinghies inflating in flight and pushing the control column forward!

Having been married for just 5 weeks George was posted to the Middle East and was not to see Florrie again for 2 years. First he was posted to Egypt and then El Shemer in Palestine. Flying with No 32 Sqn in Spitfire Mk IX's. George described it as 'wonderful flying every day over places named in the Bible; The Sea of Galilee, The River Jordan, Jericho, as well as visiting Bethlehem, Nazareth, Hadera and Haifa, although most

of the time we were shot at by both sides! I even spent some time on a Kibbutz near our airfield.



George Biggs with his Spitfire Mk IX

Subsequently 32 Sqn were based at Ramat David. After the Israeli Declaration of Independence and the start of the 1948 Arab-Israeli War, the base was temporarily maintained by the RAF to cover the withdrawal of British forces from Palestine. On 22 May, the Royal Egyptian Air Force attacked the base, mistakenly believing it was an Israeli airbase. In a series of three attacks, 5 Spitfires and a Dakota were destroyed or damaged, a hangar was destroyed, and four airmen were killed. Five Egyptian fighter planes were shot down, by two 32 Sqn Flight Commanders, still dressed in their pyjamas!

George spent another year in Cyprus flying Spitfire XIII's and Vampires. It was now time to return to UK and demob. This enabled him to be reunited with his wife and to actually meet her, rather than writing every day. He left the RAF and worked 12 hours a day on a Printing Apprenticeship. This, however, was transformed by a call up on standby for the Korean War. This turned out to be a 3 month holiday, with Florrie, to RAF Oakington flying Harvards and then to RAF North Luffenham flying Spitfire 22's and Vampire V's. In 1952 he was at RAF Valley for 15 days flying Venom V's and Meteor VII's. Finally in 1953 He spent 15 days at Reading flying Chipmunks which he found a bit tame, the reason he never took up Private Flying.

It was back to a full career in Printing, during which time whilst on a trade fair in the Middle East he met another Spitfire pilot, one Geoff Hulett our current Chairman. George will be sadly missed by the Chiltern Branch and by No 32 Sqn. Our condolences to his family.

GL



Annual Act of Commemoration at Runnymede 7 May 2017

The Annual Act of Commemoration to honour those who lost their lives will be held at the Air Forces memorial at Runnymede (Cooper's Hill Lane, Englefield Green, Egham, Surrey TW20 0LB) on Sunday 7 May 2017 at 11.00 am. This very moving ceremony, during which wreaths will be laid on behalf of the Commonwealth Air Forces and Ex-Service Organisations, is open to all who wish to pay their respects to those named on the Memorial. The Air Forces Memorial at Runnymede commemorates by name 20,458 airmen and women who were lost in the Second World War during operations from bases in the United Kingdom and North West Europe, and who have no known grave.

The Memorial stands on Cooper's Hill, overlooking Runnymede, the Thames-side pasture three miles east of where King John signed the Magna Carta in 1215. The large site was given to the Commonwealth War Graves Commission by Sir Eugen and Lady Effie Millington-Drake (Sir Eugen was British Ambassador to Uruguay at the time of the Battle of the River Plate in December 1939). The design of the Memorial consists of a square cloister and on the far side from the entrance is a tower, reminiscent of a war-time airfield control tower, available for access and giving fine views. The cloister on this side, which is on the edge of a wooded hill and overlooks the River Thames, has two curved wings, terminating in look-outs, one facing Windsor, the other Heathrow Airport. The tower has a central arched opening above which are three stone figures sculptured by Vernon Hill, representing Justice, Victory and Courage. The focal point for ceremonies is the Stone of Remembrance on the lawn enclosed by the cloisters and, for contemplation, a chapel in the tower. The Memorial was designed by Edward Maufe and was unveiled by Her Majesty The Queen in October 1953.

Buffet Lunch Wednesday 19th April 2017 12 Noon for 12.30 pm

Your Committee have decided to revise our annual programme and instead of holding our lunch, as usual, in May we have brought it forward to Wednesday 19th April at 12 Noon for 1230 at Greenacres.

The format will remain the same and we are hoping to have a special guest joining us which we hope to be able to confirm shortly. Please make the effort to attend and as usual we would welcome friends and particularly our widows. If anybody has travel problems please contact a committee member and we will try to arrange a lift.

The cost of the Buffet will be £10 and tickets will be available at the March meeting or by post from Ian Mason (and yes you have guessed it PLEASE enclose a stamped addressed envelope!)



De Havilland Moth Club

10-11 June 2017

Charity Weekend, Old Warden. This will be the first Charity Flying event for several years and is possible through the new rules and regulations introduced by the CAA which have relaxed the previous limitations and restrictions. The Chiltern ACA have sponsored one trip for a budding young aviator to get a flight in a Tiger Moth. It would be great if as many members as possible could be present. Further details will be published as they are confirmed.

30 July 2017

Gathering of Moths, Old Warden. The intention is to establish a sociable gathering of like minded people, de Havilland aeroplanes and vintage motor cars and motor cycles. You will be hearing more.

Chiltern Aircrew Association

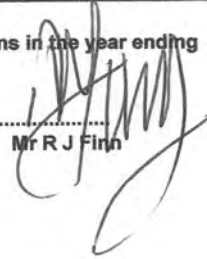
Revenue Account from 1st January 2016 to 31st December 2016

<u>Expenditure</u>	£	£	<u>Income</u>	£	£
Administration					
Committee Expenses, includes newsletter	468.44		Subscriptions	480.00	
Speaker Expenses	50.00		Raffle (Net Proceeds)	497.20	
Donations	200.00		Interest Income	0.35	
Minibus Hire	72.50		Donations	120.00	
Equipment	240.00				
		1,030.94			1,097.55
Entertainment					
Guest's Event May 2016	390.00		Guest's Event May 2016	306.00	
Xmas Dinner Dec 2016	1,100.00		Xmas Dinner Dec 2016	1,057.00	
		1,490.00			1,363.00
Total Costs		2,520.94	Total Income		2,460.55
Excess of Expenditure over Income		(60.39)			
Assets at 1st January 2016		2,731.09			
Excess of Income over Expenditure		(60.39)			
Assets at 31st December 2015		2,670.70			
Current Account		2,118.93			
Savings Account		551.77			
Cash in Hand		0.00			
		2,670.70			

We Certify that the above accounts are correct and properly reflect transactions in the year ending 31st December 2016

Signed

Hon Auditor 
Mr A C Deether FCA

Hon Treasurer.....
Mr R J Finn 

Dated

14th February 2017

Just a short note concerning these ratified accounts. As you will see we are in a healthy state. Some, however, will note a small loss over the year. This was due entirely to an unscheduled replacement of our 'speakers microphone'. Those of you who attend our meetings will know that we purchased a new one when we updated our equipment a few years ago, but this failed to give

a good standard of voice reproduction, so a new one was purchased late in 2016 and we are pleased to report it gives excellent sound.

We have managed to give small subsidies to both our lunch and Christmas dinner. Again may I thank you for your continued support for our raffle.

Rod

Programme 2017

Events at 1030 for 1100 at Greenacres unless (*)
2017

15 Mar 17 HPVictor Mk2 variants (*Ian Stewart*)
19 Apr 17 Guest's Buffet Lunch* 12 Noon
17 May 17 Members Meeting
10 Jun 17 DH Moth Club Charity Flying
Old Warden*
21 Jun 17 Project Propeller (*Gideon Topes*)
25 Jun 17 Project Propeller 2017*
Gloucester Airport*

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Welfare

I am away in Tenerife at the moment but via members have been able to keep in touch. Ron Doble is still in Stoke Mandeville. He has not been out of bed for longer than half an hour in the eight weeks, so his blood pressure is all over the place. Having said that, some days he is quite cheerful and we are hoping for improvement once the nurses get him mobile. Jim Copus is not fit to join us at the moment but am keeping in touch via his daughter

David

Membership Secretary

By now if you have not paid you should have had a personal reminder by mail or email. We would like to publish a new Membership List next month.

Ian

Secretary/Editor

We are looking at some visits and I hope to have positive news next month. Saw Ron Doble in hospital and he would always welcome visitors.

Graham

Treasurer

You will see the accounts on P7 so any queries just give me a call.

Rod

Chairman

Chiltern ACA was well represented at the funeral of our late member, George Biggs. George flew Spitfires with 32 Squadron whose current OC, Wing Commander Steve Courtnadge was present together with Station WO Mike Henriques and Cpl Donna Gibson who laid a wreath of poppies. The Squadron Association was represented by Mrs Jan Burt. The service followed the varied life of George with particular emphasis on his time in the Royal Air Force both during the war and afterwards in Palestine at the time of the troubles there, where he flew with 32 Squadron.

Sadly his wife, Florrie was not well enough to attend the service. At the reception following the funeral we were able to talk to family members and learn a little more about George and his many attributes.

Following a conversation with Steve Courtnadge we have an invitation to visit 32 Squadron at Northolt. Details to follow.

Geoff