



# NEWSLETTER

## Last chance to book for our Guest's Lunch on 20 May 2015

### Members Meeting - 15 Apr 15

*Geoff Hulett reports:*

Our thanks to a disabled Roger Miller, who arrived on crutches, for bringing along and operating the sound system for this meeting which opened with the poem 'Lie in the dark and listen' written by Noel Coward and read by Joe Williams of East Devon ACA. Joe a rear gunner on Lancs of 625 squadron and was shot down on his 20th op and subsequently escaped from a prisoner of war camp. The recording comes with the sound of 'Merlins' (See Page 7)

David Bray gave a good account of his recent cruise up the Yangtze River and surrounding tourist spots and I bemoaned my cruise on the 'MV Azores'...an expensive rust-bucket.

Tom Payne (who won the whisky once again!!) brought along a poppy from The Tower of London and took us through the story of its ultimate destination.

We heard from Harold Kirby of his incredible escape during an 'op' when the Lancaster flying above him released its bomb load which penetrated the wing of Harold's aircraft, taking out the undercarriage and resulting in a crash landing.

Guy Buckingham reported on car construction in Australia following up his story in the Newsletter.

This gave me the opportunity to produce a copy of the single sided A5 Newsletter of 1985 for comparison with the bumper edition put together by Graham and dropping through your mail or email boxes each month

In case of a lull in the proceedings I took along an artefact for identification, a difficult task and no right answers. The object was a hand mould as used by type-founders from the time of Gutenberg until c 1885. One day I hope to give practical demonstration of its use.

### Finally did anybody find a microphone?

#### Runnymede Service Sunday 10 May 2015

On Sunday 10 May there will be a service at the Air Forces Memorial-Runnymede starting at 11 am.

Please make an effort to be there by 10.30. Ample picnic areas nearby if the weather is CAVOK.



Remember 20th May 2015

“Guest's Lunch”

Why not invite a friend or two.

Greenacres 12 Noon

## Malcolm Cloult's Story

### Part 3

#### Flying at last!

Ground training began immediately, and at the end of six weeks, instead of beginning flying training, we had to begin the whole course again! Why? One can only assume that the demand for aircrew was now diminishing, requiring a slow-down in training. And then it was that Gerald and I were separated, as he failed to pass the eventual examination, he going on to Air Gunner training, and I to the Elementary Flying Training School -EFTS at Induna., Thus Gerald was wearing his flying badge before I did, and was posted to a bomber Squadron in North Africa.

With great excitement I climbed into my first training aircraft, the immortal Tiger Moth (my nephew in Australia still has one that I have flown). Preparation for this entailed robing with a kapok inner suit and heavy-duty outer, plus helmet and goggles, leather gauntlets and fleece-lined boots and, finally, a parachute, wearing which made it comically difficult to walk and climb into the aircraft

A ground mechanic saw that I was strapped in tightly, and then the Instructor showed me how to start up, before taking me for a familiarisation flight. Wow! I loved it, together with all the subsequent training, including aerobatics (with, at first, one exception that could stop you wanting to fly for ever! - that is spinning). We had to learn to recover from spins before going solo. The first time my instructor demonstrated one I simply curled up as small as my tight harness would allow and sunk down into the cockpit, But that was until I discovered that I had to keep looking straight ahead. Then it was fun.

Now came night flying. I wondered how, in the dark, one could judge height for the touch-down, but it was a needless worry. I came to enjoy flying at night, seeing the lights of the town 1000 feet below, relying entirely on the basic instruments in that flimsy little aeroplane. Of course before that we had to learn to interpret the instruments, and had to be tested in daylight under a hood that was installed covered the little cockpit. – Even taking off “blind”.

The Instructor would put the plane into some unnatural attitude, diving, climbing, on its back, and expect the pupil to make the necessary correction, and not only recover but do so quickly against every contrary message from the brain – all the fault of the inner ear in which liquid continues to swirl about even when movement has ceased. At first it required great strength of mind to physically overcome the false messages.



*Training in Southern Rhodesia, an instructor demonstrates a 'wheelerie', but we had to do 3 pointers before 1st solo!*

Before qualifying to fly solo I had one more hurdle to overcome, for after 12 hours' instruction I was still not perfecting a three-point landing. "Get the stick back". was the Instructor's patient yell when, yet again, when about to touch down; I was afraid of lifting off again and bouncing all over the airfield if I pulled the control column right back.

Finally, this normally courteous guy, a former South African Airways pilot, yelled obscenities down the voice pipe, "Pull the \*\*!\* stick back, for I was getting close to being "scrubbed". That did the trick! Come what may I yanked the stick back at the last moment on the next attempt and, MIRACLE!, the aircraft sat down perfectly on all three points. After ensuring that this was not a fluke he stopped me after the next landing, unstrapped himself, climbed out and said, "Pick me up after a circuit." I wonder what were his thoughts as he waited?

An important part of the training then was a cross-country triangular flight, landing at a strange airfield at one of the points. With a map strapped to one leg, and a log on the other, with no "Met" information, one had to work out the wind drift from the set course and apply corrections. I enjoyed that. It was not reported back to Induna that at the other airfield I committed the cardinal sin of landing down-wind! There was no excuse for it, because, not only was there a wind sock, but also the landing direction was displayed by a "T" on the ground. No condemnation was forthcoming from Induna, so it couldn't have been reported.

At the end of EFTS I was classed only "Average" as a Pilot Navigator, ruling me out as a Fighter Pilot, so I was sent for advanced training on "Oxford" twin-engine aircraft that seemed cavernous after the little "Tiger Moth!". Strangely, it seemed easier to fly, though it was said that if you could fly an Oxford you could fly anything.

*(continued on P3)*

Three incidents of my training on Oxfords come to mind: In one case I had to abort a take-off when one engine's revs fell off; on another occasion the starboard engine poured out black smoke. The partner with whom I flew merely tapped me on the shoulder to draw my attention to it in an unconcerned manner! My immediate reaction was to throttle back that engine and fly on one, but I couldn't maintain height, so I returned to base on 1 ½ engines to make an emergency landing. The fault proved to be a broken rocker arm, resulting in oil running into one cylinder and burning. I guess what I did prevented further damage, and, as a trainee, I felt pretty pleased with myself.

But a potentially disastrous situation was averted when I was practicing powered emergency landings that required landing as close to the boundary and in the shortest possible distance. Trying to improve, after several unsatisfactory attempts, the next time I was still too high over the boundary, so I throttled right back (negating the reason for the exercise!) to drop my speed, and, at about 30 ft., my starboard wing stalled. Despite my proximity to the ground, being well taught, I pushed the nose hard down, at the same time opening the throttles wide, resulting in a heavy three-point landing, but not the conventional one! This one included the starboard wheel and wing tip. Though there was no visible damage, it had to be reported for the protection of the next user. In fact a repair was required, and an endorsement in my log book put the accident down to "An error of judgement". On the quiet my Instructor was generous enough to admit failing to tell me that I needed a higher speed than usual when coasting to avoid a wing stall.



*Airspeed Oxford*

My solo check had been undertaken by the Flight Commander (you'll come across him again later) so I was just a bit anxious, which probably explained why my first approach to landing was lousy. He seemed unconcerned, sitting in the right-hand seat with his feet up on the dashboard, leaving me to it! When I realised I was making a hash of the first landing I opened up and went round again. This time it was a textbook landing. I passed,

Then followed flying with a partner, practicing, in turn, navigation and bomb aiming, alternating the piloting. We learned to trust each other completely. Having qualified as Pilots there was now a wait for a posting - to a Squadron in North Africa probably.

So to give us a taste of what that new life might be like we were moved to an isolated airfield in the bush, living under canvas for a couple of weeks. There we practiced formation and low flying in the Oxfords, and carrying out imaginary bombing raids.

Something about this way of living - perhaps poor hygiene, or the nature of the food - gave me some stomach infection. The Officer in charge ordered me back to base sick bay. My flying partner flew us back to Kumalo. During the flight I was sound asleep despite the engine noise, waking up only when we landed. Two days in bed and medicine quickly returned me to full health.

The alternative to North Africa for a few was Instructor training. That would be the "pits" for young men wanting to play an active role in the war, but no, it was to be neither for me. Being a pretty "steady" type, I was sent to a South African Air Force base in George, Cape Province for Navigational Reconnaissance training in preparation for joining Coastal Command, in which pilots had to be trained beyond the basic navigation training they had received in all Aircrew duties. This included astro navigation and intercepting ships at sea. My record of practice star sightings usually put me at more than ten miles from my position, so heaven only knows what they would have been like in a bucking aircraft!

*(To be continued next month)*

**Frank Bryant**

(Nov 1920 - Jan 2015)

Frank was a Bomb Aimer. He trained at 42 Air Training School Port Elizabeth, South Africa before serving with No 76 Squadron based at Holme on Spalding Moor on Halifax aircraft from September 1943.



During his time on 76 he became a member of the Caterpillar Club

He attained the rank of Warrant Officer and was awarded the Aircrew Europe Medal.

Post war he became an Office manager. Sadly he was unable to attend meetings recently. Our condolences go to Frank's family.

**Alan Dicker**

(21 May 1924 - 3 April 2015)

Alan flew a large range of aircraft during his RAF career as a Navigator, including Anson's, Mitchell's, Liberator's, Sunderland's, Valetta's and Varsity's and finishing with the Canberra and Victor jets. In 1947 he flew with No 203 Squadron and in 1948 moved to No 205 Squadron on Sunderlands and in the 1950's he flew with No 15



*HP Victor No 15 Sqn*

Squadron on Canberras and later on the HP Victor. He retired from the Royal Air Force on 17 July 1962

He continued his flying as a Flight Test Observer with Handley Page, flying their famous Hastings, Heralds and Victors. This was mainly from Radlett but occasionally on the Herald from Woodley, Reading.



*HP Herald at Woodley*

So quite a varied career with aircraft from the Anson to the HP Victor bomber.

Our condolences to Violet, our thought are with you at this difficult time

**To all Non pilot Aircrew**



If you disagree to this sentiment, please write an article for the Newsletter explaining your reasons!

## Avro's contribution to the Transport Fleet in the 1960's

Starting life as an A. V. Roe project in 1958, the original Type 748 was planned as a 20-seat short/medium-range feeder airliner. No interest was shown in the design, so it was scaled up in size and the Hawker Siddeley Group, of which Avro was a component company, decided to put the aircraft into production. The first flight of the prototype took place at Woodford on 24 June 1960. The first production aircraft, capable of seating a maximum of 48 passengers, was designated Avro 748 Series 1. It first flew on 31 August 1961, powered by two 1298kW Rolls-Royce Dart 514 turboprops.



*A swish replacement for the DC 3?*

Redesignated HS.748 in 1963, later versions included the Series 2 and Series 2A (1967) civil transports; the Coast-guarder variant was also developed, optimised for maritime patrol, flying in 1977. The improved Series 2B, by now called the BAe 748, flew in June 1979 and a further update, the Super 748, made its debut in 1984. Also produced was the Civil Transport with a large cargo door, and the similar Military Transport with additional fittings for a variety of roles. More than 50 military transports were sold to foreign armed services. Production of all versions, including assembly in India by Hindustan Aircraft, totalled 380 aircraft.

The RAF purchased 6 HS 748's, designating them the Andover CC Mk 2, so what was the Andover CC Mk 1, well the Hawker Siddeley HS 780 Andover is a twin-engined

turboprop military transport aircraft produced by Hawker Siddeley for the Royal Air Force developed from the Avro-designed HS 748 airliner. The Andover was named after the Avro Andover, a Royal Air Force (RAF) biplane transport used for medical evacuation between the first a kneeling landing gear to make ramp loading easier.



*Andover CC Mk 1 in the knelt position*

Deliveries of the order for 31, commenced from Woodford in 1966. Three Squadrons were formed No 46 (Abingdon), 52 (Seletar, Singapore) and 84 (Sharjah, UAE). The roles were many fold, a straight Transport aircraft, medical evacuation (stretcher fit), parachuting and supply dropping.

One of the most famous parachute drops was one by a future Monarch. On being appointed Colonel in Chief The Parachute Regiment on 11th June 1977, The Prince asked to take part in the Parachute Training Course and in 1978 he attended the course at RAF Brize Norton.

The course lasted from the 17th to the 28th April 1978. The Prince felt he could not "look them in the eye" or wear The Parachute Regiment's famous Red Beret and Para Wings, unless he had done the course. "I felt I should lead from the front or at least be able to do some of the things that one expects others to do for the country." he said.

The Mk 1 aircraft remained in service until 1974 when No 46 Sqn was disbanded at Thorney Island. Some were sold to the Royal New Zealand Air Force whilst much of the remainder were then converted to the Andover E3 in the 'Flight Checking Role' with No 115 Sqn until October 1993.

If you would like to know more about these splendid Transport aircraft, please contact Messrs **Bray, Laurie and Mason** who have many happy memories of flying the 'Brown Banana' and in Graham and Dave's case, the shiny red, white and blue Mk 2's of The Queen's Flight.

## Guy Buckingham

### Part 4

Life continued in a leisurely fashion, we all did a bit of flying, cross-countries, air tests and practice bombing. on one of these flights in the Walrus, I used the drift sight, which fitted through a hole in the floor, I took it out but forgot to close the floor panel! The pilot decided to land on the Nile and we promptly sank in six feet of water and had to be dragged out by tractor!

When the Italians came into the war, we were immediately put on a war footing; no one really knew what to do, but 'civvies' were put away, rifles issued and the locals started scraping the rust off the bombs.

At the beginning of the war the aircrew/tradesmen situation had not been sorted out, most of us were LAC's and AC's, aircraft ranks had not been introduced then, so as tradesmen we were doing operations, as well as our own duties. I was the first instrument mechanic, Cranwell trained and having done a navigation course, I was detailed to flying duties. I flew a number of trips in the Bombay and the Valencia, but a lot more in the Wellesley's, we still had quite a lot of flying to do, as our planes were scattered all over the Sudan.



*Savoia Machete SM79*

We had been watching the Alitalia hangars for some time, there were two Savoia Machete (SM 79's) standing, as soon as war was officially declared, a detachment of us charged across the aerodrome and captured all the office gear and the two SM's. The Italians just cleared off and left everything behind, we got loads of souvenirs-

cutlery, tapestries, all sorts of spares and a clapped out 3 engine Caproni. The SM's were in good order and when we took the engine cowlings off to check the engines, we found Bristol Pegasus 18's, complete with Vokes air cleaners.

The Caproni was a total mess, before it could be started all the bottom plugs had to be removed to drain all the oil out of the bottom cylinders. When it was eventually started, it smoked like a chimney all the time it was running, but it flew many times after that.

We flew several bombing missions into Italian territory in Eritrea, the Italians were not very keen to respond, as they did not really want to be in the war. We saw a few CR42 fighter planes and lost a few of our aircraft. The Vincent's were nearly all destroyed on the ground - 14 in all. The Wellesley's of 47 and 223 Squadrons were all we had left. With the Wellesley's we flew to the Red Sea, El Fasher, Asmara, Gondor, El Obeid, Wad Medani and Kassala.

While the Italians were still at war with us, we were joined in the conflict by a squadron of South Africans, they flew in Gloster Gladiators; they always kept their aircraft in the hangars, when we had an air raid warning, they would take off from within the hangar in most spectacular fashion. Their excuse being that the planes became too hot if they stood outside in the sun; in fact the metal parts of all the aircraft became so hot, that all the flash would blister. Another addition to our defence was a flight of Rhodesians flying Hawker Audax, these were very like the Hawker Hart and used as dive bombers. I volunteered to do a few trips in one of these; we chased Italian transport in the foothills, dropping small bombs, then machine gunning on the climb out. It was exciting flying, but the 'monkey chain' (a device to prevent you shooting out of the plane as it climbed out) was too long for me, with the result that I floated off the floor at the start of each dive - extremely exhilarating! To cure this problem I tied several knots in it. After a while a new ruling came out, stating that Group 1 tradesmen were to stop operations, so apart from the odd airtest or trips into the bush, to fix damaged aircraft, we were grounded!

*to be continued*



*The official handover by Tom Payne of his framed photograph 'Together Again', of the two Lancasters, to Chairman of RAFA Aylesbury and Halton Derf Mockford on 4 March 2015*

## LIE IN THE DARK AND LISTEN

by  
Noel Coward

Lie in the dark and listen,  
It's clear tonight so they're flying high  
Hundreds of them, thousands perhaps,  
Riding the icy, moonlight sky.  
Men, materials, bombs and maps  
Altimeters and guns and charts  
Coffee, sandwiches, fleece-lined boots  
Bones and muscles and minds and hearts  
English saplings with English roots  
Deep in the earth they've left below  
Lie in the dark and let them go  
Lie in the dark and listen.  
Lie in the dark and listen

They're going over in waves and waves  
High above villages, hills and streams  
Country churches and little graves  
And little citizen's worried dreams.

Very soon they'll have reached the sea  
And far below them will lie the bays  
And coves and sands where they used to be  
Taken for summer holidays.  
Lie in the dark and let them go  
Lie in the dark and listen.

Lie in the dark and listen  
City magnates and steel contractors,  
Factory workers and politicians  
Soft hysterical little actors Ballet dancers,  
'reserved' musicians,  
Safe in your warm civilian beds  
Count your profits and count your sheep  
Life is flying above your heads  
Just turn over and try to sleep.  
Lie in the dark and let them go  
Theirs is a world you'll never know  
Lie in the dark and listen

**Ed:** *This is the poem that was heard at the start of our April Meeting*

**Programme 2015**

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

- 20 May Guest's Lunch\* 1200 Noon**  
 30 May Project Propeller\* - Cosford  
 17 Jun Airliners - Chris Sprent  
 15 Jul Concord, Boom or Bust? -  
 Alan Merriman  
 15/16 Aug International Moth Rally at Woburn\*  
 19 Aug Battle of Britain - Chris Wren

**Your Committee**

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**Welfare**

Sorry to hear **Roger Miller** has spent over a week in Watford General, particularly after his splendid efforts to attend (with kit) our last meeting. He is slowly improving and it was nice to hear him compliment the NHS staff so highly. We wish him well and look forward to having our resident 'engineer' back soon.

**Dennis Swains** has also just come out of hospital after a fall but is I am glad to report, on the mend.

My thanks as usual to those who continue to ring round friends, it does help and means so much to those on the receiving end - you know who you are.

**David**

**Membership Secretary**

Sadly I have to report the passing of **Frank Bryant** in January, he served on Halifax's with No 76 Sqn at Holme on Spalding Moor as a Bomb Aimer.

On a happier note we welcome a new member '**Dusty**' Miller, not to be confused by our engineer Roger Miller! Dusty's details as follows:

272 MILLER D (Dusty) 7 Winston Gardens, Berkhamsted,  
 Herts HP4 3NS Tel: 01442 877096 GL

We also have a change of address for Alan Chapple, who has moved care homes from Aylesbury to Chalfont St Peter. His new address is:

139 ALAN CHAPPLE, Austenwood Nursing Home, 29 North Park, Chalfont St Peter, Gerrards Cross, Bucks SL9 8JA  
 Tel: 01753 890134 SB

Finally please ensure you have sent me your orders for our Buffet Lunch.

**Gerry**

**Secretary/Editor**

Next month I plan to send out a new address list for members, so perhaps now is the time to check you have updated our Secretary with your latest contact details.

**Graham**



# Guest's Buffet Lunch

Greenacres Tavern

Wednesday 20th May 2015

Noon for 12.30pm (Please do not arrive before Noon)

Cost £7.00 per head

Please complete the form below and send to Gerry Sealy-Bell together with cheque payable to 'Chiltern Aircrew Association' and a stamped addressed envelope, the closing date for postal requests is Tuesday 12 May 2015. You may also collect tickets at our April 2015 meeting.

----- Please Tear here -----

# Guest's Buffet Lunch

Greenacres Tavern

Wednesday 20th May 2015

**NAME:**

**ADDRESS**

**POSTCODE**

**TELEPHONE**

Please send me ..... tickets for the buffet lunch on 20 May 15.

**I enclose cheque (Chiltern Aircrew Association) for £..... and a stamped addressed envelope**

Post to: Gerry Sealy-Bell, 31 Hempstead Road, Kings Langley, Herts WD4 8BR