



NEWSLETTER

September Meeting



Gp Capt
Min Larkin
CBE
MRAeS



gave a lively presentation chock full of facts and anecdotes about the RAF Halton Apprentice scheme. Like the independent RAF, the Halton Apprentice Scheme was the first of its type anywhere in the world. Lord Trenchard, by 1919 Chief of the Air Staff, and having served in France during WWI recognised that a major limitation on air forces was not the availability of pilots or aircraft. The main limitation was one of maintenance with 17 trades required whose training to the required skill level took five to seven years. As commander of a brand new force comprising a mixture of RFC and Naval pilots and ground crew Lord Trenchard was of the view that the new force needed it's own esprit de corps. Accordingly he set up the world's first Aeronautical College at Cranwell and shortly after, the world's first Aircraft Apprentice Training School at Halton. (Life of Lord Trenchard see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hugh_Trenchard,_1st_Viscount_Trenchard)

Entrance to Halton was by exam for boys between the ages of 15 and 17½ and was extremely competitive.

Some detractors of the expenditure at the time called it "A Public School at Tax Payers' Expense". The full time concentration of training reduced the period needed to three years rather than five to seven. The three year course comprised practical, theoretical and military training and was of a very high standard. It is estimated that some 40% of graduates gained commissioned rank. Included amongst their numbers are Air Commodore Sir Frank Whittle, Marshal of the RAF Sir Keith Williamson, Air Chief Marshal Sir Mike Armitage, Air Marshal Sir Graham Miller and Air Marshal Sir Cliff Spink. The training established a particularly strong esprit de corps and there were few barriers to progression into all fields of the RAF. Of the total RAF strength over 55% were Halton Apprentices. Perhaps a further indication is given by the selection of those known to have been commended for valour, starting with the Victoria Cross of Sgt Thomas Gray, (20th Entry) Navigator in a Fairy Battle.

Finally a measure of the esteem in which the Halton Apprentice School was held it that it is the only training school anywhere in the world to have it's own Sovereign's Colour. Moreover the Halton Colour is the only one in the world to be handed to an NCO by the Sovereign and to a student apprentice at that.

The above does not do justice to the mass of interesting facts and figures that flowed from Min Larkin's presentation. So I finish by saying thank you Min for a very well received presentation with more than it's fair share of surprises.

Not that I am proud to be one of Trenchard's Brats or anything.

Roger Miller (Sqn Ldr Engineer Branch (RAF Rtd))
95th Entry (Qualitas non Quantitas)



**The First War Pilot J M (Jack) Mason
Part 2**

Ed: Here we continue the extracts from Jack's First World War Logbook

MARCH 1917

Date	Aircraft Type	Duration	Description
28	Curtiss Jenny JN-4	15 mins (Dual) Circuits.	First official flight in a tractor. Took controls for a short time.
28	Curtiss Jenny JN-4	15 mins (Dual) Circuits.	Did turns & two landings.
28	Curtiss Jenny JN-4	90 mins (Dual)	Cross Country to Manston & Back. Did not take control on the way out. Took control for a short time on the homeward journey but gave it up owing to darkness.
30	Curtiss Jenny JN-4	10 mins (Dual)	Engine gave out and forced to land in a field.
30	Curtiss Jenny JN-4	25 mins (Dual)	Landings. Practiced landings and am very bad at them.

APRIL 1917

1	Curtiss Jenny JN-4	30 mins (Dual)	Landings. Practiced landings.
1	Curtiss Jenny JN-4	20 mins (PI)	Circuits. First solo in Curtiss. Felt quite at home. Very bad takeoff but good landings.
4	Curtiss Jenny JN-4	100mins (PI)	Circuits of Island. Very misty & could hardly see. Another very bad takeoff but good landing. Felt quite at home and liked the machine very much.
5	Curtiss Jenny JN-4	110 mins (PI)	Circuits of Island. Much better takeoff and good landing.
7	Curtiss Jenny JN-4	65 mins (PI)	Cross Country to Manston & Back. First cross country flight alone. Found my way quite easily. Did not land at Manston.
8	Curtiss Jenny JN-4	80 mins (PI)	Circuits of Island. Nothing unusual. Good landing.
12	Curtiss Jenny JN-4	30 mins (PI)	Circuits of Island. Am inclined to slip outwards on turns. Good landing.

15	Avro 504	20 mins (Dual)	Straights. First dual in "Avro" Practiced straights.
15	Avro 504	10 mins (Dual) Turns.	Did one or two turns. Am inclined to be too heavy on controls.
15	Curtiss Jenny JN-4	50 mins (PI)	Cross Country to Hearne Bay and Back. Went to Hearne Bay. Did not land. Got on very well. Good landing.
17	Avro 504	15 mins (Dual)	Circuits. Got on better. Still too heavy on controls.
18	Avro 504	20 mins (Dual)	Circuits. Forced to land in a field owing to engine failure.
18	Avro 504	30 mins (Dual)	Landings. Got on quite well but am inclined to flatten out too soon.
18	Avro 504	15 mins (Dual)	Landings. Am much better.
18	Avro 504	24 mins (PI)	Circuits. First solo in "Avro". Got on very well. Fairly good landings.
19	Curtiss Jenny JN-4	30 mins (PI)	Figures of Eight. Flying fair. Very bad landing. Landed side on to wind.
20	Avro 504	40 mins (PI)	Circuits. Got on fairly well but could not get the machine to climb. Very good landing.

RNAS TRAINING ESTABLISHMENT - CRANWELL

24	Avro 504	20 mins (Dual)	Circuits. First flight at Cranwell. Took control for a short time and did one or two landings.
25	Avro 504	16 mins (Dual)	Landings. Did three landings. Got on quite well.

MAY 1917

9	Avro 504	22 mins (Dual)	Landings. Very bad at landings. Flattened out much too soon.
11	Avro 504	20 mins (Dual)	Landings. Much better at landing than last time.
11	Avro 504	28 mins (PI)	Circuits. First solo at Cranwell. Got on very well in the air but could not manage engine on ground and lost my prop several times.

Ed: *Next month sees Jim move on to the Avro BE2C, more cross country flights as he builds up his experience*

What is really going on at Ryanair



As you land at your destination - or an airfield within 100 miles of where you thought you were going, the trumpets blare as you taxi in. Your baggage that may have cost as much as your seat is in the hold, together with much of the cabin baggage of those who board later.

The problem lately is even getting onto a flight at all with random services being cut for a minimum of the next six weeks. The pilots and cabin crew do a marvelous job in getting us from A to B but the problems lie back home with airline management. The Press Office have been working out excuses for the fact they have run out of crews. Yes some are on leave but when since the start of the year, 140 aircrew have left the company and joined rivals like Norwegian.

Brookfield Aviation and McGinley Aviation, are agencies supplying "self-employed" pilots for Ryanair. While this model may (or may not) be legal in Ireland, it is largely considered by authorities in Germany as being potentially bogus self-employment.

Based on an examination of the actual day-to-day operations of pilots and the degree of control and direction, which the airline exercises over them, the 'self-employment' status is under considerable doubt. A Prosecutor's search warrant in Germany has accused the pilots of intentionally creating a fraudulent tax scheme together with various partners. And Ryanair's business model seems to be a central focus of the investigation, including whether the airline was reducing its tax and social insurance bills by not directly employing pilots.

Confronted with the choice of "self-employment" or no employment, many might have become unwilling partners in such schemes. While the present investigation is limited to Germany it cannot be excluded that other authorities will follow the German lead and start investigations of pilots based in their countries.

The Ryanair Pilots Group (RPG) have provided guidance and advice to pilots about registering for social insurance in Germany. The same advice has been provided to all RPG members, no matter what country they are based in. Recent developments in Germany clearly indicate that ignoring these issues will not make them go away. Direct action is therefore required by every individual pilot to be fully aware yourselves now and to protect yourselves for the future, wherever you are based.

So when pilots are offered full employment by a rival airline, it is no surprise that 140 have jumped ship. To obtain the replacements without their own training scheme will prove difficult, but this is not a surprise to Ryanair. The number of pilots leaving started as a trickle but became a flood and like everyone else, to cover existing flights, staff required for training have been tasked 'on line' and are not available to train their new recruits, exacerbating the problem. In short this has been a ticking 'bomb' but it appears it had to come to a head with large amounts of cancellations. To try and circumnavigate the law, Ryanair have announced six weeks of cancellations, which require paying compensation for those flights in the next two weeks, leaving the majority of those affected with no plans other than a full refund of their fares. How they get pre booked hotel money or alternative flight is now up to them.

Ryanair pilots, who will not give their names for fear of losing their jobs, say differently, several former and current Ryanair pilots, who are equally as strident that a lack of pilots is also to blame. At least two used the word "droves" to describe the numbers leaving right now. There is a buoyant market for pilots, as airlines such as Norwegian and Jet2 are expanding. We know 140 Ryanair pilots have gone to Norwegian this year. Jet2 wouldn't give us a number.

One pilot said that on a recent recruitment drive for another airline, 32 of the 40 people they took on were from Ryanair. Pilots are really annoyed at being blamed for taking holidays." They feel they were being used as scapegoats for these cancellations. This situation was not improved when O'Leary says he will force the pilots to give up a weeks leave, until next year! Has he never heard of Flight Safety?

Pilots are sure that the problems were "self-induced", because people are leaving "quicker than they can replace them". And the training programmes for pilots are "weeks, even months" in arrears, so "cadets aren't getting trained".

Tributes paid to Bomber Command veteran Doug Radcliffe MBE

On 16 September 2017 The RAF Benevolent Fund said it was saddened to hear of the death of Doug Radcliffe MBE, who helped to build a lasting tribute to the sacrifice of his comrades, the Bomber Command Memorial.

Paul Hughesdon, Director of Welfare and Policy at the RAF Benevolent Fund, said: "We are greatly saddened to hear of the passing of Doug Radcliffe, President, long time Secretary and lynch pin of the Bomber Command Association.



"Doug was just 17 when he volunteered for service during the Second World War. Trained as a wireless operator, he flew in Wellington and Lancaster bombers and saw service in Italy and North Africa.

"Forever touched by the sacrifice of his fallen comrades, Doug made it his life's work to ensure their legacy was not forgotten. In his role as Secretary of the Bomber Command Association, he was involved in the fundraising for and building of the magnificent Bomber Command Memorial which stands in London's Green Park.

"In fact it was a comment from Doug to David Graham of the Heritage Foundation charity which kick-started the campaign to build a Bomber Command Memorial after he remarked 'where's our memorial?' while admiring the recently unveiled Animals in War memorial in 2007.

"Five years later Doug read the exhortation at the Memorial's unveiling by the Queen and when it was vandalised in 2013 it was Doug who stood guard over the memorial until the graffiti could be removed.

"As guardians of the Bomber Command Memorial, the RAF Benevolent Fund has had the privilege of getting to know Doug and his family and regularly saw him when he attended the annual Bomber Command Anniversary service.

"His life was dedicated to the memory of those he lost during the war, the 55,573 souls who did not return home and it has been our pleasure to work with him to this end. His unstinting work was recognised by the Queen when he was made an MBE.

"The RAF Family and Bomber Command has lost one of its finest supporters and we send our condolences to Doug's family at this sad time."



Doug joined us in 2015 for our visit to The Bomber Command Lunch and joined us at the RAF Club afterwards for lunch. He is standing right of centre between Roy Briggs and Harold Kirby. He was made of stern stuff, as you can see most of our guys had overcoats on but Doug was quite happy in his suit. Well I say quite happy, he must have been very cold, but he was not going to show it!

We owe Doug so much not just the families and comrades of the 55,573 who lost their lives, but the whole RAF Family for his perseverance in finally getting the memorial built. In fact the whole country owes Doug a debt of gratitude.

May he and all his colleagues 'Rest in Peace'

**Visit to No 32 (The Royal) Squadron
RAF Northolt**



'Ablly led by our Chairman a group of 8 members assembled at RAF Northolt on Friday 22 September met by Flt Lt Morton, a squadron pilot, who gave our passes and escorted us to the Squadron Headquarters. We were met by Wg Cdr Steve Courtcnadge, OC 32 (The Royal) Squadron who immediately directed us to the coffee bar. Whilst partaking of coffees/teas, plus a wonderful assortment of biscuits, we had a general discussion on military and political items associated with 32 Sqn. During this time we were viewing, from the coffee bar veranda, the airfield and eventually the departure of the Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary in an BAe146 for Florence, where the PM was to give her Brexit Speech.

We then assembled in one of the Squadron briefing rooms to be given a presentation on 32 Sqn. Wg Cdr Courtcnadge covered the Squadron History in detail reiterating some of the questions and answers asked during the earlier coffee stop.

Our next stop was a visit to the aircraft designated as the spare to the PM's BAe146. This aircraft, ZE700, was ex Queens Flight, one that must have been flown by our Newsletter Editor! OC 32 then described the safety/security suites used by the aircraft to stop missiles damaging the aircraft before showing us the interior of the aircraft. He mentioned that the interior design was generally to Her Majesty's wishes, but highlighted that there could be many changes to the internal seating to accommodate the requirements of any passenger load.

Next came the cockpit visit; OC 32 confirmed that it was by modern standards a very old layout that

worked, although ab initio students had to work hard to change from modern technology of their training aircraft. The Chairman commented on the slight increase of dials etc over the Spitfire, certainly it was a busy area. Wg Cdr Courtcnadge mentioned that the a BAe146 were due to be replaced in 2022.

Following the aircraft visit we moved to the Officers Mess for lunch where further flying stories were related by the party!. The original Mess was a protected building with many photographs indicating that it was there during WWThe Prime Minister boards ZE 700.

David Bray



Boarding and then Up and away to Florence



Remember 18th October 2017

**Join us for
"The Space Race"
witPaul Jackman**

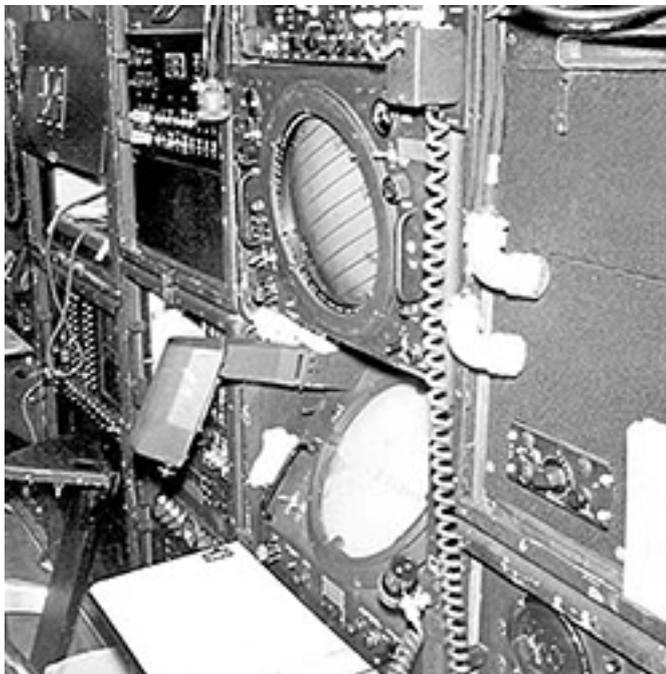
Greenacres 1030 for 1100

Tales from the Tower

by Tony Brown

Ed: Before Tony became a controller with NATS, he started his life in the Royal Air Force and here is a story from that era, the Cold War.

The Cold War was in full swing and I was stationed at a V Bomber station in what was then Huntingdonshire but for some unknown reason is now called Cambridgeshire. I was working on the GCA site which I will explain for the benefit of Ingrid. We are very familiar with all the modern navigation aids but there was a time when we didn't have ILS sat nav or computers but relied on rather more primitive equipment. GCA meant ground controlled approach and was invaluable in bad weather. It was made in the USA and comprised a search radar working out to thirty or forty miles and separate azimuth and vertical radar. Inbound aircraft would contact the search controller who would vector the aircraft to a position ten or so miles onto final approach at 3000 feet on the QFE, heading in the right direction. The pilot would then contact the director who would tell the pilot when to commence descent which equated to approximately 300 feet per mile.



The director had two radar displays one of which had an ideal descent profile on it and he could see the aircraft and whether it was too high or too low. He would then tell the pilot to reduce the rate of descent or increase it or keep it as it was. The other screen showed whether the aircraft was to the left or right of

the approach centre line and the director would tell the pilot to turn left or right accordingly. It sounds a bit complicated but with practice, pilots and controllers got very good at it. I actually saw a pilot land, run out of fuel on the runway, get out and kiss the ground.

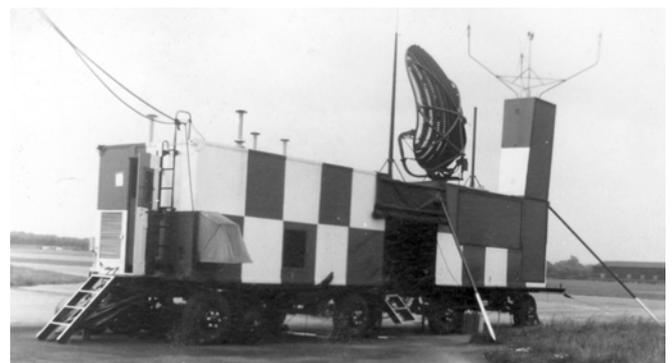
All this equipment was contained in a very large truck. We didn't have to stay in it if there wasn't any customers. Aircraft would be working the area controllers who would ring us with details of inbounds. Obviously we had to have somewhere to sleep eat and rest and we were provided with a large caravan painted in red and white squares. We were positioned out on the airfield approximately abeam of the touchdown point, isolated from everyone else.

It was the height of the Cold War. All the bomber squadrons were on QRA. The airfield perimeter, surrounded by barbed wire, was continually patrolled and armed guards were manning the only entry road to the airfield. The Station Commander was virtually living in Operations.

The whole country was covered in a blanket of fog and no one was flying. The weather was absolutely freezing. We were sitting in our lovely warm accommodation playing cards and drinking tea when there was a knock on the door. Looking at each other with a puzzled look someone opened it very carefully. Peering out into the mist we could just make out a large lorry loaded with sugar beet, parked on the side of the runway.

"Hello" said a gentleman with a broad Yorkshire accent, "I'm heading for the the great North Road but there isn't any other traffic or road signs. It was when I saw your gypsy caravan that I decided to stop and ask you for directions!!"

I don't think that to this day anyone knows how he got on to the airfield.



Programme 2017

Events at 1030 for 1100 at Greenacres unless (*)

2017

18 Oct The Space Race - Paul Jackman
15 Nov Fighter Control - 'Gibbo' Gibson
13 Dec Christmas Lunch*

2018

17 Jan Travels of a Nat Service airman - John Dicks

Your 2017 Committee**Chairman:**

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Welfare

Tom Payne continues to make progress and has a chair which allows him to go down town. Apparently he has to await his daughter to catch up! Ron Doble was unable to attend the last meeting due a 'bug', meanwhile Shirley has stopped Chemo - here's hoping it is long term and has no more. Ron was later taken to Stoke Mandeville. Norma Dyson is fully mobile; long may it be so. Rosemary Calvert is not fully mobile but is cheerful and relishes contact with CACA members. ALSO Ladies have mentioned the Christmas lunch - we must not forget them! Take care

David

Membership Secretary

Sorry to have missed you all at the September Meeting but will catch up at The Aircrew Lunch at my old stomping ground at Abingdon. If there are any queries on the day please contact me on 07855 752689. I have been visiting places where wartime airfields used to be and checking out some pubs that gave sustenance to our warriors!

Ian

Secretary/Editor

Little bit out of touch with Jo in hospital but I thank Roger Miller for his report of the presentation on the Halton Apprentices. My thanks also to David Bray and Rod Finn for looking after the RAF Northolt Visit and to Ian Mason with the Aircrew Lunch. We are in contact with 1187 Sqn Hemel Hempstead ATC and hope to get Tom Payne to visit to hand over some Lancaster memorabilia to them, more next month.

Graham

Chairman

We were so sorry hear that Jo Laurie was not well and I am sure you will join with me in wishing her a speedy recovery. Our thanks to Graham for publishing the Newsletter at a time of great stress. At the September meeting, Group Captain Derek (Min) Larkin gave a detailed review of the creation and development of Halton, over the past 100 years and it's contribution to the engineering skills of Royal Air Force personnel. Ex brat Ian Stewart gave a fitting response. Bill George brought along a neighbour...Wally Gillingham, a former fighter plotter who we hope will join Chiltern ACA. Our visit to 32 Sqn was a great success....see report by David Bray (Page 6).

Geoff