



NEWSLETTER

Book your place at our Christmas Lunch Weds 13 Dec 17 (P9)



Christmas Greetings from your Chairman and Chiltern ACA Committee

November Meeting

Our thanks to 'Gibbo' Gibson for an excellent presentation of the role of a Fighter Controller. Very much part of our 'front line' defence. The role is to guide QRA aircraft to any enemy or unidentified aircraft as quickly as possible, along with getting fighters to Airborne Tankers (RAF Voyagers) to refuel and give the aircraft longer 'patrol time'.

Christmas Lunch

A last push to ask you to join us for what is always an excellent Christmas Lunch on 13 Dec (See Page 7). We must reiterate this is open to all members, widows, friends and those who receive this Newsletter for whatever reason. You are all most cordially invited. The Tickets are £20 (Widows £10) and this will include your first drink at the bar, so please let Ian Mason know as soon as possible



Remember 17th January 2018

Join us for AGM

10.30 a.m. for 11.00 a.m.

**The First World War Pilot J M (Jack) Mason
Part 4**

Ed: Here we continue further extracts from Jack's First World War Logbook, as he sees Active Service (P3)

RNAS ESTABLISHMENT – FREIRSTON

15	B.E.2C	40 mins (P1)	Circuits. Very enjoyable. Found machine somewhat slow after the scouts.
26	B.E.2C	60 mins (P1)	Very Pistol Mirror. First flight at Freirston. Found great difficulty in keeping machine in a straight line on target.

JULY 1917

2	B.E.2C	15 mins (P1)	Circuits. Came down owing to engine trouble.
2	B.E.2C	55 mins (P1)	Dummy Bombs. Dropped dummy bombs. Got on quite well but had great trouble in keeping machine straight owing to the bumps.
2	Avro 504	30 mins (P1)	Circuit. Went up to fire Lewis gun at target but came down without firing owing to a sudden mist which obscured same from view.
3	B.E.2C	55 mins (P1)	Live Bombs. Dropped four live bombs with fair result.
3	Avro 504	15 mins (P1)	Firing in Air. Fired Lewis gun at target. Very bumpy indeed and very difficult to keep machine steady. One outer only.
3	B.E.2C	45 mins (P1)	Verry Lights at Mirror. Fired four Verry lights at mirror. Looped & stalled coming down.

RNAS AEROPLANE STATION – DOVER

16	Curtiss Jenny JN-4	35 mins (P1)	Local. Found the aerodrome very difficult to get into & had to take of again. Otherwise all right.
16	Sopwith 1½ Strutter	40 mins (P1)	Local. Got on very well. Very bumpy indeed near the ground. Overshot the aerodrome again.
17	Sopwith 1½ Strutter	70 mins (P1)	Local. Got on very well & enjoyed it very much. Perfect landing.
17	Sopwith Pup	30 mins (P1)	Local. First time in a Pup with Rhone engine. Got on quite well & liked it very much. Bent an axle on landing.
17	Sopwith Pup	45 mins (P1)	Local. Fairly decent landing when I did land but I had to take off again twice
17	Sopwith Pup	80 mins (P1)	Local. Highest I've ever been to (18600ft). Got on very well but bent an axle on landing.

ON ACTIVE SERVICE – No 4 SQUADRON

20	Sopwith Pup	45 mins (PI)	First flight in France. Enclined to put my nose down too much in turns. Bad landing & burst a tyre.
PROMOTED – FLT SUB LT			
21	Sopwith Pup	65 mins (PI)	Joy flip. Got on quite well & better turn, not good landing.
22	Sopwith Pup	75 mins (PI)	OP. Nieport & out to Sea. Flew very badly & found great difficulty in keeping formation.
23	Sopwith Pup	75 mins (PI)	Patrol. Got on better but kept too near leader. Broke axle on landing.
24	Sopwith Pup	60 mins (PI)	Local. Landed with wind & a bit side on. Crashed machine including undercarriage, main spar & engine. My first “crash”.
27	Sopwith Pup	30 mins (PI)	Local. Got on quite well & fairly good landing.
27	Sopwith Camel	30 mins (PI)	Local. First flight in a “Camel”. Found it rather strange after a “Pup”. Bumpy landing.
28	Sopwith Camel	55 mins (PI)	Local. Joy flip. Got on quite well but find machine difficult on turns. Very bumpy landing.
28	Sopwith Camel	95 mins (PI)	Fleet Protection Patrol. First patrol in a “Camel”. Did not keep formation very well. Fairly misty. Flt Cdr falls into sea.

AUGUST 1917

Date	Aircraft Type	Duration	Description
5	Sopwith Camel	35 mins (PI)	Local. Prectice flight.
11	Sopwith Camel	60 mins (PI)	Local. Practice flight. Engine vibrating badly.
14	Sopwith Camel	35 mins (PI)	Local. Engine test.
16	Sopwith Camel	65 mins (PI)	Local. Attempted to find formation but never picked them up.
17	Sopwith Camel	90 mins (PI)	Fleet Protection Patrol'

ON ACTIVE SERVICE – No 5 SQUADRON PILOT – No 5 WING RNAS

18	DH4	100 mins (PI)	Local. First time in a DH4. Liked the machine very much.
19	DH4	20 mins (PI)	To Bray Dunes & back.
19	DH4	77 mins (PI)	Bombing Raid on Snelleghem Aerodrome. Lost formation & returned home.
20	DH4	75 mins (PI)	Local. Formation practice.
20	DH4	102 mins (PI)	Bombing Raid on Sharappelhoek Aerodrome. Lost formation & returned home.

Wg Cdr Jim Wright AFC RAF (Ret'd)



Ed: I published an article last month on Jim's fight for the Bomber Command Medal but I thought this quick resume of his wartime career was very much in order, Jim writes:

As you all know I started my own personal drive to persuade our Government to award Bomber Command aircrew and essential ground staff a campaign medal way back in 2005.

I was just a Flying Officer and a navigator completing 43 OPS on 3 Lancaster squadrons in WW2; 61, 630 and 97. My skipper, Ken Ames collected an immediate DFC for his outstanding skill and courage returning from a 61 Sqn target (Kassel on 22/23 October 1943) when half (4) of his crew were injured or unconscious after reaching the target. Our Lancaster was coned by searchlights and attacked simultaneously by 3 Night fighters. The Rear Gunner destroyed one N/F, the Mid Upper Gunner was wounded in the legs, the navigator (me) had his oxygen tube severed by a cannon shell and promptly lost consciousness at high altitude, where the temperature was about minus 50 C, the Bomb Aimer also lost his oxygen supply after dropping his bomb load on target, and the Flight Engineer received a severe head wound.

All the instruments on the pilot's and navigator's instrument panels were damaged. Ken Ames managed to get the Lancaster back at high level heading roughly for home, for several hours. The nearest UK airfield, Coltishall replied to Ken's 'Darky' emergency message seeking help from the nearest UK airfield until, short of fuel he descended below cloud.. He was flying at 8,000 feet and, calling for urgent assistance via "Darky", the emergency frequency on 6440 Kc/s, with holed petrol tanks and short of fuel. He managed to land at Coltishall, a fighter base on the Norfolk coast, which put on approach and runway lights and Ken, in spite of not having any normal instruments being available to help him, landed the Lancaster which came to a halt on the runway completely out of fuel.

Ken was awarded an immediate DFC. As navigator I was immediately taken by ambulance to ELY hospital and put onto pure oxygen with the tank alongside my bed and using an oxygen mask mask to recover from frostbite and the threat of gangrene on my left arm and back due to oxygen starvation. I had been placed in the rest position on the cold metal floor by the

W/O, I think, alongside the main spar when I might have been thought dead at my nav-desk. Fortunately I made sufficient recovery after 2 months in hospital to be able to re-join my pilot and the remnants of our original crew but by this time it was Christmas, and we had been posted to 630 squadron at East Kirkby. My first trip from EK was to Berlin on 29th December 1943. the MUG and F/Eng had been changed to become Sgt Leary DFM and Flt Lt Fred Spencer.

Our first tour ended in May 43 and all crew members were awarded routine DFC or DFM. Our second tour after a 3 day Pathfinder Force (PFF) conversion at Warboys and, with yet another MUG and F/Eng, we joined 97 Squadron at Coningsby for our second tour of OPS, completed on 19th September 1944 (when our Master Bomber was Wg Cdr Guy Gibson and he and his navigator, were KIA and buried in Holland., surprisingly without any further gallantry awards to our crew. So we did not stand out in any way as a crew and we were all split up and that was the end of our WW2.

So I had nothing outstanding on which to hang my hat 60 years later in 2005 when, at age 83, I started my drive for the award of a campaign medal for Bomber Command. It must now be left to others, if possible, to persuade our reluctant Government, such as Sqn Ldr George Leonard 'Johnny' Johnson MBE DFM to finish the work already started. If he does succeed I would not be surprised if Johnny should be knighted as suggested in the press earlier this year. He has already got the ear of Prince William and, I feel sure, the wide support of the public. Well done Johnny. Good Luck to you.



Sqn Ldr George 'Johnny' Johnson MBE DFM

Ed: They got us a memorial, so for the RAF Centenary, let's get 'them' a medal!

Mugabe and Zimbabwe

As I write this, it has just been announced that President Mugabe has resigned. It reminds me of a personal link with Zimbabwe from back in 1982

On the way down Africa we were to visit Zimbabwe to carry out some recce flying to check the airfields our Andover CC Mk 2 could be visiting, prior to proceeding to Johannesburg for the first Royal Flight of the tour. We based ourselves in Harare and flew to a number of airfield including Victoria Falls, where I gained my first glimpse of the famous waters. On 18 Oct life was a little more difficult, as we were to recce a natural surface strip in Inyanga called Aberdeen 2. We were advised the Zimbabwe Air Force would send fire cover to the airstrip. The strip itself was overflowed and looked from the air in reasonable condition, albeit limiting in length, but we already knew that. We flew a circuit and landed.

A group of Zimbabwe soldiers led by a major, came out to meet us and as usual our policeman was the first to speak to them, whilst the aircrew finished the shut down checks. He came back on board and said 'Captain, you better come down, as they say we are arrested as we do not have permission to land here!' I came down the steps with out flight file under my arm with the signal giving us authority. The major still insisted he knew nothing about that and added, if you try and escape we will shoot the tyres. As he and his soldiers were well armed, I considered this a viable threat. I also noted that by this time my co pilot was up by the runway threshold having a cigarette with one of the guards, having been asked to check the runway surface for large stones, which do not react too well to Dowty propellers! Rather than argue with the Major I just said there must have been some confusion and asked him to check with his superiors. Whilst he went away I asked a fellow crew member (a co pilot under training) to try and contact Harare, which he did by giving a message to an ex pat Captain of an Air Zimbabwe 707 inbound to Harare and they promised to advise the British High Commission. We then spent a couple of hours on board having lunch when another Air Zimbabwe aircraft passed on a message from our Air Attach to 'Keep your Chins up!'. To say I was not impressed was an understatement!

We heard later the Zimbabwe Air Force were planning to launch a rescue mission using one of their DC 3 Gunships! Luckily before they arrived our 'Major' returned saying he had negotiated our release (never admitting it was their mistake).

On return to Harare I was asked to go and see the ex pat Group Captain Statin Commander at New Sarum, the military base on the opposite side of the airfield from the Civil Airport. He asked me to write a report for him of the event and he then explained the Inyanga was controlled for Mugabe by the North Korean trained 5th Brigade. This Brigade insisted they ran the area and not Zimbabwe MOD and our crew was 'piggy in the middle'. He then said if a fat Zimbabwe Flying Officer comes in, just hide what you are writing, as he is Mugabe's spy in the camp, masquerading as the Supply Officer. 'Oh, you'll want some paper', so he reached in his desk and handed me a few sheets of headed notepaper marked 'Southern Rhodesia Air Force'! No wonder he didn't want the Fg Off to see it.

That evening we invited the Station Commander and some of his ex pat officers for a drink in our crew bar. The party lasted a good few hours and as a result I was offered a trip with their DC 3 Instructor to fly the aircraft. Alas in the event, it went u/s, which was a perennial problem as they had no money for spares.

I wrote a report of the event for the Captain of The Queen's Flight and asked the Air Attache to send it by signal to RAF Benson. When we returned to Benson three weeks later I found he had added a paragraph saying how hard he had worked to secure our release, not knowing that we knew the real story! You will not be surprised to know that we kept Aberdeen 2 off the Royal flying programme, stating the airstrip was unsuitable!

I often wonder what happened to the ex pats who were working there, my guess is most of them left over the next few months, as life became even more unpleasant and their aircraft even more unserviceable.



As you see their DC3's were not 'up to Royal Standards'

GL

Tales from the Tower
by
Tony Brown MBE

British Caledonian Airways had a fleet of I-II aircraft serving various destinations, including the 'Manchester - London Shuttle'. They also used a couple of pretty rare Handley Page Heralds. When the airline first started the Manchester (MAN) / London-Gatwick (LGW) service, it was twice daily on these British Island Airways Heralds. The morning southbound was a nightstop while the morning northbound went through to Blackpool (BLK) to operate for BIA during the day, before returning late afternoon to continue southbound.



G-APWA BIA Herald operating for British Caledonian

It was Christmas Eve, dark and with poor visibility, as a steady stream of outbound aircraft taxied out, all keen to get home as soon as possible. At the head of the queue, because he had set off first, was the Caledonian Herald.

“Manchester”, says the Speedbird, knowing it’s going to slow him down initially,

“are we number two to that aircraft ahead, whatever it is?”

“Yes you are”, I reply, “and it’s a Herald”

“How was I expected to recognise that?”, he said, obviously somewhat miffed.

From out of nowhere over the ether came

“Mark the Herald’s angled wing!!!!”

Ed: Thank you Tony for your very amusing contributions throughout the year and of course ‘every one is true’. Alas I am not so certain about young Ingrid but we will leave that to another day!

I do hope delving into the memory bank, will produce some more copy, as I for one find them brilliant.

So a Very Happy Christmas to you and Lesley.

Dear Reader - now what about Lesley? As well as being Tony’s wife, she was also a long serving NATS Air Traffic Control Assistant, so perhaps there are some more stories there! Hint...hint!



*To Tony, Lesley and Ingrid
 Have a good Christmas*

Mid Air Collision

Many of you will have heard of the mid-air collision between a Cessna 152 and a Cabri G2 helicopter near Waddesdon Manor, resulting in four deaths, two on each aircraft. Both aircraft were undergoing flying training about 20 miles from their base at Booker. The AAIB are investigating but their full report is not expected for about a year. From photos of the wreckage, the tail rotor of the helicopter and fin of the Cessna appear to be in one piece.

A number of people have asked me why it happened when it was a bright sunny day! I am sure many of us have been involved in near misses, either reported or not. Training inherently means the ‘head is inside the office’ part of the time and with the ever increasing restrictions of free airspace, it is getting more and more crowded.

No doubt the excellent AAIB will come up with exactly what happened but sadly four keen aviators have lost their lives doing what they loved. May they Rest in Peace.



**Chiltern ACA
Christmas Lunch
Green Acres Tavern,
Leys Road, Bennetts End,
Hemel Hempstead,
Hertfordshire, HP3 9LZ**

**Wednesday 13th December 2017
1200 Noon for 1230**

Traditional Christmas fare

**Please reserve me tickets for the Christmas Lunch @ £ 20 per person
Widows @ £ 10 per person**

Name

Address

.....

Postcode **Tel No**

Name of Guests
.....

Special Dietary Requirements

**I enclose Cheque for £ payable to 'The Chiltern Aircrew Association'
or by BACS: I M Mason 09-01-28 41009326**

Please Post together with a stamped addressed envelope to:

**Ian Mason
65, Sunnycroft,
Downley,
High Wycombe HP13 5UR**

Closing date: 7 Dec 15

Programme 2017/18

Events at 1030 for 1100 at Greenacres unless (*)

2017

13 Dec Christmas Lunch*

2018

17 Jan AGM

21 Feb Travels of a Nat Service airman - John Dicks

Your 2017 Committee**Chairman:**

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Unfortunately Ted Matthews, died in the Florence Nightingale Hospice on Thursday 16 November - the funeral is on Thursday 7 December at 11am at Amersham Crematorium and afterwards at the Bricklayers Arms Aylesbury. We are all invited

Welfare

Not too much to say: Ron Doble had a fall which put him in hospital, thankfully he is now home and is ok for a 92 year old!

Tom Payne has been contacted by many and included a visit by Chris Brockbank. Tom unfortunately will not be fit enough to attend the Xmas Lunch.

Take Care

David

Membership Secretary

As you know Tom Payne has moved in with daughter Jill and Tom has asked you to use his mobile number 07749 266241 rather than Jill's landline published last month. He says he switches it off about 1900 as he goes to get his beauty sleep about 2000-2030, after a 'wee dram' of course.

Ian

Secretary/Editor

My thanks to you all for your messages of support to Jo and me, glad to report Jo making a good recovery and I hope to be back in harness for the New Year and we will both see you at the Christmas Lunch.

Graham

Chairman

It is with regret that we learn of the death of Ted Mathews. Details of the funeral appear above.

Our thanks to Jack Beynton-Glen for a very generous donation to 'Chiltern' funds. Sadly Jack is not able to attend our meetings to be thanked in person

Christmas Lunch 13 December.... I look forward to a great gathering of friends, old and new

Geoff