



NEWS SHEET

Stay safe whilst we are in "Lockdown"

Ed: Firstly may I thank those members who have sent articles in for publication, it really is making life so much easier for me, so a big thank you.

Crew Co-operation.

Mark Gilson writes:

I'd just re-joined 46 Sqn having completed the Captains course on the Andover OCU. I'd got just over 1000hrs under my belt - 640 of them as an Andover co-pilot - and I was a senior member of "The Flying Officers' Club".

My first sortie was a low-level Nav Ex that went South to the coast, turned West 'til you bumped into Cornwall, turned east-north-east 'til you bumped into Salisbury Plain where you threw a beanbag at Froghill, and then back to Abingdon.



The Needles IOW, a regular sight on Low Level sorties

I was puffing my way up the front ladder with a bulging Nav Bag when the Navigator, one Fg Off Dave Crombie, turned from his Nav Station and said "What you got there then?" I replied, "All the charts for the trip, with bolt-holes and safety heights, and all relevant diversion details in case we have a problem." "Oh" he said. "Can you fly to half a degree of any heading I give you?" Well, the Andover had a G4B compass that been developed

for the V Force and was very accurate so I replied "Yes. If I concentrate I'm sure I can." "Good" he said, "You concentrate and I'll navigate!"

Another **very** important lesson learned!

One for the Chairman

One of the many posts our Chairman held was at Boscombe Down when he was in charge of the Handling Squadron. This unit was responsible for writing and maintaining Pilot's Notes and the Flight Reference Handbooks or 'Checklists' for many of the aircraft in RAF service. Boscombe had a number of aircraft for the members of Handling Squadron to fly on trials of any new equipnt destined for the RAF fleet.



Here is their Andover CMk 1 - I wonder could it have been Des operating this day? XS 594 from Boscombe Down

Ed: A couple of weeks ago I was introduced to a lovely gentleman who lives in a care home north of Aberdeen. Via a friend, he asked if I had flown the Avro/HS 748. He worked at Woodford and was involved with the design of the famous HS780 (Andover CMk 1) 'Kneeling Undercarriage'. I have since been able to send him a book of on the HS 748/HS 780 covering virtually every aircraft that came off the production line. 157 HS 748's were built and 37 HS 780's

Ed: *We have all heard about Bill George and his Meteor flying but he flew other twin-engined aircraft as well, as his first story tells but hasten to add, these were all apart of the ^{364.40!}*

Near Misses Part 1

I guess all aircrew have a few near misses and I had two very very close shaves during my short flying career, which I am sure is well above the average.

The first occurred early in 1953. I was roughly over Droitwich heading South back to base at Pershore in an Airspeed Oxford when I flew into a snow-storm and had to go onto instruments. I sat back and carried on pretty sure I would come through it in a minute or so. It was actually quite relaxing looking out at the snow but I was in for a dramatic surprise because suddenly a grey flash passed in front of the windscreen. I quickly looked left to see the tail of another Oxford disappearing into the snow.



Airspeed Oxford (8751 built)

It wasn't till I got back to base that I realised how close that near miss would have been to absolute disaster if I had been just 40-50 yards or just 1 second further on. Just 10 yards in height difference would have eliminated the danger. I remember that I was flying within the correct quadrantal height so he could not have been.

I am pretty sure that the occupant(s) of the other aircraft had no idea how 'lady luck' had looked after them that day. I call this 'my chance in a trillion'- better luck than winning Euro Millions.

Near Misses Part 2

The second one was very scary and was totally my fault. At the time I was doing AFS on Meteors at Full

Sutton in Yorkshire. I was on a formation detail with an instructor as leader as usual and my mate Pete and I as formaters.

We were flying Vic and into sun with me on the starboard side. The instructor wanted to go starboard so to avoid me looking at him and into sun I was instructed to go echelon port. The norm was that you dropped under and a little behind the formation and moved across 50 yards or more before coming up level with the formation and then edging into position. By this time in my career I was a very cocky teenager and decided not to bother with 50 yards clearance but to come up straight into formation alongside Pete. Without the blinding sun that would have been possible but not advisable.



The sleek figure of the Gloster Meteor

Anyway I spotted Pete and started to pull up only to suddenly realise I was pulling up alongside the instructor and underneath Pete. By then our 2 aircraft were very close and being sucked together and losing height. I could see all the rivet heads and could have read all the messages stencilled on the underside of Pete's aircraft we were that close. I pushed the stick forward but that was not enough so I pushed it fully forward but even then it took what felt like a few seconds before the 2 aircraft separated. I must have lost at least 500 feet height and Pete about 1/2 that.

He hadn't known what happened up there until I apologised when we met up on the ground. This incident came up in the conversation when I met him 54 years later in Canada!

From our Chairman



Where have all the aircraft gone - to the tune sung by Peter, Paul and Mary



These aircraft are all parked up in California on one particular airfield, mainly belonging to Delta and American Airlines. But of course this sight is to be found all over the world. Will aviation ever be the same, probably not, as some major carriers are in real financial trouble and are already threatening large redundancies and manufacturers already scaling back production.



So if you wondered where BA were parking their aircraft, look in UK no further than LHR, LGW and Bournemouth, where Hurn is filled with Airbus A319 and 320's. Easyjet have filled every bit of space at Luton and LGW, where Virgin also have used almost a whole passenger terminal.

It is of course a problem elsewhere and the bottom picture is some of the Cathay fleet at Hong Kong. Of course it is not only airlines that are suffering but airports as well. They cannot survive on parking fees alone, so many domestic airfields all over the world could disappear as well as airlines.

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Please, if you have any problems do not hesitate to get in touch with any member of the committee.

In the meantime, stay safe and our best wishes to you all. I will try to get another issue out before too long