



# NEWSLETTER

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

## October Meeting

### “How we got into space”

Our speaker this time was aptly named Rocket Man, rather than an aviator. He spent his whole career in rocket motors based at the former RAF Station Westcott, which was home to No.11 OUT during the War. Having started his career as a student apprentice fresh out of Brunel University in 1962, Paul Jackman CEng MIMech.E MAIAA eventually took early retirement in November 2002 as Chief Engineer.

During his fascinating talk he took us through the history of British endeavours in rocketry from the earliest research after the War in 1945 under the auspices of Farnborough. These were supported by ‘our German scientists’ housed locally, the others being snapped up in greater numbers by the Americans and the Russians.

He described how rocketry was largely neglected in Britain in the 30s. Westcott’s remit was to develop rocket engines with early experiments based on ‘repatriated’ V1 flying bombs, V2 and Rheinbote ballistic missiles and other German surface to air, air-to-air and anti-shiping rocket developments.

He described the essential differences in the make up of solid propellants and the volatile liquid fuels of ethanol, high-test peroxide and oxygen with their different rocket applications. In the context of the RAF, he described the development of the Blue Streak IBCM and its testing at Woomera, Australia following engine runs on the Isle of Wight and Spadeadam.

He went on to describe the specification and development of the RAF’s liquid fueled Blue Steel stand-off weapon for the V-Force. This produced a mixed reaction from those in the audience. Some had experienced the fuel’s challenges in front line service, not least the fueling-up the missile on the QRA pan at the end of the runway.

There were three interesting observations during questions. First, that the two navigators were the tasked with fueling-up the weapon in cumbersome protective HTP suits, which then had to be disposed of before entering the V-Bomber. Secondly, fueling took 20 minutes and thirdly the QRA to airborne time was tasked at only 4 minutes!

It was also pointed out by Ian Stewart BRAT/PILOT, that the Victor had to be jacked up to enable the Blue Steel to be fitted to the bomb-bay as there were no pits available. All together, this was deemed less than satisfactory means of surviving Soviet defences.

Paul went on to describe how huge developments in knowledge and achievement had been made over the ensuing years with Britain playing a major role in the European Space Agency programmes. Many of the rocket motors are pocket sized for repositioning satellites in space orbit.

Some years ago, the research and development work was privatised and despite the closure of the site as an official research establishment, this activity continues to this day. In fact, rocket test firings are a regular occurrence and new facilities are in the process of being constructed.

The meeting was closed with a witty vote of thanks by Dusty Miller.



**Remember 15th November 2017**

**Join us for  
“Fighter Control”  
with  
‘Gibbo’ Gibson**

**The First War Pilot J M (Jack) Mason  
Part 3**

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

11	Avro 504	30 mins (PI)	Circuits. Second solo at Cranwell. Liked this machine much better.
12	Avro 504	49 mins (PI)	Circuits. Got on much better & seemed to get on with the engine.
12	Avro 504	40 mins (PI)	Circuits. Got on very well. Overshot the aerodrome first time & had to go off again. Very bumpy near the ground.
14	Avro 504	74 mins (PI)	Circuits. Got on very well. Like "Avros" much better. Very good landing.
14	Avro 504	40 mins (PI)	Circuits. Nothing unusual. Very good landing.
14	Avro 504	40 mins (PI)	Circuits. Inclined to be misty and very bumpy low down. Swerved a good deal on getting away.
14	Avro 504	11 mins (PI)	½ Circuit. Engine missing badly so came down. Found engine not getting enough oil.
14	Avro 504	12 mins (PI)	½ Circuit. Engine missing badly so came down. Found a broken plug.
16	Avro 504	52 mins (PI)	Circuits. First time in this machine. Liked it very much except for the fact that it was too small for me. Very bumpy indeed.
16	Avro 504	62 mins (PI)	Circuits. Very bumpy indeed up to 3000ft but all the same I liked it very much as they amuse me.
17	Avro 504	31 mins (PI)	Circuits. The worst bumps I've ever experienced. Had to come down owing to fin adjustment giving out.
21	B.E.2C	28 mins (Dual)	Circuits, Right & Left Hand Turns. First time in BE2C. Inclined to put nose down too much on turns & too heavy when putting on rudder.
21	B.E.2C	25 mins (Dual)	Landings & Takeoffs. Take off too soon, flatten out too soon.
21	B.E.2C	20 mins (PI)	Circuits. First solo on a B.E. And found great difficulty in getting my rudder off. Felt at home, enjoyed it very much.
21	B.E.2C	40 mins (PI)	Circuits. Got on very well. Liked machine very much indeed. Very good landing.
22	B.E.2C	25 mins (PI)	Circuits. Got on very well indeed. Somewhat of a bumpy landing.
22	B.E.2C	37 mins (PI)	Same as above.

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22	B.E.2C	32 mins (PI)	Circuits. Very misty indeed above 1500ft. Lost my way and had some difficulty in finding it. Very good landing.
22	B.E.2C	62 mins (PI)	Cross-country Lincoln-Boston-Sleaford-Cranwell. Found my way quite easily & enjoyed it very much. Inclined to be a bit too heavy on controls. Good landing.
23	B.E.2C	43 mins (PI)	Circuits. Very enjoyable indeed. Tried to do a very slow landing but lost my flying speed and bumped heavily.
23	B.E.2C	45 mins (PI)	Leadenham-Caythorpe-Rauceby. Taking photographs. Very bumpy indeed. Took photographs but spoilt two.
23	B.E.2C	27 mins (PI)	Circuits. Quite enjoyable but I don't like this machine.
23	B.E.2C	38 mins (PI)	Circuits. Enjoyed this trip very much. Came down owing to the petrol pump giving out.
23	B.E.2C	19 mins (PI)	Circuits. Continuation of previous flight. Very good landing.
24	B.E.2C	26 mins (PI)	Circuits. Inclined to be misty and bumpy. Came down owing to petrol pump again giving out.
25	B.E.2C	23 mins (PI)	Circuits. Engine missing badly so came down.
25	B.E.2C	31 mins (PI)	Caythorpe-Rauceby. Photographing. Got on quite well.
28	Sopwith 1½ Strutter	65 mins (PI)	Circuits. First time on a Sopwith. Enjoyed it very much but am inclined to be much too heavy on controls for landing.
30	Sopwith 1½ Strutter	40 mins (PI)	Circuits. Got on quite well. Bumpy landing.
30	Sopwith 1½ Strutter	56 mins (PI)	Circuits. Inclined to be very bumpy coming down & made a bad landing breaking nothing. More by good luck than good judgement.
31	Nieuport	26 mins (Pax)	Joy Flip. First time I have ever looped.
31	Sopwith 1½ Strutter	46 mins (PI)	Circuits. Did not enjoy this flight a bit. Found great difficulty with the fin adjustment which I didn't get right the whole time.
31	Sopwith 1½ Strutter	30 mins (PI)	Circuits. Very bumpy indeed. Overshot my landing twice.

## JUNE 1917

2	Sopwith 1½ Strutter	63 mins (PI)	Circuits. Very enjoyable. Nothing unusual. Bumpy landing.
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**Ed:** Next month we see Jim go on active service

### The Compass Swing

Compass swing — those two words bring images of a time-consuming task. Many of you are familiar with this, a swing — sitting inside the aircraft, engines running, air conditioner off so it doesn't disrupt the magnetic compass, as you taxi all around the compass rose, relying on your co-worker's accuracy in lining the aircraft up with the line marked on the compass rose.

On my first squadron it came down to the co-pilot's to drive the aircraft and two navigators, one inside and one outside to carry out the swing. It may have taken a long while to complete but inside we were able to have tea and sandwiches, whilst the poor navigator outside, invariably in the cold and rain, had to complete the swing before he could have a cuppa!

What made me think of compass swings? I was looking at a flight safety website this morning and came across an incident this week in Indonesia. It goes to prove that, something as simple as a compass swing, can still come and bite you!

18 Oct 17 Time: 17:10 (Local time)

Type: Cessna 208B Grand Caravan EX

Owner/operator: Asian One Air, on behalf of Mimika Government

Registration: PK-LTV

Fatalities: 0 / Occupants: 4

Airplane damage: Minor

Location: Jayapura-Sentani Airport (WJJJ)

Phase: Standing

Narrative: The aircraft was engaged on a compass swing test on taxiway F at Jayapura-Sentani Airport in Indonesia, when it suddenly ran forward. It came to rest with the nose landing gear in a ditch.



### RAF Pathfinder Reunion, RAF Wyton

The R.A.F. Pathfinder Force was formed on the 15th August 1942 and an annual reunion is held over a three day week-end nearest to the 15th August each year, this years event being the last in it's usual three day format, on the 10th/11th/and 12th at R.A.F. Wyton. As per the 156 Squadron Reunion back in May this year Harold Kirby took a taxi to Roy's address, luggage was loaded and we set off for the Cambridgeshire area and found a delightful country Pub named The Crown Inn at Broughton by midday, it being reasonably near to R.A.F. Wyton where, knowing that we would be 'Dining In' in the Officers Mess later, we took in some liquid refreshment but something 'light' for lunch.

We departed The Crown Inn and headed back up the A.142 where we located R.A.F. Wyton some 30 minutes later., for security reasons we were 'signed in', rooms were allocated, luggage dealt with and at a stipulated 30 minutes later we made our way to the Officers Lounge where we were served tea, coffee and biscuits so as to meet and greet other 'Pathfinders' as they arrived, many 'hello's ensued and lots of talking before we had to return to our respective rooms so as to change for 'Dining In' Night. It is normal for the R.A.F. Wyton Band to musically regale us on 'Dining In' Night , this year was no exception and they delighted us with their old and new songs repertoire prior to and during an excellent Dinner., much liquid was offered, taken, and consumed during and for various Toast's, Port was served, the 'Dining In' was ending but not before the C.O. Wing Commander Owen had invited all Pathfinder personnel to join him in the Bar, the offer was accepted and it was some 1.00.a.m. before I, Harold, and Roy slipped off to bed.

Saturday dawned, most people were well rested and after breakfast we three departed as we had prearranged a few days earlier to go and see our Chiltern colleague Tom Payne, who as we all know now is living with his Daughter Jill and Neil at Chatteris, a leisurely hour and a half was spent with them, Jill offering tea, coffee and home made cake , lots of conversation ensued before it was time for us three to return to R.A.F. Wyton where again, as is usual, we were offered flights over and around the local area by, and courtesy of, The Wyton Pathfinder Flying Club, Harold was resting but Roy and I managed flights, only interrupted by a Mark 9 BBMF Spitfire that had displayed earlier at Huntingdon and gave us a superb and low 'flyby' before he headed somewhere



**RAF WYTON  
PATHFINDER VETERANS WEEKEND  
11th August - 13th August 2017**



else to display., we were 'fed and watered' by the Flying Club personnel before it was time to be offered lifts back to our lodgings so as to don more formal attire as we had been invited out by other 'Pathfinders' for an informal evening meal at The Hartford Mill, reasonably near to Wyton., again another evening was enjoyed.

Sunday our last day at Wyton, breakfast was taken, checkout occurred with bar bills having to be settled with the Mess Manager., more tea and coffee was served as a further two 'Pathfinders' arrived for the Sunday events., all persons were then bussed round to St. George's Chapel on base this being used by all Wyton base personnel, the same as in wartime, within the Chapel is a 'Pathfinder' stained glass window honouring all Pathfinder members ., once the service was over we all invited to meet directly outside of the Chapel as a Memorial to all Pathfinder Squadrons and wartime personnel was to be unveiled, the Memorial was blessed by the Station Padre before all Pathfinders attending were invited to be photographed with the Memorial., some extra lettering has been carried out to the Memorial and it will shortly be transported to the National Arboretum in Staffordshire. We were then bussed back to back to the Officers Mess for pre lunch drinks after which were then called forward to be seated for Lunch., the C.O. Wing Commander

Owen then, over lunch made a point of saying remember "'328'".....10 minutes before and nearer the time of 3.28.p.m. Wg.Cmd. Owen said to be outside the Mess as the BBMF were sending us their Lancaster., bang on 3.28 the Lancaster arrived and gave us 4 excellent low level passes.....a beautiful sight.

All to soon it was time to say our good bye's to the 'Pathfinder family' but not before wondering what format will it be in August 2018.,we must now wait and see., Roy and Harold had family members collecting them, I departed to Norfolk so as to be reunited with Linda and two of our grandchildren, but again having enjoyed an excellent week-end with Chiltern and other Pathfinder colleagues and families.

**Rod Finn**

**Memorial Service for Doug Radcliffe**

Doug Radcliffe's Memorial Service will be held on Wednesday the 22nd November 2017 at 11.00.a.m. at St. Clement Dane's Church, The Strand, London. WC2R 1DH. Roy and Rod will be attending and at present are probably going to go by car, so if any other members wish to attend then they could contact Rod on 01438 350115 viz a vis car sharing.

**Tales from the Tower**

by Tony Brown

For the benefit of Ingrid and who I know avidly reads this column, even if you don't!, I will just explain a few technical details, at the risk of sounding like David Gunson.

Airways are just like motorways with roads joining and leaving. The only real difference is that airways are very fussy and aircraft have to obtain permission to enter them. These aircraft are known as "joiners". If they subsequently leave the safety of the airway, for what Air Traffic Control calls "bandit country", all they have to do is tell us. These are known as "leavers".

The area radar unit at Manchester was due to have some of the equipment upgraded and this was planned to happen during the quiet period of the night shift. Unfortunately a lot of the preparatory work had to be completed in the afternoon. This involved a team of carpenters removing a large section of the ops room floor, so that new cables could be laid alongside the old ones. This was obviously was going to cause a lot of noise and management informed the controllers that the workers had assured them that they would work quietly and that you could hardly hear modern day saws! They also gave us assurance that they would hammer very gently!!

It was rather unfortunate that much of this work took place adjacent to the Lichfield controllers radar position, generally accepted, as the busiest sector in Air Traffic. A great deal of muttering was heard and the watch manager made repeated requests to hammer even quieter.

Time moves on and a telephone call was received from RAF Lyneham, that one of the squadrons was launching Hercules at various intervals to carry out a route training exercise, which involved joining and leaving the airways. The joining position would be Lichfield and there will be 15 of them.

Even more muttering as the first one stays low level under the airway and calls for joining from the east. The banging continues, as one after the other comes on frequency, now competing with several high speed drills. The watch manager protests to no avail,

Hercules number 11 calls up for joining and the controller finally loses it, shouting to all and sundry "I am fed up to the back teeth with these damned joiners, why the ..blankety blank.. don't they push off and annoy someone else?"

It was at this point the carpenters downed tools and walked out!!!!



*The carpenters are the ones with moustaches*



*And still the controller tries to do his job*



*Another good day at the office (Not in UK!)*

### Wg Cdr Jim Wright ends his campaign for a Bomber Command medal



Oxford ACA member Wg Cdr Jim Wright at the age of 95 has finally decided that he will give up his 22 year fight to get proper recognition for those who served in Bomber Command during World War Two.

In Dec 2012 the Government awarded Bomber Command veterans a bronze clasp to attach to their campaign medal after a review by former diplomat Sir John Holmes. Jim, a former RAF Navigator described the clasp as an "insignificant miserable clasp" adding that his comrades deserved a proper campaign medal.

Jim served with 61, 97 and 630 squadrons (he can be seen just left of centre in the Pathfinder photo on Page 5). During the war he was a Flt Lt but remained in the service, retiring in 1976 as a Wg Cdr.

Following the most recent General Election, Jim decided to have one final push for his campaign, which has received support from a former Defence Minister and the Canadian Government. He asked for the matter to be debated but a reply from MOD stated:

"Please let me start by assuring you the Government and nation has enormous admiration and respect for the sacrifice made by RAF Bomber Command during World War Two.

This contribution was a significant factor in final victory for the Allied nations.

I regret to inform you there is very little I can add to the previous responses - the MOD has no plans to review Sir John Holmes decision regarding the issue of a Bomber Command Clasp as part of his review on Military Medals".

**Ed:** The photo and basis for this article first appeared in the Abingdon Herald in October. It was followed by a number of letters of support, one of which I print here:

Sir,

Wg Cdr (Ret'd) Jim Wright (RAF war hero article), should be commended for his unstinting crusade for a dedicated full campaign medal for all Second World War Bomber Command (BC) air and essential ground staff veterans.

This, despite Sir John Holmes' independent medal review recommending a clasp as more appropriate, because BC aircrew had already received either the Aircrew Europe Star or the France and Germany Star; another medal constituted "double-medalling".

Jim is from a generation of men aged 17-23 who lost their youth as boys rapidly grew into men fighting for King and Country.

BC missions took place over five years to halt Hitler's advance; seeing crews exposed to hours of relentless danger amidst ground and air attacks, enduring hazards of darkness, icing, lightning, storms and aircraft structural catastrophe.

Such description might seem unimaginable today but for BC veterans their experiences live on.

History suggests the majority who entered BC did not survive; of the 120,000 who served, 55,573 were killed, including over 10,000 Canadians. For context, on a single night, BC allegedly suffered more losses than Fighter Command during the ten months of the Battle of Britain.

Jim's endeavours since 2005 have gained support from UK and Canadian MPs across the political spectrum (including a former UK Defence Secretary), the Canadian Senate and other Commonwealth cohorts.

One can only muse why exceptional support has fallen short of success. A clasp is recognition but second best for duties nobly accomplished through

Morals and politics apart, war is war; BC veterans had no choice but to do as they were ordered. Hitler lost.

There is no room for complacency only immense gratitude; and nothing less than a full campaign medal should be entertained for BC veterans.

Squadron Leader Steve Dreier RAF (Rtd)  
Abingdon

**Ed:** The RAF will soon be celebrating its Centenary, but many of us who served will still remember the disgusting treatment of our BC veterans

**Programme 2017**

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

**2017**

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**

Ron & Shirley Doble are as well as could be expected, Tom Payne appears to be well settled with his daughter Gill and family, although disappointing that Tom will not readily be able to attend our meetings. He has vacated his flat in Hemel Hempstead, but we hope he returns to visit on a meeting day. Ted Matthews appears very elusive and maybe a mention to contact me will bring results that a telephone call is failing to do! Norma Hagan is well and looking forward to the Christmas lunch. Rosemary Calvert is recovering slowly from a fall but had developed a nasty case of shingles which is proving difficult to shake off. Sheila Smith - have tried to call a few times leaving messages. More recently I mentioned to her the Christmas lunch! Joan Golby is in regular contact with our Chairman. Ann Hyland, I believe is regularly in touch with Bill George

**David**

**Membership Secretary**

Tickets for the Christmas Dinner will be on sale during the November meeting. Payment can be by cash or cheque, or by post, as long as a stamped address envelope is enclosed. And, finally, by BACS to my bank account. Here I would ask that the applicant emails me to say a payment has been made and, once confirmed, I would send them their ticket(s) as an email attachment.

**Ian**

**Secretary/Editor**

Thank you so much for your good wishes and support whilst Jo has been poorly. I am glad to report she is now making a good recovery, so good I am hoping to make the November meeting

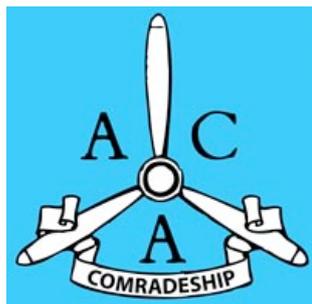
**Graham**

**Chairman**

Tom Payne (now living with his daughter in Chatteris. Telephone 01354 760006) sends his kind regards to all members of Chiltern ACA and regrets his absence from monthly meetings

I am sure you will join with me in wishing him well in his new home and promising that the whisky will be waiting for him should he be able to pay us a visit.

**Geoff**



**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**