



NEWSLETTER

Book for Aircrew Lunch at Abingdon

August Meeting

We welcomed a larger audience including new member Malcolm Webber and listened to part of a talk on Air Traffic Control. David Gunson, born in Yorkshire, started his working life in a Sheffield steel mill and later joined the Royal Air Force, where he flew as a Signaller on Shackletons in Coastal Command for twelve years.

David's love of flying continued into his civilian life where he became an Air Traffic Controller at Birmingham Airport – which is where the fun all started! Gunson talked down aircraft for over twenty-three years, and as he used to say "My aim is to stick at it until I get it right!"

Circumstances led him to the After-Dinner Speaking circuit where his smooth approach and impeccable timing, does nothing to allay the fears of would-be airline passengers, leaving them with the nagging doubt that it's all true. His talk is based on the fact, as with tongue very much in cheek, he takes us behind the scenes in the world of flying, producing laughs and several raised eyebrows.

Often mischievously, as with a wry smile, he informs us that, "We force them down narrow corridors, thereby greatly increasing the risk of collision, while at the same time justifying the job of Air Traffic Controllers to keep them apart."

Having heard the talk I am sure you come away with the knowledge that here is a consummate professional who manages to balance the serious nature of his job, whilst seeing the funny side of it! There used to be

many such guys working in NATS and I am sure you now realise that our own Air Traffic contributor Tony Brown qualifies in this group.

What is it like nowadays, I suspect a lot more serious, as wherever you are controlling in UK airspace, it is much busier than it was 30 years ago. I remember sitting in the Tower at Birmingham International (still Elmdon to me!) listening to David control aircraft and chat away at the same time - yes the consummate professional, if there ever was one.

September Meeting

On 20th September we welcome Group Captain Derek (Min) Larkin RAF (Ret'd), talking about Halton Apprentices.

Visit to No 32 (The Royal) Squadron and RAF Northolt Friday 22nd September at 10.00am

By kind permission of Wg Cdr Steve Courtnage OC 32 (TR) Sqn we have been invited to RAF Northolt. If you would like to go on the visit please contact David Bray (details on Page 8) who is co-ordinating the visit. We will need to share cars so if you can help by driving please do. Names, car details (model, colour and registration) are required for security purposes, so please let Dave have them. Closing date for visit is Fri 15 Sep 17



Remember 20th September 2017

Join us for
"Halton Apprentices"
with Gp Capt D (Min) Larkin

Greenacres 1030 for 1100

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

Ed: We listened in July to Ian Mason talk of the life of his grandfather who started flying in 1917 with the Royal Naval Air Service. Here are the events as recounted in Jack's logbook (with our thanks to Ian), it will take some time to recount everything but I hope you will agree that it is worthwhile to see what these chaps went through.

RNAS FLYING SCHOOL – EASTCHURCH PROBATIONARY FLIGHT OFFICER – U/T PILOT

FEBRUARY 1917

Date	Aircraft Type	Duration	Description
1	Maurice Farman	18 mins	Circuits. First time in the air. Liked it very much. Took control for a few minutes. Longhorn
7	Maurice Farman	11 mins	Circuits. Very bumpy low down. Did not take control but sat in front seat for first time.
13	Maurice Farman	23 mins	Circuits. Did a little turning. Seemed very bumpy low down.
16	Maurice Farman	15 mins	Circuits. Practiced landings for first time. Had no idea how to do it.
17	Maurice Farman	8 mins	Landings. Practice landings – slightly better.
28	Maurice Farman	50 mins	Circuits & Landings. Very bad at everything. Seemed to have very little idea of it.

MARCH 1917

Date	Aircraft Type	Duration	Description
1	Maurice Farman	15 mins (Dual)	Circuits & Landings. Turns & ordinary flying greatly improved. Landings still poor.
1	Maurice Farman	14 mins (Dual)	Circuits & Landings. Much better and getting the hang of it.
1	Maurice Farman	22 mins (Dual)	Landings. Landings still poor. Either flatten out too soon or not soon enough.
1	Maurice Farman	22 mins (PI)	Circuits. First solo. Felt quite at home and enjoyed it very much. Force to come down owing to not being able to see the instruments because of light.
2	Maurice Farman	10 mins (PI)	Circuit. Second solo. No sooner left the 'drome when I got lost in fog. Lost my way but spotted an arrow which I made for and landed in the 'drome. Poor landing.

3	Maurice Farman	46 mins (PI)	Circuits. Very enjoyable but sun rather bright. Made three landings, none of which were very good. Came down to see if anybody wanted the machine.
3	Maurice Farman	12 mins (PI)	Circuits. Continuation of previous flight.
3	Maurice Farman	18 mins (PI)	Circuits. First time in this machine. Got on quite well but found a good deal of difference between the two machines.
10	Maurice Farman	22 mins(PI)	Circuits. Few circuits, nothing out of the ordinary. Very good landings.
11	Maurice Farman	60 mins (PI)	Circuits & Landings. Made 9 landings, am getting better at them. Enjoyed it very much.
13	Maurice Farman	15 mins (PI)	Circuits. Found it cold & rotten. This added to the fact that I didn't like the machine & didn't feel at home on it, made me come down after only 15 minutes.
16	Maurice Farman	6 mins (PI)	Circuit. Came down almost at once owing to violent vibration.
16	Maurice Farman	30 mins (PI)	Circuit of Island. Lost my way in clouds. Very bumpy indeed low down. First time in this machine. Rather liked it.
16	Curtiss Jenny JN-4	25 mins (Pax)	Circuits. Passenger trip. First time in a tractor machine. Enjoyed it very much indeed.
17	Maurice Farman	38 mins (PI)	Circuits. Nothing unusual.
17	Maurice Farman	20 mins (PI)	Circuits. Came down owing to darkness. Landed in the wind. CO of flying school very angry and threatened to stop me flying for a fortnight.
18	Maurice Farman	29 mins (PI)	Circuits & War Formation. Enjoyed this very much. Tried to go round the island in war formation with instructor leading. Lost my prop when coming down.
18	Maurice Farman	23 mins (PI)	Circuits. Came down owing to bad light.
22	Maurice Farman	8 mins (PI)	Circuit. Caught in a snow storm and forced to come down.
28	Maurice Farman	25 mins (PI)	Circuits of Island. Engine stopped and was forced to land without a prop. Got into aerodrome.

Ed: *Next month sees Jim move on to the Avro 504K, cross country flights and an engine failure, finishing up in a field. Everyone was learning including the young engineers.*

Swiss improving their short range fleet

The days are numbered for the Swiss fleet of Avro RJ100's, as they have nearly all been replaced by the modern Bombardier 'C' series, now a familiar site in Swiss colours.



Swiss RJ 100 landing on RW28 at Zurich

With its four engines, the Avro RJ 100 is particularly suitable for airports with short runways. Swiss uses it e.g. on routes to and from London City. It has between 78 and 97 seats. The Avro RJ100 owes its nickname "Jumbolino" to the wide cross section of its fuselage and the very roomy cabin.

The Avro RJ100 withdrawal programme is coming to a close. 15 Avro RJ100 have been withdrawn and replaced with new Bombardier C Series twinjets. While some of these had reached the end of their service lives and are thus being scrapped, others have been returned to their lessors, who are leasing them out again to new customer airlines, primarily in Africa and South America. Swiss have also been trying to find buyers for their other aircraft. Most of the aircraft concerned have been found new owners: having been well maintained over the years, Swiss RJs still attract sizeable interest on the second-hand aircraft market. HB-IYQ was ferried to Cranfield in the UK.

The days leading up to the flight have seen IYQ carefully prepared for its handover by a team from the Swiss Technical Division. The work included compiling extensive documentation guaranteeing that the aircraft had been faultlessly maintained. "If there's anything that isn't in order, or if a particular document is missing, it can all get pretty expensive," stresses Werner Reiser, Senior Manager Aircraft Phase-Out Programmes in the Technical Division.

The pilots finish their briefing around 07:00, and are joined by Karl Wilkinson. Karl is from lessor Falko, and is there to accompany the ferry flight and check and

document the aircraft's functionality throughout. He's an old hand, and knows almost every RJ nut and bolt. He even organized the type's acquisition by Crossair, and spent some time working on the 'Jumbolino' with the Technical Division, too.

India Yankee Quebec makes its last departure from Zurich just before 08:00 with the three men on board, and climbs into the grey morning sky. Flight LX 5210 has Captain Weisser at the controls. But it's not to the UK that he heads, but to the Netherlands. The itinerary includes a stopover at the small Rotterdam Airport. There are customs formalities involved in importing the aircraft to the UK: and these require it to land in another EU country first.

After a 40-minute flight, Rotterdam is reached. Our pilots take a break in a small lounge by the apron while Karl coordinates with Customs. Karl is evidently satisfied: he hasn't noticed any irregularities on the flight so far.

Shortly after noon comes the phone call they have been waiting for: the aircraft is approved for import to the UK. A short time after, HB-IYQ takes off again for its final destination, Cranfield. And after a further 30 minutes it flies over the small aerodrome, turns and lands. This is where it's Swiss career ends. It will soon be in service again, but with a different registration. Before then, though, it will receive another thorough inspection by the mechanics of Avolon, the maintenance company that is based at Cranfield. They in turn will be accompanied by a representative from Swiss Technical Division, who will oversee all the work and sign the formal delivery document.

For the two Swiss pilots the work is done. They're a little sad: the RJ, they agree, was always a special plane to fly. But now it's time to dead-head back to Zurich, via London Heathrow.



Bombardier CRJ100 HB-JBA - the future for Swiss

31 Aug 97 - 6 Sep 97

Ed: This is a week I certainly will never forget, as I planned to fly HRH The Prince of Wales and Prince Harry from Aberdeen to RAF Lyneham on 31 Aug 97. Events in the early morning changed all that!

0200: I was woken by my son who had just arrived home to say The Princess of Wales had been injured in a car crash in Paris.

0240: I telephoned HQ Strike Command who acted as the tasking agency for Royal and VIP flying. I explained that I was due to fly HRH The Prince of Wales and Prince Harry that day from Aberdeen to RAF Lyneham and that my crew would be at RAF Northolt by 8am, so therefore it would be unnecessary to ring me with any changes.

0630: Arrived at RAF Northolt and already knew that the Princess had passed away. We got a BAe 146 prepared earlier than scheduled in case of changes. Over the next 90 mins it became clear that HRH The Prince of Wales wished to fly to Paris. Eventually we were scheduled to depart for Aberdeen at 1030am.

1000: We were advised that there was a possibility that when HRH The Prince of Wales returned from Paris that afternoon, we may have the body of the Princess on board. This presented a problem, as it meant that the aircraft required a modified rear hold floor inserting, known as the 'Coffin Fit'. It was decided that as there was another BAe 146 in the hangar along with all the necessary equipment that aircraft ZE 702 would be prepared for the task. The engineers set about inserting the flat floor with ball bearings in the surface into the rear hold. This would enable the coffin to be maneuvered into and out of the hold more easily.

1015: We were advised that en route to Aberdeen we would be required to land at RAF Wittering to pick up the Princess's two sisters.

1030: Our passengers aboard, members of The Prince of Wales household. Take off from RAF Northolt for the 25min flight to RAF Wittering. (We subsequently found out that there were 47 people officially at work at Northolt when we took off that Sunday morning)

1055: Landed at RAF Wittering for a quick turn round to pick up our two additional passengers.

1110: Departed RAF Wittering for a 1 hour flight to Aberdeen.

1210: We landed at Aberdeen and after a quick refuel were ready for a departure.

1230: Departed Aberdeen for Paris/Villacoublay (Paris military airfield).

1320: Whilst we were flying over London, ATC requested I contact Northolt Operations. We did this on UHF radio so as to avoid all the 'spotters' that listed into the civil ATC frequencies. I was asked what time I would be returning to RAF Northolt. It really was 'how long is a piece of string' but I had a good 'guesstimate' and came up with 1900 hrs.

1415: Landed at Paris/Villacoublay. After our passengers had departed I was advised that our official return time had been announced by MOD as 1900 hrs. So no pressure on us, my 'guesstimate' had been taken as the 'official' arrival time. At that stage nobody had any idea how long the visit would take. It was also confirmed that we would be returning with the coffin on board. An RAF Hercules had flown a coffin out (specially adapted for air travel i.e. lead lined) and this had already been transferred to the hospital. So it was just a case of sit and wait.

1715: The coffin arrived, so we started to think how we could delay the departure and route a long way round to take up the time. Our worries eased as we saw a guard of honour, a choir and a priest arrive. It was going to be a formal departure with a service, so perhaps we would be ok.

1800: We departed Paris/Villacoublay after a simple but moving service on the apron. All I could remember of that departure was that it was into a wonderful golden sunset.

1840: We were approaching Northolt from the south under the control of 'Heathrow Approach' when an aircraft turned the wrong way round the holding pattern at Lambourne (Near Romford). This caused some mild confusion but luckily we could see RAF Northolt and were cleared to descend and join the circuit for a visual approach. We had planned to land at 1849 (11 mins taxi time) but as a result of the slight delay that changed!

1851: We landed over thousands of people on the West End Road and glancing to our left saw the vast stand with hundreds of the worlds press. What a change from 'sleepy RAF Northolt' when we departed. We taxied to the end of the runway and turned north behind Air Traffic Control. We then stopped the aircraft whilst two of our travelling engineers, transferred into

the rear hold. We continued to taxi (our stop was not viewed by the press because of a combination of the slightly higher ground around the ATC Tower). We arrived on stand exactly at 1900 - phew!

1900: On stand and doors open and engines shut down - utter silence! We realised there were hundreds of photographers with long lenses pointing our way, so the co-pilot and myself lowered our seats, thus ensuring as the coffin passed the front of the aircraft along with the RAF Queen's Colour Squadron, we could not be caught on camera.

1920: With HRH The Prince of Wales back on board we departed for the 1hr 10 min flight to Aberdeen, so that HRH could get back to his sons. On the way up the crew asked me what I was going to say if HRH came to the cockpit at the end of the flight, as he usually did. I thought about it but said I would probably say what anyone would say in the circumstances.

2035: Landed at Aberdeen. HRH came forward and I realised my co-pilot and the crew chief had disappeared, so I was on my own. We spoke for 3 or 4 minutes and 30 mins later when we arrived at the Airport Hotel the crew asked me what I had said. I would not write it here anyway, but I could not even remember it then. At 2040 as HRH's car departed I just sighed with relief. It had been a long day but we got the job done to our usual high standards.

Monday 1st September 1997

1200: Departed Aberdeen for the 1hr 20min flight to RAF Northolt with some members of HRH's Household.

1320: Landed at RAF Northolt. After returning to the Squadron briefed the Commanding Officer on the events of the past 30 hours.

1800: My wife and I left Great Missenden for London. Having placed flowers in row 2 outside Kensington Palace, we went to Harrods and then Buckingham Palace. We, like so many others, just felt we had to go.

Thursday 4th September 1997

1200: My wife and I left Great Missenden for London again, this time to join the crowds queuing to sign the 'Book of Condolence' at St James' Palace. We started queuing at 1330 and eventually got in at 2050. We had been chatting to people around us but I was being very careful not to say anything that might give away my involvement.

2050 As we entered St James' Palace I saw one of HRH's Royalty Protection Officers who said 'Graham, you haven't queued all afternoon have you?, you should have phoned' to which I replied 'I would not have missed it for the world!'

Saturday 6th September 1997

1600: Departed RAF Northolt for Aberdeen with HM The Queen and party.

1710: Landed at Aberdeen

1730: Departed Aberdeen for RAF Northolt.

The other impression I was left with was how the youth of the day reacted. My own children Jackie (26) and Ian (22) and their respective friends wanted to attend the funeral. Jackie walked from Stoke Newington and Ian and friends camped at one of the London Terminuses with the co-operation of station staff before moving on to The Mall very early in the morning.

What a week! **RIP The Princess of Wales**



In silence ZE702 on the apron at RAF Northolt



Photo: Galih Mahastra

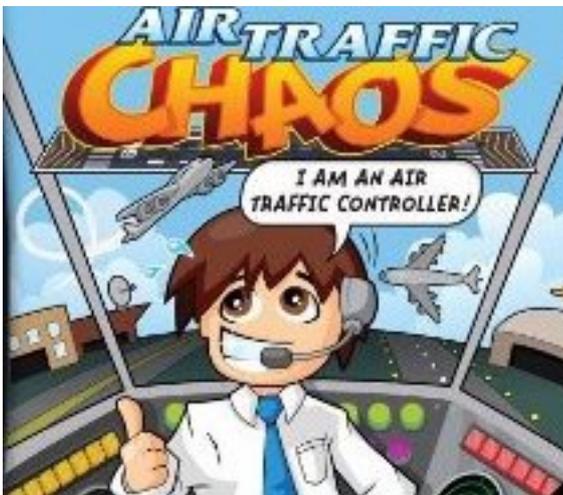
Formerly ZE702 now PK-TNV of TransNusa Aviation Mandiri at Jakarta this April

Tales from the Tower

by Tony Brown

Ed: It seems as if Ingrid is getting quite a following and she overheard Tony and a friend of his chatting about a story that happened a few years ago and as she has been undertaking a secretarial course in Manchester she sent this direct to me, and apart from the preamble the two versions were identical but I print Tony's version below.

Readers might find this story slightly complicated unless I explain the set up in the radar room. I have tried to explain this to Ingrid but after five minutes we had to lie down.



Anyway during the day there are numerous consoles covering various geographical sectors. At night, when aircraft movements are reduced, all the sectors are merged and become the responsibility of one controller.

His headset is quite clever. If an aircraft calls he hears it in both ears. However if he wants to make or receive a direct telephone call from the numerous airfields in the area, he hears the caller in his left ear. He can still hear aircraft in his right ear. In addition there is a normal handset which he can use to make non operational calls. He would move his right hand ear piece very slightly and placing the normal phone close up and could use it in the normal fashion. This was common practice at night and there was only a very slight problem. You had to remember who was on which phone or else it gets very confusing!!!!

At this point it is important to explain that this story is quite detailed as it caused so much amusement with pilots and other interested parties that the general

manager asked for transcripts of all the phones and R/T.

This particular controller who we will call Bill had two daughters who were obsessed with ponies and he was always looking to purchase one. The night shift started at ten and by five past ten he had the Manchester Evening News spread out across the radar screen. There in the advertisements was the one he was looking for a pony. Wasting no time he picked up the handset and dials the number. At the same time East Midlands ATC ring up for a clearance . There are now two phones on the go.



Lots of buttons and phones...but which one to use?

Bill "Good evening I am ringing about your advert"

East Midlands "I don't know what you are talking about."

Bill "Your advert it's in the Manchester Evening News . I've got it in front of me."

Intercom message from the tower. " Speedbird 123 airborne."

Lady answers phone probably for fiftieth time that evening

Speedbird 123 makes initial call "leaving Dayne descending 5000"

Bill: (to lady on the phone) " M a i n t a i n f i v e thousand feet. I can't see your squawk "

Lady "you pervert". and slams phone down.

Bill " Speedbird how much do want for your horse?"

Programme 2017

Events at 1030 for 1100 at Greenacres unless (*)

2017

20 Sep Halton Apprentices - Min Larkin
 22 Sep Visit to 32 (TR) Sqn, RAF Northolt*
 29 Sep Aircrew Lunch, Black Horse, Gozzards Ford
 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

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Welfare

Tom Payne progressing well with his family in Chatteris. Mavis Dyson has moved into a Residential Home in Aylesbury, although sad to leave her home she has settled well. If you would like to have her address please get in touch. It was good to see Dennis Swains at the August meeting and of course Des Richard. Best wishes to Shirley Doble and Jo Laurie as they go through their cancer treatment.

David**Membership Secretary**

We welcome our new member Malcolm Webber a former Wing Commander after spending much of his career involved with training fighter pilots. Please add him to your membership list.

WEBBER M (Malcolm) Ferrybank, The Pines, Box Lane,
 Hemel Hempstead, Herts HP3 0DJ 01442 213306 GL

Ian**Secretary/Editor**

Please see details of our visit to No 32 (TR) Squadron at RAF Northolt and shortly we also hope to have one to RAF Halton's Museum to look and fly the Link Trainer.

Graham**Programme Secretary**

We have published our programme for the rest of the year but I am still looking for additional speakers for next year, please let me know of any you may have in mind.

Bill**Treasurer**

Nothing much to report except to say we are in a sound financial state, thanks as ever to your wonderful contributions to our raffle. Last month we collected nearly £100.

Rod**Chairman**

21 members and two guests attended the August meeting. We were delighted to welcome a new member....Malcolm Webber and to see Malcolm Cloutt who has been absent for some time

Geoff



**AIRCREW LUNCH - FRIDAY 29TH SEPTEMBER 2017
12 Noon for 12.30pm)**

Another year has passed and it is time to join with Aircrew friends and partners and any other guests you would like to join us at Gozzards Ford. The pub changed hands in April and Jeff and Michaela are keen to welcome us on 29th September 2017 (12

MENU - MAIN COURSE

Fish Pie (GF) Homemade mix of cod, smoked haddock, salmon, white fish and prawns cooked in a creamy sauce and topped with cheesy mash and seasonal fresh vegetables on the side. *Order Large or Smaller portion L or S.*

Salmon Fillet Oven baked salmon fillet served on herb crushed new potatoes, wilted spinach with creamy white wine and dill sauce.

Traditional Fish & Chips (GF avail) Crispy beer-battered cod fillet, mushy peas, chips and homemade tartare sauce. *Order Large or Smaller portion L or S.*

Sausage & Mash (GF/V avail) Juicy Blackgate sausages and mashed potato served in rich onion gravy and fresh vegetables. *Order Large or Smaller portion L or S.*

Roasted Stuffed Peppers (GF avail) Peppers stuffed with roasted vegetables and couscous, topped with melted cheese and served with new potatoes and green beans.

Homemade 6oz Steak Mince Burger/Butterflied Chicken Breast Burger/Vegetable Burger (GF Rolls avail) Served in toasted bun with chips, lettuce, tomato, onion rings and house coleslaw.

Gammon Steak (GF) A grilled cut of gammon, served with chips and your choice of either grilled pineapple or a free-range egg from next door's farm. *Order Large or Smaller portion L or S.*

Superfood Salmon, Spinach and Bean Salad Salmon Fillet served with avocado, spinach, spicy bean, mixed salad, mixed pulses with a spicy tomato dressing served on a bed of crispy salad.

DESSERT

Sticky Toffee Pudding
Chef's Special Cheesecake
Warm Belgian Waffle
Cheese Board Selection

Chocolate Fudge Cake
Chef's Homemade Crumble
Ice Cream Sundae (Choc/S'berry or toffee sauce)

TEA/COFFEE

Americano
Cappuccino
Hot Chocolate

Latte
Hot Chocolate
Pot of Tea

COST: £23

£20 (Small Portions where applicable)

Cheque payable to "The Black Horse"

ORDER FORM

BLACK HORSE 29 September 2017 (12 Noon for 12.30pm)

NAMES:

ADDRESS:

TELEPHONE:

EMAIL:

MAIN COURSE:

DESSERT:

TEA/COFFEE:

If you have any special dietary requirements or food allergies, please give The Black Horse a call to help with your menu choice (01865 390530).

Send Cheque to payable to "The Black Horse" to Graham Laurie, 19 High Street, Prestwood, Great Missenden, Bucks HP16 9EE by Friday 22nd September 2017