



# NEWSLETTER

## Geoff Hulett made Hon President

### March Meeting

It was all change for our March meeting as our speaker had to cry off at short notice after his wife was rushed to hospital, we do hope everything works out well for them.

The meeting started with our former long serving Chairman Geoff Hulett being invited to become our Hon President. He accepted with his usual humility and much to many's surprise, no mention of the 'Sheffield Mafia'.

Geoff it is a richly deserved honour which we hope you will hold for many years to come and once again thank you for all the sterling work you have done for the Chiltern Aircrew Association.

The meeting continued with some films. We saw 5 short films on the Lancaster including the bombing of Berlin, dropping the big bomb and finishing with film of the last 'in service' Lancaster leaving St Mawgan for the scrap yard.

Following the Lancaster we watched a film about the Royal Flying Doctor Service, showing how they work on both routine clinic flights and the night time call outs in Queensland. Graham Laurie also explained about the introduction of the 'Life Flight' Hawker 800, so patients with serious injuries and specialist requirements can be flown from Western Australia

direct to Sydney for treatment. Previously this had taken 6 aircraft from all the bases en-route.



Rod Finn collecting the Raffle monies with his scrutineers Roy Briggs and Roger Almond (£65 raised)

*Photo on our President's new magic I-Phone (other makes are available!)*

### Message from our new Hon President

'Tis said that life is full of surprises and so the surprise of my life was to be invited to serve as President of Chiltern ACA.

In expressing my thanks for your confidence in my abilities I am assured that my remuneration will be on a par with that of my former role as Chairman!

**Geoff**



**Remember 18th April 2018**

**"40 years bomb disposal and still 10 fingers"**

**with**

**Ian Jones**

**10.30 a.m. for 11.00 a.m.**

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**The First World War Pilot J M (Jack) Mason  
Part 8**

**Ed:** Here we continue further extracts from Jack's First World War Logbook, on Active Service. He continues very active service!

12	DH4	141 mins (P1)	Bombing Raid on Etreux la Venille Dump. All bombs dropped on target. Several direct hits in the middle of the dump causing three fires. No Huns & very little AA.
13	DH4	127 mins (P1)	Bombing Raid on Etreux la Venille Aerodrome. All bombs were dropped on target & were observed to fall among the hangars on the south side of the aerodrome causing several fires and much damage. Five Huns came up to us but they were too cold footed to attack us. AA fire very accurate but not very much of it.
13	DH4	102 mins (P1)	Bombing Raid on Etreux la Venille Aerodrome. The second bombing raid today. All bombs dropped on target with very good results indeed. Bursts were observed away & on the sheds on the south side of the northern group. No E.A. & no AA.
15	DH4	82 mins (P1)	Bombing Raid on Bohain Aerodrome & Dump. Engine missing very badly and popping in the carburetter so I returned without crossing the lines and landed with all bombs.
15	DH4	57 mins (P1)	Bombing Raid on Etreux la Venille Aerodrome. 2nd raid today. First time I have a fear of this machine & was unable to get him to more than 10000ft so I was keeping the whole of the formation back. I returned home & landed with all bombs.
15	DH4	45 mins (P1)	Local. Testing my engine.
16	DH4	120 mins (P1)	Bombing Raid on Busigny Aerodrome. Engine still missing badly but I carried on. All bombs dropped on target but no results seen owing to my being too busy with Huns. About 50 Huns. Flt Cdr Ormound missing also Q.S.L Pattison, F.S.L. Cartmel brought down this side of the lines wounded. The hottest raid I've ever been on. The C.O. went as a passenger with Flt Lt Watkins.
17	DH4	111 mins (P1)	Bombing Raid on Busigny Dump. All bombs dropped on target but no results seen owing to the sky being thick with Huns. A formation of S.E.5 arrived on the scene and attacked and kept off the Huns shooting three down. Very little AA fire. About 30 Huns.

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18	DH4	114 mins (P1)	Bombing Raid on Busigny Aerodrome. All On approaching the target we were very heavily attacked by about 50 Huns of all types & description who were engaged by us together with a squadron of Camels & another squadron of S.E.5s. It was a marvellous fight & the sky was thick with machines. We lost 5 Camels, 2 S.E.5s & one DH4 who has not returned (F.S.L. Ransford & A.G.L Smith). In addition to this F.S.L.Woodhouse was wounded in the back . All our other machines returned safely.
21	DH4	100 mins (P1)	Bombing Raid on St Quentin Canal Bridges. At 4am the Huns started push & shell our aerodrome. At 4.30 we had orders to stand by to leave immediately but owing to a very heavy mist, we were unable to get away for a considerable time. We at last started to bomb the canal bridges around St Quentin in an endeavour to impede the Hun's advance. All bombs dropped on the target but no direct hits observed. Landed at another aerodrome 22 miles from the Hun lines.
21	DH4	60 mins (P1)	Bombing Raid on St Quentin Canal Bridges. 2Nd bombing raid of the day. Set out with the object of bombing anything we saw such as convoys, trains, troops etc. All bombs dropped on one of the bridges & six bursts observed.
22	DH4	86 mins (P1)	Bombing Raid on Vendhuile Bridge & Village. All bombs dropped over the bridge & village with fairly good results causing three distinct fires. AA poor but all the same, I had the nearest shave I've had from it, passing through a dense cloud of smoke an H.E. My gunlayer grazed on the hand.
22	DH4	76 mins (P1)	Bombing Raid on the Village of Vendhuile. All bombs dropped over target but no results observed. About 15 E.A. who did not attack. AA very poor.
23	DH4	82 mins (P1)	Bombing Raid on Villiers Village & Sidings. All bombs dropped over target. Three explosions observed on the sidings & two in the village.
23	DH4	70 mins (P1)	Bombing Raid on Tincourt & Maranauxuve. Set out to bomb anything we could find to stop the Huns who are still advancing.

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**GEORGE HOLT THOMAS “THE MAN WHO CREATED AIRCO, BY 1918 THE LARGEST AIRCRAFT MANUFACTURING ENTERPRISE IN THE WORLD”**

**Ed:** You may remember Dave Scott who spoke to us and wrote the book about the aircraft industry in High Wycombe. He has now nearly completed his second book about George Holt Thomas and here is a resume of the story:



*George Holt Thomas*

Unfortunately, with the passing of time, Holt Thomas, as he was generally known, has been almost forgotten, even in the industry to which he contributed so much. Yet there can be no doubt, that but for his contribution to early aviation, using his own money, with no official recognition or backing, his enthusiasm inspired much of the aircraft production and development in England in those early years and throughout the World War One.

His family fortune came from printing and publishing, his father William Luson Thomas produced the first daily illustrated paper “The Daily Graphic,” Holt Thomas was later involved in publication of two new magazines, the “Bystander” and “Empire Illustrated.”

Holt Thomas went to France to follow the early experiments in aviation, meeting with Louis Paulhan and the Farman Brothers (Henry and Maurice). He obtained the British licence to build the Farman types and the Gnome rotary engine and brought Paulhan to England to demonstrate flying. Holt Thomas persuaded Brooklands to clear land in the middle of the motor race track and Paulhan was the first aviator to fly there, attracting huge crowds and as a result aviation became established there. Paulhan was entered in the “Daily Mail” London to Manchester Air

Race. Seeking a departure point he found a suitable site in North West London (this subsequently became part of Hendon Aerodrome), Paulhan went on to win this race in a Henry Farman, having been entered by Holt Thomas.

He campaigned for the Government to create some form of military aviation and acted as Honorary Advisor to the War Office.

Unsuccessful in finding anyone to manufacture Farman aeroplanes in England, he formed his own company in 1911, “The Aeroplane Company” soon changed to “The Aeroplane Supply Company.”

He set his own company, “Airships Ltd.” with a licence to build the “Astra-Torres” airships and combined this with his other company in 1912 to create the “Aircraft Manufacturing Company Ltd” (later abbreviated to “AIRCO”).

In 1914 Holt Thomas made a significant addition to his staff, employing Geoffrey de Havilland, who was to remain with AIRCO until 1920. Here he started the famous series of aeroplanes with the “DH” prefix, with 1 to 26 all being designs by de Havilland whilst in the employ of Holt Thomas, any aeroplanes in this series should be titled with the AIRCO prefix, eg. AIRCO DH4 etc.

During World War I many outstanding designs came out of AIRCO, perhaps the most notable being the AIRCO DH2, the first British fighter and the AIRCO DH4 & 9A day bombers. Over 1,400 AIRCO DH4’s were built in England and under licence in the United States further 4,800 plus. Boeing’s first venture into aircraft production involved the modification of a number of AIRCO DH 4’s



*Airco DH2*

The need for aircraft production during the war saw Holt Thomas expand his company by creating or acquiring additional companies, many of the existing companies continued to use their existing names,

*Cont'd from Page 4:*

albeit being part of AIRCO.

These companies included, "The Integral Propeller Company," "Peter Hooker," (Gnome & Le Rhone Engine Company), "Gloucestershire Aircraft" (later to become Gloster Aircraft), "Vanden Plas," "Camden Engineering," "May Harden & May" (building flying boats), and "Wycombe Aircraft Constructors."

The need for accommodation for his employees at the huge factory at Hendon saw Holt Thomas create "Roe Green Garden Village" still extant and now a conservation area.

With concern amongst the aircraft manufacturers about "Excess Profits Tax", Holt Thomas contacted other manufacturers, resulting in the formation of the "Society of British Aircraft Constructors" (SBAC) located at AIRCO's head office in London.

The AIRCO DH9 had not been particularly successful and the AIRCO DH9A was planned to succeed it. As AIRCO's design department at Hendon was being over stretched, a group of staff were sent to Westland at Yeovilton to design the AIRCO DH9A. Up until this time Westland had simply been an aircraft manufacturing company building other companies types, they had little in-house design capability. The introduction of staff from AIRCO at Hendon, gave Westland a new design capability. Westland's first successful "own design" the Wapiti used mostly AIRCO DH9A airframe components.



*Airco DH9A*

Holt Thomas had great foresight and even in the depth of war, could foresee the future of civil air transport and in 1916 created one of the World's first airlines "Aircraft Transport & Travel" (abbreviated to AT&T). On August 25th 1919, an AT&T AIRCO DH16 operated the World's first international daily regular

air service. AT&T are considered to be the ancestor company of today's British Airways (recognised in the British Airways Heritage Centre at Heathrow Airport). Realising that international air travel would need agreements with other nations, Holt Thomas arranged a meeting to be held at the Hague in Holland, to be chaired by Sir Sefton Brancker (by then an employee of AT&T), the outcome being the formation of the "International Air Transport Association (IATA).

In 1919, AIRCO started an Aerial Photographic Division (later acquired by "Aerofilms), with Alan Cobham as Chief Pilot. The RAF Inventory on 31st October 1918, listed more AIRCO designed aeroplanes than from any other single manufacturer.

Holt Thomas had been offered a Knighthood in 1918, that he chose to decline

With the end of World War One the huge demand for aeroplanes ended suddenly, AT&T could not compete with the European airlines that were being given large Government subsidies. Holt Thomas was unable to continue and sold AIRCO to BSA and AT&T to Daimler Air Hire.

Although no longer directly involved in aviation, Holt Thomas was still to have a major input by providing a substantial financial contribution for the birth of de Havilland Aircraft Co in 1920 and considerably influencing the founding of Imperial Airways in 1924.

His other passion was for farming and from 1916 he built up a large holding of local land and property, with a herd of prize-winning cattle at his farm in North Dean (Nr. Hughenden) where he lived. He died in France in 1929 after suffering with cancer for some years, he was buried in an unmarked grave in Nice, the only known surviving mention of his name in public appears on the grave of his wife, Gertrude, on her headstone in a cemetery in Chiswick.

Some of the famous names in aviation that had worked for AIRCO, include Geoffrey de Havilland and many of his colleagues at AIRCO who joined him when he started the de Havilland Aircraft Company in 1920, Sir Alan Cobham, Sir Sefton Brancker, Mervyn O'Gorman, E.T. Willows ("The Father of British Airships"), Nick Comper (Comper Aircraft), Neville Shute & Hessel Tiltman (Shute & Tiltman later started the Airspeed Aircraft Co.), Harald Penrose and Harold Bolas (Chief Aircraft Designer at Parnall 1917-1929).

**Ed:** *We hope Dave will come and give us a presentation later in the year.*

**What's On**

**Buffet Lunch @ Greenacres  
Weds 16 May 18 at 12 Noon**

Our Annual Buffet Lunch will be held at Greenacres and tickets are available from Ian Mason (see Page 8) at £10 and just £5 for our widows. Please do try to attend and if you would like to bring some friends please do so. The more the merrier.

**RAF 100 Heritage Aviation Dinner  
21 April 2018 – Gerrard's Cross**



£ 60 a seat  
Concessions £ 40

To book your place, contact  
Peter Roberts  
01753 886497  
robertspj40@gmail.com

Supported Charity

**RAF 100 Heritage Aviation Day  
22 April 2018 – Gerrard's Cross**

**Sale and Signing Event**  
Specially commissioned work  
from artist Philip West

**Books – Mugs – Hip Flasks**  
**Other Prints and Artwork**

**Signing by Veterans**  
**Surprise Guests**

**Free entrance**

To book your place, please  
contact  
Peter Roberts  
01753 886497  
robertspj40@gmail.com

Supported Charity

Full details of the Dinner can be found on Page 9

**RAF Day at the Museum  
10 May 18**

**All members of Chiltern ACA have been invited to this event.**

If there is sufficient demand we may try for a minibus. During this special reunion, hosted by Museum staff, RAF colleagues and Veterans will be treated to a special preview of the brand-new Hangar 1, which houses two new, innovative galleries exploring the first 100 years of the RAF, its roles today and invites visitors to imagine its future contribution

and technology. The hangar has been redeveloped specifically for the RAF 100th anniversary so will provide a fitting space for veterans and serving personnel to share their stories.

As part of our RAF Centenary Programme, the Museum will also be launching a new digital project called RAF Stories; an online digital project which aims to inspire participants to share accounts of the Royal Air Force. RAF Stories seeks to find stories, not just from former and serving personnel, but also from their friends and family as well as extended partners who work closely with the RAF. Our RAF Stories team will be on hand on the day to collect stories and provide information on this new online archive.

The day's events also include a flypast, live music, tours, refreshments and the chance to catch up with colleagues old and new. With service men and women joining in from across the country, it is set to be a truly memorable and sentimental gathering.

To register your interest please contact Rod Finn (see Page 8)

**Service at the Air Force Memorial  
Runnymede Sun 13 May 18  
at 11.00 AM**

The Annual Act of Commemoration to honour those who lost their lives will be held at the Air Force Memorial at Runnymede TW20 0LB at 11.00 am on Sunday 13 May 2018. The memorial commemorates by name the 20,458 airmen and women who were lost in the Second World War during operations from bases in the United Kingdom and North West Europe, and who have no known grave. Please arrive by 10.30 am

**Other Events**

28 Apr 18 and 5 May 18  
Flying without Feathers  
Concert at Bentley Priory  
Museum. Two performances  
on each day: 1130-1230  
and 1400-1500. Tickets: Adults  
£9, Children aged 16 and  
under £6

10 Jul 18 RAF Parade and  
Fly Past in the Mall



### Tales from the Tower



**Ed:** *The dreadful crash of the Dash 8 at Kathmandu last month, has raised queries about some of the communications between ATC and the aircraft. The airline US-Bangla Airways, the day after, blamed ATC for the accident. I seem to remember my instructor saying to me many times, the priority is 'Fly the aircraft'. Thankfully the Black boxes and Cockpit Voice Recorders have been recovered, so hopefully the real reason will eventually be forthcoming. The exchange between the aircraft and ATC is summarised below - what do you think? We will follow this story with interest.*

Extraordinary air traffic control communications with a US-Bangla Bombardier Q400 shortly before it crashed at Kathmandu on 12 March 2018, reveal confusion over the runway to which the aircraft had been cleared. Kathmandu has a single runway with the designation 02/20.

The Q400 had initially been cleared to land on runway 02, and advised of a 7kt wind from 220° – resulting in a 6kt tailwind component. But the Kathmandu controller queried the crew shortly afterwards, stating: "You were given landing clearance to runway 02. You are going towards runway 20."

The aircraft, operating flight BS211, is then cleared by a separate controller to land on runway 20. About a minute later another aircraft on approach questions the runway in use, and the tower calls the Q400 to request the crew's intention, to which the pilot appears to confirm a landing on runway 02. The mix-up persists as the controller initially instructs a right downwind pattern for runway 20, before correcting to a right downwind for runway 02, and clearing the other approaching aircraft to land on 02. After the tower informs the Q400 crew to be aware of the landing aircraft, the Q400 pilot says he will be approaching runway 02 – prompting a response from the controller, asking the pilot to confirm he is tracking towards runway 20.

When the pilot responds "affirmative", the controller – with urgency evident in his voice – instructs him

again to join the right downwind for runway 02, and warns of the other aircraft on final approach. This other aircraft again requests confirmation of, and is granted, landing clearance for 02.

"I say again, do not proceed towards runway 20," the controller urges the Q400 pilot, who responds by saying he will execute a right-hand orbit to hold for runway 02.

"OK, that's good, but do not land," the controller adds.

Around a minute later the controller offers the Q400 either runway, to which the pilot replies that he would like runway 20. The controller gives the Q400 landing clearance for 20, advising of wind from 270° at 6kt, and the pilot confirms he is cleared to land.

When the controller subsequently asks whether the pilot has the runway in sight, and is told "negative", he tells the aircraft to turn right and asks for confirmation that the runway is still not in sight.

But the pilot immediately responds with a request for landing clearance, which the controller grants, initially without mentioning the runway designation.

The pilot reads back the landing clearance, but mentions runway 02, rather than 20, and the controller simply confirms: "Roger, runway 02, cleared to land."

Transmissions between the aircraft and Kathmandu controllers were obtained through the LiveATC archive.



*With thanks to Live ATC and Flight Global*

**Programme 2018**

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

**2018**

18 Apr 40 years bomb disposal and still 10 fingers -  
Ian Jones

16 May Buffet Lunch

**Your 2018 Committee****President**

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**Welfare**

Nothing really to report have been home from Australia a few days! However, Chris Brockbank brought 2 guests that he had interviewed on behalf of IBCC - Margaret and Charles Day both ex RAF in WW2 with Charles serving on 55 Sqn as a signaller, he subsequently flew Sunderlands with 201 Sqn based at Pembroke Dock.

I have been in touch with a few members, Tom Payne sound chirpy and is able to have 2 hour escapades these days. Ron Doble could not make the meeting at the last moment we trust he remains as well as can be expected.

With Margaret Day at the meeting I will endeavour to get more ladies to attend in the future?

**David**

**Membership Secretary**

I am hoping to announce another new member next month. Please also send me you cheques or pay by BACS: I M Mason 09-01-28 41009326

Please Post cheques, together with a stamped addressed envelope to:

Ian Mason

65, Sunnycroft,

Downley,

High Wycombe HP13 5UR

**Ian**

**Secretary/Editor**

By the time of our next meeting the Royal Air Force will have celebrated it's 100th Birthday. Why not celebrate with us at our April meeting, it would be lovely to see you there and also our widows. We have decided that it is time you were invited to all our meetings, not just the two with food. You will be most welcome and you can order a Greenacres Lunch before the meeting commences.

**Graham**

**Treasurer**

I hope to have our accounts ratified shortly. Please let me know if you are interested in coming to Hendon on 10 May 18 (see Page 6).

**Rod**



## HERITAGE DINNER 21 APRIL 2018

### GUEST REGISTRATION & PAYMENT FORM

To register for the RAF centenary Heritage Dinner at the Memorial Hall, Gerrard's Cross to please complete the following form and return it to Peter Roberts

NAME	ADDRESS	MOBILE TELEPHONE

SPECIAL DIETARY NEEDS (please notify as soon as possible)

This black tie/No 5s event will start with a champagne reception at 1900 and be followed by dinner and entertainment until carriage at 2300. We shall be in the presence of Veterans and members of the Royal Air Force senior leadership team. The supported charity is the RAF 100 Appeal.

Each seat costs £60. Veterans and OAPs £ 40

Please remit payment with this form by cheque payable to Peter Roberts and drawn on a British bank (to accompany this form) or (preferred) by bank transfer to:

Account:  
Bank: Santander  
Sort Code: 09-01-26  
Account Number: 12179252

Please complete the boxes above and return this form to:

**Heritage Dinner**  
**40 Moreland Drive**  
**Gerrard's Cross**  
**Bucks SL9 8BD**

Organiser: Peter Roberts on 01753 886497 or email: [robertspj40@gmail.com](mailto:robertspj40@gmail.com)  
PMC: Group Captain Paul Beaver



# RAF 100 GUIDED WALKS IN WESTMINSTER

Celebrate the centenary of the Royal Air Force with an official qualified City of Westminster guide



## CHOOSE FROM 2 WALKS:

### THE HISTORY OF THE RAF

Discover the people, places and events that tell the story of 100 years of the RAF.

### ALLIES OF THE RAF

Discover the role played by Allies of the RAF from the Commonwealth and other nations.

Please see over for more information.

Walks last about 2 hours.

Price: £12 per person or £10 for concessions

Family ticket: £25 for two adults and two children 16-18.

Children under 16 go free.

For group bookings and enquiries please contact:

RAF100@westminsterguides.org.uk

Or call Debbie Pearson on 07752 288367

Please visit our website to book online.

[www.westminsterguides.org.uk](http://www.westminsterguides.org.uk)



For every ticket sold a donation will be made to the RAF100 Appeal.



## 100 YEARS OF THE RAF GUIDED WALKS IN WESTMINSTER

Walks will start just before the official RAF centenary date of 1st April 2018 for a limited season



### THE HISTORY OF THE RAF

The City of Westminster has played an important role in the history of the RAF. Explore prime locations linked with points in the 100 year timeline; encounter famous RAF men & women and their stories; discover impressive memorials to significant people and events.

Meeting point: By the statue of King George V in Old Palace Yard, London SW1P 3JX.

Nearest Underground station: Westminster



### ALLIES OF THE RAF

During its 100 year history the RAF has been able to rely on Allies from the Commonwealth and other nations. Learn about some of the celebrated people who have played critical roles in the RAF story; admire the many statues and memorials to key figures; visit some of the locations where the allies are commemorated.

Meeting point: Canada House, London SW1Y 5BJ (Cockspur Street entrance).

Nearest Underground station: Charing Cross



Please visit our website to book online.

[www.westminsterguides.org.uk](http://www.westminsterguides.org.uk)

To mark the 100th anniversary of the formation of the RAF on 1st April 1918, the Westminster Guides will be leading guided walks in the City of Westminster from the end of March until mid October 2018. There are many connections between Westminster and the RAF, including the original headquarters on The Strand; statues of key figures in the history of the RAF; monuments to significant events; memorials to people, organisations and nations. There is of course, much to tell about the men and women of the service and their links with Westminster.

There are two routes to choose from: "The History of the RAF" lets you discover the people, places and events that tell the story of 100 years of the RAF. It starts near Westminster Abbey and ends at St Clement Danes, the church of the RAF, on The Strand. "The Allies of the RAF" enables you to discover the role played by Allies of the RAF from the Commonwealth and other nations. This walk starts near Trafalgar Square and ends on Piccadilly. Walks last between 1 1/2 and 2 hours.

The Westminster Guides are the official guides for the City of Westminster. After comprehensive training we are eligible to join the City of Westminster Guide Lecturers Association. We receive our badges from the Lord Mayor of the City of Westminster, and membership of the Association includes public liability insurance.

For every ticket sold, a donation of 25% of the ticket price will be made to the RAF100 Appeal, which supports four RAF charities. See [www.westminsterguides.org.uk](http://www.westminsterguides.org.uk)