



NEWSLETTER

Have you paid your sub? If not let Ian have it ASAP

Our AGM

Our AGM was reasonably well attended considering the 'Arctic weather'. The event lasted 14 minutes, which meant those who had opted for 10 minutes lost their bet.

The Chairman's report was published last month, so it was only the other Committee members that were required to speak. This was done eruditely and quickly and was followed by the voting in of your new committee

Your new committee is as follows:

Chairman	Geoff Hulett
Secretary/Editor	Graham Laurie
Membership Sec	Ian Mason
Treasurer	Rod Finn
Speaker Sec	Bill George ^{364.40}
Welfare	David Bray

The similarity to last years committee is purely coincidental!

Following the AGM Ian Mason gave a short presentation including the film of him completing the abseil down the 'Spinaker Tower' in Portsmouth, in aid of Hearing Dogs. The audience watched in awe and heard every breath Ian took on the way down and also a short song which Ian had to complete for one of his sponsors.

If, like me, you had sponsored Ian I am sure you felt it was very worthwhile him completing it on our behalf! Well done Ian and a splendid effort to raise over £1300.

After Ian's efforts we watch 3 short films shown from the 1950's of Astra Cinema newsreels. One saw our speaker friend Alan Merriman receiving his wings and a number of trophies as he passed out from Cranwell.

We agreed to sponsor a young aviator for a flight in the Tiger Moth as part of the Teague Challenge at Old Warden on 10-11 June 2017. This event is run by The deHavilland Moth Club under the careful scrutiny of our own Stuart McKay. It will mean that a deserving youngster will get a flight in the aircraft that delighted/frustrated/frightened many of you.

February Meeting

Our 15th February meeting will see us turning to the Army. The presentation by Reg Palmer will feature 324 Field Company Royal Engineers.

The RE's has been involved in every major conflict the British Army has fought and has ever since lived up to its Motto "Ubique" ("Everywhere").

The Corps of Royal Engineers has a long heritage that not many corps can rival.



Remember 15th February

**Join us for
"324 Field Company, Royal Engineers"
with Reg Palmer**

Greenacres 1100 am

I learnt about flying from that!

Tom Payne writes:

Late January 1952, I was 2 months into the 3 months recall into the RAF from the RAFVR, the call up came out of the blue, apparently the Air Ministry discovered there was a shortage of air crew – rather Pilots – with the ability to fly at night or in inclement weather. They had introduced an instrument flying rating, White, Green, & Master Green. On checking they had 3 or 4 pilots with Master Green rating – less than 100 with green and a few more with white. Why they called us up for 3 months to obtain a rating, (our co-pilots were in for 18 months !) we never knew.

We strolled out of the office to start our flight, about 4 hours of flying on instruments for me, with a net curtain draped on the inside of the flight deck on the port side, clear on the right for my “safety pilot” to check the way ahead was clear. After the pre-flight check it was up up and away, we flew around 8 to 10,000 feet in a pre-specified pattern, all on instruments, not a cloud anywhere near us I was suddenly plunged into darkness. The cockpit became a patch of shadows, the noise was deafening, I was aware of a form immediately above me.



A Dakota, just above but in Toms case a few feet lower and it came from behind him!

As I pulled back the throttles and moved the column forward to dive away I realised that the darkness was caused by an aircraft – this seemed to be inches away – it overtook us at an angle and as it cleared I realised it was a D.C.3 Dakota. Whilst we hadn't seen them approach it was obvious they hadn't seen

us either. The immediate effect on us was that their slipstream caused our aircraft to be flung around like a shuttle cock. We were flung around and I had a problem maintaining control, after what seemed like minutes I was able to get flying straight and level, it took longer to settle my mind.

The safety pilot was as shaken as me, we were breathless as was our wireless operator, it took another hour to feel safe – decided no point in making a report as although the guy was above us he should have been spotted by the safety pilot. We should have been seen by the Dakota as he flew straight at us, guess they were on auto-pilot and never knew how close they and us came to a sticky end.

The impression was the underside of the Dakota was less than 5 feet above us, I do not want to get any closer, never been inside one but nearly did that day. There were 18 pilots on the course, including F/Lt “Bill” Read V.C. and an F/O Pavey who I met years later in Prague. The others included 5 Sergeants, 1 P/O & 11 F/O's plus Bill Reid, one of the pilots only “multi” experience was as second dickie on Catalinas, he did a night down wind landing in a farm yard, having set incorrect pressure on his altimeter. Walked away from the wreckage, wireless operator had a broken finger, incredible result.

Accept my luck in not being 10 feet higher !!

P.S. Got my “green ticket” - printed by a Roneo on rather dodgy paper.

Ed: Thank you Tom, I am sure there are more out there, please delve back in your memories and see!

I had a note from Alistair Macpherson, of Jodel fame:

“Although I couldn't wait to read what happened in part two, this horror story gives me nightmares !

Maybe weened on good local Robinson's beer strengthened this young pilots abilities !

Seriously, I also gave much credit to my good friend and flying instructor, without who's fine tuition, may have lead to a premature return to earth!”

2 Xmas ‘ Days Out’ by 4 Chiltern Members

Rod Finn reports:

Chiltern Aircrew Association always receives a couple of invitations each year to visit with our aircrew colleagues at Woking A.C.A., Woking’s Xmas Luncheon was arranged for Wednesday the 7th December 2016, an invite was offered by Woking’s Tony Boxall to attend and myself (Rod) plus Tom, Roy and Derek duly accepted. Four persons being a comfortable number for the journey, off we set for The Camberley Hill Golf Club where said function was being held.

Luncheon was scheduled for a 1.00.p.m. start, we determined that a 12 noon arrival time would be beneficial i.e. allowing for the M.25 then the M.3 route plus the Camberley area local traffic, good time was made, to the Golf Club location. All the excellent navigation being provided by Tom. A car park ‘slot’ was allocated to us, and guess what, we parked up at 12 noon, then into the Club for drinks to meet with all our Woking colleagues.



L to R: Tony Boxall, Bill Moore, Tom Payne and Derek Gurney

As in 2015 the four of us sat with and enjoyed the company of Des O’Connell, Stan Instow and Geoff Packham, all 3 being Woking WWII lads., much conversation ensued between courses. A ‘toast to Woking’ was made by Wing Comm. Lizzie Nicholls., Lizzie duly came to meet with u, we enthused her about Chiltern and it is hoped that a visit to her ‘Home’ RAF Station maybe be forthcoming later this year.

All to soon it was departure time, we bid our farewells and arrived back in the Hemel area about 7.00’ish, slightly weary but having enjoyed an excellent visit and lunch.

A few days rest, Monday the 12th December dawned, we took the Green Line Bus from Hemel to The



L to R: Derek Gurney, Tom Payne and Roy Briggs

Bomber Command Memorial at Green Park this being our first destination as Tom wished to lay a wreath on behalf of his cousin and 2 minutes silence was duly observed, I then summoned a cab to get us to The Union Jack Club London. SE1., our host’s being The Bomber Command Association for their Xmas Luncheon. we knew that Tony Boxall and Bill Moore from Woking would join us, they duly arrived as did David Keen (late of RAF Hendon Museum who gave us an excellent talk/presentation a couple of months back) as at Woking an excellent lunch was enjoyed with friends all around us., Harry Irons and Doug Radcliffe were there and asked after all of us at Chiltern and send their ‘Best’. Harry visited us at ‘branch’ two years back (I think) and Doug joined us at the Bomber Command Memorial, then into the RAF Club on the 26th November 2015. As at Woking we enjoyed the company of Tony and Bill yet again and yet again it was soon time to depart., again a ‘black Cab’ was summoned to get us to Victoria Coach Station for the journey back. I must praise our London ‘cabbies’ as going to The Union Jack our Cabbie only charged us half the displayed fare, and returning to the Victoria Coach terminus that cabbie ‘waived’ the total fare and tip.....bless ‘em both.

12.00 noon on Wednesday the 14th December duly arrived for our Chiltern Aircrew Luncheon and yes, Tony Boxall and Bill Moore were with us returning the compliment with our friends and guest’s.....but you all know about that from the January 2017 Newsletter!

Ed: *Thank you Rod and also for the photos. We will certainly follow up the idea of a visit to a station.*

How it all started for me

Having spent my working life flying in the Royal Air Force, I am often asked, how did I get interested in aircraft and flying. The answer is basically that it sort of crept up on me, but I must be honest, the real reason I joined the RAF was I did not get enough A Levels to gain a Civilian Air Traffic Control Cadetship!

So how did it all come about, well my father served in the RAF during WW2, much of his time in Egypt but later in the Ops room at Uxbridge, albeit after the heady days of the Battle of Britain.

I suppose I saw the Farnborough Air Show on TV each year and became a bit of a 'spotter', taking the bus to Heathrow and watching from the Queen's Building. I also, with a schoolfriend, would write to airfield managers and ask if we could visit and look round the hangars. In those days I am glad to say they normally wrote back in the affirmative.

One such visit was to Kidlington now known by it's modern day title of London Oxford (Kidlington) Airport (just 60 miles from London!!). The year was 1961 and it was famous for the arrival of the first Piper Cherokee in UK. The late 50's had seen an influx of Cessna and Piper aircraft such as the Cessna 150 and Piper Tri-Pacer but this was the first 'low wing' option on the market.



My photo of N5007W being assembled at Vigors Aviation

This aircraft was the 8th off the production line and was sent to Europe as a demonstrator and Vigors Aviation at Kidlington were the main Piper Agents in UK.

PIPER'S NEW PRACTICAL, LOW WING, LOW COST, ALL METAL AIRCRAFT



OF REVOLUTIONARY DESIGN THROUGHOUT
 160 h.p. Lycoming engine—famed for its total reliability. All-metal structure of simplified design—giving rigid safety. Roomy comfort for four with luggage. Tank capacity 46 gallons—a range of 600 miles at cruising speed 130 m.p.h. Standard equipment includes large-size nose wheel and double rotating beacons.
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Information on this new aircraft, highly suitable for clubs and groups and all economy flying, is now available from VIGORS AVIATION LIMITED (Sole U.K. Distributors) Oxford Airport, Kidlington. Tel: Kidlington 3444

An early Vigors advert for the Cherokee with N5007W

By this time I was at Grammar School and a member of the RAF Section of the Combined Cadet Force. We had a Slingsby Primary Glider which we used to operate from the school playing field on Thursday afternoons, under the watchful eye of our Commanding Officer and Science Master.



Assembled and ready for 'bungee' launch

I remember one particular afternoon when our master drove an old Humber Super Snipe on to the field, announcing we were going to attach the bungee to the rear bumper and launch from a tow by the car. It worked, the aircraft got airborne but the pupil panicked and released the bungee under tension! To say the result was spectacular as the metal ring on the end of bungee passed through the boot, the rear seat, the gearbox and as it embedded in the engine it missed the master by inches! This of course was pre 'Elf and Safety'!

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This early glider training worked well and it certainly helped when I won a gliding scholarship and attended RAF Kirton in Lindsay. We flew the Kirby Cadet Mk 3's.

This course meant that at the age of 16 I held my British Gliding Association A & B certificates and had flown solo for the number of prescribed cable launches.



Kirby Cadet Mk3

Next came the chance of a 'Flying Scholarship' which meant attending RAF Biggin Hill to the Aircrew Selection Centre. We went through virtually the same tests as for those trying for selection as aircrew in the RAF. So at the age of 17 I was trying to add a Private Pilot's Licence to my portfolio. In August 1963 I completed a 30 hour course at Surrey & Kent Flying Club at Biggin Hill. Their main training aircraft was the Forney Aircoupe, built in USA and said to be unstallable and unspinnable. Both these last exercises are very much part of the PPL syllabus so we also got to fly in a Chipmunk to cover these exercises.



Forney Aircoupe

So after 6 Aircoupe and one Chipmunk sortie I was sent solo on 9 Aug 63. After a dual Cross country to Stapleford Tawney and return, I was sent on a solo triangular cross country landing at Stapleford Tawney and Ipswich. We completed the course on 23 Aug 63 with 30.05 hrs. The whole course did not involve radio work which certainly made us concentrate on look-out!

I was back at Biggin Hill again in April and May 1964 for some free flying. I had been asked to take part in a film made by the Central Office of Information about two schoolboys leaning to fly having won Flying Scholarships. So there I was at Biggin Hill and met the other chap who won his scholarship through the Air Training Corps. As it turned out I knew him from my local swimming club. We were selected because I had by now been accepted for pilot training in the RAF, whilst Richard Graham was going to Hamble to train with British European Airways. They filmed us doing groundschool and flying solo and some air to air shots from a Percival Prentice where of course we had to fly dual! It was another 3 hours flying for free and I was interviewed at home and at school on our CCF parade day.



TVTimes 20-26 March 1965

The film was broadcast on Rediffusion (London ITV) at 6.25pm on Thursday 25 March 1965 much to the delight of my parents but not seen by Acting Pilot Officer Laurie who was now learning to fly the Jet Provost Mk3 in the RAF at No7 FTS Church Fenton. Thanks however to my godfather, who was at the time Controller of Programmes at Rediffusion, I saw a special screening at their HQ in Kingsway.

Ed: So there we are, the few years that set me on a path to 36 years in the RAF. Now it is your turn - what path did you follow into the RAF? Let me know.

New Years Honours

The press or should I say the Daily Mail had a full page article plus headlines on January 4th “**The REAL heroes who expose what a tawdry joke our honours system is**”.

The article was written by Robert Hardman and at our January meeting, I was handed no less than 3 copies of the article by members that it had hit a nerve with.

I spent my working career avoiding the press as much as possible on Royal Tours and subsequently do not purchase a daily paper, choosing to get my news from radio and television. It was however not surprising, when I read the article that our members were equally incensed. I will not go into those named that Robert thought unworthy, as in one case I know much charity work goes on unnoticed behind the public personae.



Sqn Ldr George 'Johnny' Johnson DFM RAF Ret'd

He features two ex wartime veterans the first, 95 year old Sqn Ldr George 'Johnny' Johnson, bomb aimer and the last surviving British Dambuster, who in civilian life became a teacher and local councillor. It has come to light that Mr Johnson had been proposed for an award but it was rejected. The request was not made for his wartime heroics, for which he was awarded a Distinguished Flying Medal (DFM), nor for his longevity but for all his work educating the

younger generation about the war and for raising funds for RAF causes. He is still an active public speaker and has completed his autobiography:

The Last British Dambuster by George 'Johnny' Johnson (Ebury Press, RRP £17.99)

Johnny was recommended by a friend Paul Walmsey, who now plans to appeal to the government.

The other veteran was Sqn Ldr Bill Lucas DFC RAF Ret'd , who also was rejected for an honour. Bill, an ex Bomber Command pilot who completed 81 missions. After the war he became an insurance agent and was selected for the 5,000 metres in the 1948 Olympics at Wembley Stadium running against the Czech legend Emil Zatopek. He is now Britain's oldest Olympian and a lifelong member of Belgrave Harriers, he is thought to be one of the people to spot the up and coming Sebastian Coe.

Bill has spent recent years as a supporter of the International Bomber Command Centre in Lincoln. In November he and his wife were travelling in a car that overturned. They had to be cut from the wreckage with a number of broken bones, spending 4 weeks in hospital. To quote Bill 'we managed to escape for Christmas'. On 16 Jan 17 he celebrated his 100th Birthday! Bill was joined by 60 guests including the Officer Commanding of the RAF Battle of Britain Memorial Flight and two members of XV(R) Squadron who flew down especially from RAF Lossiemouth.



*Sqn Ldr Bill Lucas DFC RAF ,
celebrated his 100th birthday at Princess Marina House.
So two very deserving cases, perhaps Downing Street will see fit to correct their error in the June Birthday Honours, we hope so!*

**Group Captain J K ‘Ken’ Mason CBE, MD, LLD,
FRCPATH, DMJ, FRCPE, FRSE
RAF Ret’d**

Ed: *I was about to pen an article on Coolham Airfield in Sussex, about it’s use in the run up to the D-Day Landings. I was supplied a book by Ian Mason which he obtained from his father, stationed there in 1944. Sadly just as was about to start Ian called to say his father had passed away on 26 January at his home in Edinburgh. Our thoughts are with Ian, Paul and the family at this sad time.*

Ken Mason was professor emeritus of Forensic Medicine in the University of Edinburgh. On retiring from the Chair, he accepted honorary fellowship of the School of Law where he had taught and researched in medical law and ethics for some 25 years, working well into his 90’s. He was co-author of the standard text-book ‘Law and Medical Ethics’ and has published widely on the legal aspects of the end of life.

But all that was in later life, as he had already had a full career as a Medical Officer in the RAF. Gp Capt Mason came from an RAF family or to be more correct an RNAS family. His father started as Flight Officer u/t pilot J M Mason, first flying in a Maurice Farman Longhorn for 18 mins on 1st February 1917 at the RNAS Flying School Eastchurch. In his logbook he wrote of the experience: ‘Circuits. First time in the air. Liked it very much. Took control for a few minutes’. He served in the RAG to the end of WW2.

So it was no surprise that after medical training Ken joined the RAF and was the squadron doctor to No 129 (Mysore) Squadron in the run up to D Day, based at RAF Coolham, no not as famous as Biggin Hill or Tangmere but from April to July 1944 it was the home of six fighter squadrons. There were 3 Mustang and 3 Spitfire Squadrons and their home was somewhat primitive but it was home to several hundred men from many nations. Later that year Coolham reverted to farmland.



*Flt Lt J K Mason
(Row 2 under
prop) with 129
(M y s o r e)
Squadron early
1944*

Following general medical war service, he was trained as a clinical pathologist. A major change came in 1955 when, following the lack of knowledge exposed by the Comet disaster of 1954, he was invited to establish a Department of Aviation Pathology. In so doing, he evolved a system of medical accident investigation. The Department rapidly expanded from serving the RAF alone to all the Armed Forces and the Department of Trade through its Accident Investigation Branch. In this last role, he made a special study of safety equipment in light aircraft but probably the most interesting field work involved the investigation of major airline disasters - of which he was concerned in some 26 incidents. He was particularly commended by the court in the public inquiries into the accidents at Stockport in 1967 (passanger tie-down failure) and the BEA Trident at Staines 1972 (coronary disease in the pilot); the most noteworthy case, however, was probably that involving the discovery of a bomb on the Comet aircraft that disappeared in 1967 in the Mediterranean.

I first met Ian’s father. In the latter part of 1966 Ian and myself were co-pilots on No 241 OCU (Andover C1) at RAF Abingdon and were sent to Halton to have an arm full of jabs prior to proceeding overseas to El Adem on our OCU Night Flying detachment. It was a Friday and we were about to return to Abingdon for ‘Happy Hour’. I can still remember Ken’s polite but strongly worded statement about not drinking for 24 hours, which we all obeyed to the letter. It was nice later, when we joined No 46 Sqn, to occasionally have Ken come to the Officers’ Mess to join us for a drink.

Ken served at RAF Halton for many years, where his department was base. He lived in Halton Village and later set up the family home in Buckland, near Aston Clinton. On retirement he moved to Edinburgh and continued his lifetime work at the University. It was a

pleasure to know Ken, a real gentleman to whom modern aviators and accident investigators owe so much.

His funeral is to be held in Edinburgh on 3 Feb 17.

RIP

Graham Laurie



Programme 2017

Events at 1030 for 1100 at Greenacres unless (*)

2017

18 Jan 17 AGM
 15 Feb 17 324 Field Company RE (Reg Palmer)
 15 Mar 17 HP Victor Mk2 variants (Ian Watson)
 19 Apr 17 Member's Meeting (Provisional)
 17 May 17 Guests Lunch* 12 Noon
 21 Jun 17 Project Propeller (Gideon Topes)

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Welfare

Ron Doble is still hospitalised and has improved, mentioned to me he will be at the next meeting. Rosemary Calvert has progressed to sticks and is hopeful of a quick recover. Jim Copus is not fit enough to join us for meetings at the moment. Meanwhile hope that our Chairman has rid himself of his cold. I would like to publicly thank Rob Lowe for all he is doing for the Doble family. Those who attended the funeral of Janet Richard, will have noticed Bill Pegg did not take the service. Sadly Bill was in hospital but we are glad to report he is now home in Lincolnshire. We send our best wishes to Bill and Ann. Thank you to those who 'ring a friend' it is much appreciated.

David

Membership Secretary

Please please pay your subs as soon as possible, as I would like to publish the Membership List next month. Just pop a cheque for **£10 in the post and do remember to include a SAE.**

Ian

Secretary/Editor

Thank you to all who provide articles. Can I make a plea to those newer members to complete a profile on say a page of A4 and let me have it for the records.

Graham

Programme Secretary

The programme for 2017 is nearly full. Some of our best talks have been from our own members, so if you think you have a story to tell, please do let me know. We can always give help with scanning photos and even slides!

Bill

Treasurer

Please help Ian and get the 2017 Subs in so that I can bank them. Our accounts are in a healthy state, in no small way to those who attend meetings and support our raffle, thank you so much.

Rod

Chairman

At the AGM, those present showed great faith in the committee by re-electing it 'en bloc'. Reminiscent of days long gone when Q Macmillan (of blessed memory) would stand up and propose the re-election of the committee 'en bloc' and the reason why I now stand on the threshold of my 31st year as a committee member

Geoff