



NEWS SHEET

Stay safe whilst we are in "Lockdown"

The boy done good APO D Bray

"It was way back in 1964 that I commenced flying training. I had already accumulated flying scholarship hours plus extra hours at Hamble with their selection procedures for BOAC. I was obviously prepared for the Jet Provost (JP) training at 7FTS RAF Church Fenton so I thought!

The pre flying ground school went ok and the initial flying also didn't seem too bad. But, gradually the pressure was increased and maybe I was struggling to keep all the balls in the air. Late summer and early autumn disappeared and I was holding my own with some of the easy stuff like spinning going well!

All continued through December and into January 1965, by this time I had some 60 hours on the JP and winding my way to the test before upgrading to the more powerful JP4. However, there was the little obstacle of navigation exercises to complete.

As far as I remember Navex I went well and was followed by Navex 2 some days later. It was a February afternoon with a bright clear sky when I set off with my instructor; flight planning was fine, my map was quite a masterpiece with all the correct markings and colours and until take off all was well!

After leaving the ground I set my first heading on the compass and off we jolly well went. Very soon I identified the first turning point and reset the compass when overhead having already spotted turning point two. I cannot remember the instructor having a grin at this stage because I had identified the wrong turning point. However, I was allowed to continue until shortly afterwards I created another faux pas by effectively getting lost! I had, by this time travelled vaguely around the planned route, with the help of the instructor, although the latter stages were ok.

At the destination, another 'I have control' from the Instructor and he climbed the aircraft; on returning controls to me he almost immediately said you have a flame out. What are you going to do says the Instructor

- being overhead Church Fenton, I decided to recover engine less to that home base. On short finals, with praise of a well executed exercise so far ringing in my ear the Instructor resumed control. Unfortunately I had tried to land at a nearby ex WW2 airfield, where if I had landed the aircraft would not have been recoverable except from using a Queen Mary!!!

On return to Church Fenton I was told of the wisdom of my ways with a debrief of overall a poor navigation exercise. You will have to re-fly the Navex.



I was lucky to be regraded and after further training and posting to an OCU I was initially holding on 46 Squadron at RAF Abingdon as a Navigator. It was one sunny afternoon walking back to the Mess for lunch I passed a pilot on his way to the Squadron. It was my former Navex Instructor! As we passed I said to him 'I bet you never thought I'd become a Navigator' - he said nothing!!

The ignominy does not end there, that Instructor became my Flight Commander Ops on first tour at RAF Seletar on 52 Sqn and Navex2 haunted me for a further 3 years! Moreover, we became family friends and to this day Navex2 is still mentioned"

David Bray (ex A Cat Nav on The Queens Flight)

Ed: I was at Church Fenton at the same time as David and then at Abingdon when his former instructor turned up as a Captain on my course. You never know when and who you will meet up again!

From a Washington DC Airport Ticket Agent, dealing with queries from United States members of Congress and the Senate.

I had a New Hampshire Congresswoman (Carol Shea-Porter) ask for an aisle seat so that her hair wouldn't get messed up by being near the window.

I got a call from a Kansas Congressman's (Moore) staffer (Howard Bauleke), who wanted to go to Cape Town. I started to explain the length of the flight and the passport information, and then he interrupted me with, "I'm not trying to make you look stupid, but Cape Town is in Massachusetts " Without trying to make him look stupid, I calmly explained, "Cape Cod is in Massachusetts, Cape Town is in South Africa ." His response -- click..

A senior Vermont Congressman (Bernie Sanders) called, furious about a Florida package we did. I asked what was wrong with the vacation in Orlando He said he was expecting an ocean-view room. I tried to explain that's not possible, since Orlando is in the middle of the state. He replied, 'Don't lie to me!, I looked on the map, and Florida is a very THIN state!!"

I got a call from a lawmaker's wife (Landra Reid) who asked, "Is it possible to see England from Canada ?" I said, "No." She said, "But they look so close on the map"

An aide for a cabinet member (Janet Napolitano) once called and asked if he could rent a car in Dallas I pulled up the reservation and noticed he had only a 1-hour layover in Dallas ...When I asked him why he wanted to rent a car, he said, "I heard Dallas was a big airport, and we will need a car to drive between gates to save time."

An Illinois Congresswoman (Jan Schakowsky) called last week. She needed to know how it was possible that her flight from Detroit left at 8:30 a.m, and got to Chicago at 8:33 a.m. I explained that Michigan was an hour ahead of Illinois , but she couldn't understand the concept of time zones. Finally, I told her the plane went fast, and she bought that.

A New York lawmaker, (Jerold Nadler) called and asked, "Do airlines put your physical description on your bag so they know whose luggage belongs to whom?" I said, 'No, why do you ask?' He replied, "Well, when I checked in with the airline, they put a tag on my luggage that said (FAT), and I'm over-

weight. I think that's very rude!" After putting him on hold for a minute, while I looked into it. (I was dying laughing). I came back and explained the city code for Fresno , Ca is (FAT - Fresno Air Terminal), and the airline was just putting a destination tag on his luggage..

A Senator John Kerry's aide (Lindsay Ross) called to inquire about a trip package to Hawaii .After going over all the cost info, she asked, "Would it be cheaper to fly to California and then take the train to Hawaii ?"

I just got off the phone with a freshman Congressman, Bobby Bright from Ala. who asked, "How do I know which plane to get on?" I asked him what exactly he meant, to which he replied, "I was told my flight number is 823, but none of these planes have numbers on them."

Senator Dianne Feinstein called and said, "I need to fly to Pepsi-Cola , Florida. Do I have to get on one of those little computer planes?"

I asked if she meant fly to Pensacola and fly on a commuter plane.

She said, "Yeah, whatever, smarty!"

Mary Landrieu, La. Senator, called and had a question about the documents she needed in order to fly to China .After a lengthy discussion about passports, I reminded her that she needed a visa. "Oh, no I don't. I've been to China many times and never had to have one of those" I double checked and sure enough, her stay required a visa. When I told her this she said, "Look, I've been to China four times and every time they have accepted my American Express!"

A New Jersey Congressman (John Adler) called to make reservations, "I want to go from Chicago to Rhino, New York ." I was at a loss for words. Finally, I said, "Are you sure that's the name of the town?"

"Yes, what flights do you have?" replied the man.

After some searching, I came back with, "I'm sorry, sir, I've looked up every airport code in the country and can't find a rhino anywhere." The man retorted, "Oh, don't be silly! Everyone knows where it is Check your map!" So I scoured a map of the state of New York and finally offered, "You don't mean Buffalo , do you?" The reply? "Whatever! I knew it was a big animal."

Ed: *So it is not just that TOT (Twat on Twitter), there are loads of them over there!*

ILAFFT – Summertime Blues!

Ed: Here is the third story from Alistair MacPherson and his little Jodel G-AVOA

Any seasoned airman has at least one “memorable moment” recorded in their Flying Log Book, indelibly set in the memory.

Another such entry in mine is dated 2nd June 1982. On this day, with a close friend of mine, the plan was to fly VFR from Manchester Ringway (EGCC) to RAF Benson (EGUB) and back after a lunch in the Mess with his daughter, who was based there at the time with The Accounts Flight (TAF), RAF Benson, also home of The Queen’s Flight (TQF)



Jodel Ambassadeur G-AVOA

It was a beautifully calm, hot sunny day, not a cloud in the sky, predicted to hit the high twenties. The weather along our route for the return flight was also forecast to be perfect, virtually cloudless, excellent visibility and smooth flying conditions. There was a low probability of thunderstorms tracking across the eastern side of the country but nothing that would affect either flight, both planned to take a direct routing through the Midlands.

Having completed all the usual flight planning and pre-flight checks, at 10.40 GMT, brakes off, full power applied, our Jodel G-AVOA rolled down Manchester’s runway 24 and gently became airborne into the blue sky. Comms were expertly managed by a good friend, who was a Senior Air Traffic Controller at Manchester.

At 12:05, it was brakes on at RAF Benson and greeted by a warm reception from my friend’s daughter (who appeared uncomfortable with the

USA Confederate Airforce baseball cap I was wearing in my capacity as a “Colonel”, a rank posthumously earned, bought and paid for at the “drop of a cheque” during a visit to Harlingen, Texas the previous year! – I was later informed that the Station’s personnel didn’t know whether to salute or spit at me”!)

However, our lunch in the Mess was disturbed by the surprising distant rumble of thunder. On looking out of the window, it was apparent that the forecast was wrong and bad weather was quite swiftly rolling in.

Subsequently, we cut our visit short, hastily made our way to the Met Office for a further weather briefing and booked out with ATC. The TAFs and Actuals revealed that there had been a sudden dramatic change in the weather along the entire east side of the country and that the thunder activities were now tracking towards the centre of the country, but south of the Midlands and forecast to remain so for a few hours. Weather to the west was to remain fine.

We re-planned our route accordingly, swiftly made our way back to the aircraft, completed all pre-flight checks and with lightning now arcing almost all around the airfield, at 14:05 we made an expedient low-level departure towards the west into the clear skies.

Despite having more than adequate fuel in the tanks to return to Manchester and the weather forecast to remain clear throughout our revised slightly more westerly route, passing overhead Fairford, my gut instinct told me that dropping into Gloucester Staverton Airport to top up the tanks would be a prudent move.

At 15:15, tanks full, we departed again for Manchester and headed north towards Birmingham. As we approached the Midlands area, the skies turned increasingly and unexpectedly grey. On contacting Birmingham Approach much to our concern, our headsets were filled by instructions being given to numerous commercial aircraft being vectored to avoid bad weather; notably, more animated voices of private flyers seeking urgent assistance!

Heavy thunder activities were constantly forcing our intended northerly track more to the western side of the country and by now, the skies had become obscured, looking even darker ahead, especially towards the east.

As we cleared the Midlands area, we bid Birmingham Radar farewell and tuned in to the Manchester ATIS, the weather broadcast for which was not as forecast either – heavy rain and thunder!

We switched channels to listen in to Liverpool Airport but which offered no refuge either from the unexpected bad weather.

As we approached overhead RAF Shawbury, now engulfed in very dark skies, but still able to maintain VFR and good altitude, I considered landing there, sit it out on the ground until the bad weather had passed. However, our transmissions were not responded to and it was apparent that everyone had gone home! An unannounced landing could have serious consequences as the country was on very high alert due to the Falklands conflict. With little choice, other than picking a good field (which remained a constant option!) we pressed on through the ever-darkening hostile skies, visually picking our way through the brighter corridors towards Crewe to remain VFR and our entry point into the Manchester Control Zone and Ringway airport.

We contacted Manchester Approach who confirmed thunder activity in the area but less affected towards the south west, from where we were inbound from. My experienced ATC Comms crew member asked the controller if he could switch to the weather mode to enable us to determine if it was safe to proceed into the Control Zone and land. His reply on doing so gave us the confidence to continue, so we received our Special VFR ATC clearance and turned towards Manchester.

Approaching overhead Crewe, the controller advised us “traffic southbound leaving the Low-Level Route, height unknown, keep a sharp look out”. Just as we received this information, out of the dark sky,



Out of the blackness, a twin-engine Cessna filled our windscreen

a twin-engine Cessna filled our windscreen and shot across our nose, same height, lights blazing and weaved past us as it gained altitude right in front of us, the whites of the pilot's eyes almost visible!

Beyond our immediate path and a very threatening large dark cloud which we would have to fly under, I could see brighter skies ahead, so I made a dash for them experiencing a severe “cobblestone” effects as we flew under the very unstable turbulent air below.

After passing the zone boundary we were instructed to maintain 2000 feet and hold at Woodford as they had low level jet traffic in the circuit and Manchester had a rush of inbounds avoiding weather and couldn't accept us for twenty minutes or so. Having already deviated from our revised planned return flightpath and consumed far more fuel than originally planned, I quietly commended myself the decision for topping up at Staverton! As the storm clouds began to encircle us, violently tracking up from the south and east this was not what I wanted to hear!

On contacting the Woodford controller my colleague asked whether we could divert there if the weather deteriorated further. “Only if you declare an emergency” was the reply “the airfield is closed to all non-military aircraft because of the work being undertaken here”. This was at the time of the Falklands confrontation. We agreed, a discussion then took place between the two airfields as we were given a frequency change back to the Manchester controller.

I looked directly below and could see a Nimrod departing along the runway generating swathes of spray behind it from the downpours above us, I could even see the safety of my own home, located on the approach path.

As the inviting runway lights blazed below, I concluded, if necessary, restricted airfield or not, we will land should our flightpath to Ringway become unsafe or visually lost.

As we circled for a short while overhead, with the darkest clouds banging almost all around us, just as we were about to press more urgency into the controller, he clearly recognised our deteriorating predicament and cleared us for an immediate approach

Turning towards the extended centreline of Manchester's R/W 24, never before had I been so relieved to see the welcoming approach lights, burning so brightly before us!

Totally focussed on the landing, so as not to extend the run with higher speed jet traffic right behind us, we made a smooth touchdown. Contact with the ground was met with waves of water spraying from both undercarriage wheels on the waterlogged surface.

On making the fast turn off from the runaway, I looked towards the approach path from where we had flown, horrified that WE had flown through THAT?

Shortly after securing the aircraft in the hangar, I emerged under clear sunny skies and dissipated clouds!

I Learnt About Flying From That

1. Constantly receive updated weather reports, never be lulled into a false sense of security.
2. Optimize fuel management.
3. Always follow gut feelings.

Ed: Thank you so much Alistair. A delightful summer day out with good planning but the weather in UK and overseas can still play tricks. One point of note



OCTAF RAF Benson
Fg Off Liz Brown
Note the very clean propeller of a TOF Andover

Tony Brown MBE (our Air Traffic Control Correspondent) was Al's passenger that day and was able to take the radio duties from the pilot leaving him to do the MOST important thing **"Fly the Aircraft"**. The team working together meant it was a successful trip and not just another accident statistic. Oh and I thought you would like to see who they were visiting!

**Tom Payne's Cousin
Sgt J V Gunning**

This photograph is on the wall of remembrance at Lincoln's IBCC. The wreath laying and Memorial wall at the recent 80th Anniversary of the 51st Highlanders.



They concern Tom's cousin Vivian Gunning (Observer) and crew, all killed in action on 12 June 1940 in their Blenheim (R 3747) of XV Squadron.

It is really nice to see that even during this 'Lock-down' the crews are being remembered, particularly this one, as it was the 80th anniversary of their passing - **we will remember them.**



VJ Day Celebration in Gerrards Cross

I have had a call from member Peter Roberts who is helping organise a celebration for VJ Day. It will include a flying display by a Texan T6 which did get involved at Pearl Harbour. Thankfully the pilot on the day didn't and in fact is a current BA Captain. The date is **15 August** and full details and timings can be obtained from Peter.

The aircraft is based at Goodwood but will fly into Denham, then give a display and on it's way home will give another display at Peter's place, where beer and nibbles will be provided. There is no charge for food and drink but they ask for a donation of £10 on the day, towards the cost of bringing the aircraft over.

Peter's address is:

40 Morelands Drive, Gerrards Cross,
Bucks SL9 8BD - Tel: 01753 886497
Email: robertspj40@gmail.com

If you would like to attend please contact Peter



North American Aviation T-6 Texan

What goes around....

The Beechcraft Texan T MK1 will shortly take over the basic fast jet training role of the Tucano T.Mk 1. Students will progress onto the aircraft from the Prefect and move forwards to the Hawk T2.

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

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