



Newsletter

Book for our Christmas Lunch (see Page 7)

November Meeting

Ian Mason reports:

Those who braved the November cold spell were treated to an illuminating presentation by one of our own members, Stuart McKay who recounted the seventeen years of Stag Lane Aerodrome. This aerodrome was located just the other side of the Edgware Road from Hendon Aerodrome. In 1917 it was decided that Hendon was getting too congested as all flying had to stop when first solos were taking place. A solo consisted of take-off, a straight flight, followed by a landing before the aircraft met the hedge at the other side of the aerodrome. So a Mr Bill Warren said he would arrange purchase of Elm Farm and convert it into an airfield. Initially Stag Lane was used for civilian flying coupled with refresher flying for RFC personnel who had either recuperated from crashes or wounds from enemy action. Due to the final stages of the war and lack of direction, the airfield fell on hard times and was auctioned off in 1920 and was leased the following year to the De Havilland Aircraft Company. The company managed to continue by refurbishing DH9s. The fairy godfather appeared in 1922 in the guise of a Mr Alan Butler who obtained his wealth as a coal merchant. He asked for a three seater aircraft to be built where he could carry a passenger plus an engineer. The DH37 was built. As a result Alan Butler made a huge investment in the airfield was purchased by De Havilland's and, at last, it was able to operate as a going commercial enterprise. Additional buildings added to its expansion and in 1924 the first of the Moth aircraft were developed on site. The airfield became a place where society would be seen taking tea or something stronger at the club house plus various fashion promotions would

use the location for their photo shoots. Despite the airfield being extremely damp when it rained, De Havillands encouraged an extremely active social and sports environment. They would work Mon to Sat midday then the afternoon was always taken over with various sports events where purpose built facilities had been built. By 1928 a large workshop had been built and housed the servicing department of the Gipsy engine followed by production right through to 1944. The airfield, itself found that it was being overrun by domestic and industrial development so in 1933 the De Havilland Company was moved to Hatfield. Flying operations ceased on 5 Jan 1934 and the last aircraft to fly out was a Hornet Moth to Hatfield on 25 Jul of that year.

Stuart's talk was illustrated with photographs of the time and brought home the progress of light aircraft development between the two World Wars.

Editor's Thanks

As we come to the end of another year I would like to say a few thank you's: **Stuart McKay** for his printing and posting, as ever, to **Ian Mason** for allowing us to publish the First World War logbook of his grandfather. **Tony Brown** for his amusing stories from Manchester Air Traffic Control and also from up North **Alistair MacPherson** for his stories of 'I learnt about flying from that' - and I hope there are more to come. To **Smiley Mildwater** for that excellent WW 2 story. To **Jo Laurie** for another Christmas Card and finally to **all those members who have contributed**, particularly **Tom Payne**, who although is now t'up the AI, is always good for some copy. *Graham*



Remember 12th December 2018

'Christmas Lunch'

Greenacres 1200 for 1230

The First World War Pilot J M (Jack) Mason**Part 14**

Ed: Extracts from Jack's First World War Logbook, on Active Service. Jim was not a fan of No 48 Squadron with their Bristol Fighters (see 1 August)

24	DH4	120 mins (PI)	Bombing Raid on Froissy Dump. Leading. Very heavy clouds made it very difficult. Only two bombs observed to burst owing to the visibility. No EA & very little AA.
25	DH4	116 mins (PI)	Bombing Raid on Rosieres Station & Dump. Leading. One of the finest raids we have ever done. An enormous fire broke out in the dump which could be seen when we reached the lines on the homeward journey. Target very difficult to find owing to heavy clouds & a thunderstorm which was raging underneath us. The Wing Commander rang up to offer his congratulations on a "very fine performance". No EA & very little AA.
28	DH4	131 mins (PI)	Bombing Raid on Orniécourt Dump. Dickson leading. Very heavy clouds covered the target & observations of results was impossible. No EA & no AA.
28	DH4	30 mins (PI)	Local. Testing a new engine. This proved unsatisfactory & I was forced to come down again.
29	DH4	110 mins (PI)	Attempted Bombing Raid on Orniécourt Dump. Leading. Weather very heavy indeed. On approaching Amiens I ran into thick clouds which made it absolutely impossible to proceed so I washed it out & brought the formation back without crossing the lines. Landed with both bombs.
30	DH4	135 mins (PI)	Bombing Raid on Froissy Dump. Leading. A very good raid. Almost nine direct hits obtained on the target, two of which were mine. Two large explosions observed as we were coming away from the target. No Huns seen & very little AA.
31	DH4	127 mins (PI)	Bombing Raid on Froissy Dump. Leading. Not a very good raid. Both my bombs fell short. Three or four direct hits observed. My engine going very badly & if it had not been for the fact that I was the only Flight Commander on the raid, & should have washed out. No EA. AA heavy & accurate.

AUGUST 1918

1	DH4	133 mins (PI)	Bombing Raid on Rosieres Station & Dump & Taking Photographs of Result. Dickson leading. I was flying "slipstream to Dick" in order to take photographs. On approaching the target I was attacked by four Fokker Triplanes & No 48 Squadron (Bristol Fighters) absolutely refused help me & sat around us doing nothing although they were supposed to escort us. About four hundred rounds fired with no decisive result. Only one photograph obtained.
4	DH4	65 mins (PI)	Local. Testing my machine after she had four new planes put on. OK.

4	DH4	120 mins (P1)	Bombing Raid on Flaque Dump. Leading. The most hazy day I have ever seen during my flying career. Had great difficulty in finding the target. No results observed owing to the formation being attacked by eight Huns. AA heavy & accurate.
8	DH4	162 mins (P1)	Bombing Raid on Bourincont Aerodrome. The start of the British offensive. Thick clouds all over the sky & had great difficulty in finding my way but at last located the target through a gap. No EA & no AA. We left the ground in twilight.
8	DH4	20 mins (P1)	Local. Testing my machine after she had a new engine installed. Not very satisfactory.
8	DH4	79 mins (P1)	Bombing Raid on Congested Traffic in Foneancont Village. Leading my own flight. This raid had been carried out at a very low altitude owing to clouds. No results observed.
8	DH4	92 mins (P1)	Bombing Raid on Brie Bridge. Leading. The formation was attacked before reaching the target by 11 Phaez scouts & three Fokker biplanes. They followed us all the way there & back but no decision result was attained. No results observed.
9	DH4	143 mins (P1)	Bombing Raid on Brie Bridge. Leading. A very good raid. One of my bombs fell on the road just west of the bridge & exploded among a convoy up setting three motor lorries. The other fell in the water. Two direct hits obtained on the bridge. Engine missing very badly indeed.
9	DH4	100 mins (P1)	Bombing Raid on Brie Bridge. Leading. Thick cloud covered the whole sky. I steered by compass above the clouds all the way & then dived the whole formation through them which was 3000ft thick & came out of them right above the bridge. I was forced to come all the way back at 2000ft as the clouds were too thick to get up through. AA fire very heavy & accurate. Also MG fire. No EA encountered.
9	DH4	119 mins (P1)	Bombing Raid on Brie Bridge. Leading. Another good raid. Both my bombs fell on the rear sheds by the side of the target. Two direct hits on bridge & several in the vicinity.

Recent Accidents in the local area

The Air Accident Investigation Branch (AAIB) have recently issued their reports on two accidents in our local area. One has sad consequences with four fatalities, the other could so easily have proved fatal but with some luck and some skill, the aircraft and pilots survived to tell the tale.

The first accident occurred on 17 November 2017 when a Cessna 152 (G-WACG) and a Guimbal Cabri G2 (helicopter) (G-JAMM) collided near Waddesdon, Buckinghamshire.

The Cessna 152 and the Cabri G2 helicopter collided in mid-air when both were engaged on training flights. They were operating in Class G airspace and neither aircraft was receiving an ATC service. The opportunity for the occupants of either aircraft to see the other was limited because, although they were in proximity for some time, they were both following a similar track and were not in each other's field of view.

Both aircraft were operating from Booker Aerodrome (High Wycombe), G-WACG took off and climbed steadily up to an altitude of 2,000 ft before turning on course to the local training area northwest of the aerodrome. At 1150 hrs G-WACG confirmed with Wycombe Tower that they had left the circuit area; there were no further radio communications from the aircraft. The brief for the exercise was 'Descending' and when G-WACG reached 4,000 ft, it turned left onto a steady north-westerly course and then commenced a sustained descent which continued until the point of collision. The collision occurred 14 minutes after their takeoff from Wycombe.

The instructor had completed one training detail in G-JAMM during the morning of the day of the accident; a navigation exercise in the local area to the north-west of Wycombe, routing via Silverstone and return. The second detail was planned as a repeat navigation exercise with a different student, so it is likely that the accident flight was intending to follow a similar track.

At 1145 hrs G-JAMM was cleared to lift and taxi to holding point 'X' and subsequently to holding point 'R' to hold short of Runway 24. As G-JAMM was waiting at 'R', G-WACG took off from Runway 24. G-JAMM was then cleared to cross Runway 24 to helicopter training area 'N'. G-JAMM departed at 1147 hrs, climbing initially to the south-west, before turning north

and then north-west on track to Silverstone. The instructor in G-JAMM advised Wycombe Tower they were leaving the circuit to the north; there were no further radio communications from the helicopter. G-JAMM climbed to and maintained an altitude of around 1,500 ft amsl until the point of the collision.

The above is all factual evidence from R?T transcriptions and radar coverage. The period when G-JAMM and G-WACG collided was recorded on all four of the radar heads, the closest to the accident site being Bovingdon radar, 16 nm to the south-east. This recorded altitude and position every five seconds. Heathrow and Stansted radars, which were further away, recorded position every four seconds and the aircrafts' tracks from all radars were similar. On the accident flight and the earlier flights, both aircraft were squawking 7000, the conspicuity squawk.

So here we have two training aircraft operating on different exercises in an area where there is not ATIS or Radar service, so we are back to 'see and avoid', in other words keep a really good lookout. That is easier said than done as the view being the helicopter is negligible and as for the Cessna the lack of view forward is shown clearly in this diagram.

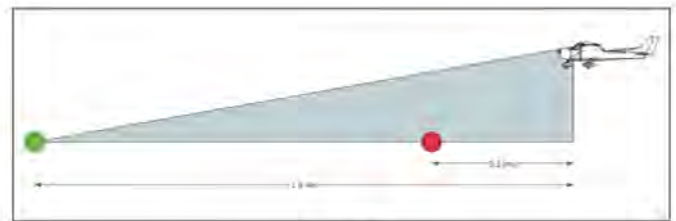


Figure 10
 Forward visibility from G-WACG
 (grey area is obscured from vision,
 red circle indicates the radar position of G-JAMM,
 green circle indicates the minimum distance at which
 G-JAMM would have been visible)

So it was a regrettable accident and some lessons can be learnt. All instructors are told to emphasise lookout and in this case it has highlighted from the Cessna's point of view to zig zag (the diagram really does emphasise the problem) to clear the area below you.

The CAA is also investigating the possibility of some form of cheap TCAS system to warn pilots of nearby aircraft.

The second accident involved a glider and a fixed wing glider tug at nearby Dunstable, the home of the London Gliding Club. Luckily this one did not involve loss of life, but it came very, very close

During the recovery to Dunstable Downs Airfield (DDA) after conducting a successful aero-tow launch, the pilot of the tug aircraft, G-LGCC, became aware of a glider ahead of him at close range. The pilot bunted to pass underneath the glider but had insufficient time to avoid a collision. The top of G-LGCC's fin struck the outboard leading edge of the glider's right wing. Despite suffering major damage, both aircraft remained controllable and landed without further incident.

G-LGCC, an aero-tow tug aircraft based at DDA and operated by the gliding club there, had conducted an aero-tow launch to the north of the field. Having released its towed glider at 2,000 ft, the tug was positioned for a right-hand downwind join to land on the north easterly grass strip

G-CFYF, a 2-seater glider also operated by the gliding club, was conducting a training flight for the front-seat occupant. After winch launching to the north-east the glider followed a thermal southwards. On reaching the southern airspace boundary the pilots elected to reposition to the north over Dunstable Downs prior to joining the circuit for landing.

As the tug pilot was descending southbound over Dunstable Downs I at approximately 100 kt, his attention was momentarily drawn to an airliner on his left on the approach to Luton Airport (LTN). On looking back to the front, the pilot saw a glider at very close range, directly ahead and slightly below him. With insufficient time available to turn away, he bunted to take his aircraft and its tow cable below the glider. As the aircraft passed one another, the top of G-LGCC's fin struck the outboard leading edge of the glider's right wing, penetrating the structure and slicing through to the spar. During the collision the top of the tug's tail fin detached along with the rudder. Stress marks found on the tug's right wing were consistent with damage discovered on the inner lower surface of the glider's right wing.

Following the collision, the tug pilot used gentle control inputs and flew a slack base turn onto final approach. Having lost the rudder, as its speed reduced the tug became less directionally stable. Increasing speed made the aircraft more controllable so the tug pilot elected to land faster than normal.

Immediately prior to the accident the glider was tracking north easterly at 50 kts and approximately 900 ft agl. Neither occupant saw the tug aircraft and the first

they knew of the collision was a loud bang accompanied by the glider yawing violently to the right. The instructor in the rear-seat took control of G-CFYF to make an initial damage assessment. Looking to the right he could see significant disruption to the wing structure, but the wingtip angle looked normal, implying that the spar was intact. The glider was still flying and responding normally to control inputs. With members of the public below and the aircraft under control, the instructor elected to continue recovering to the field rather than risk a low-level abandonment. The glider landed without further incident.

Fibreglass gliders are usually white and, with narrow cross-sections, it can be challenging for the human eye to detect them at distance, especially when head-on. Using darker colours could enhance visual conspicuity but would increase solar heating of the airframe which can adversely affect the aircraft's structural integrity. Solar heating does not affect the structural integrity of aircraft constructed of more traditional materials, such as wood and metal, to the same degree.

So we have two mid air cousins with sadly different outcomes. Both highlight the need for a good and continuous lookout. The gliding world and light aircraft fixed wing are both keen to find an electronic assistance to their lookout. The one thing is almost certain, it happen, but sadly I suspect not very quickly.



Just another foot and the wing tip would have gone



The top of the fin missing from the tug

Programme 2018/9

Events at 1030 for 1100 at Greenacres unless (*)

2018

12 Dec Christmas Lunch* 12 Noon

2019

16 Jan AGM + Subscriptions due

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Secretary/Editor

Your association has kindly been sending my mother (Mrs AE McHardy-Fox) your Newsletter for many years , following the death of her husband Dennis Fox, who was originally one of your members. Sadly , my mother passed away a couple of days ago and I now request that you take her name off your mailing list. I always remember Dennis telling me about your events , and my mother very much appreciated you keeping in touch with her via the Newsletter. I myself have led a number of walks as part of the Westminster Guides Association this year, to celebrate the RAF Centenary. It covered the early history of the RAF and other historic stories and links that the RAF had, and have, with Westminster. In total my association has raised close to £1000 for the RAF Benevolent Fund. We were supported by the RAF100 team itself. (I also noticed a mat in the entrance lobby to St Clement Danes Church which has the ACA badge on it!)

I would like to thank you on behalf of my mother for your kindness in communicating with her, and close by wishing you and your Association all the very best for the years that lie ahead. I would be grateful if you would let me know that you received this email.

Yours sincerely

Richard McHardy

Our condolences have been sent to Richard and I have printed his letter for those who remember Dennis and Betty, RIP.

Graham

Membership Secretary

As you will see elsewhere (P7) I have the tickets for the Christmas Lunch, but **I do need the order on 4 December at the latest** I would just like to reiterate that if you send a cheque you also include a stamped addressed envelope for me return your tickets. If however you go the electronic route and pay by BACS please email me and I will email you a scanned version of your tickets. Remember of course the Raffle is free as the ticket price includes your raffle ticket.

Ian

Treasurer

Sorry I was away in November but my thanks to David Bray for looking after the raffle and to those who attended thank you for being so generous. Just a reminder that the Christmas Raffle is free as your ticket is your entry to the raffle.

Rod

Last Chance by 4 Dec 18



**Chiltern ACA
Christmas Lunch**
Green Acres Tavern,
Leys Road, Bennetts End,
Hemel Hempstead,
Hertfordshire, HP3 9LZ

Wednesday 12th December 2018
1200 Noon for 1230

Traditional Christmas fare including 1st drink and wine at the table

Please reserve me tickets for the Christmas Lunch @ £ 20 per person



Widows @ £ 10 per person

Name

Address

.....

Postcode **Tel No**

Name of Guests

.....

Your committee wish you all A Very Happy Christmas



Flying at Christmas

Working at Christmas has become increasingly rare in the RAF, unless of course you are on Operations. During my career I think I worked just three. The first was in 1967 when following the crash of one of The Queen's Flight Whirlwinds, the RAF fleet were grounded. This had a major effect on our Search and Rescue capability. The Wessex was called into operation and the Andover's of No 46 Squadron, RAF Abingdon were called upon to deliver any spares required at the various bases around the coast. It was decided to run a 'bus service' daily departing RAF Abingdon about 1730 working anti clockwise around the country. I was on the Christmas Eve sortie and reached Abingdon at about 0230 on Christmas morning. We kept our eyes open but never did see the sleigh! It was however a very pleasant evening wishing all ATC units a Happy Christmas.

My second Christmas flying was an emergency callout when I was flying the HS 748 of The Sultan's Flight in Brunei. A Philippines fishing boat had been reported missing in the South China Sea north of Brunei by some 200 miles. We set off mid afternoon knowing that we only had 4 hours of daylight. Nothing found but on Boxing Day success and we dropped water, food and a note to say a Brunei Navy vessel was on it's way.

The third was a return from Kuwait during the first Gulf War when HRH The Prince of Wales. We dropped him at RAF Marham to go on to Sandringham and then dashed back to RAF Benson.

A variety but all with a purpose. Our best wishes to all those working this year. Our thoughts are with you and particularly your families.

Graham