



NEWSLETTER

Look for details of London visit below

October Meeting



Our speaker Danny Bonwit gave us a potted history of his service flying career which was part of his 5 year Short Service Commission which he signed up for instead of National Service, after service with his University Air Squadron flying DHC Chipmunks.

After Advanced training on Meteors at Worksop he was posted to Lindholme where he crewed up with a navigator, before joining No 61 Squadron at Upwood on Canberras. It was from here that the squadron was detached to Nicosia during the Suez crisis of 1956. Before flying home he had to stay to be a 'Prisoners Friend' for a Court Martial. He also mentioned a Canberra crash near Tring. He told both stories but with some recent research your editor found this link!

At Nicosia, F/O. D K....., a regular officer of No. 61 Squadron, Upwood, attached to R.A.F. Nicosia, is to be tried by general court martial next Monday, January 28. The charge against him reads: "... on November 1, 1956, when on active service, and when as captain and pilot of Her Majesty's aircraft Canberra **WH915** he was under orders to take off from Nicosia and to fly to Egypt in order to carry out a warlike operation in the air, through default, failed to use his utmost exertions to carry such orders into effect by wilfully causing the un-

dercarriage of the said aircraft to be partially retracted before take-off when the said aircraft was stationary on the ground with undercarriage down, with intent to relieve him from carrying the said orders into effect." There are two alternative charges, one of "wilfully damaging" the aircraft, and the other of "negligently damaging" it.

WH915 was repaired at Akrotiri and returned to service after this incident, but was written off on 8/3/1957: Flew into high ground in bad weather at Wiggington, two miles south-southeast of Tring, Hertfordshire, killing all three crew

Visit to London

We have arranged a visit to London on **Thursday 26th November**. We have a minibus booked and the trip is free apart from your lunch purchase. The proposed programme is as follows:

- 1000 Depart Greenacres (Meet at 0945)
- 1130 RAF Bomber Command Memorial
- 1230 RAF Club (Lunch)
- 1400 RAF Benevolent Fund HQ
- 1530 Depart RAFBF
- 1700 Arrive Greenacres

Please advise Graham Laurie if you would like to book a place

Invitation

Tom Payne invites ACA Members to his **90th Birthday Party** (92nd RAF Birthday Party, if you know the story)

Sunday 13th December 1400 - 1630 hrs

Elizabeth House, Chapel Street,
Hemel Hempstead HP2 5HH
Your presence not Presents please



LOTTERY FUNDED

Malcolm Cloult's Story Conclusion



Malcolm's visit with 'Heroes Return' was reported in the Bucks Herald

"A 93-year-old RAF war veteran is returning to the country where his entire crew was killed to pay homage to them. Former pilot Malcolm Cloult was in hospital when his crew died in Burma after crashing at sea in 1945. Mr Cloult, who now lives in Princes Risborough and is grandfather to 11, will be travelling with his daughter Christine, leaving on February 1 and spending two weeks in Sittwe, where he and his former crew served. Mr. Cloult said, "One got rather blasé about death in those days, it was happening all around you, but in recent years I thought it would be nice to honour them in some way."

The trip is being made possible thanks to a grant of more than £4,000 from Heroes Return, which is funded by the Big Lottery Fund. The scheme was set up to help Second World War veterans go on commemorative visits.

After spending time in Burma, officially known as Myanmar, Mr Cloult plans to visit the Kranji War Memorial in Singapore, on which are inscribed the names of everyone who died in the Burma campaign, including those of his crew. He said: "I have been in touch with the local church in Sittwe (pronounced site-tway) and they will probably put on some sort of memorial. "Those guys didn't have a proper Christian burial because they crashed in the sea."

Mr Cloult served in the RAF from 1941 until 1946, seeing action on D-Day, the doomed Operation Market Garden to force an entry into Germany over the Lower Rhine and in Burma.

Mr Cloult's main role was flying in supplies for those in the field and taking out the wounded, and says his abiding memory of the war is the camaraderie among the

men. He said: "It sounds strange but most people say their war days were quite happy years."

After leaving the RAF Mr Cloult returned to his career in accountancy. But he could not get the flying bug out of his system and joined the RAF reserves for five years, allowing him to fly on holidays and at weekends.

The father-of-two got married in 1947 but his wife died in 1970. He re-married and went to live in Australia for 17 years, returning in 2002 after his second wife died."

MALCOLM'S REPORT ON FAR EAST TRIP

An abiding memory of my journey will be the great disparity between living standards in Singapore, a City of skyscrapers and vast apartment blocks, and Sittwe (formerly Akyab) in northern Burma (now Myanmar) also a Cathedral City, but with mostly dirt roads, lined with open-fronted shops. Businesses of all sorts were carried out on the pavements (such as they were!) in the fronts of these shops: cycle and motor cycle repairs to deal with the hundreds swarming the streets; innumerable eating places, and clothing shops, all open to the dust of the roads. But I didn't see poverty, merely a low standard of living.

Tourism hasn't caught up with the North. The few Hotels have satisfactory standards, but no lifts, hence my fall down a flight of stairs when my attention was distracted. My elder Daughter and her Husband, who came as my carers, went off on a side trip, but Helping me to find my way around was Daniel, the Vicar of St. Marks's Cathedral, which is a fine legacy of British occupation in the 19th C.

Daniel enabled me to perform the major purpose of my visit. A wreath was made, bearing the names of my deceased crew members, and I was able to explain to his congregation (translated by Daniel) what had happened to them. Their souls were offered up to God for blessing.

"Agnus dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, dona eis requiem."

I shall be making a contribution to a project that Daniel wants to undertake.

The final part of my mission was to see my fiends' names inscribed on the War Memorial at Kranji in NE Singapore, and in this I was helped by Brother Gideon members, who undertook to take charge of me (!) while Christine and Dave went on another excursion into Malaysia. The Christians I met in Singapore were of Chinese extraction, and I was introduced to many of their Pastors and Churches, including the Dean and Vicar of the Cathedral, the Very Reverend Kuan Kim Seng.

Very courteously, he made a special appointment, arranged by a Gideon, to meet an unusual 93-y-o Christian from UK, and I am a rare recipient of a magnificent story of the Cathedral's 150 years' history. (With similar books from other Churches it could have put my luggage overweight!) He wrote in it, "Dear Malcolm, Shalom. A small gift for you, as remembrance of your visit to St. Andrew's Cathedral. Signed ..."



Kranji War Memorial, Singapore

I suffered considerably from a fall and tummy trouble, plus the awful 15 hour flight home, but that is all now behind me, and I thank God for giving me the strength to undertake such a journey. A remarkable chain of events, divinely orchestrated, meant that I had help in Singapore and Myanmar.



Jacob's Cafe, Changi Village

Not least of these was Lim Tow Soon, of whom I spoke. Tow Soon runs Jacob's Café in Changi village. Outside the café is a menu board next to another quoting John 3.16 from the Bible. If you are travelling that way be sure to look in on Tow Soon and mention me.

Ed: Thank you Malcolm for sharing your story with us, I hope all our readers have enjoyed it as much as I have. Take care.

VULCAN FAREWELL



XH 558 with the Red Arrows

The one remaining Vulcan XH558 has been touring the country in a series of farewell flypasts before it is hoped taking up residence as a ground based teaching aid.

Sadly Bucks was not on the final list of destinations but it did fly over Aston Clinton on 28 June 2015



Photos by Dusty Miller

Know David Bray (Part 2)

My foremost memories of the Far East tour included detachments to Kathmandu where we stayed a few weeks at a time delivering stores to Gurkha camps at Biratnagar and Phokara. If anyone wants photos of Mt



No 52 Sqn Andover C1 in Nepal

Everest see me - I have hundreds!! I was also lucky enough to be one of the first to be checked into Hong Kong, which resulted doing more than my fair share of screening other Squadron Navs due to the promotion and/or posting of more senior colleagues.

As experience was gained I was fortunate to fly VIP's. The first from Kuala Lumpur to Singapore was quite nerve racking, solved by seeing the VIP arrive at the aircraft with coat his over shoulder and his braces in full view – the only thing missing was the knotted handkerchief on his head!! Whilst in the air his PA mentioned the fact that the VIP had mentioned in Gan, where one had up to a years unaccompanied tour, that 'he bet the wives and children enjoyed it here'

Having flown an Andover to Singapore, 3 years later I flew the same aircraft home to the UK, unfortunately to RAF Kemble for future disposal. I eventually found that aircraft in the RNZAF Museum at Christchurch many years later. The route home was via Sharjah where I met Graham Laurie!

After completing the Staff Nav Course at RAF Manby, I was posted in October 1970, to RAF Thorney Island on the staff of 242 OCU, again on the Andover. The course followed a 10 week cycle with initially screening of new navigators on local details before route flying, primarily on Nav cross countries with Astro trips thrown in. Overseas exercises included a long weekend in Berlin and eventually the long range overseas trip and final route check incorporated into night flying detachments to Malta or Nicosia, Cyprus. Apparently we were unable to fly the extensive night exercises at Thorney Island

due to the complaints of a retired Rear Admiral who lived in nearby Emsworth – someone had to do it!

Fortunately I obtained the flying category to fly VVIP personnel and the tour after 3 years at Thorney Island I was to endure(!) - 3 magnificent years on the AFNorth Andover flying the CinC Northern Europe based at Oslo Fornebu, the civil airport. Our flying covered a huge geographical area from North Cape in Norway to Rome where the General had to attend NATO meetings twice a year and many a weekend was spent in Copenhagen.



XS 637 HQ AFNorth Andover C Mk1

What followed next was a dream – posting to HM The Queens Flight. The recent talk by Graham highlighted the honour of flying the Royal Family. My introduction included a visit to Buckingham Palace to what I thought was a famil of the Flight's operational planning cell. I met Sqn Ldr David Checketts who described his Principals future ideas, before, unexpectedly, being shown into

HRH the Prince of Wales office! I obviously did not disgrace myself as I flew exclusively with HRH as his personal Navigator for the next 5 years. Other flying with the Royals did occur including HM The Queen – in fact my claim to fame included carrying a Royal Corgi on to the aircraft at Aberdeen one Sunday evening!!!



Promotion to Squadron Leader came next and therefore I had to move on. Posting to RAF Biggin Hill on the Aircrew Selection Board was very a repetitive job but enjoyable particularly as I only had to complete 17 months before further posting. The highlight of this tour was meeting my wife, Anne

Before the move to 32 Squadron at RAF Northolt as the Andover Flight Commander I had to complete both the Nav Refresher Course and another Andover OCU Course. Both a sojourn, and bearing in mind my previous flying after 17 years of continuous flying with the last 8 years as an 'A' Category Nav had only finished a year and a half previously, a complete waste of time and money.

This new squadron was a challenge with some very experienced crews knowing exactly how VIP flying should be done. Not only did my way have to be imposed on some of their ideas but the Squadron Boss also had his thoughts!!! Overall I think all went well and I completed my 2 years as a Flight Commander having thoroughly enjoyed what was to be my final flying tour. Promotion!

I was told another overseas tour beckoned. It was, after organising a Senior Officers Conference at RAF Bracknell, a posting to Ascension Island in June 1985 as Deputy Station Commander for 6 months. Separation from a family is always hard to take but within reason the posting was ok. At the request of the Station Commander I spent the majority of the time on nights as most problems occurred with the wide bodied jets, during their transit to/from the Falklands. The aircraft, both RAF Tristar and British Airways 747's at that time, were generally no problem



Wideawake Airfield Ascension Island

– it was my first experience of coming face to face with the general public! Some of the happenings in the middle of the night with transiting passengers were an eye opener. I did have a break during the tour when I decided to fall down a cliff during an afternoon walk – I was flown back to UK on a stretcher with cuts and bruises and spent time in RAF Hospital Halton. I returned to Ascension by Christmas 1985 with only a few weeks of the posting remaining.

Ground postings followed with MOD Main Building for a tour in Air Transport Ops, followed by the Air Transport representative in RAF Germany living at Rheindahlen. The

latter included being on the committee responsible for closing RAF assets in Berlin – travel, to where I think is my favourite city outside of UK, occurred frequently. I was surprised to how many RAF outposts there were and many of the visits were quite historical – if anybody travels to Berlin do add the old Templehof Airfield as a visit both inside the terminal building and below ground are special.

On return from the Germany tour I was posted to 38 Group in charge of AT Ops – I was the world's expert by this time! The work was quite routine for the two years at High Wycombe, except for my last two days in the RAF. On the penultimate day a call at home in the early hours asked me to visit the Ops room after quoting an important Op Order – luckily I had updated this particular Op Order just a few weeks previously – it was the death of Princess Diana. Who should fly the body back? You have guessed it Graham Laurie!



The Princess of Wales coffin returns to Northolt 31 Aug 97

I had a wonderful time in the RAF, a memory that I will always cherish. To have had tours in the Equatorial Regions of Singapore and the Arctic Areas of Norway whilst my peers on the Andover had tours in the Tropics of Sharjah, Masirah etc will always be a talking point!



52 Sqn



HQ Afnorth



The Queen's Flight



32 Sqn

Ed: *Thank you so much David for that contribution - all linked by the Avro 748 and Avro 780 known in military parlance as the Andover Mk 2 and Andover Mk 1 and a little link of your editor popping up now and then!*

The pilots who risk their lives flying tiny planes over the Atlantic

Ferry flying is a lucrative but high-risk industry. Elite pilots deliver small planes across oceans and continents – distances these aircraft were not designed to fly. Flying alone across the Atlantic Ocean in a tiny, single-engine plane at low altitudes, sometimes in extreme weather conditions, is not for the faint-hearted. Things can and do go wrong.

The ferry flying industry is a close-knit band of aviators, some of whom have carried out hundreds and even thousands of flights, delivering newly sold or repaired small planes to remote destinations.

Most of the pilots start life at a training airfield and many continue into instructing to help build up hours. All over the UK, planes are being repaired and sold. Fixing and restoring a plane can take months, even years. Then it needs ferrying to their new owners – wherever in the world they may be.

“Whatever plane you’re in you have to find a way of making it fly that distance, which many small planes ordinarily would not,” says pilot Julian Storey. These are aircraft that might typically fly 200-400 miles at a time (320-645km). But the shortest stretch of water you cross on an Atlantic crossing is 700 miles.

Because most small light aircraft are unpressurised, it’s not advisable to fly above 10,000ft. This makes them more susceptible to extreme weather conditions as they have less leeway able to cruise above stormy clouds and ice caps. Airliners, by contrast, can fly at higher altitudes of about 36-40,000ft. Light aircraft are not designed to be flown at very high altitude

In a massive hangar full of planes and helicopters at Biggin Hill airport, Kent, Storey pointed at a Britten-Norman Islander light aircraft that’s being restored. It’s being “slowly transformed from something that looked like it really shouldn’t fly again to something quite smart – it’s like the Land Rover of the sky”, Storey says.

He hopes to deliver it to its new owners once the restoration is complete and the plane is sold. About 18 months ago he took two of the same model from Scotland to Cape Cod, Massachusetts. “This is real flying,” says. “If I’m in the mood for adventure it will be absolutely right.”

Before take-off, the Islander will have to be equipped with ferry tanks containing barrels of fuel needed for the journey. It’s a slow aircraft that doesn’t have the sort of high-tech equipment to deal with icing and

the weather you might expect in larger or more up-to-date aircraft. “So you are very much using your judgement, skill, experience to pitch yourself against nature and hopefully survive,”

Specialist survival equipment is carried as a precaution to prepare for the possibility of ditching in the ocean. “The main thing that is going to kill you in the ocean is hypothermia,” says pilot Dave Henderson, who has made almost 100 trans-Atlantic crossings in light aircraft.

“If you do end up in the water, the important thing is to get into your life raft but also I have a thick neoprene survival suit, which completely encloses the body and you’ve probably got a few hours survival in that.” He knows of other ferry pilots who have landed in the sea and survived, but admits it’s not something he cares to dwell on.



BN 2 Islander

At an airshow in Sywell, Northamptonshire, he carries out safety checks in the cockpit of a twin-engine Piper Aerostar aeroplane. It belongs to a client who wants the six-seater taken to Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

This delivery will cost the owner about \$20,000 (£13,000). Henderson has packed the survival gear in the Piper Aerostar, all the safety checks are complete and the aircraft is ready for pilot Joe Drury to fly it to Florida, a trip likely to take about four days.

The plan is to fly to Wick Airport, Caithness, fuel up, and then fly to Reykjavik in Iceland. After spending the night in Iceland, the next leg of the journey is to Greenland – either to Narsarsuaq in the south or further north to Kulusuk, depending on the weather – then on to Bangor, and down the US east coast. Narsarsuaq is also



A Piper Aerostar awaiting ferrying to the US

known as one of the world's most dangerous airports – landing requires approach to the runway through a fjord, surrounded by mountains and glaciers.

The route is the North Atlantic air ferry route. It was discovered by pilots during World War Two to transport aircraft from North America to Europe to support combat operations. Ferrying a plane across the Atlantic is the ultimate test for both pilot and plane. But it is not only trans-Atlantic ferry flights which are challenging.

Former army officer turned ferry pilot Robin Durie has experienced partial engine failure during a flight over the Sahara desert, been involved in two separate incidents in which his co-pilots fell unconscious at high altitude, and on another occasion was forced to dodge small arms fire during take-off in the Middle East. "Every trip does have an element of adventure about it," he says. "You need to be a pilot that can take on all aspects of flight. "I just love flying and I suppose the difference between ferry flying and a routine commercial airline job is that you physically do fly these aeroplanes, it is real stick and rudder stuff and that has huge appeal."

And all agree ferry flying is not a career for mavericks or displays of bravado.

Staying safe has little to do with luck. "It's all about judgement – it's making the right decisions. Is the weather right? Is the headwind too strong? Do you have the fuel to outfly the headwind?" insists Story.

Ed: *I have flown this route with both Andover and 146, the latter with much better fuel reserves but the 748 had to be carefully nurtured around the route. You always kept an ear on 121.5 MHz listening for these guys ferrying light aircraft, they were bold and I am glad to say often old (experience was all, in that game)*

Bomber Command - Lincoln Memorial

Gerry Sealy-Bell Reports:

There was a good turnout from Chiltern ACA for the opening of the Bomber Command Memorial in Lincoln. Myself plus Roy Briggs, Jim Copus, Ron Doble, Derek Gurney, Harold Kirby, Gerard Norwood, Tom Payne, Sandy Lowe and Stephanie Ball were all in attendance

Lord Howe, Minister of State for the Ministry of Defence, cut the ribbon. The ceremony, presented by historian Dan Snow, was attended by 300 of the remaining Bomber Command veterans. Mr Snow said: "This is Bomber County, Lincolnshire is Aviation County. Aircraft were made here, pioneered here and flown from here during both world wars.

The spire is based on two wing fragments, tapering as they rise towards the sky. The memorial spire was designed by Stephen Palmer of Place Architecture, and is higher than the Angel of the North. It is 102ft (31.09m) tall - the wingspan of the Avro Lancaster.



The Memorial and G S-B with FS Richard Selina (his guide)

Of the 55,573 Bomber Command aircrew killed, 25,611 flew from Lincolnshire bases. The organisation of the day was superb and the hospitality excellent. My personal guide for the day was FS Richard Selina, who had seen service in many war zones, as can be seen by his array of medals. He has completed 24 years service and is signing on for another 10 years.

If you are near Lincoln please do pay the memorial a visit, it is a fitting tribute. The names beneath the memorial on the wall are from 4 Group but it is planned to add those from 5 Group during 2016. Further details can be obtained at <http://internationalbombercommandcentre.com/events>

Programme 2015

Events at 1030 for 1100 at Greenacres unless (*)

18 Nov Raid on St Nazaire - Nick Beattie
16 Dec Christmas Lunch*

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Welfare

I have been phoning around as usual, including some of our widows. Ann Hyland has already agreed to join us at our Christmas Lunch. Sadly Mavis Dyson has had a fall and broken her hip and is in Stoke Mandeville. We wish her well.

If you hear from any of the guys please do let me know

David

Membership Secretary

No real news to report except that I now have the tickets for the Christmas Lunch on 16 December. The cost is £20 and just £10 for widows. Please send me your cheques payable to Chiltern ACA, together with a stamped addressed envelope. Your ticket automatically enters you for the raffle as well. I will of course be selling them at the November meeting.

Gerry

Secretary/Editor

At the back of this Newsletter you will see a brochure for Christmas goodies from The RAF Benevolent Fund. Of course I should point out that among the Christmas Cards there is the usual one from our very own Jo Laurie entitled this year 'Santa's Best Friend'. As the Aircrew Association no longer produces cards it would seem logical to use another service charity and who better than our very own RAFBF.

Graham

Programme Secretary

I am actively putting together our programme for next year. I could do with your help, so if you hear a good speaker elsewhere, please let me know, preferably with his contact details and I will see if we can book him for Chiltern.

Bill

Remember 18th November 2015

"Raid on St Nazaire"

Nick Beattie

Greenacres 10.30 for 11.00am