

JABBERWOCK 111



SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

FLEET AIR ARM
MUSEUM

*The Magazine of the Society of Friends
of the Fleet Air Arm Museum*

May
2023

IN THIS ISSUE

Obituaries - Rear Admiral Ray Rawbone and Leo Opdycke • Service Flying in the 1930s • HMS *Cardiff* in Gulf War 1 • Olympic Maritime Security • LG Groves Safety Awards • Talks, Book and Podcast reviews • Visit to Weston Helicopter Museum • *Plus all the usual features etc.*

THE
NATIONAL
MUSEUM



The Society of Friends of the Fleet Air Arm Museum



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We are extremely grateful to all those who contribute articles and material to the magazine, even though it is not always possible to use every item!

ADMISSION

Members of SoFFAAM are admitted to the Museum free of charge, on production of a valid membership card. Members may be accompanied by up to four guests (one guest only for junior members)

on any one visit, each at a reduced entrance fee, currently 30% off the standard price. Members are also allowed a 20% discount on goods purchased from the shop and cafe.

Note: These concessions are provided at the discretion of the General Manager of the Museum and could be removed at any time.

FLEET AIR ARM MUSEUM

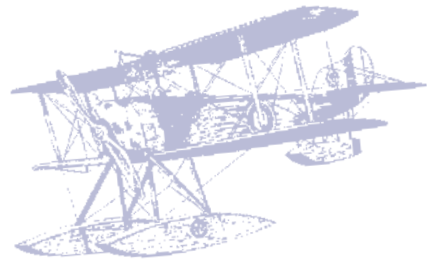
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Rear Admiral Ray Rawbone



Westland Wapiti



Olympics Maritime Safety



Weston Helicopter Museum visit

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COVER ILLUSTRATION

This Shuttleworth Collection's 1917 Sopwith Pup, 9917, G-EBKY was extensively refurbished in the colours of 9917, a Beardmore built aircraft which was fitted with Le Prieur Rockets when it served for a time on HMS *Manxman*, a seaplane carrier.
© Colin Hutson

Editorial

We are sad to report the recent death of Rear Admiral Ray Rawbone, CB AFC RN, who was the Society's Patron from autumn 1995. We carry a brief obituary in this issue.

As that year was the fiftieth anniversary of the end of WW2, Jabberwock issue 33 carried numerous anecdotes from those who were serving in the British Pacific Fleet at the time. We also remember Commander Allan Tarver, a qualified engineer and test pilot, who died in March aged 84. He was awarded the George Medal in May 1966 "for a selfless act of bravery in the air during an extraordinary feat of airmanship". A graduate of the Royal Naval Engineering College at Manadon, Tarver was the pilot of a Sea Vixen that had suffered a double engine failure. His observer's ejection seat failed to operate and Tarver stayed with the doomed aircraft attempting to free him almost until the aircraft hit the water.

Members are encouraged to visit the Society's newly-refurbished website at fleetairarmfriends.org.uk. Among other good things, this carries full length summaries of Society talks and, in the Members' area, a complete

archive of every issue of Jabberwock.

In this issue, we carry an account by a member of his father's experiences in the RAF in the early 1930s during their actions in Westland Wapiti aircraft on the North West Frontier of India. We also provide the second part of the story of HMS *Cardiff* in the First Gulf War as well as varied letters from members, which are always welcome.

As with every Society, Council members retire for various reasons. This year is no exception and at the AGM in September, our Chairman, the Deputy Chairman and the Treasurer will all stand down. These are all key posts in the management and conduct of our Society and we have a most urgent need to find replacements. Person descriptions for these positions are available on the home page of our website and anybody who is interested is welcome to contact the Chairman or the Secretary to find out what is involved.



Malcolm

Council snippets

From the March Council Meeting

The General Manager said that FAAM has seen a very positive start to the year with January weekends consistently seeing 350+ visitors each day as well as strong February half term visitation.

Family Programming has been very popular during school holiday periods. The largest collection to arrive at FAAM this year is that of Harold James (Jimmy) Abraham. Captain Abraham served as an Observer in the Fleet Air Arm during the Second World War, including on the Arctic convoys. He served in all theatres of war. As a test pilot he earned his 1000 mph certificate with the US Navy in December 1956 – very early days for supersonic flight.

Richard Macauley reminded members that the Saturday Talk series is now in place for spring 2023. After a couple of false starts with speakers, March and May are ready to proceed. Speaker details are on the website. The Chairman remarked that, although on one occasion, a talk had lost money, this was unusual. The combination of an effective talks

programme and varied choice of speaker was beneficial to the Society. The Treasurer said that the legacy from Frank Ott has moved the Society's account into a very healthy position. The Membership Secretary said that membership numbers have stabilized and 14 new joiners in a quarter is back where we were in pre-Covid days. We are currently trialling the provision of a "current membership list" report to FAAM, on 1st of each month, intended to do away with the provision of membership cards to members. If this is a success, there is a very substantial saving to be made each year.

Reporting on the production of "Jabberwock", Richard Macauley reported that he had reviewed print costs over Christmas and while slightly cheaper options are available, this also complicated the procurement process. After a brief discussion with the Treasurer, we decided that the current supplier was still very good value. He continues to review the quantity printed while the Membership Secretary pushes the PDF option, which is very slowly increasing.

Saturday Series Talks - see the SoFFAAM website Talks page for more detail
www.fleetairarmfriends.org.uk/talks/

Letters to the editor

Dear Editor

I was very interested in the Navy News article in the last edition of Jabberwock regarding the Martlet Weapons Fit Trainer and the training of Wildcat helicopter crews.

Readers may be interested in the photo below which I took of an overflying

Wildcat that has a Sea Venom missile test fit which the article also alluded to as a weapon system that is coming to the Wildcat force in the near future

**Regards,
Richard Macauley**



Photographed on January 19, 2022 as it flew over my house, a Wildcat from Leonardo Yeovil, callsign Westland 02 with a test fit of Sea Venom Missiles. © Richard Macauley

Dear Sir

For an establishment that prides itself on having forensically accurate camouflage and markings on some of its exhibits, I cannot fathom why the Fleet Air Arm Museum has felt it fit to paint a unique post war FAA Avenger variant as something it isn't, a 1944 Avenger I or II as operated in D-Day markings.

It is like painting up a Seafire 17 to

represent a Seafire III. No amount of paint or the hiding of inappropriate features is going to make the airframe something it is not.

There is probably the last surviving Tarpon I in the National Air and Space Museum's collection. This aircraft is serialled FN859 (USN BuNo 24085) and has the Grumman plate identifying

it as a TBF-1. Currently, it is in storage in a dilapidated condition under a fictitious 1943-era USN tri-colour camouflage finish. The original FAA camouflage in MAP colours is visible where the later paint has worn or flaked away. The British roundels and fin flashes also are apparent as ghosts under the later paint. Unfortunately, this needs of some restoration work - the port outer folding wing panel comes from a TBM-1C and the starboard panel from a TBM-3 (the fittings for the 0.50-inch machine guns in each wing panel are present but the ports are covered). The original 0.30-inch gun in the fuselage has been removed along with its fittings and the slot in the cowl plated over. The aircraft has the appropriate British domed observation windows in the lower fuselage behind the bomb bay. However, the second cockpit is not fitted out as per the Observers station in FAA Avengers because it is equipped with electronic equipment appropriate for a TBF-1C, as is the radio operator's compartment behind the bomb bay.

This aircraft is slated for restoration in the future, but the schedule is indeterminate, as is its final restored state, which apparently is still a matter for debate at the museum.

What I'm trying to say is that if you want a wartime FAA Avenger, go and see if you can acquire FN859 for restoration (when you've finished building the Barracuda).

You might even be able to do a swap, though historically, the ECM.6 is just as important a historical artefact as is an original FAA spec Avenger.

Please forward this letter to the collections manager at the FAAM.

Yours sincerely
Simon Liebert

Fleet Air Arm Museum reply

The paint scheme is indeed incorrect and not what we would ideally like to see on the aircraft. However, it was done to satisfy a request from a very senior level in the Royal Navy along with the Museum Director at that time, to produce two aircraft for a display at Southwick House to mark the 50th Anniversary of D-Day. (there was also a multi-national fly past over Portsmouth that launched from Yeovilton).

These days, as part of the NMRN, we have a tighter policy regarding painting aircraft (or any object) in false or non-representational colour schemes and which builds on the success that projects such as the Corsair and Martlet have enjoyed in more recent years. However, there are a few legacy paint schemes on a number of aircraft in the collection from the 1960s, 70s and 80s that still do not reflect the particular type accurately (eg-Tiger Moth XL717 and Vampire LZ551G are other examples).

Returning the Avenger to its correct ECM6B colour scheme and configuration is a future potential for a paint archaeology project, but comes with time and resource implications but is something we would in time like to see. In terms of priority, it is regretfully not something we will be a position to progress for the foreseeable future.

Dear Editor,

I refer to the article on "The First VJ Day" in Jabberwock 110. The author mentions the sinking of the troopship *Khediye Ismael* by a Japanese submarine in 1944. He goes on to remark that he had not found any mention of this accident in subsequent histories. Corelli Barnett redresses this in his magisterial book "Engage the Enemy More Closely", published in 1991. He narrates: "For want of air cover, the troopship was torpedoed and sunk on 12 February off the Maldive Islands. The packed vessel foundered in two minutes with the loss of 1,300 lives, including Wrens, ATS (Auxiliary Territorial Service, the equivalent of the Wrens) and nursing

**Best wishes,
Trevor Robert Harris**

Dear Malcolm

Chris Penney's letter in Jabberwock 109 brought back memories of railway lines crossing the runways. In 1957/58 I served at RNAS Eglinton (HMS *Gannet*) on 737 and 719 Squadrons. Whilst serving at Eglinton our runways were upgraded and we operated from RAF Ballykelly. Between us and Londonderry was another airfield, I believe run by Du-Pont Industries - the Captain's house was located there. The railway line might have crossed their runway. Both Eglinton and Ballykelly had the railway lines from Belfast to Londonderry crossing their runways. I

sisters. It was scant consolation for so heavy a loss that the destroyers HMS *Petard* and *Paladin* promptly destroyed the attacker." What Barnett does not relate is that, in sinking the submarine I-27 by depth charges and torpedoes, the Royal Navy ships inadvertently killed many of the survivors in the water. By 1944, the RN was in the process of building up the strength of the Eastern Fleet with more modern ships including aircraft carriers, but it had not been possible to protect this convoy with air cover.

Earlier in his book, Barnett goes in for some severe criticism of UK Government attitudes towards naval aviation, but that's another story....

can assure Chris the trains had priority - it seemed odd looking out of the train window and seeing a plane 'burning and turning' waiting to take off. As Eglinton is now Londonderry Airport I wonder if they have the same problem.

Ballykelly was a very active airfield, we had our Gannets and Avengers, the RAF had Shackletons, the Canadians Lancasters (natural metal finish) and Neptunes (no ramjets) and finally the Americans Neptunes (with ramjets). The line crossing the end of one of Eglinton's runways was on a raised bank. A Gannet struck the bank as it

took off and sheared off a main oleo leg, fortunately he managed to keep airborne. As he couldn't dump fuel, he circled for hours to use the fuel up - then belly landed on a foamed runway.

The railway proved useful for us once. Eglinton was about 15 miles from Londonderry and Naval buses took us into Derry on a Saturday night. The buses would return at midnight to collect us. Going into the docks to do so. One Saturday the Garda decided to let the buses in, then closed the gates and refused us entry - they then sent the buses back to Eglinton empty. People started the walk back to Eglinton, and saw a diesel train at the railway station. Someone said "I can drive that", (he was ex Royal Engineers) which is what he did. People jumped on and he drove the train to Eglinton, stopping on the runway where everyone disembarked.

The Wrens had a Christmas dance with a game of sticking the tail on the donkey. Our mess won and collected the prize of a real donkey - she was called 'Bernadette'. We had her tied up



outside the mess and took her to many kids' parties. I even rode her down to the airfield site (Eglinton was very spread out with about seven different sites).

**Yours,
Derek Poulton (Life Member1758)**

Dear Malcolm

Just to correct an error on page 37 first column second paragraph of the Armed and Dangerous article reproduced from Navy News, the Wildcat weapon wings do not have any hydraulic components

within them. Weapon release is purely electronic.

I realise this won't be published but I had to mention it as I'm in the Wildcat Delivery Team on site at Leonardo.

Tony Jupp

From the editor: We are always happy to correct errors, especially when the correction comes from such a well-informed source.

Dear Malcolm



During the seventies this photo shows a common sight. The flight deck of the HMS Ark Royal (R-09) is shared between the Royal Navy and visiting US Navy aircraft. Depicted at the front are two R-coded 809 Naval Air Squadron Blackburn Buccaneer S2C/Ds, three R-coded 892 Naval Air Squadron McDonnell Douglas Phantom FG1s and one R-coded 849 Naval Air Squadron Fairey Gannet AEW3. More Buccaneers

are visible in the background.

Visiting from the US Navy carrier USS *Independence* (CVA-62) are two McDonnell Douglas F-4J Phantoms from VF-33 (BuNo 155544/AG-202) and VF-102 (BuNo 155510/AG-100) and two VA-65 Grumman A-6E Intruders.

Also on deck is ex-USN F-4J BuNo 155510 which was sold to the UK due to the RAF needing additional fighter interceptors, as Phantom F-4J(UK) ZE358. During a low level intercept practice with two other Phantoms in 1987 it crashed into a ridge at Pant-y-Gwair, ten miles SE of Aberystwyth killing both 74(F) Squadron crew.

Regards
Chris Penney



892 gets their own back with the tail of a VMFA 531 F4B adorned with 892's insignia.



An 892 Squadron gets 'zapped', courtesy of US Navy Squadron VF-171 while disembarked at NAS Oceana.

Barracuda article in Jabberwock 110

When we received David Marchant's piece on the Barracuda for Jabberwock 110, the author supplied more images than we could use in the article. So we thought we would share these other photos here.

The photo with ground crew emphasises the size of this ugly duckling.



A Barracuda being manhandled on the flight deck of HMS Illustrious Aug 1944. Note the tail wheel steering arm used for manoeuvring. The flaps are set at the 'Dive' position. Also deployed under the wing is the V shaped handle, used to aid the wing fold process. Note also the air speed pitot head mounted on its stanchion on the outboard wing.

Rear Admiral Ray Rawbone CB AFC RN

By Graham Mottram



Cdr Ray Rawbone welcoming Bill Bedford aboard HMS Ark Royal after the first carrier VSTOL landing of a Hawker P1127. © IWM

With the passing of Ray Rawbone, only days short of his 100th birthday, SoFFAAM lost not only Patron but also one of the few people remaining from the freezing cold November afternoon when SoFFAAM was formed.

But even more than that, the world lost one of its genuinely nice people. For an ex-fighter pilot and a senior naval officer, Admiral Ray was a remarkably

unaggressive and equable man whom I was honoured to know. I was clearly not alone in that as a full church of St. Bartholomew's at his funeral comprised mainly his family and friends from beyond his naval career. So many of his naval contemporaries had already crossed the bar but I'm sure they would have been there to pay their respects if they could.

Born in Birmingham in 1923, and named after his father who had served in the Royal Garrison Artillery and then the RAF in the last year of the First World War, Ray was planning to be an architect but the Second World War intervened and he joined the RNVR Air Branch. He trained as a pilot in the UK and Canada and was posted as a Seafire pilot to 809 Squadron, embarked in the escort carrier HMS *Stalker*. 809 was involved in Operation Dragoon, the invasion of the south of France. Ray was shot down by ground fire in Seafire MA999 and force landed in German-held territory, but was rescued by the Maquis, with whom he fought for several days before rejoining his carrier. In October 1944, he and S/Lt. G H Britain sank a coaster near Larissa-Saloniki. He was Mentioned in Dispatches for his war service and that must have helped him to obtain a permanent commission in the post war navy. Post war, he was an instructor at CFS, Little Rissington, receiving a King's Commendation for Valuable Service in the Air, and also the Air Force Cross.

The advent of jets saw him posted to 800 Squadron to help bring the Attacker into service, and then his first command, as boss of 736 Squadron, the Advanced Jet Flying School. His second command was very much front line, heading 897 Squadron and taking its Sea Hawks to war at Suez, for which he received a second Mentioned in Dispatches. Because Suez was such a political disaster, the men who received awards were not sure for some months as to whether they could put up their ribbons. As a Commander he "drove" the



Ray in the cockpit of his beloved Seafire IIIc

venerable frigate HMS *Loch Killisport* in the Persian Gulf before returning to FAA duties as Wings of RNAS Lossiemouth and then of HMS *Ark Royal*. Under Captain Donald Gibson, Ray oversaw the historic first VSTOL landing of a Hawker P1127 by Bill Bedford in 1963.

A period of staff jobs occupied him until another command with HMS *Dido*, largely in the Indian Ocean in 1968/69, and then home again for one of the dream jobs, the captaincy of HMS *Heron* at Yeovilton between 1970/72. Another sea command followed, the destroyer HMS *Kent* newly out of refit, before promotion to Rear Admiral and a NATO post, Deputy Assistant Chief of Staff (Operations) at SHAPE.

Retiring in 1976 and awarded the CB for his 34 years of distinguished service, Ray and his wife Iris settled in a house designed by the once would-be-architect at Halstock, and for several years he was the Sales Director of Vincents, the Yeovil car dealership. It was during this period that he helped Dennis White to establish SoFFAAM, and was a great support in the Society's early years. Irrespective of the assembled company, never once did I hear him ask "Don't you know who I am?" or imply that, as many lesser men have done.

Leo Opdycke and his Bristol Scout

By Graham Mottram



Leo Opdycke beside his Bristol Scout yet to be finished at the time of this photo.

The bigger aviation history journals in the UK might just note the event, but the passing of Leo Opdycke sees the builder of FAAM's Bristol Scout finally relax his fantastic influence on the world of early aircraft.

Leo attributed his interest to a professor at Rochester University who was building a replica SE5. The undergraduate Opdycke became a helper and it all went on from there.

In 1961 they began publishing a "Help and Parts Wanted" newsletter for the SE5, which Leo continued to publish with ever widening audience, and that morphed into "World War 1 Aeroplanes", a very significant magazine with a worldwide circulation amongst aviation historians and reconstructors. It ran for probably 40 years and was joined by "Skyways - the Airplane 1920-1940", another high

content specialist publication, from 1987.

His own specific interest crystallised into the Bristol Scout, which was a single-seat rotary-engine biplane originally designed in 1913 as a racing aircraft. Early in WW1, it was used by the RNAS and the RFC as a "scout", or fast reconnaissance aircraft. The rectangular-section fuselage was an orthodox wire-braced wooden structure constructed from ash and spruce. Leo spent many years building a modern replica, and eventually flew it in 1987, powered by a genuine Le Rhone rotary engine. He subsequently sold it to the RAF Museum around 1990, but the aeroplane, as is often the case with modern replicas, was covered with Ceconite, a synthetic fabric which is much easier to use than linen and dope. That was not the only aircraft to offend RAFM purists and

so it was stripped with the original intention of re-covering in linen. There was some suggestion that the internal wing structure was not accurate and so the intention to re-cover it was parked, as was the aircraft, until the Bristol Aero Collection convinced Sir George White, grandson of the founder of Bristol and Colonial Aircraft Company, to buy it.

Bristol Aero were very limited in what they could achieve at that time and so, when FAAM was planning "Leading Edge" in 1999, Sir George agreed to move the loan to FAAM, which is where it remains. Whether it is pedantically accurate or not, the aircraft shows the typical structure of a WW1 era aeroplane and thank you Leo for enabling us to complete that exhibition plan of 20 years ago.

Leonard E. "Leo Opdycke 1929-2023



The completed framework of the Bristol Scout now hanging in Hall 4 of the Fleet Air Arm Museum. The background of Concorde G-BSS7 offers a glimpse of a different technology. © Richard Macauley

Service Flying in the 1930s

By Simon Cauthery



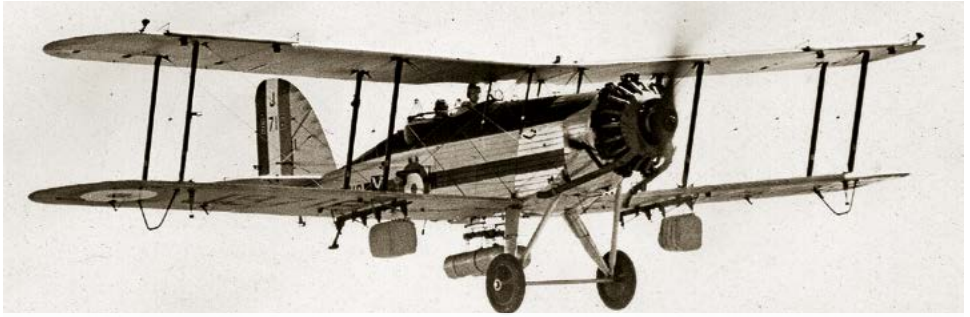
Passengers alight from a Handley Page HP33 Hinairi twin-engine bomber, one of a few converted to passenger-carrying. The design was further developed into the HP35 Clive passenger aircraft.

My father's logbook, photographs and other published material give a tantalising glimpse into life serving "King and Country" in the RAF in the 1930's.

He joined as a Pilot Officer in 1929 and was sent to Egypt to No 4 Flying Training School at Abu Sueir, near Port Said. He was under training there for 11 months, mainly on Avro 504s and DH 9As totalling 150 flying hours. He went solo on the Avro after 10 hours in those first four weeks. He took numerous photos, including several showing the tattered remains of ill-judged landings!

In April 1930 he was posted to India, to its North West Frontier region (now on the Afghan/Pakistan borders) at the Kohat air base of 27 and 60 Squadrons. There the DH 9As were being replaced with the Westland "Wapiti" IIAs, in which he flew 596 hours in the three years he was there.

The "Wapiti" was a rugged two-seater general purpose aircraft, of which 558 were built by Westland between 1928 and 1932. It was conceived to support or replace ground forces in the Middle East and India and to make use of the large amount of DH 9A components



Wapiti on a re-supply mission. The aircraft often air-dropped supplies to forward troops, although the load pictured appears not to have a parachute attached.

and spares still existing in Air Ministry stores. By 1930 the wooden components had given way to steel fuselage framing and wing structure. The IIA version, of which 430 were built, mostly used 550 HP Bristol Jupiter engines and many were still in service up to 1940. It is a pity that not one has been saved for museum display in the UK, although I believe the RAF Museum at Hendon has a "Wallace" which was a later derivative. The Indian Air Force Museum, at Palam, Delhi, has a well-preserved IAF Wapiti, serial number K-813, on display.

The Northwest Frontier region was then (as now) a troubled tribal region and the RAF squadrons' role was to scout and try to stop any sort of uprising before it became a problem.

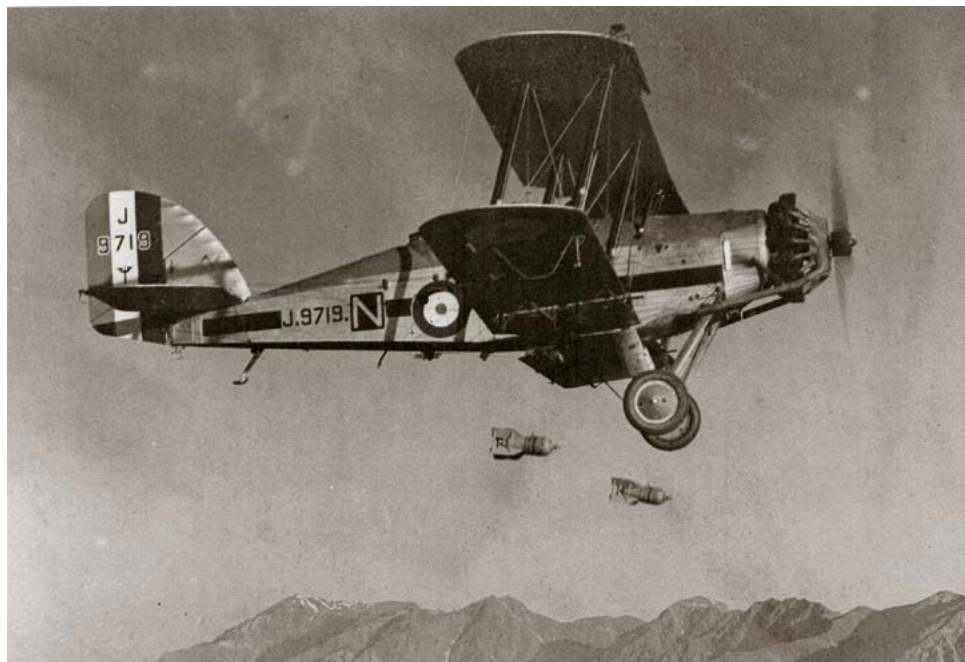
The terrain was bleak and hostile in the extreme, so a sturdy reliable aircraft and engine was all important. Looking through father's logbook, I can see that he was soon off on aerial photography missions and bombing raids, typically dropping four 112 lb and four 20 lb bombs. I don't think a lot of damage was done; there wasn't much to destroy! Warnings were sent out in advance for villagers to make themselves scarce, but it was all supposed to suppress insurrection. These bombing raids went on intermittently and in between times there were practice flights for photography, survey work, gun firing, practice bombing, testing, flights supporting other bases in the area and so on.



Wapiti with Hawker Hind light bomber in the foreground.



DH9A, modified by Westland, it used the American 400hp (300 Kw) Liberty engine.



Wapiti drops two 112lb ML fragmentation bombs.

His bombing missions were mainly in 1930 and 1932, usually two or three sorties per day of about 1.5 to 2 hours at about 5,000 feet and going on for a few months at a time. Otherwise, father was in the air most days, longer flights sometimes to Lahore and further to Karachi in two stages of 3.5 hours each. He must have been fortunate to have escaped without any sort of mishap in those days, as nothing is recorded in his log book. Those unfortunate enough to crash or force land in a hostile tribal area were unlikely to survive being captured although ransoms were usually offered.

After father had died in 1993, I was visiting a care home resident who had been in India in the 1930s and in conversation with one of the volunteers

there it turned out that he had also been in India, with the RAF, with 27 Squadron and had been my father's gunner as an LAC! I found his name in father's logbook "air firing front and rear" and "vertical photos mosaic". He later retired after WW2 as a Flight Lieutenant.

In 1932 father had four months leave and returned to more bombing practice and raids. Internal passenger air transport was by Vickers Victoria or Handley Page Hinairi twin engine machines, not far removed from WW1 bombers. By now father's time with the squadron was coming to an end but he went out with a flourish by winning the "Ellington Cup" for practice bombing accuracy. This award was named after



27 Squadron B Flight, commanded by Flt Lt F Tissett. Simon's father is in the front row, second from right between the OC and the Sergeant Pilot.

ACM Sir Edward Ellington, one time Chief of Air Staff¹. I have the medal awarded for this in March 1933 when he left with a proficiency rating of "Above the average" and a total flying time of 760 hours, 600 of which were with 27 Squadron. Father's flying instructor at No 4 FTS was Flt. Lt. Walter Dawson who went on to become Air Chief Marshal Sir Walter who died in 1994.

On his return home, Father decided to transfer to the engineering branch. A two-year course at RAF Henlow was followed by postings including

Air Ministry, Canada, Germany (2nd TAF) and other UK locations. In 1942 to 1944 he was Air Ministry overseer at Westland at the time the Wyvern was first conceived. During these postings he was able to fly a variety of aircraft; Hawker Hart, Hind and Audax, Miles Whitney Straight, Falcon, Magister, Master and Mentor, DH Moth, Gloster Gauntlet, Harvard, Fairchild 24, Cessna Crane, Oxford, Dominie, Anson and Norseman. He retired as a Group Captain in 1959 with a total of 1230 hours flying time. It must have been a fascinating life for a young man in those times and places and I am now so sorry that I was never able to have any meaningful conversation with him about his early days.

¹A famously reticent officer and little known today, as Chief of the Air Staff Ellington played a major role in the expansion and re-organisation of the RAF between 1933 and 1937.

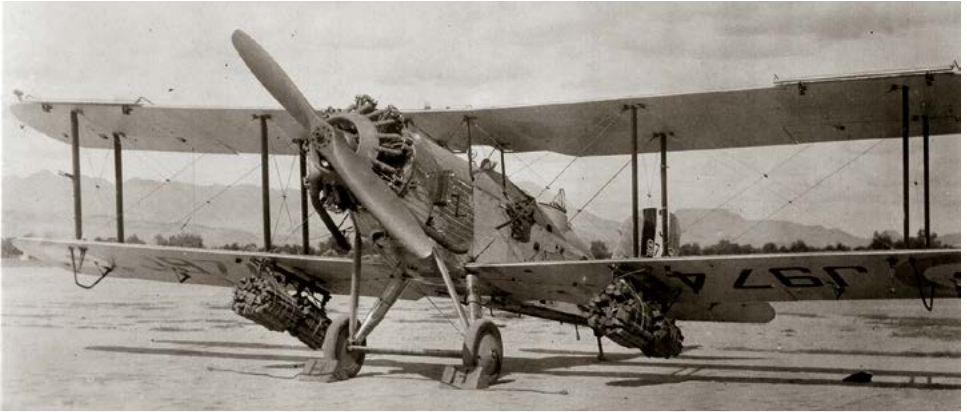


Francis Chichester with his Gipsy Moth. Chichester landed at Abu Sueir to rest and refuel on his epic solo flight to Australia in January 1930.

Editor's Note

In the rapid run-down of forces after the end of the First World War, the Chief of the Air Staff of newly independent RAF, Hugh (later Lord) Trenchard had to find ways of justifying the role of independent aviation in meeting the military needs of Britain and its empire. Under his leadership, the Air Ministry argued that air power could provide a solution to the problems of colonial policing, especially in remote regions such as Iraq (then known as Mesopotamia) and India's Northwest Frontier (present day Pakistan). The tribesmen who lived in these regions often defied the British and their colonial governments. The RAF developed a policy of establishing airbases and using Special Service Officers to live among the indigenous population. These officers attempted to disseminate the requirements of the colonial administrators and were supported by British soldiers and colonial levies, who

could provide information on potential rebellion. Warnings to tribal leaders would be backed up by overflights of their villages, followed by notice that aircraft would return to drop bombs, shoot up homes and destroy crops. The process became known as the British Air Control System. As far as the British government was concerned, the strategy was a pragmatic success – a rebellion in Iraq for example was subdued by a handful of RAF squadrons and a small force of troops. The RAF maintained its military control over Iraq until World War Two, even after Iraqi independence in 1932. These experiences have often been quoted as the underlying principle of the effectiveness of bombing, so strongly advocated by Trenchard and his successors. As the historian AJP Taylor put it: "Here was an independent strategy of the air. From this moment, it was accepted that bombs could not only quell tribal revolts but could win a great war."



Wapiti with wooden bundles on the bomb carriers. Simon believes that these were cheap variants of practice bombs, designed to burst open in a spectacular way on impact.

Important announcement from the SoFFAAM Council

Like any voluntary society, SOFFAAM depends upon a team of trustees and volunteers to ensure its continuing operations. Several of us have served many years as council members and the time has come to take a back seat. By September of this year, we need replacements please for Chairman, Deputy Chairman and Treasurer. Ideally these replacements need to be identified in advance so that smooth induction can be given. No prior experience in a similar role is required. Enthusiasm is more important. Do contact the Chairman on shalefan@btinternet.com

Please note that it is imperative we fill these positions to maintain a healthy and viable Society.

HMS Cardiff in Gulf War 1

Part two - abridged by Richard Macauley



A wartime photo of Westland Lynx '335' of 815 Naval Air Squadron on the flight deck of HMS Cardiff.

We carry on from page 27 of Jabberwock 110 by continuing the account of the actions of Cardiff's ship's flight, Westland Lynx '335'.

Next contact was January 24 when '335' was re-tasked whilst on routine surface search to proceed to the vicinity of Quarah Island to investigate two surface contacts. In company with another USN SH60 and after identification runs to 1.5nms the contacts were identified as two small landing craft probably carrying out resupply runs to Iraq occupied Quarah Island. '335' marked the contacts but after lengthy deliberations by the Americans the Lynx was hauled off in preference to a boarding and landing

operation that was carried out a few hours later.

On January 29, '335' was actioned to assist the prosecution of a number of small enemy vessels in the vicinity of Mina Saud. Lynx from HM Ships *Brazen* and *Gloucester* had already fired Sea Skua but both unfortunately had missed. '335' arrived on the scene of action and with a USN SH60 commenced a coastal search during which both aircraft were engaged twice by shore anti-aircraft batteries in the vicinity of Ras Al Qulayah. After a refuel on USS *Nicholas*, '335' was re-vectored by the SH60 to a moving contact tracking NE away from Mina Saud. 'Weapons free' was given and the SH60 vectored '335' for an

attack run. Because of communication problems three attack runs were required before the contact was successfully engaged with a low level Sea Skua resulting in a large explosion and subsequent fading on radar of the contact, the first RN success of the war. Later assessment was that the contact was either a landing craft or *Spasilac* Class mine layer.

January 30 began with routine SUSCH but '335' was quickly re-tasked to proceed to Bubiyan Island to investigate a military surface contact. Again working with a USN SH60, '335' located a T43 Class mine layer and successfully attacked with one Sea Skua hitting the vessel just forward of midships. Having returned to HMS *Cardiff*, '335' was soon back in the air again returning to Bubiyan Island to attack a number of vessels that were apparently making an escape attempt to Iran. During a 4hr 30min sortie involving one re-arm and refuel at *Cardiff*, '335' fired a further three missiles. One was a TNC 45 that was already on fire but which the Lynx had been directed to finish off, another against a second TNC 45 although this missile went rogue and missed. The last Sea Skua was fired against a third TNC 45 (possibly the one previously missed) which was notable by a large explosion followed by an even more spectacular second explosion where it was thought an Exocet missile may have been hit causing the booster motor to ignite, shooting part of the missile 300ft into the air.

A quiet week followed with a number of searches to the NPG but



Lynx '335' showing the 'kill' markings

with no sighting of the Iraqi Navy; the assessment being that the units were remaining in harbour after the allied successes of January 29/30. However '335' was back in action again on February 8 after being actioned to investigate a patrol boat operating in the vicinity of Falayka Island. After once again being vectored by an SH60 the contact was attacked with one Sea Skua resulting in a large explosion and intense fire. The contact was eventually confirmed as a *Zhuk* class patrol boat. The last attack by '335' occurred early in the morning on February 11, once again in the vicinity of Falayka Island and once again against a *Zhuk* class patrol boat. However this engagement was at night, the Lynx being actioned from Alert 45 and airborne 16 minutes later. The mission was complicated by the vessel manoeuvring in close proximity to a buoy thereby causing difficulties identifying the target. Sandpiper proved invaluable although six approach runs were required whilst the aircraft came under fire from AA batteries on Falayka Island. Two Sea Skuas were fired, the first causing only a minor explosion which could have either been the missile not arming correctly or that the

missile struck the buoy. The second Sea Skua caused a much more significant explosion and '335' departed the scene with the contact ablaze.

In summary HMS *Cardiff* Flight fired 8 Sea Skua missiles, one against a *Spasilac* mine layer/landing craft, one against a T43 mine layer, three against

TNC 45 missile boats (one of which missed) and three against two *Zhuk* patrol boats. Kills claimed were; 1 x Landing Craft, 1 x T43, 1 x T45, 2 x *Zhuk*.

Lt Phil Needham (Flight Commander)

Lt Guy Haywood (Pilot)

A day in the life...

This section gives an insight into the daily life of the flight at war. HMS *Cardiff's* ship's Flight comes in the form of a ten man team - 2 Officers, 2 CPOs, 2 POs, 2 Leading Hands and 2 Able Rates and the team is...

Lt Phil Needham RN Age 37

Flight Commander, Observer, 'The Boss'.

Lt Guy Heywood RN Age 26

Helicopter Pilot, Met Forecaster, Divisional Officer, Survival Officer, Flight Safety Officer, Trainee Warship Driver

CPOAEAC (WL) Ron Knight Age 39

SMR. Responsible for all aviation facilities on HMS *Cardiff*. Admin whizkid. Flight Secretary and also electrical trouble shooter.

CPOAEA (M) Dave Collins Age 30

Mechanical artificer. SAR Winchman. Maintenance test flier. Cabin door gunner. Captain of the Flight Deck, Divisional Senior rating.

POAEA (R) Steve Hayes Age 30

Radio/Avionics Artificer. NBCDI Flight Regulator. Missile loading supervisor.

POAEM (WL) Martin Nortcliff Age 39

Weapons/Electrical Supervisor. Load lifting supervisor. Publications custodian. Role equipment manager.

LAEM CM) Mark Davies Age 28

Helicopter mechanic. Tool controller,

Missile loader. Helo sprayer. HIFR controller. Social secretary.

LAC Chris Hulburt Age 28

Helicopter controller. Aviators tactician. Flight deck husbandry rating.

AEM (M) Adie Sharpouse Age 20

Helicopter mechanic. Plane captain Inflam and spare parts custodian. Flight-deck loadlifter. Gunner.

AEM (R) Steve Tidswell Age 20

Avionics/Weapons mechanic. Missile loader. Flight-deck loadlifter. Machine gun maintainer.

MAA Clive Griffiths Age 32

Flight deck officer. Wholeship co-ordinator. Ship's policeman. Whipcracker.

The structure is based around the engineering requirements to support the Lynx at sea, split thus between these trades - Mechanical, Radio/Avionics and Weapons/Electrical. Each member also has numerous other responsibilities.

A typical day on HMS *Cardiff's* flight deck went something like this...

03:00 - "Action Lynx - Action Lynx" (piped across ship's main broadcast). Within about three minutes the Flight are awake and rushing to the hangar. First on the scene is Ron and Dave who sleep in the vicinity of the hangar due to the threat of mine impact.

03:09 - the Lynx '335' is being driven to the flight deck grid by Mark using the mechanical handler with Dave shouting directions at the Flight as they go through the pre flight checks.

03:12 - Guy swiftly completes his pre flight checks whilst Phil receives the mission briefing from the Captain and the Principal Warfare Officer (PWO). Ron finalizes the all important technical forms while Martin makes the deadly Sea Skua missiles live and Steve makes the last minute avionics checks.

03:16 - '335' is airborne. What normally takes 45 minutes in peacetime has taken these ten guys 16 minutes.

03:30 - FDO Clive Griffiths suggests morning coffee wouldn't go amiss.

05:15 - '335' attacks and sinks yet another Iraqi ship.

06:15 - '335' returns to mother - mission accomplished.

06:35 - Steve, Adie and Dave prepare '335' for another mission and load two more missiles. Ron is busy planning the next maintenance. Martin and Steve reload the soft-kill chaff and flare dispenser. The Boss and the Guy attend a de-brief.

07:15 - Flight stand down for breakfast.

08:00 - Mark paints yet another Iraqi Gunboat on '335s' radome. Due to the chemical threat all flight personnel don chemical protection trousers and boots - Gas masks are always to hand.

10:00 - The on watch PWO orders the flight to stand by for a Sea King transfer aft - Yippee, Mail!

10:30 - The FDO is given approval to carry on with the transfer by the Officer of the Watch. The flight deck is too

small for a Sea King to land, so the tricky transfer is done in the hover.

11:15 - Transfer complete. The Sea King requests fuel by HIFR - another dicey operation in which special refuelling equipment is winched up to the hovering helicopter and 100 gallons of Avcat pumped into the helicopters tanks.

12:30 - The flight stand down for lunch.

14:00 - The two Steve's beaver away at an outstanding Radar snag.

16:30 - "Action Lynx - Action Lynx"

17:00 - Airborne again investigating two hostile contacts in the Northern Gulf. (The USN Anti-Surface Unit Warfare commander likes the Lynx).

17:30 - The Ops room report that the contacts have been lost.

18:15 - '335' returns to mother. The pilot reports engine torque problems.

20:00 - Dave, Mark and Adie think they have solved the mechanical problem.

20:15 - Guy and Dave take '335' for a test flight and Guy is happy with her performance.

21:00 - Ron is happy - the aircraft is serviceable again.

22:00 - The flight are huddled around the SRE speaker, listening to the World Service News - more bombs and cruise missiles on Baghdad.

23:00 - The aircraft is washed, refuelled, missiles loaded and covered for the night.

23:15 - The flight disperse for a shower and bed.

CPOAEA Dave Collins

Thanks to Jason Wallis, Dan Hedger and contributory members of the ship's company for access to the material supplied and enable me to represent some of the activities of HMS Cardiff's involvement in GW 1.

Olympic Maritime Security, Weymouth Bay - 2012

By Peter Cushion



The sailing competitions of the 2012 Olympic Games were held in Weymouth Bay, to the east of the Isle of Portland.

The associated security operation was the responsibility of Dorset Police who were supported by the Royal Navy, the Army, and the Royal Air Force. The floating Command and Control HQ was HMS *Bulwark*, the hub of the security operations, anchored in Weymouth Bay, 10 miles offshore.

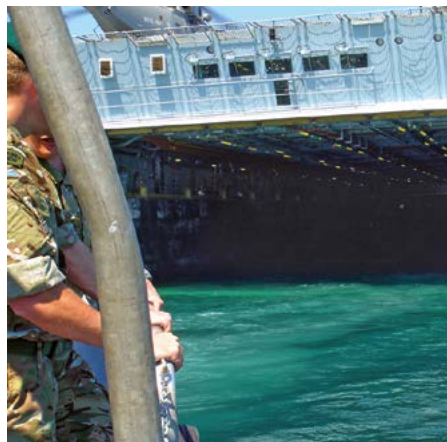
Before the start of the competitive

yacht racing, HMS *Bulwark* hosted guest groups to visit the ship to observe the security measures and be given a guided tour of the ship. My wife and I were fortunate enough to be invited to visit the ship on 25 July 2012. We met the other guests at Wyke Regis Training Area in Chickerell near Weymouth (part of the MOD Defence Training Estate) where we were security checked. A coach then took us to Portland Harbour, where we boarded RFA *Mounts Bay*, L3008. Guided through a maze of

very narrow passageways, we reached the dock area and the waiting landing craft, which were to take us out to HMS *Bulwark*. The weather was perfect, warm, with a clear blue sky and calm sea. On the journey we saw some of the other elements of the security force, P2000 patrol vessels, landing craft, various small fast craft, and police on jet skis.

On arrival, we entered the flooded dock area, which was huge. Our first guided visit was to the Operations Room, which was very busy with a mix of service and police personnel manning the various surveillance and communications systems. We were then taken on to the flight deck where we found two 814 Naval Air Squadron Merlin HM1 helicopters, which made regular flights around the bay for most of the day.

There were always crew members available to answer any questions, although they were reluctant to discuss some of the equipment, about which I enquired. I believe these were associated with countermeasures. After a buffet lunch served in the area adjacent to the landing dock, we were taken in smaller groups to see demonstrations of how they handled a medical emergency, a fire drill and then to meet a Marine Commando fully kitted up, complete with a selection of arms which we were able to handle and ask questions about. Our afternoon concluded when we re-boarded a landing craft and returned to RFA *Mounts Bay* in Portland Harbour. This was a brilliant day and a unique unforgettable experience.



LG Groves Safety Awards - part 1

By Chris Penney



Swiss Air Force F/A-18C Hornet passes in front of the control tower at RAF Leeming. © MoD

The Fleet Air Arm Museum was recently the venue for the 2022 LG Groves awards.

The prestigious military awards event – now in its 78th year – is held in recognition of outstanding contributions to aviation safety across UK defence. Its origins lie in a tragic 1945 air accident on the Quantock Hills, Somerset. Meteorological Air Observer Sergeant Louis Grimble Groves RAFVR was one of nine aircrew killed when their Halifax Mk III RG380/X9-N crashed on 10 September during poor weather, impacting high ground above the village of Crowcombe. The aircraft belonged to Brawdy-based 517 Meteorological Squadron. The following year Major and Mrs Grimble Groves donated £3,000

for prizes in their son's memory to the RAF Air Council. Presented each year since 1946, the LG Groves awards comprise those for Air Safety, Ground Safety, Meteorology and Meteorological Observation.

The Air Safety prize is awarded for the most important contribution made towards improving the safety of personnel, aircraft or equipment in flight, or enhancing the survival of aircrew. Its recipient was Major Chris Pickett, responsible for 1st Aviation Brigade Combat Team's Air Safety. He transformed safety across the AAC's Apache force, creating a squadron-wide campaign plan. He also arranged a drone safety awareness event. With the Military Aviation Authority (MAA)

Major Pickett then helped re-design the future AH-64E programme's Air System Safety Case. It ensured the safety implications of buying the type directly from the US Government were recognised and overcome. Much of Chris' work has now been incorporated across the UK's Tri-Service Joint Helicopter Command.

Winner of the Ground Safety Award was RAF Leeming Air Traffic Control Squadron. On 9 December 2021 a RAF Typhoon pilot declared a loose canopy emergency. Responding calmly, ATC cleared the circuit of all other traffic and after burning down fuel the Typhoon landed safely using its brake-chute. This became the first of an extraordinary series of high-risk incidents the tower's military controllers had to face in rapid succession. A deployed pair of Swiss Air Force F/A-18 Hornets next departed. On getting airborne, the second

aircraft suffered an engine failure with uncontained flames seen streaming behind the jet. The pilot declared a MAYDAY. Fortunately, the aircraft had sufficient thrust to climb away while ATC again cleared airspace for the Hornet to dump fuel and recover. Meanwhile, a second pair of Swiss Hornets took off, but the tower noted one aircraft venting fluid. A swift investigation established it was fuel and with the Spill Response Plan activated the runway was cleared for the MAYDAY Hornet to land safely from a single-engine approach. Swanwick Centre's Distress and Diversion Cell in Hampshire then informed Leeming that the Swiss Hornet venting fuel had declared its own emergency: suffering a total hydraulic failure and the loss of an engine. ATC alerted all airborne station-based aircraft, instructing them to conserve fuel and prepare to divert. The pilot of the stricken Hornet then executed a textbook emergency landing using the airfield's arrestor cable. The tower efficiently completed the necessary safety inspections and quickly re-opened the runway, ensuring none of the airborne station aircraft had to divert. Throughout, Leeming's air traffic personnel demonstrated outstanding teamwork, exemplary management, and clear communication under acute pressure and were well deserving of the 2022 award.

The LG Groves awards for Meteorology and Meteorological Observation are awarded to Met Office staff. Part 2 will look at the historic aspects of the air crash that gave rise to the awards.



Personnel attending the Service unveiling of the Memorial for the 75th anniversary at the fatal crash site.. © RAF Website

Sextant to SatNav - part 2

By Peter Griffiths.

January Talk summarised by Robert Heath



Peter Griffiths and the luxury interior of a Dassault Falcon Executive Jet. © NetJets

This was a welcome return by Peter Griffiths. He started flying in 1967 and joined British Airways.

He was second from the bottom on the seniority list and was still there seven years later. He left to join Cathay Pacific Airways in Hong Kong, where he enjoyed 29 years of flying. Until 1998, Cathay Pacific was based at Kai Tak International Airport in Hong Kong, perched on the water's edge of a vast range of rugged mountains. The runway is built out into a bay and there is a 2,000ft high mountain

on the landing approach. Pilots must fly the aircraft at right angles to the airport, aiming for a huge red and white checkerboard on the side of a mountain. When the checkerboard starts to look a bit close you make a 47° degree turn to the right at less than 600ft altitude. You descend between the skyscrapers of Kowloon City, on to the narrow finger of the runway projecting out to sea. It is truly gripping stuff, but apparently, pilots loved doing it.

Peter will see the funny side of any

situation and this talk soon enveloped us in mirth. In 1990 the first Gulf War erupted, necessitating the movement of military materiel to the war zone. Peter was Deputy Manager of the Cathay Pacific 'Classic' Boeing 747 fleet and leased a 747 freighter with a 130 tonnes capacity to the Army for resupply purposes. For cargo access the nose hinged upwards and there were doors at the rear of the aircraft. On one occasion, a member of the RAF ground staff arrived with one scissor-lift to unload the entire payload. He planned to unload everything from one door, until it was pointed out that the aircraft would very quickly tip on to its tail, so had to trundle alternately from one end of the aircraft to the other to unload evenly. This prompted Peter to illustrate the varieties of freight aircraft, including enormous examples from Boeing and Airbus.

Retirement from flying was compulsory at age 55 in Cathay Pacific, so Peter found employment with NetJets. This company specialises in fractional ownership of private business jets to enable the wealthy to whizz world-wide. Peter piloted the "wonderful" 'Falcon 2000 Easy' aircraft. It used Mirage jet fighter wings, was entirely computer driven, with no knobs or switches. This wealthy new world was completely different from commercial airline flying. He met a wide gamut of people from Russian oil millionaires to mining magnates, Belgian bankers, ex-heads of state, celebrities and the simply stunningly rich. He often had

to fly them to strange destinations that Peter did not know existed, with names that he could not pronounce. One client wished to make a longish journey and ordered eight different meals to be provided, from which he would choose one to eat. At the last minute, he postponed the flight until the next day. The next day he did the same again and each time eight meals were put on board and not touched. Peter once flew Bill Clinton and his four protection 'heavies'. Peter asked the guards to give him their pistols so that they could be stored in-flight in accordance with the law. The response was a curt "if you think you can take the gun off me, help yourself".

Celebrities were numerous, most of whom cannot be named because of non-disclosure agreements. One screen tough guy was scared stiff from the moment he boarded the aircraft and constantly asked 'It is safe isn't it?'. Maria Carey (a singer) demanded that no one must look at her directly in the face and her bodyguard ensured that no one did. Rich middle eastern passengers would arrive sporting Western clothes with the ladies in revealing attire. Once the aircraft took off, the passengers would disappear into the toilet closet and reappear in modest Middle Eastern dress. Peter met many people from the same region on flying training and refresher courses and has a list of airlines that he would never fly with based on his first-hand knowledge of the skill levels of their crews. This was thumping good entertainment from Peter.

From the Falklands to the Middle East

A brief history of Sea King AEW 1982-2018, by Lt Cdr Richard Lewis (Rtd) and Mike Yates ex- EMI Group Ltd.
February 2023 Talk summarised by Robert Heath



SKASaC Sea King Mk7. © POA(Phot) Paul A Barrow, Royal Navy

The Royal Navy lost its Airborne Early Warning (AEW) capability in December 1978, when HMS *Ark Royal* was withdrawn from service. The perceived airborne threat was only in the northern hemisphere and would be handled by land-based aircraft, so the Fairey Gannets that had provided shipborne AEW it were scrapped.

In 1982 Argentina invaded the Falkland Islands and in response, a British task force was dispatched to the Falklands. The Task Force included HMS *Hermes* and *Invincible*, as well as warships armed with surveillance radars and anti-aircraft missiles to

protect it from air attack. These proved only partly effective and HMS *Sheffield* and *Coventry*, also the support vessel, *Atlantic Conveyor* were lost to air-launched missiles or bombs. There was an urgent need to provide the longer-range detection of incoming aircraft that could only be provided by an airborne platform.

Mike Yates had been in the RAF for 19 years and was a Chief Technician at RAF Binbrook working on the Searchwater maritime surveillance radar fitted to the Nimrod Maritime Reconnaissance aircraft. Searchwater was identified as a solution to the airborne surveillance

problem. In 1978 Mike joined EMI and on 21 May 1982 found himself at the Westland factory in Yeovil with an EMI colleague, tasked with installing Searchwater in a Sea King. The deadline was the beginning of August 1982, when the replacement carrier HMS *Illustrious* was due to sail for the Falklands.

The Nimrod easily accommodated the Searchwater equipment, but the Sea King was a much smaller platform, with severe limitations on space and load-carrying capability. Searchwater was designed as an Air to Surface Vessel (ASV) radar to search for slow moving targets but would now have to find fast-moving low-level targets. Two Sea King Mk 2 helicopters were delivered to Westland for the modification. The 1 metre diameter radar scanner was too big to fit within or under the fuselage, so it was mounted on a hinged elbow joint on the starboard side of the aircraft. The radome was made from a robust inflatable Kevlar bag. Inside the Sea King, the sonar equipment was replaced by purpose designed pallets to contain the console and ancillary equipment. Search ranges up to 100 miles were achieved and 12 weeks after the start date the two Searchwater Sea Kings departed in HMS *Illustrious*, along with Mike and his EMI colleague. In the Falklands the two Sea Kings provided 24-hour cover over a 100 mile range, up to 10,000ft.

Richard Lewis described operations as an observer aboard the Sea Kings in the re-formed 849 Squadron. He said that due to the urgency of modification, very close co-operation developed between the FAA Sea King team and

industry. What the radar operators expected to see and be able to do was quickly translated into how the EMI radar manufacturers could make it happen. Everything was designed to happen within three button presses, and EMI achieved it. It was the first time that the MoD procurement process allowed aircrew direct access and involvement with manufacturers. It was a great success, sadly not repeated.

Communications in the early days were by voice, but the system was upgraded in 2000 with new radar and avionics. This was known as Sea King Airborne Surveillance and Control (SKASaC), supported by the Cerberus Mission System, which enabled detection of targets over land, sea and air. A Pulse Doppler cleared all the ground clutter to reveal anything that moved. This was a massive step forward and combined with the Joint Tactical Information Distribution System (JTIDS) enabled the Sea King to identify targets and relay the data instantly to the support strike aircraft to follow-up. The two AEW observers could control 250 tracks; 400 received tracks and 100 non-real world entities. However, there were some disadvantages to helicopter mounted AEW, including limited sortie duration and vulnerability to icing.

The last Sea King Mk7 AEW flight was made on 26 September 2018, after which the new Merlin HM Mk2 took over AEW tasks. Thank you Richard Lewis and Mike Yates for an engrossing and detailed account of how the RN belatedly won back its Airborne Early Warning capability.

RIAT - Some memorable moments and impossible challenges

By Tim Prince OBE FRAeS. March Talk summarised by Robert Heath



An aero-spotter's paradise! The crowded scene of aircraft of many nations at a recent RIAT. © RIAT

I first met Tim Prince more than 40 years ago as a sponsor of one of his early Tattoos.

He opened his presentation with a short, action-packed film showing dramatic highlights from several of the Air Tattoo events that he created and managed with his colleague Paul Bowen.

After being turned down by the RAF, Tim joined the Civil Aviation Authority and became an Air Traffic Controller instead. Tim gained his Private Pilot's Licence (PPL) and cut his teeth at the Aeroplane & Armament Experimental Establishment (A&AEE) Boscombe Down. It provided a firm foundation for his role in the organisation and presentation of world leading air shows.

Royal International Air Tattoo (RIAT) is the world's largest military air show. The first was held in 1971 at North Weald, in support of the Royal Air Force Association Charity (RAFA). The event was a success, with over 100 aircraft participating. Crucial to all the early events was the time and energy given by the team of volunteers. It was hard work, for example, before every show, the volunteers had to walk every inch of the runways and taxiways to meticulously clear any Foreign Object Debris (FOD). Volunteers also provided aircrew reception, hospitality services to service and civilian personnel and then to manage the vast numbers of enthusiastic show visitors.

At first, it was simply called an Air Tattoo to distinguish it from all the other air shows. Between 1972 and 1983 it was staged predominantly at Greenham Common, which at the time was a US Air Force maintenance and storage facility. Facilities were rudimentary, with just one telephone line and a mobile radar unit borrowed from USAFE in Germany. Invitations to participate were sent out by Tim and team to various countries, including Russia, which caused a stir in Whitehall. The response elsewhere was good and the USA decided to send a huge Douglas Globemaster transport aircraft. In the event, mechanical Gremlins interfered, so a CIA Constellation was re-directed to Greenham Common instead.

These Tattoos were profitable and over the years donations were made to the RAFA; then later to the RAF Benevolent Fund, where Douglas Bader, the renowned legless WW2 fighter pilot, played an influential role. On his death, the Flying Scholarships for Disabled People (FSDP) charity was created by Tim and Paul Bowen in recognition of Douglas Bader's contribution to overcoming disability.

In 1980 the US Air Force developed Greenham Common as a cruise missile base, but still generously allowed the Tattoo to take place. In 1983 it was a fantastic scoop for a SR71 spy plane to participate in the Air Tattoo. 'Ban the Bomb' peace protesters were camped around the base and unfortunately lady protesters climbed over the security fence at night and daubed paint over the aircraft. The SR71 has a very

special coating (not paint) and Defence Minister Michael Heseltine had to make a special visit to apologise. In 1985 the Tattoo moved from Greenham Common to RAF Fairford. This was a fully functioning US airbase, now primarily on stand-by use, and RIAT has mostly remained there ever since. From 1996 the title of the event was elevated to the Royal International Air Tattoo (RIAT).

In the very early days, accommodation was rudimentary and most participants slept on site on camp beds, or whatever was available. In 1994 the refurbished Avro Shackleton 'Pelican 16' took off from its base in South Africa to fly to the Air Tattoo. Over the Sahara Desert it suffered engine failure. Incredibly, the Shackleton made a soft belly landing and all 19 occupants stepped out into the desert. Another well publicised event was the collision between two Mig 29 aircraft displaying in front of the crowd.

Paul Bowen died in 2004 after a six-month battle against cancer. At RIAT that year, an incredible 535 aircraft took part, which is a record that still stands today for any airshow. These days, selected countries have to be formally approved by the Ministry. Tentative invitations go out at squadron level initially, then to the Air Force chiefs, then finally a formal invitation is submitted at Defence Attaché level. The renown of RIAT is now such that countries vie to participate, enabling the informal exchange of information and practices between all levels.

Thank you to Tim Prince for an excellent evening entertainment.

Future Talks

By Richard Macauley

It is deeply disappointing to have to announce that our scheduled speaker for June 2023 has had to cancel for the second time.

Col Rich Graham USAF F4 Phantom and SR-71 Pilot was going to speak to us about his time flying the Blackbird but due to his wife's long-term health condition, he is unable to travel to the UK this summer as he needs to be at home and support his wife. We wish her well for the future and to get well soon.

I have heard Rich speak on this amazing aircraft a few times in the past and despite the disappointment of not being able to hear him personally address the Society, there are opportunities to hear him on YouTube. Copy this address into your browser to see Rich talking about his career.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=CeBu6mRDaro

If watching that edition gives you the desire to see more Blackbird stories, type the following into the YouTube search facility to hear another very entertaining pilot - *Brian Shul on piloting the SR-71*

There are other numerous videos about this aircraft from the men who piloted them. Just typing SR-71 brings a whole host of videos to see.

Despite our disappointment, we will find an equally interesting speaker to

entertain us in July. In the meantime, these are the speakers we have booked for May and June.

**Nicci Pugh - HMHS Uganda
in the Falklands War**
27 April 2023 at 19:30

**Tim Brandt - The RAF
Germany Harrier Force**
25 May 2023 at 19:30

See www.fleetairarmfriends.org.uk/talks/ for updates

SoFFAAM Saturday Series Talks

We conducted our first experimental Saturday Talk on March 13th and were delighted to hear Commodore Neill Thomas describing his time flying the F4K Phantom with 892 Naval Air Squadron.

We will have another Saturday Talk in May at the Museum though to keep things simple there is no Zoom offering.

**Capt. William 'Steffi' R. DeGraff -
U.S. Marine Corps Exchange Pilot
with 847 Naval Air Squadron**
13 May 2023 at 11:00

We also intend to have some more Saturday Talks in the Autumn. Watch this space and also our notification emails to members. These will also be on our website at the address above.



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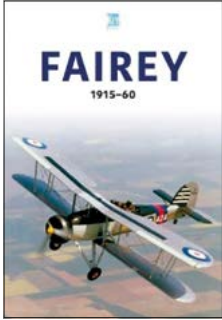


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Fairey 1915 - 60

Originally published as "Fairey Company Profile" edited by Martyn Chorlton. This review is by Malcolm Smith



It takes a book of this nature to remind us of the sheer variety of the Fairey Company's output.

Founded by Charles Richard Fairey,

who showed an early interest in model aircraft. In 1911, he joined an aircraft company at Eastchurch on the Isle of Sheppey and subsequently joined Short Brothers. He applied unsuccessfully to join the Royal Naval Air Service before forming the Fairey Aviation Company in 1915. He quickly received a subcontract from Shorts to build their Type 827 aircraft and established a factory at Hayes, soon receiving additional subcontract orders for other naval aircraft. The company designed their own aircraft, including the Campania.

The end of WW1 saw a rapid run-down in military orders, but Fairey survived on orders for the successful Fairey III series and the diminutive Flycatcher. In 1930, Fairey acquired a site for flight testing at Harmondsworth,

a site that ultimately grew to become Heathrow airport. In 1935, Fairey received the first production order for the Swordfish and also produced the Battle for the RAF. By then, the company had expanded enormously. Wartime designs included the Fulmar, Firefly, Albacore and Barracuda.

The company exited the war with a healthy order book for Fireflies and, later, the Gannet, but made an ultimately fatal entry into rotary-wing aircraft. This led to the amazing Rotodyne, which sadly was a commercial failure. In the amalgamation of the aircraft industry of the 60s, Fairey's aviation business was merged with Westland.

There is a well-illustrated introduction to the Fairey Company in this volume, but it mainly consists of comprehensive descriptions of every Fairey design. As well as the well-known naval aircraft, it provides fascinating insights into little-known variants, such as the huge Kennedy Giant and the Fairey Fox, used in large numbers by the Belgian Air Force. Succinct and informative, it should be on every enthusiast's bookshelf.

Fairey 1915 - 60. ISBN 978 1 80282 377 6. Published by Key Publishing

Podcasts

Some suggestions by Richard Macauley

The concept of 'podcasts' has been around for several years but I suspect like many, I never bothered with them... but then came Covid.

Fundamentally, a podcast is something that can be listened to (some have videos) on any computing device, be it your phone, tablet, laptop or desktop computer. Think of it as just like listening to a documentary on the radio or an audiobook. The beauty of listening on your phone means you are mobile so connected with headphones, 'cutting the grass' has now become a pleasure.

There are podcasts available to suit any genre one can think of. Therefore Aviation and Military History stories must be out there?

As we commemorated the 40th Anniversary of the Falklands War last year, the first I would recommend is the 'Battleground' series on this conflict by Saul David and Patrick Bishop. Both are renowned military historians while Patrick is also a former war correspondent who was attached to 3 Commando Brigade during the Falklands War.

These episodes cover the conflict chronologically with guest interviews that include Lord Luce, Major General Jeremy Thompson, Rear Admiral Jeremy Larken, Lieutenant General Sir Hew Pike, two SBS operators, Bob Headland of the

British Antarctic Survey, Colonel Euan Southby-Tailyour, and many more.

All the interviews are given context by Saul and Patrick in a very professional, easy to listen to but with intense detailed insights that make for very compelling listening. I especially liked Euan Southby-Tailyour's story which many will be familiar with and therefore fascinating to hear his recollections from the man himself.

You will see many other podcast episodes about the current Ukraine conflict which are equally worth listening too, but scroll to the bottom of the page to see the Falklands stories with 16 plus episodes.

Go to their website here;

<https://shows.acast.com/battleground/episodes>

One can use Apps on your devices such as Spotify or Apple Podcasts and many others but quite simply, use the address given to listen via the website.

I will make further suggestions in the next edition of Jabberwock but as a taster, go to The Fighter Pilot Podcast with over 154 editions. Run by ex US Navy and USAF presenters, but get past the 'razzmatazz' and you can listen to some fascinating aviation stories.

<https://www.fighterpilotpodcast.com/episodes/>

Visit to Weston Helicopter Museum Thursday 1 June 2023

SoFFAAM Member and one guest allowed
By Rosanne Crowther



A fine line up of some airframes that you will enjoy on this visit. © The Weston Helicopter Museum

The Helicopter Museum in Weston-super-Mare is the largest dedicated Rotorcraft Collection in the world.

With over 80 helicopters displayed inside the museum's iconic hangar! Favourites include two of the Queen's Royal Flight helicopters, the world speed record holder G-LYNX (400 km per hour!), the Vietnam Veteran Huey and the Mil Mi-24 Hind Russian Gun Ship. Explore the old airfield's restored Pilots Block where you will find the 'Weston Aviation Exhibition' telling the story of Weston-super-Mare's famous aviation past. Outside on the old taxiway visitors

will be wowed by the 30 foot 'Bristol Bloodhound' Missile - the rockets of which were made just down the road in Banwell shortly after WW2.

Please arrive at the Fleet Air Arm Museum Car Park for 09:00. You will be allowed to leave your car at the FAA Museum for the duration of our visit. The coach will depart the FAA Museum at 09:30 prompt, in order to arrive in time for the tour which commences at 11:00.

For further information on the Helicopter Museum please view their website at www.helimum.com

Weston-super-Mare Helicopter Museum Programme for the day

10:30am to 11:00am – Arrival and free time to enjoy a cup of coffee/tea and biscuits and an introduction talk.

11:00 am to 12:30 pm - Guided Tour.

12:30 to 13:30pm – Lunch is provided. Cottage pie and vegetables, followed by Apple pie and custard. Tea or coffee.

PLEASE advise me if you have any special dietary requests.

After the guided tour and lunch you will have approximately 1hr 15mins time to yourself. The coach will depart from Weston-super-Mare at 15:00 with the anticipated arrival time at Yeovilton of 16:15. Please complete and return the application form, together with cheque for £40.00 (each) made payable to SoFFAAM, to reach me no later than **Saturday 20th May**. Tickets will be allocated on a first come first served basis. I will notify you immediately if for any reason the visit is postponed OR if you have not been allocated a seat. Please note that NO REFUNDS for non-attendance can be given.

Post this form to **Rosanne Crowther, SoFFAAM Visits Co-Ordinator, St David's, 5 Church Close, Martock, Somerset, TA12 6DS**. To arrive no later than **Saturday 20th May 2023** and include your cheque for £40.00 per person payable to SoFFAAM.

Name	Address	Tel No.	Membership No.	Paid

If you have any questions, please contact Rosanne Crowther

Tel: 01935 822143 **Mobile:** 07599 944448

Email: rosannecrowther678@btinternet.com

This form is available to download from the SoFFAAM website home page if you do not wish to deface this copy of Jabberwock

www.fleetairarmfriends.org.uk

Membership Update

By David Merrett

Hello, I have recently taken over the role of SoFFAAM Membership Secretary from Simon Websper, many thanks to him for all the help and support he has given me during the handover phase.

I recently visited the Falkland Islands, albeit too briefly, and thought that members might like to see pictures of the commemorative memorial and relief (replica at FAAM) that I was so fortunate to see. I was assured that the weather was not normally so placid.

A big **WELCOME** to the new members who have joined us since the last journal issue:

- | | | |
|------|--------------------------|----------------|
| 3174 | Mr C Bryce | Middlesex |
| 3813 | Mr J Barrett | USA |
| 3814 | Mr D Baker | Gilwern |
| 3815 | Mr S Bailey | Somerset |
| 3816 | Mr K Burge | Somerset |
| 3817 | Mr W Curry | Somerset |
| 3818 | Mr A Roberts | Bristol |
| 3819 | Mr P Hurt | Somerset |
| 3820 | Mr A R Stansfield | Dorset |
| 3821 | Mr A Penny | Somerset |
| 3822 | Mr A N Watton | Co Londonderry |

Total members as of 31/03/23: **917**

Members who have made a Gift Aid declaration: **683***

*Opting to Gift Aid allows us to claim an extra 25% of your subscription from HMRC



The 1982 Liberation Memorial. © D Merrett



Relief depicting famous moments of the war. © D Merrett

Please let us have your email address to save us postage charges on other communications. It now costs us 75 pence per letter sent.

“Going green” and receiving a PDF Jabberwock via your e-mail saves us around £9 per member, per annum. Thank you to those who switched recently! Much appreciated.

Visit us at

www.fleetairarmfriends.org.uk

All membership queries to:
soffaam.mem@gmail.com

Membership Application

I hereby apply for membership of SoFFAAM (the Society) and will pay via:

- Bank Standing Order
- BACS transfer, bank details on standing order form, payment ref. "(your surname) MEMBS"
- PayPal using soffaam.joinup@gmail.com
- Cheque, made payable to SoFFAAM

Individual Adult Membership (age 16+) **at £14.00**

Individual Adult International (age 16+) **at £19.00**

Junior Membership (age 5-15) **at £9.00**
(must be accompanied by an adult)

Family Membership (2 Adults + up to 3 dependants) **at £37.00** ..

Life Membership UK (single payment) **at £125.00**

Life Membership International (single payment) **at £175.00**

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Please complete and return this form to the Membership Secretary:

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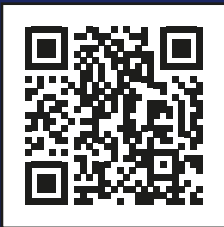
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Naval Air Perspectives

By Jim Humberstone

A unique glimpse into Britain's naval aviation heritage through Jim's individual style of illustrations and descriptive texts. He has been a long-standing member of the Society of Friends of the Fleet Air Arm Museum and contributed many articles to *Jabberwock*. So members will not be a stranger to Jim's unique style and talent.



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You can also contact Richard Macauley by ringing **07768 562976** or email soffaam@btinternet.com to order a copy direct.

