



AIR PILOT



INSIDE

**THE MASTER'S TOUR: NORTH AMERICA
CENTENARIAN: DUNCAN SIMPSON
COBHAM'S AUSTRALIA FLIGHT**





THE HONOURABLE COMPANY OF AIR PILOTS incorporating Air Navigators

PATRON:

His Majesty The King

MASTER:

Elizabeth Walkinshaw

CLERK:

Paul J Tacon BA FCIS

Incorporated by Royal Charter.

A Livery Company of the City of London.

PUBLISHED BY:

The Honourable Company of Air Pilots,
Air Pilots House, 52A Borough High Street,
London SE1 1XN

EMAIL: office@airpilots.org

www.airpilots.org

EDITOR:

Allan Winn BE(Mech) FRAeS EMAIL: editor@airpilots.org

DEPUTY EDITOR:

Chris Long FRAeS EMAIL: deputyeditor@airpilots.org

EDITORIAL CONTRIBUTIONS:

THE FINAL COPY DEADLINE FOR THE DECEMBER 2026 ISSUE
IS MONDAY 2nd NOVEMBER 2026

FUNCTION PHOTOGRAPHY:

Gerald Sharp Photography

View images and order prints on-line

020 8599 5070 / info@sharpphoto.co.uk

www.sharpphoto.co.uk

PRINTED BY:

Printovation Ltd 01494 478870

Except where specifically stated, none of the material in this issue is
to be taken as expressing the opinion of the Court of the Company.



Access the Company's
website via this QR code,
or follow us on
X, @AirPilotsCo



DIARY



Applications for Visits and Events

Details and application forms for Company events
and visits are now available only online – either on
the website or via links in the electronic newsletter
and events bulletins.

OCTOBER 2026

2 nd	Company visit, Red Arrows	RAF Coningsby
11 th	APFC Peter Davis Lunch	White Waltham
14 th	GP&F	APH
18 th	End of Season lunch	White Waltham
22 nd	Trophies & Awards Banquet	Guildhall

NOVEMBER 2026

7 th	APFC AGM	White Waltham
19 th	GP&F	APH
19 th	Court	Cutlers' Hall
24 th	APBF	APH
26 th	Scholarships presentation	RAF Club

DECEMBER 2026

9 th	APT/AST	APH
16 th	Carol service	St Michael's Cornhill
16 th	Carol supper	The Factory House

Cover photos: DHC.1 Chipmunk WP903 "The Royal
Chipmunk" (Oliver Stevenson); Alan Cobham prepares
for his 1926 flight to Australia (via Vic Flintham)

Guidelines for submissions to Air Pilot

Please submit contributions as follows:

- Text in word document, including your name below
the title of the piece;
- Photos as separate attachments, not embedded in
emails;
- All images to be sent as jpeg files with a file size of
at least 2MB;
- Attachments totalling more than 15MB to be sent
via WeTransfer only.



A MESSAGE FROM YOUR EDITOR...



Not for the first time, the UK air traffic control system run by NATS suffered a “system issue” lasting several hours on 8th September, leading to cancellations and delays to thousands of flights affecting tens of thousands of passengers across

two days. NATS’ preliminary report says that the cause was apparently a defect in the software of the National Airspace System (NAS), which led it to limit air traffic movements while it restarted the system and reloaded flight data, causing airports to close to landings and take-offs, and airlines to cancel flights. Although the issue was resolved in hours, the knock-on effects of aircraft and crews being out of position lasted well into the following day. It has since had yet another, different, failure.

As might be expected in any critical piece of infrastructure in aviation, there is a back-up system in place at NATS, but in this case whatever the issue was does not seem to have been one which could be countered by switching to that back-up, meaning that in effect the NATS system could be vulnerable to a single-point failure. This is what happened – apparently in a different part of the overall system – in August 2023, when the relevant back-up system reacted to an issue in exactly the same way as had the primary system (in that case, the submission of a flightplan with two different waypoints some 2,000 miles apart sharing a common name). For that particular subsystem, the back-up software was hosted on separate hardware, with separate power supply and data feed, and it must be assumed that the same would apply in the most recent case.

According to the UK *Sunday Times*, the NAS, which is NATS’ core flight data processing system dates back to the 1970s, and its replacement has been delayed several times in the last 30 years, although other parts of the overall system have been replaced or upgraded in recent years. If that is the case, then the replacement of the NAS with a more modern system must be given much greater priority than the *Sunday Times*’ alleged timescale of the 2030s. In the meantime, however, it would seem prudent to address the functionality of the existing software to ensure that the back-up system does not blindly mimic the reactions of the primary system to an issue, but flags the anomaly for independent assessment while maintaining as seamlessly as possible the service on which the aviation sector is critically reliant.

Allan Winn - Editor

IN THIS ISSUE...

NEWS

- 4 Youth Gliding
- 4 Lady Mayor's Ride-Out
- 5 APFC Update
- 6 Gazette



P5

REPORTS

- 7 Master's Message
- 9 Regional reports:
 - 9 Hong Kong
 - 10 North America
 - 11 Australia
- 12 Young Air Pilots
- 13 From the Desk of the DAA

FEATURES

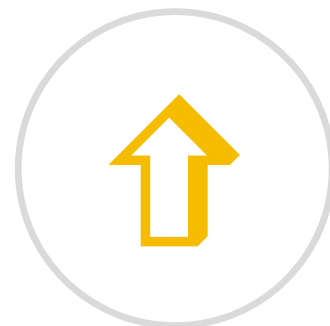


P18

- 15 Great Centenarians: Duncan Simpson
- 18 The Master's Tour – North America
- 26 Industry profile: CHIRP
- 28 Cobham's 1926 flight to Australia
- 30 Book reviews
 - 30 *Chipmunk at 80*
 - 30 *Waterbird*
 - 31 *Teddy*
- 32 Into the Overshoot



NEWS ROUNDUP



AIR PILOTS YOUTH GLIDING SCHEME 2026

By Liveryman Sue Hawkins

The APYGS is now in its 22nd year. The scheme was set up to give young people, initially from inner London schools, the experience of flight in a glider. While sponsorship comes mostly from the Honourable Company of Air Pilots, this year two school groups were given the opportunity by the Merchant Taylors' Company.



Getting to grips with gliding at Lasham (John Denyer)

This year, as in previous years, the London Gliding Club at Dunstable, Cambridge Gliding Club, Booker at High Wycombe and Cotswold Gliding Club all hosted our groups.

Two more clubs, Lasham Gliding Club and Portsmouth Naval Gliding Club, also welcomed two schools from their local area in Hampshire.

Instructors and volunteers from the clubs give up their time on the day, helping the students to understand safety aspects and how to pre-flight a glider before they take to the air. The professionalism and warmth shown help to allay any fears and apprehension, as enthusiasm and confidence build throughout the day.

Feedback from the groups has been overwhelmingly positive. Some of the students rarely leave their local area in London, and for many this is their first experience of flight. "Magnificent" and "just incredible" were a couple of the expressions used to describe the day. Teachers have let us know how the days have helped students to broaden their horizons and aspirations when considering their future path.

Despite the excellent weather we have had this summer, low cloud, wind and extreme heat forced us to reschedule some groups. At the time of writing, 258 young people had flown this year, our largest annual number to date, with another couple of groups hoping to fly in September. As always, the office staff at the clubs have been very helpful in rebooking groups at short notice.

Thanks must go to the Master and other members of the Company who attend the gliding days to help and share their experience with the students. A few of our visitors flew to the airfields, including PM John Towell in his De Havilland Tiger Moth, an aircraft of great interest to the students. Our Company visitors have also encouraged students to apply for our scholarships and to consider a career in aviation, both commercial and military, including emerging opportunities in drone technology.

Assistant Mark Grigg has put together the visitors' programme this year. We have a small group of volunteers who attend regularly, but we would be happy to welcome more, so please get in touch if you are interested.

Overall, it has been another successful year for Youth Gliding, with five new schools joining the scheme and two new locations added. Since the scheme began, more than 2,500 flights have taken place, which leaves us well placed to achieve 3,000 by our Centenary Year.

Liveryman Dacre Watson adds: The Air Pilots Flying Club (APFC) was able to fund six Gliding Scholarships for 2026, of which four were completed with Cotswold Gliding Club at Aston Down airfield in Gloucestershire between the 3rd and 7th of August.

Liverymen Tricia Nelmes and Dacre Watson were able to attend the course on the 7th in order to present the successful candidates with their Gliding Certificates. □

LADY MAYOR'S RIDE OUT

By PM Jonathan Legat

Flying can be so frustrating... Isn't it typical: you've planned your day, booked the aeroplane and the weather is unsuitable. What do you do? Drink coffee and look at the skies listening to old 'war stories' from the others in the club - but thankfully, there is always another day when the sun shines.

Motorcycling, it would seem, is no different: The Lady Mayor's Ride Out was scheduled for Thursday 11th June. I had made my plans, got the bike ready and then the ride was postponed due to the forecast: torrential rain similar to the tropical rainstorms I was so familiar with in the Far East. The ride was, wisely, postponed until Friday 17th July,

which by contrast was dry, sunny and hot, very, very hot. Traditionally, each year, the Mayor's Ride is around the square mile on horseback with outriders on motorcycles: this year the Ride Out embodied the Lady Mayor's theme of 'Unsquaring the Square Mile'—bringing a modern perspective to one of the City's ceremonial traditions. With 149 bikes registered, including representation from over 30 Livery Companies, there was insufficient room



Leader of the pack: Jonathan Legat wears the Company crest

to assemble at Mansion House, as originally planned: instead, much to the bemusement of the tourists, we took over St Paul's Yard. PM Jonathan Legat wore a sleeveless t-shirt over his leathers emblazoned with the Air Pilots crest (many thanks to Assistant Seb Pooley for arranging this to be printed by Pooleys Flight Equipment). Our own Beadle, Ted, expertly called us to order and the Lady Mayor gave her speech followed by a blessing from one of the Cathedral's clergy. After the obligatory group photos on the steps of St Paul's, we set off on the 25-mile ride led by the Lady Mayor, resplendent in her leathers, riding pillion with Emma Franklin, Chief Editor of *Motorcycle News*, while her Mayoral Consort and husband, Gary, was pillion on

another bike, all under the watchful eyes of the City of London Police who provided a motorcycle escort.

AIR PILOTS MAKE THEIR MARK

It took a while to traverse the square mile, initially along Cannon Street and past the Tower before leaving London on the A13, where traffic flowed smoothly into the Essex countryside. The destination was Cherry Orchard Farm, where we enjoyed a celebratory BBQ reception including copious quantities of cold alcohol-free beer. On arrival,

Jonathan persuaded the Lady Mayor, who by now had changed into a much more appropriate summer dress, to put on another Air Pilots t-shirt for a photo, taken by Gary. Reflecting on the success of the day, Lady Mayor Dame Susan Langley said: "Swapping the traditional ride out on horseback for a pack of motorcyclists was a bold decision and I'm thrilled we pulled it off in style. Thank you to the team at The Lord Mayor's Appeal for turning our idea into a spectacular reality, and to Triumph Motorcycles who added that much-needed *va va voom* to the day. Events like this show just how un-square the Square Mile really is!" All in all, it was a very enjoyable day out but, as ever, weather permitting, I'd rather be flying...!



The Lady Mayor is taken for a ride (pics PauliinaRootsPhotography)

AIR PILOTS FLYING CLUB UPDATE

By Liveryman Sue Hawkins

Now in its 40th year, the Air Pilots Flying Club is still going strong, with more than 200 members. The winter season of 2025/26 saw a continuation of the monthly Zoom talks, which began during the Covid-19 lockdown. Taking place on the second Tuesday of each month from November to March, they regularly attract around 50 members, who enjoy a wide range of aviation-related tales.

The programme for this winter is being finalised but will include talks on the 80th anniversary of the De Havilland Chipmunk, the history of the Westland Lysander, and our first female speaker, PM Dorothy Saul-Pooley, with stories of the first ladies to be awarded Livery of our Company. Details will be published in the Company calendar and are open to all members of the Honourable Company.

The flying season always opens with two lunches at our spiritual home, White Waltham airfield. Taking place over two Sundays in April, these gatherings give us the chance to catch up with old friends. Unfortunately, our first three



The flightline at Barton Farm

fly-ins were affected by the weather.

High winds were a factor for the Henstridge fly-in. Although the wind there was straight down the runway, crosswinds at departure airfields were beyond the limits of many aircraft. At Tibenham, the weather to the east of London was good, but low cloud lurked to the west, keeping our pilots grounded. Old Warden was rescheduled due to extreme heat, and a second day with slightly lower temperatures had similar implications for

aircraft performance. Finally, at the beginning of August, a dozen aircraft made it to our annual fly-in at Popham, supporting an airfield under threat of closure.

A HIGH, HIGHLIGHT

The highlight of the year was our visit to Barton Farm. Sixteen aircraft, with 32 people aboard, flew into this privately owned airstrip, which boasts the highest airfield elevation in the UK at 1,460ft. Hosts Melissa and Gilbert Greenhall made us most welcome, transporting us all to lunch at The Exmoor Forest Inn in Simonsbath. It was a memorable outing to a unique airfield situated on top of a ridge in Exmoor.

A WhatsApp group has now been set up for members to exchange messages and make plans for *ad hoc* flights to airfields around the UK. At the time of writing, we are hoping for good weather for what has become our end-of-season event, hosted by our President, Dacre Watson, and the team at Oaksey Park.

The annual summer barbecue took place at White Waltham airfield this August, with almost 50 members attending. Good weather and good food were the order of the day. Our end-of-season lunches will take place during October.

The membership fees of £20 annually for flying members and £10 for associates, together with individual donations, have helped us to sponsor six of the Honourable Company's Gliding Scholarships in the Flying Club's name this year. Enabling young people to begin their journey in aviation is a tradition of which our members can be rightly proud. Further information and an application form to join the Flying Club can be found on the Company website. □

MISSING CREDIT

We inadvertently failed to credit Freeman Stuart Scott for his excellent photo "A traffic jam of Typhoons awaiting fuel" on p5 of the August 2026 issue. Our apologies. □

GAZETTE

APPROVED BY THE COURT 17 SEPTEMBER 2026

ADMISSIONS

As Upper Freeman

Simon Michael HICKEY

Laura MASON (NA)

Christopher Thomas
MEGAW (AUS)

Jean-Claude PATCHELL
(NA)

Paul John SORRELL

Mitchell SPICER

Alexander TORRES (OS)

Desiree WINELAND (NA)

As Freeman

Jeffrey Phillip CONTRERAS

Michael John HATZIPAVLIS
(AUS)

Clive Edwin PONSFORD

Michael SPIERS

As Associate

Wassim AKMIK (HK)

Daniel Lee BOX

Freddie Lloyd BURROWES

Craig CONLAN

Chrisna DESAI

Samuel Nicholas HOLLAS

Karen LOCATELLI

Harrison Mark PLATH
(AUS)

Alexavia Indiana May TYNE
Arnav WATTS (AUS)

Alexander WILSON (AUS)

ACKNOWLEDGED BY THE COURT 17 September 2026

REINSTATEMENT

As Upper Freeman

Owen Phillip ZUPP (AUS)

Sebastian Alejandro
MENDEZ (HK)

REGRADE

As Liveryman

Ian MILLS

Robert EDWARDS (NZ)

As Freeman

Alexander HOROWITZ

Andy Daniel LIMBAYA

RESIGNATIONS

David ALEXANDER

Robin BOOTH

Sam CHURCHWARD

David COE

James EASTCOTT

Charlie GAZZARD

Andrew GRIFFITHS

Joe HADLEY

David HART

Gary JACKSON

Callum JOHNSON

Dale JOSEPH (HK)

Ron KARO (OS)

Christopher MANN

Luke MCCONNELL

Simon McGLYNN (HK)

Roger MILNE

Benjamin PILGRIM

Etienne POTGIETER (HK)

Jamie ROWLANDS (HK)

Christopher REYNOLDS

Stjon SIMPSON (HK)

Alan STEWART

Daniel TUCKWELL

Stephanie VICIC

Christopher WILLIS

Marcus WOHLRAB

Anthony YARDLEY-JONES

DECEASED

Terry BUCKLAND

Ian FOGARTY (HK)

Martin HARRIS (HK)

Alan LONGSTAFFE

Anthony Paul MOTHEW

Anthony RIDLEY



Applicants for Membership of the Company can now complete an Application Form online, using this QR code.



MASTER'S MESSAGE

By the Master, Elizabeth Walkinshaw

I have now caught up to my Garden party held at Denham Aerodrome by kind invitation of Upper Freeman, Quentin Smith. It was the most wonderful day, and, it has already been kindly covered in the last edition

by PM Chris Hodgkinson. However, I would like to thank Quentin, his family, staff, David Curgenvin and all the 99 members and guests who attended. Also, a thanks to my two Charities for the year, The HELP Appeal and Hearing Dogs, for taking the time to spend time with us there. A thank you also to the organisers who kindly organised the flypast for us – it was greatly appreciated. I was determined not to miss the Garden Party but had little voice (once again due to a chest infection!) to talk to everyone there. Anyway, I am now back to full strength and have so much to tell you.

My next event was the Scientific Instrument Makers Banquet at Painter-Stainers Hall. Our Beadle, Ted Prior, was officiating and the Master, Jane Fishwick, and I discovered she was also struggling with her voice and had also been ill - the hazards of being a Master, I guess. However I had a fun evening with Ted using us to demonstrate the Loving Cup procedure.

A BUSY WEEK

The following week was certainly very busy! The Master Gardener and the Master of The Charterhouse had invited all the Masters to their Livery Garden Party held at The Charterhouse. It has the most beautiful garden where we enjoyed drinks and great conversation, and we were given lovely corsages which were made on the spot. Well worth a visit if you get the chance.

I then had to hotfoot it to the Candlewick Ward Club's civic dinner held at Wax Chandlers' Hall but it was not far away, and I was kindly offered a lift which made it even easier. This hall was chosen so we were able to enjoy the many beeswax candles ablaze on the chandeliers and, of course, the connection with Candlewick. It was a lovely evening where we also enjoyed the music of Suzi Digby's ORA singers.

I then had a quick nip back home for the Brize Norton Annual Formal Review by kind invitation of the Station Commander, Gp Capt Louise Henton. PM Rick Peacock Edwards and I had a chance to chat to both 101 Squadron and 10 Squadron representatives, including OC

101 Sqn Wg Cdr Graham Prager who was getting ready for the Squadron to move elsewhere while the runway is being resurfaced. The evening culminated in a speech from the Station OC, a flypast and great music from the band. It was back into London, the next day, for an extremely busy day! Firstly, the Sheriff's election at Guildhall. - my first time processing at this event. Two new Sheriffs were elected, Alderman the Hon Tim Levene and Alderman Prem Goyal MBE.



The gardens at Charterhouse

Lunch at Stationers Hall had fewer members than normal representing our Company, which was disappointing. However, we still managed to make plenty of noise with 'Chocks Away' when we were asked to identify ourselves as is done with all the Companies present.

Then I went swiftly back to Guildhall for the Armed Forces Flag-Raising Ceremony. Luckily, this was moved indoors to the Main Hall as the weather was so hot, so we congregated inside to watch most of the proceedings, listening to the military band but, of course, the actual flag-raising was carried out in the Courtyard. Afternoon tea was served afterwards and was much appreciated by members of the parade and band who tucked in and enjoyed it.

It was straight from there to the Submarine Service 125 years Celebration at Mansion House, by kind permission of the Lady Mayor. This evening celebrated 125 years of the Submarine service, from its origins to its vital role in the Royal Navy today. The programme included short presentations on its history and evolution, alongside a reception with music from the Royal Marines band, refreshments and a fabulous birthday cake. It was fascinating to hear about the Submarine Service and chat to the serving submariners there.



The Submarine Service's 125th Anniversary birthday cake

T & A COMMITTEE

The next day's meeting of the T&A Committee saw me having the unique position of wearing two hats, *Ex Officio* as Master and as a Committee member. This meeting is always a delight to attend, with all the worthy candidates that have been presented, debating which should receive the Awards and Trophies and the Committee making the final decision on all. We are all given the opportunity to read about the many candidates before the day, so we are up to speed on the potential awardees. However, often there will be information and knowledge that comes out on the day that can make a difference to decisions.

From there it was straight back to the RAF Club to shower and change into my evening gown to attend the Honourable Company of Master Mariners' Centenary Dinner at the Guildhall. Security was tight on the night, and I was delighted to be greeted by HRH the Duke of Edinburgh, Master, at the head of the receiving line. He and his sister, the Princess Royal, Past Master, entertained us with great speeches including a bit of family rivalry and fun coming through between them. Cdre Duncan Lamb, Deputy Master, also gave a great speech. This was a truly wonderful evening.

That week, I also attended the memorial for Quentin Smith's father Mike at HQ Denham. Mike Smith had been my examiner in 1986 and had awarded me my PPL(H) in the Bell Jet Ranger. So many fond memories were told by family and friends alike. He was an amazing pilot, and it was a fitting memorial to him.

The following week came with an invitation from 601 Sqn RAuxAF OC AVM Malcolm Brecht to its annual reception at the RAF Museum at Hendon. I had a lovely evening chatting to Malcolm and many of the Squadron, especially our two members of the Squadron, Assistant Jo Salter and Liveryman Annalisa Russell Smith.

SCHOOLS GLIDING

I had a lovely return visit to the London Gliding Club, to spend the day with Swayne Park School, one of the schools which applied for our School Gliding Days. It is

always a delight to attend these and see the pupils have their first taster of flying and thoroughly enjoy it.

I attended a couple of final GASCo meetings for the Board and Council and also a separate meeting to discuss what the Air Pilots could do to help the continuation of GA Flight Safety following GASCo's demise.

I was invited also to sit in, as Master, *ex officio* on the Air League Trustee and Council meeting and then on to the House of Lords to attend the Air League's Annual Reception, by kind invitation of Lord Davies of Gower. It was great to see many there including Tim Peake. I then had an away day at the Goodwood Festival of Speed with my son, Fergus, where his TWR Supercat was being shown and taking part in the Hillclimb - proud mum!

Next was the Helicopter Club of Great Britain's 60th Anniversary Dinner held at the Peninsula Hotel on Hyde Park, whose chairman, Liveryman Sir Michael Kadoorie, is a HCGB member. The setting is certainly different with so many automobile and aviation themes. It was a great pleasure to be at the same table as Honorary Liveryman HRH Prince Michael of Kent, HCGB Chairman David Monks, and PM Roger Gault. It was a great evening catching up with so many from the helicopter world I have known for years.



Annual Formal Review at RAF Brize Norton

Next came meetings of the GP&F and then the Court meeting where we held a minute's silence in PM Malcolm White's honour and I said a few words remembering his time in the Air Pilots. A sad loss to us all. A meeting of the APBF was also held. Please remind yourselves of the official objects of this Charity and think if you might know someone who could benefit from it.

Just before I left for my North American Tour, I attended PM Malcolm White's funeral and celebration of life, a beautiful service presided over by our Chaplain, The Venerable Ray Pentland. RAF Halton provided the bearer party, and an RAF Northolt musician played the Last Post and Reveille. Many Past Masters, Court Assistants and members attended to pay their respects to a great man. Our thoughts continue to be with Vanessa and all of Malcolm's family. □

REGIONAL REPORTS



Regional Report: Hong Kong

By Liveryman Pat Voigt, Chairman

Since our Immediate Past Chairman (IPC) Rob Jones' excellent article in June's edition, the traditional summer exodus for holidays, allied to the resultant heavy rosters, has impacted negatively upon the usual hectic social scene of the Region. However, I managed to hold my first General Committee Meeting, having been re-elected as Chairman on my return to the Region. This was followed by a very well attended 'Beer Call' at our old stomping ground of The Globe, an English-style pub providing traditional fare of pies and ale. This social event led to several pilots whose membership had fallen by the wayside over the past few years now rejoining the Region. Encouragingly we are also enjoying applications from new members - my thanks to Head of Membership Sam Jones for facilitating these.

Following requests from many of our members who rarely read the digital version of *Air Pilot*, I am pleased to report that hard copies of the magazine have returned to the Region. To save the previously prohibitive costs of individual postage from the Aviation Club to the membership, there are copies at all events for members

to collect. They are also available in Cathay Dispatch, AvMed Centre and the Fleet Offices. In our continued aim to project our Company to the wider Hong Kong, the Foreign Correspondents Club (FCC), located in Central (and occasionally visited in the past by our very own Honorary Editor Allan Winn) has kindly agreed to display *Air Pilot* on the FCC Members' magazine racks.



Air Pilot now educates the Foreign Correspondents in Hong Kong

BUSY COMMITTEE

Despite this somewhat fallow social period, Sir Michael Caine's observation "...that whilst the duck remains serene it furiously paddles below the surface" is so true

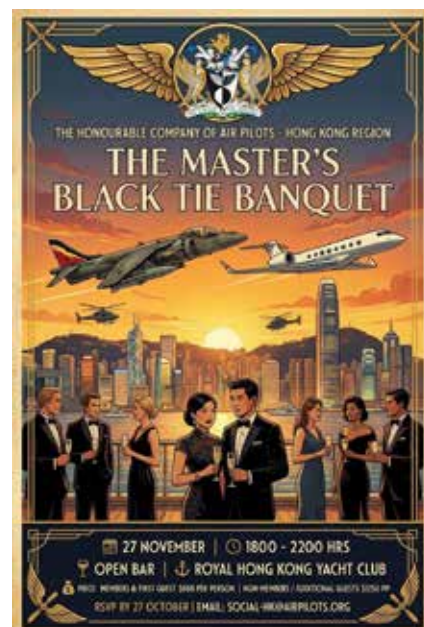
of several GC members. In his well-earned 'retirement' this includes our IPC, whose contacts for events and visits remain essential. Also, in addition to his usual financial oversight, annual fees invoices have been dispatched by the Honorary Treasurer, Chris Field, so hopefully all will have been paid by the time this issue is published...

My current focus is to ensure that Master Elizabeth Walkinshaw's visit to our Region has an appropriate balance of

visits and social events. I believe that it is vital for her to meet as many members as possible, so that she can return to 'Head Office' able to relay the solid state of our Region and, more importantly, the engagement of the membership. Our newly elected Head of the Social Team, Sam Quinn, has secured an outstanding finale to the Master's Regional Tour; as depicted in the 'Flyer' accompanying this article. We thoroughly look forward to welcoming Master Elizabeth Walkinshaw to the Hong Kong Region in November.

LIVERYMAN MARTIN HARRIS

I am sorry to announce that our Region has recently been devastated by the very sudden and premature passing of Capt Martin Harris, following an aggressive recurrence of cancer. Until our last AGM, Martin served the Hong Kong Region as Treasurer for six years during some of the hardest times that we have experienced. He was always available for General Committee (GC) Meetings even when back in Blighty and was a stalwart of the GC throughout his tenure; indeed he was still contributing his wise words a month or so ago. In recognition of his outstanding service, he was recently chosen to be the recipient of this year's Master's Trophy for the Hong Kong Region.



Hong Kong prepares to entertain The Master





Regional Report: North America

By Freeman Hal Adams, Chairman

The North American 2026 wildfire “season” is starting earlier and lasting longer than at any time since the beginning of wildfire statistical reporting. Operating, safely, an aircraft in North American airspace is challenging enough in high-use, high-density airspace such as the major metropolitan cities in Canada and the USA. Operating an aircraft safely in sparsely populated, remote areas, such as large parts of Canada and Alaska, is the inverse challenge. Both highly dense and remote flight operations bring unique challenges and require very different piloting skills. Normal weather operations are challenging enough, without the introduction of wildfires to complicate the air space environment.



Wildfires in North America, late August: orange flames = non-contained fires; red dots = hotspots (NASA/US Forest Service)

My exposure to remote operations was over a five-year period in mid-2000s, when I had a GNSS manufacturing facility in Anchorage, Alaska. On my frequent trips and during extended stays in Anchorage, I met many people with long-time “bush flying” operations and experience.

EXTENSIVE CHALLENGES

It is hard to visualize the extent of flying challenges in the North America bush, until you are immersed in the environment. “Normal” remote ops are often without air traffic radar or VHF voice and data radio contact coverage and require very enhanced pilot situational awareness, relying on VFR flying techniques in particular, as well as use of challenging HF comms and ADF Nav. Since the early 20th century there have been many vast improvements in aircraft flight-deck pilot aids, such as VHF, HF comms, radar, transponders, data link and, importantly, satellite-enabled comm/Nav. New flight aids, along with more sophisticated aircraft sensors and flight decks, are constantly appearing.

The current and evolving flight aids are amazing. However, what happens when the North America wildfires make low intensity air space, clear skies VFR flying suddenly very complicated? The intensity and wide range of forest fires in North America, and the rest of the world, compound the challenges for all type of flight operations. However, flying in the remote bush areas is challenging enough without

the added issues associated with forest fires. Remote air space awareness takes on a heightened meaning and danger for the remote air operations, whether private or commercial operations.

The remote air space, usually extremely clear of traffic issues, can during wildfires have serious visual reductions and a multitude of challenges. Not only is reduced visibility a major issue, the usual low-density air traffic is suddenly sharing airspace with a multitude of VFR, IFR and unmanned operations associated with the fire spotting, suppression and logistics efforts.

HIGH NUMBERS, LOW DENSITIES

While North America has remote air operations, as do many other areas of the world, the sheer area of North America is difficult to fully comprehend. As of 2025 it is generally believed that USA has the largest total fleet of civil registered aircraft, numbering about 46,200+, or 42% of civil aircraft in the world, including 23,575 jets and turboprops. Canada has the third-largest civil aircraft registered fleet, 4% of world totals, estimated at 5,000+ aircraft including about 1,290 jets and turboprops. The USA has about 0.005 aircraft/km² and Canada about 0.0006 aircraft/km².

In 2023, Canada had 25,007 licensed pilots, 2,150 operating licences held by 1,444 air carriers (40% Canadian and 60% foreign), 16,002 aircraft maintenance engineers, 859 approved maintenance organisations, 564 certified aerodromes and 1,460 non-certified aerodromes. FAA data indicate that in the USA in 2025 there were 887,519 total active pilots, 174,155 student pilots, 145,538 private pilots, 492,311 flight instructors and 100,704 remotely-operated vehicle pilots.

North America’s vast remoteness drives the demand for air “service” whether private or commercial. This statistical perspective to the North America region reflects the challenges of high-density and sparse-density operations. I suspect not many people in general, or “pilot people” in particular, think about or realise the magnitude of operating aircraft in North America.

Also, there are very many aviation organisations in North America, competing for members from existing and aspiring pilot populations and/or aviation associated entities. The North America region needs to grow in order to become more relevant to the aviation community, as well as to have a forum for impacting the aviation environment and, in particular, to keep funding our new scholarship programmes aimed at growing the pilot community and in turn, hopefully, the Company’s regional membership. □



Regional report: Australia

By Liveryman Adrian Young, Chairman

The Australian Region has continued to focus on strengthening its operating foundations while broadening engagement with members, working groups and the wider aviation community. A key development has been the introduction of MyCommittee, a shared platform that will support the Executive Committee, Combined Council and Young Air Pilots Australia. The system will help centralise documents, improve retention, strengthen governance and provide a more consistent way of managing Regional business.



The Region is monitoring the airspace implications of the new Western Sydney International airport (WSI)

Preparations are also well advanced for the 2026 Master's Visit, scheduled from 26th October to 12th November. The itinerary will include Perth, Adelaide, Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane and Canberra, providing members across the country with opportunities to meet the Master, showcase local activity and reinforce the connection between the Region and the wider Company. A particular focus this year will be the Canberra programme, including Remembrance Day commemorations and a dinner bringing together Australian award recipients and senior aviation leaders.

Our Technical and Air Safety portfolio remains active across areas of current industry relevance. Recent work has included support to the Instructors' Technical Group, engagement with the General Aviation Advisory Network and ongoing connection with the International Technical Forum, with the next forum scheduled for October. The team has also been monitoring major airspace and flight path changes introduced in July, including the redesign of Sydney Basin airspace to support Western Sydney International Airport and the transition of Ballina Byron Gateway Airport in northern New South Wales to controlled airspace.

We are continuing to build a dedicated Technical and Air Safety working group and are seeking members with experience across general aviation, recreational aviation, gliding, sport aviation, military aviation, airspace management, human factors and broader technical safety

disciplines. This work is intended to ensure that the Region can draw on a wide range of operational and technical experience when contributing to issues affecting the profession.

CAREERS AND EDUCATION

The Aviation Careers and Education Committee has continued its important work supporting the next generation of aviation professionals. Recent scholarship activity has included awards across ATPL, partial ATPL and Instrument Rating pathways, with future opportunities already being shaped through donated training support including GA Ready, UPRT, Pinstripe Coaching, HUET/ EBS and gliding scholarships. Members are encouraged to promote these opportunities through their networks so that the Region continues to reach strong and diverse scholarship candidates.

Young Air Pilots Australia also continues to provide an important connection point for emerging professionals. The Region has welcomed new committee members and thanked those who have stepped down after contributing over the past year.

The Australian Region will also be represented at PACDEFF later this year, with the Technical and Air Safety team preparing to contribute to the programme. A proposed paper on applied human factors leadership, contemporary human factors challenges and lessons from operational practice is being developed. This provides a valuable opportunity to position the Region in an important professional forum and to share practical insights that will support safer and more effective aviation operations.

We have also welcomed new members since May 2026 and recognised members who have reached significant long-service milestones. Both are important reminders of the breadth and continuity of experience within the Company. New members bring fresh perspectives and energy, while long-serving members demonstrate sustained commitment to professional standards, service and the aviation community.

Overall, the Region is focused on building capability, improving governance, supporting members and contributing meaningfully to aviation across Australia and beyond. The coming months will bring further opportunities through the Master's Visit, scholarship activity, technical safety engagement, young member initiatives and professional forums. Together, these activities reflect an active and outward-facing Region committed to strengthening the profession and supporting the wider objectives of the Honourable Company of Air Pilots. □





REPORT: YOUNG AIR PILOTS

By Associate Chris Barrott, Chairman

As we move into the northern autumn, it's enjoyable to reflect on what has been another busy Young Air Pilots summer. With an all-time-high YAP membership, the committee has enjoyed meeting so many new members at our events over the past six months. The pleasant weather has also provided some great opportunities: starting with our Spring Fly-In and BBQ at Sywell in April, outdoor cocktails in May, 'Longest Day' gliding in June, a visit to Cranwell in July and, finally, our Summer BBQ at the end of August.



Devolution: Young Air Pilots gather in Manchester

It's been really pleasing to catch up with so many members – new and old – and share in their success. We've heard good news from many recently: ranging from sponsored flying programme offers with Jet2 FlightPath and British Airways Speedbird, through to achieving first flying jobs, or career moves. The amount of success really demonstrates the range of experience, support and talent within the membership. Well done to everyone who has achieved so much this summer.

By the time you read this, we will have moved towards our autumn and winter calendar, focussing more on indoor events and socials as the weather shifts. Read through for what we've been up to, and what's coming up in the next few months.

The fourth FPAD was hosted at the University of West London at the end of July. Making the most of the on-site 737 simulator at FlightPad, attendees enjoyed a full day of activities, ranging from theory on CVs and written answers, through to interview and group exercise workshops. We really believe this preparation day is the best available, and is run at zero profit. With YAPs getting priority spaces and a discount, make sure to sign up for the next one on 12th November which will be hosted at the Stelios Foundation in South Kensington.

SOCIAL SCENE

To provide more opportunities for our Northern members, we hosted a social evening of darts at

FlightClub in Manchester. Demonstrating the desire for events far out of London, a group of YAPs enjoyed the opportunity to meet up closer to home, and the fun extended well into the evening. Thanks for all who joined us and look out for more in the future.

After three months without rain, it was typical that we would host our Summer BBQ on one of the first wet days of the summer! However, although limiting chances to fly in, the rainy day at White Waltham at the end of August didn't dampen spirits. We hosted nearly 40 YAPs and selected 'Old Air Pilots' for our afternoon BBQ which was the largest in many years. Guests also included a handful of this year's PPL scholars who had completed their licences, providing a first introduction for them to YAP and the wider Company. With the conversations extending into the late afternoon, the day was a great success, and finished the summer calendar on a high.

GETTING INVOLVED

Many new members often ask about what they can get involved with in the Company. Two good places to start are Promotions and Mentoring. The Promotions Team is also always looking for volunteers. The RAeS Careers Fair (4th Nov) and Pilot Careers Live (7th Nov) are great opportunities to get started with the team. Get in touch with the committee if you'd like to help out. Mentoring is also a membership benefit, both as mentor or mentee. If you'd like some support with your next step, or feel you have experience to offer, please do drop a line to mentoring@airpilots.org.



Soggy bottoms: unseasonal weather for the summer BBQ

Looking later into the year, we are planning the return of Zoom meetings and professional development seminars. These will start with a command development afternoon to be held in November. By the time you read this, a date will have been circulated for the Christmas social, which we hope to be a wonderful festive occasion for all members. Until then, as always, I hope to see you at one of our events soon, and hope you all enjoy a fantastic, fun and safe autumn of flying.

□



LITHIUM ALERT

From the desk of the DAA, PM Nick Goodwyn

In August on each of the four days of the Eastbourne Airshow, six times an hour, attendees may have seen the video of UK CAA Head of Flight Operations presenting a safety campaign messaging on new restrictions to the carriage of lithium batteries on commercial airliners titled 'Pack Right, Safe Flight'. Commercial airline passengers over the northern summer will, no doubt, have been made aware at check-in and during the onboard safety briefing on these restrictions and other risk mitigations should a lithium battery overheat or get crushed on board the aircraft.

On 21st August 2026 at least four people suffered burns after a laptop battery caught fire onboard an American Airlines Airbus A321 flight from Atlanta to Dallas-Fort Worth. At least one of the passengers required medical attention, but not hospitalisation, after the aircraft landed in Texas. The pilots reported to air traffic control (ATC) that smoke had been detected at the back of the cabin and cabin crew managed to put out the fire.

In January 2025, a power bank fire was found to be the cause of a fire that destroyed on the ground an Air Busan A321, from which all passengers and crew were evacuated. In 2025 alone, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) recorded 97 incidents involving lithium battery devices in the United States.

The increasing number of incidents prompted International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) to adopt new rules from March 2026 to limit the number of power banks allowed in the cabin to two per passenger. Some individual airlines, however, have implemented stricter limits: Southwest Airlines has limited the number to one per person, while others, especially in the Middle East and Asia, have fully banned their use onboard. According to the FAA, lithium battery fires on US flights have risen 388% since 2015. In the USA alone almost two new incidents a week are reported. The prime culprit is the power bank, the root of 43% of all reports. E-cigarettes were second worst with 20%, while laptops, phones and other devices represented around 12% of incidents.

MORE THAN EVER

Travellers are flying with more lithium battery-powered devices than ever before. An IATA passenger survey found that 83% carry a phone, 60% bring a laptop, and 44% travel with a power bank. While these items are generally safe when handled properly, improper packing or damage can pose serious risks.

The UK Civil Aviation Authority has issued a warning about summer flights being delayed by wrongly packed electrical gadgets with lithium batteries. It predicted that 30million passengers would leave the UK in July and August. With passengers carrying an average of four lithium-powered devices each, millions of rechargeable gadgets take to the skies every day, including more than four million over the UK on an average day and nearly 30million each week. Incorrectly packed lithium batteries are already and increasingly causing delays and cancellations due to bags having to be off-loaded and if a fire breaks out onboard, flights may have to be rerouted or evacuated.



Battery-induced fires are intense...



...and can lead to this (National Transportation Safety Board)

New regulations require that items such as power banks must not be placed in checked-in luggage stowed in the aircraft hold but be taken into the cabin as hand luggage, to enable swift action to be taken if they start to overheat, and these must never be recharged onboard the aircraft as this would increase the risk of a fire.

Already this summer there have been incidents which have caused flight diversions and presented safety risks of smoking checked baggage because of incorrectly packed lithium batteries. Worryingly, passenger awareness of the danger remains low. Over one third (36%) of travellers are unaware of the dangers of packing lithium batteries

in checked baggage, even though 92% fly with a mobile phone, 55% with a laptop and 49% with a power bank. This summer has seen a cross-industry drive to increase awareness. Many airlines are now adding announcements on board as part of safety briefings, contacting passengers before flights, and new signage is appearing in airports. CAA figures show that reports of overheating or malfunctioning passenger devices nearly doubled between 2024 and 2025. Globally, there are now two lithium battery incidents each week, with two occurring recently on UK-bound flights.

WHAT IS A LITHIUM BATTERY?

The family of lithium batteries is separated into lithium-metal and lithium-ion types. Lithium-metal batteries, which are usually non-rechargeable, have lithium metal or lithium compounds as anodes. These batteries are generally used to power devices such as watches, calculators and cameras. Rechargeable lithium-ion ("Li-ion") batteries, which include lithium-polymer types, are commonly used in consumer electronics such as mobile telephones and laptop computers.

Li-ion batteries are regulated by watt-hour (Wh) rating with which they have been required to be marked since 2009 (Li-metal) and 2011 (Li-ion). Batteries are often marked with just voltage (V) and ampere-hour (Ah) capacity: $Wh = Ah \times V$ or, if the battery is marked in milliampere-hours, $Wh = mAh / 1,000 \times V$.

Regulations state that a battery must be of a type which meets the requirements of each test in the UN Manual of Tests and Criteria, and Lithium metal batteries must have a maximum 2g of lithium content and Li-ion batteries a maximum 100Wh rating.

The conditions for the carriage and use of these electronic devices and spare batteries (including power banks) must be provided in the operations manual and/or other appropriate manuals by the operators to enable flight crew, cabin crew and other employees to carry out the functions for which they are responsible.

THERMAL RUNAWAY

One main risk in the carriage of lithium batteries is thermal runaway. Although previous battery technologies were not risk-free, lithium-based batteries have a larger electrochemical potential: therefore, if damaged, mishandled or poorly manufactured, they can suffer stability issues and suffer what is called a "thermal runaway". This phenomenon is well recognised now, and it can be mitigated provided that awareness and prevention actions are taken.

In case of internal degradation or damage, a battery cell rapidly releases its stored energy (potential and chemical)

through a very energetic venting reaction, which in turn can generate smoke, flammable gas, heat (up to 600°C and 1,500°C locally), fire, explosion, or a spray of flammable electrolyte. The amount of energy released is directly related to the electrochemical energy stored (state of charge) and the type of battery (chemical and design). All lithium-based batteries are capable of self-ignition and thermal runaway; once this process is initiated, it can easily propagate because it generates sufficient heat to induce adjacent batteries into the same thermal runaway state. Lithium batteries can be both a source of fire through self-ignition and thermal runaway, and a cause of fire by igniting surrounding flammable material.

Changes to rules regarding operator and passenger/crew provisions for the carriage of lithium cells/batteries and power banks became effective from 27th March 2026. ICAO published an addendum to the *Technical Instructions for the Safe Transport of Dangerous Goods by Air (Doc 9284)* which detailed important changes made to the provisions for the exceptions for dangerous goods of the operator and the provisions for dangerous goods carried by passengers and crew. These restrictions are aimed at reducing the likelihood and impact of thermal events involving lithium batteries and harmonising restrictions around the world.

SEVEN SAFETY RULES

There are seven essential rules everyone should follow when flying with lithium batteries:

- Pack light and only bring the devices and batteries you really need;
- Stay alert: if a device is hot, smoking, or damaged, tell the crew immediately;
- Check battery size: larger batteries (over 100Wh, such as those used in cameras, drones, or power tools) may need airline approval;
- Keep devices with you: always carry phones, laptops, cameras, vapes (if allowed) and other battery-powered items in your hand baggage, not in checked baggage;
- Gate check reminder: If your hand baggage is taken at the gate to go in the hold, remove all lithium batteries and devices first;
- Protect loose batteries: keep spare batteries and power banks in their original packaging or cover the terminals with tape to prevent short-circuits;
- Check with your airline: always confirm the airline's policies, as requirements may differ in compliance with local regulations.

<https://safetyfirst.airbus.com/lithium-batteries-safe-to-fly/>





DUNCAN SIMPSON OBE C ENG FRAES FIMECHE

23RD DECEMBER 1927 – 7TH DECEMBER 2017

By PM Chris Hodgkinson

Air Pilot's series of Centenary-focussed profiles of the individuals and aircraft which exemplify the Company's first century continues with the story of PM Duncan Simpson.

Duncan Menzies Souter Simpson was a slightly reluctant Master of the then-Guild: he felt he would be too old to be Master but with a little persuasion from two Past Masters he agreed to stand and was elected as the Junior Warden in his 70th year. Five years later, in 2002, he took office as Master.



From a (unauthorised!) sketch by Duncan of the building of the DH.106 Comet at Hatfield, 1948

Duncan Simpson's name might not be as well-known as some of the pioneering aviators of the early 20th century. Yet, for those within the aerospace industry, he represented a distinct breed of courage, technical acumen, and unwavering dedication: the test pilot.

Born in 1927 in Edinburgh and educated at Merchiston School, Duncan's fascination with flight was ignited early. His formative years were shaped by the shadow of World War II, a period of extraordinarily accelerated aircraft development. He excelled in mathematics and physics, demonstrating an early aptitude for the scientific principles that underpinned flight. Starting his aviation career at the de Havilland Technical School in Hatfield, he became a Chartered Engineer.

He joined the RAF in 1949, initially flying the Gloster Meteor with 222Sqn. It was during this period that his natural talent for handling aircraft, his calm demeanour under pressure, and his keen observational abilities began to distinguish him. His true calling, however, emerged when he was selected for advanced training at the Empire Test Pilots' School (ETPS).

TESTING THE EARLY JETS

In 1953, he was posted to the Day Fighter Development Squadron at the Central Fighter Establishment, then at

RAF West Raynham, where he flew and tested a selection of the then advanced fighters including the North American F-86 Sabre, the Hawker Hunter, the Swift and the De Havilland DH.112 Venom.

His early test pilot assignments involved evaluating some of the RAF's most cutting-edge post-war jet aircraft. He played a pivotal role in the development and refinement of early jet fighters, pushing their speed, manoeuvrability, and operational envelopes. One of his first significant successes came with the Supermarine Swift programme. While the Swift ultimately faced challenges, Simpson's meticulous testing and detailed reports were instrumental in identifying critical design flaws and contributing to the understanding of high-speed aerodynamic limitations.

However, it was his involvement with the Hawker Hunter that truly cemented his reputation as an exceptional test pilot. The Hunter was a formidable jet fighter, and he was at the forefront of its development being instrumental in optimising its flight control systems, demonstrating its impressive speed and agility, and establishing its combat manoeuvring capabilities.

THE HAWKER SIDDELEY YEARS

In 1954 he had a brief ground tour as the RAF Aide de Camp to the Duke of Hamilton (Deputy Master of the Guild 1932/3), and in the same year he was invited by the company's chief test pilot Neville Duke to join Hawker Siddeley Aircraft at Dunsfold as a production test pilot.



Duncan Simpson (front centre) in 32 Course, No 6 FTS, RAF Tern Hill, 1949

Over the next 30 years he would work on the Sea Fury, the Hunter, the P.1127 and its evolutions - the Kestrel and Harrier - and eventually the Hawk. At Hawker Siddeley he worked with such famous aviation names as Sir Sydney Camm, who would refer to the customer government department as 'the Misery of Defence'.





With Neville Duke, who recruited him to Hawker Siddeley

In 1956 Simpson was posted to Peru to oversee the introduction of the Hunter. Not long afterwards while playing squash he met Pat, who also lived in the Guildford area, and they subsequently married having three children, one of whom predeceased him.

On the VTOL project Simpson was chosen to conduct the training of the 10 squadron members whose task it was to perfect the tactics and capabilities of this revolutionary jet, now given the name Kestrel, and later the Harrier. Subsequently, he was a member of the Harrier conversion team introducing the aircraft into service with the Royal Air Force. Initially the conversion had to be undertaken without the use of a dual-control version, with students given 10h on a helicopter to introduce them to the art of controlled hovering.

THE ACCIDENT

The company developed a two-seat trainer in 1969 and shortly after its first flight Simpson experienced a failure of the Bristol-Siddeley Pegasus engine at 3,000ft over Salisbury Plain and had to eject, and in so doing broke his neck on the canopy. Taken by helicopter to hospital he needed a bone graft and the surgeons had to operate via the throat and as a result his speech was permanently affected. It was nine months before he could return to flying and subsequently he was awarded the Queen's Commendation for Valuable Services in the Air. Hawker introduced detonating-cord modifications to its canopies as a result of this incident.

He was appointed as chief test pilot for Hawker Siddeley in 1970. He made the first flight in 1974 of the Hawk trainer aircraft with which his name continues to be associated. Retiring as a test pilot in 1978, he continued working for the company until the late 1980s. Later he spent 15 years as the deputy director of the Society of British Aerospace Companies which ran the then-annual Farnborough Airshow where he hosted the many visiting overseas delegations.

He was appointed OBE in 1973 and was the recipient of many aviation awards including the Queen's

Commendation for Valuable Services in the Air, mentioned above. Other awards included the Guild's own Derry and Richards Medal, the Air League's Founders Medal, the Royal Aeronautical Society's Alston Medal and he was made a Fellow of the Society of Experimental Test Pilots. Each year the Red Arrows ex-Team Leaders decide who should be invited to become a 'Fellow of the Red Arrows' and the presentation of this honour is made at their End of Season Guest Night at Cranwell. Unsurprisingly Duncan was an invitee: two other Company members who have received this honour are Liverymen Eric Ward and David Boyce.

Beyond the direct development of new aircraft, Simpson was also a key figure in the evaluation of engine performance and reliability. He conducted numerous flights to test new jet engines under a wide range of operating conditions, from the icy altitudes of the Arctic to the searing heat of desert environments. His ability



Showing HRH Prince Charles the Harrier in 1972

to meticulously document engine behaviour, identify subtle anomalies, and provide precise data allowed engineers to fine-tune engine designs, leading to significant improvements in fuel efficiency, power output, and overall longevity. This work, though less visible to the public, was fundamental to the economic viability and operational success of air transport.

Simpson's contributions were not limited to British aviation. His reputation for skill and integrity led to opportunities to consult and test on international projects.

He worked with American manufacturers on evaluating specific aspects of their aircraft, fostering a valuable exchange of knowledge and best practices between nations during a period of intense aerospace competition.

ADVOCATE FOR SAFETY

Throughout his career, Simpson was a staunch advocate for safety protocols and pilot training. He understood that the most advanced aircraft were only as good as the people who flew them. He actively participated in developing and refining flight safety procedures, sharing his experiences and insights to prevent future accidents.

Even after retiring from active test piloting, Simpson did not fade into obscurity. He continued to contribute to the aerospace industry as a consultant and an advisor. He sat on numerous technical committees, lent his expertise to accident investigations, and remained a respected



Duncan Simpson, Master 2002-3

voice in discussions about the future of aviation. His deep understanding of both the theoretical and practical aspects of flight, combined with his firsthand experience of pushing the boundaries of what was possible, made him an invaluable asset.

In 2002 he was elected Master of the Guild and with his distinguished aviation background and with the invaluable assistance of his wife Pat, they were splendid representatives for the Livery Company for their year. He served for many years as a member of the Education & Training Committee and was a long serving member of the Trophies & Awards Committee. His Summer Garden Party was held at Popham: at his suggestion, and most appropriately, the test pilots of the postwar years held their reunion party in an adjacent tent with the likes of

Neville Duke, who had flown the very first flight in the Hunter; and other famous test pilots present. This delighted, in particular, one of our official company guests, AVM Tony Dudgeon, who had commanded the test squadron at

Boscombe Down where many of those present had served.



Celebrating 1 million flying hours of the RAF's BAe Hawk fleet at Valley, 5th July 2006

When Duncan finished working as a test pilot for BAe, he became very active with its sales division and formed a very close relationship with the Managing Director and later Chairman Sir George Edwards OM. Duncan continued flying in Scotland for pleasure until age 60. He was a founder member of the Historic Aircraft Association and, with his interest in older aircraft, for many years displayed older Hawker aircraft including the Hart and Sea Fury, and played a pivotal role in handing over Hawker-Siddeley-owned Hurricane PZ865 *The Last of the Many* to the RAF's Battle of Britain Memorial Flight.

As mentioned at the beginning, he was slightly reluctant to stand for the post as Master of the Guild, but later confessed that he was delighted to have done so. □

DUNCAN SIMPSON HONOURS AND AWARDS

- OBE, 1973
- Queen's Commendation for Valuable Service in the Air 1969
- Master, GAPAN, 2002-3
- Award of Honour, GAPAN, 2011
- Derry-Richards Medal, GAPAN, 1971
- Alston Medal, Royal Aeronautical Society
- Fellow, Society of Experimental Test Pilots
- Fellow, Institution of Mechanical Engineers
- Fellow, Royal Aeronautical Society



THE TOUR PART 1: NORTH AMERICA

By The Master, Elizabeth Walkinshaw

CANADA: VANCOUVER

Visibility was poor as we approached Vancouver Airport because of smoke from the forest fires, further east. Krista Dugdale,

Liveryman Jonathon's wife, and his father, John, kindly met me at the Airport. We stopped for an early supper beside the water, watching the seaplanes coming in and taking off. My hotel room had a great view of the Harbour Air seaplane terminal from the balcony, although the smoke hid a good deal of the mountains on the opposite bank.

The next day they accompanied me, showing me Lynn Canyon Park with its suspension bridge over the gorge, a beautiful park with steep paths. Then on to scale Grouse Mountain by gondola and chairlift, to the great views which were not so shrouded in smoke, and to watch the Lumberjack Show and paragliders take off. We completed the day at a great seafood restaurant - it was a lovely start to my Tour. Krista and John then returned home to Abbotsford, delivering me into the capable hands of Liveryman Alistair Beaton.



The view of Harbour Air's dock in Vancouver

Our first visit was to Western Community College's Aviation training hangar at Abbotsford International Airport, where Alistair is Chief Instructor. I met with Sohail Durrani, the aviation manager, and students and flight instructors at their Flight Training Unit (FTU). The College is the first International Air Transport Association (IATA) Authorized Training Centre in Canada to offer IATA certified aviation training programmes. Alistair had told them all about our Company, so I was able to give them a brief rundown and had time to chat and find out about their training. One of their newly qualified students, Mehdi Aliasghari, has become a Freeman of the Air Pilots.

Pitt Meadows

We then drove about an hour to Pitt Meadows Regional Airport where we popped into Sky Helicopters, which conducts Heli Tours, as Alistair was hoping there would be

some helicopters available. Sadly, none were, so no chance of a flight. Interestingly, Sky says it does a great trade in private champagne flights to celebrate divorces!



Lumberjack show, Grouse Mountain

some shown around an impressive facility where we also met the students and instructors. We then discussed the relationship with the Air Pilots. Mostafa asked how we could assist with Pilot Aptitude Testing, and on my return I have put Alistair and Mostafa in contact with Warden Taylor to further this. We discussed the new North America Scholarships, and they were, naturally, interested in these. It was interesting to hear that the new immigration laws in Canada had put a huge dent in the number of students that they were now allowed to accept.

My second day included a visit to Conair, which is a global leader in the production and operation of emergency response aircraft. The company manufactures, owns and operates the world's largest fleet of fixed-wing aircraft specialising in aerial firefighting. We were met by Jeff Berry who took us on a tour of the workshop. Conair transforms aircraft into firefighting machines, and we were shown the incredible simulators. With me were Alistair Beaton, Sohail Durrani, and some of his students at Western Community College. One of the students was given some time on the simulator, and Capt Dave Jenkins demonstrated the Bombardier Q400 water bomber, fencing in a forest fire with retardant. We were then shown the suppressant and water

We then visited Vancouver Aviation College, which is equipped to train for both private and commercial licences, and where Alistair was an instructor until recently, but he continues to be on the Board. We met with Capt. Mostafa Khosowtaj, Principal and CEO, and with his son Reza I was



Krista Dugdale shows the Master the sights



With Alistair Beaton and Sohail Durrani at Western Community College

tanks, which Conair manufactures and are fitted to the aeroplane. Liveryman Mike Zaytsoff is one of their employees, and he lives in the area for six months a year. I would meet up with him later at the Abbotsford International Airshow.

Abbotsford

That evening we met up with Alistair's wife, Diana, and had a lovely meal at the Cactus Club before finding our seats at the Airshow for the twilight show marking the start of the weekend. There were great aerobatics with fireworks by Melissa Burns in a Zivko Edge 540, and Redline Airshows, a father-son formation team, flying the Van's RV-8. There was also a drone show celebrating the RCAF aerobatic team.

I was delighted to see the Snowbirds at this Airshow during the day. It was the first time I had seen their display and will probably be the last time for a while as its Canadair CT-114 Tutors are being retired this year.

We had been invited by its CEO and President, Cathy Press, to the Chinook Helicopters Leadership/Awards Breakfast the following morning. This was the third "Women in Aviation Breakfast", a morning dedicated to celebrating and connecting the incredible women shaping the aviation industry. Cathy Press is an inspiring woman, a trailblazer in the aviation industry, the first female helicopter flight instructor in Canada, and she is recognised for her company's helicopter and aeroplane training. OC RCAF, Lt Gen Jamie Speiser-Blanchet, was a guest speaker. We had a chance to look around the impressive facility and Chinook's many helicopters. Interestingly, the company takes new Robinson helicopters and puts some hours on before selling them, saving the new buyer the initial drop in price they would suffer on buying a new one.

We then visited the Flying Club where we could sit for a drink and to stay out of the sun for a while before the evening's BBQ which was greatly enjoyed. I had the chance to meet some of the Air Pilots' members there and have a chat with them.

The next day, thanks to the Company's North America Administrator Donna Farquhar, we were treated to the VIP enclosure at Abbotsford International Airshow - a great place to watch the wonderful aircraft and displays. I enjoyed all of them, but particularly interesting was the Canadian Forces Close Air Support demonstration, showcasing the co-ordination between ground and air forces, with Boeing CF-18 Hornets and Bell CH-146 Griffon helicopters, together with soldiers on the ground.

While Mehdi was kindly driving me back to Vancouver airport, I discovered that he was struggling to find a job flying with an airline and was working at the airport hoping to help his chances. He had been offered one position for which he would have had to do the Sim time in the USA, but his nationality did not enable him to cross the border.



At Vancouver Aviation College: Alistair Beaton, Master, Mostafa Khosrowtaj and Obi (CFI)

OTTAWA

After staying at the Fairmont airport hotel, which had a fabulous view of the runways and the Tower, I boarded an early morning flight to Ottawa. We arrived in a thunderstorm and had to wait for the red alert for static to be cancelled before we could arrive at our stand. Once inside, an alert appeared on my mobile for a tornado - luckily, it didn't appear. Liveryman Peter Allen and Upper Freeman Geoff Lowe kindly met me at the airport and transported me to my downtown hotel.

We were privileged to be joined for our meetings in Ottawa by the newly appointed UK Defence Adviser in Ottawa, Air Cdre Liz Hutchinson. Our morning visit was to the Canada Transportation Safety Board office in Gatineau, Quebec, across the Ottawa River from Ottawa, and we were met there by our host, Director Paul Dittmann, a retired Colonel and former Director of Flight Safety for the RCAF.

It was emphasised that the TSB is not the Regulator: it operates independently from other government departments and agencies conducting independent investigations, identifying causes and contributing factors, identifying safety deficiencies, making recommendations



Bell 47s at Chinook Helicopters

complex, detailed, limited scope, data gathering and foreign investigation. It is currently pursuing 51 active investigations. Our meeting discussion points included accident data, runway incursions/overruns and Safety Management Systems.

Nav Canada

Our afternoon meeting was at Nav Canada in the City Centre. Present were Vanessa Robertson, Assistant Vice-President Operational Support, Noel Dwyer, Director ATS Standards and Chris Bowden, Manager of Aeronautical Publications for Nav Canada. Nav Canada was the world's first privatised air navigation services provider; interestingly, Peter Allen was one of its founders. The discussion focussed on data and the challenges of controlling Canada's 18million km² landscape and the ocean approaches. We chatted about space-based ADS-B, the retention of terrestrial links, Canada's comparative



At Conair (l-r):Aniket (Western Community College Dispatcher), Hruthik (WCC FI); Master,Jeff (Conair), Sohail (WCC),Alistair Beaton, Mehdi Aliasghari, Mohammed (new PPL)

scarcity of airspace infringements, how Nav Canada collaborates with NATS and has two of its own aircraft doing flight inspections, and about patrols with skidoos and guns to protect from bears that might interfere with their equipment, and many other intriguing topics. Technology, initiatives such as Trajectory-based Operations,

and publishing reports. It is not the function of the Board to assign fault or determine civil or criminal liability. However, following any accident investigation it can, and does, make recommendations and these may be implemented by Transport Canada. There are six levels of investigation: safety issue,

TBO Indra's Interoperability Through European Collaboration (ITEC), and the application of digital capabilities are all very important to Nav Canada. The application of artificial intelligence in air navigation was discussed, and Nav Canada recognises that down the road this technology will lead to a reduction in Area Control Centres and therefore a reduction in employees.

In the evening, we were hosted by Peter Allen and his wife, Gail at the historic Ottawa Hunt and Golf Club and were joined by Geoff and his wife, Linda, and Liz Hutchinson. It was a lovely evening. As we left, it was reported that there was a skunk in the car park but, luckily, we didn't come across it!



Conair's Dave Jenkins (l) instructs on the Q400 simulator

RCAF

Our meeting at the RCAF was held at the National Defence Headquarters, Carling Campus, on the west-end of Ottawa and was a relatively short one as the newly appointed OC had recently returned from being away and had many meetings scheduled for that day. Our hosts were Lt-Gen Jamie Speiser-Blanchet, Commander RCAF, and Maj-Gen Dennis O'Reilly, Deputy Commander RCAF. The OC is a helicopter pilot, and I had seen her at the Chinook Helicopters Breakfast.

I was asked about the Company's future and outlined what we hoped to achieve and continue. Having touched on the CAT Flight Safety Bulletins, the OC suggested that the RCAF's Flight Safety Officer could hold a seminar for the ITF. She says that the RCAF is constantly in touch with UK CAS ACM Sir Harv Smyth. We had a brief discussion on the Air Pilots' connection to the RCAF Foundation, The Snowbirds and Royal Canadian Air Cadets RCACs. Liz Hutchinson and I also thanked the RCAF for looking after our Red Arrows while they were delayed by bad weather at Goose Bay. Liz suggested that an affiliation with the reservists would be good.

Following our departure from the RCAF, we were invited by Liz Hutchinson for coffee at the High Commission. The Air Cdre introduced me to Cdr Ray Snook, Chief of Staff, British Defence Liaison Staff and Wg Cdr Chris

Thompson, Air, Naval and Space Adviser to Canada and we had a good meeting in the Victory Room discussing various topics of interest and providing them with more insight into Air Pilots and its activities. HMS Victory room is so titled as it has a model of the Victory there on



Simulated dropping of fire retardant

display. Liz showed me where the Red Arrows had flown over the Embassy on its opening, two years previously. The High Commissioner was away during my visit, but it is hoped that future Masters will be able to arrange a meeting

and so strengthen the relationship with the North American region. I also hope to meet with Liz for coffee when she is in the UK.

MONTREAL

It was a great change to join Geoff and Linda and take the train to Montreal. This was extremely spacious and comfortable, with a meal and drinks being served on the way and having time to take in some of the lovely green countryside.

Our first meeting the next day was in walking distance, at the International Federation of Air Line Pilots Associations (IFALPA) in the ICAO building. The host was Celine Canu, Managing Director of IFALPA. She was joined by Dragana Milosavljevic, IFALPA Technical Officer. IFALPA has 74 members and acts as a go-between for concerns etc for pilots to ICAO and has 13 people working in Montreal. One of the interesting issues that IFALPA is pursuing is the quality of life and working conditions for airline pilots. Ultimately this leads to such issues as crew duty days and Crew Resource Management (CRM) priorities. Both Celine and Dragana were very interested to hear about the CAT Safety Bulletins, and I have put them in touch with Ed Pooley to be added to the list of recipients.

They were also very interested to hear about the DAA's paper on mental health, wellbeing and welfare support. They were finding that long haul was becoming less popular, with pilots now wanting weekends off and more sociable hours. They feel everything became more difficult after Covid-19 and that pilots now don't want Captain posts, instead, opting for First Officer so they don't have as much responsibility, and they also feel that their training is lacking and they are not ready to step up. We also discussed that there are fewer senior pilots, so the knowledge and experience is not being passed down to the younger pilots. I asked about training schools' problems. IFALPA does not get involved with them but Celine and Dragana did comment that pilots who have completed a course don't necessarily get a job as they

have not attained enough hours. I asked their thoughts on single-pilot operation - they were against that, and agree that English should be the single aviation language. It is hoped that Air Pilots can link in with IFALPA in the future and that is being worked upon.

ICAO

Our next meeting at the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) ran straight on from the IFALPA meeting. This meeting was conducted in the ICAO building in the office of Michele Merkle, Director, Air Navigation Bureau. ICAO Human Factors was her first job, so she was very interested to hear about the DAA's paper on mental health, wellbeing and welfare support. Currently, she looks after 16 of the 19 parts of ICAO but not environment issues, facilitation or security. However, she did say that ICAO is looking towards 2050 for zero emissions and that the sector needs more fuel efficiency.

She commented that ICAO is trying to promote aviation to females and that the developing countries seem to have more females in the sector. ICAO does not back single-pilot commercial cockpit operations, and says it needs to have sufficient evidence before agreeing to an age-limit increase. These data need to be performance driven and to be continually updated. On the proposed move to True North, there is a task force working with Air Pilots involvement. It is looking at the implications, and the final recommendation will be decided in 2027.



Breakfast at the Abbotsford Air Show with Alistair Beaton, Jonathon Dugdale and Mike Zaytsoff

Talking about GNSS, Michele agrees it is important to have a GNSS complimentary ground base, and says ICAO has three technical groups looking into this. The Part 4 International IFR study group vision for vertical ports etc was also mentioned, talking about new standards for 2030 and asking for advice and putting out guidance.

We touched on space integration as ICAO is looking into the impacts of launch, re-entry and debris. There will be an ICAO Symposium in October in Montenegro. Michele said that safety and security are intertwined and that the industry has more to do. ICAO Annex 19 was developed



An Air Pilots pin for new Freeman Mehdi Aliasghari

to centralise and harmonise safety management provisions that were previously scattered across six different ICAO Annexes, creating a single, coherent document focused on safety management functions applicable to the safe operation of aircraft and aviation systems at both the State and organizational levels. Its primary purpose is to enhance overall safety performance by promoting proactive risk management, data collection, analysis, and information sharing.

ICAO museum

We were then provided with an excellent tour of the ICAO museum, where there is soon to be an interactive display, and the Assembly and Council rooms (the former with 800 seats!) by Sarah McLaggan, ICAO Communications Associate. ICAO has 193 member states, all represented at Assemblies which meet not less than once every three years, as convened by the ICAO Council. The member countries also elect 36 states to serve on the ICAO Council, a governing body responsible for Secretariat oversight, and for the ongoing diplomatic and technical decision-making through ICAO while the Assembly is not in session. We also had a chance to look at all the interesting items on display that had been



Chinook Helicopters' Cathy Press and Lt Gen Jamie Speiser-Blanchet address the Women in Aviation breakfast

donated to ICAO and hear some great history and facts from our guide

Our visit to the Space Agency did not come off so we

had an unexpected free day in Montreal. Geoff and I spent some time looking at Old Montreal as Linda already had a previous engagement. It is certainly an extremely busy tourist area with many gift shops and restaurants!

The next day was a scheduled free day for me, and I had coffee with Liveryman Valerie Stait who had recently moved to Canada to work for IATA. Val, as some of you will be aware, had lived in Hong Kong and was a previous Chairman of the Hong Kong region. There was no IATA meeting on this Tour, but I hope that a meeting can be set up for next year. Brett Wells, who has just retired from IATA, has become a Freeman of the Air Pilots. With Val's and Brett's help there should be the chance of a meeting.

USA: WASHINGTON DC

My flight to Washington was certainly eventful! I was feeling very happy as I had taken a taxi to the airport with



Geoff Lowe, Peter Allen, Master and Liz Hutchinson visit the RCAF

no traffic problems, checked in straight away and through security. Next, through Customs at Montreal to enter the USA which made it so much easier - I wish it happened at all airports. Settled with three hours to spare in the lounge, I glanced at the departures board to see, to my horror, "flight cancelled"! I was rebooked on another flight via Pittsburgh with a five-hour stopover, which ended up being much longer as the aircraft taking us to Washington was stuck at Newark because of thunderstorms. Eventually, I arrived in Washington eight hours late. Liveryman Bill Pinney, who was going to meet me, had kept in contact and we decided there was no point in his waiting to meet with me that night, so I found a taxi and made my own way to the hotel.

With the Freedom 250 Grand Prix being in Washington DC, there were road closures, traffic jams, barriers and construction workers to negotiate. It made it very difficult to get around. In fact, for many of our meetings, staff were not present because of the difficulties in getting to their offices. I had my first experience of travelling on the Washington metro, which was very interesting.

Federal Aviation Administration

There were road closures around the FAA Headquarters building. The first meeting was with David Burkholder, Deputy Executive Director, FAA International Affairs. We



In the Victory Room at the British High Commission: Geoff Lowe, Peter Allen, Master and Liz Hutchinson

had a great meeting with so many topics covered and discussed. David recounted that the FAA has collaboration with four other countries - the UK, Canada, Australia and New Zealand - known as the Five Eyes. He discussed the National Aviation Authorities Networks for advanced air mobility aircraft type certification, and the Electric Vertical Take-off and Landing (eVTOL) and Advanced Air Mobility (AAM) Integration Pilot Program (eIPP). He explained that there are different business models with different stakeholders, businesses and some manufacturers, testing to assemble the data and make informed decisions, in eight different areas around the USA. The hope is that there will be integration by 2028 in time for the Olympic Games in Los Angeles. Beyond Visual Line of Sight (BVLOS) rules had been published two weeks previously, 12-18 months earlier than expected, he says, because of a push by the White House. This will be reviewed in the next few weeks.



ICAO's splendid Council chamber

We also talked about anti-drone management and discussed system backups, L1 and L5 GNSS bands and S1 and S2 satellites. I mentioned the CAT Safety Bulletins, and we now have a point of contact at the FAA who will distribute these to all relevant people, and to David who was extremely interested in the GNSS bulletin in particular. David agrees that the stigma about reporting and speaking about Pilot Mental Health needs to be addressed and hopefully improved. I informed him of the DAA's paper. He says so that more data can be assembled pilots need to feel they can come forward and not feel

they are going to be punished. Until more people do report then not much can be done. It would help to understand how it can be dealt with and how to help pilots. In 2023, 2024 and 2025, AMEs have been allowed to add additional anti-depressant medication to the list of approved ones so that more pilots can continue to fly.

David then told us about the Strategic Management of Airspace, Routes, and Trajectories (SMART) paper. This is aimed at achieving zero delays at the start of the day, flights that depart on time, get passengers to their destinations on time, and follow the most efficient flight paths. SMART is a cloud-based platform system that enhances existing FAA air traffic management systems. It provides air traffic control and aircraft operators with a shared, data-driven view of the National Airspace before flights depart. Using AI, SMART analyses airline schedules, weather, airport capacity, airspace conditions,



ICAO's Michele Merkle (r) with Geoff Lowe and the Master

and operational constraints to predict traffic flows and identify potential conflicts before they occur. This shared view helps the FAA, airlines, and operators identify and agree on the most efficient routes and departure times. As conditions change throughout the day, SMART continuously updates forecasts and planning recommendations to support operational decision-making.

VAI

Our second meeting was with Vertical Aviation International (VAI) formerly Helicopter Association International (HAI), the name being changed so that it involved eVTOLs as well as helicopters. Upper Freeman François Lassale had been keen to meet me as a fellow member of Air Pilots and a helicopter pilot. François has had a packed life (BAe Harrier pilot, royal flight, commercial pilot, helicopter pilot flying Westland Pumas, etc) and it was fascinating to hear about his journey to where he is today. He is the first International CEO of the company which, he explained, had been in existence for nearly 78 years. VAI offers scholarships in aviation maintenance and pilot professional development to help vertical aviation students and professionals continue their education and training. François would like to set up a Foundation, and he is looking into workforce development and scholarship funding. Perhaps there is the possibility



The Master meets up with ex-Hong Kong Region Chairman Valerie Stait, now with IATA

of liaising with the North American region. François invited me to VAI's next VERTICON show at Anaheim in 2027 and was keen to help the North American Air Pilots' presence at this. He is planning to set up an Australian Show next year, which would also be good for the Australian region. VAI will also have its first helicopter section at The Experimental Aircraft Association's AirVenture show at Oshkosh next year. We discussed so much about helicopters and eVTOLs, such as operation and airspace issues, piloting and maintenance. He explained that he was the International Federation of Vertical Aviation (IFVA) voice at ICAO and he often discusses with, and lobbies, the Government on various points relating to helicopters and eVTOLs.

NTSB

The third meeting was with the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) and we were hosted by Dr Dujuan Sevillian, who is a human factors specialist. We talked about mental health, and I informed him of the DAA's paper. He said that there is a fear of reprisal, and he wanted to see more data on this problem and mentioned the FAA's mental health Aviation Rulemaking Committee. He told us that when NTSB investigates an accident, it asks friends and family about stress and fatigue, medical issues and medications etc. It works with the FAA, and in-house, on pilot mental health. There is an NTSB Safety



Bill Pinney introduces the Master to the Smithsonian

Summit Navigating Mental Health video on YouTube. He discussed the January 2025 Potomac River collision between an American Airlines Bombardier CRJ700 airliner and a Sikorsky UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter and NTSB's findings and recommendations, the need to have maps updated and routes kept current.

NTSB is also discussing upgrades to TCAS/ACAS, looking into eVTOL and Advanced Air Mobility operations, as well as space launch and relaunch incidents. It is examining repairs and systems failures such as happened on the Boeing 737 Max. It was noted that pilot error is a more probable cause of an accident than any manufacturing or maintenance errors. NTSB is also looking into spatial disorientation and loss of control, Fatigue Risk Management System (FRMS) and Controlled Flight Into Terrain (CFIT). Dujuan also asked to be added to the CAT Safety Bulletin list.

We took the chance, while being in the area before it was further closed off because of the Grand Prix, to visit the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum, although it was supposed to be staying open over the weekend with a bridge over the racetrack. With Bill being a docent of the Museum, we had free access and he treated me to a fantastic tour for three hours, giving me so much information to digest.



Jennifer Murray's double-globe-encircling Robinson R44 at the Smithsonian

GAMA

The fourth meeting was with Andy Phillips, the director of Regulatory Affairs & Innovation at the General Aviation Manufacturers Association (GAMA). Andy is British and explained about his time at Heathrow when he was involved with the Heathrow Runway 3 expansion project before Covid-19. GAMA's concerns are with general welfare, safety, interests, and activities of the global business and general aviation industry, such as aviation manufacturing, maintenance, repair, and overhaul. It has 150 members who are manufacturers and certifiers, or those who provide services to operators. It now has a new gateway encompassing eVTOL. GAMA hosts the Aviation Design Challenge for high school students in the USA to promote careers in aviation, and will be setting up a European Challenge next year in which the UK will be able to join. We discussed human factors, pilot overload and human error. He said that GAMA has investigated placement of instruments and the brightness of the colour red when used in cockpits. Andy has asked to be added to the CAT Safety Bulletin list. We discussed the closure of airfields which is happening in the USA as well as the UK



- short sighted, as eVTOLs will need bases. The ATC upgrade, impact of 5G on aviation and many other topics were discussed. This year we did not have a meeting scheduled with the National Business Aviation Association.

Joby Aviation

Our fifth and final meeting was with Joby Aviation. The North American Region had tried to schedule this, but it only occurred at the last minute, thanks to the efforts of Francois Lassale at VAI. We met with Kristine O'Brien and one of her colleagues and she has put me in touch with Joby's contact in the UK so I will look forward to having a further meeting with him. Joby's piloted, all-electric aircraft is designed to deliver fast, quiet, and zero-operating-emissions flight for everyday passenger transportation. Joby's dual-use autonomous flight system supports a range of commercial and defence needs and has been successfully demonstrated across several Joby aircraft platforms.

Although this is the company that seemed to be mentioned so many times at my meetings, I was amazed to hear how far along it actually is. It has been testing in Dubai, at JFK airport in New York, where it was using the helicopter routes in unison with regular rotary-wing aircraft, and was to be testing in Dallas in September. Seemingly, in New York, there was a motion for 'Stop the Chop' because there are so many helicopter flights with too much noise (so critics say!). The plan is, however, to share the airspace so that helicopters still have their place. Joby's aircraft will be piloted, initially, with four passenger seats and eventually, if the concept is popular enough, will become autonomous. The US military has taken up both piloted and autonomous machines. The company has been working with the military since 2016, and a new contract had been signed the week before our meeting. Joby Aviation is also looking into hydrogen-powered aircraft. The electric aircraft is currently going through certification with the FAA with hopes of confirmation soon, although there will still be amendments to come, following more testing. It plans to have 48 machines built by 2027. Joby has a huge facility at Dayton, Ohio and it has bought Blade Helicopters, Resonant Sciences, and a software company, Avionyx. It plans to lease individual aircraft, not to sell them, but will sell to fleet operators: however it will retain maintenance of the aircraft in all cases. It has many partners such as Toyota, which is supplying critical manufacturing expertise, and has bought Uber Elevate so passengers will be able to call up a flight as you currently do for a taxi. In the UK, it has partnered with Virgin Atlantic to offer air-taxi services. I asked about pilot licensing and was told there will be a new type of licence.

trying out the Joby simulator

My thought is that with each manufacturer designing the controls differently, this would be quite a consideration for licensing.

Widespread testing

Working with the FAA's Electric Vertical Take-off and Landing (eVTOL) and Advanced Air Mobility (AAM) Integration Pilot Program (eIPP), Joby will be testing air taxi operations in New York, Texas and Florida, and in Utah, North Carolina and Virginia it is testing autonomous operations. We talked about the new ATC upgrade and Kristine said that it is the ideal time to integrate eVTOLs into the system, so that the new system will already have them in place. It will be very interesting to see how this development is managed.



Space Shuttle Discovery at the Smithsonian, Dulles

There was a simulator at Joby but, unfortunately, it was not working; however it gave me a chance to sit in and get an idea of how it would feel. I so wished I had had the chance to fly it and wonder how similar it will be to flying helicopters. It uses Garmin for avionics but all else is in-house build and design. The aircraft is all fly-by-wire and does not have a manual override, but the systems are all duplicated. The FBW system translates pilot inputs into instructions for the various rotors, to decide which angle they will be etc. There are two electric motors on each power unit, so each delivers only 50% of the total power of the unit. The system is designed so that if one or more motors or power units fail the remaining power units will compensate by altering the distribution of power across all of them.

On the final day, Bill Penney kindly offered to take me back to the airport and, on the way, to show me around the other part of the Air and Space Museum close to the airport. This was another fabulous tour around the facility, with Bill again enlightening me on so many of the exhibits. He suggested, as with previous Masters, that I had my photo taken in front of the Space Shuttle but, to be different, I chose the Piper Cub which had been the very first exhibit delivered there.

Thank you to all that made this such a great Tour for the Master: Donna Farquhar, Hal Adams, Krista Dugdale, Alistair Beaton, Peter Allen, Geoff Lowe, Bill Pinney and additional thanks to Mehdi Aliasghari and Francois Lassale, and for all the help from our DAA Nick Goodwyn. It was lovely to meet Diane Beaton, Gail Allen and Linda Lowe. □



PROFILE: CHIRP

By Richard Harrison, Director, Aviation, CHIRP

If you're reading *Air Pilot*, it is highly likely that during your time in aviation you will have become familiar with aviation safety reporting systems and, indeed, may have used various reporting tools to report accidents, incidents and near misses.

In the civil aviation world this will most likely be in the form of the CAA's Mandatory/Voluntary Reporting System or a company's own safety management system, used by employees to internally report safety issues to their organisation. Military aviation has similar safety reporting mechanisms, broadly mirroring those of the civilian world.

What happens, however, when you come across something safety-related that feels as if it really should be reported, yet you're concerned that after reporting it you will be penalised, punished or have a black-mark put against your name? In an environment of genuine 'Just Culture' this is not how aviation safety should function – being penalised for reporting a safety concern – but you might be surprised how often such situations occur. This is where CHIRP comes in.

CHIRP (the Confidential Human Factors Incident Reporting Programme) Charitable Trust is a cornerstone

of aviation safety in the United Kingdom. For decades, this independent charity has provided a vital safety net. It allows anyone involved in aviation in the UK to report close calls, human factors-related incidents and safety concerns without fear of reprisal.

Initially formed in 1982 [*in which the Guild of Air Pilots and Air Navigators played an instrumental role - Ed*], CHIRP was established in its present charity form in 1996. Dealing only with aviation in the early years, CHIRP is now also engaged heavily in maritime safety. Whilst the charity's aviation programme is wholly funded by the Civil Aviation Authority, it is important to note that CHIRP operates entirely independently of the regulator. The charity's aim is to help improve aviation (and maritime) safety, through building a just culture by managing an influential programme for the confidential reporting of human factors-related safety issues.

REASONS TO CHIRP

In the submissions CHIRP receives, the reporter is invited to comment on why they haven't raised their issue with their company or management. The most common reasons go along the lines of: "I'm scared to"; "fear of reprisal" (which, in many cases, can refer to losing a job); "management won't listen" and "I've raised it but I'm being



Are problems up here being reported?

ignored". CHIRP's role is to assist with trying to resolve issues while protecting the identity of the reporter.

All reports CHIRP receives are treated in absolute confidence – any associated information and concerns are only communicated to external agencies with the agreement of the reporter and then, to protect the reporter's identity, only in an entirely disidentified form.

CHIRP functions to support all aviation activity (and the people involved in it) including commercial flight crew, cabin crew, engineering, ground handling and security staff, general aviation and, most recently, drone operations.

Over the last 12 months CHIRP has received in excess of 1,000 individual reports. In the commercial aviation world, reports about fatigue linked to duty/rosters are a very common issue; in general aviation CHIRP receives reports that are more *mea culpa* in nature, with people voluntarily reporting human factors-related incidents in an effort to help others learn from their experience.

In this respect, whilst CHIRP is primarily concerned with safety-related reports about human factors and/or just culture issues, some people report to CHIRP because they simply want to pass on a learning experience or an important safety lesson from a situation that might otherwise not be reported. Often, this is because the experience fell below the threshold for formal reporting or represented circumstances where things nearly went wrong but did not because of the successful intervention of those involved.

SPREAD THE WORD

If you're familiar with CHIRP's work then that's great, but if this article is your first encounter with CHIRP, please help us to spread the word. We're only a very small charity and promoting our existence to an ever-changing aviation community is a continuous activity. Please tell others about CHIRP and promote our services. A report is easy to submit and CHIRP's website (www.chirp.co.uk) can be

FC5494 (C)	Cabin Crew Welfare	22.07.2026	🔍
CC8189	Pressure: on time departure affecting safety duties & manipulation of company data	22.07.2026	🔍
CC7676	Door Not Armed when Commanded to do so by Pilot	22.07.2026	🔍
FC5410 (C)	Pressurised to report early	22.07.2026	🔍
CC8108	Inappropriate rest facilities	22.07.2026	🔍
CC8069	Fatigue v Sickness	22.07.2026	🔍
CC8150	Fatigue	22.07.2026	🔍
GA1425	'ATIS Content'	17.06.2026	🔍
GA1423	'Airspace infringement'	17.06.2026	🔍
GA1417	'Near collision during complex sky diving serial'	17.06.2026	🔍
GA1419	'Towbars routinely being left attached to aircraft'	17.06.2026	🔍
GA1421	'Near collision with runway lights'	17.06.2026	🔍
FC5410	Pressurised to report early	09.06.2026	🔍
FC5406	Reporting system not fit for purpose	09.06.2026	🔍
FC5407	Fatigue	09.06.2026	🔍
FC5413	What is maximum acceptable cabin temperature for boarding passengers?	09.06.2026	🔍
FC5415	Insufficient crew food provided	09.06.2026	🔍
FC5414	Insufficient rest between trips	09.06.2026	🔍
FC5416	Fasting for religious observance whilst operating as crew	09.06.2026	🔍
FC5425	Cost over Safety?	09.06.2026	🔍
FC5419	Professional Standards and Attitude	09.06.2026	🔍
DUAS 00XX	AAIB Bulletin: 2/2026 Velos V3 AAIB-30745	01.06.2026	🔍
DUAS 0041	Collision with Drone while cycling	01.06.2026	🔍
DUAS 0040	I forgot my Drone was in the Sky	01.06.2026	🔍

A sample of reports submitted to CHIRP in just a few weeks

found easily in any internet search. Every safety report counts in helping to foster an improved safety culture, where learning from human factors experiences is the name of the game.

Finally, whilst any aviation-related safety issue that gives cause for concern may be reported to CHIRP, to accord with UK regulations there remains a legal responsibility to report accidents to the UK Air Accidents Investigation Branch (AAIB), and safety-related occurrences (including accidents) to the Civil Aviation Authority. CHIRP does not replace organisations' Safety Management System reporting schemes when these are available and, if reporters feel able, they should always consider using these first before coming to CHIRP. This is because direct reporting should result in a faster and more integrated response from the organisation without CHIRP acting as an interlocutor.

Richard Harrison has 32 years' aviation experience in the Royal Navy's Fleet Air Arm. His last two jobs in the military involved running the Aviation Safety Management Systems for the Fleet Air Arm (at Navy Command HQ) and the Joint Aviation Command (at Army HQ).





SIR ALAN COBHAM'S 1926 FLIGHT TO AUSTRALIA

By Liveryman Glen Fricker

One of the most remarkable aviation achievements from 100 years ago must surely be Sir Alan Cobham's flight from England to Australia in De Havilland DH.50J G-EBFO. Earlier in 1926, Cobham had successfully flown the same DH.50 from London to Cape Town, arriving there on 15th February, having left Croydon on 16th November 1925. Accompanied by his engineer, Arthur Elliot, and photographer Bill Emmott, Cobham had not intended to set a record. The flight's primary purpose was to survey 25 potential landing sites *en route* for subsequent use by Imperial Airways. The journey of over 8,000 miles was covered by Cobham in 94h flying time. The Cape Town flight was by no means Cobham's first long-distance use of G-EBFO, or his acquaintance with Arthur Elliot. On 20th November 1924, at the bequest of none other than our own Sir Sefton Brancker, Cobham set off from London to fly to Rangoon and back, having recruited the 19-year-old Elliot from the RAF engineering school at Halton.

G-EBFO was the second of some 38 DH.50s built, the type having been designed as a four-seater replacement for the DH.9C. Initially powered by a 230hp (170kW) Armstrong Siddeley Puma engine, the prototype G-EBFN made its first flight on 30th July 1923, piloted by Hubert Broad. Alan Cobham flew this aircraft to the International Aeronautical Exhibition in Gothenburg just four days later. He won first prize in the associated reliability trial by flying 'FN daily between Gothenburg and Copenhagen.

COMPARISON OF DH.50 AND DH.82 TIGER MOTH

	DH.50J with floats	DH.82a Tiger Moth.
Engine	385hp Jaguar	130hp Gipsy Major
Wingspan	42ft 9in	29ft 4in
Length	29ft 9in	23ft 11in
Cruise Speed	110mph	90mph
Max Weight	4,200lb	1,825lb
Service Ceiling	16,500ft	14,500ft

A year later, in August 1924, Cobham won the Kings Cup in 'FN and set other records in this aircraft in September 1924, flying between London and Tangier.

MORE POWER, MORE FUEL

Following a heavy landing at Stag Lane aerodrome, a flight to Australia and back was proposed, once again as a route-proving flight for Imperial Airways, and G-EBFO was

prepared by fitting a 385hp Armstrong Siddeley Jaguar engine, fuel tankage was increased and, as most of the route lay over water, floats were fitted by Short Brothers. Having not flown a floatplane before, Cobham did an abbreviated 4h conversion course with John Lankester Parker in the days just before departure.



Cobham and Elliott at Rochester before the flight

Cobham would have preferred a slight swell to the flat calm on the water, to aid "unsticking" the heavily laden DH.50 at 06:00 on 30th June, as he and Elliott took off from the River Medway near Rochester, Kent.

By the end of the first day's flying they had covered some 1,200 miles, stopping at Marseilles for fuel before arriving at almost last light at Naples. The preceding days' anxiety and myriad pre-flight preparations for weather, visas, navigation, fuel and oil *en-route* (generously provided by Lord Wakefield), had taken their toll on Cobham's health. It was only because of pressure from the weather forecast of heavy sea swells that they pressed on to Athens the next day.

On medical advice, Cobham rested on the third day before setting off for Baghdad via Leros Island and Alexandretta (now Iskenderun, in Turkey) for fuel. Although still unwell, on 5th July Cobham pushed onwards towards Bushehr. When about 100 miles northwest of Basra, whilst flying at low altitude because of weather, Cobham heard an explosion.

DISASTER

He shouted through the connecting window to the cabin to Elliott, who replied in a weak voice that a petrol pipe had burst. Then Elliott passed a written note from his message pad saying he was hit in the arm and was "bleeding a pot of blood". When Cobham saw his face, and noticed how terribly pale it was, he realised that he



The DH.50 being refitted with wheeled undercarriage at Mindi
faced a grave problem.

Should he attempt a landing in unfamiliar territory or carry on to Basra where they were to refuel in any case? He chose the latter as being the best chance of Elliott receiving medical attention, landing on the river some 40min later.

After some difficulty organising the ground crew to assist him, he managed to get Elliott taken to hospital; initially it seemed that he might make a recovery, but sadly he died from his wounds a day later. It would appear that Elliott had been hit by a stray bullet, fired accidentally by a startled Bedouin. The bullet had come through the floor of the aircraft, fracturing a fuel pipe before passing through Elliott's left arm and lungs.

Cobham's initial reaction was to abandon the flight but, following telegrams from his wife, Sir Sefton Brancker and others, he was persuaded to continue the flight, aircraft mechanic Sgt R W Ward of 84Sqn being seconded to Cobham to replace poor Elliott.

So, on 14th July they continued the flight, routeing via Bushehr, Karachi, Calcutta, Rangoon and Timor, often having to await favourable weather conditions before continuing. The enforced waits were put to good use by carrying out maintenance on the aircraft and engine.

They arrived in Darwin on 5th August 1926, having covered the 10,352 miles in 36 days, with 126h 10min flying time, giving an average of 288 miles/day at an average speed of 82mph. By comparison, today most modern airliners can cover that distance non-stop in a flight time of just 19h! At Darwin, the DH.50 was craned onto land by HMAS *Geranium*, where the wheeled undercarriage was re-fitted for the flights around Australia.

From Darwin they continued their journey: the massed greetings at Sydney and Melbourne by adoring crowds in their thousands were interesting, though not always welcome, as their wish to get as close to the DH.50 as possible produced some anxious moments!

RETURN FLIGHT

They started upon their return journey on 29th August,

taking a more central route across Australia to Darwin where G-EBFO was re-fitted with her floats for the rest of the journey home. Cobham had wished to set a record on the return flight but was frequently thwarted by weather. However, this was the very first Australia-to-England flight and also the first return flight between the two countries.

The return route was fairly much a reverse of the outward route with some minor exceptions, and fortunately less eventful. Alighting on the River Thames outside the Houses of Parliament on 1st October (after a few "flypasts" at Rochester and Westminster) marked the end of their remarkable adventure, King George V honouring Cobham with a Knighthood a few days later, and soon after that he was awarded the Gold Medal by the *Federation Aeronautique Internationale*.

This, and the long-distance flights that Cobham (and others!) made, are truly remarkable: the organisation that had to go into them was a feat in itself. No aeronautical charts, or many airfields, existed in those days; even road maps were a "best guess", with many of the routes over unmapped territory. Marine charts were a slightly better



Cobham's triumphant return to the Thames (all pics via Vic Flinham)

source of information but, even then of course, there were not many suitable landing areas equipped to deal with an aeroplane. Such logistics had to be dealt with well before the flights, not to mention arranging visas, military permissions and diplomatic clearances.

Despite Sir Alan's wish that G-EBFO should be presented to the Science Museum in South Kensington, within a month of his landing outside Westminster De Havilland had sold the aircraft to an Australian air taxi firm for £500. Sir Alan described this as "an act of highly insensitive negligence" and it certainly contributed to his leaving the company shortly afterwards. Sir Alan was among the founder members of the Guild of Air Pilots and Navigators, first as an Upper Freeman, later taking the Livery and becoming Master 1964-65. His son Sir Michael was also a Liveryman.

□

BOOK REVIEWS

CHIPMUNK AT 80 BY BEN GRIFFITHS AND IAN BLACK

Reviewed by The Editor



The De Havilland DHC.1 Chipmunk has had a great deal of attention this year, as the Canadian-designed trainer celebrates its 80th birthday. Along with the single-marque rallies and

features at several of the major airshows, there now comes the birthday book, written by Liveryman Ben Griffiths and Ian Black.

No staid, dry history tome this - it is a dramatically covered, large-format (30cm x 24.7cm) landscape paperback, as unconventional inside as it is on the outside. Yes, it begins after introductions by the authors with a brief history of the prototype, designed by Polish engineer Wsiewolod Jakimiuk in the immediate aftermath of World War Two and with the acceptance that open-cockpit biplanes were no longer relevant as military trainers. Thereafter, however, the book zooms off into a series of chapters covering topics such as learning to fly on the Chipmunk, how to maintain it and individual histories of a couple of important airframes. Those include the "Royal"

aircraft on which the Patron, HM The King, late Grand Master HRH Prince Philip, Liveryman HRH The Duke of Kent and Honorary Liveryman HRH Prince Michael of Kent learned to fly.

A good half of the book is, however, devoted to a gallery of full-page photos of individual Chipmunks, the bulk of them in full colour and taken in recent years, though with a leavening of period monochrome shots including some lovely De Havilland company promotional shots – and the bare minimum of caption text.

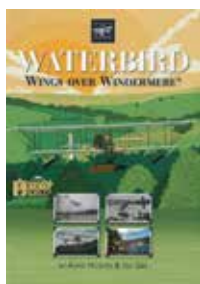
This, then, is very much a love-letter to the Chipmunk from a couple of ardent admirers and owners, backed by contributions from other people who clearly love their Chipmunks. For the many thousands of pilots who have experienced the enchantment of Chipmunk flight, this will be the ideal book to have on the coffee table, to share that love with others. It is likely that they will be waiting impatiently for the promised second volume, too.

Chipmunk at 80, Volume 1, by Ben Griffiths and Ian Black; published by Independent Publishing Network; 168pp softback; ISBN 978-1-80645-308-5; £37.99

□

WATERBIRD BY ANNE HUGHES AND IAN GEE

Reviewed by The Editor



The pioneering flights on Windermere by Capt Edward Wakefield's 'hydro-aeroplane' *Waterbird* in 1911 were the first successful flights by a floatplane in Britain, and it has been recently agreed by the Glenn H Curtiss Museum in the USA that Wakefield had beaten his rival Curtiss to be the first to

patent the stepped float which has been the secret of success for all subsequent waterborne aircraft. Wakefield founded the Lakes Flying Company which operated limited services from Windermere up until World War One, and maritime aviation returned to the lake during World War Two, when Shorts established a factory at White Cross Bay where 35 Sunderland flying boats were built and others repaired.

In 2009, Freeman Ian Gee established a successor charitable Lakes Flying Company to build a flyable replica

of *Waterbird*, a goal reached in 2022. Each year the Company – which has Freeman Anne Hughes as a Trustee and Upper Freeman Bill Brooks as Chief Engineer – gets permission to operate *Waterbird* for a couple of evenings on Windermere.

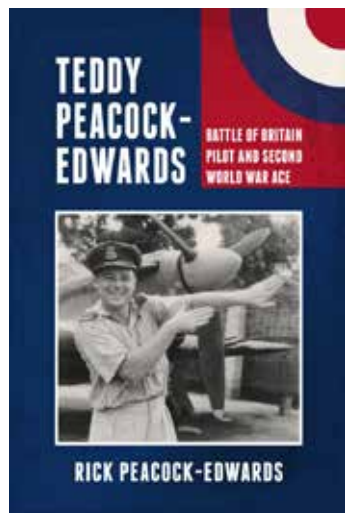
This recently re-released book covers the history of Wakefield's original endeavours, subsequent maritime aviation on Windermere, and of the building and flying of the current replica. It is a straightforward, no-nonsense account of a fascinating part of British aviation, well-illustrated with period and modern photographs, and proceeds of sales go to support the activities of the charity – whose ultimate aim is to build a permanent museum of waterborne aviation and operating base on the shores of Windermere.

Waterbird: Wings over Windermere, by Anne Hughes and Ian Gee, published by Lakes Flying Company Ltd; 80pp softback; ISBN 978-1-3999-4904-0; £14.95

□

TEDDY PEACOCK-EDWARDS, BY RICK PEACOCK EDWARDS

Reviewed by The Editor



While biographies of World War Two pilots are not uncommon, examples written by the subject's son are rarer, and ones which draw extensively on the subject's own writings to his family are rarer still. Into this rarified group of biographies comes the biography of his father written by PM Rick Peacock-Edwards.

The bulk of this book covers Teddy's (real forenames Spencer Ritchie) wartime experiences, but they are bracketed by relatively brief chapters on his early life as a farmer's son in South Africa and what is now Zimbabwe, and his postwar life, first still in the RAF and later back in his South African homeland.

The aviation story starts with Teddy's application to join the RAF (one of the first 11 Southern Rhodesians to do so) in early 1938, and his initial training at the Civil Flying Training School at Hamble. On graduation, his RAF service began with 150Sqn, first at Boscombe Down and later at Benson, flying the Fairey Battle, and it was with this unfortunate aircraft that he was to serve for 21 months. That time saw him fighting in France until the height of the Battle of Britain, in a squadron which endured frequent relocations and catastrophic losses, especially when its Fairey aircraft were being used on unescorted daylight bombing missions.

TRANSFER TO FIGHTERS

By September 1940, Teddy had been accepted for transfer to fighters on 615Sqn, converting to the Hawker Hurricane at Prestwick in Scotland and then being posted to 253Sqn at Kenley. In three months there he claimed two enemy aircraft destroyed and three damaged, but he was on the move again, this time on the aircraft carrier HMS *Furious* with a load of Hurricanes destined for the Middle East. Having flown a Hurricane off *Furious* to Takoradi on the Gold Coast, he flew in formation over six days to Egypt, after which he was transferred by Short Sunderland to join 261Sqn in Malta.

In a turbulent few months he claimed another two aircraft destroyed and two damaged, was appointed Commander of 'A' Flight – and survived one crash landing – before 261Sqn was relieved on Malta, and sent to Cairo. After a frustrating six months at HQ Middle East and some ground instruction he was posted to 258Sqn in Ceylon in March 1942.

A month later he was to be involved in defending against a long-expected yet somehow still surprise Japanese attack on Colombo in which 27 RAF aircraft were lost, Teddy himself ending up injured in a crash landing in a paddy field – a battle in which he claimed one aircraft destroyed and one 'probable' and he and his Squadron Leader both earned the DFC. There followed a transfer to 273Sqn and finally to 30Sqn as Officer Commanding, in which role he was again to oversee numerous relocations of his squadron across Ceylon and India but also managed to find time to be married.

Having returned to the UK in July 1944, he served in a number of flying and non-flying roles before being transferred to the reconstituted Southern Rhodesian Air Force in 1946, where he stayed for only just over a year before returning to the UK and the RAF in 1947. His second RAF career was to last for 10 years, in largely non-flying roles, until the Duncan Sandys Government White Paper of 1957 saw him take premature retirement to South Africa where he was to live for the rest of his life.

Much of the non-service detail in the book is provided by excerpts from his letters to his sister Judy, who remained on the family farm in Rhodesia. His service history is drawn largely from the entries in his own logbooks and in the Operations Records Books (ORBs) of the squadrons on which he served. His son Rick has done a commendable job in drawing the information from these and other sources together into a thoroughly readable book which conveys in great detail not only the service history of a fighter ace but also much of the flavour of life in often nomadic squadrons of the RAF across four different theatres of World War Two.

Teddy Peacock-Edwards – Battle of Britain Pilot and Second World War Ace, by Rick Peacock-Edwards; published by Grub Street (www.grubstreet.co.uk); hardback, 184pp; ISBN-13: 978-1-911714279; £25

□

OVERSHOOT

A round-up of less-formal items which have caught the Editor's eye



NESTING TIME

For those who want to sleep on a long flight but don't want to stump up for a Business or First ticket, Air New Zealand has a new option on its Boeing 787 Dreamliners. From December 2026 Economy and Premium Economy passengers on its New York-Auckland services can book four-hour slots in new lie-flat Skyneest bunks. Each of the "Nests" (six available per flight) has its own ambient lighting and privacy curtain, pillow, sheets and blanket, and will cost from £215/\$US250/\$NZ500 per session, for which you also get a so-called Nestcessities kit containing eye mask and earplugs... (Air New Zealand) □

ISLANDER RETURNS

Bembridge, Isle of Wight-based airframer Britten-Norman has test-flown the first of its Islander twins to be built from locally-manufactured components for many years – from 1968 the airframes were built in Bucharest, Romania and fitted out at Bembridge. Since 2009 final assembly has been at Bembridge from imported major sub-assemblies. Over 1,250 of the rugged utility aircraft have been delivered since the first in 1965, with over 700 still in service. Unusually, Islanders are available with a choice of piston (260 or 300hp Lycoming) or turbine (350 or 400hp Rolls-Royce turboprop) power. (Britten-Norman Aircraft) □



SENT TO COVENTRY

The final 'proper' aircraft movement from Coventry Airport, which officially closed in June, was the flight out of the recently restored Douglas C-47 *Night Fright*, on its way to Sywell for completion. The final airside fixed-wing aircraft movement (bet the developers will use helicopters...), however, was a little less uplifting – at the beginning of September the mortal remains of Lockheed Electra G-LOFB (last operated by Atlantic Airlines) were towed across the airfield to a landside compound for dismantling and transport to Scraptoft near Leicester. In the meantime it sits alongside BAe Nimrod XV232, similarly awaiting dismantling and transport to Manston in Kent. (Midland Modern Warfare Collection) □