FEBRUARY 2015
3  Technical and Air Safety Committee Meeting  Cobham House
5  Luncheon Club  RAF Club
26 10th General Purposes and Finance Committee Meeting  Cobham House
26 6th Court Meeting  Cutlers' Hall

MARCH 2015
3  Education and Training Committee Meeting  Cobham House
9  Annual Service  St Michael's Cornhill
9  AGM, Installation and Supper  Merchant Taylors' Hall
19  Lord Mayor's Dinner for Masters  Mansion House
20  United Guilds' Service  St Paul's Cathedral
20  Lunch with Fan Makers' Company  Skinners' Hall

APRIL 2015
7  Technical and Air Safety Committee Meeting  Cobham House
9  Benevolent Fund Board of Trustees Meeting  Cobham House
14  Environment Committee Meeting  Cobham House
16 1st General Purpose and Finance Committee Meeting  Cobham House
23  Assistants' Dinner  Cutler's Hall
23  New Members' Briefing  Cobham House
30  Luncheon Club  RAF Club
30  Cobham Lecture  Royal Aeronautical Society

MAY 2015
12  Education and Training Committee Meeting  Cobham House
14 2nd General Purposes and Finance Committee Meeting  Cobham House
14 1st Court Meeting  Cutlers' Hall
28  Livery Dinner  Drapers' Hall

JUNE 2015
18 3rd General Purposes and Finance Committee Meeting  Cobham House
24  Election of Sheriffs  Guildhall

VISITS PROGRAMME
Please see the Flyers accompanying this issue of Air Pilot and previous editions of Guild News or contact Liveryman David Curgenven at visits@airpilots.org. These flyers can also be downloaded from the Company's website.

FLYING CLUB EVENTS
March 22nd  Freddy Stringer Memorial Lunch  WLAC White Waltham
March 29th  Pre-Season Lunch WLAC White Waltham
April 24th  Lunch Le Touquet
May 29th  Lunch Calais

GOLF CLUB EVENTS
March 13th  AGM Lunch East Berks GC
April 21st  Spring Meeting (Open Event)  North Hants GC
May 21st  Prince Arthur Cup (Team Event)  Walton Heath GC

Cover photo: This Augusta A109S was photographed departing the Metropolitan Police Air Support Unit, Lippitts Hill. It is operated by the Children's Air Ambulance, the only dedicated helicopter emergency transfer service for seriously ill children and babies. A description of the Company visit to Lippitts Hill is on page 15.
A message from your Editor...

The February edition of Air Pilot always presents something of a challenge to the Editor. After the surge of inputs that fills the December edition as a consequence of much Company activity in late autumn - Trophies and Awards Banquet, Scholarships Presentation, late summer visits, for example - December and January are very quiet months by comparison. Nevertheless, I hope I have found sufficient material to make this issue interesting for you all.

The Master describes her Tour of the Regions, a considerable undertaking with little time off for relaxation. Continuing an overseas theme, Freeman Stephen Smartt describes his life flying with a Japanese airline specialising in air freight, not something many Company members do. The Director of Aviation Affairs' report gives an interesting slant on a current theme, mid air collisions, where potential conflict between GA and military aircraft appears to be a major area of concern. The proliferation of cheap easily purchased remote piloted air systems, or 'drones' as the popular press has christened them, often operated by those with scant knowledge of the appropriate regulations, adds another dimension to this challenge. On the historic side Liveryman Stephen Slater's story of his epic effort to get the BE2 replica to France for the 100th anniversary of the Great War is well worth a read and the dramatic story of the Sea Fury forced landing at the RNAS Culdrose Air Day shows how challenging vintage aircraft operations can be. Add also a report on the Company visit to the Metropolitan Police Air Support Unit at Lipps Hill and I hope you find this issue an interesting one.

The days are lengthening now and we can hopefully look forward to a spring and summer of CAVOK conditions. However, please don't spend all your time in the cockpit, remember I need copy of your activities to fill the pages of future editions.

Assistant Tom Eeles
Honorary Editor
News Round Up

LORD MAYOR’S SHOW

November 8th, 2014 saw the Honourable Company of Air Pilots striding out for the first time under its own banner in London’s very own Lord Mayor’s Show.

In the 600 plus years that the Lord Mayor’s Show has taken place it has very rarely ever been cancelled because of the weather and this year was no exception. It threatened to pour with rain, as it did in 2008, 2009 and 2013 but the ‘weather gods’ were looking favourably upon the event on this occasion!

Assistants John Denyer, Nick Goodwyn and Warden Colin Cox ‘walked the walk’ between the floats and marching bands along the route to the applause and cheers of the thousands who had turned out in supporting us all in this, the eleventh year that the Modern Livery Companies have been involved as a group in the Lord Mayor’s Show.

Everyone who has been involved in previous years has thoroughly enjoyed their experience and it is sincerely hoped that next year, as many members as possible will feel as enthused with the sense of occasion and turn out to enjoy one of London’s most colourful and understated pageants.

NEWS FROM BAHRAIN

Liveryman Yvonne Trueman reports that Remembrance Day was commemorated in Bahrain on the 11th hour of 11th November as is the tradition. A wreath laying ceremony was held at the Old Christian Cemetery in Manama. The event, which is held annually to remember the British, Commonwealth and Allied European servicemen and women who have given their lives in the line of duty, was attended by Bahrain’s Foreign Minister Shaikh Khalid bin Ahmed Al Khalifa, the British Ambassador Iain Lindsay and other European Ambassadors and Dignitaries.

This year Captain Neil Purves of the Royal Flight and Captain Vanessa Umba, first female Captain with Gulf Air, laid wreaths on behalf of the Honourable Company of Air Pilots; Liveryman Yvonne Trueman was also in attendance making this a record number of Honourable Company members to be present at this function. The visiting Royal Chelsea Hospital pensioners were flown in and hosted by the Bahrain British Business Forum and were taken around the British School and other British institutions. They also visited the International Racing Circuit and the Rugby Club and managed a round of golf at the Royal Golf Club.

NEW YEARS HONOURS

Congratulations to Liveryman Air Marshall Sir Barry North OBE, created KCB in this year’s New Years Honours List.

MESSAGE FROM PAST MASTER

ROD FULTON

Past Master Rod Fulton has asked for his grateful thanks to be passed on to all Company members who have wished him well during his recent illness. The Company hopes that he continues to make a full recovery.

SIXTY YEARS MEMBERSHIP

Liveryman Captain Graham James Rice DFC MAP of the Queensland Working Group, Australia Region, completed 60 years as a member of the Guild/Honourable Company on 7th October 2014. The Company offers its hearty congratulations for this exceptional record.

DUKE OF EDINBURGH AWARD PRESENTATION

Liveryman Dacre Watson writes: On 5th December 2014 I was invited to make a presentation of a cheque for £1200 to Walthamstow School for Girls, the proceeds of which will be used to start a Duke of Edinburgh Award programme at the school.

Readers will recall from previous articles that these funds are raised by the Ray Jeffs Golf Match, the inter-Livery golf match played every June and started by Captain John Mason and now run by Captain Rick Thomas. The matches raise an annual £4000 which is passed on to the Duke of Edinburgh scheme organisers who choose three schools each year to receive the award. Walthamstow School for Girls is the third school to receive such funds from the match held in 2013.

The school is unusual in this day and age: founded as a private girls’ school in 1890, it is now a Community School for Walthamstow and its 890 girls aged 11-16 are drawn from the local area. It is also unusual in that it is solely for girls. It is a multifaith school and has received outstanding reports over the years from Ofsted.

I found the teachers and pupils I met to be dynamic and inspiring and I have every reason to believe that the girls will do well in the Duke of Edinburgh programme.

Liveryman Dacre Watson presents the cheque to the Headmistress and two of the pupils.
The Master’s Tour 2014

DOROTHY SAUL-POOLEY

World events must take precedence over the Master’s tour and the G20 summit scheduled for mid November in Brisbane threatened lockdown and gridlock preventing the planned activities there, so thus it was decreed that the tour for 2014 would be conducted eastabout. Hong Kong was to be the first region visited, then New Zealand, Australia and finally North America. The downside of this was the more difficult time zone adjustments. The positive was the (allegedly) better weather in Hong Kong, as the tour would start there at the end of October instead of finishing there at the beginning of December. Another factor of so many time zones and climates (North America in early December is very cold!) was the necessity of packing almost an entire wardrobe within the limited confines of airline baggage allowances - it is then that one realises the advantages of ocean liner travel! However, these planning considerations conquered, the shoe collection reduced to a mere six pairs (for six weeks!!) and many items discarded, the suitcase weighed in at a mere 27kgs!

Hong Kong - 31st October

A delegation greeted me at the arrivals point including Ian Fogarty, the regional administrator and Lily Fenn, regional Chairman with her aide to carry the bags! The Master traditionally stays at the Charterhouse Hotel in Wan Chai, a boutique hotel which is centrally located for all of the visits planned. The room was on the 20th floor, affording a view over the wooded hills in the distance. An advantage of this hotel was the inclusion of a Smartphone for making unlimited calls free of charge to the UK, Australia and New Zealand! Needless to say, this facility was fully utilised!

The official programme was not due to start until Monday, but Lily had planned some other activities, thus on the Saturday, she arrived in her new Maserati to whisk me off for a sumptuous lunch at the Summer Palace restaurant at the Shangri La Hotel.

There was also an optional, but welcome, activity planned for Sunday and once again Lily collected me to go to the Hong Kong Aviation Club. It was good to meet up with John Li, a former Chairman of the Hong Kong Region, as well as the new club President, Gigi Chao, another lady helicopter pilot. John took me, together with John and Sue Hutchinson, for a quick sightseeing tour in the R44. Helicopters are the only form of aviation still allowed out of the remnants of Kai Tak airport - it has all been covered in other activities now. Last time I was in Hong Kong, some 18 years ago, I had flown in a C172 out of Kai Tak, to Sek Kong and back.

John Hutchinson was in Hong Kong for a family wedding, so the Aviation club had prevailed upon him to give one of his Concorde talks - a good crowd from the Honourable Company had come along as well as Aviation club members and a convivial evening was passed in that favourite activity of multiple aviators - talking about flying!

The official programme was due to commence with an executive committee meeting at the World Trade Centre, to be followed by a presentation to Michael Chan, Chief Pilot of the Government Flying Service. This was during the course of a cocktail party and was followed by another delicious dinner. It
was heartening to see that the Hong Kong region has a growing number of young members, both from Cathay and from the Government Flying Service (GFS), who are beginning to follow some of the ideas of the London-based Young Air Pilots in organising their own activities.

Tuesday was a full day, starting with a visit to Cathay City. This impressive edifice is astonishing. After coffee with Ian Fogarty, Lily and I were taken into the Airbus 330 simulator, where Ian showed me Unusual Position recoveries, then let me try to stall or achieve Vne! As a non-airline pilot, the Airbus’ sophisticated computer systems were a novelty for me. Engine failures, engine fires etc. notwithstanding, the aircraft was landed without running off the runway! After a visit to the Flight Planning Centre and crew training mock ups, we joined Richard Hall, Director of Flight Ops and some other Cathay staff for a very good lunch in their 7th floor restaurant.

Next visit was the Civil Aviation Department (CAD), housed in an extraordinary innovative building, which has won many environmental and architectural awards. Our delegation of six and the CAD delegation of eight participated in briefings in the board room, followed by an extensive tour of the building. The education trail is state of the art, interactive and fascinating. The accident investigation facilities and new, as yet uncommissioned, Air Traffic Control Centre are amazing. A short bus ride took us to the Tung Chung pier from which we boarded the Government Yacht for an evening tour of the harbour to see the areas of reclamation and the night sky illuminations! On disembarkation a bus awaited to whisk us to the Jockey Club, another fine building, whose grandeur and opulence has to be seen to be believed. Our host, the Director of CAD, Norman Lo and I discovered a mutual colleague, as he had trained as an instructor with the same instructor who trained me for Flight Instructor Course!

The following day was another highlight! From the helipad near the Convention Centre, Lily, Tin Lam and I were taken in a GFS helicopter piloted by Capt. West Wu, on a comprehensive tour of the island with commentary. Many more photos especially the landing into the facility at Chek Lap Kok. A large delegation awaited and guided us through the hangar explaining the multiple roles of the various aircraft - Super Puma and Jetstream. The GFS having just become an affiliate of the Honourable Company, suitable presentations of photos and pictures were made after the buffet lunch in their staff dining room.

A very hot day on the Thursday saw Lily, Tin and me walking up the driveway of the Hong Kong Observatory. It is a surprise to climb this hill, the path winding through tropical gardens, and emerge to the view of a traditional white painted verandahed colonial building. Sharon Lau, Assistant Director greeted us and after the requisite formal photographs, signing of visitors’ book etc. a comprehensive briefing and Q and A session covered the work of the Observatory. We toured the control room, saw the weather forecast studio and then enjoyed a fascinating tour of the history room.

Having acquired an Octopus card (like an Oyster card but better as you can also use it for buying food and drink) the Mass Transit Railway had become the preferred form of transport and Lily dared to send me solo on the return journey! That evening’s activity was a tour of the City on an open topped tram. The Formal dinner was scheduled for the next evening so a visit to the hairdresser was a must. Despite the best intentions of arriving on time, the elements conspired against us that night. Lily was caught up in a traffic jam which meant it took her three hours to reach the hotel, arriving two hours late. My taxi took 50 minutes to travel 1.5 miles. It was a combination of pouring rain, the Occupy Central protest and Friday evening. Many people were late, but they couldn’t start without Lily and me! So our evening was somewhat stressed at the beginning and became very protracted, as speeches were still going on at 1140pm! Although all these obstacles had to be surmounted, everyone enjoyed a great time with good camaraderie, which is what it is all about. My flight was due to depart for New Zealand on the Sunday evening, which was Remembrance Sunday. Research had shown that there was a parade at the Cenotaph, so I duly negotiated the MTR and arrived as they started. More than 130 wreaths were laid by the many service and volunteer groups associated with Hong Kong and then prayers were said/ chanted or sung in seven different religious denominations.

New Zealand - 10th November

Ten years since my last visit to New Zealand yet the arrival into Auckland with the view of the many islands and harbour seemed awfully familiar. Bill Bentley, Chairman of the New Zealand regional committee, was waiting to meet me with transport to the airport Holiday Inn for one night. Later a number of locals met in the bar for general aviation chat, most of them members of the local aero club. A good buffet meal in the hotel
allowed us to continue the informal discussions.

The first official visit was to the training department at Air New Zealand, where Bill’s son, David, welcomed us and introduced us to Chris Hirschbaum. An in-depth and very useful briefing on training, Flying Training Organisations (FTOs) and subjects such as standardisation of instructing techniques were covered. The 787 Simulator was completely booked, so it was not possible to try it out!

The next visit was a return to the Warbirds Hangar at Ardmore, which I first visited over 20 years ago with one of the display pilots, Peter Beaumont. I was sad to learn that he had died a couple of years ago from a heart attack. After the tour, we went to the Auckland Aero Club for a bowl of soup and then a young recently qualified lady instructor introduced me to the new Cessna 162 Skycatcher - a new type for me! A lovely flight around the City.

Then a rush to the airport for a flight to Nelson on an ATR72. In Nelson we met Mark Woodhouse, who won the Pike Trophy a couple of years ago and shared thoughts on training standards, current equipment and standardisation - all very productive and useful. Over dinner at the Rutherford Hotel, I received a comprehensive briefing from Bill on the important issues for New Zealand’s region.

Next morning, we visited Motueka, home of the Nelson Aviation College, where a warm welcome awaited. Giles Witney, who had taken over the running of the college with his wife, is charismatic and dynamic. His empathy is evident in all his dealings with his staff and students. The impression was of a professionally run establishment that really cared about the wellbeing of the students. As a result the students are focused but relaxed and they all do well. Giles is keen to foster quality rather than quantity, so keeps his school on a fairly small scale with around 65 students at a time, 25 graduating each year. This is managed by 15 instructors using C152s and C172s.

It was delightful to be asked to address each group of students and answer their questions, as they were all engaged and motivated. It is not surprising that this is one of Air New Zealand’s preferred training partners.

One of the instructors had volunteered to take me on a sightseeing trip over the mountains and down the coast, which was an excellent way to view some of the surroundings expeditiously! We experienced some snow showers in the mountains, but bright sunshine back at Motueka. The neat and tidy aeroplane fleet adds to the impression of care and attention to detail which underpinned this excellent training establishment.

After a quick discussion with the CFI, Jeremy, we said our goodbyes and set off to drive to Blenheim. This was a 2 1/2hour drive through the mountains, pretty spectacular scenery and winding roads to reach the Omaka Vintage Aviation Museum. Two directors of the museum, Brian and Jane, conducted us through the main parts of the museum which houses an amazing collection of Sir Peter Jackson’s aircraft and aviation memorabilia. Readers will probably be aware that Sir Peter makes the Hobbit movies (inter alia) and the museum is like no other, each aeroplane being exhibited within its own film set depicting real life scenes in many cases. It is a photographer’s paradise and many more hours could have been spent there, but sadly we had to leave to drive to Marlborough airport for the flight to Wellington!

The flight in an ATR72 was only 15 minutes long. It took longer than that to reduce the weight in my bags to an acceptable limit by repacking some of my stuff into Bill’s cases! The alternative NZ$60 fee seemed a bit steep for a couple of kilos! On arrival into the Windy City, we took a taxi to the Wellington Club and checked in - this is an extraordinary time warp looking like a traditional gentleman’s club, but perching on the top three floors of a modern office block! It also houses the largest billiards room I have ever seen with virtually unused green baize spreading throughout a room the size of a dance hall!

A quick turnaround before joining the rest of the Executive committee for a briefing in the bar followed by dinner. Leslie Brown, the man on the ground in Wellington, had set up a super programme of technical visits and meetings over the next few days and it was good to have the opportunity to brief on their expectations for the Master!
Gordon Ragg, Bill and I enjoyed dinner in the club with lots of reminiscences of former Masters’ visits. It became clear that the visit of the Master is a hugely significant event to the New Zealand region. It was disappointing not to have more time allocated for this part of the tour.

Thursday 13th was probably one of the more exhausting and tricky during the whole trip. There was a daunting schedule of meetings to be completed before the Regional Formal dinner in the evening and there was little slack for a hair appointment, speech writing or clothes preparation. After a rapid breakfast, our delegation left to visit Transport Accident Investigation Department. It was clear that they were quite under-resourced, but it was an interesting and useful session. The Master was expected to lead the session and our group felt that we had been helpful to the investigators, who we left with a better understanding of the resources available to them through the expertise of Honourable Company members.

From there we walked the short distance (one of the great advantages of Wellington!) to the RNZAF for a short meet and greet with AVM Kevin McEvoy. A quick snack was grabbed before leaving for the next meeting at the CAA.

This meeting was with representatives of the General Aviation department, Licensing and Medicals Directorate. We were offered tea and cakes!! The comment afterwards was that “if they don’t stop talking then it’s been successful!” We were handed a huge pile of their publications on instructional techniques, syllabi and licence information. These were boxed up and sent home as the luggage was already overweight! Many of the issues we discussed were parallels to those experienced in London on the various technical committees - mentoring of CFIs, standardisation of instructional techniques, concern over different techniques, collaborative arrival system has been adopted to great effect as well as the environmental benefit of reduced CO2 and emissions. One of their challenges is that they receive 90% of their revenue from two companies: Air New Zealand and Qantas, so the business model is very different from those in Europe or North America. Despite this, they are finding incentivised (their word, not mine!) to stay, but the product is of a higher quality - the bigger schools can afford a compliance department and the burden of all the paperwork is reduced for the individual instructors.

That evening’s formal dinner was a small, but interesting, gathering with almost no women present (apart from the family of the award winner). It was held in the wood panelled bar and a private dining room of the United Services Club. The certificate winner made a short address in the presence of his delightful wife, his son and his equally engaging wife.

Another shortened night made way for the final day in New Zealand! First meeting was at the Ministry of Transport, where they required our input to the rewrite of their Civil Aviation Act. The various members were keen to learn of any similar problems which we might have experienced in the UK. The issues of “gold plating”, over-regulating GA, over-pricing and over-burdening flying training organisations gained sympathy and they appreciated understanding where EASA was leading to difficulties and pitfalls. Leaving a couple of our group to pick through the details, the rest of us (six) went to a meeting at the Airways Corporation.

To be found on the 26th floor of the building which also houses the Inland Revenue, the view from the board room window was really spectacular. Ed Sims, the CEO, turned out to be British and we found friends in common, as he used to live very near to where I lived 15 years ago! He was impressive and knowledgeable in his presentation to us of the challenges faced by his organisation, which is unique in its method of dealing with the Air Traffic service provision. Safety and operational efficiency underpin the activity. Loss of separation has been an important issue and they are aiming for zero high risk losses. In terms of operational efficiency, the collaborative arrival system has been adopted to great effect as well as the environmental benefit of reduced CO2 and emissions. One of their challenges is that they receive 90% of their revenue from two companies: Air New Zealand and Qantas, so the business model is very different from those in Europe or North America. Despite this, they are finding new customers in the Middle East and South East Asia for their training business.

We spent some time discussing the management of drones/RPAS and how to rationalise the differing needs of this emerging sector and Ed was pleased to learn of the work on this area carried out by the Honourable Company; the papers and links we have were subsequently forwarded to him as well as to others met during the Wellington meetings.

The final visit in Wellington was to the Vintage Aviator workshops housed in the old Electrolux building near the main airport. We met Gene DeMarco for a light lunch at the old Roxy Cinema restaurant before some of the group dispersed to catch their flights back to Auckland. Bill and I joined Gene for a fascinating tour of the facility, where we learned that they make absolutely everything from the nuts and bolts to reverse engineering engines from the originals to build the tooling and equipment required to reproduce faithful copies. Gene is clearly fanatical about what he does and as a test pilot, he gets to fly all of these amazing machines!

**Australia-15th November**

The early start next day (0430) was of my own making, because my three previous trips to Australia had not permitted a visit to the Great Barrier Reef and it was definitely high on the must-see list. The only way to visit economically and to fit into the Australian region’s schedule necessitated a 0630 flight to Cairns, via Brisbane.

The G20 summit was in full swing that weekend, so security was heightened and the two hour transit time at Brisbane was heavily eroded by searches, Ebola checks and the necessity of immigration and then changing from international to domestic terminals, so it looked tight to achieve the Cairns flight but with a lot of running and stress, especially when stopped for an explosives check (!), the flight was made. The wonderful surprise at Cairns was being met by the sole member of the Australian Womens Pilot Association (AWPA)/99% in Northern Queensland, Deb Evans, who cheerfully delivered me to the Mantra Hotel on the Esplanade. Her husband had recommended me the diving company Tusa 6 with whom I spent a delightful
day snorkelling on the reef on Sunday. Monday was time for real work again and the flight to Sydney on a Qantas 737-800 was more comfortable than the Virgin Australia flights on the previous Saturday. Sandy Howard was at the gate to meet me and marshal the luggage, then drove me to his house, where Marje's welcome included tea, cakes and home made scones! It was marvellous to stay in a home after so many nights alone in hotels. Marje was a superb hostess, helping with laundry and dry cleaning and providing wonderful home cooking.

The following day was relaxed with less of a schedule, which was a relief! Sandy and I drove the hour through the suburbs to Bankstown, which I had last visited ten years ago on a business trip. We met up with his friend, Philip Reiss, Chairman of AOPA Australia who planned to take us on a sightseeing tour in his PA30. Some problems with an alternator delayed us, but it was pleasant standing in the warmth of the sunshine, holding screws and cowling panels! Our flight was following a well-marked out route, very scenic and many photos were taken!

After a quick sandwich at the Howards, we set off for the Royal Motor Yacht Club at Broken Bay, a splendid edifice that has been much extended since the early days in the 20s. Sandy's beautifully appointed 6 1/2 year old Seawind 100 bobbed on the bay on its mooring and we were delivered to it by the yacht club tender. It was deemed a bit too windy to sail so we contented ourselves with bobbing about on the water which was glistening and bright with the warm sunshine.

A tour of the yacht club facilities was impressive and then we returned to prepare supper at home. This was to be taken early as Sandy and I were due to participate in the monthly regional committee meeting which is achieved by conference call. There was a huge agenda to be covered in the two hours and after contributing what I could we left the team to it.

My final day in Sydney was to include the working committee lunch at the Kirribilli Club. The club is in a wonderful location overlooking the Sydney harbour bridge. It was a lovely warm day and our group had secured two large tables outside on the verandah which was an excellent viewing spot. The assembled company included several former acquaintances and it was delightful to spend time talking to Past Master Frank Dell, who had also been one of my near neighbours in Shoreham by Sea before he emigrated to Australia. Another re-acquaintance was Senja Robey, an enthusiastic 87 year old, a friend of Nancy Bird Walton, who hosted me on my first Australian visit 20 years ago. Cathy Hobson was also an interesting companion, currently researching a lady pilot called Nancy Ellis who operated a Miles Messenger.

The excellent and companionable lunch had to end as my flight to Adelaide was at 1625. The reception committee at the gate in Adelaide was Sue Ball and Rob Moore, who drove me to Sue's lovely spacious bungalow in the West Lakes Shore area of Adelaide. Sue was another wonderful hostess immediately taking care of my laundry, and leaving me free to catch up on emails.

Rob and Sue had briefed me for the Adelaide activities and the next morning, in spite of pouring rain, we headed off to the gliding club at Gawlor. Ever the weather optimist, I was determined that it would improve - the front was due to pass through, so tucked into the extensive seafood buffet provided by Rob's wife, Colleen. Harold Walton, the Chairman of the Australian region was there with a number of other members. It looked as if there might be a brief weather window and we made the most of it! Between heavy showers, I was able to get airborne in the DG1000 towed up by a Pawnee to 2500 feet in a small gap almost over the airfield. After being released we were able to turn and fly level with the cloud layer to get a bit of lift and as another hefty shower approached the airfield we gently drifted down to land about 20 minutes after take off!

The evening activity that day was a meet up with other lady pilots, some 99s and some AWPA and it was good to meet Marion again, who won the top Dawn to Dusk prize about 6 years ago. Our small group of women pilots included several late starters still learning to fly and a 70 year old instructor who had been flying for 44 years! The Lake View Hotel, predictably situated on a lake(!) had good food and wine and as one might expect with a group of lady pilots, some Prosecco was consumed!

We had time the following morning for a short walk to the beach (and a paddle in the sea for me!) before getting ready to go on our first technical visit. A short drive to Parafield airport to visit Flight Training Adelaide (FTA). A good briefing from the Marketing Director, Michael Wallis, who had previously worked at Flight Training Europe and has partly adopted the same model for Parafield. There are many airline sponsored students in Australia; in New Zealand the students have a very good student loan system, both much preferable to the European system of mainly secured lending or students having to borrow on commercial interest rated loans.

Cathay is a major customer, as is the Hong Kong Government Flying Service and all trainees have to undergo rigorous selection and aptitude testing. Unlike Nelson, which abandoned rotary training in August 2014, FTA has a strong rotary division. The school achieved 35,000 hours last year and is the mainstay of Parafield airport with 95% of its movements! They have a fleet of 38 aircraft and 7 helicopters as well as 9 simulators. The impressive 97% pass rate is testament to the high calibre of students selected although it is
disappointing that there is still only a 6% complement of female students - the same the world over it seems!

Our next visit was to the University next door, where we met a large group of instructors and students for an open forum on the work of the Honourable Company and its training and instructor committee. These students seemed interested in our work on syllabi, standards and safety and it was a wide ranging discussion. One or two of the instructors/lecturers expressed interest in joining the Company.

The location for the South Australia working group dinner was the Naval and Military Club, another typical colonial style building with wood panelling and black and white photos. The warmth of the evening allowed us to take our pre dinner drinks outside which was pleasant and enabled most of the guests to meet the Master in a more informal setting. Four of the AWPA ladies were amongst our group, some of whom had just joined the Company, so it was pleasing to see that the presence of a lady Master has encouraged other ladies to join what is often seen as a very male preserve.

It was a very pleasant evening, the speech causing some mirth with jokes that I wouldn't have dared use in London!!

The final day in Adelaide involved another flying event. Aldinga is a country airfield with a small aero club and separate flying school. A spot landing competition was taking place and the Master was prevailed upon to join in. As the mount was a C172 (albeit the fancier faster S version), it seemed feasible and a respectable attempt was made. Meanwhile, another friend of Sue's (Steve Nelson) had arrived with his RV7A and took me for an enjoyable flight along the coast with a few aeros…!

The results of the competition were announced and this Master was pleased to uphold the distinction previously claimed by PMs Fopp, Lowe and Spink, being photographed with the trophy and accepting a bottle of local wine! Sue then quickly dragged me away to the airport for the flight to Melbourne.

Melbourne no longer has a working committee, so the purpose of this brief visit was purely social, as I was being allowed a day off!
reaching the Snowy River. On arrival into Canberra, we took a circuitous route for a bit of sightseeing, where cockatoos were perching in the trees. There was an abundance of lemony scented leaves and bottle brush trees, a very different landscape.

First work day in Canberra was a very early start as we had to be at the Air Force for 0800! Our meeting with the Deputy Chief of Air Force, Leo Danks, was fairly brief and he seemed determined to focus on the lack of women candidates and how they could attract them, using positive discrimination. Neither Norf nor I thought that this was the right approach, as it could lead to selection of lower calibre candidates just to try to achieve their stated ambition of getting their first female RAAF fighter pilot. Selection should always be on the basis of capability, not biased towards trying to fill a quota whether on a gender or ethnic basis.

Our next meeting was not until 1030, so there was time for a short drive around Canberra to see some of the monuments and important buildings. Then we went to Civil Aviation Safety Agency to meet Peter Boyd, the Executive Manager for the Standards Division, who is Acting Assistant Director at the moment. Much of the meeting focused on concerns arising out of the new Part 61 licensing regime - a parallel to our concerns in Europe over EASA Part FCL. Some of the criticism is on the length and complexity of the regulation (familiar theme there!) and whereas there had been relaxation in some areas, there had been considerable tightening up in others, leading to an outcry, particularly the requirement for renewal tests on all different aircraft a pilot has on his licence. The idea that complexity and disproportionate level of administration would extinguish general aviation seemed to sound a chord. There was also much discussion on safety related matters dealing with structural failures in various aircraft which had led to fatal accidents. We could have stayed much longer as the time in Canberra had been useful and well-spent.

That evening an extremely pleasant dinner was held in the Green Herring Restaurant, a very old (by Australian standards!) restaurant, dating back to 1820. Some of the previous evening's crowd attended, together with some of the government officials we had met over the previous few days, which enabled us to further some of our conversations in a more relaxed setting. It was felt that the time in Canberra had been useful and well-spent.

Norf drove me to the airport where I checked in and met up with Harold Walton who was also travelling to Brisbane. The short flight was met by John and Gael Howie and Doug Stott and we went straight to the premises of the Royal Flying Doctor Service. A fascinating briefing and tear-jerking film introduced us to the work of the RFDS and we went on to the hangar and a meeting with some of the pilots informally over sandwiches. John Howie then took me to see the Kingsford Smith memorial containing the Southern Cross Fokker. This was followed by a visit to the Aviation High School, where the enthusiastic principal, a Scotsman, showed us round the various projects implementing regulations and educating pilots, a local issue of radio frequencies, growth in the mining industry requiring larger aircraft to frequent smaller regional locations, windfarms and RPAS!

Later that evening a large group of us assembled for a very pleasant drinks and informal supper party at the beautifully situated home of AVM Kim and Debbie Osley. They presented me with a book about Australian pilots in the Battle of Britain.

More meetings the next day, starting at the Air Services Corporation, who are responsible for the Air Traffic services, AIM and NOTAM. We were given a thorough briefing on the workings of the corporation and its activities and then taken to see the National Operations Centre (NOC) and the Met forecast section. This was interesting, as they were predicting some unpleasant weather for Brisbane and indeed they had an extremely violent storm that afternoon which overturned seven aircraft at Archerfield airfield and caused widespread property damage, including hailstone damage to many cars.

We had two or three hours in the middle of the day when I selected the option to visit the Australian War Memorial. This was much more than an edifice, as it housed an extremely extensive and well laid out museum to all of the recent wars in which Australian personnel had played a part. It would have taken far longer than we had to review everything there, but for anyone visiting it is a definite "must!"

The final technical meeting in Canberra was a visit to the Air Transport Safety Board (ATSB). This was probably the most interesting of all as we were treated to a lengthy explanation of the Australian efforts in the search for MH370. The Australian bureau is coordinating this for the Malaysian government and have been allocated funding of A$60 million for their bathometric survey. This is insufficient for the area that has been narrowed down, but the Malaysians have now matched the funding equally so there should be enough to continue the search for up to a year. The area is 100,000 square kilometres in the Southern Indian Ocean.

We also had a long discussion about GA accidents and their causes. It is evident that the majority of these accidents are caused by similar factors to those that we see in the UK, but they have also highlighted underlying issues of lack of appropriate pre-flight planning and decision making. It also appears that amateur built aircraft are a disproportionate source of accidents because of handling problems associated with them. Although the pilots in these accidents generally have higher numbers of hours than those flying factory built aircraft, they typically do not have many hours flying the particular type. It is apparent that the reduced resources within the ATSB lead to a necessity to select which accidents to investigate and the scope of such investigations may be limited. This is undesirable but a necessary by-product of the reduction in manpower by the government.

A lunchtime meeting had been arranged to further some of our conversations in a more relaxed setting. It was felt that the

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early 1950s! She told me all about her amazing adventures including a crash where she ended up in a river bed! It was good to meet a couple of younger women, currently studying for their CPLs at the local aviation college. The evening was to be the Queensland Working Group dinner with the presentation of a number of trophies and awards. Amazingly the Grand Master’s Australian medal had survived intact in my luggage almost all the way round the world!

It was a much larger gathering than in the previous locations and was more formal in its structure, including the use of loving cups. Everything passed off smoothly with John reading out the citations, except the MAP which I read (as we do at Court meetings in the UK) and the whole evening was faultless. They even laughed at my jokes!

Sunday morning a taxi to the airport for the flight to the USA.

USA - 30th November

Sunday 30th November was one of the longest of my life, as I crossed the International dateline and thus travelled continuously on that one day for over 27 hours and experienced a 39 hour day! Brisbane to Los Angeles on a Qantas 747-400, to clear customs, then transit to an American Airlines A321 flight to New York. My brother met me and took me to rest for two days at his home by a lake in Brookfield, Connecticut.

On Wednesday 3rd December it was a 5am departure to catch the train from Stamford to Washington DC. After check in at the Marriott Hotel, I met up with Kent and John Cox to take a taxi to the Capitol. We entered the Redmayne building and went up to the office of Congressman Michael Burgess, who welcomed us for a short chat about the work of the Honourable Company. After the requisite formal photo, we were taken on a comprehensive conducted tour of the building. This included all of the historical parts, statues, Old Senate and Congress and a visit to the Chamber for a short while to hear a debate.

Later that evening we met to review the meetings set for the next few days and the main issues for the North American region which included the lithium battery issue and LOCI.

Our first meeting was at the NTSB. Having so recently visited the ATSB, this felt like familiar territory. We focused a lot on what the Honourable Company members could do to help the NTSB with the provision of non-partisan expert advice and this seemed to be the key to gaining the interest of most of those we met in Washington. One of the main problems for the Board is reaching those GA pilots who need to be informed of safety matters and advice. AOPA in the USA has 400,000 of the 600,000 pilots as its members, but there are still 200,000 out of reach.

We discussed the airline problems of disconnect between the pilots and the aircraft because of increased automation leading to the reduction of flying skills, a familiar topic within our technical committees. Getting information to the pilots seems to be a big stumbling block.

After a short interlude visiting the Air and Space museum at the Smithsonian, guided by Bill Pinney, we had another useful meeting at the FAA. A free ranging discussion on the issues arising from UAVs/RPAS included the privacy issue, low flying and many of the interesting applications now being put forward by commercial companies. (Following this meeting a couple of long documents were forwarded to us on the state of play within the USA relating to regulation of RPAS.) We also covered aspects of NextGen, Performance based Navigation and Required Navigation Performance. Safety was clearly the underlying theme...
Our discussions also included some training issues especially at the lighter end of business aviation. This is exacerbated by the lack of suitable simulators and the requirements of training programmes for crossover training for already experienced pilots. The first meeting of the Honourable Company with the Helicopter Association International took place that afternoon. Time was spent in explaining our purpose and history and we also learnt about the origins of HAI and its membership. The President, Matt Zuccaro, was pleased to learn that the Master held a commercial helicopter licence and was also an instructor. Animated discussions on cooperative ventures then ensued and we were shown the conference facilities on the lower floor, which were offered to the Company free of charge if they wished to stage a conference. It seemed an ideal location to hold a joint safety based conference which could also attract new local members.

That evening Kent and I enjoyed dinner with Lucy Young, an American Airlines pilot who recently joined the Company, who had flown in from Charlotte, and Mike Zaytoff, a regional pilot from Vancouver, who had been at ICAO for a meeting and flown down from Montreal. It was a wide ranging discussion on all the issues we had been reviewing over the previous few days, collating our various experiences from Lucy and Kent's military backgrounds, Mike's regional experience, Lucy's airline and my GA and instructional experience.

Next day I left to fly home from Washington Dulles to London Heathrow, completing the circumnavigation of the world and a six-week tour. 14 commercial flights, 13 light aircraft or simulator trips, 28 different airports/airfields, 18 different beds!

One thing is certain, the Master's tour is very informative and well received in every country. We are proud of our overseas regions and our influence within the aviation communities should not be understated. The underlying message is that we can open doors, do things quietly and introduce people and expertise where it is needed.
INTRODUCTION
Work on the 'Enhancing our Professional Committees' programme in early 2014 showed that we would lose some important aspects of the existing structure if we stuck to the original concept I have previously outlined here. Unfortunately, conflicting diary commitments stopped us convening a meeting of all the stakeholders (committee chairmen, vice chairmen, sub-committee chairman, a committee member, Warden, the Master Elect, the Clerk and DAA) until late November 2014. However, at that meeting all present agreed first that change was necessary and then formulated and agreed a new proposal to put to the January 2015 Court. As I write, Court members have not been advised of that proposal so it is premature to include details here. However, I wanted to assure everyone that changes are still planned and these will offer increased participation by members not able to attend meetings in London. Further updates will follow.

CONSULTATION RESPONSES - 2014
2014 turned out to be a particularly busy year for aviation-related consultation. As part of our efforts to ensure the Air Pilots increasingly have a voice in these matters, we responded to the following consultations:

- London airspace proposals (specifically Gatwick procedures).
- CAA consultation on the scope and management of an area navigation (R.NAV1) mandate for the London terminal control area.
- Farnborough airspace change proposal.
- Birmingham airport Airspace change proposal.
- Birmingham airport Standard Instrument Departure routes.
- The House of Lords Select Committee on the European Union Sub-Committee B Internal Market, Infrastructure and Employment investigation into the civil use of Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems (RPAS) in the European Union.
- Aviation CHIRP 5-year review.
- Department for Transport (DfT) research into the economic impact of the UK GA sector.
- CAA proposal for the Future Structure of the CAA's Medical Department CAP 1214.

Sixty-five of our UK members were able to input their own views on the DfT research. Our formal written responses to the House of Lords, to the CHIRP Review and to the consultation on the future of the CAA Medical Department will become publicly available when the consultation reports are released but in the meantime they have been published on our website at [http://www.airpilots.org/aviation-matters/policy-and-comment/position-papers/] so that they are available now, to members and non-members alike.

UK MAA MID AIR COLLISION CONFERENCE
In November, the UK Military Aviation Authority (MAA) held the first of what will hopefully be an annual military flight safety conference. This year the topic was Mid Air Collision (MAC) and, demonstrating the importance that attached to the event, MAA Director General (DG), Air Marshal Dick Garwood introduced the conference and remained to the end.

Mid Air Collision sits within the top 5 risks for each of the UK military Operational Commanders with air assets. There is increasing pressure and desire to install Airborne Collision Avoidance Systems (ACAS) in all UK military aircraft though there was a view that this might not be possible in F-35/Lightning II. The UK military were also looking to General Aviation (GA) to increase their take-up of ACAS through ADS-B and for Commercial Air Transport (CAT) to stay inside the protection of controlled airspace as far as is possible and to avoid the temptation to 'cut the corners'.

A Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) speaker envisaged a future with integrated surveillance, (using largely satellite surveillance instead of radar surveillance) linked to on-platform electronic ID. CAA felt this, with ADS-B in use across the UK, would be the key to allowing GA and Unmanned Air Systems (UAS) access to airspace from which they are currently prohibited. It was also suggested that the airspace protection afforded to military and civil airfields was overdue for review; the suggestion that the current Air Traffic Zone/Military Air Traffic Zone structure might be redesigned to provide the protection actually needed for modern aircraft operations was most welcome.

From the desk of the Director Aviation Affairs
LIVERYMAN JOHN TURNER
Air Pilots Visit to the Metropolitan Police Air Support Unit
Lippitts Hill, 20 October 2014

LIVERYMAN PETER BARKER

On the western fringe of Epping Forest, rising to a height of three hundred feet, with a commanding view over the City of London, Lippitts Hill has long been recognised as a rather special location.

During the First World War Lippitts Hill was the site of one of the very first anti-aircraft gun emplacements. The site was developed further between the wars and then became the home of the US 184th AAA Battery during World War II. The gun emplacements and buildings remain, now listed, and rather than being preserved as a museum - and they are beautifully preserved - are put to good use with the addition of two small hangars as the Met Police Air Support Unit.

Where better could it be? Only six minutes flying time to Tower Bridge - and much less to many of the other 'interesting' areas of north and east London.

We were greeted by our trip organiser, Graham Powell and then welcomed to Lippitts Hill by Sgt Andy Hutchinson who gave us an illustrated briefing on the historic formation of the unit with its Bell 47 ‘MASH’ helicopter, then with Bell 222s, AS355s and now the very capable EC145s.

The roles covered by the unit include suspect searches, vehicle pursuit, missing persons, public order, crime reduction, dog handler deployment, counter terrorism and VIP escort. Andy explained in detail how each of these roles provides huge benefits in efficiency and effect on the ground which could not be achieved by any other means. Officers are able to be at the scene of a crime within minutes and, with the advantage of their comprehensive aerial view of the incident, are often best placed to take charge at the scene. An illustration of this was when the four London bombs went off on the 7th July 2005; all communications systems were swamped, there were conflicting reports flooding in and it was only with the benefit of the overall view from the MPASU helicopter above, that a clear assessment of the situation could be made and control taken.

Andy explained that the unit is staffed by 18 Constables and three Sergeants headed by an Inspector; the pilots are none - police members of staff usually ex-services and currently mostly ex Royal Navy. Because of the specialist nature of the job, all the police members of staff are selected from volunteers who are then rigorously filtered through a selection process - a very necessary procedure because during operations, and in some of the situations that they find themselves in, they are frequently required to punch well above their rank - with no extra pay!

Yes, Andy’s technical presentation was entertaining and welcomingly laced with humour.

Our visit to the engineering hangar revealed the beauty and complexities of the stripped down EC145; one helicopter is usually in the hangar being serviced by the full time engineers whilst the other two are on standby or in service. Operational configurations can be swiftly changed from the standard observational role to provide seating for the swift deployment of anti-terrorist teams.

We were delighted to see some action as the duty helicopter deployed from its helipad and then to follow its progress on the large screen monitors in the control room. We followed the action as the camera zoomed in to track suspect cars on the motorway, the number plates and the plainly oblivious drivers all clearly visible. It was particularly impressive to see the helicopter break off to fly several miles in just minutes to assist a ground team locate an escaping burglar - and to see the criminal brought down by the police dog. The steadiness and quality of the pictures, often taken at great range, from the external camera is astonishing.

Our final briefing was by pilot Justin Wells who explained how the helicopters are crewed by one pilot and two police officers whose duties include all aspects relating to policing allowing the pilot to be unencumbered in his piloting. The crews work on a 4 day on, 4 off, 4 night on, 4 off rota, a system proved to work well.

We were intrigued to be told that, in this day of GPS and modern electronics, navigation is still based on an A to Z road map. It seems that the system works really well, especially as the pilot becomes familiar with London – “go to Page 54” is easily understood both on the ground and in the air and there is little room for confusion!

By way of contrast, you can now follow the MPASU on Twitter: @MPSinthesky
You might also like to take a look at the MPASU website: http://content.met.police.uk/Site/airsupportunit where you can see video clips and much, much more! Our grateful thanks to Graham Powell for his organisation and to Andy Hutchinson and Justin Wells and the other members of the MPASU who

The Company visitors on the helipad
Following the completion of my commercial pilot training at the Oxford Aviation Academy, I spent the first five years flying with a well-known Irish LCC on various routes around Europe and while it was an interesting and enjoyable experience, I decided that I would like to broaden my horizons and experience flying in a completely different part of the world. As luck would have it, the Japanese airline ANA (All Nippon Airways) was recruiting pilots for their 'Air Japan' subsidiary flying Boeing 767s out of Tokyo, Japan. This seemed like too good an opportunity to pass up and I promptly submitted my application. A few weeks later I found myself boarding a flight to Japan for an interview and SIM assessment, although naturally excited I was also more than a little anxious about not knowing what to expect, especially since I had never previously flown east of Corfu!

On my return to the UK and having learnt of my success in passing the interview and a very thorough SIM assessment, which was conducted with no less than 4 checkers/observers in the SIM (this is the norm for any check in Japan) it was back to Japan to begin eight months of training in order to gain a Japanese ATPL and the 767 type rating. The ATPL study consisted of the usual Air Law and Regulations along with a generous helping of Radio Law and theory thrown in, thankfully, all translated into English! I thoroughly enjoyed the simulator training especially the 1st phase which was for the issue of the 767 type rating which involved a lot of hand flying while undertaking interesting maneuvers such as circling approaches and low level circuits off visual patterns. The 2nd phase of training was for the issue of the ATPL which assessed command decision making and overall situational awareness. Although recruited as a first officer, all of the SIM training is conducted and assessed as PIC while flying in the left hand seat. Both of these phases as well as the yearly simulator check include a mandatory visual traffic pattern just for the first officers. Although very enjoyable there is slightly more pressure on you since it is a pass/fail item that unfortunately we do not get to practise very often or at all in air transport operations.

After successfully completing the simulator training, the next phase OJT (operational job training) began. It was a great feeling to be finally getting into a real 767 after over six months of training but frustratingly you are only permitted to fly two take offs and two landings during the whole of the OJT, this is the Japanese way and it is much improved on having had none in the past. Nonetheless you are kept very busy undertaking the role of PM (pilot monitoring) that literally does everything in the cockpit except fly.

Since finishing training and having been “flying the line” for a number of months now I can honestly say that flying a 767, in this part of the world, has been a very exciting and rewarding experience so far and I am really glad now that I made the move. Although I am still getting used to the “back of the clock” type of flying that is required for the cargo trips.

With only approximately 220 pilots in the Air Japan group you get to know everyone quite quickly and it is a very close knit community. As well as Japanese management pilots who come over from the mainline carrier we have expat pilots from all over the world with a very diverse range of flying backgrounds and experience.

Our main base of operations is Narita International Airport just north of Tokyo where we fly both passenger and cargo flights. The cargo flights transit through our cargo hub in Naha on the island of Okinawa which is ideally situated as a transfer station between the cargo destinations. The routes we currently fly for ANA take us as far east as Hawaii and as far west as Singapore and pretty much every major and not so major airport in-between. We have a number of destinations in China which is an interesting area to operate into but can become very challenging very quickly.

The commuting between the UK and Japan is also very easy with a direct ANA business class ticket to Heathrow on my allocated days off each month. To anyone considering a career flying in this part of the world, especially Japan, I would highly recommend it.
An Exercise in Decision Making

Why ‘Biggles Biplane’ wasn’t the First in France

LIVERYMAN STEPHEN SLATER

A few months ago, I wrote an article on our preparations for a flight across the Channel in our Royal Aircraft Factory BE-2c replica on the centenary of the first-ever aerial deployment of an air force to a theatre of action on 13th August 1914. The last Air Pilot also carried an excellent article by Freeman Ron Gammons on the subsequent commemorations in France, but we were absent. So what happened?

Well, the exercise turned into an object lesson in decision-making. Along the way, we learned some intriguing new information about the BE-2 and its flying characteristics, and we returned to our base at Sywell with an even greater respect for the airmanship of the original pilots of No.2 Squadron RFC, who made that first crossing.

Their flight from Swingate Down near Dover, to Amiens in France was an unprecedented feat. In the five years after Louis Bleriot’s faltering first crossing, probably only around 50 pilots had flown the Channel. Yet all twelve BE-2 aircraft of No.2 Squadron safely made the crossing and in the opening weeks of the Great War, more than 60 RFC aircraft successfully made landfall in France.

History of course, records that Lieutenant Hubert Harvey-Kelly was famously “the First in France”, in breach of an order from his Commanding Officer, Major Charles Burke, that “all aeroplanes were to take off and land in Squadron order.” While the rest of the squadron navigated along the French coast and along the River Somme, Harvey-Kelly had flown a direct compass course across country, beating his commanding officer by two minutes.

TALE OF A TAIL

Just before our departure we were able to create a bit of a stir among historians when we positively identified for the first time, precisely which aircraft Harvey-Kelly had used to arrive in France. For most of the past century, it was assumed that his mount had been a BE-2 with the tail code ‘347’. The assumption was based on a photograph, held by the Imperial War Museum, which shows Harvey-Kelly reclining against a haystack next to his aircraft. While used by contemporary newspapers to illustrate “The First in France”, it turns out that the aircraft in the picture never made it as far as the English Channel.

The photograph was in fact taken on the moors above Whitby in North Yorkshire, when No.2 Squadron was heading south from its base at Montrose in Scotland. A day or so later the aircraft was damaged but undaunted, Harvey-Kelly made his way to the Royal Aircraft Factory at Farnborough and took over another, newly-built aircraft.

In preparation for the WW1 centennial commemorations, we had been liaising closely with the Western Front Association and its Vice-President Graham Parker, and one day he said he had an interesting document for us. It turned out to be a faded, typewritten copy of Major Burke’s diary for the day of the crossing. In addition to giving a first-hand account of the crossing, the diary page contained a list of each aircraft and the pilot flying it.

It was a bitter-sweet moment for us. On one hand we had uncovered a piece of history and we now knew definitively the correct number. The bad news was, that having flown our aircraft as ‘347’ for the past three years, we now had to remake the rudder with the correct code, carrying number “471” in commemoration of Harvey-Kelly and the aviators of a century ago.

BEST LAID PLANS

It was planned that our BE-2 replica would be a centre-piece of WW1 commemorations at Dover, Amiens and at the Royal Flying Corps Memorial at Arras. In addition to our BE-2c, it was
also hoped that two New Zealand-built 1917 BE-2e replicas, at the time based at Old Warden, as well as a flock of de Havilland Moths, would all make the channel crossing, aiming to alight in Amiens 100 years to the day from the first arrivals.

Sadly the aftermath of Hurricane Bertha was set to throw a spanner in our works. Vintage biplanes, with low wing loadings, poor gust response and almost zero cross-wind capability are not good bedfellows with blustery conditions. Adding to the challenge is our low cruising speed and relatively limited range. At 65 knots, and 90 minutes of fuel at best, we even needed an intermediate fuel halt just to get from Sywell to Headcorn!

DECISION TIME
As the winds resolutely refused to drop below 15 knots gusting 25 knots, we elected to ‘use up’ our planned weather day on Monday 11th August. An early start on Tuesday 12th, the day ahead of the actual centenary, we thought would at least get us as far as Headcorn, where we were due to fly along the white cliffs in the company of (well it was never going to be a formation) a No.2 Squadron RAF Tornado.

We eventually deemed the wind (just) within our limits and with co-owner Matt Boddington at the helm, launched from Sywell on Tuesday 12th. As we flew overhead Old Warden, their hangar doors remained firmly closed, a good call I think; their BE-2e replicas are even more kite-like than ours!

One characteristic that we had never experienced previously came to light in the turbulent conditions. The BE-2’s relatively small tailplane in comparison to its wing area led to a pitch up movement with every gust, with the elevator loads then kicking the stick back into the pilot’s stomach. Subsequent investigation reveals that the tailplane area was doubled late in 1914. Now we know why!

A couple or three bumpy hours later (and after a thought-provoking take-off into curlover at the end of Stapleford’s runway), Headcorn hove into view. The inevitable low level turbulence meant that we were right on the limits of controllability when we ‘arrived’ and to make matters worse, the RAF’s media department had ensured a healthy sprinkling of TV cameras and press photographers!

With the wind still building, the BE-2’s gust responses made it just too risky to take to the air again, whatever the media commitments. Instead, as we posed for press photos and TV interviews the Tornado came to us, with a spectacular pair of flybys which delighted the Headcorn locals!

Thereafter the priorities were (1) a hangar for the BE-2, where we replaced an undercarriage bungee which had suffered in the gusty arrivals. Fortunately we had loaded the appropriate spares in our trusty Zafira support vehicle (thank you Vauxhall), and (2) a bar and stiff drink for Matt! I am glad to say that Headcorn and its environs furnished both!
SLOW RETURN
On Wednesday we planned an early start for France, but continuing high winds meant the channel crossing and arrival in time for the planned ceremonials in Amiens was out of the question. A dozen or so hardy souls in Moths did battle through, with the Royal Flying Corps wreath that we were due to carry being delivered to Amiens by Past Master Dick Felix in his Hornet Moth.

However the slower speed, smaller fuel tank and poorer controllability of the BE meant it would have been foolhardy for us to try. With thunderstorms likely to force diversions from our route there would even have been doubts as to whether we could reach our planned destinations, and the need for into-wind grass runways for our brakeless tailskid aircraft meant that few diversions would have been appropriate.

We did at least get within sight of France, as we made a personal flypast over the white cliffs and Swingate Down where the aircraft departed 100 years ago, then slowly headed back to Northamptonshire. With another 20 knot headwind, our return ground speed was just 45 knots!

So, France 2014 has left us with unfinished business. It therefore remains our goal in 2015 to get the BE-2 over the Western Front and indeed, to commemorate another feat of aviation by the Royal Flying Corps. What is that feat? Well you'll need to wait until next year to find out!

Matt Boddington and Stephen Slater are determined to try again this year

The wreath, delivered by Past Master Dick Felix in his Hornet Moth

The BE2 back safe and sound, ready for another attempt
Commanding Officer of the Royal Navy Historic Flight, Lieutenant Commander Chris Götke Royal Navy displayed exemplary airmanship when the Fly Navy Heritage Trust's Hawker Sea Fury T20 G-RNHF (VX281) suffered engine failure during a display manoeuvre at Royal Naval Air Station Culdrose Air Day on 31 July 2014, forcing him to take swift action and carry out a dramatic emergency landing.

Lt Cdr Götke's quick thinking and outstanding flying skills in a situation that demanded split second decision-making, undoubtedly averted disaster, avoided any loss of life or injury and saved a rare and historically significant heritage aircraft.

“The Sea Fury T20, which is based with the Royal Navy Historic Flight (an Affiliated Unit of the Honourable Company) at RNAS Yeovilton, lost power at a critical point in the display” said Commodore Bill Covington, a Trustee of the Fly Navy Heritage Trust. “Chris did a fantastic job. The Sea Fury is a large, high performance aircraft, representing the pinnacle of piston-engined fighter design and Chris was carrying out a well-rehearsed display routine. The aircraft had just started a descent from 2000 feet when significant vibration was felt from the engine.”

This was initially thought to be the engine running rough. Chris closed the throttle gently and zooming to height positioned the aircraft for low key left to the duty runway. With his speed falling below 200 knots but still expecting to have sufficient power to make the airfield, he lowered the landing gear and made a pan call to the Tower. Within seconds it rapidly became apparent, however, that the engine had lost power and the glide angle would not allow the aircraft to reach the airfield.

“The situation was now very much more serious” continued Bill Covington. “The aircraft went into a steep dive and Chris had barely 15 seconds to respond to and recover from a complex, fast moving and extremely hazardous changing set of circumstances. It is difficult to imagine a more daunting prospect than engine failure at a critical point in a public air display, or any greater demonstration of conspicuous courage in the air under such intense pressure. Exercising superb judgement Chris made a series of calm, clear thinking and instantaneous decisions displaying a level of proficiency and airmanship rarely seen even among the most experienced of pilots. In order to improve the glide angle, the gear was selected up again and the propeller pitch (RPM) coarsened to get the aircraft flying again. Once the gear was up he extended the flaps for maximum lift.”

Simultaneously, Chris made an assessment of the surrounding fields with a view to making an emergency landing. His wheels were up in preparation, but the fields were small and surrounded by dry stone walls. Any attempt to land in these conditions would have been too dangerous. At this point – and with his options rapidly diminishing, Chris felt he would have to jump out of the aircraft. “It was a horrible, horrible feeling” said Chris. “I didn't want to abandon the aircraft but I certainly thought at this point that this was it!”

However, barely 5 seconds later with the wheels retracted again, the glide angle improved and the sight line rate started to work just sufficiently for Chris to make another rapid decision; not now to jettison the canopy, check his parachute harness and jump – but to stay with the
Aircraft.

Again, with split second timing he aimed to the left and short of the runway, lowered the landing gear once more, at particularly low level, and finding he had a little more energy, flew the aircraft over the airfield boundary and onto the main runway.

“By any standards, it was a superlative achievement and an exemplar piece of flying” continued Commodore Covington. “Even on touchdown, when the wheels did not quite lock into place causing the aircraft to collapse on its undercarriage, Chris still demonstrated impeccable skill, carrying out a textbook forced landing ensuring minimum damage to a magnificent historic aircraft.”

The accident and emergency services at RNAS Culdrose were on the scene immediately and Lt Cdr Götke escaped injury and climbed out of the aircraft unhurt. A photographer who witnessed the crash said “I was filming the display when I noticed smoke billowing from the Sea Fury’s engine. The pilot diverted around the edge of the crowd and was obviously heading in to make a swift landing. Great skill and calm was shown by the pilot. There was a spontaneous round of applause when the pilot emerged from the aircraft.”

Speaking after the incident Mike Nixon, Chief Executive of the Fly Navy Heritage Trust said “Carrying out a successful forced landing in one of these heavy fast heritage aircraft is extremely difficult. Lt Cdr Götke ably demonstrated his skills as a Royal Navy graduate of ETPS, quickly assessing the situation and putting the aircraft down safely in extremely difficult circumstances.”

The challenges of flying historic aircraft are greatly underestimated and there are no simulators to train for such emergency procedures. Handling an emergency in a historic aircraft is not something that can be practiced and Chris had barely 60 seconds from first realising he had a problem to putting the aircraft safely on the ground.

The event was a public display at Royal Naval Air Station Culdrose in Cornwall in front of a crowd of 23,000. Chris dismisses his heroic action but his passion and love of flying has inspired millions at air shows and events around the country and he is unanimously respected as a gifted display pilot and a champion of the Royal Navy’s aviation heritage.

An assessment of the damage by the specialists at Weald Aviation who maintain the Sea Fury T20 is that while she will certainly need a new Centaurus 18 engine; she is eminently repairable. “The offers of help have been incredible” said Tim Manna, a Trustee of the Fly Navy Heritage Trust. “We still need considerable financial support but are devoting all resources to getting her back in the air again. The engine is currently under investigation with 1710 Naval Air Squadron but the airframe is in excellent condition.”

“It was a pretty close thing that’s for sure” said Chris who was featured on the BBC One Close Calls on Camera programme in October. “The Sea Fury is such a magnificent aircraft and was one of the most successful and popular aircraft operated by the post war Fleet Air Arm. It proved particularly successful during intensive carrier operations in Korea in the 1950s, flying thousands of missions and famously being credited with the shooting down of a MiG-15.”

Owned by the Fly Navy Heritage Trust, the Royal Navy charity that preserves and promotes the nation’s Naval Aviation Heritage, the Sea Fury has been a powerful brand signature for the Trust over the past three years attracting great excitement and interest at air shows and events up and down the country.

“Her power, grace and high performance are phenomenal” said Chris “I can’t wait to get her flying again.” Chris who saw operational service in the Sea Harrier and served with the Fast Jet Test Squadron at QinetiQ Boscombe Down as the test pilot for the VAAC Harrier, the unique ‘fly by wire’ test bed for the control philosophy for the Joint Strike Fighter, hopes to fly the F-35 from the new Queen Elizabeth Class aircraft carriers.

Speaking of Lt Cdr Chris Götke’s close call, Liveryman Captain Eric ‘Winkle’ Brown CBE DSC AFC Royal Navy, the Royal Navy’s most decorated and distinguished Naval Test Pilot, pictured with Chris in front of the Sea Fury T20 the day before RNAS Culdrose Air Day, said of Chris’ skilful emergency landing: “It was a pretty amazing piece of flying! There couldn’t have been a better person at the controls. Chris, the entire aviation community salutes you! Chris’ flying skills, which would have been outstanding in a modern aircraft, were altogether exceptional in a 60 year old piston fighter. His quick thinking, exemplary airmanship and total dedication to duty stand out as one of the finest examples of gallantry in the air in recent years.”

To support the Fly Navy Heritage Trust and help get Sea Fury T20 G-RNHF flying again please donate to fnht.co.uk/t20-appeal.html or send a cheque made payable to the Fly Navy Heritage Trust, to Fly Navy Heritage Trust, RNAS Yeovilton, Ilchester, Somerset BA22 8HW.
Freeman Steve Bridgewater takes to the skies with the world's only privately owned full-time, jet aerobatic team.

"Breitling Team Check In..." commands Team Leader (and Founder) Jacques Bothelin. "Un", "Deux", "Trois", "Quatre", "Cinq", "Six", "Sept!" followed the chorus of pilots as each pilot called out in turn. With the register taken it was time to get the show on the road.

"Fairford Tower, Breitling team is ready for taxi."

"Breitling Team, good afternoon, you're clear taxi to the hold, report ready for departure."

And so begins the ride of a lifetime.

RIAT

It is the Friday before the International Air Tattoo at RAF Fairford, Gloucestershire and I'm strapped into an Aero L-39 Albatros jet trainer belonging to the Dijon based Breitling Jet Team - the only full time, civilian jet aerobatic team in the world.

I've done a little bit of formation flying in my time, but never with so many aeroplanes and as we line up for take off the runway seems awash with jets. Luckily, for everyone concerned, I'm merely here as an enthusiastic passenger today and it is soon evident that the workload is high. As the crews run through their last-minute checks I glance left and a cheery wave from ITV West Country Tonight's Cordelia Lynch catches my eye. I nonchalantly wave back (well, she is pretty so it'd be rude not to!). I glance right and 'Captain of Industry' Sir James Dyson nods his head to signify his readiness. Directly ahead, in the leader's jet, is 18 year-old Air Cadet Warrant Officer Connor Miller, a member of 2478 (Abergavenny) Sqn who was selected to fly for his commitment to aviation and his regular voluntary work at RIAT. Speaking to him later, he confided: "[it was] one of the best things I have ever done in my life."

We may be an incongruous group of passengers, but in the front of each jet are some of the most experienced pilots in the world - in my case Christophe Deketelaere (known simply as 'Douky' to his friends and team members). Douky has more than 5,000 hours flying in fast jets and was a former SEPECAT Jaguar and Dassault Alpha Jet jockey in the French Air Force. He flies aircraft number 4, is an incredible pilot, and has an odd habit of humming, singing and whistling whilst performing the most extreme close formation flying!

ROLLING

A shade before 12.30, 'Breitling Team' is cleared to take off and Douky spooled the Ivchenko AI-25TL turbofan up as we held on the brakes. The Russian Ivchenko engine is capable of producing nearly 3,800lb of thrust and is notoriously loud and smoky - yet here in my glass cocoon all was peaceful and tranquillity reigned, the only real sound coming from the air conditioning fans. If it were not for the firm seat containing the parachute and rockets for the ejection system, one could almost describe the surroundings as civilised. It was certainly easy to forget you were sitting in an Eastern Bloc military jet dating back more than 40 years.

"Are you happy?" asks Douky.

"Good to go!" I grin.

"OK then, we're rolling!"

As the brakes are released there's a gentle push in the back as the engine bites at the air and starts to propel the aircraft down the runway. I glance down at the stark, grey instrument panel (certainly a throw-back to the communist days) and my eye falls on the ASI. It's winding up quickly now and Douky eases back on the stick as we pass 190km/h. [Interestingly, in another throw-back to its Soviet Bloc design roots, the L-39's gauges are calibrated in Metric rather than Imperial figures. 190km/h equates to roughly 103kts].

WAKE SEPARATION

The team takes off in two sections, a first group of four aircraft and a second group of three, with the initial section taking off flapless. The second section uses a take-off flap setting and, as a result, is airborne prior to the leaders - thus ensuring it is above and clear of the wake-turbulence left behind.

With the gear retracting, the pilots slide their aircraft into position as we exit the airfield to the west and start to climb.

"We like to fly close," laughs Douky, "never more than 9ft apart!"

The warm air means it is slightly bumpy at low altitude but the aircraft remain in rock-steady formation. Looking around it is formation grins as far as I can see.
CLIMB FOR HEIGHT

Flying solo, the L-39 has a climb rate exceeding 4,000ft/min, but in close formation and with the pressures of air traffic restrictions, we had a more sedate climb today. Upfront, Jacques has been negotiating a climb to 6,000ft and we've been allocated a 'practice box' close to Keevil airfield. At the controls, Douky sings quietly to himself, adding to the serenity of the experience. The air is much calmer up here and the ride is incredibly smooth.

The L-39's cockpit seems vast, the large clear canopy extending ahead of us and tapering to a stylish point towards the nose. Even with my straps tight I can look over my shoulder and see the leading edge of the wing and the big wingtip fuel tanks with their landing lights twinkling.

G FORCE

Soon though, that serenity is over as the team prepares to run through some of its signature manoeuvres. After a quick check that everyone is OK Jacques calls the team into formation and the nose drops. The wind noise increases significantly as the speed increases through 500km/h to 550km/h and then, ultimately, 610km/h [330kts]. “Here we go,” calls Douky as he hauls back on the stick and the G Force piles on. The 'G' is now piling on again as we approach the bottom of the loop and Douky 'blips' the air brake lever to maintain our position relative to the leader. The L-39 is a slippery aircraft and can gain speed in a flash. Conversely, the Ivchenko engine can take what seems like an eternity to spool up from low power settings, so the team flies the formation at a constant power setting and uses the air brake - rather than the throttle - to maintain position.

EXIT STRATEGY

Jacques later told me that although the L-39 is a great display aircraft, the altimeter and ASI are not very accurate, especially at the top of a loop. “We tend to fly more by feel than by 'numbers' and speeds,” he explained. “We do have gate heights and speeds to maintain but the crucial thing is to have enough energy when you enter a manoeuvre. You need enough to complete it, or you need enough to exit it if anything untoward happens. If we haven’t got the required energy or height at the top of a loop we will simply roll out - which uses less energy.”

It is also interesting to note that the team actually practises very little for its displays. “We fly the same routine every year and our pilots are full-time,” explained Jacques over a post-flight coffee. “As such we don't have to retrain new pilots each year like the military teams. Likewise, our pilots are allocated a position in the formation and that never changes, unlike the military teams who may fly a different 'slot' each season.

AEROS

Next up is a lazy barrel roll, arching around the blue skies with white puffy clouds dancing around the canopy. I look left and catch a glimpse of Cordelia, hanging in her straps with a grin from ear to ear; her aircraft - flown by former Mirage 2000 and Rafale pilot Frederic 'Fredo' Schwebel - hangs onto our wingtip as the background blurs from green to blue again.

Then the 'G' mounts again as we zoom skywards into a wide wingover before heading back to RAF Fairford. I'm completely disorientated at this point;
I've spent so long admiring the view I'm no longer sure which way is up or which way is home!

**RUN & BREAK**

Fairford asks us to hold for a few moments before we rejoin the circuit and Jacques flies a lazy orbit to position the team over the Cotswold Water Park for rejoin. All seven aircraft whistle downwind in close formation before rolling out on the centreline for a run and break, with Douky's the seventh and final aircraft to break. The smoke comes on at crowd centre and in turn each pilot hauls his jet up and out of the formation before breaking downwind to land. The 'G' increases again as we join the end of the queue, but it is obvious the manoeuvre has worked perfectly as we can see six perfectly spaced jets ahead of us on the downwind leg.

**LANDING BACK**

Established on the downwind leg, Douky lowers the landing gear at 350km/h [190kts] and adjusts the power to suit. Once again he has to be aware of the time the jet takes to spool up to power, so he and his team members opt to fly the circuit at a higher power setting and adjust speed with the powerful air brakes. This way, power can be delivered much quicker if a 'go-around' is required. “With so many aircraft ahead it can be quite turbulent,” explains Douky, “so I like to keep the speed as high as possible to help cut through the air.”

As the speed descends through 300km/h [160kts] the first stage of flap is selected and the power adjusted to maintain separation from the aircraft ahead. Then, with the approach clear, Douky rolls us onto Final approach and descends through 220km/h [120kts] as the tyres meet the tarmac once again. The nose is held high on landing, keeping the nose wheel from touching the runway for aerodynamic reasoning - or to save on brake-wear as Jacques likes to say. It also looks great from a showmanship point of view.

**JET FUEL**

We taxi back into position in line astern, our senses being assaulted by the whine of the turbine and the scent of burnt jet fuel as we catch the efflux of the six machines ahead.

A sudden roar makes us both start, and a Eurofighter Typhoon blasts off into its practice display. “Now that is seriously cool!” remarks Douky.

“Better than a Rafale?” I ask probingly... I just get a chuckle in return.

“So is the L-39 the ideal display ship?” I ask. “It's a compromise,” Douky admits. “As a pilot you always need 'more', you want more speed, more manoeuvrability, more visibility, but I think the L-39 is the best compromise. It's exciting yet affordable, and after all we have no government backing so somebody has to pay the bills. You can get spares; they are reliable; they're attractive, and they are certainly fun to fly.”

I really can't argue with that, but when it comes to creating a symphony in the sky the Breitling Jet Team and the L-39 must surely be Top Guns.

With the 'bang-seats' made safe by the ground crew we climb from the aircraft and Douky puts his arm around me.

“Did you like that?” he asks. “Oh yes,” I reply, “you can be my wingman any time!”

“Oh no,” he replies. “You can be mine!”

Douky, it'd be an honour and a pleasure, Sir.

“In a throw-back to its Soviet Bloc roots, the L-39s gauges are calibrated in Metric rather than Imperial figures”

“We like to fly close; never more than 9ft apart!”

“The formation drifts effortlessly around the top of the loop, the speed dropping as we hang in our straps”

“Next is a lazy barrel roll, arching around the blue skies with white puffy clouds dancing around the canopy”

“We taxi back, our senses assaulted by the scent of burnt jet fuel as we catch the efflux of the six machines ahead”