DECEMBER 2015
17 New Members’ Briefing Cobham House
17 8th General Purposes and Finance Committee Meeting Cobham House
17 Carol Service St Michael’s Cornhill
17 Christmas Supper The Counting House
18 Office closes

JANUARY 2016
4 Office opens Cobham House
14 Benevolent Fund Board of Trustees AGM RAF Club
21 9th General Purposes and Finance Committee Meeting Cutlers’ Hall
21 5th Court Meeting Cutlers’ Hall
21 Court Election Dinner

FEBRUARY 2016
2 Luncheon Club RAF Club
11 General Purposes and Finance Committee Meeting Cobham House

MARCH 2016
3 General Purposes and Finance Committee Meeting Cobham House
3 Court Meeting Cutlers’ Hall
7 Company Annual Service St Michael’s, Cornhill
7 AGM, Installation and Supper Merchant Taylors’ Hall
10 Aptitude Testing RAF Cranwell
10 Lord Mayor’s Dinner for Masters Guildhall
11 United Guilds Service St Pauls Cathedral
11 Lunch with Fanmakers Company Skinners Hall

VISITS PROGRAMME
Please see the flyers accompanying this issue of Air Pilot or contact Liveryman David Curgenven at visits@airpilots.org. These flyers can also be downloaded from the Company’s website. Please check on Company website for visits that are to be confirmed.

GOLF CLUB EVENTS
Please check on Company website for latest information
A message from your Editor...

Yet again it was humbling to listen to the citations of the Award winners at this year’s Trophies and Awards Banquet, a report on the event can be found in this issue. It was particularly gratifying for this elderly military aviator to see the UK Military Search and Rescue Force honoured after so many years of outstanding work. Whist I am sure we shall see worthy civilian Search and Rescue winners of the Prince Philip Helicopter Rescue Award in the future, I am reminded of a comment made to me recently by a fellow yachtsman at the bar of my Yacht Club. We were discussing the contractorisation of Search and Rescue; he observed, perhaps tongue in cheek, that we might now see a card machine coming down on the end of the winch wire rather than a crewman, with a note asking for one’s PIN to be inserted before rescue.

This year there have been a large number of very interesting visits undertaken by Company members. You will find reports in this issue on visits to the Chelsea Hospital, the RAF College Cranwell, RAF Coningsby, Cardington, Britten-Norman at Lee-on-Solent and RAF Halton, all undertaken over the last three months. Liverymen David Curgenven and his team of helpers deserve great credit for organising such a diverse array of places for us to visit, the popularity of these events is measured by the regular need for a ballot as they are nearly always over-subscribed. My thanks go to those members who not only took the trouble to write up these events but also to supply me with the essential photographs.

Shortly after the Trophies and Awards Banquet the Master and his Lady set off for their Tour of the Regions. It got off to a slow start, with a long delay at LHR owing to an unserviceable BA A380 and a crew who ran out of duty time, but the latest intelligence that I have is all is going well. We look forward to seeing them both again at the Carol Service and Supper and hearing how it all went.

It only remains for me to urge you all to send in contributions for the February issue, whose theme will be orientated very much towards Scholarships and Bursaries. May I take this opportunity to wish you the Compliments of the Season and a Safe and Happy New Year of Aviation.

Liveryman Tom Eeles
Honorary Editor
VISIT TO BERRY BROTHERS

Sue Jones, the Master’s Consort, reports that ‘Thirty ladies from both the Air Pilots and other City of London Livery Companies met at Berry Bros and Rudd in St James, London, for a luncheon with fine wines on Wednesday 7th October. Lance Jefferson, the Director to the Chairman’s Office, hosted the event and did a marvellous job in taking us on an exploration of vineyards of both France and Hungary. We all assembled in the Napoleon Cellar, where we were served Berry’s UK Cuvee, Grand Cru, from Mailly. The pre-lunch gathering was an excellent opportunity for the ladies of the Air Pilots to meet current and former Mistresses and Consorts from other Livery Companies. At 1 pm we sat down at the splendid long table in the Cellar. Lance welcomed us to Berry’s and gave a brief history of the company, the building and his role. He also remarked that he had never hosted 30 ladies at such an event. Before each course he gave us an informative explanation of each wine, the grape, the vineyard and terroir, and why each wine should complement its corresponding dish on the menu. Our first course was parsnip veloute, chestnuts and stilton fritters accompanied by a white Rhone, 2013 Viognier, Vin de Pays Principaute d’Orange, from Domaine de la Janasse. We followed with ballotine of coq au vin, baked potato puree and charred onions, accompanied by a red Burgundy 2009 Berry’s Gevrey-Chambertin from Domaine Rossignol-Trapet. Dessert was delightful, a twice-baked quince with rosemary crumble and quince custard which went extremely well with a 2008 Berry’s Tokaji Aszu, from Hungary. Finally we concluded with Berry’s selected coffee and chocolates. As always Berry’s hospitality was second to none. Chris and I have been many times over the years, not only to attend their wine school but also to enjoy their fine wine luncheons and dinners in a relaxed and convivial atmosphere. Details of all these can be found on their website. This occasion did not disappoint and I am sure that many of those who attended for the first time will return. As one lady noted in her letter of thanks, life is too short to drink poor wine. Sincere thanks go to Lance and all the team at Berry’s who made the luncheon such a success.’

CANBERRA BOYS

Liveryman Andrew Brookes, Chief Executive of the Air League, has been commissioned to edit a new book, ‘Canberra Boys’, in Grub Street’s popular series. He is seeking reminiscences and stories from Canberra pilots and navigators and would encourage anyone with a good tale to tell to contact him at andrew.brookes@airleague.co.uk.

ROYAL INSTITUTE OF NAVIGATION (RIN) ‘TOP NAV’ COMPETITION 2015

Liveryman Professor Diana Green reports that ‘On 15th July 2015, John Davy and I were presented by His Royal Highness Prince Philip with two “Top Nav” prizes.

We had entered the “Top Nav” competition for the first time in 2014 as complete novices in preparation for entering another European precision flying competition in Cognac (the biennial Cognac Rally) and we were lucky enough to get second prize in the the “Top Nav South” competition, based at White Waltham.

This fired our enthusiasm to improve our performance and hopefully win the competition in 2015!

What is “Top Nav”?;

The Royal Institute of Navigation (RIN) has run an annual “TopNav” competition annually for many years. The aim is to encourage and preserve precision navigation using a map, compass and clock.....Quite a challenge in these days of GPS and planning and navigation tools such as Sky Demon available on iPads and mobile phones.....The competition involves a prescribed and planned flight of about 90 minutes. Some elements change from year to year. In 2015, it was open to all types of aircraft, including microlights, helicopters, autogyros and SLMG/TMG with a minimum of two crew with the addition of an opportunity for single-seaters (there are shorter routes and reduced entrance fees with crews including a navigator under 18 years of age.)
A further change in 2015 was to run the competition in three regions:

- The South at White Waltham
- The North, at Sherburn in Elmet
- The West, at Bodmin

This seems to have helped increase the number of entrants.

**What’s involved?**

The main competition involves planning a prescribed route, using conventional planning tools, then flying it as accurately as possible within a timescale related to aircraft type and cruising speed using conventional navigating aids. The planning involves a conventional PLOG, planning a suitable altitude and calculating the ETA at the various turning points as well as a note about any projected deviations for hazards (eg gliding sites).

The turning points were specific features which had to be photographed…. (no turning back and flying around them several times if you want to win!!!) Each participating aircraft carries a tracker that records the route flown and the time. At the end of the flight, time is allowed for notes to be added to the Log explaining the reasons for any changes to the plan.

It is essentially a competition run to the same rules in all venues. All participants meet at their chosen base at the same time, are given the route and have to plan it and prepare their PLOG. This is an essential part of the process of developing skills…. In 2014, John and I had to re-learn planning with a Whizz Wheel! In 2015, using our regenerated skills, we ended up helping some of the first time participants with the planning process…

The Southern Competition involved flying from White Waltham around a route which took us to Wiltshire and flying from White Waltham around a route which took us to Wiltshire and route which took us to Wiltshire and route which took us to Wiltshire and route which took us to Wiltshire and route which took us to Wiltshire and route which took us to Wiltshire and route which took us to Wiltshire and route which took us to Wiltshire and route which took us to Wiltshire and route which took us to Wiltshire and route which took us to Wiltshire and route which took us to Wiltshire and route which took us to Wiltshire and route which took us to Wiltshire and route which took us to Wiltshire and route which took us to Wiltshire and route which took us to Wiltshire and route which took us to Wiltshire and route which took us to Wiltshire and route which took us to Wiltshire and route which took us to Wiltshire and route which took us to Wiltshire and route which took us to Wiltshire and route which took us to Wiltshire and route which took us to Wiltshire and route which took us to Wiltshire and route which took us to Wiltshire and route which took us to Wiltshire and route which took us to Wiltshire and route which took us to Wiltshire and route which took us to Wiltshire and route which took us to Wiltshire and route which took us to Wiltshire and route which took us to Wiltshire and route which took us to Wiltshire.

The weather that morning was pretty poor with strong winds and lowish cloud, but by the time planning and lunch had been completed, the weather had improved enough for the competitors to set off on their timed starts.

It was great, if very demanding, FUN!

We thought we had done quite well but were aware that the number of entrants and the handicapping system for experience might count against us.

So it was a great surprise to find that we had won both the Southern Competition and won the 1st prize for overall performance nationally! It was a pleasure and a delight to receive the two trophies!

We have wondered about entering again next year and the attraction is that the North base will be Peterborough Conington and there is likely to be a fourth regional base, possibly Goodwood.

At a time when basic practical flying and navigation skills are both hard to come by and to retain given the availability of electronic aids… we commend the Royal Institute of Navigation for its offering us all the opportunity to put these historic skills to the test and have fun at the same time.

See you at Bodmin next year?’

**WHEN CAPTAIN ALASDAIR BEATON MET CAPTAIN ALISTAIR BEATON**

How uncanny to think that, out there somewhere, there was another person with the same name, working in the same profession and also a member of the same Honorary Company of Air Pilots. Confusing perhaps for our office staff at Cobham House, although they always succeeded in keeping our details quite separate. But intriguing, it certainly was, for both ABs.

We become used to thinking that our names identify us precisely for who we are. It’s an individual thing, not to be taken, used or abused or so we would like to think! Our names identify us with our profession and also a member of the same organisation, a ASD and one with an IST.

In aviation, in Scotland, the two ABs came close to meeting in the 1960s, at HMS Condor, a gliding centre at Arbroath. Thereafter whilst Alasdair, joined the RAF and the airlines, Alistair moved to instructing and corporate aviation. Another potential encounter occurred in the Middle East, in the 1980s, when mid way through both aviation careers. Alasdair flew in the Qatar Emiri Air Force, whilst Alistair instructed commercially in Abu Dhabi. Neither had any knowledge of the other.

The linkup finally came about when HCAP member, Iain Tulloch, was looking for one AB but found the other, all three being members of the then Gapan. It transpired that Alasdair had been at Acklington for RAF basic flying training with Iain, Iain can therefore claim responsibility for first introducing the two ABs to each other.

When Alasdair happened recently to be on business in Canada, the opportunity came to meet up and so it happened, on Sunday 4th October, in Vancouver, Canada,

After Alasdair’s seaplane flight with Harbour Airways, (HCAP member organisation), Alistair (now a Director of HCAP North American Region) and his wife Diane, enjoyed lunch and a tour around Vancouver, amusingly interspersed with an extremely convivial and interesting canter through two parallel aviation careers. According to Diane, two very similar personalities found that we had far more in common than we thought.

The moral - whilst there is perhaps only one of you, there will always be two of us. So if HCAP or any members of our organisation need to get in touch with either of us, do make sure you get the right one.

*Alasdair Beaton met Alistair Beaton.*
The Master’s Message

SQUADRON LEADER CHRISTOPHER FORD

I write this hard on the back of a most enjoyable Trophies & Awards Banquet at which we were privileged to host our Patron, as well as the award winners, members and guests. I am delighted to report that 638 people attended the event. A full report follows later in the magazine. However, I would like to highlight the skill and airmanship, tenacity and endurance of, not only Andre Broschberg and Bertrand Piccard, but also the 90 or so members of the Solar Impulse Team as they pushed innovation and endurance flying to the limits. I wish them every success as they repair the craft and await a window of opportunity to continue the next leg of the Round the World voyage next year.

Our Award of Honour acknowledged the selfless bravery and 63 years of continuous dedication to the task in hand shown by the crews of The UK Military Search and Rescue Force. As they hand over the baton of responsibility to The Bristow Group at the end of this year I feel sure that the many aviators, sailors, climbers, fell walkers or patients who owe their life to these brave men and women will join us in congratulating all for a job well done. Over the years many of our awards have been presented to the SAR crews for operations in some of the worst flying conditions that any pilot would ever wish to encounter, often with no fear for their own safety as they fought the elements to complete their mission.

Closers to our normal operating environment, the winter is closing in on us now and the flying days are getting shorter by the day. I always find it depressing when the clocks go back and can only envy those lucky enough to be able to go to sunnier climes for the winter. The rain will make the grass airstrips less user-friendly and the winter weather could cause delays to airlines through fog or de-icing requirements. For those who may be reading this in Norway or Canada, you will be well used to operating in extreme weather conditions. However for us back here it may well be time to dig out those manuals relating to performance on contaminated surfaces, remind ourselves just how important it is to de-ice and read the small print associated with holdover times. It was a hard lesson for the aviation community when Air Florida Flight 90 crashed into the Potomac River in 1982 and the accident has remained in the back of my mind since then.

During my time on the RAF Hercules Force I was operating in many extreme environments, none more demanding than the far north of Norway or the Eastern seaboard of Canada in the depths of winter when nights are long and the temperatures sometimes incredibly low. However, the sea influences both locations and temperatures can fluctuate from +5 to -15 degrees with almost no warning. Cold, damp and wet snow/slush conditions are not conducive to enjoyable flying and make ground handling difficult. On the other hand, very cold dry air is by far the better option as any falling snow fails to stick to the aircraft surfaces. Most approaches were fully IFR/IMC to decision height/altitude and luckily there was always a navigator on hand to work out all the temperature error corrections to be made throughout the approach. It was on such flights that I learnt to appreciate that sometimes the autopilot could fly a better ILS than me! I also quickly learnt that I ought to assume that each approach in such conditions was likely to result in an overshoot and plan accordingly, though with any luck we would see the lights and be able to land safely. Our crosswind limit was reduced by 50% and we were not authorised to operate from unprepared surfaces if they were contaminated. This often meant spending some considerable time seeking out diversions and careful fuel planning to ensure landing distances were not compromised by ‘bunkering’ too much fuel. I have been in situations where, due to strong overnight winds, the parked aircraft was swung through 45 degrees whilst parked on ice, and on another occasion the tyres were well and truly buried in two inches of solid ice on the pan!

A very quick search on the Internet has revealed a few good sites to visit in order to brush up on your winter ops procedures. The CAA Winter Operations pages give guidance for aircraft, airport and aerodrome operators. SKYbrary’s Cold Weather Operations checklist for VFR flight, provides more of a guidance for the GA community. The European General Aviation Safety Team (EGAST) recently released Safety Leaflet GA10 on In-Flight Icing. This leaflet provides guidance to pilots of aircraft without modern ice protection systems and covers, amongst other items, icing after landing, effects of icing, propeller icing, pre-flight planning, pre-flight checks and ground de-icing and typical in-flight icing scenarios. Suggested actions to be taken when encountering icing are presented in a summary section. I am sure that a few moments spent reading any one of these would jog the memory and perhaps even give the low hours pilots a good basis from which to start planning a flight in the winter months.

It may also be a good time to refresh oneself on the ATSOCAS procedures and terminology. Do you really need only a Basic Service as you transit in the poorer weather? Just think, if you are dodging the clouds so will other pilots. A Basic Service will not help you in these circumstances. Over the past few years I have been able to attend the UK Airprox
Board as an observer and often the recurring cause of conflicts in Class 'G' airspace is put down to a poor understanding of ATS. Some examples of this include the selection of an inappropriate ATS for the flight conditions or activity, an assumption of protection from other aircraft whilst in receipt of an ATS, conducting IFR training outside ATS coverage but in intermittent IMC and the pilots' lack of understanding of continued collision avoidance responsibilities when in receipt of an ATS. This is the end of the H&S brief for now and I hope that all your flying over winter, be it airline, military or GA is safe, incident free and under an appropriate Air Traffic Service!

You will all be reading this as Sue and I come to the end of our Tour of the Regions and we will update you on our meetings in the next edition of Air Pilot. Suffice it to say that we have been on a whistle stop journey and hope to return fit and well for the Christmas Season.

On a final note, I would like to take this opportunity, on behalf of Sue and myself, to wish you and your families the happiest of Christmases and a healthy year in 2016. We hope that we will see as many of you as possible at the Company's annual Christmas Carol Service at St Michael's Cornhill on the 17th December.

Gazette
Approved by the Court 19 November 2015

Admissions
As Upper Freeman
Lieutenant John Martin ALDERETE (NA)
Captain Jurgen AUER (OS)
Captain Richard Thomas BENNITT
Squadron Leader (retd) Andrew BOXER-MISSEN
Major (retd) Christopher Thomas BROWN (NA)
John Michael CONNOLLY (OS)
Richard William COVLIN (NA)
Dr Francis Leslie ERVIN (NA)
Matthew John HARRIOTT (AUS)
Flight Lieutenant Jonathan Frederick HILL
Squadron Leader Thomas HILL
William Barry HUBBARD (NA)
Captain Ahmad Mohammad AL KHAWALDEH (OS)
Captain Jeffrey Byron KILMER (NA)
Captain William James PERRINS
Captain Carl Casper VAN DER SYDE (AUS)

As Associate
Alexander BEATTY
Diana Margaret BIRRELL (NA)
Grace Kathleen DAVIS
Piers John DOUGLAS
William Christopher GOULD
Safeen Yusuf KAY
Alexander Thomas MAY
Michael Peter MERRITT
Edward Charles NEATE
Alexander Anthony SHARPLES
Thomas Elliot SMART
William Grant SPENCE
Spencer Matthew THOMAS (NA)
Douglas WESCOTT

Acknowledged by the Court
19 November 2015

Regrade
To Livery
Dr Eleanor Ann IVORY
Captain Alan Ross BOYENS (OS)
Jeremy Pettican TRACY (NA)

To Associate
David MARSHALL

Deceased
Sir Michael BEEATHAM
Colin BELL
David BYWATER
Sebastian de FERRANTI
Christopher KELLEHER
Brian LECOMBER

Resignations
Sean ASHTON
David CONNELL (AUS)
Anthony CRILLY
Brian CROFT (NA)
Stephen FROMAGE
Christopher GOODYER
Paul HILL
David HUGALL
Peter JACKSON
Richard KEELING
Gregory MADDEN (AUS)
Gordon PATE
Thomas PEARSE (AUS)
Duncan STUBBS
Brendan SWEENEY (OS)
Simon WALKER (HK)
Timothy WOOLTORTON

Forfeit All Benefits
Paul ALLEN (OS)
Helen CRAIG
Myriam GARDEAZABAL (OS)
The Trophies and Awards Banquet took place again in the magnificent and historic surroundings of the City of London's Guildhall on 29 October. At a meeting of the Court in the crypt the Master, Squadron Leader Chris Ford, witnessed the clothing of thirteen new Liverymen. Air Commodore I A Milne, Captains R Boyens, W M D Gilmour, B Hutton, D I Fidler, R D De Watts, Doctors E A Ivory, A A Jenkins, Messrs J P Tracey, R J Commander, J Turner, A Burrows and Mrs P A Vahey were all welcomed into the Honourable Company as fellow Liverymen. The Master also presented Master Air Pilot Certificates to Lieutenant Commander N D Bance, Captains W J Brown, C A R Hirst, C H Nicholls, P D J Terry, Flight Lieutenant D W T Brown, Cdt T De Moortel and Mr R Miller, Master Rearcrew Certificates to CPOACM A S Vane and Master Aircrew V Dodsworth, and a Master Air Navigator Certificate to Lieutenant Commander N A Jacques.

After the Court meeting members and their guests enjoyed a Champagne Reception in the Old Library, the Guard of Honour being provided by the Pikemen and Musketeers of the Honourable Artillery Company. The Master welcomed the Guest of Honour, His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh KG KT, Patron of the Honourable Company, who was introduced to the Wardens and members of the Court before joining the other members and guests. Other senior guests included Sir Gerald Howarth MP, Rear Admiral K Blount OBE, Rear Admiral Fleet Air Arm, Colonel R Green ADC, Colonel Army Air Corps, Captain J Conybeare, Master Master Mariners, Mr N Andrews, Master Pattenmakers, Mr M Kimber, Master Coachmaker, Captain T Henry RN, representing HMS Ocean, Group Captain P Nicholas, Air Advisor Australian High Commission, Group Captain S Paterson, RAF Benson, Wing Commander M Cannon, Air Advisor New Zealand High Commission and Wing Commander J Stevens, RAF Central Flying School.
The Banquet was served in the medieval Great Hall; the Beadle, Mr Ted Prior, led in the Master and the senior guests to the customary slow handclap. After Grace, said by the Company’s Honorary Chaplain, The Venerable R J Pentland CB, the Master invited the newly-clothed Liverymen to stand and be recognised. Music during the meal was provided by the London Banqueting Ensemble; their rendition of the Post Horn Gallop, delivered in a ‘walkabout’ by two outstanding players, received long applause. The Banquet concluded with a Sung Grace, the Ceremony of the Loving Cup and Toasts to Her Majesty the Queen, the Royal Family and the Lord Mayor and The City of London Corporation. The Trophies and Awards were presented by the Patron; the recipient's citations can be found on the Company's website and a selection of photographs and abbreviated citations of recipients can be found following this article. After the presentation of the Trophies and Awards the Master addressed the members and guests, gallantly struggling with a sore throat. He concluded by proposing the Toast to 'The Few, our Award winners and our Guests'. Sir Gerald Howarth MP responded on behalf of the guests with an amusing and thought-provoking speech; both speeches were greeted with acclaim by all present. Full transcripts of the Master's and Sir Gerald's speeches can be found by accessing the Company website, Aviation Matters/Company Policy and Comment/Public Speeches.

The Master then invited all to join him with a Stirrup Cup in the Old Library, after which members and their guests made their way home. Those staying in the RAF Club kept the Cowdray Room bar busy until the wee small hours.

Photographs of the evening are available on the photography website of Gerald Sharp Photography, www.sharpphoto.co.uk
There now follows a description of a week spent with the Honourable Company during the preparations for the Trophies and Awards Banquet, as seen by 21 year old Angelo Zangarini, from Italy. Angelo won the 'Diventa Pilote', a work exchange scholarship set up in Italy by Company member Freeman Eleonora Orlandi. It is a competitive scholarship for aspiring aviators to gain some aviation related experience. The following is in his own words.

"I remember the call from Eleonora Orlandi to tell me that I had won the scholarship, and soon a moment of joy became one of uncertainty: which offer to choose? I had a few of them selected, including a one month stage at FTE Jerez flying school, though I had not really weighted all the aspects. In the end I decided for the one that had most potential and coherence with my educational path.

So I was contacted by the Company Clerk, Paul Tacon, to get an early arrangement for a one week unique experience. Living in Italy, I did not know a lot about the Company, but I had a rough idea as I remember it used to be GAPAN, I actually read the name quite a few times on aviation magazines.

I have a decisively technical background: I went through aeronautical technical school and now I am studying aerospace engineering at the Polytechnic University of Milan. I am keen on history, especially the 20th century, I am an aviation enthusiast and also a 'wannabe' pilot, so the programme was centred around these aspects.

The first visit was the RAF Museum at Cosford, with a special behind the scenes look at the Michael Beetham Conservation Centre, dedicated to maintenance and restoration of historic aircraft. I was met by the head engineer of the Centre and two young apprentices who showed me their work, techniques and tools. I had the opportunity to discuss with them problems and issues they encounter, such as aircraft leaking oil even after 30 years being dry, oleos to be refilled as they stand on the exhibition floor all the time. Other challenges include missing diagrams and drawings and damage from visitors and wear, just to mention a few.

The next day I travelled to the RAF Museum in Colindale, London, located where the Hendon Aerodrome used to be. One of the Company Wardens, Malcolm White, gave me a quick but thorough tour inside this history-rich facility, once the pounding heart of the UK aeronautical industry and pioneer of the early 1900s aviation scene. It is a highly regarded place, full of "exotic" aircraft, showrooms like the one dedicated to the First Century of Aviation, with aircraft from the early years of WWI to the latest Eurofighter. One of the aspects covered are the people, their achievements and challenges, and I think the museum managed to convey it all.

On Thursday I was at the Company office helping Paul, Pat, James, Ruth and Julie with the last preparations for the Trophies and Awards Banquet. Some guests could not attend the event, so I was invited to sit in the main hall. This was my first time attending such a big event, and definitely the first time with Royals, as Prince Philip was attending the event, what an honour that was! I sat beside John Denyer and his wife Kate and had a wonderful evening in their company, exchanging opinions, curiosities and experiences. I was not aware of many of the stories behind all the awards, and so I was really impressed and I wish to congratulate everyone once more.

Finally on Friday I went to Farnborough TAG Airport with Captain Wally Epton, who was very kind to show me what an active business-only airport is like. This was my first time in a business airport, as I only know military airbases and big airports like Gatwick, Malpensa and so on.

This visit was really interesting: Farnborough has to deal with interesting challenges as it is really close to many airfields and Heathrow. I was allowed in the air traffic control centre and the control tower, and we got to have a chat with the manager. Then we moved on the training facility at FlightSafety where I was met by two type rating instructors, one for helicopters and the other of King Air 200, and I even got to fly in the simulator, flying an ILS approach into London City airport. Taking control of an aircraft, even though in a simulator, is always a fantastic experience.

During this week I met many interesting people that helped me with their experience and knowledge to answer some doubts and questions, to open myself to different points of view and above all, they helped me learning about many other parallel realities that exist in the aeronautical field, not just airline pilots and engineers.

This was definitely a unique event, that probably will not happen again. I am thankful to everyone that I have meet for their cordiality and I am honoured to have had the opportunity to enjoy such an experience."
The full citations of all Award winners can be found on the Company website; the following are the abbreviated citations which were read by the Learned Clerk during the presentation of awards at the Banquet.

**Award of Honour**

For more than 60 years, the search and rescue capabilities of both the RN and RAF SAR Forces have provided life-saving help to people in perilous situations, over land and sea, by day or night, throughout the United Kingdom. Since 1953 when Dragonfly helicopters of 705 NAS responded to urgent requests for help following extensive flooding in East Anglia, across six decades crews of both RN and RAF aircraft have routinely helped the emergency services, rescued and recovered countless military downed aircrew, provided support at aircraft accidents and aided emergency services at major incidents. Since their inception, both Forces combined have cumulatively launched aircraft in response to calls for assistance on over 75,000 occasions and assisting a similar number of individuals.

Such selfless effort to ensure lives are saved, and the aspiration to achieve the highest standards, has not been without casualties. The combined Forces have lost crewmen during the many rescues that they’ve conducted and a number of others have been seriously injured while putting others before themselves. SAR flying requires a demanding range of skills, from operating overwater and alongside shipping to rescue and recover sailors, to overland transfer of hours-old babies or hover-taxying through blizzards at night in the mountains to rescue injured climbers. The hallmark of the military SAR Force has been the skill, bravery, determination and selfless commitment to others shown by its crews. This has been recognised over the years through numerous state awards to RN and RAF crews including 7 George Medals, 16 Queen's Gallantry Medals, 42 Air Force Crosses/Medals and 103 Queen's Commendations.

On 1 January 2016, the combined SAR Forces will pass on the baton of responsibility of UK helicopter SAR to a civil contractor. For an outstanding and enduring record of perpetual on-call capability, at anytime and anywhere throughout the UK, for more than 60 years, the combined RN and RAF SAR Forces, this evening respectively represented by Captain Alun Jones and Group Captain Steve Bentley, are deserving recipients of the Award of Honour.

**The Grand Master’s Medal**

Flight Lieutenant Christopher Gonzalez has served as a Qualified Weapons Instructor and Weapons Systems Officer at RAF Marham for the past 3 years. During 2014 he was deployed to Afghanistan and then Iraq for almost 9 months in total. Traditionally, a Tornado squadron would have 3 weapons instructors who would lead and shape much of the squadron’s output; however, for a number of reasons, II (AC) Squadron had just one for the entire period deployed - Flight Lieutenant Chris Gonzalez. By consistently displaying the highest levels of professionalism in the airborne environment, excellent instructional technique and an unsurpassed level of aircraft systems knowledge, Chris Gonzalez was integral to the successes of the Squadron. To have performed at this level for a short period is commendable; to sustain this for the extended period experienced in 2014 was outstanding.

Chris Gonzalez has been the exemplar for any aspiring officer in today's RAF and the finest of Qualified Weapons Instructors. He has displayed levels of leadership, professional knowledge, dedication and commitment that are exceptional. He is therefore a deserving recipient of the Grand Master’s Medal.

**The Award for Aviation Journalism**

Squadron Leader David Webster has been actively involved in RAF Media and Communications in various guises since 1987 and has been the RAF Search and Rescue Force Media and Communications Officer since 2005. During that time he has used his wealth of experience and considerable media contacts to be almost single-handedly responsible for the multitude of documentaries and positive media exposure that the RAF Search and Rescue Force has enjoyed.

In addition to all this unstinting work with the national and local press, he has established a highly credible and favourable image for the RAF Search and Rescue Force through the publication of books, notably the '30 Years of Sea King' and a host of TV documentaries. These have included 'Highland Emergency' and 'Helicopter Rescue' which featured HRH Flight Lieutenant Wales in his role as an RAF Search and Rescue pilot. In his exceptionally long and prolific career dealing with all aspects of the media, Squadron Leader Webster has been exemplary in ensuring that British military aircrew are held in the highest regard by the UK public and he is therefore awarded the Honourable Company of Air Pilots Award for Aviation Journalism.
The Master's Commendation

In July this year Lieutenant Commander Chris Gotke was flying a Sea Fury at Culdrose as part of the RN Historic Flight display. Part way through the display at low level the Sea Fury's engine started to lose power. Responding immediately, he lowered the landing gear and started to position the aircraft for a precautionary landing whilst informing ATC of the situation. However, 10 seconds later the engine failed completely.

In front of a crowd of 21,000 people, the Sea Fury, now billowing smoke lost altitude rapidly. Chris faced deeply unenviable choices. He could abandon the aircraft or crash land in the rough terrain - either would endanger his and other's lives and the loss of an historically important aircraft.

Instead, under considerable stress and with split-second timing, he made the decision to stay with the aircraft and attempt to make the airfield, raising the undercarriage to reduce drag and so improve the glide range. This decision required huge courage, presence of mind and the finest pilot judgement. Coaxing an unforgiving, stricken 7 ton, high performance historic fighter required enormous skill and finesse, and only Chris's smooth handling avoided disaster. Once over the airfield boundary, he delayed increasing drag by lowering his wheels only at the last moment, but fully aware that reduced hydraulic pressure may prevent the undercarriage from functioning properly. The port wheel locked, but the starboard failed to latch, resulting in the undercarriage collapsing and causing the aircraft to veer off the runway before harmlessly coming to rest. Chris then calmly ensured the aircraft was safe before affecting his escape.

This incident was complex and potentially exceedingly dangerous. Chris's response was truly exceptional, making swift but appropriate decisions under considerable stress. However, quite extraordinary and instinctive flying skills were also required to deliver his plan. Together, these prevented a catastrophic civilian loss of life and minimised damage to a historically important aircraft. Chris Gotke's outstanding judgement, skill and bravery stand out as a fine example of airmanship and he is accordingly awarded the Master's Commendation.

The Myles Bickerton Trophy

Squadron Leader Gary Coleman has been extraordinary in his contribution to aviation, flight safety, and operations. After a long and illustrious career as a RAF Navigator, he became a full-time Reserve Officer as OC Ops Squadron at RAF Halton in 2011. Here he is principally responsible for the delivery of safe flying operations at the busy, twin grass strip aerodrome, hosting a wide variety of civilian and military aircraft movements a year. RAF Halton has since been made an exemplar for minor aerodrome operations due to his efforts.

His ongoing service of 11 years to the RAF Flying Clubs Association as their Flight Safety officer also attracts high praise for his 'exceptional dedication and enthusiasm in keeping the RAF's flying clubs working to the very highest standards'. His devotion to aviation safety is also reflected by his membership on the General Aviation Safety Council.

All relevant agencies confirm that his continued tireless efforts across aviation flight safety and operations, now render those arenas safer and with an unknown number of lives saved or positively affected. As such, this widely appreciated, consistent and extraordinarily successful commitment is worthy of recognition by the award of the Myles Bickerton Trophy.
Andre Borschberg's recent solo crossing of the Pacific in 117 Hours and 52 seconds has broken many aviation records. These include the longest distance for solar-powered flight, the longest duration for a solar-powered flight and the longest non-stop solo flight of any kind. Since Solar Impulse left Abu Dhabi in March, both Andre Borschberg and Bertrand Piccard have demonstrated the highest standards of professional aviators, sound decision-making and consummate skill.

Whilst the flight round the world is far from complete, the most recent leg, a remarkable and innovative record-breaking flight - a feat of flying, courage, incredible human endeavour and adventure - to land safely in Hawaii earlier this year is, on its own, a tremendous achievement, and an accomplishment to be recognised and applauded. The two pilots, Bertrand Piccard and Andre Borschberg, through their skill, tenacity and endurance have already achieved so much.

In recognition of the innovation, endeavour, teamwork, airmanship, organisation and management demonstrated by this round the world solar-powered flight, the crew members of Solar Impulse, Andre Borschberg and Bertrand Piccard, are awarded the Master's Medal.

Puma 2 represents a step-change in Medium Support Helicopter capability and its introduction to service required a complete re-analysis of crew training and skill-sets. The RAf's Puma Aircrew Training Team has completed an exceptional job in delivering the entire Puma Force to the new Puma 2 Initial Operating Standard in only 18 months. This outstanding effort enabled the aircraft and crews to be deployed to Afghanistan in record time. The team has been an exemplar of teamwork, communication and focused collective endeavour.

The team's first-class efforts and dedication to the task throughout has been inspiring. They continue to innovate their operating, thinking and methods of delivery. In sum, their outstanding achievements have enabled the Puma Force to deliver meaningful capability for the foreseeable future. The tremendous effort and achievement of the Puma Aircrew Training Team is recognised by the award of the CFS Trophy.

A professional pilot since his early twenties, Captain Mark Chesney has logged over 13,000 flying hours. In 2002 he joined the CAA as a Flight Operations Inspector and in 2009 was appointed Head of the Flight Operations Inspectorate.

Using his experience from his former airline role, he identified a key threat to the effective safety oversight of current flight operations. This threat is the growing mismatch between the structure of safety regulators in Europe and the new business models emerging in the aviation industry, such as transnational operators, wet leasing arrangements and virtual airlines. In order to address this issue, he made an unsolicited approach to EASA where he brought the issue to their attention. EASA immediately commissioned the formation of the EASA New Business Models Working Group and appointed Mark as Chairman.

Mark has proposed that co-operative oversight arrangements are essential to the future success of safety regulation for transnational operators and others who are remotely based in the liberalised European market. Mark has secured agreements between the UK CAA and 3 other states to conduct trials of cooperative oversight in practice. These will serve as pathfinders to create a workable model and additionally will address specific safety issues existing today such as small foreign operators flying UK citizens point to point in the UK without oversight from either their own state or the UK CAA.

Mark also leads safety partnership work with other states. His recent work with Turkey substantially reduced incidents in London airspace within 3 months. Mark's expertise and interventions regularly provide the substance for international action. His work is key in sustaining the excellent safety record of aviation because he is leading the way in meeting new industry challenges and is recognised amongst industry and regulators as a pragmatic and expert champion for safety. He is a most deserving recipient of the Sir James Martin Award.
Doctor Hugh Browning has expended and continues to expend a vast amount of his time on developing improvements in gliding safety, with a specific focus on the long term analysis of accidents and incidents to gliders within the UK.

In 2004 Hugh analysed the 2650 gliding accidents recorded over the previous 16 years. He has since developed training materials to target one major cause (failed winch launches) which have been praised by safety authorities around the world. Hugh has developed a comprehensive accident database which enables the BGA to track accident trends and, following the work done by Hugh on the winch launch safety initiative, there was a statistically significant reduction in fatal and serious injury winch accidents. However, Hugh realised that there was no guarantee that the lower accident rate would continue and he has worked tirelessly to maintain focus for glider pilots on safe winch launching.

This success rate continues to the present day and his work has been presented to EASA who have endorsed it as an example of best practice. Dr Hugh Browning is accordingly awarded the Cumberbatch Trophy.

The Sir Barnes Wallis Medal

As a metallurgist and chemist, qualified in non-destructive testing, Doctor Richard Raistrick started technical failure and accident investigations in 1987. In the period since he has been directly responsible for generating or formally acting as independent scientific advisor in excess of 700 technical investigations. He routinely provides highly reactive and immediate response to major issues, whilst also leaving a lasting legacy through recommending and driving innumerable improvements to aircraft design and health monitoring techniques. These have led to improved operational availability, safety and reduced operating costs across the UK’s military aircraft fleets.

These skills alone would be impressive, but what makes his contributions truly exceptional is his ability to mentor and train so many others. His infectious enthusiasm, combined with boundless energy and a readily apparent passion for aviation has been most beneficial to the next generation of engineers, scientists and accident investigators.

For his exceptional professionalism, efforts and results in investigating and overcoming aircraft technical failures and issues, concurrently driving technical improvements within aviation, Doctor Richard Raistrick is a most worthy recipient of the Sir Barnes Wallis Medal.

The Grand Master’s Commendation

In September last year 1 Regiment Army Air Corps (AAC) returned to the UK to be re-equipped with the Wildcat and based at RNAS Yeovilton. This reorganisation and cessation of army Lynx helicopter operations in Germany closed an historic chapter in UK military aviation history after nearly 68 years of non-stop UK military flying activity in Germany.

During its time in Germany, 1 Regiment AAC fulfilled many varied roles, evolving capabilities to match distinct historical moments. The Regiment was a key component to the British Army of the Rhine, equipped with Gazelle Reconnaissance helicopters and Lynx anti-tank helicopters, held on extremely-high readiness to repel a Soviet Armoured thrust. In parallel, the Regiment also supported counter-terrorism operations in Northern Ireland from its base in Germany by providing roulement aircrew.

During the 1990s, the Regiment was deployed in an anti-tank role to the Arabian Gulf, as well as deploying in a utility support role to the Balkans three times. Most recently, the Regiment has supported concurrent operations in both Iraq and Afghanistan, having the distinction of being one of few units committed to both campaigns simultaneously. In the past decade alone, the Regiment has deployed its two Germany-based Squadrons 17 times on operations, flying many thousands of hours.

1 Regiment’s adaptation and success have been neither straightforward nor inevitable. Now, as the Regiment prepares for a new chapter, equipped with the Wildcat, its outstanding contribution to the UK’s NATO commitment in Europe, the nation and aviation is recognised by the award of the Grand Master’s Commendation.

The Hugh Gordon-Burge Memorial Award

On 25 January 2014, a pair of British Apache helicopters launched on a routine operation in Helmand Province in support of Coalition Forces. Some ten minutes into the sortie, one of the aircraft, c/s 'Ugly 52' commanded by
Major Nicholas English, and piloted by Captain Charles Russell, experienced a catastrophic mechanical failure of the tail rotor drive shaft, an extremely difficult failure to control - even in benign circumstances.

At the time of the incident, the Apache formation was in the cruise at approximately 2500 feet, some 20 kms to the east of Camp Bastion. It happened while the crew were conducting a routine weapons check. There was a bang and the aircraft yawed to the right. Control pedal input became ineffectual and the crew quickly realised that there was a serious problem with the tail rotor system. Captain Russell immediately reduced the power, which in-turn reduced the yaw and increased controllability. A turn towards Bastion was effected but, as the reduction in power had also initiated a high rate of descent, Major English transmitted a 'Mayday' call as confidence in recovering to Bastion diminished.

In order to maximise the crew's chances of that recovery, Major English elected to jettison the full load of external fuel tanks and ammunition. He further elected to fire the Apache's 550 rounds of cannon ammunition, in an effort to minimise aircraft weight, but with sufficient presence of mind to carefully select an area which would not suffer damage to life or property.

With the immediate risk of uncontrolled descent past, Major English concentrated on giving clear and concise directions to his pilot to help maintain airspeed and horizontal orientation. The crew continued to display incredible CRM given the situation. Major English's commentary continued throughout the final stages of the descent and contributed significantly to the pilot's ability to fly the aircraft effectively. It quickly became apparent that, due to a combination of the continued loss of height and an inability to maintain orientation towards Bastion, the aircraft would have to be landed beyond the camp's boundaries. At only some 500 feet above an area of open desert, control of the aircraft was reaching the limits of the pilot's abilities. Major English shut down the engines and the pilot reacted to the loss of power by flaring the aircraft. He then followed the procedure which no British Apache pilot had previously had to conduct outside the flight simulator, and succeeded in landing the aircraft with little impact and a straight run-on. Uninjured and in an aircraft that was undamaged, save the initial mechanical failure, the crew continued to follow their training and rendered the aircraft both safe and de-classified by removing cryptographic material. They then awaited subsequent and successful evacuation by a US CH-53 transport helicopter.

For the most outstanding airmanship, piloting skill, presence of mind and level headedness, resulting in the saving of their highly operationally valuable aircraft, Major Nicholas English and Captain Charles Russell are awarded the Hugh Gordon-Burge Memorial Award.

The Prince Philip Helicopter Rescue Award

On 17 January this year R177, the duty SAR helicopter at HMS Gannet, was scrambled at 19.00hrs to assist two missing climbers high up on Ben Nevis. This was their third rescue duty in a 24 hour period.

The weather had started to deteriorate markedly. At night, in the depths of the Scottish winter, they were forced to fly at low-level through continuous snowstorms and freezing temperatures that limited visibility to less than 300m. With no moon and full cloud cover, Night Vision Goggles offered only little assistance.

Ben Nevis was in cloud, with waves of heavy snow showers, strengthening to blizzard conditions where the climbers were, in a precarious position at the far end of a valley. R177 attempted to fly into this valley, however, the visibility quickly reduced to zero, requiring a blind valley turn to be flown as they were forced out. After several further attempts, and with snow rapidly accumulating on the airframe, R177 was forced to withdraw and land at Fort William rescue base.

Towards midnight, R177 was then tasked to a further rescue many miles away on the Isle of Eigg. However, as the weather on Ben Nevis refused to relent, R177 was subsequently sent back to Ben Nevis as concern for the climbers grew.

With first light still to come, little had changed, and R177 again attempted entry to the valley before severe turbulence and loss of visibility again forced them out whilst having to alternate from full power to autorotation. On yet a further attempt they were able to position the aircraft close enough to the ridge to maintain visual contact, hover-taxing below the ridgeline towards the climbers. In blizzard conditions, and with close teamwork by the two pilots and continual commentary from the observer, R177 eventually managed to reach the climbers. Once in position, R177 held a perfect hover within feet of the rock face whilst wind continued to batter the aircraft and visual references faded and reappeared. The winchman rapidly recovered the climbers and R177 launched clear of the mountain on instruments and returned successfully to Fort William.

In this duty period, R177 flew nearly 10 hours, in the worst conditions of the Scottish winter, conducting 3 separate rescues. In recognition of their outstanding determination, tenacity, courage, team-work and professionalism, Lieutenant Lewis, Lieutenant Commander Fuller, Lieutenant Hammond and Petty Officer Aircrewman Henson, are awarded the Prince Philip Helicopter Rescue Award.

The Award for Gallantry

On 28 July last year, a call for assistance to rescue a fisherman overboard from a vessel, 60 nm NE of East Falkland was received. Without almost immediate recovery, the chilled South Atlantic
Miraculously, on arrival on scene, the casualty was spotted in the aircraft's searchlight wearing a life preserver and floating face up in the water, although his chances of being alive were assessed as slim given the length of time in the near freezing water. With daunting sea conditions and a winching height of 80 ft required to keep the aircraft clear of wave peaks the winchman, Sergeant Allanson, showed no hesitation in leaving the aircraft to assist. Immediately on entering the near freezing water, he was submerged as changes in wave height outpaced the maximum speed of the aircraft winch. On resurfacing, the lashing sea spray and crashing wave peaks forced him to raise his run-in height, but he successfully made contact with the casualty.

The physical effort of man-handling a large casualty in 45ft swell was demanding and, coupled with the violent wave motion, caused the winch cable to become wrapped around Sergeant Allanson’s legs. He was forced to release the casualty to free himself, but after freeing his legs from the cable and then repeating the contact procedure, demanding considerable physical strength, he regained the casualty. The demands placed on Sergeant Allanson cannot be overstated within this exceptionally violent and life-threatening environment. After single-stropping the casualty’s rolling body, both recovered to the aircraft. Allanson was immersed in these punishing conditions for almost 15 minutes, but on entering the cabin, and without time to recover from his own ordeal, Sergeant Allanson began to provide immediate life support to the casualty en-route to hospital.

For his exceptional demonstration of selfless courage, in extremely punishing conditions and despite life-threatening risk to himself, Sergeant Daniel Allanson is recognised as a most deserving recipient of the Award for Gallantry.
the necessary data and evidence for decision-making is rarely always readily to hand, and at the right time, rather than with the benefit of hindsight.

- International collaboration is a key part of most of our planning, but it’s not always easy. It would be a lot to expect that all allied nations might share common requirements and timelines; and agree common solutions which delivered the best outcome across nations, rather than serve individual national interests.

We want to achieve operational advantage over potential adversaries, and that depends very much on investment in technology.

I’m confident that our investment plans support that approach. This audience knows very well the long list of new capabilities which defence is planning and buying. Each of the services is in the midst of a re-capitalisation of almost all of their major platforms.

And its not just in the traditional ships, tanks and aircraft. An increasing proportion of our new equipment spend is now on enhancing our capabilities in intelligence, understanding, communications and, of course, cyber. I would be very happy to address specific capability issues further in the Q&A.

I would contend though that there are two things in the technology space which are different from previous generations. First, most technology now stems directly from increased consumer demand and better manufacturing techniques, rather than from military demand.

I’m very comfortable with that evolution. There are certainly things that only defence can sponsor - I can’t, for example, see much consumer demand for nuclear submarines.

But across most areas of defence business, and in particular anything related to information capabilities, we should be able to rely much more on the open market and competition, rather than trying to develop bespoke military requirements and solutions.

Secondly, the global availability of technology, combined with an ever-increasing pace of technological change, means that we face an increasingly capable and diverse range of threats. These are likely to include not only sophisticated military weapons, but also greater innovative and ingenious application of readily available civil technologies.

Where adversaries can more easily buy high technology products on the open market, this potentially reduces our operational advantage. To understand, counter, and protect against such threats, we need to be able to use effective investment in science and technology to access and deliver relevant, timely technology into our future systems.

Here then are the fundamentals of our approach to technology: provide our armed forces with the best capabilities we can afford; wherever possible, meet the UK’s requirements through open competition in the domestic and global market, buying off-the-shelf where appropriate.

But recognise that defence is fundamentally different in some respects, so protect the UK’s operational advantage and freedom of action, where this is essential for our national security. And, of course, invest in the science and technology and, if necessary, industrial base in support of all of this.

So much, so positive. But there is a niggling problem. We might have excellent individual items of equipment, but these days can we afford enough of those items to be able to achieve decisive military effect? In essence, have we got the quality versus quantity balance right?

Let me stand up a strawman.

- With each successive generation of new military equipment, the capability is certainly greater, but so is the cost in real terms - typically an inter-generational cost growth of around 5% per annum across all types of platform.

- Since defence budgets tend not to increase at that sort of rate, the natural consequence is steadily fewer platforms. Which makes for less efficient production runs and therefore higher up front costs and therefore fewer platforms being affordable, and so on.

- Eventually, you risk getting to the point where your platforms might be individually brilliant, but they can only be in one place at a time and there is little resilience or strength in depth to cope with the unexpected. Time also has a significant value here - while we might still be trying to bring into service the 100% solution, we potentially deny ourselves the 80% solution on the battlefield today.

Having stood up the strawman, for balance let me see if I can knock it down.

- Costs may be greater between each generation, but what about the capability delivered? Most of the cost growth can be attributed to the military setting higher specifics, but we are also now able to do things with a degree of precision, timeliness and effect which would have been unthinkable in earlier generations. In most cases, our predecessors used mass because the technology available did not allow them to do otherwise - we now have that technology.

- What about adversaries? Enemies get a vote, and if their technology is getting better, then we need to stay ahead of that - as I said earlier, I’m not after a fair fight. So, investing in better technology is in many ways non-discretionary. Even against adversaries who have used relatively unsophisticated means to attack us - IEDs in Iraq and Afghanistan for example - we have made extraordinary levels of investment in technology to help us defeat that threat.

- Finally, of course, one of the key attributes of technology is not only that you can do things better, but you can do them more efficiently - in other words, with fewer people. What creates the largest long-term pressure on the defence budget - indeed any organisation’s budget - is people and operating costs, not capital spend.

So, is my strawman standing up or is he knocked-down? You will I’m sure have your own views, but for me the answer is ‘neither really’ - there is no right answer, we just need to strike the right balance. We need technology; but numbers are also important; and either way we need to be able to afford it.

How do we achieve that balance? I offer a headline example - something which is quite simple to say, but quite difficult to deliver in practice. If most of our inter-generational cost growth is indeed down to setting higher specs, then we need a far more sophisticated understanding of what it is that we’re asking for which is driving that additional cost, and how important it really is to our future capability.”

Following the presentation and questions light refreshments were served in the ante room of 4 Hamilton Place.
Visit to The Royal Air Force College

LIVERYMAN PAUL SMIDDY

A group of 11 members visited the RAF College, Cranwell on 25th July 2015. This had kindly been arranged by the Commandant, Upper Freeman Air Commodore Chris Luck MBE. Part of the reason for this visit was in order to cement our new relationship with the College, which has recently been invited, and accepted, Affiliate Unit status with the Company.

The College’s mission - ‘To attract, select and recruit the Air Force of tomorrow whilst training and developing the Air Force of today and fully supporting wider Defence outputs’ - is to supply the RAF with high quality personnel, ready to undertake their next stage of specialist training, for example flying, engineering or administration. So the full panoply of its responsibilities was described, from recruiting and selection at the Officer and Airmen Selection Centre, through Phase 1 Training (once known as Initial Officer Training) at Cranwell and Halton; Command and Staff training of RAF NCOs; oversight of the network of University Air Squadrons’ organization; Air Experience Flight flying in support of the Air Cadets and International Defence Training in support of national strategy. In support of this it has responsibility for the safe operation of 6 airfields and other facilities.

Air Commodore Luck emphasized that the key enabler was his staff, who must be sufficient, capable, and motivated and trusted with Mission Command. Clearly the development of a strong Service ethos is critical.

Following the presentation by the Commandant, we were privileged to be guided around College Hall by its curator, Hazel Crozier.

She outlined the fascinating history of Cranwell and College Hall Officers Mess (CHOM). Her compass ranged from the design and construction of CHOM, through the laying of the foundation stone on 29th April 1929 by Lady Maud Hoare (wife of Sir Samuel, the Secretary of State for Air), to the present day. Afterwards the group viewed the stunning art collection other memorabilia.

Our thanks go to Assistant Air Chief Marshal Sir Stephen Dalton, the Court Appointed Liaison Officer, for initiating such an important liaison, and to Liveryman John Davy for planning the visit.

Editor’s Note. My father, who was a cadet at the College at the time of the laying of the foundation stone, told me that the cadets conducted their own stone laying ceremony the night before, which had to rapidly be undone before the official ceremony. What punishment was meted out afterwards has not been recorded!

Visit to The Royal Hospital Chelsea

FREEMAN WING COMMANDER MALCOLM WARD

Sixteen members and guests took part in the visit to the Royal Hospital Chelsea on Monday 21st September. We gathered under leaden skies before being escorted into the Hospital via the Chelsea Gate on the Royal Hospital Road. The afternoon commenced in style with an excellent curry lunch enjoyed in a small dining room adorned with the badges of many illustrious army regiments. Members who had served in light or dark blue uniform searched in vain for RAF or FAA badges because, as we were to learn, the Royal Hospital’s residents, the “In-Pensioners”, are chosen solely from veterans of the British Army. After lunch, we adjourned to the bar to take coffee. The temptation to linger in the bar chatting to the residents was great, not least because the Master, of course a former Hercules pilot, was engaged in conversation by an ex-paratroop dispatcher, who had no doubt experienced many hours in the Herc. However, our guide for the day, former Staff Sgt Bill Bullick marched us outside for the start of our tour.

Bill explained that he had been an aircraft technician in the Army Air Corps and it transpired that he had served with 12 Flt
AAC at RAF Wildenrath in Germany in the early 1980s, leaving shortly before my wife and I arrived there as newly-weds: the World is a small place. Bill was an excellent raconteur and in between giving us a comprehensive tour of the Hospital demonstrated a fine sense of humour and military banter. It soon became clear that, whilst the RAF was the focus of much of this banter, his principal target was the forerunner of the RFC, namely the Cavalry, whom he consistently referred to as “the Donkey Wallopers.” Bill commenced the tour in the central courtyard of the Hospital, the Figure Court, so called because it is dominated by the gilded statue of King Charles II, who founded the Hospital in 1682 as a retreat for veterans of the regular army. In deference to the pouring rain Bill kept us under the cover of the colonnades along the side of the Figure Court, whilst he explained the early history of the Royal Hospital. Securing the funding for military projects was no easier in those days and it was to be 10 years before the Royal Hospital buildings designed by Sir Christopher Wren were opened to the first In-Pensioners in 1692. Bill explained that the Royal Hospital is now a registered charity and derives much of its income from the Chelsea Flower Show, which is held each year on the South Terrace.

The tour continued in the Chapel, where Bill pointed out the tranquillity, which was enjoyed by believers and non-believers alike. The cushions in the Chapel are embroidered with unit badges, including 4 RAF crests because as Bill explained, some of the in-pensioners went on to serve in the RAF after leaving the Army. However, the rank worn on their tunics is always the last non-commissioned rank that they held in the Army. The uniform itself represents the red tunic and tricorn hat of the British Army of Marlborough’s time and is worn without any regimental insignia. The only clue to an In-Pensioner’s former regiment is that regimental cap badges and stable belts may be worn with the informal version of the uniform. Bill explained that the residents are known as “In-Pensioners” to differentiate them from those living in the civilian community on an Army pension, who are known as “Out-Pensioners.” The system of military pensions was established by James II, because the increase in the size of the standing army had made it impossible to accommodate all entitled veterans in the Royal Hospital, although this had been the original intention when it was founded by Charles II.

Bill took us outside to view the North Frontage of the Royal Hospital building, which reputedly served as the prototype for College Hall at Cranwell, complete with rotunda and tower albeit minus the lighthouse beacon which adorns College Hall. I have to confess that the similarity was hard to see, but this may have been due to the pouring rain and the scaffolding surrounding the North Frontage, which like much of the Royal Hospital is undergoing extensive restoration. We hastened back inside through the double-height doors, which Bill explained were built to allow the “Donkey Wallopers” to ride through without lowering their lances, which would have constituted a salute to the foot soldiers and was therefore beneath their dignity! The tour continued in the Great Hall where the In-Pensioners take their meals and which is hung with replicas of captured French, Belgian and American Standards, the originals of the latter having been taken during the American War of Independence. A plaque on the table in the Great Hall commemorates the fact that it was here that the Duke of Wellington’s body lay in state. Our tour concluded with a visit to the Museum, which includes many interesting artefacts, including the Jubilee Mace presented by HM the Queen in 2002, which rests on a woolsack donated by our sister company, the Worshipful Company of Woolmen. The Master delivered a vote of thanks to Bill for his excellent tour, which gave us a fascinating insight into the daily life of a Chelsea Pensioner.
Visit to Hybrid Air Vehicles at Cardington

UPPER FREEMAN GEORGE WILLIAMS

Hybrid Air Vehicles (HAV), winners of last year's Barnes-Wallis Medal, invited the Company for a visit to their facility at Cardington for a tour around their amazing project - the Airlander 10. The lighter-than-air craft brings together the best of aircraft, helicopter and airship technologies to create a hyper-efficient aircraft for multiple roles.

Due to the interest generated within the Company, HAV put on 2 tours of their facilities, the first of which I was lucky enough to get a place on. Well, actually David Curgenven who organised the event let me come on the first day when I really should have been on the second - once again sorry about that! After a period of poor weather, the day arrived for the visit with glorious sunshine which gave me the opportunity to fly up in a Slingsby Firefly, past the massive airship sheds at Cardington where HAV have their aircraft in the northern one - the southern one being used as a film set. The 2 sheds dominate the area, making navigation to the nearby Old Warden airfield very easy indeed. On joining the rest of the group at Cardington, the sheds were even more impressive from ground level. Some work was being done to the exterior with a mobile platform on arrival and the tiny figure adjusting some exterior metalwork made the scale hit home.

Before venturing inside, we were issued with reflective vests and a hard hat. During the safety brief it was explained the hat was to guard against falling objects which may be dropped by birds who have mistaken them for twigs and discarded them - a bolt falling from the top of the shed would certainly cause grievous injury! We were hosted during our visit by the Head of Partnerships and Communications, Chris Daniels. Despite his hectic schedule, he took the time to take us round, explain the project and answer our many questions. He was also joined by Dave Burns, the Chief Test Pilot for HAV who has a phenomenal amount of experience in piloting airships and aircraft.

Immediately on entering the shed, the group was struck by the sheer size of the Airlander which was inflated inside the shed. It filled half the length of the shed at 92m long, 25m high and 30m wide (300 x 82 x 98 ft). This was fortunate as the shed was being renovated by the owners allowing half of the shed to be renovated at a time. The airship was due to be moved into the renovated opposite end of the shed the week after our visit allowing the other end to be done too. The renovation included extensive work on the metal structure and a new concrete floor (which after many years of new concrete floors is now 3 feet higher than when first built!).

When we saw it, the Airlander was actually only filled with air rather than the expected helium as it is in early stages of preparation for flight trials in Feb/Mar 16. However, a little helium will be used to make it buoyant enough to be pulled gently along the hangar for the second phase of renovation.

The Airlander itself is made of several components: the envelope, the fuselage, the engines and the control surfaces. We saw the envelope inflated in the hangar but without its other components attached which were arranged about it. The envelope is made of an incredibly strong material, in which even the strongest amongst us couldn't make even the slightest tear (a Kevlar, mylar mix). From the front it looks like two cigar shaped balloons have been squashed together. This left a cleft in the bottom, which is where the fuselage with cockpit, cargo compartment and fuel tanks go. Four 85 hp diesel engines, which look like props in ducts roughly the height of 2 men, will be attached one on each corner on rotating mounts which allow vertical thrust. A cruciform set of tail surfaces go at the back. With all the components in place, the aircraft has a payload capability of 10 tonnes (which is why this vehicle is called the Airlander 10). The vehicle size was chosen as a good balance between useful payload and initial cost and is roughly equivalent to the capability of a Chinook helicopter. However, the future plans of HAV are for an aircraft with a 50 tonne payload which is approaching the capability of a C17 Globemaster! However, the operating costs are predicted to be significantly less.

Controlling this machine is conducted from the cockpit which is somewhat spartan. This is due to the origins of the aircraft which were in a now cancelled US Army project where the aircraft was
to be optionally piloted. The pilot sits at a console with a commanding view to the front and sides, surrounded by controls. He has a sidestick to his right and throttles to his left - but no pedals. A collection of modern avionics are arranged on the console including displays for the many cameras around the aircraft (you cannot see up through the envelope without such cameras). There is also a wide array of other controls and gauges which would be unfamiliar to aeroplane or helicopter pilots. Whilst the sidestick and throttles control the control surfaces and engine thrust, there are also controls for the attitude of the engine nacelles, the balance of fuel and controls to adjust the helium pressure inside the envelope. The inputs are sent along fibre optics to the systems (fly-by-light) but the pilot is currently expertly juggling all the inputs without the aid of any coupled autopilot - however, adding such an autopilot is all part of the plan giving the pilot height, speed and direction control amongst other modes.

When Chris and Dave explained the buoyancy of the system, it caused general surprise amongst the group - the aircraft is actually designed to be heavier than the air. Whilst this might sound disingenuous, it really makes sense. If the aircraft were truly buoyant, any failure in control or gust of air would be driving the aircraft up or away from the intended direction. With a little bit of weight, which can be countered by either vectored thrust or aerodynamic lift from the envelope, the pilot maintains better control and tolerance to turbulence. As all aviators know, stability is all about returning to where you started when disturbed. The aerodynamic lift can be up to 40% of the available lift of the air vehicle when at its top speed of 80 kts, with the vectored thrust from the engines taking up the load as it takes off or lands. The pressure of the envelope is carefully controlled to be slightly above ambient pressure - you would not be able to dent the surface of the main cell no matter how much you pushed apparently. The control of pressure is provided by ballonets full of normal air inside the big envelope which are reduced in size during the climb to keep all the helium at the right pressure. This gives a limitation on the maximum operating altitude of the craft (since the ballonets will eventually be empty). Currently this is set at 20000 ft which is a result of the original US Army programme. However, the cockpit is currently unpressurized meaning the crew would be on oxygen - again the optionally piloted heritage of the aircraft comes through.

The bottom of the envelope also serves as its landing gear, with reinforced longitudinal fillets along each side. The aircraft requires little ground support equipment to land, consisting of a collapsible mast and a little truck to rest the rear end on, mostly to keep the nose into wind when parked. However, for short payload drops or pickups the aircraft can operate without any infrastructure.

This leads onto the huge variety of tasks to which the Airlander could be turned. The endurance of the aircraft is such that with a small amount of luck with winds and roughly 5-6 days to spare, you could circumnavigate the world - imagine an aerial cruise across the globe. With such longs legs it could also be used as a cheap satellite, putting imaging sensors over a target area for very long periods of time. With the planned lift of the Airlander 50, disaster relief would move into a whole new era - 50 tonnes of relief aid, straight to where it is needed without any ground support. There would be no fear of a host nation declining assistance due to downwash and missing out on lift capability as happened in Nepal with the UK Chinooks. There were many more ideas bubbling out of Chris and Dave during the visit and their enthusiasm for the project was infectious. Other ideas
included the use of future renewable energy sources such as conformal solar panels to power the aircraft indefinitely. The safety features of the aircraft were also quite impressive. The envelope is immensely strong, with internal divisions for redundancy in the event of damage to an area. It would be incredibly difficult to bring down the aircraft - a test on another airship revealed that even with multiple bullet holes the aircraft had a leisurely 2 hours to land safely - this is primarily due to the very small overpressure giving low leak rates. Each external component is strung on multiple mounting points each of which can comfortably take the weight; engine failures can also be tolerated with ease. The aircraft can fly in winds up to 35 kts with the aircraft always landing with the wind from ahead. It currently has no icing condition capability but this could be added if needed.

The aircraft has already flown before as part of the US Army programme, before the rights and hardware moved under HAV. HAV is the amalgamation of the very best of British airship engineering, with many of its 100 staff coming from earlier airship companies. However, new blood is also part of the company with many PhDs and apprentices joining to be part of the project. A key person behind the innovation was Roger Monk, who has sadly passed away. However his wife Annie is a keen supporter of the project. If the Airlander has sparked your imagination, there is currently the opportunity to support the project through a Club. Donating to the club gives access to the latest news and includes the writing of your name on the aircraft for its first flight. Chris also noted that the project is already fully funded for its initial flight trials and demonstration phase which is starting early next year. The funding is a mix of government grant and private investment. Corporate sponsors may also get their names on the outside but the company chairman already has dibs on the aircraft registration! The future of HAV and Airlander looks bright and I will certainly make a point to keep track of the first flight.

The Company would like to thank HAV for allowing us to visit and Chris Daniels and Dave Burns for giving their precious time to explain the aircraft and the project. Heartfelt thanks must also go to Heather who followed us around all morning helping carry a chair to provide a resting place for one of the group. The day concluded with a very nice lunch and a flight in the sunshine past the sheds again. Old Warden is highly recommended for a visit if ever the opportunity arises – the absence of landing fees and variety of visiting aircraft made it a very worthwhile stop off. However, don’t blunder in – call for PPR.

The Master adds a few words on the visit to Cardington.

As a Company, Cardington has a place in our hearts for it was here that both the R100 & R101 were housed in 1929 and 1930. In July 1930 R100 flew to Montreal in 78 hours and returned the next in 58 hours. R101’s flights were delayed by the need to increase the lifting capacity by the lengthening of her hull. On completion she was to take the Secretary of State for Air to India. This journey was delayed, and on the evening of the 4th October 1930 R101 departed on the journey with 54 crew and passengers on board. In the early hours of the 5th Oct near Beauvais in France the crew encountered low cloud and driving rain and subsequently, for unknown reasons, dived from about 1,000ft. Impact with the ground followed and resulted in a fire in which 46 of the occupants, including all the passengers, lost their lives. For our Company the loss was devastating. The death of the Master, Sir Sefton Brancker, the Deputy Master, Squadron Leader Earnest L. Johnston, N. G. Atherstone, a Court Member and Mr. M.A. Gilbert, an Honorary Member was very hard to bear.

In Cardington village the cemetery contains a communal grave for the 46 who died and a memorial with all their names noted. A poignant reminder of the dangers associated with early innovative aviation. Sadly this accident led to the scrapping of the R100 and the demise of the airship industry in the United Kingdom for a considerable time.
Visit to RAF Coningsby
LIVERYMAN PAUL SMIDDY

With a seemingly ever-decreasing number of operational military airfields left in the UK, a visit to RAF Coningsby, the only English base of the Typhoon, was always going to be something special. Eleven aircraft flew in on Thursday afternoon. As we were welcomed to our two HASs (my Glastar has rarely been more secure!), the perils of Typhoon flying were made evident straightaway. Our greeter was Flt Lt Steve Eccles. Although he was clad in his growbag, he was off flying, until at least next March, as a result of crushed discs in his neck. This was caused by the stresses of manoeuvring at up to 9g in his air combat training. (We later learned how such stresses have resulted in each Typhoon squadron now being given dedicated physiotherapist support).

The flyers-in had a splendid evening in the Coningsby Officers' Mess, which was enlivened by a Rugby World Cup game. Friday morning was glorious autumnal weather, and all 43 Company members assembled in the ante-room for a briefing by Wg Cdr Chris Moon, OC of 3(F) Sqn, which he immediately pointed out was the oldest heavier-than-air squadron in the RAF. The other based squadrons are XI, 29 (R) (the Typhoon OCU), and 41(R) - the Typhoon and Tornado Test & Evaluation squadron. Last but by no means least is the BBMF, which some members had visited in 2014. Chris pointed out the heavy incidence of visitors to the base: the past fortnight had seen visits by the Prime Minster and the Duke of Cambridge for example.

Together with their compatriots at Lossiemouth, Coningsby’s Typhoons form the UK’s air defence asset. Hence the station’s first priority is to provide the nation’s Quick Reaction Alert force. A pair of Typhoons are constantly at readiness at both Lossie and Coningsby. The squadrons also provide the QRA for Op Sipling - the Falkland Islands (we met crews who had just returned from taking airframes down there), and also the Baltic.

The Typhoon Force’s second priority is to sustain Overseas Contingent Operations, with two squadrons at very high readiness to deploy. At the time of writing Tornados were deployed to Cyprus for operations over Iraq.

Looking to the future, Chris pointed to the transition of 2 Sqn (‘The oldest fixed wing flying squadron in the world’ - as its boss would no doubt remind Chris!) from the GR4 to the Typhoon. Meanwhile work continues to bring the Typhoon’s ground attack capability up to that of the Tornado with Brimstone and Storm Shadow due to become operational in 2017/8. The Meteor missile is slated to replace the AMRAAM ‘in due course’. Chris pointed out that having to develop the Typhoon in conjunction with four other air forces brought and brings its own challenges….

The decline of the RAF’s capability from 20 front line squadrons at the time of Gulf War 1, to 7-8 now (with no commensurate reduction in demands) has led to obvious stresses on 1 Gp personnel. This was evident both on aircrew, but also ground staff, where the industry-wide shortage of engineers is making itself felt. Chris underlined that a major help was that the Typhoon was “the safest aircraft the RAF has ever flown”, pointing out that no aircraft had been lost in the development phase. But trade was busy for Coningsby: Russian incursions into British airspace had increased very substantially over the last three years.

As we headed off to the squadrons, our host was Flt Lt Mike Highmoor. There was widespread sympathy for the fact that he had been on duty overnight on QRA, so had already been at work for more than 24 hours! As we toured a Typhoon in a HAS, Mike gave us a thorough briefing on the type’s merits relative to its competition, including giving us a better understanding of the recent RAF v IAF air combat test (where the RAF clearly lost the PR battle!). The Typhoon really is a most impressive piece...
Of kit. Of the many statistics on which we were fed, one sticks in my mind: 0 to 35,000’ in 2 minutes at Mach 1.5! Understandably the accompanying cost per flying hour (£90,000) is something that would give most Company members' eyes water…

Wg Cdr Moon had stressed that the Typhoon is an easy aircraft to fly - leaving its pilots with spare capacity to fight with it. This was brought home when we all had a go in the sim. If even your author could take off, climb to 35,000’, throw in a few aeros before successfully recovering to Coningsby (all in 5 minutes), then it has to be easy to fly! Huge fun. Despite the fact these were “1/2 globe” no-motion sims, standing watching a colleague point a Typhoon at the ground was a very discombobulating experience. As ever the sim instructional team is made up of retired military fast jet pilots.

Then we were taken to XI squadron, which had recently celebrated its centenary, being founded in Netheravon in 1915. As we entered their quarters past serried ranks of family estates, one crusty colleague was heard to mutter “in my day we all had sports cars!”'. Here Flt Lt Stu Roberts, another grounded junior pilot, (this time having pulled an Achilles at touch rugby!), took us through the considerable personal equipment of a Typhoon pilot. Altogether he dons 13 kgs of kit; the weight of the Mk 10c helmet puts further stress on neck muscles during combat. Use of NVGs obviously exacerbates this problem. He emphasised the level of international interoperability: there is a forthcoming exercise in the US (as well as the annual Red Flag), and one US pilot on exchange, whilst 3 Sqn currently has a RAAF pilot on its books. Stu took us through the risks and rewards of QRA operations. For example, did you know that Bears, the most frequent ‘customer’, often trail 1 mile of HF aerial?

On to 41 (R) Sqn, for a briefing by Sqn Ldr Rick Tuer, with an F3/ RAAF FA18 exchange/ Typhoon background. He explained the squadron’s role in evaluating in-service changes to the two types' envelope capability or asset life. Their essential objective is to test whether an upgrade is fit for purpose. They had recently done all the testing of new tanking systems for the Voyager type. The squadron will also be central to the implementation of the new missile systems that Chris Moon had outlined. The level of experience of 41(R) sqn aircrew is probably a shade ahead of that on the operational Typhoon squadrons. Rick was particularly illuminating on the stresses brought about by implementing software upgrades across four international air forces!

Our final halt was at the BBMF where we were hosted by the new Boss, Sqn Ldr Andy Millikin. A fount of knowledge, his enthusiasm for his role was evident to all. Talk about a round peg in a round hole (and that is no comment on his waistline)! We were regaled with the operational history of every airframe, and also every serial, where they were not original to the airframe. A Hurricane represented that of Flt Lt Jimmy Whalen, who secured 3 kills in one day during the Battle of Britain, and 3 in one day later in the Far East. It was clear that the BBMF particularly enjoyed meeting veterans, some of whom had links to the Flight’s current airframes and serials. Andy pointed out that the Mk XIX Spitfire holds the altitude record for piston-engined aircraft at 51,000 ft. Our walk round the hangar was enlivened by his asides on the difficulties operating different marks of the legendary design.

As we concluded our visit, the BBMF’s Lancaster PA474 was being towed out of the hangar for its first engine run since its starboard outer had burst into flames earlier in the season. An uplifting moment.

Overall it was a fascinating day, providing a valuable insight into the sharpest tools in the RAF armoury. Our thanks must go to John Davy for the considerable spadework in setting it up, and to all our RAF hosts, in particular Flt Lt Mike Highmoor. And the flight home was also in perfect flying conditions.…. 
Visit to Britten-Norman at Lee on Solent

LIVERYMAN DR JOHN McADAM

The Master with twenty four guests of the Honourable Company visited Britten-Norman at Lee on Solent on 8th September. Britten-Norman was founded as a company at Bembridge, Isle of Wight; and 50 years ago the Britten-Norman Islander flew for the first time. BN’s head office is now at Lee on Solent, which was started its existence as a flying boat base in WW1. Situated between Portsmouth’s Royal Naval base and Southampton’s Mercantile Marine harbour, the airfield was used by the Royal Navy under the name of HMS Daedalus until quite recently, but is now a civilian establishment.

Eight members of the Air Pilots did manage to accept Britten-Norman’s invitation to fly in including the writer flying in Graham Foster’s yellow and white Piper Archer based at Fair Oaks. We were later joined by the rest of our Company who all arrived in motor vehicles, many of whom found great difficulty in finding the correct gate in which to enter the airfield.

We were welcomed by Mr Kieran O’Toole, the company’s Operations Director/Intelligence and Surveillance. His introductory talk emphasised the safety and security aspects within the aerodrome and workshops. Speaking as a retired senior police officer Mr O’Toole spoke with great authority of successful police aerial operations involving both helicopters and Britten-Norman Islander/Defender aircraft. He reported a true story involving criminals who raided and robbed a steel container, leaving the guard locked inside this airless tomb as the ship sailed away to a foreign port. The criminals confessed to this aggressive act and with their $1,000,000 worth of aerial ‘heat-seeking’ equipment in a Britten-Norman Islander, the police were able to identify the container imprisoning the guard who was safely released and lived to tell the tale.

Mr O’Toole then introduced Mr William Hynett, OBE, FRaE, Britten-Norman’s Group Chief Executive, who began by regaling us with the history of Britten-Norman, which was founded on the 29th July 1954 across the Solent at Bembridge on the eastern shoreline of the Isle of Wight. When asked why they chose a somewhat remote location on the Isle of Wight, he explained that John Britten and Desmond Norman were both very keen yachtsmen and this was an ideal location where they could combine work and with pleasure. BN is a British aircraft manufacturer and aviation services provider, beneficially owned by a consortium which includes two members of the Zawawi family from the Sultanate of Oman. It is now the sole independent commercial aircraft producer within the United Kingdom.

John Britten and Desmond Norman first met when both were training as engineers with the de Havilland aircraft manufacturing company and started developing crop-spraying equipment attached using De Havilland Tiger Moths. These open-cockpit light aircraft were modified at their Ventnor factory close-by: with crop-spraying equipment attached they were able to win a Sudanese government contract. With this added experience, they both then turned their hand to light aircraft design and their first effort was the Britten-Norman BN-1 Finibee, described as a light single-seater parasol wing aircraft. This they pitched to several aircraft manufacturing companies, without success. John Britten and Desmond Norman then put their combined creative aviation brains together and making a detailed analysis of the light aviation market decided there was a demand for a twin-engined utility aircraft with minimum complex systems. It would also have to operate from short, rough airstrips and for high-density short commuter flights. This design concept resulted in the design of the Britten-Norman BN-2 Trislander and the company was formed to produce this basic and uncomplicated light, twin-engined aircraft. The BN-2 Trislander, with its militarised counterpart the Defender, has gone from strength to strength with many still flying around the world today. It is interesting to note that two of our members, our Master Squadron Leader Christopher John Ford and Squadron Leader John Davy have both logged 3,500+ hours in a Britten-Norman BN-2 Islander and/or its military cousin the Defender.

In 1969, Desmond Norman then designed a four-seater touring aircraft to compete with established aircraft such as the Cessna 172 and Piper Cherokee and a prototype named the BN-3 Nymph was built but failed to attract significant orders and was shelved. Britten-Norman then put maximum effort into improving the highly successful Islander and in 1970, the Trislander was born by adding a third engine to the leading edge of the tail unit, giving this improved aircraft greater range and capacity. In 1975, this Trislander won Britten-Norman the Queen’s Award for Industry for
'Technical Innovation.' Today, Britten-Norman has sold more than 1,250 aircraft to customers in more than 120 countries around the world. In addition to aircraft manufacturing, the company also excels at general maintenance, overhaul and repair work as well as performing sub-contract engineering and design work. Although BN's historic home is at Bembridge on the Isle of Wight, airframes were assembled under sub-contract in Romania for 40 years. During that period, Romanian aircraft used to pass through Avions Fairey in Belgium and onward to the United Kingdom for certification. Today all aircraft are manufactured in the United Kingdom at the Lee on Solent manufacturing facility at Daedalus Airfield. While spare parts production continues at the site at Bembridge, sub-assemblies are also being supplied from the original Romanian facility. Ownership of the company has passed through a number of hands starting when the Fairey Aviation Group acquired Britten-Norman in 1972. Following financial troubles, the company was sold to Oerlikon-Buehrle in 1978, who owned Pilatus Aircraft of Switzerland, which is why some aircraft have the designation of Pilatus Britten-Norman. In 1998, Oerlikon-Buehrle sold Britten-Norman to Litchfield Continental, who very shortly sold it on to Biofarm Inc. In 2000 B-N was formed to acquire the assets of Britten-Norman Limited. Mr O'Toole then described the virtues of the Islander, Trislander and the Defender aircraft. He spoke with great conviction of the high success rate of police and military surveillance, especially so when they were supporting ground forces in a chase situation following a bank robbery or similar crimes, when they used the services of Islander aircraft. The question was raised of growing competition from UAVs, which have a much greater flight duration time and were more economical, for surveillance and observation of ground based criminal activity. Mr O'Toole countered this argument by stating that a human pilot in an Islander had the ability and comprehension to 'Look outside the box' while concentrating on activity within the box. This advantage might be denied the UAV operator on the ground who was possibly operating many many miles away. Our day was now drawing to a close as we were all invited to fly in an Islander, around the nearby Solent. We bundled 'Six by Six' into their Islander for this unforgettable local flight. Thank you to David Curgenven for putting together this unique visit.

Visit to RAF Halton

LIVERYMAN TOM EELES, EDITOR

A group of Company members visited RAF Halton on 21st October at the kind invitation of the Station Commander, Group Captain Adrian Burns MSc MA BSc RAF. The plans of those who had hoped to fly in, including your editor, were thwarted by extensive low cloud and drizzle so a rather tortuous road journey led us all to Halton House, currently used as the Officers' Mess.

There has been an impressive building at Halton since the Norman Conquest, when it belonged to the Archbishop of Canterbury. Sold to a Henry Bradshaw in the mid 1600s, it then was sold again in 1720 to the Dashwood family. In 1853 Sir George Dashwood sold the property to Baron Lionel de Rothschild but the house became uninhabited, fell into disrepair and was finally demolished. During the second half of the nineteenth century the Rothschilds acquired and constructed seven grand houses in the Vale of Aylesbury. Today the house at Aston Clinton is no longer standing, Mentmore Towers and Eythrope Pavilion are in private hands, Tring Manor House...
is an Arts Educational School. Waddesdon Manor and Ascott House are held by the National Trust and Halton House is the RAF Halton Officers’ Mess. By around 1880 plans were being made by Alfred Rothschild, Lionel’s son and a director of the Bank of England, for the construction of Halton House. It was finished in July 1883 but not formally opened until January 1884. The house was only ever used by Alfred Rothschild for social purposes, whilst he remained living in London. A good friend of Lord Kitchener, Alfred allowed Halton House and grounds to be used in the First World War to prepare soldiers for trench warfare. After his death in January 1918 the House was sold to the War Office for £112,000. It was then transferred to the newly formed RAF and has remained with the Service ever since.

After coffee and biscuits we were split into two groups for a tour of Halton House. Squadron Leader Cobley proved to be an excellent and entertaining tour guide, providing much information about the astonishing interior of Halton House, which, despite military ownership for nearly 90 years, has retained much of its original sumptuous fittings. The gold leaf ceiling in the original billiard room, which cost £25,000 when installed, was a wonder to behold, its value being astronomic today. There was evidence everywhere of the five arrow crest of the Rothschild family. We were shown the special sliding security doors and windows that were used to secure the House when it was not being used, the original provision of under-floor heating and the very early use of electricity. The chandelier in the front salon was enormously spectacular. When asked how the House had escaped the RAF’s habit of painting its building interiors with a seemingly inexhaustable supply of magnolia paint, our guide pointed out that one Station Commander had indeed authorised the interior of the grand salon to be decorated this way, but luckily was prevented from continuing this vandalism any further. There was evidence of water damage to wall coverings, caused by leaks in the internal drainage pipes. This problem, which is being addressed, highlighted the difficulties in preserving historic interiors in buildings owned by the Services in an era of great budgetary constraint. Halton House has been used extensively by the film and television drama industries, appearing in well-known films such as The King’s Speech, The Queen, Evita and Fly Boys, and TV series Poirot, Jeeves and Wooster, Foyle’s War, Downton Abbey and Spooks, to mention but a few. This work must provide a welcome revenue stream. After an excellent lunch we moved on to The Trenchard Museum, which displayed many items associated with RAF Halton’s varied history, including a complete Gnat aircraft that appears in the editor’s log book. The emphasis was very much on Halton’s history as the RAF’s Apprentice Training School, set up by Lord Trenchard as the third ‘pillar’ of his young Service, the other two ‘pillars’ being the Cadet College at Cranwell and the Staff College. None of these exist today in their original form. The apprentices, known as Halton Brats, were the core of engineering expertise within the Service. Many were offered commissions as general service officers; the Company has two Past Masters who are Halton Brats, Wally Epton and Cliff Spink, and many others went on to achieve high rank and distinguished service.

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Many thanks also to Liverymen John Davy and David Curgenven for organising the visit.
I am a lucky man. Apart from surviving 20 years as a fast-jet RAF pilot and still operating Boeing 757 and 767 aircraft, I occasionally get to experience Round the World (RTW) operations. RTW ops are up to 3 week trips flying wealthy people to far flung destinations. Although the trips do not always encompass the globe they are generically known as RTW flights. The clients (never passengers) have paid around $70,000 for a fully inclusive package on their 'Explorer' B757.

The aircraft are standard passenger jets internally re-seated for RTW ops. From 221 seats the load is reduced to 72 quasi-business class seats and 18 economy seats for non-operating and rest crew. The crew complement is somewhat different to the norm. Two pilots and 5 crew is the standard for operating to Europe but on these trips we carry 3 pilots, 9 cabin crew, 2 engineers, despatcher/loadmaster, chef, and caterer. In addition there is a ‘team leader’ (arguably tour leader and troubleshooter), doctor and one or 2 lecturers that come and go on the 3 week trip. The B757 is the ideal jet for this type of trip. It’s large enough to carry a good complement of clients and crew, a capacious cargo hold that has the space for 2 bags per passenger and crew, sometimes golf clubs, bottled water for most of the trip and most importantly a large wine and alcohol cellar. It also has the legs to fly some very long sectors and with the recent (5 years ago) addition of winglets can complete 9 hour blocks, Anchorage to Osaka being an example.

So why not utilise a bigger jet, a B767 or Airbus A330 for instance?

Cost is part of the answer but more importantly the B757 can taxi and park in places that the bigger jets would struggle. Jaipur, India, has a restricted parking entrance with barbed wire being only a few feet left and right of the wing tips, requiring an off-centre taxi to avoid getting a few scratches on the way. B757 steps are usually available world-wide.

So what is a standard Round The World trip?

Effectively it is to try and visit as many of the Wonders of the World is possible in 3 weeks. The aircraft may be pre-positioned but otherwise it could be an empty flight out of the UK, say Luton, to Fort Lauderdale maybe via Bangor, Maine. A few nights rest to acclimatise and then the passengers (oops clients) join us on the first leg to Lima, Peru. Their target is Machu Picchu. Now, we, the crew, can visit all the sights on our days off, in-between flights. The criteria are that we have to be back, rested and able to operate the next leg. For some destinations this is easy but Machu Picchu is not one of them and although some crew have managed to visit the Wonder, generally it doesn’t happen. However the next destination, Easter Island, it is very easy to visit and photograph the monuments. Getting there requires a few procedures, being an ‘Isolated Airfield’, but realistically once you have reached your Point of No Return the airfield is yours, no other aircraft are allowed to use the runway until you are safely on the ground. Easter Island is 2 hours from the nearest alternate and since there is no other aircraft operating in the area lends itself to complete a few figures of eight to allow everyone a photo opportunity.

Naturally we carry a good amount of extra fuel, not only for a flight into Easter Island but on all sectors. The Explorer
flights are 'ad hoc' and diplomatic clearances can sometimes be lost by the ATC agencies. Such an occurrence was leaving Cambodia and entering Thailand. After holding at the FIR boundary for 30 minutes we started our return to our departure airfield, only to be informed, as we were making our initial approach that they found the paperwork. Fortunately we had the fuel to continue to Thailand and onwards to India.

From Easter Island across the South Pacific is one of the longest and loneliest sectors we operate. Utilising an ETOPS (Extended Twin Operations) of 180 minutes allows a flight passing Tahiti as a possible tech stop onto Samoa, a flight time of some 8 hours. On one occasion the doctor asked to speak to us saying that a passenger had had a possible heart attack, this at the mid-point of the ETOPS. Although sympathetic we suggested that she try to keep our client alive for another 3 hours, Tahiti being our nearest diversion. The client survived, it was indigestion. Most of the Pacific traffic operates mid or to the north of the ocean, we did not see or hear of another airliner for 5-6 hours. We passed over one or 2 islands that could have been used in the Tom Hanks film 'Castaway', otherwise nothing. Our destination, Samoa, used in another film, this one being 'South Pacific' was effectively an overnight tech stop and we crossed the date-line the next day to reach Cairns for the Great Barrier Reef. Confirming the lack of traffic was that we were given a block of FL290 - FL390, allowing us the facility to increase our flight level in 100ft increments, a highly efficient way of operating not afforded to us in busy European airspace. Cairns is one of the smaller Australian cities but is an interesting and friendly place and of course is the gateway to the Reef, another Wonder of the World. If you're not into snorkelling or diving then the glass-bottomed boat is an option. From Cairns to Port Moresby is a short 90 minute hop and we were left by the passengers who went off to see some of the Papua tribes, the last of the cannibals. At this point I'll mention the food. I wrote earlier that we carry a chef and caterer. There is no true cooking on B757, just reheating part cooked, fully prepared food in the 6 ovens on-board the aircraft. However, it still allows our chef to prepare some outstanding menus and the delight is that the crew get to eat the same food. The 3 pilots (a Lead Captain, second Captain and a First Officer) still eat different meals but there is sufficient choice for a very pleasurable meal, 'lobster thermidor' being one option one does not see for crew meals on European routes. The chef will have identified hotels at all our destinations that can provide kitchens and sous-chefs to the required quality and the caterer needs adequate cleaning facilities for the entire cutlery, crockery, yes real crockery, and the carts and trays. We carry most of the wines and spirits on board the aircraft but some clients have a particular desire for a specific drink and these will be purchased downroute as needs be. Any part-used bottles of wine have to be thrown away but the disposal is usually carried out by the crew after the flight. As the dry weight of the aircraft reduces due to the consumption of wine and bottled water it is balanced by the purchase of souvenirs by the clients so the 'Zero Fuel Weight' remains the same for the whole trip, very convenient.

After the clients have returned to us after visiting the cannibals we do a head count but usually we get most of them back. Joking aside, we do lose one or 2 throughout the trip, through illness and fatigue, fortunately nothing more serious. The whole experience, for both clients and crew, is very tiring and requires a good amount of stamina. The aircraft is 'home' for 3 weeks and sometimes the relief of the clients returning to the jet can be quite surprising. For the crew, providing a high quality service for 3 weeks with hardly a break is not an easy task. You work hard, be a tourist and play hard, after 3 weeks most crew just want to sleep on reaching home. Not always a popular move when being greeted by your young family?

So onwards. Next could be Siem Riep, Cambodia, for Angkor Wat and a good laundry stop for the crew. Next might be Kathmandu, though I fear that it might be a while before we return after the earthquake the Nepalese people experienced. From a professional
perspective, Kathmandu is quite challenging. Although the airfield's elevation isn't that high, only 4390ft, it is the approach, go-around and visual circuits that concentrate one's mind. The final approach starts from some 11500ft and requires gear down, nearly landing flap and a judicious amount of speedbrake to control the descent angle and speed. At 3 miles the approach reverts to a standard 3 degree so landing flap is lowered and a normal landing is completed. One rule, in any go-around or visual circuit do not exceed 4 miles from the VOR, or you hit a mountain. Simple!

Well over half-way now. Next could be India. The Taj Mahal is a very beautiful monument and well worth a visit. In the late afternoon it changes colour from white to light pink to deep pink as the light changes due to the setting sun. Quite remarkable. We tend to fly into Agra airfield, an Indian Air Force transport base, which is conveniently close to the Taj. Even the immigration procedures were easier here, something for which to be very grateful. Although the British invented bureaucracy (debatable) the Indians perfected it. On the note of passports we all have to have 2 passports for this adventure. One of which has our US business visas and the other for all the other countries that we will or are likely to visit.

From Agra we fly to Kilimanjaro, the second longest leg of just short of 8 hours. Unsurprisingly, the airport is very close to Mount Kilimanjaro and offers spectacular views as one makes a final approach into the Tanzanian airfield. The clients immediately board some turboprops and make their way to the Serengeti for a safari. We can also go on safari to the Ngorongoro Crater Game Park which is a naturally enclosed space that has most of the big game, including lion packs that adore the shade proffered by the tour rovers and allow some very, very close-up photos.

We used to carry a good amount of cash, $100,000 on my first trip. Some of it was used for actual services such as catering, fuel and other times 'airport services'. Tipping people in certain destinations helped to get the show into the air. The last couple of legs, Yaounde Cameroon (tech stop), Madeira (night stop), Santa Maria, Azores (tech stop) and finally Fort Lauderdale complete the trip, necessitating a positioning back home leaving the aircraft for the next crew to take to some other exotic destination. The trips encompass South America, Africa, South East Asia, Japan, anywhere in the world where people want to visit. Last year there was a golfing trip of 3 weeks starting in Hawaii and finishing in Spain, via Mauritius, South Africa and a few other golfing pleasures. Missed that one unfortunately but I have been lucky to complete a total of 3 trips, to destinations that I would never have visited in the normal chain of events and does give a taster to perhaps revisit and incorporate in one's own family Round the World trip.
INTRODUCTION
I'm pleased to be able to report that our new committee structure is now in operation and going well. We also have a new relationship with SKYbrary.

On a more sobering note, the ongoing UK Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) Review of UK Air Display Regulation leaves many of us in the UK General Aviation (GA) community unsure as to what the future holds; associated activity is also attracting large portions of many people's time. This is not an issue for UK alone; European and North American bodies associated with display flying bodies have already suggested/requested the opportunity to share any lessons that might emerge from the UK Review. International standardisation has long been one of the Air Pilots' goals, (more usually in connection with commercial air transport) so it is heartening to see that view shared most strongly by the international practitioners within one sector of GA.

The CAA Review is expected early in 2016 (before the start of the next display season here); a further interim report from the Air Accidents Investigation Branch (AAIB) into the Shoreham accident might be published in advance of that, though their final is not anticipated until June 2016.

TECHNICAL COMMITTEE
Our new Technical Committee met for the first time on 23rd September with 13 attendees. Unfortunately the four committee members who were not in the UK were unable to join in because our planned conferencing facility was not ready; additionally, one UK member had fallen off a ladder while committing DIY and was unable to travel and two others were at work on the flight deck. Nonetheless, the mix of previous committee members and new faces worked well and created something of a new dynamic as new ideas mixed with previously well-established ones.

Air Cdre Dai Whittingham volunteered to take the chair and Assistant Marion Wooldridge and Captain Richard Hall agreed to take on the Vice-Chair positions.

The agenda was wide-ranging. It included an update on the CAA's initial response to the Shoreham accident, discussion of passenger (mis-)behaviour, the admissibility of AAIB evidence in court and the implications of that in terms of a jury's perception of evidence, the context of which they were likely not to understand, an update on EASA's action plan following the GermanWings accident and the medical implications of aviation-related issues including zero-hours contracts and fatigue. A review of Working Group topics resulted in four being held in abeyance to concentrate effort on the other nine. One of the nine is the Instructors Working Group, more of which below.

All felt that the inaugural meeting was most successful and looked forward to the next one which is scheduled for 28th January.

SKYBRARY
The intent to establish a new relationship with SKYbrary was touched on in a previous article we are now proceeding along those lines. Articles we have already endorsed remain under our 'Content Control' and we will review these and linked references for currency and relevance on a period basis. We will now be able to complete more meaningful reviews and have the time to re-write articles where that is appropriate; the Instructors' Working Group have already made major progress in re-writing an article on VFR Flight into IMC; the article now reflects pilot training lesson plans and is now circulation amongst all the Working Group for further review. Our plan is that, whenever it is appropriate, all Working Groups will be encouraged to produce articles for publication through SKYbrary in parallel with their other outputs.

The SKYbrary website has been designed with web searching in mind; anyone who 'searches' (e.g. on Google, though there are other web search engines available) on words that form part of a SKYbrary article title will almost certainly get SKYbrary on the first page of search results. (Searching “Visual Approach” on Google will reveal an article within our Content Control.) So pilots and others searching on topics of concern to pilots will increasingly be made aware of the Air Pilots.