Guild Diary

June 2011

9  Pilot Aptitude Assessment
11  Garden Party
14  2nd Technical and Air Safety Committee Meeting
16  3rd GP & F Committee Meeting
16  New Members’ Briefing
21  Environment Committee Meeting
24  Election of Sheriffs

July 2011

6  Trophies and Awards Committee Meeting
12  Benevolent Fund Board of Management Meeting
12  2nd Education and Training Committee Meeting
14  4th GP & F Committee Meeting
14  2nd Court Meeting

July 2011

tbc  Guild Sunday

August 2011

11  Pilot Aptitude Assessment

September 2011

15  5th General Purposes and Finance Committee meeting
15  3rd Court Meeting
20  3rd Technical and Air Safety Committee Meeting
21  Guild Luncheon Club
21  Sir Frederick Tymms Lecture
28  Election of Lord Mayor

October 2011

6  Pilot Aptitude Assessment
11  3rd Education and Training Committee Meeting
13  6th GP & F Committee Meeting
25  Environmental Committee Meeting
27  Trophies and Awards Banquet

GUILD VISITS PROGRAMME

21 June  RNLI Waterloo Bridge
1 July  Windsor Castle
20 July  RAF Brize Norton
7 September  RAF Northolt Ops Room and RAF Uxbridge Bunker

Please see the Flyers accompanying this and previous editions of Guild News or contact Liveryman David Curgenven at guildevents@dcai.co.uk. These flyers can also be downloaded from the Guild website.

Cover Photo: Guild members travel in style! Past Master Dick Felix’s 1936 Hornet Moth provides a fitting background to Freeman Alan Winn’s 1929 Blue Label 3 litre Bentley, pictured at Wheel Farm during the Guild’s visit to Retrotec (see page 8). Assistant Diana Green can just be discerned experimenting with the Bentley’s controls.

Photo courtesy Liveryman Alan Jackson.
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LIVERY DINNER. This year’s Livery Dinner took place on 26th May, at the Drapers’ Hall. Before the Dinner there was a Court Meeting at which six new Livemermen were clothed; they are Alasdair John Beaton, Michael O’Donoghue, Ronald Morley Cox, Gerald Douglas Howarth, David Winston Gerrard and Stephen Bruh. Master Air Pilot certificates were presented to Squadron Leader Kevin McCarthy and Captain Peter Turner. The principal guests were Guest of Honour Theresa Villiers MP, Minister of State for Transport, Mr Lee Balthazor, President RAeS, Air Chief Marshal Sir Brian Burridge, President Air League, Mr J Moore, Master Fanmaker, Lady Milnes Coates, Master Loriner, Alderman David Wooton, Master Solicitor, Wing Commander C M I Barker, University of London Air Squadron and Squadron Leader C Thompson 101 Squadron. This issue of Guild News went to press before the Dinner so the report will be published in August Guild News. Photographs of the event will also appear in August Guild News and can be accessed on the official photographer’s website www.sharpphoto.co.uk

GUILD LUNCHEON CLUB. On 21st April 90 members of the Guild Luncheon Club sat down to an excellent meal in the RAF Club. The Guest of Honour and speaker after the meal was Air Vice Marshal Andy Pulford, Air Member for Personnel at Headquarters RAF Air Command. After the meal the Air Marshal entertained the diners with a fascinating overview of current and future issues affecting the RAF, leaving his listeners in no doubt as to the challenges that lie ahead.

COBHAM LECTURE. This year’s Cobham Lecture took place on 21st April at the Royal Aeronautical Society’s premises, 4 Hamilton Place. The lecture was given by Claudio Galdo Camelier, Chief Test Pilot Embraer Executive Jets, the subject being ‘The Embraer Legacy 450/500, Newest Clean Sheet Design Business Jet of this Century’. Conceived as a concept called the Mid-Light Jet at the NBAA Convention in 2007, the Legacy 450 and its big brother the Legacy 500 were officially launched in May 2008. They are designed to carry 7 to 8 passengers over 2,300 nautical miles. The aircraft has full by-wire flight controls, a Collins ProLine Fusion flight deck, Honeywell HF7500 series engines and a full stand up flat cabin floor. First flight is scheduled for later this year and entry into service in 2013. The presentation was followed by a reception. A full report will appear in the next issue.

PUBLIC RELATIONS GROUP. Members of the newly-formed PR Group had their first meeting on 12th April, to discuss the way ahead for the Guild’s PR strategy. The accompanying photograph shows members of the Group, consisting of (left to right) the Master, Steven Slater, the Clerk, Past Master Roger Gault, Dan Tye and Stephen Bridgewater.

WEDDING NEWS. Many congratulations to Assistants John Davy and Diana Green, who have announced that they are to marry. They invite all Guild Members to join them for the ceremony at 11am on Saturday 17th September at the Guild Church, St Michael’s, Cornhill.
A GOLDEN FLYING MILESTONE.
Liveryman Terry Holloway, Group Executive at Marshall of Cambridge, celebrated the 50th anniversary of his first solo flight with a solo flight in a Cessna 172 of the Cambridge Aero Club on 21st March 2011. Terry, who has worked for Marshall since his retirement from the RAF in the rank of Group Captain in 1995, flew his first solo at Christchurch airport in an Air Cadet T 31 training glider on 21st March 1961, just weeks after his 16th birthday. Since then he has amassed over 8,500 flying hours in over 150 different types of aircraft and gliders and remains in current flying practice, both for business and pleasure. Terry is pictured in 1961 flying his first solo, and in 2011 being congratulated by Iain Young, the Marshall Aerospace Chief Test Pilot. Terry remarked ’’I have been lucky that continuing good health has enabled me to continue to fly. I have particularly enjoyed my solo celebratory flight which brought many happy flying memories back. Probably my most memorable experience was in 2000 when, with a friend, I flew a light aircraft from Cambridge to the west coast of the USA, although the adventure of being one of the first Englishmen to fly a glider over Mount Aconcagua, the highest mountain in the Andes at 22,482 ft, was also a breathtaking experience.’’

April Guild News Correction. In the report on the visit to Farnborough in the April issue of Guild News the AAIB was incorrectly referred to as a Board. It is of course a Branch; the Editor apologises for this error.

MONARCH AIRLINES ATTRACTS HIGHEST VISITOR NUMBERS AT CTC WINGS OPEN DAY. More future pilots than ever registered to attend CTC’s Wings Open Day last month. Monarch Airlines, one of CTC’s longest running partners for ‘CTC Wings’, has been recruiting pilots through the programme since 1996. Out of 432 pilots flying for Monarch today, 95 are ex CTC cadets. CTC Wings Open Days have proved increasingly popular tools for aspiring pilots to research their flight training options. Parents are also encouraged to come along. Organised at least 3 times a year, the Open Days are hosted at CTC’s Boeing and Airbus simulator centre just outside Southampton. Those attending have the opportunity to meet the CTC team, talk to banks and financiers about funding, learn more about the selection process and how the training programme works and try their hand at the controls of a jet simulator. Speaking at a recent Open Day, Captain Martin Dudley, Head of Pilot Training for Monarch Airlines, said ”I genuinely believe now is a most timely point to be considering a career in commercial aviation. It is certain that we will soon start to face a global shortage of qualified pilots to fly the world’s fleet of aircraft.’’ The next Open Day is to be held on Saturday 9th July. For more information visit www.ctcwings.com.
**The Master Writes**

**CAPTAIN WALLY EPTON**

The night after the AGM, Jan and I undertook our first official engagement when we were guests of the Chief of Air Staff at a private dinner party in his residence. Only in my dreams might I have imagined that I would sit down to dinner with the head of the RAF and yet there we were, all together with the common bond of aviation bringing us into enthusiastic conversation about flying aeroplanes. The CAS is an accomplished fighter pilot and an Upper Freeman in this Guild. Like all of us he loves flying. In talking with him I was convinced that like most of us he shares the feelings expressed by our Patron HRH Prince Philip who recognised that wherever aviators were bound together by common ties and aims, there developed a sympathy between them.

What was more surreal about our evening with the CAS was that the next morning the news broke about NATO’s decision to impose a “No Fly” zone over Libya, and we learned that RAF Tornado aircraft had been in action immediately. It made me realise that the CAS must have said goodbye to us after dinner, and returned almost immediately to a night of serious work seeing his pilots and aircraft into action in the Libyan skies. I am sure that I speak for all members of this Guild when I offer our continuing support to the CAS in his capacity as commander of the Royal Air Force. I offer our continuing support to the professional pilots of the RAF and their allies in NATO, in all of their missions, wherever in Libya, Afghanistan, Iraq or wherever they are called upon to fly, and hope that they will, without loss, ultimately be successful in their objectives.

By the end of March Jan and I were presented in our finery to the Lord Mayor of London, Alderman Michael Bear and the Lady Mayoress Barbara Bear at the Mansion House for dinner. This was a grand occasion where Masters and their ladies from the Livery Companies in the City were gathered together as guests of the Lord Mayor. His speech reminded us of the turbulent economic times that Great Britain has passed through and emphasised the financial difficulties the UK was experiencing. The City of London is still the economic engine that drives the UK producing around 40% of the nation’s GDP. The Lord Mayor thanked the Livery Companies for their enormous transformative contribution to the City, to the wider community and to the nation. He reminded us that the City is still relatively strong compared to many other financial centres and its financial landscape was being resurrected to make the UK strong and more financially stable in the future. I could not help feeling proud that the Guild of Air Pilots and Air Navigators was a contributor to that stability in the City and that as Master I was there to represent you all.

Since March there have been a number of engagements giving me the opportunity to represent the Guild. I have for example attended the Awards Presentations at The Worshipful Company of Scientific Instrument Makers. Whilst reminding my hosts that as pilots and air navigators we relied on instruments for safe flight, I was delighted to note that there were a number of apprentices at the celebratory dinner. The Scientific Instrument Makers are very keen to cultivate their apprentice schemes and in true traditions of City of London Guilds, include apprentices in their ceremonial activities. I often joke with my younger co-pilots that they are my apprentices, and ought to be members of the GYM. In fact it is a condition that anyone who flies with me is required to join the Guild, and I always strongly encourage my “apprentices” to enrol in the GYM. In many ways that is where the apprentices of this Guild are to be found and I am encouraged that our Liverymen support the GYM and its activities.

At the European Business Aviation Conference and Exhibition (EBACE) in Geneva I was asked to present safety awards to various business aviation organisations at the Bombardier 5th Annual Safety Stand-down Europe reception the evening before EBACE opened. I was also asked to make a speech at the closing Gala Dinner and this was a good opportunity to tell the business aviation world the story of GAPAN and its wider role in international aviation. I got the message across that we were a truly international organisation even though we were London centric, and with our active regions in AUS, HKG, NA, and NZ, invited all business pilots worldwide to become members.

I also found time to renew my flight instructor rating skills with Warden Dorothy Pooley which was probably quite risky for the Guild having the Master and a future Master carrying out aerobatics, stalls, practice forced landings, etc in the Chipmunk which has to be classified as an historic aircraft by now. Thoroughly enjoyable work, and to me demonstrates how in the Guild we are able to help each other maintain flying skills and standards. Believe me Dorothy gave me no special privileges and ensured my instructional skills were up to the standard required under EASA regulations.

We now have the newly formed PR Group up and running which pleases me because I do believe that our public image is very much enhanced through good PR and press work. Headed by Steve Bridgewater together with Steve Slater and Dan Tye, working in close liaison with our superb editor of Guild News, Tom Eeles, I have great hopes for achieving the goals set down in our Strategic Review of providing greater strength to the Guild publicity machine.

In my first message I wrote about the status of pilots and especially how my perception of a gradual decline in status was particularly affecting young pilots because they were having to Pay2Fly. I note that other organisations including our colleagues at the RAeS have been working actively on the deplorable Pay2Fly situation. Whilst I accept that the forces of economics will always dictate in any business activity, this Guild cannot condone the practice of Pay2Fly especially when it affects type-ratings, initial and recurrent training. Only recently I learned of another company insisting on pilots having the required type rating before considering them for interview. These were not young pilots but mature and experienced pilots. I have also learned of companies purchasing new aircraft where training is provided as part of the package, not using the training courses but rather banking the courses to use in future negotiations in the hope of enhancing the value of the aircraft on re-sale. The sole purpose of aircraft manufacturers selling aircraft with pilot training courses is to enhance flight safety. It is deplorable that these training courses should be used as a commercial commodity for barter during the used aircraft sale. It is a practice this Guild should strongly oppose.

One final thought in my message concerns...
avoidance of thunderstorms. It’s that time of the year when the ITF is further north. I am increasingly concerned that pilots may not be as positive as they should be about avoiding thunderstorm activity. It would seem that a reluctance to deviate from the airway centre line and a reluctance to be more insistent with ATC has led aircraft into hazardous situations. As I am a member of the working group within the CAA and NATS dealing with R/T phraseology I have discussed this with my colleagues, and asked if there is something we should be doing to re-educate pilots into understanding that deviation is not a sin. I recall that when I flew in Australia the R/T phraseology was quite strict and our wording had to be almost perfect as laid down in the AIP. I remember that the word “Require” was used if we needed to make changes in the air for safety of flight reasons. Deviating around thunderstorms was one of those reasons where the pilot would “Require” a heading change and merely requesting it was not the preferred option for safety of flight. The controller was then obliged to acknowledge the pilot’s change of heading and grant immediate clearance. Maybe the Aussies have it right, and maybe the old lessons of thunderstorm avoidance will need to be revisited with a revival of that word “Require” in our R/T phraseology.

Clerk's column

PAUL TACON Learned Clerk

SCHOLARSHIPS PROGRAMME

The Guild’s annual scholarships programme is one of the most visible and ‘real’ means of immediate and direct effect on the aviation community that the Guild has - and for many aspiring pilots, or those who want to enhance their licences or ratings, it is their first contact with the Guild. By awarding the various scholarships, the Guild literally increases the number of qualified pilots and flying instructors; all Guild scholarships are ‘full scholarships’, meaning that they all result in the gaining of a licence or rating. Accordingly, the scholarships programme is a vital element of the Guild’s activities. It not only serves the interests of the scholarship winners, is gratifying to external sponsors, supplies clients to FTOs and influences individuals’ lives in a positive manner - it is a great mechanism for promoting the Guild and what it stands for.

This year, the Guild has awarded 4 FI(R), one FI(R)(H) and 5 PPL scholarships to date, as well as 3 instructor bursaries - and also has 2 JOC courses to be awarded; many are funded by the Guild and several are funded by external sponsors. A full list will be in the August edition of Guild News.

Each scholarship is administered totally by the Guild - from advertising, to selection of scholars and flying schools, to monitoring of progress throughout training; sponsorship by generous external sponsors carries no onerous commitments to selection or other administrative effort - and the Guild will acknowledge the generosity of sponsors where it can, with appropriate attribution for all sponsorship made on the website, in Guild News and at other opportunities that the Guild may have to highlight the individuals and organisations that assist financially in this much appreciated work of the Guild. But we need more sponsors for the future! It’s accepted that the current economic situation is challenging, however, any potential sponsors for next year that Guild members may know of, or could consider asking, would be greatly appreciated. Helping with the securing of any new sponsorship would be of significant and meaningful assistance to the Guild - and to an eventual scholarship winner. Sponsorship may be ‘gift aided’ if donated to the Guild of Air Pilots Trust, the Guild’s registered charity which deals with the funding for all scholarships.
Wheel Farm, owned by Liveryman Hamish Monro, is the home of Guy Black’s company, Retrotec Ltd, which specialises in the restoration of old aircraft to flying condition, including their engines and in some cases other components. On Saturday 9th April, a glorious spring day, 30 Guild members, led by the Master and Past Masters Dick Felix (who arrived in his Hornet Moth) and Roger Gault were privileged to be shown around this fascinating organisation. First item on the visit was the restoration of the only Hawker Fury in the world capable of recovery to airworthy condition. The Fury was the first RAF fighter able to exceed 200 mph. This unique aircraft was found in a South African scrap dump a few years ago as a total wreck but is now virtually fully restored, including items of contemporary equipment such as the guns and its early oxygen system. The nearly finished fuselage displayed exquisite workmanship and incredible attention to detail. Allotted the civil serial G-CBZP and the military serial K5764 and resplendent in 43 Squadron (The Fighting Cocks) markings, it is hoped that the Fury will get airborne in June. We were also shown the Fury’s magnificent Rolls Royce Kestrel engine on its ground running stand, complete with a complex radiator cooling system. It has already been run for 20 minutes, so far without a propeller attached and only at idling RPM; the next time it runs will be once it is installed in the airframe. In the same building was a Fieseler Storch that had been built in France during the war and a Russian Yak 1 fighter; both will one day be restored to flight. The Yak’s robust fuselage frame with its somewhat rudimentary quality of welding much in evidence made a strong contrast to the Fury’s rather more delicate and skilled construction. A marked contrast to the Fury was the restoration of a DH9 bomber of World War 1 vintage that had been recovered from an elephant stable in India. This aircraft, although only 12 years older than the Fury, showed a completely different style of construction, using almost exclusively wood and fabric with minimal use of metal, mainly bracing and flying wires. Its construction was strongly reminiscent of wooden boat-building techniques and the aircraft could well be described as a ‘cloth bomber’. Again, the workmanship in this restoration was of the highest quality and one day this very rare aircraft will also take to the skies again. Retrotec has also amassed a comprehensive collection of machine tools which are essential for the manufacture of the components required for these complex restoration projects. Of particular interest was a Draw Bench dating from the early 20th Century, used to convert round section tube into aerodynamic section tubes and other complex shapes. Wisely it was described as a ‘museum piece’ to a visiting Health and Safety inspector but it did show evidence of recent use. Also on view was a fuselage section of a dual control Hind, recovered from Afghanistan in 2005, scheduled for full restoration and,
somewhat incongruously amongst all the aircraft, a World War 2 vintage Crusader tank. A short drive away from the main site was the farm, with its interesting grass strip, orientated 03/21 but with a distinct curve and an uphill gradient. Here we saw Hamish Monro’s beautiful Tiger Moth, all ready to fly and immaculate in its World War 2 camouflage livery. In the same hangar was the fuselage of a Hawker Audax, unusually powered by a radial engine; this had originally been exported to Sweden and again was due for eventual restoration. Another highly unusual aircraft in this hangar was a Heinkel He 162 Salamander, also known as the Volksjaeger. A small single seat jet powered interceptor, armed with two 30mm cannon, it was conceived in the last months of World War 2 in a desperate attempt to build an interceptor of cheap non-strategic materials to counter Allied bomber formations. Powered by a BMW axial flow turbo-jet mounted on top of the fuselage, it was very small but quite advanced in concept, being equipped with an explosive-operated ejection seat. This example, still showing its wartime paint scheme including written instructions for the ground crew, is to be restored as a ground exhibit for a German museum. Apparently the wartime casualty rate of this aircraft was very high! At the end of this fascinating visit the Guild party, accompanied by Hamish Monro, retired to a nearby inn where a sandwich lunch had been arranged, eaten ‘al fresco’ on the terrace in the hot sunshine. The Master thanked Hamish Monro for allowing the Guild to see such an interesting range of restoration work and presented him with a set of Guild cufflinks, before challenging Assistant Professor Diana Green to a game of table tennis.

All that remains of the very rare dual control Hind

The DH 9’s cockpit, a total contrast to the Fury.

Assistant Diana Green ponders the ergonomics of the Salamander’s cockpit.

Hamish Monro’s beautiful Tiger Moth
Into the Dust Clouds with the Chinook!

The Guild Visits the Chinook main operating base at Odiham 4th May 2011

Freemen Steve Fromage & Steve Morrell

We arrived at RAF Odiham to find the usual suspects milling about, GPS units blaring in protest. Clearly some of the team may have been temporarily uncertain of their position! We slotted in behind a suitable registration, PAN 333, to be provided with vectors to the car park!!!

Having eventually been assisted to the holding point by our hosts, our group of 45 members, ably led by Master Captain Wally Epton and assisted by John Davy, attended roll call at the Officers’ Mess and enjoyed light refreshments of coffee and biscuits.

Our host for the day was Flight Lieutenant Ian Fortune DFC. This young officer had been the recipient of the Grand Masters Commendation in 2010 and was the subject of considerable media coverage. In January of last year, Ian had continued to fly his Chinook on an Immediate Response Team mission after being injured when a bullet hit the night-vision goggle rail on the front of his helmet, then passed through the helmet skin and out through the top. He remained in control and recovered the aircraft and casualties to the top. He remained in control and recovered the aircraft and casualties to the safety of Camp Bastion. At 29 years old Ian is one of the senior pilots on the squadron.

Full details of his Guild Commendation can be found at:
http://www.gapan.org/about-the-guild/trophies-and-awards/award-winners/the-grand-masters-commendation/

With refreshments and introductions over, the visitors were taken by bus to Station HQ and settled into the lecture theatre where Station Commander and Chinook Force Commander Group Captain Steve Shell OBE MA RAF outlined the theatre of operations. He explained that the Chinook Force had provided 28 years of continuous operations. These included Peacetime/UK Support 24/7 365 days a year and worldwide 10-day deployment standby. Operations included the former Republic of Yugoslavia, (Bosnia and Croatia, Kosovo), Sierra Leone and Afghanistan and Iraq. Deployment to the zones was either direct flight, sea (ferries, RN) or by transport aircraft. The lecture, including video footage, was then focussed on Afghanistan. Apart from the enemy, terrain and 46 degree heat, the biggest environmental challenge is the dust, which is as fine as talcum powder. In effect this turns landings into ‘carefully controlled’ crashes, as pilots have a virtual brownout for the last 5 seconds or so of the landing. It is even worse for aircraft no 2. (or 3!). The dust cloud can extend to 2000 ft. It was interesting to note that these dust clouds are 10 times more dense than in Iraq, therefore requiring different risk profiling (bear in mind going too carefully involves being a sitting target). Combine this with the requirement NOT to follow a patterned procedure. Then do all of this in a 15ft walled compound, 30 - 40 times a day. The visitors sat in awed silence.

The main threats to the Chinook were small arms fire and missiles. In Afghanistan every head of a family carries an AK47 and there are many RPG rocket launchers. Heavy machine guns are apparently less of a threat as they are easier to spot. We were amazed to learn that should the enemy drop a weapon, they are not to be considered a threat, and as a consequence cannot be fired upon! An indirect threat is mines, as injuries caused by mines requires require an Immediate Response Team (IRT) flying into zones occupied by the enemy.

An advantage for the Chinook in both weaponry and technology is that its ability to manage load means that weapons can be ‘strapped on’ and newer technology tested while keeping the comfort of the existing systems. Other helicopter types would require exchanging new for old.

With regard to human performance, operational tours of duty are based on a 10 week (two lunar cycle) period. Operational Risk Management research indicates that a pilot’s cautious decision approach at the start of a 10 week cycle changes to a bolder decision point approach at the end of the cycle, after which the pilot returns to the UK so that his risk management profiling can be ‘reset’. With pilots often experiencing up to 6 ‘30 second starts’ per day, operational stress levels are high. The average age of an operational crew is approximately 26 years old. People management is recognised as an important factor, with family members being part of, rather than ancillary to, the team. The bravery of the men and their families was illustrated by many examples of incidents ranging from flying to the bravery of ground engineers reclaiming aircraft parts from helicopters that have crashed due to enemy fire. Although uncomfortable with the analogy, the Chinook force have been publicly compared to “The Few”.

There followed a brief question time and answers revealed that:
• UK crews flew 30% of USA time with only 12% of US aircraft capacity.
• Cost of a Chinook ‘bare bones’ £20m, fully armed £70m
• There were Chinooks in Japan, Australia, Netherlands, Italy, Spain, Libya and 28 years of continuous operations...
USA, but only UK, Canada, USA and Australia were committed to operations. Unfortunately, questioning on subjects such as Artificial Vision (AV) did not give the visitors the comfort that maximum attention has been given to current technology at the appropriate level. It would appear that although suitable AV technology exists, we are still losing aircraft due to zero visibility landings caused by the dust in the operational areas. A straw poll of the visiting Guild members indicated agreement that the cost of lack of vision related repairs alone would probably go a long way towards covering the cost of the technology. Later during the course of our visit we would learn that even simple low cost technology such as noise cancelling headsets had not yet been authorized for use. Is there a challenge here for the Guild to take up? Having thanked the Officer Commanding for an outstanding, frank and informative lecture the visitors were bussed over to 27 Squadron for a tour of planning and briefing facilities, followed by a close inspection of a Chinook.

First we were shown the planning room with walls covered in appropriate charts. In fact all flight planning is done with computers and printed out. Charts are reserved for operational night navigation and for those who find technology ‘slower’ than good old fashioned charts. We will leave the reader to decide who this may apply to!!! We were then put in the very capable hands of Flt Lt Lance Levin in the briefing room. He led us through the geographical region and typical operational issues as seen from the perspective of those ‘at the coal face’. We were amazed to discover, inter alia, the wearing of woollen long johns and full kit in 40 - 45 degrees centigrade allowed one to consume upwards of 8 litres of water without needing a comfort break. (Fortunate really as facilities are limited, may be this is why the average age of the pilot’s has to be so low?). The visitors discovered that the Chinook is a star performer, for example in full summer conditions she can carry 24 troops with kit and up to 36 in winter, as opposed to say a Merlin which could carry only 4 in summer and 16 in winter. Vehicle load capacity is 4 tons as opposed to a Merlin’s 1 ton capacity.

Some further details of the Helmand task to support the UK mission were elaborated upon. We were shown footage of Helmand Express (no-notice flying). Highlights included footage of IRT & MERT (Doctor, Trauma Nurse and 2 paramedic team) missions with a 20 minute by day and 60 minute by night, time to start times. Examples of accidents where undercarriages had been totally ripped from airframes gave us a timely reminder of the previous discussion of available AV technology and our inability to understand why this had not been employed.

Flt Lt Alex ‘Frenchie’ Duncan DFC was on hand to give us a first hand account of a mission for which he received the Distinguished Flying Cross, for bringing his Chinook safely back to base in Afghanistan after it was severely damaged when it came under sustained attack by a rocket-propelled grenade and heavy machine-gun fire. After landing the aircraft and unaware of the severity of the damage, the pilot decided to relocate his Chinook to allow other aircraft to land. The RPG hit should have brought down the aircraft, the RPG had passed through the fuselage and one rotor blade. Talk about using all your nine lives in one go!

From there a short walk took us to the real thing. After a group photo with our photographer at first blissfully unaware of a taxiing Chinook talking him from behind (much calling of ‘look out behind you’), we were broken up into smaller groups to tour the loading area and cockpit of a Chinook. The sheer scale of these machines is simply astounding. Time was fleeting, and the visitors were dragged way from the aircraft (The Master spending a suspiciously long time in the cockpit with a huge grin on his countenance) for lunch. After a splendid repast, the Master had to broach the thorny subject of a handle that had ‘broken off ’ during the tour of the aircraft. Finding that there was no volunteer to present it to, he proceeded to give a short closing address thanking our hosts and paying tribute to their youth and bravery. An announcement was made that members departing in aircraft should make themselves known so that ‘the tower’ could be suitably warned. We all left with the greatest admiration for the Chinook force.

Our thanks to the Station Commander and his team for their excellent hospitality, highly informative presentations and thoroughly enjoyable morning at Odiham.
Flying in Libya before Gaddafi

ASSISTANT TOM EELES

Offensive air operations by the RAF and other NATO air forces over Libya have been very much in the news of late, so it is interesting to look back some 45 years to the mid 1960s to recall some of the RAF’s flying activities in that country before the era of Colonel Gaddafi’s regime. I was on my first tour and serving on 16 Squadron, flying the Canberra B(I)8 and based at RAF Laarbruch in West Germany. The squadron’s primary role was tactical nuclear strike, using the Low Altitude Bombing System (LABS) technique to deliver the weapon. This method of attack involved a low level high speed approach to the target, 200 ft/430 kts, pulling up into a toss manoeuvre with the bomb being released at either 60 or 120 degrees of pitch, depending on pilot selection. This was followed by a roll off the top of the looping manoeuvre and an escape back to low level, quite a challenging event in a Canberra. The LABS equipment consisted of a timer, various gyros and accelerometers, a Normal/Alternate switch and a cockpit display instrument. For a ‘Normal’ attack an Initial Point (IP), an easily identifiable ground feature, would be selected and a timer setting calculated, taking into account the head or tail wind component on the attack heading from IP to pull up point. On over-flying the IP the pilot would pull and hold on the trigger on the control column; this would initiate the timer. The LABS display, which had a vertical and horizontal needle just like an ILS display, would indicate pitch on the horizontal needle and heading on the vertical needle. When the timer ran out the horizontal needle would demand about 3.5 g by dropping to the bottom of the display; a hefty pitch input with the control column would initiate the pull up, the aim being to keep the needle level. The vertical needle continued to display a heading demand. At 60 degrees of pitch the bomb would be released and at this point the rest of the ‘roll off the top’ manoeuvre was completed on the normal flight instruments, the artificial horizon being specially modified not to topple as the aircraft went through 60 degrees of pitch, falling back onto the target whilst the aircraft recovered from the manoeuvre. The bomb was loaded with four 25lb practice bombs on the wing pylons, transit to the range, toss the bombs and return to Idris for an engines running re-arm, then repeat the exercise. The Canberra’s air conditioning system was not very good at providing cold air and the B(I)8’s fighter-type canopy could not be opened, so it was hot work, even in winter. I recall that providing the aircraft remained serviceable we would fly three of these double-headed sorties a day. Our accuracy was really quite good, notwithstanding the somewhat dubious ballistic properties of the 25lb practice bomb. The real bomb was very big and filled the whole of the Canberra’s bomb bay. It was forcibly ejected from the bomb bay by a ram and occasionally a ‘shape’ would be authorised for delivery, but never in Libya. It has been rumoured that Tarhuna was where Gaddafi developed his weapons of mass destruction, now supposedly abandoned. In addition to intensive LABS training, low level navigation sorties over the desert were also a popular feature of these detachments. Minimum low flying heights were less rigorously adhered to over the desert than in Germany and chasing lorries along the coast road provided much entertainment. The desert was still littered with the debris of the Second World War, the most notable artifact being the wreck of the B24 Liberator “Lady Be Good”, still visible deep in the desert well to the south and originally discovered by an oil prospecting team. Signs of the emerging oil extraction industry were already beginning to appear even in the remoter desert areas. Also in western Libya, not far from Tripoli, was the enormous USAF base of Wheelus Field. We had little contact with the USAF, I note from my log book that I once carried out a practice diversion to Wheelus but I seem to recall it was not a great success owing to language problems. I believe Wheelus Field is now Tripoli’s international airport.

Irids airfield, 1965. RAF detachment in top right hand corner

16 Squadron Canberra at Idris

The locally employed Libyan’s lounge.

The Italian control tower, converted to the RAF’s Headquarters

16 Squadron Canberra at Idris

Our accuracy was really quite good, notwithstanding the somewhat dubious ballistic properties of the 25lb practice bomb. The real bomb was very big and filled the whole of the Canberra’s bomb bay. It was forcibly ejected from the bomb bay by a ram and occasionally a ‘shape’ would be authorised for delivery, but never in Libya. It has been rumoured that Tarhuna was where Gaddafi developed his weapons of mass destruction, now supposedly abandoned. In addition to intensive LABS training, low level navigation sorties over the desert were also a popular feature of these detachments. Minimum low flying heights were less rigorously adhered to over the desert than in Germany and chasing lorries along the coast road provided much entertainment. The desert was still littered with the debris of the Second World War, the most notable artifact being the wreck of the B24 Liberator “Lady Be Good”, still visible deep in the desert well to the south and originally discovered by an oil prospecting team. Signs of the emerging oil extraction industry were already beginning to appear even in the remoter desert areas. Also in western Libya, not far from Tripoli, was the enormous USAF base of Wheelus Field. We had little contact with the USAF, I note from my log book that I once carried out a practice diversion to Wheelus but I seem to recall it was not a great success owing to language problems. I believe Wheelus Field is now Tripoli’s international airport.
The other major RAF facility was in eastern Libya, just 10 miles south of Tobruk. RAF El Adem was a large well equipped airfield with an extensive weapons range very close to the airfield. The Germany based Canberra squadrons rarely used this range for LABS bombing as the Canberra squadrons based at RAF Akrotiri in Cyprus had first call on its use. However, the Germany Canberra squadrons' secondary role was conventional ground attack using a gun-pack that housed four 20mm cannon, flares for night target illumination and 1000lb bombs delivered in a shallow dive. Armament Practice Camps for conventional weapons delivery were regularly held at Akrotiri. As the Cyprus weapons ranges could only accept practice weapons, aircraft would regularly transit across to El Adem range where the full range of live conventional weapons could be used by day or night. Night dive bombing or air to ground firing, under the fitful light of the unreliable flares in the complete darkness of the desert night was a testing experience guaranteed to induce disorientation. Compared to Idris, El Adem was a rather austere base with little greenery to soften the scene. Just outside the main entrance was a German hospital of World War 2 vintage, built into an escarpment; this had been booby-trapped when Rommel's Afrika Corps retreated west in 1942 and had not been subsequently re-entered. Off-duty time at El Adem was often spent in the shore-side Officer's Club in Tobruk; weekend expeditions to the amazing classical cities of Cyrene and Appolonia were popular diversions. All around El Adem and Tobruk there was considerable evidence of the heavy fighting during World War 2.

The last time I visited Libya was in 1968, by now I was flying Buccaneers with 801 Naval Air Squadron of the Fleet Air Arm. My squadron was deployed to El Adem for a major 3 week exercise flying long range simulated strikes on Akrotiri and carrying out Forward Air Control work with British army units exercising in the desert. The atmosphere in Libya was different to earlier times; the RAF had withdrawn its detachment from Idris and it was clear that the British armed forces' days of using Libya as a huge playground were numbered. The regime of King Idris was weak and it seemed only a matter of time before a total British withdrawal would become inevitable. Not long afterwards the King was deposed whilst on holiday in Turkey by a Colonel Gaddafi and the rest, as they say, is history. I often wonder what RAF Idris and RAF El Adem are like today.
The time I am talking about is the summer of 1969, which is not yesterday or even the day before. The squadron had had it’s shiny new Hercules for a year and I am sitting in the crew room minding my own business when in walks Ray, the Nav Leader. Now Ray is much older than me, in fact so old that he flew Catalina things in WW2 and walks around with half a lung and one leg shorter than the other on account of the devotion to duty shown by Mr Goering’s employees. Irascible fits him like a glove, and right now he’s irascible. The chaps are working too hard, he says, and irascibles in to tell The Boss. The Boss wilts, and enquires what Ray proposes, so Ray tells him. Time, Ray says, to Declare a Dividend. We’ll have an exercise. In Machrihanish. We’ll take some aeroplanes up there, fly some low level stuff round the hills in the morning and play golf or fish in the afternoon. Or the other way round. Good Wheeze, says The Boss. So we do.

For those of you who don’t know Machrihanish, it’s on the dangly bit of Scotland just to the left of Glasgow and in these days it’s got some interesting aerials and things, which the natives claim they need for decent television reception. So there’s a big barbed wire fence outside, separating the airfield from the golf course. So we fly around in the morning or the afternoons, play golf and fish in the afternoons or the mornings and sample the local Malts in the evening. All good stuff. The ground chaps that went out to mark the drop zones and do the groundy things all took tents and lots of grub. We airdropped reinforcing supplies of whisky every now and then so a good time was had by all. So far so good, and we all came home.

Now all this fun is noticed by the Other Lot Up The Road, and before you could say Glenmorangie they’re organising their own expeditions. Not as well done as ours, of course, but they do their best and these exercises become a bit of an annual event. Fast forward a couple of years and My Chum Charles from The Other Lot Up The Road is in Machrihanish and ready to come home. His Mighty C-130 Hercules is parked on the pan with the rear door open, all the ground equipment loaded and he’s ready to come home. After lunch.

Meantime, on the other side of the barbed wire fence there’s a golfer from Manchester. It’s raining and he’s not having a good day. In fact he didn’t have a good round in the morning, he had several large whiskies for lunch, he’s now very wet and his golf is rubbish. He wants to go home. He came to Machrihanish on an aeroplane and there, conveniently parked on the other side of the barbed wire fence, is … an aeroplane. So he throws his clubs over, climbs after them, walks up the ramp into the Herc and sits down.

My Chum Charles finishes lunch, assembles crew, wanders back to aeroplane and leaps skywards. Shortly thereafter Loadmaster arrives with coffee and states with some awe “’Ere Captain, your mate down the back ain’t ‘arf drunk”. MCC enquires “What mate?” Questions are asked. Things become clear. C-130 turns round, goes back to Machrihanish, boots golfer out, takes on more fuel, returns to Other Lot Up The Road.

At the subsequent Board of Enquiry… (there is always a subsequent board of enquiry) a distinguished Senior Officer enquired of the chap who’d been sitting next to the unexpected guest why was it he hadn’t said anything. In ringing and confident tones the reply came: “Well Sir, he was drunk and carrying golf clubs, so I thought it was an Officer”. So I learnt a bit about flying from that. Not as much as MCC, who got a reprimand, but I did learn that security isn’t just about barbed wire and that you can’t expect passengers to voice suspicions about their fellow travellers. I also learnt that they make a very fine malt called Springbank in Machrihanish…
WHY MOUNTAIN FLYING?
As a low hours pilot (900 hrs) with my own aircraft (G-DIGN, a Robin DR-400 180), I have not lost the passion for flying. However, like most GA pilots, every now and then I wonder if I can find a new challenge, taking my flying beyond a trip to a new airfield and a very expensive cup of coffee. I had briefly tried helicopters but decided that they were not for me. Since all of my previous fixed-wing flying has been in aircraft with a tricycle undercarriage, a tail-wheel conversion was one possible option. I briefly tried my hand at flying straight and level in a Hornet Moth and was seriously thinking of signing up for a conversion course when I heard about the possibility of flying a tail-wheel aircraft in the mountains, specifically at Megeve, in the French Alps.

The first attempt at this, in October 2010, did not work out as the clouds hid the altiport (which is at 5000 ft) for the whole 5 days of my first visit.

The next month I went on holiday to Australia and New Zealand. Whilst in the South Island of New Zealand, I had two experiences of flying in snow and ice capped mountains, first landing on Fox Glacier in a helicopter and secondly sitting in the P2 seat of an Islander en route from Queensland to Milford Sound, and back. Flying amongst the snow capped peaks, even though it was the height of summer, was an indescribable experience.

So when John Davy suggested I tried again and tackled some real mountain flying in the Alps in January this year, I leaped at the chance. John booked two lessons for me at the flying school at Megeve and I prayed that the weather would be kind this time. I duly read up on the text-book, written by one of the instructors at the school, which discussed the techniques for flying aircraft fitted with skis.

THE TECHNICAL CHALLENGE
The training aircraft are Jodel 140 Mousquetaires with tailwheel and skis. In my innocence I assumed that the aircraft would be similar to my Robin and the challenge would be to do the tail-wheel conversion. Walking round the aircraft, I quickly realised there were several other challenges:

• First, the instrumentation is minimal. There is no attitude indicator so flying accurately at altitude while attempting to navigate through mountains that looked somewhat similar without the help of the pilot’s stand-by friend, the GPS, was a revelation. Trimming accurately was going to be essential.

• Landing a tail-dragger uses a different technique. Landing one fitted with skis is a double challenge.

• There are no brakes, which affects the way you taxi and turn, especially on ice!

• There is no marked runway, just tracks in the snow or ice—if you are lucky. This makes spotting the runway, gauging its gradient to work out the descent for landing complex. And there is never an opportunity to go around if you get it wrong!

• This means it is essential to fly accurately in the pattern, “by the numbers” and pinpoint a precise aiming point for landing.

THE HUMAN FACTORS CHALLENGE
I managed two initial lessons in January and returned, with my enthusiasm and nervousness undimmed for more lessons in February. After the first of these, my landings seemed to have deteriorated although I did manage to find the altiport when at the end of a cross country trip. This prompted a discussion with the CFI about whether I should carry on. It became obvious very quickly that I had completely failed to communicate to the CFI and the School my intentions. They had wrongly assumed that I was intent on getting a Mountain Flying Rating. My aim was and is to use the training, with a different aircraft in challenging environmental conditions, to improve my general handling and accuracy, as well as giving me experience of landing tail-wheel aircraft. I hoped this would allow me to transfer this learning into a tail-wheel conversion course in the UK. I also wanted the opportunity of flying, with an instructor or qualified mountain flying
pilot in and amongst the mountain peaks. I didn’t expect to go solo! This communication failure was not simply a matter of my poor linguistic skills, as I speak French fairly fluently. It was more the case that I had not registered the need to specify clearly my intentions!

There was also an element of cultural differences. The French system does not allow for trial lessons (although you can pay for pleasure trips). And mountain flying, in this part of France, is a Gentleman’s Club. I suspect that there was a bit of reluctance to even consider admitting a girl, particularly one who was unlikely to be able to devote the time and energy required to be able to reach their exacting professional standards.

THE COMPROMISE
At this point I had given up hope of progressing and decided that I would simply content myself with trying to absorb the lessons and techniques, as a passenger, when John was flying. The next day, we booked a session with an instructor, with John, who already holds a French Mountain Rating, in the front seat and myself in the back, listening, learning and taking photographs. We planned a cross country route with two landings, firstly at L’Alpe D’Huez and then at Meribel. John did the first leg and we landed for coffee. The instructor, Bruno, then told me to get into the front seat and fly the leg to Meribel. I was ecstatic!

Meribel is very difficult. At 5600ft, it is a short (406m) runway with a moderate gradient: about 7deg. Of course, there’s no go around! There is also a public road yards short of the threshold, and a ski slope at the far end of the runway. Under Bruno’s expert guidance, my approach and landing were second to none, as I hope the photographs show!

Lessons learned?
Reflecting on my experience, I think I learned some important lessons:

- Fly the attitude
- Trim perfectly
- Speak some French and be clear about your intentions
- BE BORN A MAN!

NOTE: If you have been stimulated by this article to try your hand at mountain flying in the French Alps, I suggest you get in contact with the AERO-CLUB De MEGEVE
tel 00033(0)4.50.21.33.67
e-mail: aeroclub-megève@orange.fr
NEW SAFETY SENSE LEAFLETS on Radiotelephony; VFR Flight Plans; Helicopter Airmanship; Balloon Airmanship; Collision Avoidance; Strip Sense; Interception Procedures; Aerodrome Sense; Winter Flying and a Good Airmanship Guide., may be found at CAA site: www.caa.co.uk/application.aspx?catid-33&pagetype-65&appid-11&mode-list&type-sercat&id-21.

MODE S TRANSPONDERS A timely note in the Helicopter Club magazine, reminds everyone that old Mode A and C transponders will be inadequate for flight in controlled airspace in March 2012. If you wish to fly in controlled airspace then a Mode S transponder is required.

TRANSITION ALTITUDE (TA) At long last there is progress on the long held desire of the Guild, BALPA and other bodies to have a higher unified altitude. It is a well known 'secret' that consultation will take place later this year with the suggestion of raising it to 18,000ft. Agreement in principle has been reached with the Irish and some other northern European countries.

LASORS ( Licensing, Administration, Standardisation, Operating Requirements and Procedures) A new edition 2010 has been published, which may be read free at www.caa.co.uk/lasors or purchased for £16.99

HELI.COPTER CLUB OF GREAT BRITAIN - NEW CHAIRMAN Liveryman Peter Barker is to be congratulated on his election as Chairman for the next two years.

NEW 100-OCTANE FUEL ADDITIVE SHOWS PROMISE In the nearly three decades that the GA industry has been searching for an unleaded replacement for 100LL, there has one recurring question: Isn’t there an additive that will provide the octane? An American petro chemist believes he may have found the answer. Ed Kollin announced recently that he has developed an additive that shows promise as a direct replacement for the octane-boosting properties of tetraethyl lead.

AIRCRAFT SALES FRAUD Beware, there has been a rapid increase in aircraft sales fraud, particularly for ‘in demand’ helicopters, but for other aircraft as well. It is believed that the frauds originate in Nigeria. Not quite the standard 401K fraud but not dissimilar. Look out for a lower than expected price with a request to ring an 0702, 0703 or 0704 number, which connects (at your expense) to Nigeria. Should you decide to proceed with the purchase, ensure YOU choose the escrow account that may well be required. Caveat emptor.

GPS INTERFERENCE In January the US FCC (Federal Communications Commission) gave permission for a company called LightSquared, to commence high power transmissions for their mobile phone 4G service. The transmissions will be on frequencies adjacent to those used by GNSS devices (GPS mainly) in the L band spectrum. Since GPS uses very low power it is relatively easy to jam the signals, so the potential for interference is huge. Belatedly a review committee has been established to investigate. The Guild, and other representative bodies have been pressing for some while, that there should be a secondary navigation service such as eLoran available. Meanwhile high powered cheap jammers are easily available on the web.

GNSS:RELIANCE AND VULNERABILITY A report from the Royal Academy of Engineering entitled “GNSS: Reliance and Vulnerabilities” highlights our ongoing concerns over backup for satellite based navigation systems. The currently underused system capability is readily able to safely revert to conventional navigation aids but that option is unlikely when the full capability is utilised. Given current development timescales the issue is of significant urgency. With supportive views from Marine transport and some concerning regulatory approvals in the USA, a joint approach to the CAA was agreed with UKFSC, RaS and BALPA using the established GAPAN channel of contact.

UAVS AND RELATIVE SAFETY. We are indebted to Captain Norton for guiding the committee debate and for the development of a GAPAN paper addressing UAV’s and Relative Safety. The challenge is proving to be presentation of the highly technical content in an acceptable format. Further proof reading comment by the membership and some drafting consultation will be necessary before the paper can be presented to the Court. At that time it is considered to be a paper worthy of wider circulation.

DECIMAL OFFSETS. The introduction and use of decimal offsets to reduce the risk of in-flight conflict is progressing at a scarcely perceptible rate. Attempts in a number of committees to achieve progress have largely met with disinterest or perceived vested interest conflicts. An approach to IFATCA (Int. Federation of Air Traffic Controllers) is proposed to widen the potential arena of support. Suggestions that unilateral implementation be considered in various parts of the world will produce a much reduced benefit when compared to an international agreement.

FREQUENCY SPACING. New business considered the introduction of 8.33 kHz radio channel spacing under an EU Commission regulation. The primary reasons given include a need to reduce frequency congestion in the medium- to long-term, with a change to 8.33 spacing being the only realistic, validated option, and failure to implement the change will make airspace improvements impossible. Recognising that equipage of GA VFR aircraft with 8.33 kHz capable radios will have considerable cost implications with only limited operational benefits for those aircraft, a seven-year period will be allowed for retrofit. A much shorter implementation period will be required for controlled airspace operations. The TASC viewed this proposal as inevitable in principle and the detail would require closer scrutiny by GA expertise. The CAT operations are largely already compliant.

LASER ATTACKS. A rapidly rising number of laser attacks on aircraft in recent months is proving a serious concern. The TASC has been involved in an information gathering exercise initially to establish the potential risk to flight safety and crew health. A diversity of technical opinion so far would suggest that the issue is unlikely to be readily resolved.
On behalf of the Guild of Air Pilots and Air Navigators - North America, I was privileged and honored to attend a pilot briefing session and the pre-season practice of the world renowned Canadian Forces demonstration team “The Snowbirds” at CFB Comox, Vancouver Island, on April 8th, 2011. The 431 Air Demonstration Squadron received Affiliated Unit status with GAPAN North America in August 2009.

At 08.00 hours sharp, the Guild NA group consisting of myself and three pupils with their teacher from Shawnigan Lake School, were met by Captain Marc Velasco, the Public Relations Officer for the Snowbirds. Captain Velasco immediately escorted the group to the briefing room, to be introduced and warmly welcomed by the “Boss” - Team Leader and Upper Freeman, Major Chris Hope. This was to be a special day for Major Hope, because during the practice demonstration flight following the briefing, Chris would log his 5,000th hour in the Tutor aircraft, the type of jet trainer used by the Snowbirds and formerly used by the Canadian Air Force as a basic jet trainer between the late 1960’s and, I believe, into the 1990’s.

A prompt start to the briefing began at 08.15 hours with 13 Snowbird pilots in attendance; the nine formation team pilots plus two safety coordinators, (who coordinate the flights with Air Traffic Control), and two Flight Standards pilots, who are former team members. The Flight Standards pilots act as a resource for the team, especially the new members.

The briefing session started with a general warm up discussion lead by Capt Marco Rusconi, who covered such items as “splicing plans” where the air demonstration has to skip ahead of the preset program for timing purposes. There was some discussion on conservation of ‘smoke’ during practice displays, display lines that are set for maintaining spectator safety etc.

Now came the briefing for the demonstration flight that was about to take place.

Engine parameters were discussed; oil pressure / temperature limitations in various configurations were reviewed.

Weather briefing - Few Clouds at 4000’, Few Clouds at 24,000’, Density Altitude 1500’, Winds mostly Light and Variable - A perfect day to go aloft!

The Team Leader decided the High Show was the practice for this sortie, due to the advantageous weather and that the Departure would be made from Runway 12 in 3 x 3 Vic formations. A 5 knot tailwind would be acceptable and any return for a landing immediately after take-off would be attempted on Runway 30.

The Emergency of the Day was a Bird Strike scenario. Should total engine power be lost, the deal is that the pilot should attempt 2 restarts. If the engine failed to relight, then the pilot is instructed to Eject following the Ejection Checklist.

The rest of the formation plays out and confirms that the downed pilot is safely in his dinghy - the exercise assumed that ejection was necessary over the water, since the line of the display is in fact the north west / south east runway, which is close to and parallel to the shoreline. The dead-side of the display being the spectator area to the west of the runway.

Once Emergency Responders are on location, the Snowbird keeping an eye on the downed pilot would return to base.

Ideal ejection height in the Tutor is 5000’ plus but preferably not below 2,000’. The pilots were reminded to point the aircraft away from persons or property before going for the ride in the ejector seat. Also pilots were instructed to pull the dinghy towards them and not to try to swim to the dinghy if they landed in water. There was a naval vessel positioned off-shore to assist in any rescue efforts.

The briefing continued with sequencing of formation flying to include 9 ship Diamond Wedge Loops, The Canada Goose, The Maple Leaf, Diamond formation Rolls and Speedbirds. All of these and other maneuvers were done without the pilots wearing ‘G’ suits. Amazing when the aircraft and pilots are experiencing accelerations of 5 to 7 times gravity.

The most impressive part of the Briefing session was the RT commentary, where from memory, the whole one hour display was talked through in about 10 minutes at high speed. The concentration levels of the pilots was intense, some clenched fists at shoulder level, with eyes closed as they visualized every move and change of position within the formation. “Over the Top, Relaxing, pulling back, Smoke On, Power up, Tightening up and so on - every pilot in sequence. I must say Major Hope looked pretty relaxed while everyone else was sweating.

Snowbirds Call In Ready 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9 and with a great roar from aircraft engines and a huge cloud of smoke - deliberate, bye the way, the first Vic Formation was off down the runway and aloft, closely followed by Vic 2 and Vic 3.

After a warm-up just to the South of the airport, the 9 ship diamond formation entered centre stage with a loop. Having done some formation flying in the past, I was impressed with a seven ship line abreast loop, which I would judge to be quite a difficult maneuver in keeping all seven flying machines in an exact line.
British Prime Minister Winston Churchill called it ‘Possibly the decisive factor of the war’. The ‘factor’ wasn’t a battle or an area of conflict. Far from it. It was on Canadian soil and in Canadian airspace. It was The British Commonwealth Air Training Plan or BCATP.

This summer, Vintage Wings of Canada, which operates a collection of flyable vintage warbird aircraft in Gatineau, Quebec is embarking on an ambitious ‘Yellow Wings’ program to pay tribute to the BCATP, its pilots, its aircraft and its legacy.

‘The Plan’ existed for five and a half years, from December 1939 to September 1945. It remains the single largest aviation training program in history and transformed Canada into what U.S. President Roosevelt called the ‘Aerodrome of Democracy’. In its day, the BCATP spent more than $2 billion and trained nearly a quarter of a million pilots, navigators, bomb aimers, air gunners, wireless operators, flight engineers and ground crew from Canada, the British Commonwealth, the United States of America and other countries in the free world.

The location was perfect. Canada had ample fuel supplies, wide open spaces for training along with industrial facilities for the production of aircraft and supplies. The weather, despite extremes was more suitable than the fog and rain of Britain. Canada was also far from any threat from the European or Pacific theatres.

The BCATP ended in 1945, the barracks and hangars were emptied. Some airfields became Canadian Air Force bases, others became private or commercial airfields. ‘The Plan’ became history, a story most Canadians never knew.

But when the BCATP ended in 1945, the barracks and hangars were emptied. Some airfields became Canadian Air Force bases, others became private or commercial airfields. ‘The Plan’ became history, a story most Canadians never knew.

Vintage Wings of Canada has its own ‘Plan’ to change that. In late June, its Harvard, Fleet Finch, Fairchild Cornell and de Havilland Tiger Moth will depart from Alberta to fly east across the country and drop into as many former BCATP airfields as possible. These ‘Yellow Wings’ will also visit OshKosh. The grassroots aviation community, flying clubs, general aviation owners and suppliers, historical societies and governments at all levels are urged to take part. The ‘Yellow Wings’ program will bring the story of this great achievement to Canadians from coast to coast.

The legacy of ‘The Plan’ will also be told. How the demand for small training aircraft, then later the massive Lancasters, kick-started Canada’s aeronautical industry. Today Canada is a world leader in aerospace propulsion systems, commuter and business aircraft design, aerospace technologies and systems. All this in no small part is tied to the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan.

The BCATP is a story worth telling and worth hearing. For more on ‘Yellow Wings’, check out the Vintage Wings of Canada website at www.vintagewings.ca.
# Programme for 2011

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## Guild Young Members

**Liveryman Ludo Forrer**

**Events** The GYM took part in a Parliamentary Event on 28th March promoting Youth in Aviation. The event was hailed as a success in that it raised the profile of youth in aviation to key decision makers. One of the key points picked up on, was the specific point raised by the Guild regarding the need for more economical funding of flying training by, for example, the scrapping of VAT on flying training.

Peter Nye represented the GYM and the Guild by presenting at the RAeS Ballantyne Lectures on 1st April, to an audience of several hundred schoolchildren. The subject of the talk was “Aerospace Versus the Elements” and it was received very well.

The 2011 GYM Lecture by Sqn Ldr [rtd] Myles Garland of The Blades Aerobatic Team took place on the 29th March at Hamilton Place, in conjunction with the General Aviation Group of the RAeS. It was a much applauded talk, with a decent turn out of approximately 40.

A GYM Social on the same date as the lecture took place in Mayfair. Over a beer GYM Committee members, the speaker, RAeS General Aviation Group members and other attendees had plenty to discuss at this informal social.

The GYM also supported the Flyer Exhibition on 16th April at Heathrow, with the usual aptitude testing, and offering of advice.

The GYM Fly-In on 8th May at Compton Abbas, part of the Pooley’s Air Day, was cancelled due to bad weather and has been re-scheduled for 25 September. Guild Flying Club and other members are being invited to support the GYM by offering seats in their aircraft to GYM members wishing to fly-in but lack the means.

**Scholarships** The GYM introduced Gliding Scholarship had received over 30 applications when the deadline passed. These have been narrowed down to 5 for interview, the winner receiving a week’s gliding scholarship at Lasham Airfield.

**Membership** The GYM are looking into ways in which to improve the ‘welcome’ that GYM members get when they join the Guild. A welcome pack is being discussed, to include for example, a membership card.

**Marketing** GYM Polo Shirts for use at exhibitions and events have been received and used with much positive feedback. It is intended that these professional looking shirts will be worn by young members when assisting at Guild Events.

Ongoing work includes investigation into other marketing material - for example branded items- while being mindful of the need to achieve value for money. Targeted and carefully thought out marketing items will be proposed by the Marketing Coordinator at the next GYM meeting.

**Website** Ongoing work on the GYM website includes the addition of a page with more information on how to join and investigating a GYM-only web forum (for sharing of knowledge).