



FEBRUARY 2022 ISSUE 49

AIR PILOT



INSIDE

**ZARA RUTHERFORD:
AROUND THE WORLD SOLO AT 19
AIRFIELDS AT RISK
SCHOLARSHIP REPORTS**





THE HONOURABLE COMPANY OF AIR PILOTS incorporating Air Navigators

FORMER PATRON:

His Royal Highness
The Prince Philip
Duke of Edinburgh KG KT

MASTER:

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CLERK:

Paul J Tacon BA FCIS

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

DIARY



With the gradual relaxing of lockdown restrictions the Company is hopeful that the following events will be able to take place 'in person' as opposed to 'virtually'. These are obviously subject to any subsequent change in regulations and members are advised to check before making travel plans.

FEBRUARY 2022

1 st	Luncheon Club	RAF Club
10 th	GP&F	APH

MARCH 2022

10 th	GP&F	APH
	Court	Cutlers' Hall
16 th	APPL	APH
21 st	AGM & Installation	Merchant Taylors' Hall
	Church service	St Michael's Cornhill
24 th	APBF	APH
30 th	APT/AST	APH
	ACEC	APH

APRIL 2022

7 th	GP&F	APH
27 th	Luncheon Club	RAF Club
	Cobham Lecture	RAF Club

Cover photos: Associate Zara Rutherford takes off from Gimpo Airport, Seoul, during her solo female microlight round-the-world flight (Park Junha); Dark skies over Coventry Airport (Steve Bridgewater)

Applications for Visits and Events

Please kindly note that we are ceasing publication of printed 'flyers' and application forms for visits and events. From now, details and applications for all visits and events will only be available online - on the website and via links in the e-news and events bulletins which are circulated by email to members.



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



A MESSAGE FROM YOUR EDITOR...



In early January the CAA issued the first two elements of its Airspace Modernisation Strategy (AMS) consultation, covering 1) Strategic Objectives and Enablers and 2) Delivery Elements, of its plans for modernising UK airspace in the period 2022 – 2040.

The need for a review of UK airspace and the way in which it is managed has long been recognised, and has become more urgent as air travel and air cargo have grown (the hopefully temporary downward effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on aviation notwithstanding), and new classes of air traffic such as remotely piloted air systems and personal air mobility have begun to emerge.

The over-riding message they deliver is of the need to maintain and improve safety, while satisfying demands for improved operational efficiency and flexibility with reduced environmental impact, all against a reminder of the British Government's stated position that flying is a social and economic good, and one that it wholeheartedly supports as a key part of building a Global Britain.

The combined 133 pages of these two documents bear close reading by all those who manage or fly aircraft, or provide services to those who do, even though at first glance they suffer from as great a congestion of acronyms as the airspace they address does of aircraft movements. There will be proposals in this consultation with which many will be in enthusiastic agreement (eg flexible use of airspace currently reserved for exclusive use by the military, enabling continuous climb and descent to reduce fuel consumption and noise) and others which cause concern for some (eg mandating electronic conspicuity in aircraft of less than 5,700kg and replacement of the Lower Airspace Radar Service and London/Scottish Information Service with a surveillance-based flight information service).

There are dozens of such proposals, and all of them are likely to have enthusiasts and detractors, but the important thing is that the CAA says is trying to make this consultation an interactive, iterative one, with the aviation community engaged in a two-way conversation throughout, rather than consultation responses disappearing into a 'black hole' from which non-negotiable rulings and regulations emerge months or years later. For that aim to be realised, and for the right sort of modernised airspace to serve it, the aviation community needs to respond *en masse* and in a timely fashion: there is a lot of reading, conversation and responding to undertake before the consultation closes on 4th April!

<https://consultations.caa.co.uk/policy-development/draft-airspace-modernisation-strategy-2022-2040/>

Allan Winn - Editor

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Guidelines for submissions to Air Pilot

Please submit contributions as follows:

- Text in word document, including your name below the title of the piece;
- No embedded photos;
- All images to be sent as jpeg files with a file size of at least 2MB;
- More than 2 images to be sent via a Dropbox file, rather than an e-mail attachment



NEWS ROUNDUP



VISIT: THE NATIONAL SPACE CENTRE

By Assistant Chris McGee



Space, the final frontier? In 2021 with Covid-19 restrictions easing, we (including members of the Space Technical Group) set off to the National Space Centre in Leicester to find out more.

Every year since 1967 there has been a University of Leicester-built instrument in space, and in 1997 the Millennium Commission recognised this heritage, and the Centre opened its doors to the public in 2001.

Housed in a suitably futuristic-looking building, the Centre is home to hundreds of Space-related exhibits, and it quickly became clear a day was not going to be enough to explore it all. Fortunately, we were greeted by an enthusiastic member of the team who, after a welcome coffee, gave us a quick orientation tour so we could return to areas that particularly interested us later on.

One that fascinated us all was dedicated to *Living and Working in Space*, featuring the seemingly mundane tasks of keeping fed and watered and, of course, clean. Zero gravity makes them anything but mundane. All food must be kept in packages to stop it floating away, and be more highly flavoured as the lack of gravity leads to fluid retention, giving a feeling like a permanent cold and lack of smell and taste. UK chef Heston Blumenthal was commissioned to create a series of meals for astronaut Tim Peake's visit to the International Space Station. These were all based on Tim's personal memories and even included a bacon sarnie. Although bread is not usual in zero g (as crumbs can escape and become dangerous) the sandwich was specially compressed and allowed him to have a welcome taste of home with a cup of tea on his arrival. The Cosmonauts meanwhile enjoyed pheasant soup!

Naturally what goes in must come out (the answer to the apocryphal question of "How does one use a Space loo?" being: "Very carefully"). Although technology has improved a lot since the early days of long-duration space flight, the basic premise of waste disposal remains the same. Liquid waste is recycled, producing fresh water, and solids are purified and ejected into space. Apparently, the process produces what looks like a shooting star outside the vehicle, so be careful what you wish for. In order to ensure the million-dollar equipment is used correctly, the Russian Space Agency created a training potty with an

inbuilt camera to check your 'aim'.

With so much still to see, it was already time for a lunch break and, following on, we were treated to a fascinating talk by Professor Anu Onha OBE, Director of the Centre, entitled 'The Secret Rulers of the World.' This was a very timely analysis of critical thinking skills using several conspiracy theories (including the Moon landing and Covid) as case studies. His presentation emphasised the importance of using the thinking skills at the heart of scientific and engineering methodology " ...as we are awash in an ocean of information and disinformation." Social media, are we looking at you?



Air Pilots get into space

One side of the building has impressive full-height atrium housing several rockets, including the UK Blue Streak and the US Thor Able. This converted ballistic missile (the lower stage being Thor; the upper stage Able containing the payload) launched three mice into space in 1958.

The centre has a variety of real spacesuits on display, including Russian ones used for training and launch for UK astronaut Helen Sharman. Also featured is the special shock-absorbing couch to assist with the landing g forces generated by the 3t Soyuz.

Approximately 10min before touchdown, compressed nitrogen is pumped into the base of the seat to cushion the impact and, as with F1 racing drivers, the seat liner is custom-moulded to fit each astronaut's body. Interestingly, most writing on the suit is written 'backwards' as it is impossible for the occupant to see his/her own chest area, and a wrist-mounted mirror is used.

Our huge thanks to Professor Anu and all the knowledgeable and welcoming team at the Centre.



Special adaptations are needed for both the input and output sides of space living

VISIT TO HMS PRINCE OF WALES

By Liveryman Alan Jackson



On the morning of 30th November our party of 31 assembled at Portsmouth dockyard's Victory gate. After security checks we were taken by coach to the jetty where *Prince of Wales* is moored. She is immense: 70m (230ft) wide and 280m (919ft) long; and her flight

deck has an area of 4.2 acres (1.7ha). We gathered in the hangar for introductions to our hosts for the day: 'Wings', Cdr Phil Beacham; his deputy Lt Cdr Paddy Holmes; and 'Strike' Cdr Neil Tuckwood, all naval aviators.



The Company parades on the Flight Deck

Capt Steve Higham then addressed us. His previous posting was as military assistant and private secretary to Boris Johnson. The close knowledge of defence policy developed in that role was apparent in his presentation of the ship's significance to current and future UK defence. She may remain in service for 75 years. As well as the Lockheed-Martin F-35B Lightning II (an "airborne GCHQ") she will bring cyber and AI to the front line. Her role will develop to include the operation (which may include onboard 3-D printing) of swarms of drones, and may extend to launching conventional-take-off aircraft. "She is the nation's ship", said Higham, and the Navy has an obligation to explain to the nation why and how our money will be spent over her working life.

Following the captain's address, we toured several departments. First the operations room, where we were treated to a simulated air strike against the ship, using anti-ship missiles. We could see only a small fraction of the ship's 3,200 compartments; extensive spare capacity contributes to her future-proofing. Back in the hangar we learnt that the ship is equipped to support all marinised types in the UK military aircraft inventory, and some NATO types.

We rode up to the flight deck on one of the ship's two large aircraft lifts. The deck itself requires a sophisticated coating to protect it from the 1,000°C temperature and 18,000lb (89kN) exhaust thrust from F-35B engines. (The total lift thrust of the F-35B is 41,900lb: 18,000lb from the engine exhaust nozzle, 20,000lb from the engine-driven lift fan and 3,900lb from the roll-control posts.) This metallic spray coating was described as "liquid titanium"; a British development, and something which our American allies would like to have! From the flight deck we climbed several ladders to reach the bridge. On a normal day in transit at sea, we learnt that the bridge might be manned

by as few as four sailors, all of whom could be less than 20 years old; an awesome responsibility. We were also told that the impressively huge windows of flying control on the aft island are two inches thick, and designed to keep a Chinook out!

Before saying our thanks and farewells, Peter Benmax presented to the ship a personal gift in the form of a delightful globe which he had made, with orbiting miniature aircraft, the carrier, and complete with vertical take-off F-35B. This was received with great pleasure by Captain Higham.

Those of us fortunate to be part of this excellent visit have brought away memories of the size and technical complexity of the ship and its systems. Many thanks to David Curgenvin for organising the visit at very short notice. Thanks also to Past Master Tudor Owen for managing the affiliate relationship with the ship which made the visit possible.



Flying Control is in the Aft Island

A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR OF AVIATION AFFAIRS



The Court has very recently learned that the DAA, Paul Stone, unfortunately and through no fault of his own, needs to step-down from his role – for an undefined and hopefully temporary timespan – due to an unforeseen ruling by the German regulator (LBA) which

directly affects his ability to perform his 'day job'. The DAA recently wrote to the Master as follows (excerpt from full letter):

'...I have been fighting a losing battle since May 21 with the German regulator on validating my UK CAA CPL(A) and Flight Test rating so that I can perform my duties as the Volocopter test pilot. The LBA have announced, after taking advice from EASA, that I need to start from scratch and retake all 13 ground theory exams. In addition my company

wish me to work towards a PPL(H). All this has to be done in addition to my day job and my Shuttleworth commitments as Chief Pilot. It was always going to be tough to dedicate enough time to fulfil the role but these unplanned extra burdens have sadly tipped me over the edge in terms of workload and I can no longer give the DAA work the time it deserves. I realise this has placed the Company in a difficult position and I am truly sorry to let you all down. I will remain committed to ensuring my successor receives a professional and thorough handover'.

The Court wishes Paul all the very best in dealing with the situation in which he finds himself and is thankful for the great work he has done as DAA in the brief period since he took office. For the time being, the Court has resolved to appoint an interim DAA for an indefinite period pending clarification on Paul's professional situation and ability to return to the role in due course.

GAZETTE

APPROVED BY THE COURT 20TH JANUARY 2022

ADMISSIONS

As Upper Freeman

Delbert Maurice BASSETT (NA)
David Michael COE
Michael Kenneth CONOMOS (HK)
Colin Matthew Andre DONALDSON
Leonardo Ben HERMAN (OS)
Graeme MARTIN (HK)
Steven Raymond PRICE
John Vincent TYRRELL (AUS)
Erik WEISE (OS)

As Freeman

Thomas William BARTON
Charles RANDALL

As Associate

Christopher James David BELFIELD
Vanessa CHUA (AUS)
Aaron Colum Thomas GALLAGHER
Dylan Jonathan KNELL (AUS)

Alanis NAGEL (AUS)

Steven SHEN (AUS)

ACKNOWLEDGED BY THE COURT

20th January 2022

REGRADING

As Freeman
Peter ELLIOTT

To Livery

Marland GREEN
Andrew BLOOM

REINSTATEMENT

Freeman
Mohammed Amin Hamed VAFADAR (OS)

DECEASED

Ian FROW
Garry John HUNT

RESIGNATIONS

Karim ATTA
Andrew BALFOUR
Keith LAKIN
Dominic LAZARUS
Robert MUNRO
Simon READE
Toon STORKHORST
Paul TRETHAWAY





MASTER'S MESSAGE

By The Master, Sqn Ldr Nick Goodwyn

New Year - New Challenges And New Opportunities

Welcome to 2022! In my last Master's Message, I reflected on the

start of the Mayoral year in the City and here we are at the start of a new year, although with a sense of *deja-vu* with new challenges brought about by the emergence, before Christmas, of the Omicron variant of Covid-19 in the UK (and of course elsewhere around the globe) with a threat, again, to our emergence from the pandemic and further potential impact on aviation. Indeed, feedback from our regions reflects this and perhaps none more so as exemplified by that experienced by flight and cabin crew in and out of Hong Kong.

But Lenka and I hope, that wherever you were, you were able to enjoy something of the festive break and any new year celebrations. Sadly, the consequence of this latest wave led to the cancellation of our traditional carol service at St Michael's, an event which I know so many of us were looking forward to. This was especially, and with sadness, felt as it was to be the last of the Company events where we would enjoy and be enriched by the presence and pastoral care of Dr Peter Mullen who, on reaching a milestone birthday this January and having served the Air Pilots for 22 years, has decided to retire from the role of Honorary Chaplaincy. As Peter's appointment will formally end at our AGM and Installation in March, I hope we can say *adieu* then but for now may I offer Peter sincere thanks for his enduring support and contribution he has made to the Air Pilots. I for one will miss your company and conversation at dinners and after Court meetings.



The late Liveryman and Company historian Ian Frow

On a further sad note, another departure that I wish to mention is the passing of Liveryman Ian Frow who passed away just before Christmas. After gaining his wings in the RAF, he joined BOAC (later British Airways) and flew with them

for 34 years before joining Virgin Atlantic. He will be remembered as the author of the second volume of the History of the Guild (from 1965-2004). Ian recalled that, when granted an audience with our late Patron, HRH

Prince Philip, and on asking his advice on tackling the task of writing the history, the reply was typically forthright if initially rather dispiriting: 'It defeats me how you could set about something like this!'. HRH suggested that 'history' was the wrong title and perhaps 'portrait' would be better. Ian rose magnificently to his task. We extend our condolences to his family.

REGIONAL CHANGES – AND CHALLENGES

With all departures, there must also be arrivals and new opportunities. I was delighted to extend congratulations and a welcome to Liveryman Captain Simon Lawrence FRAeS who was elected to be Chair of our North American Region on the retirement, as Chair, of Liveryman Alistair Beaton after a number of years holding the fort. Alistair, thank you for all that you have done for the region and for the Air Pilots.

I must mention, as alluded to in the introduction to this message, that Hong Kong is one of the world's biggest aviation hubs but also has some of the strictest coronavirus regulations in the world. Two pilots with a locally based airline recently told the BBC that the rules have seriously affected their mental health and are putting a strain on their personal lives. The BBC articles made for disturbing reading. Indeed, the HK regional Chair has emailed me as I write this and said: 'The rules, restrictions and subsequent impact on both airlines, aviation in general and therefore our regional membership are so dynamic that if I were to give you a snapshot now, it will very likely be completely outdated by the time you read this email, let alone when the February Journal is published'. So our thoughts and all our support are especially with our regional members, but also whilst I am consistently impressed and humbled by their resilience and fortitude in upholding the ethos and fellowship of the Air Pilots in such difficult circumstances. And so, in the run up to Christmas, I found myself, usually very early on a Friday morning, dressed in black tie (at least from the waist up...) and badged, attending (virtually) regional dinners and speaking as Master, not least on three occasions with our Australian friends and members. In hindsight, I am glad that I refrained from entering into any Ashes-related banter, but I was able to highlight and congratulate our region on celebrating the RAAF's Centenary once again.

SCHOLARSHIP SUCCESSES

And once again, new year and new opportunities to highlight. Our website is advertising and inviting



applications for our Scholarships for 2022. Last year, we provided 34 scholarships which were successfully flown during the summer: three FI, eight full PPL and 23 short residential gliding courses. As you may be aware, we also provided for many more gliding days, as every year, we offer schools the opportunity to take part in a heavily subsidised day out at a British Gliding Association (BGA) Gliding Club. The offer is open to students of secondary schools and academies on behalf of a group of City of London Livery Companies led by the Honourable Company of Air Pilots. For only £15 each, students will receive a flight in a glider under the instruction of an experienced qualified instructor. An amazing initiative.

I would like to shine a light on how we are able to generate our programmes. In the last round of scholarships (2021), funding was generously provided by benefactors for the following scholarships:

Air BP - funding for one PPL (fixed-wing) scholarship, 'The Air BP Sterling Scholarship'; Past Master Mike Grayburn - funding for one PPL (fixed-wing) scholarship, 'The Grayburn Scholarship'; the Cadogan Charitable Trust - funding for one PPL (fixed-wing) scholarship and one FIC (fixed-wing) scholarship, 'The Cadogan Scholarships'; The Air Pilots Visits Team - funding for one PPL (fixed-wing) scholarship; the Adrian Swire Charitable Trust - funding for one FIC (fixed-wing) scholarship, 'The Swire Scholarship'; Captain Colin Donaldson - funding for one PPL scholarship, 'The Donaldson Scholarship'; the BALPA Benevolent Fund - funding for three PPL scholarships, 'The Wrigley Scholarship', 'The Lane-Burslem Scholarship', 'The Bob Dawson Scholarship'; and the Air Safety Trust - funding for one FIC (fixed-wing) scholarship - 'the Norman Motley FIC Scholarship'. Funding for a number of residential Gliding Scholarships was provided by: the Air Pilots Flying Club; the Air Pilots Benevolent Fund; and the Air Safety Trust.

Whilst funding, I am sure one would understand, is not guaranteed year-on-year, we owe a great debt of thanks to all those individuals and organisations concerned who enable the Air Pilots Scholarships and Bursaries team to deliver such an impressive portfolio of opportunities on our behalf. I was particularly delighted that, having chatted again with Colin Donaldson, a current BA A380 Captain, at the Scholarships presentation ceremony after the November Court meeting that he has subsequently joined the Air Pilots. Welcome and thank you. One other mention, and with gratitude, is to Per Caelum, the Masonic Lodge affiliated to the Air Pilots, which has agreed to donate £800 to provide a gliding scholarship and £1,000 for schools as well as enduring support to the London Air Ambulance which is one of my chosen charities this year.

YOUR DAY IN COURT?

The January meeting of the Court will see the opportunity for an Assistant to be elected to Warden and commence the journey (all things willing) to become Master of the Air Pilots in due course and, in addition, as I write this, Liverymen of the Company are invited to submit their names and credentials in consideration of election to the Court as Assistants. This process of renewal of the Court is part of the lifeblood of our Company and is a special and exciting opportunity for all those who are eligible and wish to serve the Air Pilots at its heart. Could that be you, if not this year, then perhaps next? Those who submit their candidacy for election to Assistant are placed for consideration by their peers in the ensuing election which is held during February and thus the Annual Ceremony of Installation of Master, Wardens and Assistants to the Court follows the Annual General Meeting, which will be held on 21 March 2022. The AGM, Installation and the dinner that follows the proceedings are important events in our company calendar and a truly delightful way to celebrate a new year in our cycle or rhythm as a Livery Company. Join Us.

With that thought, I come to the end of this, my last message as Master of the Air Pilots. I will soon be handing the controls to my successor, Captain Robin Keegan, with my best wishes and offer of any and all the support I can give both Robin and his lady Eileen for their year as Master and Consort. Let us hope and anticipate that they are able to enjoy a full year of Company and Livery events and even a traditional Master's Tour of the Regions. I have reflected on my Master's Messages over the last 12 months and what stands out is the energy, enthusiasm and contribution of the members, bonded by a love and passion for all things flying and aviation, and what makes the Air Pilots unique as a City of London Livery Company.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the IPM, Past Masters, GP&F, Court and to you all as Air Pilots for the support to myself, Lenka and my family throughout my year. I would also like to give a special "thank you" to the Clerk and to all the office staff who are an outstanding team - I hope I have not been too demanding of you! My year has flown past and it has been a privilege to serve the Honourable Company of Air Pilots as Master. Thank you all.



The Master signs off!

REGIONAL REPORTS

Australia Region

By Australia Regional Chairman, Upper Freeman Rob Dicker



November is normally a busy time of year, and at this time I would normally be reporting on the Master's visit to the Australian Region. Alas, for the second year running, the Master has not been able to travel down under but we were still able to go ahead with formal dinners in Brisbane, Adelaide and Canberra with the theme of marking the RAAF Centenary and recognising our local award winners. The Master was, however, able to make an appearance at each function, via video link.



Brisbane Dinner: Capt Tony Alder presents the Grand Master's Australian Medal to Flt Lt Laura Haws, and the Captain John Ashton Memorial Trophy to Shane Lawrey



Unfortunately, I was also unable to attend the Brisbane and Adelaide dinners, due to interstate border restrictions, and made an appearance alongside the Master, via video link. This afforded me an insight into what it is like to attend a dinner virtually, and particularly when you are 10 or 11 hours out of sync with the audience. It is not a task to be envied, so I sincerely thank the Master for his time and effort in supporting these functions where his message was well received on each occasion.

AUSTRALIAN AWARDS

The Australian Region has four unique awards, and it

was fitting in the Centenary year for the RAAF that two of these awards went to RAAF personnel. At our Brisbane dinner Flt Lt Laura Haws, an Engineering Staff Officer from RAAF base Amberley, received the Grand Master's Australian Medal. Also at the Brisbane dinner, the Capt John Ashton Memorial Trophy, for an outstanding contribution to flight standards, was presented to the Royal Flying Doctor Service, Queensland Section, and was accepted by Chief Pilot Capt Shane Lawrey. A number of Master Air Pilot certificates were also presented at the dinner and the first Master Rear Crew certificate to be presented in Australia was accepted by Sqn Ldr (ret'd) Rick Evans.

At our Canberra function we were looking forward to hosting the Chief of Air Force and his wife as our guests but unfortunately, after accepting our invitation, more important priorities arose that required his attention. He was however ably represented by Air Cdre David Titheridge, who presented the Australian Bi-Centennial Trophy, for an outstanding contribution to Australian Aviation, to Flt Lt Geoffrey Fox, currently serving with the VIP transport squadron in Canberra.

The CAF also generously allowed us to display at the function the commemorative Centenary Officer's Sword which I had the privilege of presenting, on behalf of the Honourable Company, at the beginning of this Centenary year for the RAAF.

We were also delighted to have as our guest at the Canberra dinner the recently appointed CEO of CASA and Director of Air Safety, Ms Pip Spence, who presented the Master's Trophy for the Australian Region to Adrienne Fleming OAM in recognition of her outstanding



Air Cdre David Titheridge presents the Australian Bi-Centennial Trophy to Flt Lt Geoffrey Fox; Pip Spence presents the Master's Trophy for the Australia Region to Adrienne Fleming

contribution to flight training and support for women in aviation.

For a change there were no awards made at our Adelaide dinner, but that did not dampen the support and convivial atmosphere of the guests at the Naval Military and Air Force Club, where the guest speaker for the evening was Grp Capt Pete Mitchell, representing the RAAF, who spoke on the theme of "The next 100 years for the RAAF". Regrettably, the spot landing competition which is traditionally held at Aldinga Airfield on the Saturday following the dinner, had to be cancelled due to poor weather but will hopefully be held sometime in 2022.

F/A-18A RETIRES

On the last weekend in November the only airshow to take place on the east coast of Australia this year, *Wings Over Illawarra*, was held at the Shellharbour Regional Airport, about 1½h drive south of Sydney. The weather was not ideal on the Saturday, but that didn't seem to dampen the enthusiasm of the thousands who turned up. The weather improved on the Sunday, to the delight of those who attended and were able to witness the last public display by the RAAF of the Boeing F/A-18A Classic Hornet and the first 'official' public display of its replacement, the Lockheed Martin F-35A Lightning II. Both put on fantastic displays and made lots of noise with afterburners going for much of the time.

The following day the F/A-18A was officially retired from the RAAF at a ceremony held at RAAF base Williamtown attended by the Chief of Air Force and the Australian Minister for Defence.

As I write this article at the beginning of January, Australia has, like many other countries, suffered the knock-on



Wings over Illawarra: F/A-18A farewell display and some of its predecessors on the flightline



effects of large numbers of people either sick or isolating because of Covid-19. For airlines and their passengers this has meant flight cancellations and delays over the holiday period; however, with over 90% of the Australian population over 12 double-vaxxed and a booster programme in progress, the long-term outlook, I believe, is good.

Unfortunately, space prevents me from saying anything about the cricket(!) and I will end with best wishes to all for a happy and healthy 2022.

Pictures by ©Commonwealth of Australia; Rob Dicker; Honourable Company of Air Pilots Australia

Regional Report: North America

By North America Regional Chairman, Liveryman Simon Laurence



I recently became the North America Regional Chairman, and my first order of business is to thank my predecessor Alistair Beaton for his two years in the position. Alistair volunteered for a second year to assist the Region and has had to work through the tough

times of Covid-19 with its many restrictions to aviation and the Region. I have large shoes to fill!

As we wind down 2021 and take a quick look at aviation in North America, like the rest of the world, we are dealing with the continuing effects of the virus and its latest variant, Omicron. Despite this setback, aviation in North America seems to be improving. Using the airlines as a gauge, travel in the US over the Thanksgiving holidays reached almost 90% of 2019 pre-Covid passenger levels and Christmas travel was expected to do the same. Holiday travel in Canada hasn't been quite as robust. The Canadian government recently advised Canadians to avoid all non-essential international travel and one carrier was reporting staff shortages which had lowered its daily flight

totals. Despite this less-than-positive news, the Canadian government did allow eight additional Canadian airports to begin accepting international arrivals at the end of November.

While passenger loads have improved, one North American airline CEO stated recently that his airline had 100 jets sitting on the ground due to a lack of pilots. This was countered by the US Air Line Pilots Association (ALPA) which contended that it was management decision-making that grounded the aircraft, not a pilot shortage. Regardless of your position on the 'pilot shortage', previous announcements by each of the top four US carriers have stated that they will be looking at pilot recruitment numbers of 2,000-5,000 pilots each, for the next few years. One regional airline has advertised signing bonuses of almost \$US200,000 to join its pilot ranks. This huge expansion will obviously place pressure on airlines as pilots move around looking for 'greener pastures.' In addition, the US has seen at least four high-profile airline startups in 2021.

Business aviation in the Region has also seen improvements as more passengers seek the use of private aircraft to limit their exposure to Covid-19 and large airport crowds. The National Business Aviation Association (NBAA) has reported that: "Business aviation in June 2021 reached levels not seen since October 2007." On the general aviation side: "Aircraft manufacturers report shortages of parts and people but turbine aircraft sales and revenue are posting double-digit gains" according to the Aircraft Owners & Pilots Association (AOPA). Personally, I'm approaching 2022 feeling 'cautiously optimistic,' for aviation in the North American Region.

A FLYING HISTORY

As this is my first contribution to the magazine, I was asked to provide a short bio. I was born in the UK but grew up in the eastern USA. I began civilian flying in 1973 while in high school. After university I had obtained my instructor rating and a commercial certificate and began my professional career as a flight instructor and charter pilot. Eighteen months later I was hired by a major US retail corporation, flying corporate executives in turboprop and turbofan aircraft throughout the US.

In 1984 I began my airline career with an upstart airline flying the BAC One-Eleven and six months later I was hired by Piedmont Airlines as a Boeing 727 Flight Engineer. I had a relatively quick progression to first officer on the Boeing 737, then 757/767 and became a 737 captain during the USAir merger with Piedmont in 1989. I continued with USAirways as captain on the McDonnell-Douglas MD-80 and Airbus 319/320/321, until I left in 2005 when I was offered a direct-entry captain position



(American Airlines)

with Emirates on the Airbus 310/310F.

As an A310 captain for Emirates, I also worked with the Chief Pilot's office developing the A310 freighter operation. In June 2006 I became the Fleet Technical Pilot on the A310, responsible for overseeing the technical operations of the A310 passenger and freighter aircraft. After the removal from service of the A310 fleet, I became the Boeing 747-800F Project Pilot responsible for the entry into service of the new freighter. However, two years later the order was cancelled, and I became the company Project Pilot. From the Project Pilot position, I moved to a 777 Technical Pilot position and eventually took early retirement from Emirates in 2016.

After a long three days of retirement, I took a position flying a Beechjet-400XP in the USA for a charter operator in my hometown. Eighteen months later, I moved back to the airline world as a captain on the 747-400F for an international freight operator. Currently, I am the Chief Pilot for a small international passenger airline in the US.

Additionally, during my tenure at USAirways, I was a safety volunteer for IFALPA and for the Air Line Pilots Association and served as the National Director of Charting and Instrument Procedures and Director of Human Factors. In parallel, I also worked at NASA Langley as a Research Evaluation Pilot for 17 years and I'm a Fellow of the Royal Aeronautical Society. I am looking forward to my year as Chairman of the North America Region and the aviation challenges the position brings.



Regional Report: Hong Kong

By Regional Chairman, Assistant Pat Voigt

Knock-it-Off! Knock-it-Off! Knock-it-Off! I am sure that this call will resonate with all pilots, whether received in an urgent radio transmission

or simply through the osmosis of experience disseminated throughout the aviation community, during the endless but necessary debriefs in crewrooms and bars around the world. Sadly, this vital avenue of learning is dwindling into near-extinction, as a result of the current lack of pilot-to-pilot communication outside the cockpit and in a truly 'no-threat to your career' environment. I am firmly of the belief that this trend must be addressed before not only is irreversible damage done to our industry, but a dangerous legacy is impacted on all aviation, which I am sure is in the heart of every member of our Honourable Company.

Unfortunately, yet another knock-on effect of the global aviation downturn is that, reflecting the traditionally strong expat pilot community here, the effect of job losses has sadly, but inevitably, led to the departure of some of our regional members. However, many have repatriated to their home countries and have continued, or hopefully will continue, their membership within these established regions. Despite the losses, I and my General Committee have been heartened by the continuing recruitment of new - and indeed the rejoining of some lapsed - members. We sincerely hope that this trend continues, and we will soon return to the usual social whirlwind that epitomises the Hong Kong Region.

CAPS AND COOLERS

Another very positive and significant area where our region has forged ahead is that of merchandise. Following IPC Liveryman Locky Lawford's initiatives involving polo shirts, cummerbunds and "stubby" coolers, we have not only redesigned and resupplied dwindling stocks, but also diversified with other popular items. As you will note from these photographs, our latest water bottles and caps incorporate both our 'Head Office' national flag and all regional ones. On that note, and for the keen-eyed amongst the membership, we were very careful to arrange the flags in a diplomatic geographical sequence. I am acutely aware of my previous brave closing quote published in the December edition: "As I write this article on Halloween night from my quarantine hotel in Sydney, I am aware that by the time you read it, we will be



New caps feature the flags of the Regions alongside the Company's crest, as do the new water bottles and stubby coolers



about to hold our Regional Formal Christmas Banquet". Unfortunately, unexpected and drastic restrictions put paid to this; however, with true aviator spirit we held a few informal Christmas beer/wine calls that proved both popular and an opportunity to ameliorate some of the concerns voiced in my first paragraph.



No banquet, but informal drinks kept Hong Kong spirits up

YOUNG AIR PILOT UPDATE

William Wright – YAP Committee Chair



I have been in post as chair of the young members for coming up to two years, having assumed the position coincident with the installation of IPM John Towell. Before I launch into a quick precis of the highlights, a word on what has been

achieved since the last edition of *Air Pilot*:

Pilot Careers Live (PCL) based at Heathrow was well supported by several young members. We were able to provide words of advice and encouragement to prospective aviators, and really compliment the promotions team's experience with a burst of youthful enthusiasm. The events during the day preceded a social at the RAF Club. Around 20 young members arrived for drinks and canapés in the Presidents' room, conversation flowed, and events soon found their way to the Running Horse, which leaves me to reference the observance of Chatham House rules! It was clear that through shared values and similar experiences young peers were able to build relationships and connections in a familiar, relaxed setting. It is what being an Air Pilot is all about for me.

The final point to mention is the upcoming Pilot Assessment Event, being held at University West London in partnership with the University itself, FlightPad (Turnpoint), and Psytech. We have worked in close partnership with all these organisations before and so are looking forward to doing so again. The event will be spread across two days and aims to support aspiring aviators and established professionals alike for any upcoming assessment, whether for a training programme, commercial airline job, or anything in between.

Now, I hope you'll indulge me to reflect very briefly

on my two years as YAP Chair. With the backdrop of a pandemic, we set-up a development group to help facilitate idea generation and growth opportunities. We launched the Virtual Coffee Morning (VCM) series, connecting company members across the world virtually for a series of informative talks, that can still be found within the young members pages on the website. We sent out a survey to better understand what our young members were already engaged with, and more to the point, what else they wanted to see from us. This led to establishing our pillars of work, which have served as a useful framework for development. We held a series of career development events including a forum to receive career guidance (The New Normal, Level Up and the Star Gallery). We were also able to formalise the YAP committee with a Terms of Reference and committee appointments for the various pillars. Meanwhile, we have supported the wider company via the Scholarships committee, the ACEC and the promotions committee. These are just some highlights that come to mind among many other achievements. But they all serve to make the point that the young members are becoming a more obviously integrated and contributory part of Air Pilot life, and for that I am proud.

What is very clear to me though, is that none of this would be possible without the support of the Master and IPM, the Learned Clerk, the Secretariat, the Development group, the YAP Committee members, and most importantly, the young member community. It has been an absolute pleasure to see the growth, and long may it continue. Although I will be stepping down as chair, I will remain involved in the background, and will be a strong supporter of whomever takes over next. To that end, I hope we will be able to run due process to find and appoint someone to take the committee and the membership forward.

Blue skies and tailwinds as always.



The Young Air Pilots socialise at the RAF Club



The Company delegation at Pilot Careers Live



UPDATE: GENERAL AVIATION SAFETY COUNCIL

By Upper Freeman Stephen Hayman

I currently represent the Honourable Company of Air Pilots on the GASCo Council, which meets four times a year. I retired in 2019 from Thomas Cook, having flown Airbus A330s, but still fly my Europa Monowheel from Rochester Airport. I have been involved in flight safety for many years, including 11 years as a Crew Resource Management Instructor (CRMi) and attended an AAIB Short Course in the 1980s whilst working as an ATCO. The latest GASCo Council meeting was held on 30th November, via Zoom. Unfortunately due to Covid-19 we have had to have all our meetings online for the last two years. Although this works well and saves money, it's not the same as face-to-face meetings.

Amongst the issues discussed were:-

- The CAA Survey into the use of carbon monoxide (CO) monitors which commenced in September 2020. Two recent accidents have been attributed to CO poisoning. One was the widely reported Piper Pa-46 Malibu crash off Guernsey in January 2019, and the other was the de Havilland DHC-2 in crash Hawkesbury River, about 30nm from Sydney, Australia, in December 2017. The inference is that if you haven't got a CO monitor already, get one. It might just save your life one day!
- Changing to navigating in True track rather than Magnetic. Again, it was thought that it was only a matter of time before this is mandated. However, there is obviously a cost to implementation to not only aircraft but also to airports. Changes were needed to aircraft equipment, runway signage etc.
- Airspace infringements and the resistance to using transponders for fear of being prosecuted by the CAA, in particular by professional pilots!! It is rumoured that there are pilots flying with their transponders switched off for fear of prosecution should they stray into Controlled Airspace. Having personally had an incident where there was a technical fault with my transponder which resulted in an erroneous high reading, I know how they might feel, as the resulting phone call from the CAA was not at all pleasant. Of course it was my fault that the transponder failed in its duty!

- GASCo will continue to provide safety evenings even though it is no longer contracted by the CAA. The replacement contractor Astral Aviation is only providing online or social media communication and training.



The inference is that if you haven't got a CO monitor already, get one. It might save your life! (CO Guardian)

The next Council meeting is expected to be in the spring, via Zoom, and it is hoped that there will be a real live meeting in the summer.

If you have not already joined or been on one of the GASCo courses, I can fully recommend your doing so. It is run as a charity and any donations are gladly received - it is all in the aid of Flight Safety.

See www.gasco.org.uk for further information.



There is resistance to using transponders for fear of being prosecuted by the CAA, in particular by professional pilots. (Trig Avionics)

SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS 2021

The winners of the Company's 2021 PPL and Flying Instructor scholarships were presented with their certificates at the November Court Meeting and, with friends and family members, were entertained to dinner at Cutlers' Hall. In these end-of-term reports the winners summarise their experiences and aspirations.



PPL Scholars with the Master and retiring Scholarships Lead Liveryman Tricia Nelmes



Flying Instructor Scholars with the Master and Tricia Nelmes

PPL SCHOLARS



CHARLIE GAZZARD

Cadogan PPL Scholarship

My scholarship started on 20th June. Although I was initially rusty, having not flown in two years, my instructors quickly brought me back up to speed. I completed my training in the Robin DR400, mostly on G-HANS. Fortunately, I was back up to doing solo circuits on my second day.

My first solo landaway was at Shobdon airfield and within a week, I was embarking on my Qualifying Cross Country (QXC) flight. This was by far the highlight of my scholarship. On my route to Sleaf Airfield, via Shobdon airfield and Lake Vyrnwy, I was very lucky to admire the stunning views over the northern Welsh mountains.

Not long after this, the big day was upon me. My examiner flew into Gloucester (Staverton) from Bristol and instantly put me at ease when we met each other. We discussed my training and my planned route to Bromyard, Banbury and then back to Gloucester. There were stronger winds than usual on this day; however, once I was accustomed to them, the test was over before I knew it, and I had passed.

I would like to thank the Honourable Company of Air Pilots and the Cadogan Charitable Trust for awarding me this very prestigious, once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.



DAVID HART

Wigley Scholarship (BALPA Benevolent Fund)

For as long as I can remember, I have been fascinated by flight and the world of aviation, and gained my first flying experiences with the Air Cadets.

After completing an Air Cadet Pilot Scheme in 2019, I had accepted that it would take much longer

to progress, as the world had much more important things to worry about when Covid-19 struck in 2020 and impacted on so many people's lives.

It was only by chance that I noticed that the Honourable Company of Air Pilots had restarted its scholarship programme for 2021. I worked so hard during the application process and, unbelievably, it paid off.

My whole summer has been dedicated to completing the scholarship and I have loved every bit of it - apart from catching Covid-19 right at the start! Learning about navigation, radios, and the general handling of the aircraft has been truly enjoyable. On top of the practical flying element, the theory has been just as challenging, yet rewarding and insightful.

The journey through the scholarship has been extremely hard work but genuinely the best time of my life. I will always remember the time I have had this summer.

Flying everyday has been amazing and a dream come true and will allow me to begin my flying journey. I would like to thank everyone at the Honourable Company of Air Pilots, the BALPA Benevolent Fund, Lewis Alderson (my mentor) and Westair.

ANNE SOLTOW

Bob Dawson (BALPA Benevolent Fund) Scholarship

I can't believe that I am a powered pilot! What an adventure this summer has been! From holding for Spitfires, admiring stunning views of England, and flying overhead major airports, I've enjoyed every minute. Completing a PPL within two months while

coping with a pandemic and the British weather was challenging. Thankfully, I had my gliding experience and recently-obtained Aeronautical Engineering degree to assist me. Flying and studying every day while ticking off milestones along the way, there was always something to look forward to. Finally, after 2,200 pages of reading, nine theory exams, my qualifying cross country, and multiple



mock tests, amounting to 45h of flying, I was ready for my skills test on 23rd August. Once I got my nerves under control, I had so much fun, and we even flew over Gatwick! With a PPL in my pocket now, I have big plans, including introducing others to the world of aviation, exploring countries, helping at gliding clubs, and building hours. What's more, getting a CPL now seems within reach where it didn't seem possible before.

I will be forever grateful to the Fairoaks team for their support, pushing me just the right amount throughout, to the Honourable Company of Air Pilots for awarding me this amazing scholarship, and the BALPA Benevolent Fund for sponsoring it.



LUKE MCCONNELL

Lane-Burslem (BALPA Benevolent Fund) Scholarship

A summer to remember and a dream finally reached: completing my PPL will always be one of my greatest achievements. Completing the Eric Lane-Burslem scholarship is an honour - hearing his story of how he was forced to fly when he didn't feel comfortable to do so is a moving story for me. His formation of BALPA is another inspirational story. I would love to thank the BALPA Benevolent Fund and the Honourable Company of Air Pilots for the amazing opportunity and the fantastic summer. The highlight of my scholarship was flying my qualifying cross country, especially the leg to Caernarfon. Flying round the coast of Wales and Anglesey provided some of the best views I had ever seen, especially when going through the Menai Strait at 1,300ft. Furthermore, flying around Blackpool and up to the Lake District provided similar picturesque views. My career goals are

to become a pilot in the RAF, and the completion of this scholarship will make me a viable candidate to do so. Again, I would like to thank the BALPA Benevolent Fund and the Honourable Company of Air Pilots for the scholarship and hope to maintain the wonderful relationship we already have.



OMAR MSHIHADANI

The Air Pilots Visits Team Scholarship

Becoming a pilot means much more to me than just flying. It's about community, integrity, and ambition. Being awarded this scholarship was one of the best things to have happened in my life, allowing me to realise a lifelong dream whilst gaining skills both in and out of the aircraft. Upon receiving the scholarship, I was eager to start training. My first solo came soon after starting - I'll never forget [Piper PA-28] G-BODD and Runway 09. It wasn't long before I completed my QXC, the first time I truly felt in command of an aircraft. Then, with delays due to bad weather thrown in for good measure, the day of my skills test arrived. I had no fear, just sheer excitement. From attending my first air show aged eight, joining the Air Cadets, travelling across the country by bus to attend flight school open days, purchasing second-hand theory books, founding an aviation society, and flying the Grob Tutor with my UAS - the day of my skills test was a special moment many years in the making. Sincere thanks to The Honourable Company of Air Pilots, the Air Pilots Visits Team, ACS Aviation and everyone who made this lifelong dream a reality. Blue Skies!



MAX ELLISON

Air BP Sterling Scholarship

This summer has been one like no other. Attaining my PPL has been a dream that always felt just out of my reach. It is without a doubt my proudest achievement and one I worked incredibly hard to get. Moving from my family home in a little village in the west of Ireland to living on my own in London was a massive change for me. I

knew in advance that the workload would be tiring; flying during the day, studying and commuting in between, and resting whenever I had time. Days when I wasn't flying would be almost entirely spent studying and revising. I proved to myself just how committed I was to becoming a pilot. Without a doubt, it was the hardest few months of my life, but I wouldn't change a second of it. I lived every moment of my flying, knowing how lucky I was to be there. Occasionally seeing Spitfires, sharing the same skies as me while I was out doing my solo navigation exercises, are memories I'll cherish forever. After passing my skills test, I was filled with mixed emotions. I had finally completed a life-long ambition; on the other hand I knew the best summer of my life had finally ended.



TYLER MCGREGOR

Donaldson Scholarship

Four months of some of the most fun and concentrated flying, have successfully led to my obtaining a PPL through a scholarship which is an absolute dream come true and I cannot thank the Honourable Company of AirPilots enough. Flying is, without a doubt, one of the

biggest parts of my life and always has been. My long-term dream is to become a commercial pilot and then a test pilot, and to fly as many different types of aircraft as possible. My flying career began at age 12 when I started gliding and since then I have amassed over 300 flights. The next progression from gliding for me was to begin PPL training; however it can be very costly, so when an opportunity arose to apply for the Air Pilots scholarship, I made sure I worked extremely hard to get it.

The flying training itself was amazing; flying out over

various cities and towards the Norfolk coast during Nav flights, and being able to fly out of Duxford was an experience in itself, being in the circuit with Spitfires and Hurricanes which was phenomenal. In addition, the adrenalin from doing Practice Forced Landings and emergency procedures was amazing. I had done a lot of revision about powered aircraft in previous years, so I felt very prepared.

All in all, it was definitely one of my biggest achievements and I cannot wait to fly more and more as the years go on - definitely the best year of my life.



CHRIS BARROTT

Grayburn Scholarship

Thank you to everyone who made it possible for me to spend my summer in the sky. It's been an absolute privilege to receive the Grayburn scholarship and I am incredibly appreciative of everybody at the Honourable Company of Air Pilots for their help. I have been flying gliders since I was 14, racking up nearly 200 hours, but I've always wanted to start powered flying with the aim of turning it into a career.

I completed my training with Flight Training London, based at Elstree; a busy airfield with a narrow and sloping runway. My first solo flight was at the start of July and I rapidly moved onto the navigation. It all happened in a bit of a blur – my first solo navigation and QXC all happened within a few days. A particular highlight was setting off on the last leg of my QXC from Duxford and enjoying a smooth flight back down to Elstree in the evening sun - simply fantastic. I'm looking forward to getting some hours under my belt and starting a night rating this winter before converting to the tug at my gliding club for next summer. All I know is: I want to fly, and I'm immensely grateful for how this scholarship has helped me.

FLYING INSTRUCTOR SCHOLARS



JOSEPH HADLEY
Swire FIC Scholarship

In four intense weeks the marvelous team at Leicester have taken me from "just a PPL" to a flight instructor. I have been consistently put through my paces, sharpening my flying accuracy, verbal articulation,

and theoretical knowledge. It has been the most challenging flying I have ever done and yet for a significant amount of time in the cockpit I wasn't even touching the controls. Who knew that sitting and talking coherently could be so difficult!

It has also been the most rewarding experience. Completing this course hasn't just been about getting the rights to sign someone's logbook; I've learnt how we learn and teach, seriously reconsidered Threat and Error Management, and vastly improved my capacity in the air. I can't wait to get to instruct with a real student soon.

I must take the opportunity to thank the Honourable Company of Air Pilots and the Swire Charitable Trust for this opportunity, Peter and John (including their "student" alter-egos Doris and Eric) and all the team at Leicester Aero Club for making me so welcome. Also, Lee Ingram of Motorglide for teaching me to fly, Jeremy Pratt of Airplan Flight Equipment for all my supplies, and of course my parents for their enduring support and having to listen to my practice briefings.



GARY JACKSON MBE
Norman Motley (Air Safety Trust) FIC Scholarship 2021

Ever since gaining my PPL ten years ago, I have dreamed of becoming a flying instructor and particularly being able to teach people to fly vintage aircraft and 'taildraggers'. With a young family and all the financial commitments that come along with that, this dream has seemed

consistently unobtainable. However, this year I applied for a Flying Instructor scholarship from the Honourable Company of Air Pilots, and to both my surprise and elation, I was selected as the lucky recipient of the Norman Motley Scholarship 2021.

I chose to complete my Flight Instructor's Course at Andrewsfield Aviation because of its strong reputation. The level of instruction I received was outstanding and my instructor, Paul Slater, was excellent, really taking the time to share his experience. I thoroughly enjoyed the course, although it was certainly challenging with the focus more on communicating effectively, facilitating learning, and assessing student performance.

I am extremely grateful to the Honourable Company of Air Pilots for the scholarship, which has enabled me to realise a long-held aspiration and become a flying instructor. I am now eager to put my newly acquired skills to the test, teaching and coaching PPL students.



GEORGE COE
Cadogan FIC Scholarship

It had been a dream of mine to become a Flying Instructor for a long while, so I was overjoyed to find out I had been successful in gaining an Honourable Company of Air Pilots scholarship to complete my FI rating.

The FI course is made up of a big chunk of ground

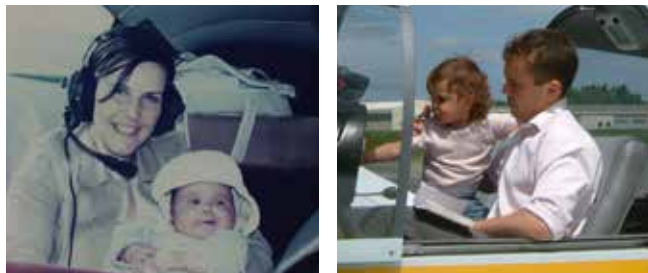
school and flying training. A classic British summer full of low cloud and rain gave me a good chance to work through lots of ground school initially!

The practical flying really opened my eyes to how much an instructor must think about – particularly in the early parts of the syllabus as the student is completely new to flying concepts. Practice makes perfect though, as they say, and after a time, you develop the skills and knowledge to manage the multiple parts effectively, whilst constantly sharpening your flying.

The end of the course comes around rather quickly and just as you feel you're getting into it – it's time for a test. Thankfully, I passed with positive feedback and can't wait to get into instructing with real students – hopefully to inspire many more. I'm thankful to the Company and all those who supported me along the way.

AROUND THE WORLD IN 155 DAYS

On 18th August last year 19-year-old Associate Zara Rutherford left Kortrijk in Belgium on a quest to become the youngest-ever female pilot to complete a solo circumnavigation of the globe and the youngest of all to do it by microlight. The Editor takes a look at her memorable journey.



Where it all began – The young Zara with Mum, Bea in 2002; with Dad, Upper Freeman Sam, 2004 (FlyZolo; Beatrice DeSmet)

Flying a Slovakian-built Shark, she was aiming to take the Guinness World Record for the trip from the existing holder, Shaesta Waiz, who was 30 when she made her flight in 2017, and close the age gap to the current absolute World Record holder, fellow-Associate Travis Ludlow, who was 18 when he completed his solo flight on 13th July 2021.

Apart from the record aspects of her flight, Zara was intending to use her attempt to encourage girls and young women to pursue their dreams and promote aviation and STEM-related careers (science, technology, engineering, mathematics) for them. After an adventure plagued by weather-induced delays, Zara completed that journey on 17th January this year, 155 days after she set out – in stark contrast to the mere 44 days which it took Travis.

The posts of Zara and her team on Facebook over those 155 days have given a unique insight into the challenges which she faced on her flight, as they were happening, and we have drawn on those posts to produce this report.

Zara's flight began with a transit through the UK via Popham and Aberdeen to Wick, from where she departed on 19th August for Reykjavik in Iceland. Later



Zara on the day of departure (Jo Vlieghe)

that day, she was able to report: “Made it to Iceland! Five-hour flight over water and due to clouds, I was stuck at 1,500ft (460m) the whole way... Was amazing seeing the volcano and getting so close. Heading to Kulusuk (Greenland) tomorrow!” In Greenland, having met the Icelandic Minister of Justice, Áslaug Arna Sigurbjörnsdóttir, she caught up with NASA scientists who are researching global warming

She reported: “Using a DC-3 from the 1940s, they’ve been dropping probes into the ocean around Greenland to measure the salinity and temperature of the



Water cannon salute (Jo Vlieghe)

water. They’ve been doing this for a few years now so they can compare results and see how their data evolves over time as the glaciers are melting...”

TRANS-ATLANTIC

Two days later from Goose Bay in Canada (where she had been greeted with a water cannon salute from the airport fire service), she was able to say: “Completed my first solo trans-Atlantic! Absolutely loved the flight yesterday. Was a long 8½h but flew over the icecap for the first time which was amazing. Seeing Canada after a long flight over sea was great! Didn’t think I’d ever be so excited to see a tree again.” While in Montreal, she met the Ninety-Nines, a group established in 1929 by 99 women pilots, one of whom was Amelia Earhart, and who are represented in all areas of aviation today.

From there, a quick flight saw Zara able to report: “Made it to NYC! Landed at JFK yesterday which was crazy. By far the biggest airport I’ve ever landed at (and probably ever will). Was a short 2½h flight from Montreal with blue skies the whole way.” After a scheduled maintenance day, she had a weather diversion to Princeton before heading to Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, where the Wright Brothers made the first powered flight in 1903, and another



At Kulusuk, Greenland, during the Atlantic crossing (FlyZolo)



Engaging with, and inspiring, young girls (here in New York) has been a major aim of the flight (Sheltair)

weather diversion to nearby Washington Warren before finally making it to Jacksonville, Florida, for her meeting with Shaesta Waiz.

RECORD REQUIREMENTS

To satisfy the Guinness World Record requirements of visiting two antipodal (diametrically opposite geographical) points, Zara then headed into South America via Miami, the Bahamas, Turks & Caicos and Necker Island where she was a guest of Sir Richard Branson.

While approaching San Salvador in the Bahamas, she reported, " ...the airfield was in between two big rainshowers. The whole day I had been listening to Kanye West's new album, where one of the songs is the 'Donda Chant', where Kanye West just repeats the word 'Donda' for about a minute. I was getting ready to land, and it was getting bumpier; when the 'Donda Chant' comes on and I can't change it as both my hands were busy trying to fly the plane... So it's a pretty rough and bumpy approach, and for a minute I realised I might die in San Salvador with Kanye West chanting 'Donda, Donda, Donda, Donda, ...' continuously and if that isn't a cool way to go then I don't know what is..."

By 2nd September, she was reporting: "Made it to Colombia!!! Was a long 6h flight but super-easy cruising at 8,500ft and had a 10kt tailwind later on in the trip. Thank



There have been crowds greeting the little Shark all along the route – here in Costa Rica, heading north after the first antipodal point (Robert Karah via Aerodiva)

you so much for the amazing welcome in Barranquilla! It's a shame I can't stay longer but looking forward to seeing Tumaco tomorrow - my first antipodal point!"

The weather again frustrated that ambition, leading her to land at Quibdó, which became her official antipodal point and where she was stuck for two days in "...the rainiest city on Earth..." before returning north via Barranquilla. On 6th September she reached Panama ("3h flight to Barranquilla followed by a 2½h flight to Panama, landed right next to a thunderstorm coming into Panama City so that's always fun!") and then flew via San José in Costa Rica to Mexico.

On 8th September: "Arrived [after 9h in the air via Tapachula] in Veracruz (Mexico) late last night. I was very happy to see my parents there waiting for me! Went to my hotel room quite quickly (on the 6th floor), when suddenly the building started to sway... Thought it was in my head at first until my dad asked: 'Is it just me or is the building moving?'. Don't think I've ever run faster down the stairs. Luckily we were quite far from the epicentre where they experienced a magnitude 7.1 earthquake, was still scary though!"

The following day, on her way to the USA, Zara passed through Monterrey, where she was met by the Gender and Equality Secretary of ASPA (Asociación Sindical De Pilotos Aviadores De México), Captain Martha Yolanda Vera Araujo, who has overcome traditional obstacles and challenges to become a Boeing 787 captain.

DIVERSIONS & DELAYS

In Albuquerque, she was invited as a Q&A guest speaker at the very first in-person New Mexico chapter meeting of Women in Aviation International (WAI), sponsored by Virgin Galactic, with whom she then spent "...the most amazing day in Spaceport America" at Las Cruces. Another gremlin then interrupted the mission as she was leaving the Spaceport on 11th September, and this time it wasn't weather:

"On the flight out, I noticed my airspeed indication wasn't working (after I took off). Did a quick circuit to land to check what was wrong with the pitot tube and hope I hadn't stupidly left the pitot cover on... Turns out it was just blocked. I decided to fly to Las Cruces where they could help me out. However, the pitot tube being blocked caused a couple other issues and I returned to Spaceport soon after take-off. I was able to leave this morning whilst the air was still cool and not too bumpy."

Two days later during a scheduled maintenance stop at Mojave Spaceport, Zara reported: "Loved being in Los Angeles yesterday! Flew in from Las Cruces (New Mexico) after a brief stop in Phoenix (thank you for the welcome!) That evening I had an amazing flight in a 1941

Stearman and got to see the Hollywood sign!" It was then on to Palo Alto, San Francisco where she received, a warm welcome from the Honorary Consul of Belgium for San Francisco, Mrs Nathalie Delrue-McGuire, as well as from an aspiring pilot: Sahej Sethi. The 14-year-old girl now aspires to break Zara's record. Her team reported that: "It was here that Zara had a technical issue with her plane, and if it hadn't been for the enthusiasm and invaluable help of so many people on the ground, Zara would probably still be stuck in Palo Alto."

By 20th September, after a weather diversion to Redding, California: "I was heading to Seattle a few days ago but the wildfire smoke completely blocked my view to the point where I could only see the peaks of mountains straight below me, I turned around pretty quickly. I was stuck in Redding, California for a little while and was able to go to Seattle yesterday. Had a 30kt headwind for a large part and then rain showers as I was flying north (got plenty of rainbows though)." The weather continued to obstruct progress as she aimed for Nome in Alaska, her intended stepping-off point for crossing the Bering Strait to Russia.

Zara ended up taking nine days to reach Nome on 30th September, after stops in Ketchikan, Juneau, Yakutat and Anchorage, reporting on the last day: "Had a beautiful flight up to Anchorage but it got quite turbulent as I was heading towards the ocean out of Juneau. I was very close to turning back but decided to try one more time and head further out to sea which worked. Heading to Nome later today."

It was here that another challenge reared its head. The weather and other delays encountered so far meant that Zara was so far behind her schedule that her visa for entry into Russia had expired. It took her emissary Miffy ten days to procure a replacement visa for her, and she then lost another 20 days to bad weather before finally, on 1st November, she was able to make the crossing.

"Finally made it to [Anadyr] Russia! Just in time before the days start getting too short. It's pretty cold out here right now at -24C, luckily, I've got @vikinglifesavingequipment to keep me warm. So happy to be over the Pacific and onto the second half of the world. First bit of the flight was more challenging, a few snow showers here and there to dodge and some low clouds but nothing major. Later it was stunning blue skies all the way!" The following day she was in Magadan:

"I flew 6h yesterday. It was mostly over ice and snow the whole way. I was pretty lucky as it was 'only' -20C in the air, whereas it was -35C on the ground, leading to the Shark needing the services of a de-icing truck. The Shark had never flown in temperatures this cold before so a mechanic in Nome blocked some of the air intakes to

keep the engine warm." Any feeling of relief was soon dashed, however: another week of weather delay in Magadan led to a difficult routing debate.

As the team back at base reported: "When [she was] in Magadan, a low-pressure system (low clouds and precipitation) was moving Northwards from the South. Options are:

"a) Stay in Magadan: the same low-pressure system would move northwards and prevent Zara moving for the forecastable future;

"b) Fly, plan for Khabarovsk, perhaps even Ekimchan. Ayan is the furthest south we could be completely confident Zara could beat the weather. We communicated with the airport and were told they could accept Zara and her Shark, and that accommodation could be provided for her. (Thank you to the people who made this happen!)"

So Zara decided to fly. Unfortunately, the low-pressure system was moving Northwards faster than forecast, so once it became clear the weather was deteriorating in Ekimchan, Zara elected to divert to Ayan, a local uncontrolled airport.

Zara's diversion options *en route* in Russia are limited to uncontrolled domestic airports. Flying into controlled airports in Russia requires to speak Russian or have a Russian navigator on board. Obviously, this would rather be defeating the point of Zara doing this trip solo.

That was the start of a 19-day delay in Ayan, before a short weather window allowed her to fly to Khabarovsk and, after a rest day, to Vladivostok on 2nd December – and there she stayed for another ten days for maintenance, rest and sorting out paperwork.

Finally, after 41 days in Russia, she was able to make it to Gimpo Airport at Seoul in South Korea: "This was my



Dealing with the Russian cold – sometimes the plane needed a de-icing truck here near the Sea of Okhotsk, but sometimes something more serious, like an airframe-warming truck, here in Magadan (FlyZolo)

longest flight so far with about 6h in the air; most of it was also over water. I had to do a huge detour to avoid North Korea as much as possible which ended up working great. I was able to cruise at around 6,500ft for most of the trip.” A short trip to Muan to position for the shortest route to Taiwan was then followed by another overwater flight – this time one of 4½h to Taipei, and on 15th December she had arrived at Mabalacat in the Philippines, having evaded a fast-developing typhoon.

SLEEPING IN THE AIRPORT

That storm, however, precluded her making a second stop in the Philippines, and she had to head straight to Kota Kinabalu in Malaysia, from where the weather again intervened in her plans to reach her second antipodal point at Jakarta in Indonesia, with another two-day delay. On 20th December she reported: “Finally crossed the equator! I was flying from Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia to Jakarta, Indonesia. However, I had to land in Bandar Udara Rahadi Osman [Ketapang] because the weather was worsening. I’ve been stuck here for a few days now and am trying to continue to Jakarta but there are many thunderstorms in the way. This airport isn’t international, so because of some paperwork I can’t leave the airport, which means I’ve been sleeping in the terminal for the last two nights. Starting to feel a bit like Tom Hanks in *The Terminal*.”

The following day she did reach Jakarta, and two days later, after a scheduled press day, headed for Singapore. Her approach to Seletar was bumpy, and ATC held her off for some 40min to avoid a storm building over the city – and then she had to endure another enforced stay over Christmas waiting for a punctured tyre to be replaced.

A four-hour flight on 27th December saw her get from Seletar to Bandar Aceh in Indonesia, during which some unexpected weather (including lightning) fortunately failed to disrupt progress, and the following day a flight of 931nm (1,724km), of which 816nm were over water saw



Destinations ranged from remote strips to major international airports – this is Gimpo (Seoul), South Korea (Park Junha)

her touch down at Colombo in Sri Lanka, her 40th stop.

Smog around Delhi saw yet another re-routing for Zara as she headed into India on 30th December, but this time with some serendipity the most suitable diversion airport after a three-hour flight was Coimbatore, the home of her sponsor Elgi Equipments Limited.

NEW YEAR IN MUMBAI

On New Year’s Eve she was able to report: “Arrived in Mumbai nine or so hours ago. It was a pretty good flight, but the smog got quite heavy as I approached the city. Stayed relatively low to the ground (2,500ft) and not too far away from the coast to stay visual with the ground. Thank you also to the ATCs who made it very quick and easy to land at Juhu. Today is my longest flight yet to Dubai! It’s around 1,000nm over water and should take about 7½h.” Her optimism for that flight was, however, misplaced, and she arrived in Dubai by car... Eventually, she was able to explain: “Arrived in Dubai! A couple of days ago I had to land in Al Ain after an 8h flight because the wind at Al Maktoum (my original destination) was gusting at 45kt. Even the wind at Al Ain was pretty strong and I had to make sure I taxied slowly to avoid taking off again.”

After another unscheduled delay, she flew to Riyadh, Saudi Arabia after a stunning flight overhead Bahrain and the desert. A busy day there saw her welcomed by the female students and staff at Princess Nourah Bint Abdulrahman University, and meeting the brother of the incumbent King, HRH the Saudi Prince and Sultan bin Salman Al Saud and his family. The prince is a pilot and was the first Arab/Muslim/Royal to go into space, as a payload specialist aboard Shuttle Flight STS-51 in 1985.

On 8th January Zara was able to report: “Had one of the most amazing flights yesterday across Saudi Arabia from Riyadh to Tabuk [which had been scheduled as simply a refuelling stop but became an overnight because there



A school at Taichung, Taiwan shows support for Zara as she overflies

was not enough daylight left to reach Alexandria in Egypt]. Terrain changed a lot throughout, from dunes to rocks and villages/cities. Flying was also really nice as there are usually no clouds whatsoever and it was extremely smooth (in the morning). Plenty of camels as well! Today I'm waiting for some fog to clear in Egypt before heading to Alexandria". This stop in Egypt marked the fifth continent which she had visited on her adventure, but the following day she was back in Europe, after an elapsed time of 139 days, with a flight to Heraklion in Greece. Seemingly within touching distance of home, she was again delayed here by weather.

ALMOST HOME

It transpired that Zara would spend three days in Greece waiting for the wind to abate. The ancient Greeks believed the wind was the result of divine intervention and controlled by four deities, each responsible for one of the four cardinal directions. Collectively, they were known as the Anemoi. In Zara's case it was the deity Boreas, God of the North wind, which persistently blew at 25-35 kt and prevented her departure to Bulgaria until 14th January. Her arrival in Sofia was important to her as she got to meet Dimitar Dimitrov, owner of her main sponsor ICDSOFT, and the following day she departed to Senica, Slovakia to meet up with her other most important sponsor, Vladimír Pekár from Shark.aero.

Zara described Vlado as "...the single other most important person that allowed me to fulfil my dream." He was inspired by design genius Burt Rutan and saw FlyZolo as a way of inspiring a new generation of aircraft builders.

Arriving at the Shark factory, Zara was 'intercepted' by a flight of Shark owners, eager to show their support for her remarkable venture and escort her to the aircraft's spiritual home.

On 16th January, Zara wrote: "One small step closer to home today. Didn't quite make it into Prague due to fog. It was a short one-hour flight to Benesov [in the Czech Republic], where I landed on a grass runway for the first time in a while!

"Tomorrow I'm planning on flying home!!! I'm hoping that the weather will be good enough to fly through Northern Germany, the Netherlands and into Belgium. It might still change though..." True to form, it did!

The plan had seen Zara arriving back in Belgium on 17th January but rain, cloud and wind left her stuck in Benesov for two full days. She finally got airborne to Egelsbach near Frankfurt on 19th January, "...weaving through the German hills and following the river bed to try to remain as safe as possible." That day her Shark was the most followed aeroplane on the flight-following apps.



A shiver of Sharks escort Zara to the factory where her aeroplane was built.

Day 155 – Zara's final day – dawned grey and wet and her ETD of 10.00 GMT was soon pushed back by an hour. However, the weather lifted enough for her to get airborne from Germany and as she crossed into Belgium she was met by the Belgian Air Component's display team, the Red Devils. Their four SIAI Marchetti SF260s escorted her to Kortrijk where the combo performed a stunning low flypast before the team dramatically peeled away to allow the intrepid explorer to land.

To fly around the world is an achievement in anybody's logbook. To do it solo is an even greater accolade but to do it at the age of 19 in the midst of a global pandemic makes Zara Rutherford's flight even more remarkable.

She is an inspiration to youngsters – both male and female – around the world and a wonderful ambassador for aviation. We are lucky to have her as a member of the Honourable Company of Air Pilots.

As this issue closed for print we learned that Zara's brother Mack (currently aged 16) plans to set off in March in an attempt to become the youngest-ever earth-rounder. The flight is being sponsored by Dimitar Dimitrov and Mack says: "I want to find bright young girls and boys that have invented or created useful things and put them in the spotlight. They deserve it."



Triumphant return broadcast via social media (FlyZolo)

OUR AIRFIELDS ARE UNDER THREAT

Warwickshire District Council recently voted in favour of the proposition to build a Gigafactory on Coventry Airport, granting speculative planning permission for the change of use citing 'Very Special Circumstances'. *Charlotte Bailey* from the Save Coventry Airport group reflects on the journey so far



The proposed fate of Coventry Airport will see it lost below an enormous 'Gigafactory' (Rigby Group)

Eighty years ago, the *Luftwaffe* rained fire and fury upon the city of Coventry, destroying much of its heritage and causing extensive damage. Today, although the aerial bombardment may be long gone, sources closer to home may be about to “finish the job” that not even it could achieve: removing, once and for all, Coventry’s airport.

Controversial proposals first raised in February 2021 – endorsed by none other than the airport owners themselves – would see the site shut and redeveloped as a ‘Gigafactory’, producing batteries for electric vehicles. The plans were spearheaded by the ‘Joint Venture Partnership’: a private-public partnership between Coventry City Council and the Rigby Group, the airfield owner. Despite significant opposition and hundreds of formal objections (including from the CAA, the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on General Aviation and Royal Mail), a Warwickshire Council meeting held in early January voted in favour of the proposition and granting outline planning permission for a ‘change of use’ to the site, citing ‘Very Special Circumstances’. Although support from Coventry City Council is also required, the outcome is likely to represent a death sentence for aviation operations.

Coventry (Baginton) airfield, first opened in 1936, is currently home to many local businesses with worldwide

reach. After seeing service as a fighter station during World War Two, Baginton saw civilian use as a passenger and freight airport, with the lease passing to Air Atlantique in the 1980s before changing hands to TUI in 2004. In 2009, the site was acquired by Regional City Airports; a subsidiary of the Rigby Group which describes itself as “... the leading player in the UK regional airport sector... led by a team with proven commercial and operational expertise in both the airport and airline sectors”. Company founder, Sir Peter Rigby, even learned to fly at Coventry.

“DISUSED”

However, under the Rigby ownership many tenants have cited a “systematic running-down” of the facilities. The radar was removed and the airfield closed on Sundays and Mondays, both severely limiting its scope. In June 2021, a *Financial Times* article incorrectly described the airfield as “disused”, a perspective which seems to have been adopted by the planners. (Indeed, campaigners have alleged that before local councillors were invited to film a video, airport staff were intentionally sent home). Even the pandemic – financially ruinous for some – reportedly offered the potential for extra income in the form of a request for the temporary storage of 20 Easyjet Airbus A320s which was not taken up.



*Hundreds of people attended the 'Save Coventry Airfield' open day on 1th January despite fairly atrocious weather.
(Steve Bridgewater)*

Coventry's current tenants include training providers, maintenance facilities and heritage aircraft operators which offer exclusive expertise and rely, to a great deal, on the site's 2,008m runway. Two resident flying schools - Coventry Aero Club (the site's oldest resident) and Almat Flying Academy - help put Coventry on the map for instructional excellence. In October 2021, Coventry was second only to Oxford for training movements, and was in the top three nationally for the year as a whole; a figure entirely disregarded by the planning committee. Closure of the site could also risk the loss of unique



A grandfather shows his small grandson the cockpit of a flyable Vampire T.11. This scene, captured during the recent Save Coventry Airport open day perfectly sums up the importance of airfields. (Steve Bridgewater)

expertise in the restoration and rebuilding of classic aircraft and airframes, including early jet engines, with some of these businesses finding it almost impossible to find suitable alternative airfield homes. The loss of additional businesses – including specialist aviation consultancy company Sky Harbour UK, and maintenance firm Aerotech – would be felt far and wide. Mark Hooton, owner of the site's resident de Havilland Vampire T.11, the only airworthy ex-RAF example worldwide, says: "An important part of British aviation history could be lost for future generations." Resident static BAe Nimrod and Avro Shackleton aircraft – the latter of which recently received a Covid-19 recovery grant – also face an uncertain future. Fortunately, the long-established Midland Air Museum on the edge of the airfield remains unaffected.

John Gilder from the APPG-GA spoke at the planning meeting and the CAA's newly established Airfield Advisory Team lodged an official objection to the planning proposal in October - the first such public response it had issued. The CAA's objection also noted that: "It is a condition of the current lease that certain legacy infrastructure is maintained in an operational condition, even though the equipment is no longer utilised. Such infrastructure includes Radar, instrument landing system (ILS), non-directional-beacon (NDB) and distance measuring equipment (DME)."

"EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES"

Opponents of the planning proposals (including, but not limited, to those within the GA world) do not object to investment in the local economy but feel the 'Gigafactory' plan is fundamentally flawed. The airfield's status as greenbelt land can only be altered in 'exceptional circumstances' which must be 'fully evidenced'. However, campaigners point out that, as this is so far a speculative development with no identified end user – who would require a £2.5bn investment - that evidence does not

exist, and that with other 'brownfield' sites ripe for development close by, the 'exceptional circumstances' case is not made, either.

The immediate future is unclear. During the planning meeting, Warwickshire District Council was told it was not legally possible for a condition to impose continued operations at the site until a confirmed investor for the Gigafactory was found, and that nothing could stop Coventry airport from closing tomorrow should the owner decide so. Coventry – UK City of Culture 2021 – would then be left as the only major UK city without its own aerodrome. Owing to the scale of the development it has now been referred to the Secretary of State, Michael Gove.

Steve Ford, CEO of Sky Harbour UK Limited, says: "By ignoring the objections of the Civil Aviation Authority, the All Party Parliamentary Group and Royal Mail, a dangerous precedent has been set, nationally. A green light has indeed been given to speculative property developers who control the nation's airports".



The resident Vampire T.11 is supported by Coventry Airport tenant Heritage Turbines. In addition to working on the Goblin engine the company has recently restored a pair of Avons in order to allow the Australian-based Canberra to return to the skies. If it is forced to find a new home its future could be uncertain. (Steve Bridgewater)



Coventry was once a thriving airport with an active aviation heritage scene. Today all of these airframes have gone with the exception of the ground-runnable Shackleton and Nimrod and the Vampire Preservation Group's flyable Vampire T.11. What fates await these aircraft with the closure of the airfield? (Steve Bridgewater)

AIRFIELDS UNDER THREAT

Unfortunately, the situation at Coventry is not an isolated one. In purely alphabetical order the following airfields also face the threat of closure or limited activity.

Bourn has been earmarked for some 3,500 homes by South Cambridgeshire District Council, which approved a planning application for the development in February 2021 subject to the completion of prior conditions. Marshall Aerospace and Defence Group (MADG) will be vacating **Cambridge** aerodrome by 2030 and the site has been put forward for a major housing development.

In Oxfordshire, **Chalgrove** is included in South Oxfordshire District Council 2034 Local Plan for a 3,000-home development with a new runway for Martin-Baker Aircraft (MBA) operations. A planning application was submitted by the landowner, Homes England, but was withdrawn in May 2021 after the CAA recommended that the proposed development be discontinued as it was incompatible with MBA's current site operations. HE has stated that it will use its CPO powers if negotiations about the development with MBA (its tenant) are unsuccessful.

Deenethorpe in Northamptonshire has been accepted as the site of a proposed a 1,500 home 'Garden Village' and a planning application for the development is awaited. A planning application for mixed use development at **Dunsfold** in Surrey including 1,800 homes was approved in 2016 and, while protest groups appealed the decision in the High Court, these were rejected in November 2018 and the development has been granted Garden Village status.

In Yorkshire, **Elvington** is under threat from a development that includes up to 3,330 homes on the middle section of the runway. The owner of **Fairoaks** in Surrey has reportedly given notices to some hangar and building tenants to vacate by February 2022. The operation of the taxiways and runway (which are in separate ownership) is unaffected but the draft 'Local Plan Options' document recommends that development at the airport should be guided by a development brief/masterplan.

A planning application has been submitted by the owners of **Halfpenny Green (Wolverhampton Business Airport)** for the construction of 112 homes on the south-west corner of site and aerodrome improvements, including construction of three new hangars.

Long Marston aerodrome in Warwickshire has Government Garden Village approval for which a planning application has been submitted, and **North Denes** (Yarmouth Heliport) with two grass runways is for sale having been disused since 2015. With the support of the airfield owner, **Nottingham City (Tollerton)** and adjoining land was earmarked for up to 4,000 homes in a 2019 Local Plan and a planning application for

development proposals to the north and east of the aerodrome has been submitted.

Homes England has purchased **Panshanger** in Hertfordshire from Mariposa Investments. A public hearing into housing development on the site which preclude a realigned grass runway ended in March 2021 and an outline planning application to re-open the aerodrome has been submitted.

Another tentative 'success' occurred at **Peterborough Sibson** where Huntingdonshire District Council's bid for a 2,500 home Garden Village on site was unsuccessful; however the site is still listed in the Council's Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment. Further south, the owners of **Popham** airfield in Hampshire have submitted the site for a 3,000-home development and in Nottinghamshire, **Retford/Gamston** has received planning approval to convert five hangars into a vehicle testing facility and for dual use of the runway for autonomous vehicle testing and aircraft.

A 'Scoping Opinion' has begun on an Environmental Impact Assessment for development of 750 houses, a medical centre and employment units on the site of **Thurrock** aerodrome in Essex and planning issues rumble on at **Wellesbourne Mountford**. Stratford-on-Avon District Council's Core Strategy stated policy is to "Retain and support the enhancement of the established flying functions and aviation related facilities at Wellesbourne Airfield". The Council has now rescinded the owner's permitted development rights and initiated negotiations for an agreed purchase of the site whilst also taking CPO action to acquire the site.

Finally, **Wycombe Air Park's** lease holder (Helicopter Aircraft Holdings Ltd) has agreed new leases with the landowner, Wycombe District Council in Buckinghamshire, but the Council's adopted 2033 Local Plan provides for an industrial/warehousing complex on south-western part of the site requiring shortening of runway 35 and relocation of gliding activities to the north.

In addition to these active civil aerodromes the following RAF airfields or army barracks are also planned for disposal in the years indicated: **Abingdon** (2024/25), **Brawdy** (2024), **Colerne** (2025), **Dishforth** (2031) **Halton** (2022), **Henlow** (2023), **North Luffenham** (2022), **Scampton** (2022), **Spitalgate** (2024), **Swanton Morley** (2031), **Tern Hill** (2025), **Wethersfield** (2025) and **Wyton**. All are potentially ripe for planning and, in the case of the latter, a property developer has proposed a 4,500-home development, despite the airfield being under consideration by MADG as a possible new home (see above).

The author would like to thank John Walker for the latest updates on many of these airfields.

INTO THE OVERSHOOT

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

SORRY, YOU'RE FADING...

After the FAA asked US telecom providers AT&T and Verizon to delay switching on their new 5G services because of fears that their C-Band transmissions could interfere with the avionics of some older aircraft, the phone companies offered a six-month trial of reduced signal strengths near airports as a solution. They cited evidence of successful similar signal suppression near French airports in support of their offer. The FAA, which had already banned some flight operations near areas of potential interference, says French 5G transmissions are not only lower-powered anyway, but operate in the 3600-3800MHz band, rather than AT&T/Verizon's 3700-3980MHz (closer to the 4200-4400MHz used by radio altimeters. So if your swanky new 5G phone fails to get a decent signal near Charles de Gaulle, now you know why..



(iStock/Joeygil)

BUDGIE GOES VEGAN

Airbus Corporate Helicopters has delivered an ACH145 fitted with an all-vegan interior, to meet the requirements of the owner's wife, an "ethical fashion pioneer". All of the usually-leather upholstery in the ACH145 cabin – from seats down to the cuffs at the bases of the flying controls – has been replaced with polyethylene-based "Ultraleather". Let's hope it's more durable than the vegan interior options on Tesla cars, some of which have been reported to be suffering surface bubbling after owners had the temerity to drive their cars while wearing perfumes and sunscreens which are not approved by Tesla...



(Airbus Helicopters)

MIGHTY MARS FOR SALE

They say if it flies or floats it's cheaper to rent than buy but if you want to own the ultimate flying boat now is your chance. Coulson Flying Tankers has placed the last airworthy Martin Mars up for sale, albeit at an eye-watering asking price of \$5million! It is one of six Mars troop transport/medevac seaplanes made for the US Navy during World War Two and in the 1950s it was decommissioned and converted into a firefighting water bomber. With a wingspan a little wider than that of a Boeing 747, the Martin Mars is the largest flying boat ever flown operationally. ('Operationally' means that Howard Hughes' one-mile hop in the Spruce Goose doesn't count.) The aircraft can scoop up 7,200 US Gal of water in 32 seconds and then mixes it with a polymer thermo gel that sticks to burning trees and increases the dump's effectiveness. It is claimed that the Mars can extinguish a four-acre wildfire in one fell swoop.



(Coulson Flying Tankers)