February 2013

7 10th General Purposes and Finance Committee Meeting Cobham House
13 Environment Committee Cobham House
13 Guild Luncheon Club RAF Club
26 5th Technical and Air Safety Committee Meeting Cobham House
28 11th General Purposes and Finance Committee and 6th Court Meeting Cobham House

March 2013

7 Pilot Aptitude Assessment Cobham House
12 6th Education and Training Committee Cobham House
11 Annual Guild Service St Michael’s Cornhill
11 AGM, Installation and Supper Merchant Taylors’ Hall
14 Lord Mayor’s Dinner for Masters Mansion House
15 United Guilds’ Service St Paul’s Cathedral
15 Lunch with Fan Makers’ Company Skinners’ Hall

April 2013

9 1st Technical and Air Safety Committee Meeting Cobham House
11 1st General Purposes and Finance Committee Meeting Cobham House
16 Benevolent Fund Board of Trustees Meeting Cobham House
17 New Members’ Briefing Cobham House
18 Assistants’ Dinner Cutlers’ Hall
20 Flyer Show Sofitel Heathrow
25 Guild Luncheon Club RAF Club
25 Cobham Lecture Royal Aeronautical Society

May 2013

9 2nd General Purposes and Finance Committee Meeting Cobham House
9 1st Court Meeting Cobham House
14 2nd Education and Training Committee Meeting Cobham House
28 Environment Committee Meeting Cobham House
29 Livery Dinner Mansion House

GUILD VISITS PROGRAMME

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

Cover Photo: The Immediate Past Master and Wardens Pooley and Ford brave the November weather to carry the Guild’s banner in the Lord Mayor’s Show Parade in London on the second Saturday in November. A full description of this event can be found on page 10. Photo courtesy of Gerald Sharp photography.
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CAROL SERVICE. The Guild’s Carol Service took place on 14 December in St Michael’s Cornhill. Sharing the event were Liverymen and Freemen of the Worshipful Company of Fanmakers and the Worshipful Company of Fuellers; the Masters of these Companies each read a Lesson. The Director of Music was Jonathan Rennert MA(Cantab) FRCCO LRAM ARCM, Past Master Worshipful Company of Musicians, the organ was played by Richard Moore BA(Oxon) ARCO, Assistant Director of Music, St Michael’s Cornhill and the Service was conducted by the Guild’s Honorary Chaplain The Reverend Peter Mullen. Apart from an unscheduled interruption in the first carol by an uninvited passing individual who appeared to be the worse for drink, the Service proceeded on traditional lines with Lessons being read by an Assistant, a Warden, the Learned Clerk, the Master and the Chaplain and well-known carols sung with gusto by the congregation. The Choir excelled itself in the singing of a number of anthems and carols. After the Service Guild members moved on to the Counting House for the Christmas Supper, the final Guild event in 2012, before dispersing for the Christmas holiday.

NEW YEAR HONOURS. Congratulations to Upper Freeman Rear-Admiral Simon Charlier who was awarded the CBE in the New Year’s Honours List. If your Editor failed to spot any other Guild members honoured within it and in order that due and proper recognition can be made in Guild News, may I ask that anyone who received an award let me know and it will be publicised in the April edition.

BURMA SPITFIRES? The Editor writes: I was invited to a Press Briefing in the Imperial War Museum in December on the much publicised cache of crated Spitfires believed to exist in Burma/Myanmar, unfortunately I could not attend but I have received further information on the subject. An organisation called Wargaming is compiling a blog describing the activities of the expedition to Myanmar which was due to begin in early January to begin the survey and excavation at Mingaladon.

Wargaming’s message issued after the Press Briefing stated: “The expedition may unearth the planes - if they are indeed there - but it will also shed light on the Burma Campaign. The War in the China-Burma-India Theatre was one of the longest, bloodiest and least known theatres even at the time - not for nothing did the British 14th Army christen themselves ‘the Forgotten 14th’. The conflict involved thousands of military men and women from Britain, the US, Japan, India, Australia, China and the people of Burma itself. “This project to investigate the legend of buried Spitfires at Mingaladon Airfield is a chance to see a microcosm of that forgotten war and recover the historical and material traces of the people whose lives it impacted,’ said Andy Brockman (the project’s archaeologist). ‘We hope to glimpse the material traces of the lives of the service men and women of the many nations who found themselves at Mingaladon, but also the traces of the war’s impact on the local people.’ Joining the expedition are Martin Brown and Rod Scott, leading authorities in Conflict Archaeology, as well as Dr Adam Booth and Dr Roger Clark, geophysicists who have worked with David Cundall who has led the project since the late 1990s.” The somewhat ambivalent tone of the press release seems justified; as Guild News goes to press the Daily Telegraph (19 Jan) reports that nothing has been found and the expedition has been terminated. Mr Cundall remains convinced that there are Spitfires there somewhere.

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This event finalised our active golf programme for 2012, and we now look forward to another season beginning in April 2013. We would like to encourage Guild Members to join us and participate in our golf days even if they can only manage a few events. Details of our events can be found on the Guild web-site.

CONGRATULATIONS TO REAR-CREWMAN MARCUS WIGFALL. Rear-Crewman Marcus Wigfall turned aerial midwife in the early hours of Tuesday 11th December, when he successfully delivered a baby boy at 1,000 ft above the Shetland Isles. His Coastguard helicopter was scrambled to transfer the expectant mother and her partner from the Isle of Unst to hospital in Lerwick, but the new arrival could not wait. At 6.30 am, assisted by winchman paramedic Wigfall and fellow rear-crewman Friedie Manson the 7lb baby boy arrived above Lunna Holm, a rocky outcrop on the north side of Shetland.

Ten minutes later, the Coastguard Sikorsky
S-92 helicopter landed in Lerwick and mother and son were transferred to hospital. Wigfall, a paramedic for 12 years, said he had been trained to deliver babies but this was a first. "I have been in search and rescue for 20 odd years and have seen all manner of things, but this is the first time that I have delivered a baby on my own without any assistance from medical staff" he reported to Shetland News.

The Immediate Past Master had presented the 40 year old former Royal Navy winchman with his Guild Master Rear Crewman Certificate in January 2012 at HMS Gannet, Prestwick. At the time Wigfall had recently retired from the Royal Navy to join the Coastguard service.

"The Guild’s Master Rear Crew Certificate recognises those who have a direct airborne involvement in ensuring safe and effective aircraft operations and who have, in the opinion of the Court, displayed over a number of years those qualities of capability, airmanship and character which have brought honour and respect to the profession” said the IPM. "As its title suggests, the recipient is a proven Master of his craft and nowhere better was that shown than in his impeccable manner of dealing with this almost unique situation. Our congratulations to all concerned."

**EDITORIAL**

Back in 2009 our current Master bullied me into taking on the role of Honorary Editor of Guild News, knowing full well that I had previous experience in editing the Buccaneer Aircrew Association’s Newsletter, a modest publication that came out just twice a year. It was a real struggle getting copy for this Newsletter, with only just over 400 members of the Association and the consequent limited pool of experience that I could fish in. I gave in to the Master, as I had no reasonable excuse and I imagined that I would have no problem whatsoever with copy for Guild News, given the Guild’s large, international and ever-growing membership. Indeed, I have had plenty of material to fill up each issue of Guild News, however, recently the editorial electronic pending tray is showing distinct signs of poverty. I often feel that with the Guild’s membership covering such a wide spectrum of experience, both civil and military, and such a wide geographical spread, I should be inundated with material for publishing but sadly this is not always the case. In particular, I am always short of material for my News Round Up pages and the Regions section. So, as the Guild embarks on a new year, with a new Master soon to assume control, this is an Editor’s plea to readership for suitable articles for Guild News. Don’t worry about length or grammar, I can usually sort that out if need be. Good high resolution photos are also needed. My thanks go to those stalwart regular contributors who have kept me airborne, without your efforts Guild News would have been very thin.

2013 promises to be another interesting year for the Guild. For the first time we are expecting to have a Learned Judge as our Master, doubtless a good thing given the increasingly litigious environment that we live in. I am sure that the Trophy and Awards Committee will find worthy recipients for the many and varied acts of excellence in aviation that the Guild recognises, the Education and Training, Technical and Air Safety and Environment Committees will continue to debate current issues and provide sound advice, the Flying Club will hopefully find good weather favouring its flying and the Luncheon Club will continue to provide that excellent social environment for which it is renowned. A busy visits programme is being drafted, indeed more detail on this will probably be known by the time this issue is published, and the Guild Young Members will doubtless continue to enjoy their energetic programme. Thus there is a lot going on and so I plead for reports on this wide range of activity to be sent to me for Guild News at teeleeditor@hotmail.co.uk.

### MASTER’S CHOSEN CHARITY.

Each year the new Master invites the Guild to nominate a charity for that year and during 2011/12 the Master, Captain Wally Epton, chose the Henry Surtees Foundation. The HSF was set up in 2010 by F1 motor racing and Grand Prix motorcycle champion John Surtees OBE and it supports the Kent Surrey Sussex Air Ambulance Service (KSSAA) with blood transfusion equipment aboard its helicopters based at Redhill.

During the 2011/12 the Master’s Charity raised over £1,400 which was a record year for charity fund raising within the Guild. This was achieved largely due to the efforts of the Events Committee who organised the Master’s Garden Party at RAF Halton and various other events including the GYM Karting team entry in the HSF Charity Kart Race at Brooklands that supported the Master’s Charity for the year. Other monies came from Court contributions where the "Charity Box" is passed around at every Court Meeting to accept cash donations from all members of the Court, and they do give generously.

Busy schedules delayed presentation of the 2011/12 charity money to the HSF but at a small ceremony held at Monza House, Edenbridge just before Christmas, the IPM with head of the Events Committee Liverryman David Curgenven, and former Chairman of the Guild Young Members Freeman Ludo Forrer, handed over to racing legend John Surtees, a cheque for £1,423.90. In attendance was Adrian Bell chief Executive of KSSAA who was pleased to accept the cheque with John Surtees.

The Events Committee are planning a technical visit to Redhill later in the year and on the itinerary will be a closer look at the KSSAA with special focus on their newly introduced night air ambulance operations. Also the HSF is planning another grand Karting event at Brooklands in July and John Surtees has invited the Guild to enter a team, so watch out for further news.
The Master Writes

AIR MARSHAL CLIFF SPINK

This will be my last message as your Master and it is truism that time does fly when you’re having fun. I was just working out how many miles I have covered internationally in the last year and it works out to just under 36,000 nautical miles - add to that my UK mileage and you can see that my suitcase has been a pretty constant companion. But in those travels it has been the members of the Guild who have brought the time alive and I have been able to witness at first hand the professionalism and dedication of our calling. There have been, and remain, some huge challenges in our profession but we have a huge pool of expertise in our Company that fits us well for the demands that face aviation now and in the future - indeed, given that we have no political or industrial ties we can continue to give advice and opinion unfettered by vested interest. We are also a wonderful fellowship of like-minded people who have shared the adventure of aviation and who can think of no better reward than promoting flying in all of its guises. Thank you all for your support in the past months and the privilege of serving as your Master - it has been a signal honour and I will leave this position with a feeling of enormous pride in our great Company.

The Master’s Tour Diary 2012

The 3rd of November found Caroline and I finally packed and on our way to Heathrow - I now realise that flying is easy compared to planning the clothing requirements for an extended period away. A series of ominous texts from our airline about increasing delays with our flight did not bode well and so it proved - a quick appraisal ascertained that we would miss our connection in Hong Kong so a request to get us to Auckland by ‘fastest means’ got us a route via Shanghai, but the next day. Our two flights en route to Auckland were both excellent and illustrated the very best of our profession - that said the transfer at Shanghai was ‘interesting’ and not for the faint hearted or those with a tendency to another day so impressed were we by the activity. Indeed, from what I had seen the previous day at Ardmore and this visit, it is a credit to New Zealand that they have established a formula where the Regulator and Industry can work together to attain the highest standards but without a bureaucratic millstone. However, time was pressing and a short journey later we were registering in the Wellington Club before the afternoon session of meetings. The meetings that we had, both this and the following day, included the CAA, AIA and Airways and this not only gave me a tremendous insight into the broad spectrum of aviation matters in New Zealand but gave Allan Boyce and his team the opportunity to test various issues by attending. Back to Auckland the following day following further meetings and a quiet dinner with Allan and Lyn.

Day Three of the New Zealand trip found us being driven by Allan to RNZAF Air Base Auckland, Whenuapai, for a visit to No 485 Wing. We were welcomed by OC 485 Wing, Group Captain Kevin McEvoy, and what followed was a very special day looking at the workings of the Air Force in
general and the Auckland base in particular. The Whenuapai team were excellent and we saw the spectrum of operations on the base not least the newly refurbished P-3K2 Orion. I left the base thoroughly impressed with the professionalism of the RNZAF and of a force that despite its modest size most definitely punches above its weight. The evening was taken up with a very pleasant informal reception hosted by Allan and Lyn when we were able meet even more local members of the Guild.

After slow and relaxed start to the day where we had the opportunity to see something of the beautiful area around Auckland we set forth to the airport for our flight to Brisbane. After goodbyes to our wonderful hosts for what had been a short but action packed few days in NZ we headed for our aircraft....’not so fast’ said the Gremlin controlling our flight schedule! No engine start on No 2 meant a three hour delay and by the time we arrived in Brisbane I had visions of the formal Queensland Guild dinner that evening starting without us. In the event the Chairman of the Queensland Working Group, Patrick Hill, just extended the pre-dinner drinks and this seemed to meet with most Aussies approval!

Caroline missed this thoroughly enjoyable evening having been laid low with a vicious cold and therefore the next day she confined her day to a quiet walk to the pharmacy while I lit out with Patrick and Past Chairman Buck Brookesbank to Caboolture Airfield. I had a stimulating discussion with Ray Vuillermian and his team about general aviation and display flying before climbing into a Chipmunk with John Dawson and launching into a very windy Queensland sky. There is something magical about doing aerobatics over a white sand coastline that stretches as far as the eye can see in either direction - and not falling out of a stall turn from either direction (it was not to last!!). That evening Caroline (now on the road to recovery) and I spent a very pleasant dinner with a Past Chairman of the Hong...
Kong Region, Keith Griffin and his wife Sushma. As a cricket fan I felt privileged to be sitting on a table adjacent to many famous names including Richie Benaud and Glen McGrath but that did not prevent Keith and I reliving past times on the F4 Phantom - once a pilot......

A drive to RAAF Base Amberley with several local members of the Guild was the order of the next day and one could not fail to be impressed with the welcome that we received. Following a comprehensive briefing we visited the three major units that were flying respectively C17, Airbus 330 Tankers and the Super Hornet. That the oldest aircraft of these was the C17 - only 5 years - illustrates the way the RAAF are moving forward into the 21st Century. I confess to have felt very nostalgic when the Super Hornets cracked in the burners.... A great visit in all respects. A dinner that evening in the Queensland Club with Chairman Patrick Hill and Past Regional Chairman Buck Brooksbank enabled us to spend some time discussing Queensland Guild matters in most pleasant surroundings.

On our final day in Queensland we were able to visit a rather interesting school in Brisbane - called the 'Aviation High'. I found this school quite inspirational on many levels not least that it uses aviation in all aspects to act as the focus for subjects - science, maths, communication etc, etc. It is interesting that the subjects take on real meaning for the pupils as they can actually see how their studies can be allied to an end result. Wonderful forward thinking and small wonder that aviation firms are sponsoring the continued development of this school. A short but important stop at the Kingsford - Smith Memorial to see the Southern Cross aircraft was our last port of call before embarking for our flight to Sydney - and it was on time! Sandy Howard welcomed us into Sydney and delivered us to the friends that we were to stay with during our few days in New South Wales. The following day we joined Sandy and Marj and many of the members of the NSW region for a lunch at the Kirribilli Club overlooking Sydney harbour. A great pleasure to see so many of our senior airmen from the Guild 'down under' in such fine fettle and we left the Club with more than a few stories to retell. That evening I gave a lecture to the RAES at Sydney University on, broadly, the aircraft that I had been lucky enough to fly. It was followed by an active question period which provided some light entertainment for my wife as I started to answer a question that I thought I had heard - aah the delights of high tone deafness! I confess I could not understand why my questioner looked so baffled - anyway Caroline was then able to relay so that further embarrassment was avoided. Sandy and Marj very kindly gave us a full day of R&R the next day on their wonderful boat together with our hosts Mike and Linda Hall. A magical day.

Another relatively short flight to Canberra the next day and we were met by Group Captain Pete Norford and wife Jane, Deb Osley and Mike Cleaver aka ‘Wombat’. Pete gave us a tour around the Canberra Memorial Museum which is quite excellent before Mike piled us into his car and, after a quick car tour of the wide boulevards of the Capital, we were outbound west for the 3 hour drive to Temora. Australia is big... no it is huge... and on our way to Temora Mike explained that he was just back from taking his Auster out and back to Perth. A 'mere' 1600 nms each way with 16 stops en route outbound - or in our terms, London to well beyond Moscow! Temora airfield is set in flat farm land and was one of the largest wartime training bases in the British Empire - on an old photograph in the flying club I counted around 80 Tiger Moths. Today it is home to a vibrant GA and Gliding community plus a museum which boasts aircraft including the only two flying Spitfires in Australia. I spent the next day watching some iconic aircraft flying - Sabre, Boomerang and Harvard - and gave the second of my presentations on flying old aircraft. In a heartbeat we were on our way back to Canberra.

Air Vice-Marshal Kym Osley and his wife Deb very kindly provided a bed for us for the next couple of days whilst I variously visited Government departments accompanied by Australia Regional Chairman, Sue Ball, and Mike Cleaver. It was a manic but very productive day and we got to speak to the Secretary Dept of Infrastructure and Transport, the Deputy Chief of the Air Force, Chief Commissioner Air Transport Safety Bureau, Chief Executive Airservices Australia and the Acting Director of Aviation Safety CASA. We could not have wished for a fuller programme and with so many influential and informed people. A great visit with many important professional contacts and grateful thanks to all who helped make the visit so successful.

Outbound to Melbourne and met by Past Regional Chairman, and Coordinator of Victoria, John Whittington and our first sight of this great southern city. John
deposited us at the RAC Club Victoria - very smart - with time (a very precious commodity) to relax for an hour or so before we were off to the Royal Victorian Aero Club at Moorabbin Airport for an informal dinner after which I gave the Frank Fischer Lecture. There is always a danger when you give a presentation about personal experiences when there is someone in the audience who knows you - that someone was John Botham, a colleague from Lightning/Phantom days. (Editor’s note - see John’s article in this edition). Actually it was a great bonus as John was able to add a great deal to quite an extended question time. Next morning I was up and away at crack of sparrows to give a breakfast presentation to the Aviation Table Members of the Athenaeum Club - an absolutely delightful bunch of aviation-minded people. We concluded our whistle stop in Melbourne with a very pleasant lunch with Guild Members in the RACV before John whisked us back to the airport for our flight to Adelaide.

Regional Chairman Elect Harold Walton met us in Adelaide and deposited us with Sue Ball at her home in the lovely suburbs of this southern city. We were greeted by a lovely morning the following day and accompanied by Harold and the Chairman of the South Australia Working Group, Rob Moore. I was taken to the nearby Parafield Airport to visit Flight Training Adelaide (FTA). A most interesting visit and we saw the entire workings of this residential flying school. Interestingly, I noted that they included 5 hours ‘upset’ training in an aerobatic aircraft in their syllabus - not only because they saw the value of such training but their airline customers mandated that their students should receive this flying. That evening I gave a joint lecture to both the Guild and RAeS at the Institute of Engineers. The following day we travelled north to Gawler Airfield where both Caroline and I were taken flying in very high performance two seat gliders - far removed from the aircraft I flew in my early gliding days. I also had the chance to get airborne in a Chipmunk to do some aerobatics in the overhead - always chancy to put your skills on show and true to form, after successful stall turns left and right, the third stall turn was a little slow and I duly practiced my recovery from the vertical! Another great day and my thanks to all at Gawler not the least to the ladies for the fantastic lunch. The day concluded with a formal dinner with the members of the South Australia Region at the Naval, Military and Air Force Club of South Australia - a splendid end to the day. Friday the 23rd November dawned just as bright as the previous day and Sue drove us south into the McLaren Vale to the airfield at Aldinga. Flying skills were put to the test with a spot landing competition - very well organised and with marks for just about every aspect of the circuit not just getting down in the right place. Later, I was also lucky enough to get airborne (more aerobatics) with Guild member Steve Nelson in his very smart RV, and also in a Nanchang which tested not only flying skill but an ability to taxi! A spot of wine tasting later for us with Sue and Rob in this outstanding wine region was a fitting end to a rather special day. The following day Sue managed the impossible by cramming us both, plus luggage, into her Mini and getting us to the airport for our flight to Hong Kong - our Captain was Steve Nelson, who I had flown with the previous day, and of course his landing in HK was a ‘greaser’!

Unfortunately the good weather did not follow us to Hong Kong but this did not in any way diminish the warmth of our welcome. We were met by the Regional Chairman Tony Fung and his wife Carmen together with the Administrator Ian Fogarty and quickly transported to our hotel in the centre of Hong Kong. I would not wish to abbreviate my report on this part of my tour but I am conscious that Geoff Barber has written a piece for Guild News separately and therefore I will restrict myself to the major events. I was delighted to attend a General Meeting of the Council and it was clear from this that the Hong Kong Region is in very good health. The professional programme that followed over the next few days encompassed Cathay City, Civil Aviation Department, Government Flying Service and the Meteorological Service/Hong Kong Observatory; I am most grateful respectively to Captain John O’Halloran of Cathay Pacific, Norman Lo Director General of Civil Aviation, Captain Michael Chan Controller Government Flying Service and Shun Chi-ming Director Hong Kong Observatory for their time and excellent briefings. Needless to say, as reported by Geoff the social programme was quite excellent and particular thanks to SFO Gary Lui, Lily Fenn and Captain John Li for organising parts of the social programme which were so entertaining. Tony and Ian organised an excellent visit which was a fitting finale to my 2012 Tour, and when we stepped onto the aircraft at Hong Kong Airport heading home it was quite stunning to think of the amount we had covered in the previous month.
Gazette
APPROVED BY THE COURT ON 17 JANUARY 2013

ADMISSIONS
As Upper Freeman
Peter John COX
Captain Michael Sydney DAVIS
Richard Alexander DRISCOLL
Michael Edward HALL (AUS)
Captain Richard Myrddin Gregory JONES
Captain Anthony James Michael KELLEHER
Captain Gregory Victor LOUGHLIN-SIMS
Anthony Mayhew MOLLISON
Colonel Brian Charles PIERSON (NA)

As Freeman
Kreisha BALLANTYNE (AUS)
Dr Wai Man CHANG (HK)
Lieutenant Colonel Antony Francis CRILLY
Mark Peter GILBERT (NA)
Chris JAMES (OS)

As Associate
Hugh John BISSETT (GYM)
Peter Leonard DARUVALA (GYM)
Annelise LA ROCHE (NZ)
Paul Magnus Laurence THOMASON (GYM)

DECEASED
Eric BOWKETT
Robert BOYCE
Bernard HOLLAND
Derek MASON (NA)
Linley MIDDLETON
Douglas SYMINGTON

RESIGNATIONS
Peter ARMSTRONG
Roger DIMMOCK
Douglas GAGE
Emma JOHNS
Mark JOHNS
Graham PETER (OS)

GUILD participation in the Lord Mayor's Show 2012
WARDEN CHRIS FORD

On the day after he is sworn into Office and for the past 477 years, despite plague, great fires, countless wars and insurrections, come sun, rain or gales and since 1852 never moved from the scheduled date, the Lord Mayor has processed from Mansion House to the Royal Courts of Justice to swear allegiance to the Monarch. Traditionally a procession of barges traversing the Thames, carriages were first used some 156 years ago and since 1959 the Show is held on the second Saturday in November. Nowadays the event is a street parade, which is a fairly light-hearted combination of traditional British pageantry and elements of carnival. The Great Twelve Livery Companies, namely the Mercers, Grocers, Drapers, Fishmongers, Goldsmiths, Merchant Taylors, Skinners, Haberdashers, Salters, Ironmongers, Vintners, and Cloth Workers participate as of right. All other Livery Companies participate by invitation, though the Lord Mayor’s own Company is always among these. When invited and within the body of the Parade, the Modern Livery Companies are represented by at least three representatives from each Company supported by a red London Bus proudly displaying a banner of those taking part. Annually the Clerk seeks volunteers to take part in this most fascinating experience.

This year the weather was kind to IPM Epton, Warden Pooley and Warden Ford as they represented the Guild of Air Pilots and Air Navigators in the parade. The biggest joy of participating is seeing the mass of Londoners who stay happy and joyful despite the cold and the seemingly long wait for the parade to pass through the streets. Invariably starting at the North Walls the parade passes Guildhall, Mansion House and Fleet Street prior to stopping at the Royal Courts of Justice for the Lord Mayor to swear his allegiance to the Monarch (whilst the rest of the parade stop for lunch) and then returning to the Mansion House via Embankment and Queen Victoria Street. The parade lasts for about 1½ hours either side of lunch, which the modern Livery Companies enjoy whilst being entertained on HQS Wellington to Champagne and sandwiches.

Stout, comfortable shoes, an umbrella and warm clothing are the order of the day as well as a very keen sense of fun as one waves and greets all those who have made an effort to cheer the parade through the streets of London. Despite the number of people lining the route there is often delight at seeing old friends or acquaintances amongst the throng. Traditionally, though not this year, the parade ends at 5.00 pm with a fireworks show on the Tham es, which can be seen to the best advantage from the Eye. If you would like to take part in the parade or just watch please feel free to contact the Clerk for more information.
From the DAA Desk
LIVERYMAN JOHN TURNER

Traditionally, New Year is a time for making resolutions. Last year we resolved to review the ever-lengthening distribution lists for our technical committees and did some trimming by reference to the attendance lists on meeting minutes. There is a practical reason for doing this, not least that the email systems of many organisations reject any email with a large distribution list. Comments received as a result of that exercise revealed that not everyone was aware that all members can see the summary reports each committee chair provides to the Court, whether or not you are a member of or consultant to the committees; their reports are at Members Pages > Committees > Professional Committees on our website.

During my time in aviation, progressive technical development matched by exponential increases in computing power has produced tremendous advances in the safety of flight as aircraft have become ever easier to fly and to operate. Having spent much of my working life striving to improve aircraft handling qualities and cockpit/flight deck ergonomics, I was suddenly made aware of the unintended consequences such advances can have during my first flight in a de Havilland Cirrus Moth (DH60). For a number of reasons, this took place on a day when the wind proved particularly gusty the moment I left the shelter of trees shielding the take off point. On entering the turbulence, I found myself not only being thrown repeatedly off the seat and against a single chest strap (as originally fitted) but also working much harder than I could ever recall just to keep the aircraft flying level. I also began to wonder whether I would be able to make a safe landing and became increasingly conscious that I was in the oldest airworthy Moth in the world! Fortunately, I choose a lull in the wind to attempt an approach, which led to an adequate landing that kept both the aircraft and my pride undamaged. On reflection, my previous experiences of a number of aircraft with ‘interesting’ handling qualities (and a thorough grounding on tail wheel aircraft on the Chipmunk at a University Air Squadron in the 20th Century), gave me the benefit of a flying background where good handling skills had to be invented because they were a necessity for continued survival. I was also fortunate (?) to learn my trade at a time when aircraft system and engine failures were a normal part of flying, rather than something very rarely encountered outside a simulator. In contrast, today’s pilots train in aircraft that are increasingly easy to fly and then progress to airliners (or business jets) that have increasingly reliable and accurate autopilots and auto flight systems that together have allowed us to enjoy an exceptionally low accident rate in commercial aviation. However, over recent years some accidents involving loss of control in-flight (LOC-I) suggest that easy to fly training aircraft coupled with the increasing availability of and crew reliance on flight deck automation might be posing new challenges for our profession in the fields of pilots developing and sustaining situational awareness and pure handling skills. In response, a number of airlines have introduced upset training for their flight crews and both our Technical & Air Safety Committee and Education & Training Committee have been examining options to address these challenges as well as monitoring the likely effectiveness (or otherwise) of action plans being proposed by the regulators.

On the subject of regulators, the increasing span of responsibility that EASA is taking from National Authorities like CAA continues to raise issues and the occasional unanticipated anomaly. It is still early days in this transformation and I am certain that in 25 years time, when EASA regulations have been honed and are well established, this period will be seen in a different context. Nonetheless, when examples of ‘unintended impact’ include CAA examiners becoming unqualified to examine on the day that EASA documents replace CAA documents then we are clearly living in ‘interesting times’.

The transition to EASA also poses new and particular challenges for our own organisation. At the practical level, what used to involve popping into CAA House or Aviation House will in the future require a trip to EASA in Cologne. Even more importantly, we are faced with a change from seeking to influence and liaising with a national organisation with national agendas to a pan-European agency that performs has much broader horizons and political agendas to satisfy. So far, National Authorities in a number of the other member-states have been less proactive than our CAA in working with EASA and with this in mind, our strategy has been to engage with CAA as fully as possible and seek to influence EASA through them. However, in the longer term we must find ways to engage directly with EASA. This will require more than just a shift of focus, as there are already signs that EASA is instinctively more receptive to approaches from organisations that it perceives as pan-European, rather than representing a single-nation view.

Recently, EASA has started expanding its rule-making activities into the realms of aerodromes and air traffic management but the main area of media interest remains on their production of new rules concerning the control of pilot fatigue. I have heard from some quarters that the new EASA rules are a step backwards and that they will increase levels of pilot fatigue with the inevitable threats to safety. From other quarters I have heard that the new rules represent a great step forward from CAP 371, as the new rules are based on the most extensive and up to date research data available, and they will further enhance commercial air transport safety. What is not in doubt is that regardless which of these views is correct, the mere fact of a change in rules will disrupt many people’s established plans and expectations, including their anticipated work schedules, which in itself is not conducive to flight safety. For those who feel that formulative rules can never be the complete answer to controlling workforce fatigue (as I do), I would urge you to review our Discussion Paper, “Fatigue Risk Management System - Introduction into a Long-haul Airline” on our website.

On a slightly different tack, our PR group has established a number of targets for 2013 with the aim of increasing awareness of our activities throughout the aviation and wider world. These should comprise particular ‘story’ launches throughout the year as well as some background activities to try to bring those involved in the aviation media up to speed with what it is that we stand for and what we actually do. More on this as the year progresses. Finally, in my last article I mentioned plans for an email survey and I should assure you that you have not been missed out. Unfortunately the survey was delayed by events in December and the holiday period. However, I hope to indulge on your time in answering a few questions for me very shortly.
2012 marked 60 years of continuous, unbroken service by 750 Naval Air Squadron (NAS), a unique accolade within the Fleet Air Arm (FAA), with the closest FAA Squadron to this record celebrating only its 50th unbroken year. Why then, should a relatively unknown training squadron producing Royal Navy (RN) Observers have achieved such a record against far more illustrious and famous Naval Air Squadrons? One could argue that it is because the role of 750 NAS has changed little over time with its Observers key to the FAA’s past and future operational success.

For those unaware of what an RN Observer does, or why their skills are still required in an age of ever-increasing technology, the answer is that he or she is simply the tactical brains of a maritime helicopter. Although specialists in air navigation, it is their expertise and knowledge in tactics and weapon systems that are critical in managing the complex surveillance, anti-surface and anti-submarine warfare systems that are employed in RN helicopters. They are ‘bred’ to be aircraft commanders, responsible for co-ordinating ships, aircraft and weapon systems in the dynamic and demanding maritime environment to maximise operational effect; a capability that is unlikely to be replaced by a ‘black box’ any time soon.

This then is the weighty responsibility of 750 NAS, based at Royal Naval Air Station Culdrose in Cornwall; to produce Observers with the right foundation of skills, experience and quality that will be required of them at their Operational Conversion Units on their way to a front line squadron fitted with Maritime Lynx / Wildcat, Maritime Merlin or Airborne Surveillance and Control Sea King helicopters.

Operating aircraft from sea presents a unique set of challenges and difficulties that ‘land orientated’ aircrew rarely (if ever) have to consider. Departing from maximum range certainly concentrates the radio and radar silence to operate at mind. But to do that and have to return to a small, pitching deck in a sea state six without any diversion in quickly deteriorating meteorological conditions (aren’t ‘Met men’ great!) requires a level of confidence and ability in both you and your pilot that are rare to find. Some things never change, and over the last one hundred years of naval aviation history lessons have had to be learned by the FAA, lessons that 750 NAS try hard to imbue into their students from the very outset.

Whilst the role of and requirement for Observers remains unchanged, the way 750 NAS does its business has seen considerable development over the last eighteen months. The venerable Handley Page Jetstream T2 aircraft used by 750 NAS since 1978 as a flying classroom has now been replaced by an internally modified and radar equipped Hawker Beechcraft King Air 350, named ‘Avenger’ in RN service. The Avenger is fitted with twin student training consoles and twin instructor consoles and has an underbelly mounted 360 degree Telephonics RDR1700 radar with full navigation and communication suites. Allied to this is a Tactical Mission Trainer (TMT) which provides a tactical navigation overlay to the radar display which allows a range of instruction from navigation to maritime surface search, from captaincy and decision-making development to search and rescue planning. This ‘state of the art’ aircraft training system is backed up by a fully representative ground-based TMT trainer and modern classroom teaching aids which students are fully prepared and practiced for each training event before they get airborne.

The aircraft and mission system is not the only change that 750 NAS has seen during this time. The way military flying training is delivered to all three services is also in a process of considerable change. In order to improve efficiency and coherency of military flying training, the new ‘UK Military Flying Training System’ (UKMFTS) has been set up that will see a gradual change to a tri-Service based training system with a commercial Training System Partner (TSP), responsible for taking all military aircrew after their initial military training to the point of entering an OCU. 750 NAS is already a part of that with a 5 year RN contract with Ascent Flight Training, our UKMFTS TSP and is expected to continue after 2016 with a new contract that will hopefully see the integration of RAF Rear Crew training for their WSOp branch.

The new UKMFTS Rear Crew Training course is markedly different from the previous course delivered on the Jetstream. Previously, the Basic Observer Course was solely conducted at 750 NAS on the Jetstream T2 over a 32 week period after completion of Initial Officer Training (IOT). Today, RN Observer students complete IOT and then undergo 13 weeks of training at 703 Naval Air Squadron at RAF Barkston Heath covering a Common Core Ground School package, Introductory Flying Training and Elementary Navigation Training on the Grob Tutor aircraft before arriving at RNAS Culdrose for their 16 week Basic Flying Training (BFT) package at 750 NAS. BFT consists of several phases of training; Reversionary Navigation to give them the basics of Dalton computer-based dead-reckoning navigation, System Navigation to give them the required skills to navigate in IFR conditions, Low Level visual navigation, maritime surface search and sensor application, search and probe to apply the basics of controlling other aircraft and finally a Multi-task phase which tries to put all of the above into one sortie to develop captaincy and decision making. As you can imagine, quite a challenge for the students in just 16 weeks, especially when there isn’t an ‘app’ for it when you get airborne!

As I hope you will agree, this has been an incredibly busy and successful 60 years for 750 NAS. Whilst the number of students has dwindled over time following reductions in the FAA and wider Fleet, the role and requirement for Observers is as relevant as ever. Indeed, it’s not unreasonable to assume that in a further 60 years time, 750 NAS will still be in the business of generating RN Observers who will go on to make key contributions to the defence of the UK’s interests wherever they may be.

The Interior of the Avenger T1

The Avenger T1 in Cornish skies

The new Wildcat - the Lynx replacement

The student’s Tactical Mission Trainer
We welcomed the Master, Air Marshal Clifford Spink and his wife Caroline, for a busy week of events on 25 November, 2012. On Monday, 26 Nov, we met at the Hong Kong Football Club where we held an abbreviated General Council meeting which served primarily as an occasion to be briefed by the Master on current Guild business in London and the other regions. This was followed by a discussion of airport operations at Chek Lap Kok airport in Hong Kong.

After completing the business for the night, we held the meet and greet for several hours that was highlighted by the Master presenting Youth Flying Scholarship awards to two deserving young Hong Kong aspirants to the piloting profession. The YFS program, ably run by Captain Tin Yun Lam, plays an important role in Hong Kong. As elaborated by both Hong Kong Chairman Tony Fung and the Master himself, Hong Kong lacks significant opportunity for flight training. Not only are there airspace limitations and a dearth of schools for civilian training, there is no military route to flight training in Hong Kong. Congratulations to both winners! Our hope is to expand this valuable programme.

Tuesday had the Master, HKG Chairman Tony Fung, Past Chairman Ian Fogarty, and Captain Tin Yun Lam attend a briefing with the Hong Kong Civil Aviation Department. Following these discussions of HKG issues, the CAD director, Norman Lo, arranged a private harbour cruise followed by a dinner of Cantonese delicacies at the Craigengower Cricket Club.

Wednesday night is race night at Happy Valley Race Course! And no matter the outcomes on our bets, it was the winning place to be for our Guild group. This has become one of the most popular events of the last several Master’s visits. We were able to obtain access to a private Member’s Box for the evening. Although the track was a little damp, the horses ran well and I heard some cheering from our group - so somebody must have won something. I think next time I’ll circle my picks with my eyes closed....

Thursday saw the return of the Vintage Red Tram Tour of Sheung Wan to Causeway Bay and back again via Happy Valley. We have now made this a regular feature for Masters’ visits as it is unique and has a feel of Old Hong Kong. While the weather didn’t cooperate fully, the night was still a success for the 25 guests as we traded stories of flying and daring-do over beverages and snacks on our private tram! Capping the week off, the Master’s Formal Dinner was held again at the Park Lane Hotel in Causeway Bay on Friday. As usual, the food and drink were great and only surpassed by the company. Following the passing of the Loving Cup, we heard remarks from the Head Table. Chairman Tony Fung spoke to the larger audience on the importance of the YFS programme and the reasons for this - with hopes to expand this programme. Hong Kong Observatory (HKO) Director, C.M. Shun, remarked on the great cooperation among professionals in the aviation community here in Hong Kong. Government Flying Service (GFS) Controller, Captain Mike Chan, also noted the great cooperation that exists among the various components of aviation professionals. “Master Spink is the first Master of the Guild who wasn’t able to tour Hong Kong by air because of weather - we will have to blame the HKO for this!!”, he joked. As all laughed, he then had praise for Air Marshal Clifford Spink, and his career from gliders to fighters. Master Spink finished the formal part of the dinner by recognising and appreciating the roles, commitments, and relationship of the HKO and the GFS to the safety of aviation in Hong Kong. And after relating a personal story, to great laughter, regarding a ME109, a Spitfire, and Czech airspace, he reminded us that if we had all bet at Happy Valley as the Lady in Red did - we’d all be ahead!
Finding myself with a few blank days in the Filofax spreadsheet year planner and having flown seldom during the earlier part of the year, I decided that the only way to get some quality flying for a few hours was to go to Mondovi in Piedmont, Northern Italy. I persuaded Gareth Button, a chum from the RAF Halton Balloon Club, to accompany me and to help share the car hire and accommodation costs. I must say that there was an ulterior motive; I was aware he needed some hours under instruction to get his Balloon PPL so this seemed an ideal opportunity for two of us to achieve our ambitions. After arriving at Turin under different travel arrangements, on a mid November Sunday evening, we met up and proceeded south to the historic and pretty town of Mondovi. Nestling a few miles from the foothills of the Alps, Mondovi boasts a very good weather factor for ballooning. There are reputed to be 300 days flyable each year. It was in Mondovi, 8 years ago, that I first started my balloon flying and though I have been back on a few occasions to continue my flying it was good to ‘come home’ and meet John (Giovanni) Aimo again and be taken under his wing. John is a Balloon and Air Ship instructor of long standing with a fine reputation, who manages a school for Cameron Balloons of Bristol.

Our plan, entirely dependent upon the weather, was to fly on the Monday till Friday and take an R&R day on the Saturday before returning home via Turin on the following Sunday. With some trepidation, we checked the forecast weather on the Saturday before departure and luckily it looked as if it would be good for the first three days. Would this be long enough for Gareth to get his PPL(B)? We could only keep our fingers crossed.

0730 Monday morning gosh, it was chilly, still dark but not too much wind! After a thorough Met, Notam and ATC brief we decided that Gareth should fly the first wave and then we would alternate trips. The forecast we had seen was a notoriously pessimistic one, provided to cover all eventualities but John assured us that the weather would be suitable all week. One of the joys of flying in the benign weather of the Po Valley and over hospitable terrain is that one can carry out numerous landings and even stop to change crew and replenish the gas cylinders. We would be using John’s O-75 size balloon and he would be the only other one in the basket as we flew. Normally flying with four containers, the inflation and first 3/4 hour uses one and then it is a case of how much burning is required for the flight. Invariably the remaining containers would last for 1 1/4 hours or so each, giving plenty of endurance. Whilst the balloon is being flown the retrieve crew will try to establish the best place to wait for the crew change and refuel. This often means stopping at regular intervals for a coffee or just sitting at a cross roads hedging the bets as to where to go next! Throughout the week of flying we were blessed with suitably light winds; sometimes frustrating, as we could not go exactly where we wished to but at other times a blessing, as it ensured a very gentle landing often in the very narrowest of locations. (see picture overleaf)

Listening to Gareth give his briefings and watch him inflate the envelope helped me get back in the swing of things and I was eagerly awaiting the end of his first two hours with John. Crew and fuel change over complete it was my turn and we rose gently out of a smallholding north east of the picturesque town of Carru to drift gently north up a river valley. As ever there are problems and ours was the existence of a major motorway, which attracted us like a magnet. Only a climb to 2000ft and a change of wind direction enabled us to escape the pull and we then settled back into the northerly valley. Aiming to land in a sports field for ease of access, the lower winds were not kind to us so a suitable field with no vines, crops, animals or wires was selected and we landed as close to the access track as my lack of currency could achieve! It had been marvelous to be airborne again and drifting over pleasant, obstacle-free countryside with very few restrictions on landing sites. After a good Italian snack lunch Gareth and John flew another sortie into the late afternoon.

The next two days followed a similar pattern and Gareth was progressing well, to the point where he was declared ready for his check ride. Part of our pre-departure planning had involved discussion with Kevin Meehan, a CAA Balloon Examiner and old friend of both The Editor and the Learned Clerk, who did agree to come out to Mondovi to examine Gareth if and when he was ready. Thursday dawnd, Examiner in place and ready for the check ride, weather suitable in all respects bar one! NO wind. Well, what to do but as ever sit and wait. We were well aware that there was a different situation back home where gales and rain were prevalent yet here we were becalmed. Late morning and the situation altered enough for the check ride to happen and after lunch Gareth was allowed to go solo whilst being observed by Kevin from a distance. Great news, one of the objects achieved, so all had not been wasted. I had spent the day as retrieve crew enjoying the challenge of guessing where to go next and trying to be at the point of landing. Not the case for Gareth’s solo so he had to keep the balloon inflated.

Ballooning in the Italian Alps
WARDEN CHRIS FORD
for some time whilst we found a way across yet another motorway!

On the Friday morning, our last planned day of flying, I took over from John and another UK based pilot out for some refresher flying and set off into the unknown. I had a plan to attempt to get to the point I had taken off from on the Monday and was doing pretty well until the sun broke through, the slight cloud layer which had dispersed, and heated up the ground just a wee bit too much. Enough indeed to alter the wind direction by 15 degrees taking me directly to the center of Carru! Not where I wished to be and certainly not in my skill set to land in a market place or piazza. After a rethink I made a safe and upright landing close to an old monastery just to the north west of Carru and there, as ever, were the retrieve crew waiting! It had been the most enjoyable and invigorating 2hr 10min flight for some time. I had put into practice as much as possible with many intermediate landings, climbs and descents to get the wind to take me where I wished to go and even with time to take the occasional photograph of churches, villages and vineyards in passing.

As promised we then had a day of R&R on the Saturday, visiting Cuneo and its impressive covered arcades of ancient shops, Santorio Vicoforte, (which boasts an impressively large, unsupported roof to its Basilica) and later in the evening taking the funicular railway up to the upper part of Mondovi to look out over the Alps and extensive Po Valley. All too soon our visit to Piedmont was over, we had achieved the objects. Gareth was now a PPL(B) and I had renewed my skills and even had the joy of a day out on my own, the first time for some while. Ballooning is fun and whilst you cannot always land back at the take-off field or exactly where you are initially aiming, it is immensely rewarding to land upright and on the spot you eventually nominate!

Warden Ford drifts gently past Mondovi with the Italian Alps in the background
Many people fly across the Atlantic in relative comfort and ease on their way to Orlando, New York or many other North American destinations. Not many get the opportunity to fly a fighter across in relative discomfort, and, on my crossing, far from ease. I was coming to the end of my tour on 19F Squadron based at RAF Wildenrath in Germany, flying the McDonnell Phantom F4M, or FGR2 as it was known in the RAF. The squadron had been chosen to take part in the first ever RAF air defence detachment to Exercise Red Flag in the Nevada desert, in October and November of 1987. Red Flag is primarily a bomber aircraft exercise and the RAF had regularly sent its fighter-bomber squadrons to take part. A large area of desert to the north of Las Vegas was set aside for the exercise with instrumentation on ground stations and pods on the aircraft to enable the action to be reconstructed for a detailed debriefing. It was a huge exercise and we were thrilled to be tasked to provide some of the air defence forces to give realistic training for the bombers.

To get there we had to fly from Germany across the North Atlantic to Goose Bay in Canada, the Phantom squadrons would rendezvous with a Victor tanker over the North Sea to top them up before they joined the Tristars. (See below for my map of the route across the Atlantic.)

In normal operations our Phantoms carried two fuel tanks (known as Sergeant Fletchers, after their manufacturer) on the outboard pylons and either nothing or a Gatling gun pod on the centreline station. For a long transit such as the one planned, critical to the deployment, we fitted the centreline station, increasing the fuel carried by 4100lb (1860kg) to 21,300lb (9660kg) of useable fuel. As the tank is low a height as an airliner cabin, so you need to breathe an oxygen mix. Sitting on an ejection seat can give you peace of mind in case of an emergency, but there is not much use ejecting into the cold North Atlantic just to die of hypothermia. So an immersion suit is essential.

You can imagine that wearing an immersion suit and being strapped tight into an ejection seat for seven plus hours is no fun, especially if you want to go to the toilet. It is possible to make the seat safe, unstrap and pee through the zip hole in the immersion suit into a small bag containing a sponge, but it is best avoided if possible. The technique we used to avoid the situation was to reduce drinking for several hours before the flight to dehydrate. Then
drink a little during the flight to rehydrate. The food provided was a white box containing a few sandwiches with their crusts cut off, a piece of fruit, a chocolate bar and a small carton of drink. We were never sure if they cut off the crusts because they thought officers liked dainty sandwiches, or they thought we needed small bite sized food like astronauts. Needless to say it was not adequate food for a long flight. As for entertainment, all we had was watching the other pilots trying to hit the refuelling basket, and of course the lovely view of the sea and land below.

In the early hours of Tuesday 20 October 1987, the aircraft were readied and crews briefed. At dawn, the first formation started up with the second formation manning their aircraft as reserve in case one of the first formation had an unserviceability on start. All went well and we were able to relax for a few minutes until it was our time to start, with the third formation acting as reserve for us.

Our start went well and we lined up on the runway for take-off. The Station Commander rolled first, and after a pause on full cold power he selected after-burner on the engines. I watched as only one after-burner lit. This is a no-go item on take-off. Although the Phantom has enough thrust to take-off comfortably with only one after-burner lit, in the event of a failure of the good engine, there would not be sufficient thrust to climb after take-off and an accident would be inevitable. However, the Station Commander was not in a frame of mind to abort and miss his chance of being first into Nellis. So he continued. We rolled after him and the formation all joined up safely for transit to the tanker over the North Sea.

The normal fuel management in the Phantom requires that take-off is performed with ‘Stop Fuel Transfer’ selected. This means that the engine burns fuel from the fuselage spine tanks, which moves the centre of gravity forward. After take-off, the pilot selects the appropriate tank(s) for transfer to the fuselage tanks, usually in the order Centre, Outboard then Wing tanks. I selected the centre tank and
expected to see a flash of the ‘CTR EXT FUEL’ caption on the Telelight Panel, to indicate that there was some activity in the fuel flow from the tank. The light remained off and the fuel quantity gauge continued to show a drop in the fuselage fuel. This told me that the centre tank was no longer connected electrically to the aircraft and I would not be able to transfer its fuel.

The electrical connector from the centreline tank has a quick release mechanism to unplug the connector in event of tank jettisoning. These quick release mechanisms become worn and it was not uncommon for them to release inadvertently during the vibration of take-off. I now had the same dilemma as the Station Commander, although without the safety implications. Do I declare my problem and return to base to have it fixed, or do I press on hoping that the tanker crew will be able to manage my fuel and get me across the Atlantic. My navigator, Scott Notman, and I decided to press on.

Over the North Sea we commenced our intercept on the Victor tanker. There was cloud up to a high level and the Victor was climbing through it trying to get clear on top. We completed our intercept in cloud and eventually found the Victor in the cloud tops.

The technique is to formate behind the tanker with the aircraft refuelling probe just behind the basket that is on the end of the tanker’s refuelling hose. The tanker is painted underneath with orange lines to assist in holding position. With a slight increase in power you move forward to connect your probe into the basket. It is important not to keep looking at the basket because it moves around in the airflow around the nose. Once connected you push the hose into the hose drum unit until about a third of the hose is left and at this point fuel can flow. The operation is flown at a relatively slow speed and with the extra drag of pushing the hose forward there is little power left available in cold power. As fuel flows into the aircraft, it gets heavier and the drag increases. As we were flying higher than usual for refuelling operations, there was less power available and there came a point when even with full cold power selected I couldn’t stop the aircraft sliding backwards. To increase power, you can put one engine into afterburner. However, after it lights there is considerable extra thrust, so it must be countered by reducing the thrust on the other engine. This can be difficult to judge and over controlling can cause you to pull out of the basket, or worse, and reconnecting can be tricky with a now much heavier aircraft. We all completed the manoeuvre successfully and headed to the rendezvous with the Tristar over north west Scotland.

We joined with the Tristar and headed out over the North Atlantic. I now had to address our problem with the centreline tank. I explained our situation to the tanker pilot and asked if we could have an extra refuelling bracket in between the planned ones in order to keep my useable fuel level high in case of a diversion. Fortunately, Maurice Flemmings, a 19 Squadron flight commander was on board the aircraft and talking to the tanker crew. He was able to explain my situation in detail and reassure them that my request would not drain their fuel resources, so they agreed.

They commenced to trail one of the centre hoses so that they could top me up. The hose would normally trail fully and stay there with the drag of the hose and basket being balance by the motor in the hose unit. However, after being trailed, the hose went straight back in. They tried again and the same thing happened. Fortunately, they have two hose units fitted below the rear fuselage, so they tried the second one. The same thing happened! They reported that both hoses were unserviceable and that they would have to return to RAF Brize Norton. They instructed us to divert to RAF Kinloss in northern Scotland.

We landed safely and while the Station Commander was talking to Tanker Ops at Upavon on the phone I removed the access panel on my centreline tank and found the tank connector disconnected with lots of broken pieces of small copper wire around it. Our ground crew had obviously discovered a problem with the connector and had tried to secure it with copper tell-tale wire. I contacted the Squadron engineers at Wildenrath to ask for advice and they later advised that they had located a spare connecting cable at RAF Leuchars and it could be driven to Kinloss overnight with an engineer to fit it. However, as this might jeopardise my trip to Red Flag I asked a young airman to bring a length of locking wire and a pair of locking wire pliers out to my aircraft. There we reconnected the cable and secured it with the locking wire so that it could not come off again. This might cause a problem in the event of jettisoning the tank, but I felt that that would be the least of my problems if that happened.
The Station Commander discovered that the third tanker had gone unserviceable before take-off with an instrument problem and the last two Phantoms had diverted to RAF Leuchars in eastern Scotland. Tanker Ops were working on the situation and would get back to us with instructions.

At this stage, we had one tanker and three Phantoms well on their way to Goose Bay, two tankers at Brize Norton, three Phantoms in Kinloss and two in Leuchars.

Not a great start to the deployment. However, good news came from Tanker Op. They had discovered that the hose units on our tanker had not been set up after the aircraft had been to a civilian contractor for modification. Amazingly, no one on the Tristar squadron had thought to check the aircraft after its return. Especially amazing considering this was their first major deployment. However, they were able to fix the hose units quickly and would launch shortly to meet us again over northern Scotland. The aircraft had also been carrying the only spare instrument available that could fix the third tanker, so that was off-loaded and the third tanker was expected to be serviceable for a departure early the next morning.

The Station Commander led our formation off again. Again only one of his afterburners lit and again he continued. We joined the tanker and I was able to advise that I no longer had a centreline tank problem. After an uneventful first refuelling bracket we settled down to what we hoped was going to be an uneventful trip from now on. We had already had more drama than any deployment I had experienced before. However, it was not to be.

The number three Phantom reported that his ‘RADAR CNI COOLING’ caption had come on. This indicates that the cooling turbine for the equipment bay had failed. The drill was to turn off all radar, navigation and radio equipment located in the aircraft equipment bay in order to stop it from overheating. Turning off the equipment would not be a problem while he was with us in formation, but in my experience it had little effect, with overheating still occurring and smoke filling the cockpit. The drill then is to descend, depressurise and divert. Sure enough he soon reported smoke in the cockpit.

The brief had been to all divert as a formation in the case of an aircraft problem requiring a diversion. However, that did not take into account the Station Commander’s desire to get to Nellis, so he ordered me to escort the 92 Squadron aircraft to Keflavik in Iceland while he continued with the tanker to Goose Bay.

We both landed safely at the USAF base at Keflavik while our overnight bags continued across the North Atlantic in the Station Commander’s baggage pod. The aircraft were looked after by the F15 ground crew and I reported on the phone to Tanker Ops. The 92 Squadron aircraft would need parts and engineers to fix it, so he was going nowhere for the moment. I needed to be with the next tanker. Tanker Ops came back to me with instructions to meet the third tanker at a point in the middle of the air lane in the North Atlantic at a time early the next morning.

Now the Phantom had pretty sophisticated navigation systems for its time, but out of range of ground based aids its inertial navigation system was not reliable enough to guarantee finding a point in the middle of an ocean, so I phoned the USAF fighter control station on Iceland for help. They gave me a frequency to call and promised to assist in navigation and locating the tanker.

Four tired and disappointed aircrew then arranged a bed for the night, visited the BX to buy a toothbrush, toothpaste and razor, had a meal in the canteen, bought some beers from a dispenser and sat in the corridor to drown our sorrows before an early night for Scott and me.

We got up before dawn to a cold icy morning. At least we did not take long to pack. When we arrived at our aircraft we discovered that we could not raise the canopies. The canopy raising mechanism was operated by the pneumatic system and on cold nights the air can leak away. This is usually easily fixed by connecting an air hose to the aircraft and charging the system. However, the RAF had replaced the American charging fittings with RAF ones, so the USAF ground crew could not charge the system up. Ground crew are resourceful individuals and they quickly found an F15 fitting and swapped it for the RAF one. We were now able to get into the cockpit and although running a little late were able to get airborne on time. We contacted the radar controller and he steered us toward the rendezvous point.

When we reached the rendezvous there was no sign of a tanker and the controller said that he could not see one on radar, so we set up a holding pattern to wait and hope. After a while the controller reported that he had a likely contact well to the east. It transpired that we had been given the wrong coordinates by Tanker Ops. Fortunately, we were to the west of the tanker, not to the east. We made radio contact with the Tristar and set up an intercept, rolling in behind him. He had his hose trailed ready to top us up but I noticed that there was only one Phantom with the tanker. The other 92 Squadron aircraft had had a hydraulic failure and diverted to Keflavik.

Thankfully the rest of the flight to Goose Bay was uneventful and we were able to enjoy the view of Greenland in the distance to the north. Our overnight bags were waiting for us and we enjoyed a shower and change of clothes. After day two, we had two Tristars and four Phantoms in Nellis, a Tristar and two Phantoms in Goose Bay and the two 92 Squadron Phantoms both very unserviceable in Keflavik.

The next morning, a little worse for wear having having forgotten to minimise the liquid intake, we had breakfast in the transit food hall and collected our rations for the flight. We were surprised when we compared our small box of food for our six and a half hour flight with the tanker crew’s huge crate of food for their four hour flight. However, we were used to being second class citizens when it came to rations. Thankfully, the next leg of our journey was uneventful. We all took-off without incident, took on our fuel as planned and enjoyed watching the American scenery passing by on a lovely day. The tanker left us and landed in Lincoln, Nebraska, and we completed the rest of the flight on our own, arriving tired but excited at Nellis.

As we had a long weekend break ahead of us, Maurice met me with a car and a plan to drive across to California for the weekend. The two 92 Squadron crew did arrive in replacement aircraft eventually. Exercise Red Flag proved disappointing. The Americans restricted us to high level which was not our normal role. The weather was often forecast to be poor and the air defence forces were the first to be cancelled if there was any doubt. I only flew on four days of the nine days planned for the exercise and on the last day, my planned last flight on 19 Squadron, our flying was cancelled.

However, Las Vegas was an interesting place and touring California, Nevada and the Grand Canyon was the experience of a lifetime. Our luck continued at the Grand Canyon where we woke up in the morning to thick fog. Fortunately it cleared in time for us to see the spectacular sights.

So the next time you are relaxing with a cool drink on a flight across the North Atlantic, spare a thought for those who flew that way in a little more discomfort, but with a lot more adventure.
CONTRAST IN STYLES - A380 to MICROLIGHT

A REVIEW OF TWO RECENTLY PUBLISHED AVIATION BOOKS BY FREEMAN STEVE SLATER

There has been a lot of discussion in recent months about the need to maintain hands-on pilot skills, not least on the highly-automated flight decks of the latest generation of airliners. Two books, written by recent Guild Award winners from contrasting ends of the aviation spectrum, certainly demonstrate that the Guild’s commitment to the highest flying standards remains as appropriate as ever. They both offer cracking good reads too.

“Wheely” Dave Sykes this year received the Master’s Medal, awarded to a pilot under the age of 30 for outstanding achievement and endeavour in any field of flying activity. He received the award despite being paralysed from the waist down as a result of a motor cycle accident, he successfully completed a solo flexwing microlight flight from England to Australia.

His book “On A Wing and a Chair” chronicles the highs and the lows of his achievement and his dry sense of humour, as unsponsored and living “from hand-to-mouth”, he headed from his Yorkshire home to Australia in 124 days and 257 hours of flying time. Despite being wheelchair-bound, he carried out all his own maintenance and repairs, including accident repairs after gusting winds caused a heavy ’arrival’ in Indonesia.

As befits its blunt Yorkshireman author, “On A Wing and A Chair” is simply written and straightforward. Part-diary, part travelogue, you ride with Dave through the sandstorms and blistering heat of Arabia, monsoons and air turbulence of southern Asia. It is a compelling read, recording perhaps one of the last great flying adventures on earth.

There couldn’t be any greater contrast between a Pegasus Quik microlight and an Airbus A380, but Richard de Crespigny equally demonstrates the vital importance of top-level pilot skills in his book QF32. In 2011, Richard and his crew were presented with the Hugh Gordon-Burge Memorial Award, for “outstanding behaviour and action contributing to the saving of their aircraft and passengers”.

The book takes its title from the flight number “QF32”, allocated to the Qantas A380 which departed Singapore for Sydney on 4th November 2010. It was crewed by Captain de Crespigny, First Officer Matthew Hicks, Second Officer Mark Johnson, along with Training Captain David Evans and Captain Harry Wubben, who was undergoing training as a Training Captain. In total there were 469 souls on board.

The focus of the book is unsurprisingly, the team’s successful management of the consequences of an uncontained major failure of the No 2 engine which caused significant damage to the port wing and a great many of the aircraft’s systems. The emergency in the air lasted an unprecedented 94 minutes.

De Crepigny decided to land 50 tonnes overweight while the aircraft was still within the C/G limits. After computing several options, a configuration was found that permitted a landing to be safely made with just 150m of Singapore Changi airport’s runway remaining. To achieve it, Richard had to hand-fly the final approach to a tolerance of plus or minus one knot.

The book, though, is about much more than the successful outcome of the emergency. Richard’s life and flying career, including flying RAAF DHC-4 Caribou transports in Papua New Guinea and Bell Iroquois helicopters on UN peacekeeping duties in Sinai, prior to graduating to Qantas, makes equally interesting reading. However the undramatic, in-depth, blow-by-blow account of how Richard and his crew averted potential disaster sets it apart as one of the great books on flying.

“QF32” is published by the Australian division of Pan Macmillan, priced at A$34.99 For more information on availability check: www.QF32.aero
The Victor in print (or Blackman v Brookes)

Victor Boys: True Stories from Forty Memorable Years of the Last V Bomber

Tony Blackman with Gary O'Keefe

Grub Street, 2012  (ISBN 978 1 908117 458)

LIVERYMAN PAUL SMIDDY

My first encounter with the mighty Victor was not auspicious. As a sproglit pilot I happened to be flying a Chipmunk from Wyton in the summer of 1973. To the right of the main runway was a huge blackened gouge in the grass. It marked where, only six weeks earlier, the crew of a Victor SR2, XL230, had misjudged an asymmetric go-around, and rolled in. It was a potent reminder to a callow youth of the dangers of aviating.

A year later and the Victor entered my affections because it was the only V bomber I ever got to fly in. By now a sproglit Bulldog pilot, I was at Marham this time, and by some good fortune was invited to sit in the sixth seat of a 57 Sqn K1 tanker, XH616. To my eyes, the Victor looked like a slightly malevolent if cheeky, whale. If I had realised then how implausible were the escape arrangements for back seaters (albeit much better than those in a Vulcan), I would perhaps have been less keen. We set off on a typical tanking sortie doing tow lines over the North Sea, up as far as Wick, the fastest I had ever flown backwords. I was wide-eyed in bliss - until there was a cockpit depressurisation. To this day I do not know whether it was a real or simulated emergency; I do know that I had not been briefed for it. We did an emergency descent into Leeming, with a PAR recovery, and then a low level transit back to Marham - which would have been more interesting had one been able to see any scenery from the back. (The social life at Marham is succinctly reported in Blackman's book as like "El Adem with grass")!

So the Victor has a place in my logbook and my affections. Liveryman Tony Blackman’s book does a good job in bringing out the merits of this craft. Through its career its image w as overshadowed by that of the Tin Triangle; and the fact that there is no Victor still flying, whilst there is still a Vulcan in the sky (just), means that this remains so.

Many readers will be surprised to learn that Handley Page’s revolutionary design owed a lot to knowhow from German wartime aeronautical research establishments at Gottingen and Volkenrode. When it first flew on 24th December 1952, it was the largest supersonic aircraft in the world. The Victor was not intended to travel supersonic, but had sufficient power (in both marks) to do so. The sophisticated design of its crescent wing created an unusual landing characteristic in that no elevator inputs were needed for last 1500 feet of the approach.

The gestation period of the Victor coincided with the government’s desire to rationalise Britain’s fragmented aircraft manufacturing industry. Whilst it decided to order a V-bomber design from each of the three major firms (an incredible decision to 21st century eyes), it was then ruthless in forcing Sir Frederick Handley Page to merge with his rivals. Sadly the intransigent HP spurned the valuations offered, his company went into administration, and all its assets, including the Victor project, were given to his arch competitor, Avro.

Reading Victor Boys is like being in a bar whilst a succession of Victor aircrew sit down and relate their favourite stories over a pint. Ones that caught my attention? The time a Victor wiped out the reception of Coronation Street for half the reception of for half the day. If I had known then how back seaters (albeit much better than those in a Vulcan), I would perhaps have been less keen. We set off on a typical tanking sortie doing tow lines over the North Sea, up as far as Wick, the fastest I had ever flown backwards. I was wide-eyed in bliss - until there was a cockpit depressurisation. To this day I do not know whether it was a real or simulated emergency; I do know that I had not been briefed for it. We did an emergency descent into Leeming, with a PAR recovery, and then a low level transit back to Marham - which would have been more interesting had one been able to see any scenery from the back. (The social life at Marham is succinctly reported in Blackman’s book as like “El Adem with grass”)

The development and operation of the Victor seem like a bygone age when one considers the costs incurred - on the back of seemingly limitless MOD budgets. An OCU celebrated its imminent closure by organising a jolly to Australia. A flight up to 55,000 feet, more or less just for the hell of it. And then the amazing cost of the Blue Steel programme: 124 flights in which there was an intention to launch a missile, 74 pre-launch aborts, and 50 actual launches, with each missile costing £1m (at historic prices), of which only half reached their target.

When the Victor was switched from the bombing and strategic reconnaissance roles to tanking, it had two great virtues - it could climb and fly as fast as any of its fighter ‘customers’, and indeed could outperform some types. So there was no need - as there is with current, converted airliner types - for fighters to descend or slow down to take on fuel. The Victor was therefore supreme in its role.

Blackman notes that, as is the wont of RAF heavies, Victor crews had a good time down route. In 1968, some were royally entertained by the Argentinians. This makes it somewhat ironic that the Victor’s crowning glory was in helping to defeat the same nation fourteen years later. The cost of the air component of the Falklands campaign must have been mind-blowing. He describes how Ascension Island was turned into a very congested aircraft carrier. Perhaps the most fascinating part of Victor Boys is its exposition of Operation Black Buck - the mission to bomb Port Stanley airfield, which was the apotheosis, and nearly the swansong, of the Victor’s career. The refuelling logistics were immensely complicated, and readers will be left in no doubt how success was achieved by the narrowest of margins, and by Victor aircrew very much putting their lives on the line. It took more than 1.5m lbs of fuel to put a handful of bombs onto that runway (£671,000 at today’s prices).

Victor Boys ends somewhat abruptly. Its construction is infuriating: the first half devoted to the aircraft’s development hangs together reasonably well. But once the focus shifts to operations, it is just a collection of personal accounts. Whilst most of these are very interesting, there is considerable overlap, and the book loses any narrative thread. With less lazy editing it would have been a more accessible volume.

Liveryman Andrew Brooks has also written about the Victor (Handley Page Victor, Ian Allen, 1988, ISBN 07110 18030). Just as Blackman was an Avro test pilot, so was the major part of Andrew Brookes’ RAF career that of a Vulcan captain. So both of these prolific authors are benchmarking the Victor against the same aircraft. Both books are well illustrated (Brookes’ more copiously so), and no doubt both will find a place on the shelves of former Victor aircrew and groundcrew.

The earlier volume is written in Brookes’ typically authoritative style; because its structure is tighter, and the narrative clearer, it will appeal to a wider audience.

Reviews of other aviation volumes are available on www.paulsmiddy.co.uk
The Duke of Kent (1902-1942), father of the present Duke and youngest brother of King George VI, was killed when a Sunderland flying boat of 228 Squadron in which he was travelling crashed in the north of Scotland near Berriedale in August 1942. The aircraft was bound for Iceland when it hit a hillside, scattering wreckage over a wide area and caught fire. Of the fifteen on board only the rear gunner, Sgt Andrew Jack, survived. A memorial cross bearing the names of those killed stands on the site of the accident. The accident received little coverage in the newspapers at the time, presumably for reasons of security and national morale.

The Duke had been a keen flyer and was the first member of the Royal Family to cross the Atlantic by air. He was Grand Master of the Guild from 1938 until his death. In 1953 a memorial window to the Duke was installed in the Queen’s Chapel of the Savoy, replacing one of the several windows destroyed by a bomb blast in 1940. The panels of the window display armorial bearings, with a naval anchor, RAF banners and Masonic symbols, and a representation of the memorial on the Caithness Hills where the aircraft crashed.

The Queen’s Chapel of the Savoy at Savoy Hill, Strand, London WC2R 0DA was built as part of a charitable foundation under the terms of the will of King Henry VII in the early sixteenth century. The land on which it stands is a part of the central London estate of the Duchy of Lancaster, a private estate of the Sovereign. Members of the public may visit (Mondays to Thursdays 9am to 4pm) and attend Sunday services at 11am, even though the building is a private chapel of the Sovereign. It is not subject to Episcopal jurisdiction, but remains part of the Church of England. In 1937 King George VI commanded that the chapel should be the Chapel of the Royal Victorian Order, an honour in the personal gift of the Sovereign.

The Air Forces Memorial, Runnymede

Among the most impressive of the many memorials in the care of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (www.cwgc.org) is the Air Forces Memorial which stands on a wooded ridge overlooking the riverside meadow where Magna Carta, enshrining man’s basic freedoms under law, was sealed by King John in 1215. The memorial commemorates airmen who were lost without trace, often at sea, with no known grave, in operations from bases in the United Kingdom and North and Western Europe – more than 20,000.

The land upon which the memorial stands was donated by Sir Eugen and Lady Ellie Millington-Drake in 1949. The memorial was designed by Sir Edward Maufe, the Commission’s principal architect after the Second World War. It consists of a shrine embraced by a cloister in which the names of the dead are recorded, grouped by year of death. The coats of arms of the Commonwealth countries are represented on the cloister ceilings. The shrine is entered though an arch with three stone figures representing Justice, Victory and Courage. Engraved on the great north window of the shrine are words from the 139th Psalm, sometimes called the Airmen’s Psalm:

If I climb up into Heaven, Thou art there;  
If I go to hell, Thou art there also.  
If I take the wings of the morning  
And remain in the uttermost parts of the sea,  
Even there also shall Thy hand lead me;  
And Thy right hand shall hold me.

From the shrine two staircases lead to a gallery and from there a further staircase leads to the roof of the tower which is surmounted by an Astral Crown of blue and gold. From the roof there are fine views down to the River Thames and in the distance Heathrow Airport provides an aeronautical backdrop.

The Runnymede memorial was opened by Her Majesty the Queen on 17 October 1953. Her Majesty returned to celebrate the memorial’s fifty years as a place of commemoration and remembrance on 17 October 2003.

The Air Forces Memorial is open everyday except Christmas Day and New Years Day. It is situated between Egham and Englefield Green and is signposted from the A30 and A308 along the A328, turning onto Coopers Hill Lane, where there is a car park with toilets.
The first battle of the Cold War began on 24 June 1948. On this day, Soviet and East German forces blocked access by road, rail and canal, to the Allied sectors of Berlin. With their supply of food and fuel severed, they were forced to consider various options. After some hastily drawn up calculations, steps were taken to supply West Berlin by air - the so-called Berlin Airlift.

The first aircraft to undertake a mission into Berlin, thirty-two US C-47s, lifted off for Berlin on 26 June carrying a combined cargo of eighty tons, which included milk, flour and medicine. The first British aircraft flew two days later. At the time, the airlift was expected to last three weeks. Nearly a year later the USAF, the RAF and many civilian airlines had completed over 200,000 flights, providing the necessary 4700 tons of daily rations of fuel and food to keep the Berliners alive. Despite the significance of the airlift, it is still the largest humanitarian airlift in history and a less well-known and documented aspect of twentieth century military aviation history.

In an effort to capture the surviving first-hand accounts of those involved in the airlift, the charity Legasee Educational Trust has launched a project to record veterans’ stories. One of those recently interviewed was Wing Commander Tom Holland.

Now 86, Tom joined the RAF partly because he wanted to fly and partly for revenge over the damage he witnessed in the German bombing of Coventry.

Eventually he trained as a pilot and passed through Cranwell with a special recommendation for high altitude Spitfire reconnaissance. Some months later he found himself based at Calshot on Southampton Water on the particularly low altitude Sunderland flying boat. To this day he is convinced that someone in P staff wanted to stitch him up.

In July 1948, just weeks after his 22nd birthday, Tom flew to Finkenwerder on the River Elbe with 230 Squadron, a trip he stills recalls 65 years later. ‘It was the first time I had flown over the Continent and the cities in England had been knocked about a bit, but then as we got over the German border they were more knocked about and when we got to Hamburg it was very, very severely damaged and that was really striking’.

Flying as a crew of ten with two pilots, a navigator, two flight engineers and five signalers who doubled up as radar ops, the Short Sunderland Mark V was specially adapted to carry a four and half ton load onto the Havel See (Lake Havel) which adjoined Gatow airfield. ‘The ammunition tanks were obviously empty and every bit of weight that could be reduced was taken down to the bare minimum. So areas like the bomb room, the wardroom, the bow and all through the aircraft were empty. We were the only people flying aircraft that were proofed against salt corrosion so we generally carried sandbags of salt in’.

Although Tom only flew an accumulated seven hours in a day, in the early months Operation Plain Fare as it was officially known was poorly organised and long days were the norm. ‘Through the July and August period you were flying most days. There were three round trips each day and your day would start maybe at half past two in the morning or some ridiculous hour, you were briefed about half past three and take off at four. It was a very, very long day, by the time you got back you were absolutely shattered. Then in September the men in white coats came out and we did some tests at the beginning of the day and at the end of the day. The edict came down and within twenty four hours we were limited to two trips a day and no more’.

Fatigue wasn’t the only thing that Tom had to contend with and he recalls the Russians intercepting their flying boat on numerous occasions. ‘The Mig15 jets
weren’t such a problem because they’d fall about trying to maintain slow speeds but the Russian prop planes used to buzz in and formate under our wings. Usually we’d wave at them and offer them a fag or a mug but one got a bit over enthusiastic and he formated up under the wing, pulled out, rolled over and came up under the other wing... I’m not quite sure how he did this but I know it was terrifying’.

The Sunderlands were an iconic part of the Berlin Airlift. They flew over 1,000 sorties until the shortening days and then ice-floes on the Havel See brought their flying operations to a halt on 15th December.

On reflection Tom acknowledges himself as a ‘Cold War warrior’ who was in at the beginning. With the benefit of hindsight we are now able to view this period as a momentous chapter in European history. Had the Russians taken Berlin, and with strong Communist allies in France and Italy, what was there to stop them heading further West?

By recording such accounts as Tom Holland’s, Legasee aims to preserve valuable first hand memories about the Berlin Airlift - personal stories that would otherwise be lost forever. Did you fly during the Airlift? Legasee would love to speak with you and can be contacted at www.legasee.org.uk.

The mighty Sunderland, the RAF’s last Flying Boat