



AIR PILOT



INSIDE

ICONS OF THE CENTURY - HARRIER
THE ROLE OF AI IN AVIATION
TANKING WITH 101 SQN





THE HONOURABLE COMPANY OF AIR PILOTS incorporating Air Navigators

PATRON:

His Majesty The King

MASTER:

Elizabeth Walkinshaw

CLERK:

Paul J Tacon BA FCIS

Incorporated by Royal Charter.

A Livery Company of the City of London.

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DIARY



Applications for Visits and Events

Details and application forms for Company events
and visits are now available only online – either on
the website or via links in the electronic newsletter
and events bulletins.

AUGUST 2026

4 th	APFC Fly-In	Popham
5 th	APFC Fly-in (alternate)	Popham
10 th	APFC Fly-In	Barton Farm
11 th	APFC Fly-in (alternate)	Barton Farm
16 th	APFC Summer Barbecue	White Waltham

SEPTEMBER 2026

15 th	APFC Fly-In	Oaksey Park
16 th	APFC Fly-in (alternate)	Oaksey Park
16 th	APT/AST	APH
17 th	GP&F	APH
17 th	Court	Cutlers' Hall
23 rd	Luncheon Club	RAF Club
23 rd	Tymms Lecture	RAF Club

OCTOBER 2026

11 th	APFC Peter Davis Lunch	White Waltham
15 th	GP&F	APH
18 th	APFC End of Season Lunch	White Waltham
22 nd	T&A Banquet	Guildhall

Cover photos: BAe Harrier flown by Flt Lt Pat Voigt over
The Blue Hole offshore from Belize, September 1993
(Sqn Ldr Andy Suddards); Eurofighter Typhoon being
refuelled by 101 Sqn Voyager, May 2026 (A Winn)

Guidelines for submissions to Air Pilot

Please submit contributions as follows:

- Text in word document, including your name below the title of the piece;
- Photos as separate attachments, not embedded in emails;
- All images to be sent as jpeg files with a file size of at least 2MB;
- Attachments totalling more than 15MB to be sent via WeTransfer only.



A MESSAGE FROM YOUR EDITOR...



As this issue was in final production, the biennial Farnborough International Airshow was underway, with the 2026 edition claimed to be the largest-ever, with a sixth exhibition hall and over 1,400 exhibitors. This is the home show of the UK aerospace industry, claimed by its

trade body ADS to be the second-biggest in the world, with an annual turnover of £41.5 billion, export sales of £30.6 billion and a workforce of 113,000. Those figures don't include the contribution of the UK space sector, itself a major manufacturer, employer and exporter.

Away from the densely occupied exhibition halls, the international pavillions and numerous corporate hospitality chalets, however, the casual visitor might struggle to recognise in this business-oriented event much of the Farnborough Airshow as it was in the past.

At the first Farnborough show in 1948 there were 71 aircraft of 65 different types on show, of which 48 took part in the flying display – and all were British. Numerous types, including the Vickers Viscount, Airspeed Ambassador, Boulton Paul Balliol, Avro Athena, Fairey Gyrodyne, Supermarine Seagull, Blackburn B-48 and Armstrong-Whitworth A.W.52 were show debutants.

In 2026 there were again 71 types listed, fewer than 10 of which could be described as essentially British – and one of those was a World War Two Supermarine Spitfire. Only one of those types – a reworking of a 45-year-old Dornier design – was a 'new' airliner. The flying display featured just 13 types, two of which were parachute teams, two were aerobatic teams and two electric taxis. That's a huge change – but does it matter?

For one group it might. As in recent years, the last day of the show – the only public day – was "...dedicated to inspiring, engaging and recruiting the industry's future workforce", that is, students, apprentices and other youngsters. With the best will in the world, those youngsters will have engaged meaningfully with a small percentage of the exhibitors in those halls and pavillions, so what could have been potentially the most powerful inspiration for them would be a less-than-stellar flying display - no matter how superb those few acts were.

Of course, one biennial airshow is not the only opportunity to inspire youngsters to engage with aviation and the industry. There are other shows (though many fewer than there once were), and the Air Pilots alone will grant 12 PPL, two ATPL Ground and 48 gliding scholarships, and give 312 youngsters a gliding experience flight, but Farnborough does seem like an opportunity missed to do so much more for the next generation.

Allan Winn - Editor

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NEWS ROUNDUP



THE LIVERY DINNER 2026

The 2026 Livery Dinner was held at Drapers' Hall on 28th May, with Principal Guest Brig Chris Fogarty MBE, Deputy Commander, UK Space Command. Other guests included Richard Charlesworth MVO, Master Coachmaker; Nicole Brocklebank-Fowler, Master Gunmaker; Dr Robert Lamb, Master Clockmaker; Prof Andrew Rae, President-Elect of the Royal Aeronautical Society and Janine Hornsby, CEO of the Air League. The Master's personal guest was Damon Hill OBE. At a special Court meeting before the dinner, six new Liverymen were clothed, and two Master Air Pilot certificates presented.



The Master with her guest Damon Hill



The new Liverymen: Capt David Joslyn, AM Andrew Turner, Annalisa Russell-Smith, The Master, Paul Frampton, Dr Peter McCarthy, Capt Cary Crawley



The new Master Air Pilots, Flt Lt Chris Geeson and Gp Capt Peter Hackett with The Master



The Principal Guest, Brig Chris Fogarty



Honorary Chaplain The Ven Ray Pentland, Master Coachmaker Richard Charlesworth MVO and Warden Capt Steve Durrell



The new Liverymen are acclaimed by the assembled Company

COMPANY VISIT: 101 SQUADRON

By The Editor

Over two successive Wednesdays in May, a total of 96 Company members experienced aerial refuelling missions from RAF Brize Norton, aboard Airbus A330 MRTT (multi-role tanker transport) Voyager aircraft. The Editor was aboard the second of these flights, on 27th May, for a seven-hour sortie.

Having been collected by coach from a nearby car park, we were taken onto the base and delivered to the terminal building, where we were checked in and fed through security (carry your own tray!). We were then bussed to our aircraft, ZZ337, surrounded on the apron by a selection of other Voyagers (including the uniquely-liveried VIP example with Union Flag tail), Airbus A400M Atlas turboprops and Boeing C-17 Globemaster III heavy airlifters.



The two groups to visit 101Sqn at Brize Norton: (above) 20th May; (below) 27th May (Crown Copyright)



With maximum take-off weight of 233t, the Voyager can lift a total of 110t of fuel, almost all of which is available to refuel other aircraft – the absolute minimum beyond which fuel cannot be transferred to others is 8t. The Voyager is cleared to refuel the RAF's A400M Atlas, Eurofighter Typhoon and Lockheed Martin F-35 Lightning II, and can also service other aircraft such as the French Dassault Rafale. Unlike the Typhoon and Rafale, which can use both the wing and centreline refuelling hose units (albeit not all at once), the F-35 is cleared only for the wing stations. A Typhoon can accept fuel at a rate of 5-600kg/min, whereas the A400M can take a maximum flow rate of 1,800kg/min.

Unlike the typical RAF set-up, the Voyager force is a joint



A traffic jam of Typhoons awaiting fuel

operation between 10Sqn and 101Sqn, flying aircraft which belong to, and are maintained by, a commercial organisation, Air Tanker. As explained by Wg Cdr Neil Wheeler, Acting OC 101Sqn, in a comprehensive briefing after our flight, of the 14 Voyagers in the fleet, 10 are at any one time on the strength of the RAF force and four with Air Tanker. The aircraft with Air Tanker are operated by civilian or RAF reserve crews on civil charters.

Those flying with the RAF are crewed only by the 26 assigned RAF crews, drawn from a pool of 60 pilots and 24 Mission Systems Officers (MSOs) who operate the onboard refuelling systems. There is also a pool of 120 cabin crew shared across the fleet, with five of them looking after us (including serving a hot snack meal) on our flight. Within the overall Voyager Force, 101Sqn takes responsibility for training, planning and capability development, and 10Sqn handles initial training and air safety, with a limited operational capability, and provides the Chief of Staff for the Force.

Away from its refuelling role, the Voyager can accommodate up to 291 passengers or up to 40 stretchers or eight NATO or civilian pallets, and has enough range to reach the West Coast of the USA – able to go both further and faster than either the A400M or Globemaster.

A LONG SLOG

Our flight took us from Brize Norton up to the North Sea, off the coast from Aberdeen, where a series of Typhoons hooked up for a drink. Squadrons whose aircraft appeared alongside included 1(F), 11(AC), 6, XI(F) and 12: the hoped-for appearance of an *Armée de l'Air* Dassault Rafale did not materialise, but a lucky few on board caught a glimpse of a USAF Rockwell B-1B Lancer in the distance, being refuelled by its own service. A long slog down to Cornwall while lunch was served was rewarded by the appearance of just one Typhoon while we circled off the coast near Bodmin and then over the Isles of Scilly before the home run to Brize Norton.

Throughout the flight our crew of pilots Sqn Ldr Piers Hammond and Flt Lt Jason Alty, MSOs Flt Sgt Owen Hughes and Flt Sgt Benjamin Robinson, the cabin crew led by Flt Sgt Liz Craig and our escort Fg Off Jon Hardie showed us exceptional hospitality and generously accommodated us and our myriad questions during visits to the cockpit. At the briefing after the flight PM Peter Benn thanked the Voyager team and Wg Cdr Wheeler for hosting us so magnificently (though in light of the previous group's visit one week beforehand, spared them the receipt of another Company shield), and also thanked Liveryman David Curgenvin for his superb organisation of the visit. □



Close-up and personal (Vic Flintham)

THE MASTER'S GARDEN PARTY

By PM Chris Hodgkinson

The 2026 Master's Garden Party was held in one of the several hangars on the north side of Denham Airfield, at the home of HQ Aviation by kind permission of the owner, Upper Freeman Quentin Smith, known as 'Q'. HQ not only takes care of and sells private helicopters, mainly Robinson R22s, 44s and 66s, but is also a flying school. The Master had asked if someone would intercede with the weather organiser and, fortunately, the volunteer had been extremely successful, with it being not too hot or cold and a light breeze.



The expansive picnic space

The attendees, totalling very nearly 100, were met by tables and chairs for everyone, along with coffees and teas provided by two ladies all the way from Leicester to accompany members' own delicious-looking picnics. Additionally, there were representatives from the Master's two charities, Hearing Dogs for Deaf People and the HELP (Helicopter Emergency Landing Pads) appeal. The reason that this date had been chosen was because



*Alexander Pooley takes control of Q Smith's R22
(Chris Hodgkinson)*

it tied in with the annual fly-past over Buckingham Palace following the Trooping of the Colour. The Master had applied for a subsequent overhead pass at Denham. While The Red Arrows, one of our Affiliated Units, flew about three miles to the west fulfilling other commitments, we did have the Lockheed Martin F-35 Lightning IIs and Eurofighter Typhoons overhead.

The youngest person present, Alexander Pooley, was over the moon when Q let him fly the R22 to celebrate the week of his 12th birthday and then had a lovely time with one of the Hearing Dogs for the Deaf spaniels.

All in all, a most splendid Saturday enjoyed by everyone. □



A GUINNESS WORLD RECORD

By Upper Freeman Sam Rutherford

Having seen my family and others achieve flying world records and helped in that, it occurred to me that trying for a Guinness World Record sounded like a fun thing to do. I started researching what flying records were out there and eventually

found two that approximately fitted my usual ferry flying schedule: most US states visited in 12h, and 24h, solo.

I immediately discounted the 24h solo option, as it's simply not safe – but 'in 12h' warranted further analysis, and an exchange with Guinness. They confirmed that I needed a minimum of ten US states to claim the record, and sent through their 'Guidelines', the document that explains everything you need to do, and prove. It was, as you can imagine, relatively simple. One period of 12h, no clock pauses or extensions, and that every State claimed needed a full stop landing. The majority of the document listed the large amount of evidence required: written, video and electronic tracking.

I teamed up with one of my pilots, Julian Gaudry in Florida, who very kindly accepted to be my Ground Control and between us we put together a route from Florida to Maine - 17 US states. We realised that the best strategy was to fly high, before descending low to 'catch' two airports straddling a border before climbing again until the next pair. Airports identified, we contacted all of them and were amazed by the enthusiastic response. Date window chosen, we were ready for the attempt.

DAWN START

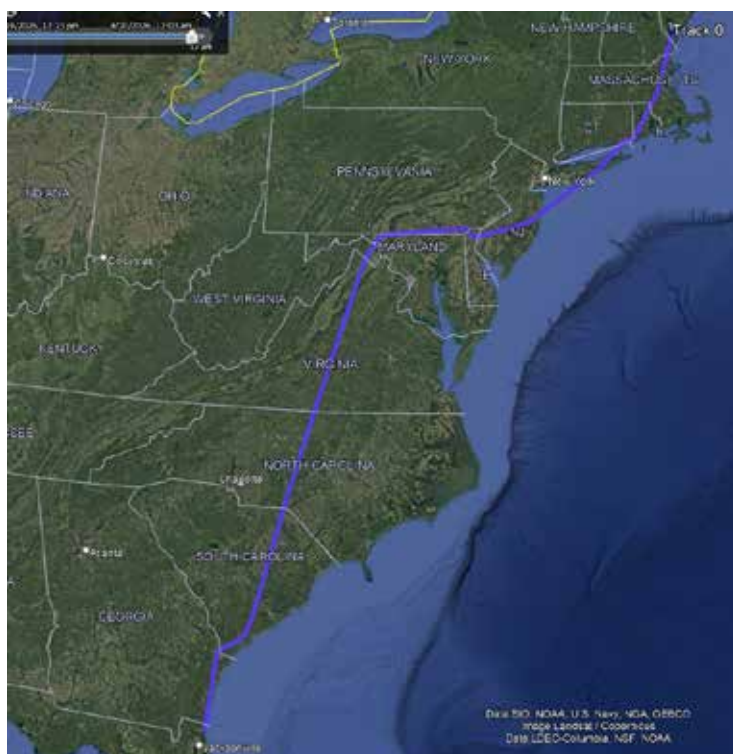
At dawn on 19th April 2026, I arrived at Fernandina Beach airport, Florida, and checked the Tecnam P2010 aircraft. Witness statements completed, on schedule at 07:30, I began my adventure. The first three hours included just three stops, starting with Georgia and South Carolina. With a 40kt tailwind I was ahead of schedule and feeling pretty relaxed - a mistake.

Landing in North Carolina, I had to complete five states in less than an hour; three of which are in the DC Special Rules Area where any mistake would result in an 'interview without coffee'. Julian, back in Florida, was as busy as I was. As well as opening and closing

flight plans, he was calling all the airports just before I landed to ensure they were ready, their own cameras and witness statements prepared, and then needed to let me know (via Starlink) where to go on landing. My beautiful Florida weather had now deteriorated to 'workable', but ahead of me there was a big band of winter thunderstorms – the outlook was poor.

I had a dilemma: the bad weather was moving east, out of my way, but more slowly than my own eastwards travel. I continued, hoping to squeak through the trailing edge of the weather and maintain my schedule. My ongoing 40kt tailwind was both helpful and unhelpful! Ocean County airport in New Jersey was my fuel stop and tenth (new World Record!) US state. After a short rest, I was back in the air towards New York, both the state and the city, passing almost overhead JFK. Unfortunately, there was nothing to see as by now I was in the thick of things, flying IMC, relying on Julian to pass me accurate weather and route advice. This included word that my airports as far as Rhode Island were still reporting MVFR, but further north was going to be difficult. Fingers crossed, I continued...

Approaching Massachusetts, we made the decision to drop Vermont: low cloud, poor visibility, freezing rain and snow – a hard pass. Julian quickly rejigged the plan and found Norwood airport near Boston that was just within limits. I managed to continue through New Hampshire until landing in Maine after 10h 31min. Sixteen US states. Whoopee!





Greeted by a giant squirrel at Winchester, Virginia

A few weeks later, after collating and submitting all the evidence, Guinness certified my attempt as successful. It had been a huge amount of fun, surprisingly difficult and, unexpectedly, I learned a huge amount from it – so it was also useful. Another huge positive was the reactions from all the people along the route. Everyone really bought into the idea, and it was clear they also enjoyed being part of it. I was also drowned in gifts along the way! Luckily, I had some stickers to offer in return. Another member of the Honourable Company, has since contacted me saying that he had followed my attempt, and wanted to do one of his own. Watch this space! □

THE CHIPMUNK 80

By PM Richie Piper

The De Havilland Chipmunk is celebrating its 80th anniversary this year and the type holds a special place in the hearts of many pilots from their initial training, especially in the RAF and University Air Squadrons. The fact it is still in service with a few air forces is testament to the highly successful design. For example, the Portuguese Air Force sent three of its Lycoming-engined variants to the recent Duxford air show and the RAF Battle of Britain Memorial Flight still uses two Chipmunks to convert modern pilots to the ways of “analogue” tailwheel flying.



A scurry of Chipmunks in this aerial view of Halfpenny Green (Stuart Scott)

There is also a very active civilian group of pilot owners who still enjoy the pleasures of the “poor man’s Spitfire”, who regularly get together to fly in formation. The most recent event was *Chipfest* and *Chipmunk 80* held at Halfpenny Green airfield near Wolverhampton. Despite the significant investment and resulting work in progress going on to improve the airfield, the Halfpenny Green team were excellent hosts, accommodating all the Chipmunk and BAe Bulldog activity...

The Friday was the *Chipmunk 80* and, with so many

Chipmunks flying in, the airfield was limited to arrivals only until 12:00 midday. Over 50 Chipmunks came to mark the type’s anniversary 80 years to the day since the first flight. This included aircraft coming from several European countries, especially France and Belgium, where



Some 60 of DHC’s finest turned out for the celebrations

there is a very active Chipmunk community. There were also a few pilots from the USA who flew loaned aircraft. Much credit for the pre-event organisation must go to Carol De Solla Atkin who tried to contact as many Chipmunk owners as possible to invite them to the event. She also liaised with the airfield in the event planning.

SECRET PLAN

There was also a secret plan masterminded by Upper Freeman Tony De Bruyn and Piet Luijken, along with Upper Freeman Robert Miller, to put up 20 Chipmunks to fly an ‘80’ formation over Hawarden, this being where most of the Chipmunks flying had been built. Under CAA regulations it was essential this did not become known by the public, otherwise Article 86 rules (those covering airshows) would have applied. This naturally involved a lot of planning by those three leading up to the final one-hour briefing, followed by the walkthrough on a very sunny day. To further enhance safety, each aircraft would carry a second pilot to act as an additional lookout. That, together with the camera ship and two flying ‘spare’ Chipmunks,



Formation flying was a feature of the gathering

'0' and '8' elements. With a long run-in into Hawarden, the transition began with the sections that formed the '8' moving up to line abreast with the '0'. Then four transitions moved the various sections from finger four into the positions to make the '80', which had to be

meant 46 pilots attended the briefing. The actual sortie would last over 1½h, and the sections would transit in finger fours before commencing the moves into the '80' formation. The choreography was carefully planned, especially on ensuring safe separation of the

in reverse so it looked correct from the ground. The formation then flew over Hawarden with the timing coordinated to avoid commercial operations. The formation was then gently turned to avoid Liverpool airspace and eased back into the transit elements. The recovery back to Halfpenny Green saw the '8' sections run in and break before the '0' sections did the same. On a hot day, and after a successful flight, the pilots enjoyed much deserved "refreshments" before heading off to a well-deserved dinner.

The weekend continued with the *Chipfest* carrying out formation training for various combinations ranging from four to nine aircraft. It was pleasing to see the response from the public, who completely filled all the car parks to come and see the gathering of Chipmunks. This included many family groups and hopefully inspired the young children's interest in aviation for the future. □

GAZETTE

APPROVED BY THE COURT 16 JULY 2026

ADMISSIONS

As Upper Freeman

David ALBASHA
Edith Mala DIOP (OS)
Etienne Charles FRITSCH (HK)
Stuart Laurence GIBSON
David Andrew HAYHOE (AUS)
Simon MICHAELSON
Paul Barclay Gabriel PIKE
Steven James RANDALL (NA)
Robert Ian SILVER (HK)
Mark Nathan TOMLINSON
Andrew Thomas VIDAMOUR
Dimitrios ZIAKKAS

As Freeman

Brian Michael BACINSCHI
Steven BAKER
Vanessa CHUA (AUS)
Mateusz Mark DZIUDA (NA)
John Bernard HALLORAN
Dr Yusuf JAFRY
Rohil Brendon KISHORE (AUS)
Jonathan Mark SACKIER
Bretton John WELLS (NA)

As Associate

Angelique AJALA

Merve AKINCI (AUS)
Summer ALAHMAD
Jasmine Maree ANTUNOVIC-FRY
Jacob Andrew Clark BAKER (AUS)
Oliver James FERGUSON
Victor JONES (AUS)
Adrian Donald LI (HK)
Emma LIVERSIDGE
Philippe Hari Robert Marie de MANNY (HK)
Alexander Ashley MASEFIELD
Dr Rowan TAYLOR
Joshua Harold TYLER-JONES
Oliver Emilius WEBSTER (HK)
Bradley Robert VARNEY (AUS)

ACKNOWLEDGED BY THE COURT 16

July 2026

REINSTATEMENT

As Upper Freeman

James Robert BROOKS
Adam Douglas GLENDINNING (HK)

REGRADE

As Liveryman

Amanda HARRISON
Peter HACKETT

Gavan SPRING (AUS)

RESIGNATIONS

Paul CARVOSSO
Chris JAMES
Gareth KING (HK)
Simon MORAN (HK)
Martin SMITH
Jonathan STONER (OS)

DECEASED

Bruce HUTTON
Barry MITCHELL (NZ)
Jack RANDELL
Peter THORNE
Sir Neville TROTTER
Past Master Malcolm WHITE



Applicants for Membership of the Company can now complete an Application Form online, using this QR code.



MASTER'S MESSAGE

By The Master, Elizabeth Walkinshaw

I left you all at the end of my last Master's message in the hope that many of you would have booked in for my Master's Garden Party. You didn't let me down. Thank you! Such a busy two months to tell you about.

My first meetings were for the GP&F and the Court. At the Court meeting, I said a few words to remind everyone the huge contribution the late PM Clive Elton had made to the Company, and we remembered him with a minute's silence.

My son, Fergus, joined us after the Court meeting and we had a lovely meal with a few of the Court in a restaurant nearby. Fergus was joining me, staying at the RAF Club (my second home this year!) that evening in preparation for our attendance at the Royal Garden Party, the following day. The next morning, we had a hearty breakfast at the Wolseley, Piccadilly, returning to change into our finery for the early afternoon at the King's Garden Party.



Enjoying the grand Royal Garden Party

It was a beautiful day, and we joined many others filing through the Palace gates. In attendance were the Prince and Princess of Wales, the Duke of Edinburgh and Zara Tindall. We didn't get a chance to speak to any of them, but they spent a huge amount of time speaking to the many who did. The crowds around them were about ten deep. Fergus and I had a lovely time walking around the beautiful gardens, speaking to other Livery Masters and enjoying a lovely afternoon tea. What an amazing day!

My next meeting was the ACEC meeting where it is always extremely interesting to hear about everything to do with scholarships, promotions, bursaries, gliding days, mentoring, apprenticeships, aptitude assessments and interview training.

CLERGY SUPPORT

That evening, I attended the Clergy Support Service at St Paul's, dressed in my Livery gown, and processed in with

the other Livery Masters. The Clergy Support Trust is the largest and oldest Charity supporting Anglican ministers and their families. Since 2020, the Trust has spent more than £30million on the wellbeing of clergy households. This service is known for its fine music, and it certainly showed us why that evening. The evening also included a sermon from Dame Sarah Mullaly, Archbishop of Canterbury, who is an Honorary President of the Trust.

Continuing with the music theme, next came the Mercers' Concert and Dinner held at Mercers' Hall. This was a lovely colourful evening with the dress code as smoking jackets for the men and cocktail dresses for the women. The hall is immense, even having its own Church and two court rooms in the building. The atmosphere was relaxed and we so enjoyed the amusing renditions from the vocal duo 'George and the Dragon'. They entertained us with songs such as *The Green-Eyed Dragon*, *The Spider in the Bath*, *The Hippopotamus*, *The Floral Dance* and finally a composition of their own, *The Liveries of London* listing all the Livery Companies in one song and going at quite a pace! (It can be found on YouTube) This was all followed by a lovely dinner.



The Master goes to Court! Lunch at the Old Bailey

My next port of call was the Old Bailey, by invitation of the Sheriff and Deputy, Keith Bottomley. There were six of us who attended, all from different backgrounds but also including one other Livery Master. Firstly, we were greeted by Sheriff Bottomley in his premises for a chat and a glass of Champagne and the chance to purchase items to help fund the Sheriffs' and Records Fund. We then proceeded to the dining room to have lunch with the Judges who were there on the day, a lovely lunch with non-alcoholic drinks. It was amazing that sitting between two judges, I had something in common with both. It is a

small world! A significant part of the role of the Sheriffs of the City of London is to promote the 'Primacy of the Rule of Law' and, as part of that theme, after lunch we had the extraordinary opportunity to watch part of a case that had reached an interesting stage 'from the inside'. It was daunting to enter the Courtroom and sit in the body, looking at the defendants behind a glass screen. It was a fascinating insight into how much goes into the detail of researching all the evidence, piecing it together, and producing it for the Judge and jury. What an amazing experience to be offered.

TANKING VISIT

It is always a great pleasure to attend one of our Company visits which David Curgenvin and all the members of the Visits team work so hard to make happen, this one to 101 Sqn RAF. Our Liaison Officer for the Squadron, PM Rick Peacock-Edwards is doing a fantastic job to enable this to happen, keeping in touch with the Squadron on a regular basis. My visit was with the other 49 members who had booked into the Tanker Trip, flying out of Brize Norton on the Airbus Voyager. We met up early in the morning to be escorted to check in for our flight. As always, both 101 and 10 Sqs looked after us so well. The Tanker refuelled Lockheed Martin F-35s just off the east coast of Scotland with the amazing opportunities to photograph and video this. (only for our personal use). We also had the chance to have a cup of tea in the 101 Sqn offices and hear a bit more about the Squadron. It was also lovely to have a quick chat to OC Wg Cdr Graham Prager who is a great supporter of our Squadron Affiliation.

The GASCo Board meeting next which was for the Report and Progress on the Winding-Up Plan. A happier event was the RAF Benson Annual Formal Reception hosted by Station Commander, Wg Cdr Alice Tierney. A lovely event held in the sunshine, with drinks and canapes in front of the Officers' Mess and a great chance to chat to many of the members of the base and visiting guests. It was interesting to hear how many of the personnel return to RAF Benson and it seems to be very dear to their hearts. I had the chance to chat to one of the young women trainees who commented how lovely the OC was and that she was always available to talk to if needed. We also chatted about the introduction of gear designed specifically for women to aid their comfort and safety in flight. She said it would be of huge benefit and make such a difference to the female pilots. The evening was completed with a talk from the OC and OC Air Wing, Wg Cdr Johnny Longland and we enjoyed the music played by the Band of the Royal Air Force Regiment with two Chinook aircraft performing a low-level flypast, I had a



Oiling the City gates

chance to chat to Wg Cdr Longland and we are hoping to re-establish and strengthen our Affiliation going forward.

My next event was the Annual Oiling of the Gates Ceremony at Temple Bar by kind invitation of the Master and Wardens of the Chartered Architects' Company. Like many traditions, this takes place at the request of the Corporation which required the Chartered Architects to carry out yearly maintenance of the hinges when they took on the duties of Opening of the Gates for ceremonial occasions. The Opening of the gates is listed as a part of the Intangible Heritage of the Square Mile. Temple Bar is the only surviving 'gate' into the City of London and the event involved an inspection of the closed gate by engineer Michael Coombes, the Master of the Gates, who lubricated the hinges.

PM Clive Elton's Funeral and Celebration of Life was held in St John's Stoke church at Guildford. I, and many PMs and members, attended the service, supporting his family and showing our respect. It was lovely to hear so much about him in the tributes. He was, indeed, a great man.

THE LIVERY DINNER

The evening of our Court meeting and Livery Dinner at the fabulous Drapers' Hall came around before I knew it! A fantastic Court meeting welcoming new Liverymen and awarding Master Air Pilots certificates. Then on to the Livery Dinner which was so well attended. My

personal guest was Formula One World Champion Damon Hill OBE who I have known for a long time and our guest speaker was Brig Chris Fogarty MBE. My speech encompassed how we gained the Livery as this year celebrates 70 years since 10th April 1956 when the Court of Mayors and Aldermen resolved that The Guild of Air Pilots and Navigators be a Company of the City of London and enjoy a Livery. Later that year on July 11th 1956, the Grand Master, The Duke of Edinburgh, received from the Lord Mayor, the Letters Patent confirming the grant of Livery.

Following this, our speaker - who joined the UK Space Command as Chief of Staff and is currently the Deputy Commander - gave us an extremely interesting talk. Superb food and great music from the Band of the Royal Marines and the evening was punctuated with bagpipe music from Pipe Maj Steven Duffy who played us in at the head of the procession. I also took a dram with him as a toast to the Piper which seemed to be well received by the audience! A good time was had by all, and it was so lovely to see so many members and guests there, Damon was certainly surrounded at the Stirrup Cup, and I think many selfies were taken and tales shared.

My next Dinner engagement was the Banquet at Goldsmiths' Hall by kind invitation of the Master and Wardens of the Worshipful Company of Chartered Secretaries and Administrators. A fabulous event which was thoroughly enjoyed by all. I had an interesting moment of slight panic, which I am sure the Master will not mind me sharing as we laughed about it afterwards. Late in the evening, the lectern and microphone were placed in front of me by mistake! I had heard that sometimes Masters can be asked to speak if there is an absentee but I was certainly not expecting it on this occasion. So much going through my mind thinking what I would say!

LADY MAYOR'S WEEKEND

Next, the date of the Lady Mayor's Livery Masters' weekend at Bournemouth came around with a Red Weather warning in place for the Saturday! This weekend was attended by nearly all of the Livery Companies so there were over 200 of us present. What was so lovely was that we were not split into groups but enjoyed everything together. Our stay began with check in at the Bournemouth Highcliff Marriott Hotel with my room overlooking the beach. The view would certainly change with the weather! We were all given a goody bag with various useful items. Firstly, a leisurely stroll along the beach that evening to a beachfront venue where we enjoyed catching up with old friends, meeting new ones, and having a selection of food and drink. I opted for the



Selfies with Damon Hill OBE were the order of the day at the Livery Dinner

coach back rather than the 40min stroll back again!

The first morning started early with breakfast and wearing the present of socks that the Master Framework Knitter had commissioned for us all- depicting the caricature of the Lady Mayor on the side, even making me a small pair especially! They certainly came in useful for the weather that day. Then, off by coach to the Bovington Tank Museum, which is home for over 300 armoured vehicles, and we all had a ride around the arena in an all-terrain vehicle, which was fun, and watched tank displays. Then on to a fabulous barbecue and cider tasting at Purbeck Cider Farm with the sheep barn having been cleared for us because of the atrocious weather.

In the afternoon, after another drive, we arrived in Swanage where the town crier met us outside the Mercers' Hall. We then boarded the Swanage Railway steam train for a scenic ride including a view of Corfe Castle and finishing with an ice cream at the disembarking station. A lovely dinner that evening was had by all, our seats being chosen by picking from packs of cards! The next morning, some went for a dip in the sea but not me. We then had a meeting to decide that our group would be called 'The Unsquared' following the Lady Mayor's 'Unsquaring the Square Mile' theme. and our weekend finished with a lovely service at St Mike's Church.

Oh dear, I have run out of word count! More to come in the next edition. □

REGIONAL REPORTS

Regional Report: North America

By Freeman Hal Adams, Chairman



I had the honour of attending the very first HCAP North America Aviation Scholarship Foundation awards during a late April ceremony at the University of North Dakota John D Odegard School of Aerospace Sciences, Grand Forks, North Dakota. I was delighted to personally deliver the awards to the recipients and I am very proud of these first two scholarship awardees, as I was an early graduate of the aviation programme here in the mid-1970s. Special thanks are due to Assistant Mark Tousey, ASF Chairman, and to the ASF board of directors for all the hard work to deliver these very first HCAP NA scholarships. We are working on establishing a similar foundation for Canadian scholarships, as Canadian and USA foundation rules are different and require separate compliance.

THE ROAD TO INTELLIGENCE?

Any change in flight decks is generally understood by the professional aviation community to be slow, methodical, tempered by overarching public safety requirements overseen by regulatory authorities. If “noise” is a level of interest measure, then the overall industry noise level surrounding Artificial Intelligence (AI), is generally already quite intense.

The FAA, as well as other regulatory entities, is closely watching AI evolution. The 2023 FAA document, *Roadmap For Artificial Intelligence Safety Assurance* noted: “The Research, Engineering, and Development Advisory Committee (REDAC) in 2022 recommended that FAA establish a roadmap for AI to alleviate uncertainty in the industry with a clear direction of how this innovative technology can be used in airborne applications. The industry lacks a method for the safety assurance of AI. Safety assurance encompasses all the activities and artifacts to provide sufficient justification that the risks are acceptable.”

More recently, 2025, the FAA has started funding AI activities with a contract worth up to \$875million over 12 years, “...marking one of the largest investments in applying artificial intelligence and predictive analytics to America’s air traffic system.”

In aviation, concern about AI is perceptibly, and continually, increasing, and is clearly a leading item in current and emerging discussions. We should be looking forward to the discussion and dialogue, which is already spirited, opinionated, and includes special interest alignments, as seems normal with most aviation paradigm shifts, no matter the magnitude of the change. The counterbalances to this shift are the significant change barriers in aviation,

be they intentional and simply inherent institutional resistance to change. I have lost count of the number of successful (or failed) paradigm shift attempts in our industry, which I have personally witnessed, or actively participated in.



Technical advance in aircraft cockpits and systems is relentless (Boeing 787)

They include some painfully and slowly adopted, but eventually successful, solutions such as TCAS (Traffic Collision Avoidance System), GNSS (Global Navigation Satellite System) nav and landings, ADS (Automatic Dependent Surveillance) systems as well as major shifts in flight deck design and automation.

SOME PARADIGM SHIFTS

TCAS: Even with the unfortunate 1979 San Diego, California mid-air, which was the driver behind TCAS, the precursor general discussion went along the lines of “engineering solution in search of a problem”, “just look out the window”, or something similar. Now, the TCAS is usually a MEL (Minimum Equipment List) no-go item.

GNSS: While early civil aviation adopters, supported by US GPS manufacturers, were intent on making commercial GNSS terminal and en route usage a routine nav operation, there was certainly reluctance by user groups. A senior Boeing VP, during a demo flight, accused us of cheating and using an inertial system, not the “smoke and mirror” GPS – and what was wrong with ADF (Automatic Direction Finding)?

ADS is still morphing and being adapted to new solutions such as runway incursions alerts and advisories. The runway incursion feature has been part of ADS since the beginning and adoption is still a work in progress. Privacy is a big issue to some operators, but the FAA issues discrete ADS-B identifiers on request, such as with corporate aircraft operations.

The key take-away from these paradigm shifts might not be the actual shift, but rather the process that seems to follow a certain pattern. While new solutions may mean safer, better, faster, more efficient operations, such change is not without cost. In aerospace, generally, what makes things fly is not the aerodynamics, but the funding. □





Regional report: Australia

By Liveryman Adrian Young, Chairman

Building on our previous update, the Australian Region continues to gather momentum across governance, industry engagement, scholarships and university partnerships. With the AGM complete, a new Regional Constitution endorsed, and the Executive Committee and Advisory Council in place, our focus has shifted from strengthening foundations to extending our contribution across the wider aviation community.



The UNSW panel (l to r): Malcolm Good, Andrew Stead, Adrienne Fleming, Adrian Young

A recent highlight was our participation in the *Safeskies Australia* conference in Canberra, one of Australia's leading aviation and aerospace safety forums. Through the Region's conference stand, members promoted the Honourable Company of Air Pilots, connected with industry peers, and showcased the professionalism and breadth of experience within the Company.

The Region also contributed directly to the conference programme. The Australian Region Chair moderated *Accident investigation: new ways to learn from the past*, with Angus Mitchell, Chief Commissioner of the Australian Transport Safety Bureau, and Grp Capt David Smith, Director of the Defence Flight Safety Bureau. The discussion explored how modern investigation methods can better identify causal factors, deepen organisational learning and improve safety outcomes.

The conference theme, *Safety Collaboration 2.0*, resonated strongly with the Region's priorities. Discussion focused on data-driven safety decisions, AI and emerging technology, airspace integration, and the evolution of safety management and assurance. For a global membership, these are not uniquely Australian issues; they are shared challenges shaping aviation safety worldwide.

SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED

The Region's scholarship programme also continues to provide practical support to emerging aviation professionals. The first 2026 round recognised: Vanessa Chua, 23, Tasmania, recipient of the ATPL scholarship for a Company member; Ellie Webber, 23, Western Australia, ATPL scholarship; Michael Hatzipavlis, 24, Victoria, partial ATPL scholarship; Mitchell Lee, 32, Queensland, ATPL scholarship; and Victor Jones, 25, Victoria, Instrument Rating scholarship. We thank our donors and partners for making this support possible. The next round is now in the planning phase and is expected to be released in the coming months.

Our relationship with the University of NSW (UNSW) has also continued to strengthen. The Region recently moderated a panel on the future of pilot training with Adrienne Fleming, Head of Operations and CFI, Tristar Aviation; Andrew Stead, Head of Training and Checking, Qantas Airways; and Malcolm Good, Head of Operations, UNSW Flight Operations Unit. The discussion brought together regulatory, operational and educational perspectives on whether current training models are evolving quickly enough for an increasingly automated, data-rich and complex aviation environment.

A strong theme was the central role of the instructor. Panellists and participants noted that instructors set standards, shape foundational airmanship and influence how new pilots develop judgement, discipline and professional behaviours. The discussion also highlighted an opportunity for greater consistency across the broader general aviation instructional community, particularly in supporting early-career instructors beyond minimum regulatory requirements.

Building on that observation, the Region is considering whether it could play a practical role by drawing on its experienced instructor base across general aviation, airline simulation and military training. This could include advice, reference material or a forum to support flying schools and share good practice in briefing, debriefing, student development and instructional judgement. It is

Scholarship winners (l to r): Ellie Webber, Victor Jones, Vanessa Chu, Mitchell Lee, Michael Hatzipavlis



an early concept, but closely aligned to the Company's commitment to standards and professional excellence. Looking ahead, the Australian Region will continue to build on this momentum through further industry engagement, university partnerships and collaboration with the New Zealand Region on opportunities for young

members. We are also finalising plans for the Master's visit in late October/early November and look forward to welcoming her to Australia. Together, these activities reflect a Region that is active, outward-facing and committed to strengthening the profession for members across the Honourable Company. □



Regional Report: New Zealand

By Upper Freeman Ron Thacker, Chairman

The New Zealand region has been fairly quiet over our winter season, but we continue to progress a couple of significant work streams. Our social media campaign has been very successful in terms of audience growth, but this has not yet translated into increased membership. This will continue to be a focus for the year ahead.



Massey University's Aviation School will be working with the NZ Region

Thanks to some exploratory work by our Technical Director, Capt Mike Zaytsoff, we are now in the early days of collaborating with our Australian

colleagues with respect to their pilot mentoring programme and their active Young Air Pilots scheme. Noting the close relationship of our aviation communities, particularly with many New Zealand aviators crossing the Tasman in search of employment opportunities, developing shared mentoring and Young Air Pilots programmes would seem to be a win-win for both countries. I need to thank our Aussie colleagues for their willingness to engage with us.

Further following the Australian example, the New Zealand region has

recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Massey University School of Aviation. This MoU is intended to serve several purposes: to provide the university with access to the Air Pilots technical networks in support of aviation research; to allow the university to benefit from Air Pilots training support (in the form

of guest lecturers, employment transition seminars, etc); and to expose a wide audience of young aviators to the benefits of Air Pilots membership.



The Memorial site blessing - NZ Region Hon Chaplain Richard Waugh at far right (Memorial pics Manatu Taonga/Ministry for Culture & Heritage)

After years of lobbying, including by our previous Chair Capt Allan Boyce, construction has begun on a permanent memorial to the 257 crew and passengers of the ill-fated Air New Zealand flight TE901 that crashed into Mount Erebus in Antarctica in November 1979. The Erebus Memorial is being constructed in a park overlooking Christchurch city, the scenic flight's planned return landing point. Our Honorary Chaplain, the Rev Dr Richard Waugh, who began advocacy for this memorial in January 2016, formally blessed the memorial site on 22nd June.

Our monthly professional development webinars, hosted by Mike Zaytsoff, continue to prove popular with our audience in New Zealand, Australia and further afield. These are conducted in association with the New Zealand Society of Air Safety Investigators and often feature presentations by those involved in accident investigation around the world.

Finally, planning continues for the Master's visit to our region in November. We look forward to hosting her and introducing her to some of the cutting-edge work which is being done in New Zealand, particularly in the space and UAS domains. □



Concept drawing for the National Erebus Memorial overlooking Christchurch city



REPORT: YOUNG AIR PILOTS

By Associate Chris Barrott, Chairman

As British summer continued, the Young Air Pilots calendar was busy and going from strength to strength. Since May, we have enjoyed hosting a summer evening of gliding, a professionals' cocktail social, another Future Pilot Assessment Day (FPAD), a visit to Cranwell and more social drinks in London. The high attendance at these has been really great to see, despite many busy schedules, and we intend to keep up the momentum into the autumn. Alongside the YAP-specific events, many of us have enjoyed Company events, with a strong contingent especially noticeable on the Brize Norton refuelling flights.



Social cocktails

GLIDING EVENING

In June, we were lucky enough to offer 20 members the opportunity to enjoy an evening of gliding and pizza. With the weather completely on our side, it turned out to be the perfect evening for flying. We were warmly welcomed by the team at Surrey Hills Gliding Club to join its "longest day" flying event at Kenley. The goal for the day was to complete 100 launches, flying from sunrise to sunset. With our help, they smashed that target.

The evening kicked off with a quick safety briefing before diving straight into the first launch. Everyone enjoyed at least one flight, and the club members ran a remarkably well-oiled machine, keeping the winch launches constant and seamless. With beautiful visibility under the setting sun, we enjoyed views of the London skyline, seeing from Heathrow to Gatwick. To make it even better, while YAPs waited for their turn to launch, they got to network and socialise over freshly-baked pizza made right next to the launch point.

The event brought together a fantastic crowd from across the aviation industry, including commercial pilots, pilots in training, and those with no previous experience. Everyone had a brilliant time getting up into the air and, for many, flying a glider for the first time.

A massive thank you to everyone who joined us and an

extra special thanks to all the incredible volunteers at the Surrey Hills Gliding Club for making the night possible. In what is fast becoming an annual tradition, we will be looking to organise another event next summer, after similar success at Cambridge last year. If you think it would be good to host the event at your club, please get in touch with the committee.

PROFESSIONALS' COCKTAILS

At the end of May we ran an event specifically targeted for the first time at our working professionals. Bringing together pilots from across the aviation industry, we shared stories, experiences, and plenty of laughs. Represented were backgrounds spanning airline, military, flight instruction, and flight calibration. Following fantastic feedback, we'll certainly look to organise something similar again soon.

UPCOMING EVENTS

The calendar is showing no signs of letting up, and we're making sure to finish the summer in style. Dates and ticketing information will be circulated by email and WhatsApp, as usual. Make sure to join us for our summer BBQ and fly-in at the end of August at White Waltham, which is always popular and well attended. Following that, we will meet for an evening of networking, with finance experts making a pilot-specific presentation, in the RAF club in September.



The end to a perfect day's gliding

The Trophies and Awards Banquet, which is always the biggest YAP night of the year, will follow on 22nd October. Make sure to get any leave requests in early! Autumn and winter are also looking exciting, with a return of Zoom meetings and professional development, with a *Working towards command* afternoon in planning. Finally, a date for the Christmas social will be circulated soon. Until then, as always, I hope to see you at one of our events soon, and hope you have all enjoyed a fantastic summer of flying. □



OBITUARY: PM MALCOLM WHITE (1952 – 2026)

Born in Somerset, Malcolm spent his early years in Nigeria. On return to the UK he was educated at Milton Abbey in Dorset, before joining the RAF in 1971. Following initial flying training, Malcolm's operational flying was first on the Hawker

Hunter and subsequently a career dominated by flying the BAe Harrier, but one which also included the additional delight of flying the Boeing Chinook and Aérospatiale/Westland Puma and Gazelle helicopters. He enjoyed exchange postings with the United States Marine Corps and the Royal Navy.

As a staff officer he "flew" a desk in the Ministry of Defence as the Personal Staff Officer (PSO) to two Chiefs of Air Staff; the RAF's Command Headquarters at High Wycombe and finally, Rheindahlen in Germany, where he was the desk officer responsible for the introduction of the night attack Harrier GR.7.

He commanded 1453 Flight at RAF Stanley in the Falkland Islands (twice); No IV (AC) Squadron at RAF Gutersloh, and then became station commander at RAFG Laarbruch, (also serving as the RAF Harrier Force Commander). In addition to his Cold War and NATO commitments, he deployed on operations in Belize, the Falkland Islands, and the Balkans. He also travelled widely in support of various diplomatic, training and staff commitments, and served with the Royal Navy and the British Army on the Rhine.

In his final two service appointments he was Commandant (Air) at the newly formed UK Joint Services Command and Staff College; he then moved to PJHQ Northwood, where he was tasked with the creation of the UK's Joint 'Rapid Reaction Force' training structure. On retirement he moved to the commercial aerospace sector and, after eight years with Northrop Grumman, became a consultant to Leonardo Marconi Westland.

TRUSTEE, FUNDRAISER AND AMBASSADOR

In 2004 Malcolm was appointed as a Trustee to the RAF Museum and, in 2010, Chairman of the Bomber Command Memorial Team, responsible for the securing the funding for, and construction of, this important memorial which was opened in Green Park in June 2012. Later, he was selected to chair the Museum's RAF Centenary Development Committee, overseeing a £26million transformation programme which was opened to the public in 2018. Having stood down as Trustee, he became an Ambassador for the Museum.

Malcolm joined the then-Guild in 2006, became a Liveryman in 2010, was elected as an Assistant in 2011 and Warden in 2015. In 2017 he chaired the Working Group tasked with delivering the Air Pilots' Strategic Plan, and in 2019 he was installed as Master. Malcolm and Vanessa had three children and four grandchildren.

PM John Towell writes: "I was installed as Master in March 2020 as lockdown was announced; our plans for meetings and events bit the dust. We switched to online and in these challenging circumstances Malcolm's impressive qualities shone through. He was unwavering in his support and friendship - a strong, intelligent, good-humoured team player. He was soon referring to me as 'Master Zoom'!

"During lockdown Malcolm confided in just a few close friends that he had oral cancer. The manner in which he dealt with surgery and the following treatment was most remarkable. He never missed a meeting and remained cheerful, amusing, and ready to help, his enormous strength of character very evident.

"Malcolm and Vanessa were always an exceptional team. When Malcolm had his terminal pancreatic cancer diagnosis they faced it together; he with selfless stoicism and good humour, she practical and kind. Malcolm always told us how grateful to and proud of Vanessa he was. Vanessa, as ever an absolute star; nursed him at home to the end."



IVSqn reunion at the 2022 Master's Garden Party, Andrewsfield: Pat Voigt, Malcolm and PM Roger Gault

Liveryman Pat Voigt recalls: "Malcolm White's progression through the RAF Harrier Force and selection for the USMC exchange on the AV-8B at MCAS Cherry Point was nothing short of outstanding. Indeed, having been fortunate enough to view his logbook with him very recently, the entry of 'Exceptional as a Harrier Pilot' in one annual summary typified his abilities.

"However, Malcolm was one of the few senior officers capable of interacting seamlessly across the ranks. This was especially evident on 'Field Deployments' where relationships with our groundcrew were forged; demonstrated by their overwhelming appreciation of his determination to march alongside them in the 2022 Remembrance Parade in London.

"Resilient to the end, Malcolm's infectious ability to 'Work Hard and Play Harder' will be sorely missed by several generations of Harrier pilots and groundcrew." □



SUPPORT FOR GENERAL AVIATION

From the Desk of the DAA, PM Nick Goodwyn

An enduring theme of the last year has been a focus on and support to General Aviation, which is the grass roots of aviation and the life blood of sustaining a thriving industry from *ab initio* to commercial flying training, engineering, innovation and pastoral leisure activities as well as air experience for the next generations. Our Company is home to the excellent Air Pilots Flying Club, established in 1986 and with around 200 members, which is an exemplar of how GA brings like-minded people together to enjoy fly-ins, open days, aviation talks and social gatherings and support future Air Pilots.



GA airfields like Popham are under constant threat

Across Europe and the UK, GA numbers remain impressive: 90,000 pilots engaged in private powered flying, 40,000 microlight pilots, 115,000 hang glider and paraglider pilots with 20,000 GA aircraft and 22,000 Gliders registered. Our regions also are also equally engaged, where possible, in promoting and supporting active GA such as raising safety concerns over GA traffic routes and the like against the airspace constrictions resulting from Australia's new-build Western Sydney International (Nancy-Bird Walton) Airport.

Last December, I quoted the UK CAA: "The GA sector is an important part of the wider UK aviation industry that drives innovation, supports business, and provides a crucial entry point for individuals seeking a career in aviation. As such, promoting a safe, sustainable, and thriving GA sector is beneficial to the UK's wider interests."

It goes on to state in its *General Aviation Strategy* published in October 2025: "The GA sector faces some notable challenges including declining flying hours and a stagnating number of recreational pilot licence holders, as well as an ageing fleet of aircraft. Additionally, transitioning to new technologies – such as advanced avionics, electric propulsion, sustainable fuel – presents challenges in terms of investment, training, and changes to regulation. However, these also present significant opportunities,

including enhanced operational efficiency, improved safety, and greater sustainability, all of which could help to rejuvenate the sector."

THREATS REMAIN

Notwithstanding that last sentence, GA remains under threat on many fronts. Since 2018 the GA sector has been steadily declining, with CAA data showing an overall 40% reduction in activity over the last eight years.

In the past year, the Air Pilots have been proactive in supporting GA such as raising objections to the proposed redevelopment of Popham airfield, from which the local planning authority has since retreated. We are actively supporting work on safety and training of GA pilots, aiming to close the gap left by the sad demise of GASCo, not least in ongoing collaboration with the RAeS. We have also aligned with, and lent accreditation to, the RAeS position paper on the future of GA airfields in the UK, *Protecting UK Airfields: Safeguarding, improving and integrating General Aviation Infrastructure for the benefit of the National economy, industrial Resilience, Skills development, and Future Air Mobility*. This paper provides an overview of the accelerating loss of UK airfields and the economic and strategic risk this brings, despite growing demand from new types of users. In the UK, there are an estimated 1,000+ operational sites, including: licensed aerodromes (some 241 in the GA Sector), unlicensed airfields (400–600), private strips and farm strips (number unknown but significant). GA airfields offer connectivity, aircrew, ATC & engineering training, emergency services, business, resilience, diversion options, recreation and sport. Without the training and skills pipeline, current and future demand will not be met from national resources. Unless technology significantly changes GA, facilities will continue to be needed for the integration of eVTOL, RPAS and with other emergent piloted technology aircraft.

GA brings local employment, particularly in highly skilled engineering and technology industries, apprenticeships which are increasingly a key part of training, STEM engagement and innovation and aircraft development that requires remote and relatively large areas of land, which existing airfields already provide. Additionally, we should remember our proud aviation heritage which is so prevalent across this architecture, and which demonstrates to future aviators the paths available in our industry.

NEW BILL

On 2nd June 2026, the Civil Aviation (Consumer Protection and Regulatory Reform) Bill passed through

the House of Lords for approval and now has moved to the committee stage of scrutiny ahead of parliamentary vote and, if passed, enactment in the legislature later this year. This bill marked the first major aviation reform package introduced since the UK's withdrawal from the EU. It is broad in scope, modernising consumer protection, accelerating airspace reform and enabling aviation regulation to maintain pace with technological advancement. Given the limitations of parliamentary time afforded to enact regulatory change, we continue



Flying clubs and small grass airfields are the lifeblood of the aviation sector

to diverge from EASA which has significantly more capacity for change, albeit balanced against the challenge of gaining consensus amongst 31 member states.

Clause 8 of the Bill enables the UK CAA to create aviation safety and operational rules more autonomously, mitigating the pressures on the Department for Transport (DfT) and Parliament to enact law and regulatory change, arguably to allow a more agile approach to amended international standards, emergent technologies and safety risks. This notable transfer of lawmaking authority from accountable and elected governance to independent authority has not happened without question, through concerns of law making, implementation and enforcement and, when appropriate, sanction of noncompliance all coming under one body.

The Bill focuses on consumer rights, airspace modernisation, airports and the regulator. What was not debated or included in the Bill was any reference to GA. Whilst opportunities for economic growth, innovation and competitiveness were advocated, there was a lack of causal link to grass roots and GA as the key enabler to such opportunities. Several Peers voiced their concerns about this disconnect and observed that long term grass roots sustainability, flying and other disciplinary training, architecture were disregarded.

To quote Liveryman Lord Davies of Gower: "No reference whatever has been made of DfT's priorities to general aviation. There is not one mention in the whole of the Bill of what is, for many in the industry, the front door to their career; whether they be air crew or ground crew."

STARK BACKDROP

The backdrop is stark. Comparatively recently the DfT significantly expanded its GA-related staff and the CAA

expanded its GA unit. The DfT has now, it is understood, disbanded its GA unit and the CAA has dispersed its own into other departments. Such is the consequence when ministerial preference and thus political influence shifts; perhaps this also reflects a broader policy and emphasis shift towards commercial flight operations against the perceived decline in GA.

Lord Davies commented further: "I am extremely concerned that the Government's enhanced consumer protection measures do not create unintended burdens for smaller airports, aerodromes and GA operators... pilots do not magically appear out of an EasyJet or BA-trained box. They are the result of people starting at the very bottom of the ladder, through gliding, progressing to their PPL, many add-on qualifications, instrument ratings and the mountain of exams needed to gain an ATPL – the so-called self-improver route. All this is achieved at the grass roots level



Will GA pilots have to pay for this in the future? (NATS)

by small flying clubs and schools and small grass airfields, at enormous cost to the individual (or their family) and risk to small businesses with fluctuating cost of fuel and imposed employment taxes."

Other commentators have noted that the most contentious issue for GA may prove to be Clause 8 of the Bill, which deals with future charges for ATC and ANS services. The Government has explained that with an evolving UK airspace system and emergent new categories of airspace users, such measures relating to charging will be necessary. "The Bill broadens the range of entities that can be charged for ATC and ANS services to ensure that costs are recovered fairly and that funding for airspace modernisation can continue".

When the Air Pilots ITF Airspace Group proposed a template for future airspace modernisation, such funding was addressed commensurate with usage by commercial operators. Whilst the Bill does not explicitly state that GA aircraft will become liable for charges, the concern is that this clause may open the door in the future to charging airspace users who have historically not paid directly such fees, without recourse to independent or elected oversight. Let GA be warned that if that came to be, it might well signal the death toll of an already fragile, yet fundamental and essential part of our aviation community. The Air Pilots will monitor progress of this Bill and its implications closely. □

PROFILE: THE AVIATION INDUSTRY SKILLS BOARD



By PM Roger Gault

Aviation is a skills-driven industry. Beyond the visibility of the flight deck, a complex network of roles underpins every operation, each requiring consistent standards of training, competence and professionalism.

Maintaining that capability — not just today, but for the future — remains one of the sector's defining challenges. The Aviation Industry Skills Board (AISB) was created to address exactly this.

AISB's distinction lies in its independent employer-led model. It brings together industry organisations to define shared skills priorities - ensuring the sector remains safe, resilient and future-ready - while influencing policy through a single, coordinated voice.

FROM COCKPIT TO CAREER PIPELINE

For pilots, the importance of a robust skills system is



Poorvi Patel, AISB Chair, Head of Future Skills - Careers, Heathrow Airport

clear: Aviation demands precision, consistency and professionalism - qualities built through structured training, standards and continuous development. But these same principles extend across every role supporting flight operations.

AISB recognises that aviation is not just about individual careers - it is about an interconnected system.

Pilots rely on engineers, dispatchers, ground handlers, air traffic professionals and many others, all operating to high standards. Ensuring that each part of that system is properly resourced and future-proofed is central to the Board's mission.

"AISB provides a vital platform for bringing together the operational experience of industry and allows us to contribute meaningfully to how current and future talent is shaped and developed across aviation." [Grp Capt Roger Gault, Honourable Company of Air Pilots/AISB Member]. Its purpose reflects this role: *"A unified industry voice that influences and shapes sustainable skills for today and the future."*

A JOINED-UP INDUSTRY VOICE

One of AISB's greatest strengths lies in its ability to

bring together organisations that might otherwise operate independently. Its membership spans employers across the aviation ecosystem, working in partnership with government stakeholders including Skills England, Department for Work & Pensions (DWP), and the Department for Transport (DfT) and relevant partner associations.

This collaborative structure allows the industry to identify shared challenges - whether around training pathways, recruitment pressures or emerging skill requirements - and respond collectively. It also ensures that aviation has a stronger, more coherent influential voice in policy discussions.



Peter Gardner, AISB Vice-Chair, Early Careers & Apprenticeships Manager, easyJet

For aviation member organisations this provides a valuable platform to contribute professional insight into broader workforce development conversations, ensuring that operational realities are reflected in future planning.

TURNING INSIGHT INTO ACTION

AISB is not simply a discussion forum. Its activity is structured around three core priorities, delivered through focused Task and Finish Groups:

- Strategic Communications: raising awareness of aviation skills needs and ensuring they are understood by policymakers and stakeholders
- Future Skills and Capabilities: identifying workforce gaps and developing practical solutions to address them
- Education, Advice and Guidance: working with educators to improve understanding of aviation careers and pathways into the sector.

INSPIRING THE NEXT GENERATION

A key focus for AISB is raising awareness of aviation careers among young people, educators and career influencers. While pilot roles often capture the imagination, awareness of the wider range of opportunities across the sector remains limited.



Through targeted campaigns and webinars, AISB showcases the diversity of aviation careers - from engineering and safety to digital, sustainability and operations - highlighting both the visible and less well-known roles that enable flight.

A particularly exciting development is the creation of sector-wide Virtual Work Experience programmes, including one aligned to the pilot role. Delivered in partnership with industry, these immersive programmes provide real insight into the operational world of aviation, bringing to life the roles, environments and decision-making behind every flight. By demonstrating how different functions connect and providing direct access to industry professionals, they offer a more accessible and inclusive route into the sector. In doing so, AISB is reaching talent that may not otherwise have considered aviation, creating a scalable and modern approach to inspiring the next generation.

Alongside this, AISB continues to engage with educators, parents and young people through careers insight activity, strengthening understanding of aviation as an accessible and rewarding career pathway.

PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE

The aviation sector continues to evolve rapidly, shaped by technological change, sustainability goals and shifting workforce expectations. Meeting these challenges requires a coordinated, forward-looking approach to skills.

AISB's role is to ensure that the industry is not simply reacting to change but actively shaping its future workforce. By identifying skills gaps early and aligning industry, education and policy responses, the Board helps build long-term resilience across the sector. Its vision captures this ambition: *To inspire and build sustainable skills accessible for everyone.*

STRONGER TOGETHER

Ultimately, the strength of AISB lies in its collaborative, employer-led model. In an industry where safety, precision and professionalism are non-negotiable, ensuring the right skills are in place is a shared responsibility.

By bringing together employers, government and industry

partners, AISB provides a mechanism to align that responsibility - connecting insight from the front line with strategic decision-making at national level.

For the aviation community, and for the pilots who operate at its forefront, this collective approach is critical. It ensures that the people, standards and pathways underpinning aviation continue to evolve in step with the demands of a complex and global industry - and that the next generation is ready to take flight.

For those interested in learning more about the Aviation Industry Skills Board and its work to support the development of skills across the sector, further information can be found at www.aisb.uk □

A screenshot of the AISB website homepage. The header shows the AISB logo and a navigation menu with links: Home, What we do, Members & Partners, Work Experience, Careers, Resources, and Get Involved. The main banner features a photograph of a commercial airplane taking off, with the text 'A Collective Voice for Aviation Skills' overlaid in white.

A NEW WEBSITE

Since the AISB went fully independent in April 2022, its digital presence has been minimal and through LinkedIn, but thanks to the support of its members and partners, it has recently developed a comprehensive website that showcases its work, highlights the AISB career initiatives, virtual work experiences, and provides a central hub for its resources.

As a new venture the website currently includes the information below; however it aims in the future to continue to add to the content as its work progresses:

- Home information page
- About the AISB
- What we do
- Members & Partners (NB: The details for this section have been populated from information provided by members for the recent LinkedIn series Meet the AISB)
- Work Experience
- Careers
- Resources

Please explore our website through this link:
www.aisb.uk



INTEGRATING AI INTO COMMERCIAL AVIATION OPERATIONS

*By Liveryman Will Wright, Upper Freeman Konstantinos Pechlivanos and Associate Tilly Watts, TSTG**



Artificial Intelligence (AI) is becoming more present in our day to day lives. Within the context of modern commercial aviation operations, it is becoming increasingly difficult to ignore its benefits; however it is not without its challenges. Recent progress has been seen in a variety of areas across the sector from theoretical innovation to operational integration. Applications in predictive maintenance, trajectory optimisation, and flight support are transforming how safety and performance are conceptualised. Yet technology itself does not guarantee improvement. Unlocking success requires structured integration: embedding AI systems that complement rather than displace human cognition. Ensuring system trust, accountability, transparency, and ethical airmanship will be the main challenges: however if successful, those factors will mitigate associated implementation risks.

CONTEXT

In December 2025, the first real-world emergency Autoland was performed by a Beech King Air B200 equipped with a Garmin Autoland system. The emergency Autoland was triggered automatically after a detected rise in cabin altitude caused by a loss of pressurisation. The aircraft assumed pilot incapacitation and took over, selecting a suitable diversion airfield, communicating with ATC and safely landing the aircraft. The emergency Autoland system performed in accordance with its design and certification; identification of an emergency, interpretation of available data, and the execution of required operational actions for a safe landing at an appropriate airfield. However, both pilots remained conscious throughout and elected to monitor the system which was working as they had anticipated ^[1].

This event demonstrates aviation's evolutionary relationship with technology. Each 'wave' of progression is reshaping safety, workload, and situational awareness for pilots. AI introduces not another layer of automation but a transformation in system logic: algorithms capable of adapting to data rather than following fixed parameters. EASA's AI Roadmap outlines three levels of its implementation:

- Level 1: AI Assistance to the human. This focuses on supporting the human without replacing their authority, such as supported decision making and data processing. For example, this might be a system that provides an indication of the likelihood of an unstable approach based on comparing various historic data (e.g. weather, flight data monitoring etc) with current flight parameters and conditions. The output of this system would give the flight crew a choice to discontinue the approach or continue.
- Level 2: Human-AI Teaming. The human and AI system work together to achieve goals. An example could be the use of an AI assistant that could mitigate the effects of startle and surprise. ENAC (France's National School of Civil Aviation) is developing an intelligent assistant paired with psychophysiological stress monitoring to provide startle recovery support for pilots ^[2].
- Level 3: Advanced Automation. At this level the system can function without human intervention under certain conditions. This is split into two sub-levels, 3A and 3B, with 3A functions remaining overridable by the human and 3B being non-overridable. The Garmin Emergency Autoland would be an example of a Level 3A system, though it must be noted that this was certified for emergency use only and not for normal operations.

Such progression, however, must remain anchored in human judgment. True progress depends on aligning automation with professional trust rather than convenience ^[3].



The sequence for the first-ever live Autoland

LEARNING ASSURANCE

An application of AI could be in a simulator environment, though a level of learning assurance will be necessary for operational use. Unlike deterministic systems, AI learns through data exposure. This requires a shift from static certification to dynamic assurance. Learning assurance treats AI as a continuously evolving entity subject to continuous evaluation and validation. It parallels pilot proficiency checks: algorithms must demonstrate consistency under changing operational contexts. Assurance frameworks must therefore assess both technical performance and human-system



Autoland is available for aircraft such as the Beechcraft King Air 350 fitted with Garmin G1000 NXi and G3000 avionics (Garmin)

simulator environment could allow new algorithms to be proven in a non-safety critical environment, increasing trust before implementation on the line.

HUMAN PERFORMANCE AND TRUST

The introduction of adaptive automation alters the cognitive landscape. Pilots shift from controlling to interpreting systems, managing multiple layers of uncertainty. Cultural attitudes will also influence automation use: some crews may over-trust technology because of hierarchical norms, while others may resist it through over-caution. Understanding cultural variability in risk perception and assertiveness is essential for globally coherent AI integration.

Trust may become a measurable competency, and future simulator checks will need to adapt to test this competency. Research indicates that trust calibration emerges through interaction: explainable outputs, stable responses, and consistent accountability structures foster trust without dependence. Training must therefore include scenarios where AI performance is imperfect, encouraging pilots to critique automation constructively while sustaining situational ownership. Historic sim check data could also be used to build tailor-made scenarios for each pilot, which will help the pilot to improve their response to the AI output whilst also moving away from the current 'one-size-fits-all' approach.

ETHICAL ADAPTION

Airmanship is not only procedural - it is also ethical. Ethical airmanship ensures that accountability remains human, even when systems provide autonomous input. AI integration should therefore strengthen moral responsibility as a defining feature of aviation professionalism. Systems must be designed in a transparent way, allowing pilots to understand how a decision has been made and using which data. At the same time, pilots will need to be diligent in maintaining a certain level of scepticism in AI decision-making, ensuring that actions are 'sense-checked' whilst monitoring as a human 'in-the-loop'.

The traditional accountability for a flight remains with the pilot in command, with actions that they take in relation to an AI system being answerable for. The King Air Autoland incident is a good example of accountability remaining with the conscious pilots, who were actively monitoring the system and ready to intervene if necessary. However,

interaction. Research on AI and human performance^[4] found that recurrent behavioural evaluation was identified as central to maintaining algorithmic reliability and pilot trust. Testing AI applications in a

if the pilots had been incapacitated, this accountability would have arguably shifted to the system designers once the Autoland system had taken over. Clear definitions of accountability will be vital going forward as human-led actions and AI-led actions become further intertwined.

CONCLUSION

Contemporary safety management focuses not merely on avoiding failure but on ensuring success under variable conditions. AI expands foresight but risks narrowing human adaptability if over-relied upon. A Safety-II perspective calls for monitoring how systems succeed, not just how they fail. Recommendations for the integration of AI require alignment between governance, training, and organisational culture, and the need for sustainability:

- **Governance:** Regulators should implement continuous oversight systems where algorithmic behaviour is periodically reviewed by multidisciplinary panels including pilots, engineers, and human factors experts.
- **Training:** Crew development must include AI literacy, ethical reasoning, and trust management. Simulation scenarios should involve algorithmic ambiguity, fostering adaptive judgment rather than procedural compliance.
- **Culture:** Operators must promote psychological safety, allowing pilots to critique automation without institutional penalty. Open dialogue ensures that AI evolves with, not apart from, human insight.
- **Sustainability:** Integration should progress through low-risk, high-feedback stages—focusing first on analytic and monitoring applications before extending toward flight-critical decision domains.

AI will redefine professionalism but not replace it. The pilot's role will evolve from controlling systems to interpreting complex relationships between data, context, and ethics. Progress should be measured by reflective maturity, not implementation speed. Disciplined integration - grounded in transparency, learning assurance, and human agency - remains the foundation of aviation's next chapter. Technology will continue to evolve, but the enduring benchmark of safety will remain the capacity for ethical judgment and adaptive expertise.

* TSTG: The Company's Training and Standards Technical Committee □

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THE CENTENARY IN 20 ARTICLES

THE HAWKER/BAe HARRIER

By Assistant Sebastian Pooley, PM Malcolm White and Liveryman Pat Voigt*

Air Pilot's series of Centenary-focussed profiles of the individuals and aircraft which exemplify the Company's first century continues with the story of the Hawker (later BAe) Harrier

The sight of a fighter aircraft hovering motionless above the ground remains one of aviation's most remarkable spectacles. Even in an age of stealth fighters and advanced drones, there is something extraordinary about a jet aircraft that appears to defy the normal rules of flight. Known around the world as the "Jump Jet", the Harrier was the world's first operational vertical/short take-off and landing (V/STOL) combat aircraft and remains one of Britain's most significant aerospace achievements.

More than 50 years after entering service, the Harrier is a fascinating study in engineering excellence, operational innovation and pilot skill. It is also an aircraft whose story continues to resonate with members of our Company, not just those who flew it, including PMs Duncan Simpson (a member of the Harrier conversion team introducing the aircraft to RAF service at RAF Wittering), Roger Gault and Malcolm White, and Liveryman Pat Voigt.

SOLVING A COLD WAR PROBLEM

During the 1950s, military planners on both sides of the Iron Curtain recognised a significant vulnerability. Modern air forces relied heavily on large, fixed airfields, which could become prime targets in the opening stages of any conflict. The challenge was straightforward to define but extraordinarily difficult to solve: how could a jet aircraft operate without requiring a conventional runway?



Harrier GR.1s won both legs of the 1969 Daily Mail Transatlantic Air Race

Proposed solutions involved complex arrangements of lift engines, rotating wings or tilting propellers. Most proved impractical. What was needed was a simple and reliable means of generating lift for vertical flight while retaining the performance of a conventional combat aircraft. The answer emerged from Britain's aerospace industry and, specifically, from the work undertaken by Bristol Aero

Engines under the leadership of the renowned engineer Sir Stanley Hooker.

THE GENIUS OF VECTORED THRUST

At the heart of the Harrier's success was the Pegasus engine, one of the most innovative aero engines ever produced. The principle behind vectored thrust is

HARRIER GR.3 AT A GLANCE

Type	V/STOL Ground Attack and Reconnaissance Aircraft
Manufacturer	Hawker Siddeley Aviation
Powerplant	One Rolls-Royce Pegasus Mk 103 vectored-thrust turbofan
Maximum Thrust	21,500lbf (95.6kN)
Crew	1
Length	14.37m (47 ft 1 in)
Wingspan	7.70m (25 ft 3 in)
Height	3.45m (11 ft 4 in)
Maximum Take-Off Weight	11,900kg (26,200lb)
Maximum Speed	730mph (1,175km/h)
Service Ceiling	Over 50,000ft (15,200m)
Combat Radius	Approximately 300 miles (480km)
Armament	Two 30 mm ADEN cannon, bombs and rocket pods, air-to-surface missiles and AIM-9 Sidewinder air-to-air missiles

In Service

First Flight	31 August 1966
RAF Service Entry	April 1969
Retired from RAF Service	December 2010
USMC Service Entry	January 1971 (AV-8A)
AV-8B Harrier II Introduced	January 1985
USMC Retirement	3 June 2026



What the Harrier was originally designed for - operating in the forests of Europe

deceptively simple. Conventional jet engines direct their exhaust rearwards to propel the aircraft forward. The Pegasus, however, employed four swivelling nozzles positioned around the aircraft's centre of gravity. By rotating these nozzles, the pilot could direct the engine's thrust downward to produce lift or gradually angle it rearwards to transition into forward flight.

One of the earliest advocates of vectored thrust had been the French aviation engineer Michel Wibault. Wibault proposed a vertical take-off fighter powered by a turbofan engine using deflected exhaust streams to provide lift. His concept attracted the attention of British engine manufacturers and Wibault's ideas were followed up by Bristol Aero Engines, where the distinguished engineer Sir Stanley Hooker recognised their potential. Working with engineer Gordon Lewis and the Bristol design team, Hooker refined the concept into what would become the Pegasus turbofan engine.

FROM EXPERIMENTAL AIRCRAFT TO OPERATIONAL REALITY

The first practical demonstration of the concept came with the Hawker P.1127, which made its maiden flight in 1960. Test pilots quickly recognised they were flying something entirely different from any previous aircraft.

Development progressed with nine evaluation aircraft, designated the Hawker Siddeley Kestrel. These flew from 1964 and were operated by the Tripartite Evaluation Squadron, of British, American, and German pilots. The Royal Air Force subsequently ordered a modified version of the P.1127/Kestrel, designated the Harrier GR.1. Many were later upgraded to GR.1A and eventually GR.3 standard featuring more powerful engines, and along with newly built Harriers remained in service until 1994.

The RAF Harrier was later extensively redeveloped through collaboration between McDonnell Douglas and British Aerospace, leading to the second-generation AV-8B Harrier II. British variants — including the GR.5, GR.7, and GR.9 — entered service from the mid-1980s.

Throughout the 1990s, Harriers were heavily involved in operations, initially conducting reconnaissance over

Northern Iraq and later undertaking both reconnaissance and strike missions during the Balkan conflicts. The RAF and Fleet Air Arm units merged in 2000 to form Joint Force Harrier. After the Sea Harrier's retirement in 2006, both 'light and dark blue' pilots flew the GR.7 and GR.9.

Further combat operations took place during the second Gulf War in 2003, however the longest continuous deployment occurred in Afghanistan, where GR.7s and GR.9s operated from Kandahar Airfield between 2003-9.

The Harrier II remained in service with both the RAF and Royal Navy until December 2010. Despite its proven combat effectiveness, the Harrier was retired because of

THE PILOT'S AIRCRAFT

Notwithstanding the Harrier's remarkable engineering achievements, its operational success depended equally upon the men and women who flew it. Flying a Harrier demanded an unusual combination of skills. During conventional flight, it behaved much like other high-performance jets of its era. However, hovering introduced an entirely different set of challenges.

The transition between hover and forward flight became an exercise in precision and anticipation. Harrier pilots routinely moved between vertical and conventional flight modes during a single sortie. The aircraft therefore was one of the most demanding operational jets of its generation.

Pat Voigt says: "From its awesome acceleration to hovering above a woodland clearing balanced on four pillars of thrust provided by the Rolls-Royce Pegasus engine, the single-seat Harrier was arguably the pinnacle of RAF pilots' aspirations.

"However, it was not the easiest aircraft to fly, especially during the transition to and from jet-borne and wing-borne flight. To quote legendary Harrier test pilot John Farley: 'It was an awkward, nasty little aeroplane, but the vision of what was on offer was just mind-boggling.'

"Whether operating at medium level or ultra-low level, deployed to dispersed sites or onboard 'The Boat', the Harrier's capabilities were second to none. It could drop or fire virtually the full arsenal available to the RAF and in the later variants it could carry mixed weapons loads and amend impact solutions should the task change once airborne. Combined with its reputation for immediate and lethal close air support, this made it uniquely capable within the RAF." PM Malcolm White adds: "They were bloody good fun to fly!"



Joint task force: RAF GR.3s and RN FRS.1s operating together in the Falklands campaign

defence budget cuts, with priority given to retaining the Panavia Tornado fleet. The remaining aircraft were stored at RAF Cottesmore, and in November 2011 the UK government announced the sale of 72 airframes to the US Marine Corps for spares to support its AV-8B fleet.

From 1969 RAF Wittering in Cambridgeshire became known as the "Home of the Harrier" with the formation of the Harrier Conversion Unit and No. 1(F) Squadron. By 1976, RAF Gütersloh — located just 60 miles and under 10min flying time from the border of the then East Germany — served as the Cold War spearhead for the Harrier Force, accommodating No. 3(F) and No. 4(AC) Squadrons.

The Royal Navy variant, the Sea Harrier FRS.1, colloquially known as the SHAR, entered service in 1980. Equipped with radar, its primary role was air defence for Royal Navy task forces, centred around the aircraft carriers.

In response to Guatemalan threats of invasion, a permanent detachment of four GR.3s was stationed in Belize from 1975 until early 1993. September of that year saw a short-term deployment of four GR.7s from No. 4(AC) Squadron from Germany to Belize as a show of force (see front cover photo).

THE FALKLANDS WAR AND THE HARRIER'S FINEST HOUR

When Argentina invaded the Falkland Islands, Britain faced the immense challenge of projecting military power across nearly 8,000 miles of ocean. The Royal Navy relied heavily upon the relatively small aircraft carriers HMS *Hermes* and HMS *Invincible* which, along with sister ship HMS *Illustrious*, had been designed specifically for Harrier operations, with a 'ski jump' ramp on the flight deck. Operating from these ships, the Sea Harrier became the principal means of providing air defence for the Task Force and, alongside the RAF's Harriers, was used for ground attack operations against Argentine forces.

Despite operating at extreme range and often in adverse weather conditions, Sea Harrier pilots achieved an impressive combat record. The aircraft's combination of manoeuvrability, advanced radar and AIM-9L Sidewinder missiles proved highly effective against Argentine aircraft. Perhaps more importantly, the Sea Harrier provided

Britain with a credible carrier-based fighter capability at a time when many questioned the future of naval aviation.

A GLOBAL SUCCESS STORY

The Harrier's reputation soon extended beyond British service. The United States Marine Corps became the largest overseas operator, initially with the GR.3-based AV-8A. Further development produced the AV-8B Harrier II, developed jointly by McDonnell Douglas and British Aerospace, featuring a larger wing, improved avionics, and increased payload capacity. The aircraft would serve in numerous operations from the Gulf War through to campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan. Spain, Italy and India also adopted Harrier variants for naval aviation duties, further demonstrating the versatility of the design.

The AV-8B Harrier II's retirement at Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point, North Carolina, on 3rd June 2026 brought to a close more than 50 years of Harrier operations in American service.

*Malcolm White finished his contribution to this article just 10 days before his death in July. □

VARIANTS

P.1127: The original six prototypes

Kestrel: Nine developed P.1127s for trials by the UK, Germany and the USA

Harrier: First British production aircraft; GR.1, GR.1A and GR.3 plus two-seat T.2, T.2A, T.4, T.4A

Sea Harrier FRS.1: Maritime version of GR.3 built for the Royal Navy and Indian Navy plus two-seaters T.4N, T.8, T.60

Sea Harrier FA.2: Upgraded FRS.1, for Royal Navy

McDonnell Douglas AV-8A and AV-8C: Modified Harrier GR.3 for the US Marine Corps and Spain (AV-8S, later sold to Thailand); plus two-seaters TAV-8A and TAV-8S



The final variant AV-8B with its nemesis, the Lockheed Martin F-35B (All pics © UK Ministry of Defence)

McDonnell Douglas AV-8B: Substantially upgraded aircraft with a new wing, for the US Marine Corps, Italian Navy and Spanish Navy

Harrier II: British version of AV-8B; GR.5, GR.5A, GR.7, GR.7A, GR.9



BRITISH AEROBATICS 'GET INTO AEROS' 2026

By Upper Freeman Charlie Coode

British Aerobatics runs 'Get into Aerobatics' events to promote the safe and enjoyable pursuit of aerobatics as a discipline and the sport of competition aerobatics in particular. In 2026 two events were run: the first 'Get Into Aerobatics' (GIA) event was aimed at GA pilots with limited or no previous experience of aerobatics and was held at Popham airfield on 16th May. The second 'Get into Aerobatics Contests' (GIAC) event was held alongside a British Aerobatics competition at Sleaf Airfield on 13th June, being designed to give holders of an aerobatics rating a taste of what is involved in competitive aerobatics. As in 2025, The Air Pilots Trust generously supported the British Aerobatics 'Get into Aerobatics' programme in 2026 and a summary of both events is provided here, with gratitude to the Company for its support.

'GET INTO AEROBATICS' - POPHAM AIRFIELD

GIA is run as a one-day immersion into the world of aerobatics, introduction to the sport of competition aerobatics and exposure to the broader British Aerobatics community. The programme is a mix of training flights, ground instructional and inspirational talks and demonstration flights showing participants what is involved at all levels of aerobatic competition. The day finishes with a social BBQ where the participants relive their experiences and get to mix with a wider cross section of the aerobatic community.

Twelve pilots were selected, representing a range of ages and from all around the country - all attracted by the opportunity of learning more about aerobatics, expanding their flying experience and the opportunity to fly in high performance aircraft.

Three aerobatic aircraft were supplied by different aerobatic training establishments, offering a representative selection of aircraft for early stage aerobatic training and competition:

- G-BUUA – Slingsby T67M-1 60 Firefly, provided by Flight Performance Training at Shoreham.
- G-BTTR - Pitts S-2A Special, provided by Ultimate Aerobatics at White Waltham.
- G-INGS – Super Decathlon, provided by Leicestershire Aero Club at Leicester Airport.

The aspiring aerobatic pilots were allocated to an aircraft and an instructor for the day, flying a series of aerobatic manoeuvres (a loop, stall turn, steep turns, half-Cuban 8, and a level roll), first separately and then linking them together in a competition sequence. Everybody enjoyed the flights immensely (even if some stomachs were complaining). Several of the participants well and truly caught the bug and have already started their aerobatic

ratings, aiming to get into competitions later in the year.

When they were not flying, participants attended ground talks about how to get into the sport, what's involved and what support is available. In addition, Chris Brook, a previous UK Unlimited Champion, talked about his journey as a pilot, his progression in the sport and some of the adventures he has had along the way.



GIAC participants hiding the Pitts Special

'GET INTO AEROBATIC CONTESTS' - SLEAP AIRFIELD

Building on GIA, GIAC is targeted at pilots with an aerobatic rating, so further down the path towards aerobatic competition. Whilst it is instructional, the event is run alongside a BA competition to give participants a feel for the competition environment. This year's GIAC was run at Sleaf, simultaneously with a Club, Sport and Intermediate level competition.

Four pilots took part (one of whom was a graduate from last year's 'GIA' event), with two pairs flying either the (hard working) Pitts S-2A from Ultimate Aerobatics, or the Extra EA-200 from Northwest Aerobatics. One participant had travelled down from Scotland and another fulfilled his childhood dream to fly a Pitts Special.

The flying instruction and practice at GIAC is more serious than GIA, with students flying twice in a simulated competition 'box' and completing a Club level sequence, with the instructors evaluating their performance.

Participants also attended the competition briefs, the competition judging line and were given a motivational talk by Nigel Lamb, a previous aerobatic champion at UK national level and in the Red Bull Air Race.

Smiles all round, alongside plans being made to attend future competitions showed the effectiveness of both GIA events as engaging with the broader GA community, expanding awareness of the sport of competition aerobatics and promoting the safe conduct of aerobatics. □

INTO THE DÉJÀ VU

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



CAT WITH TWO LIVES

Catalina Aircraft Trust, the type-certificate holder for the iconic Consolidated PBY Catalina, says it has commitments for up to 46 of an updated turboprop-powered Catalina II from Hong Kong-based Pan American Airways System. In amphibious form (a straight flying boat version is also on offer) the new aircraft would have a payload of over 5t of cargo or 34 passengers, and fire-bomber and special-mission variants are also available. All would be powered by two as-yet-unspecified 1,900hp (1,420kW) turboprops in place of the original 1,200hp Pratt & Whitney R-1830 piston engines. The potential customer – a licensed user of the Pan Am name and winged-globe logo – intends to offer tourist flights in Africa and beyond. (Catalina Aircraft Trust) □

THE GOLDEN OLDIES SHOW

With a scarcity of genuinely new aircraft types on display, the standout feature of the static aircraft park at this year's Farnborough Air Show was the number of comebacks and roles or variants for older types. They included:

BOEING 747



Four years after the type went out of production (and 22 years after one first appeared at Farnborough) a Boeing 747-400 dominated the park. This one is GE Aerospace's Flying Test Bed, sporting on this occasion four standard GE CF-6 turbofans while it awaits its next test engine.

DE HAVILLAND CANADA SHERPA



Fifty-two years after the basic Shorts SD3-30 first flew, current type-certificate holder De Havilland Canada is touting a return for the military Sherpa variant. The new model would have undated cockpit, avionics and engines.

GENERAL ATOMICS AEROTEC SYSTEMS DO228 NXT



The Dornier Do228 is a mere 45 years old: General Atomics' updated version of the utility/feederliner has refined fuselage aerodynamics, new five-bladed propellers and glass cockpit. The Do 228 is also the basis of the troubled ZeroAvia hydrogen/electric project.

SAAB 340B



The Saab 340B dates back to 1983: in 2026 the example operated by GE Aerospace in conjunction with Beta Technologies, NASA and Boeing has demonstrated flight at 30,000ft using an innovative hybrid-electric powerplant (standard GE CT7 turboshaft driving an electrical motor/generator to power the propeller) in its starboard nacelle. □