February 2026 ISSUE 73

AIR PILOT

INSIDE

CAN THEY SEE EACH OTHER?
IMPROVING ELECTRONIC CONSPICUITY

THE MASTER'S TOUR PT2

SOPWITH THE CENTENARIAN

THE HONOURABLE COMPANY OF AIR PILOTS
incorporating Air Navigators

PATRON:
His Majesty The King

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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.

FEBRUARY 2026

10th	APFC talk: Dacre Watson	Zoom
12th	GP&F	APH

MARCH 2026

10th	APFC talk: Tom Eeles	Zoom
12th	GP&F	APH
12th	Court	Cutlers' Hall
16th	Annual church service	St Michael's Cornhill
16th	AGM & Installation	Merchant Taylors' Hall
25th	APPL	APH
26th	Centenary Committee	APH

APRIL 2026

1st	APT/AST	APH
9th	GP&F	APH
12th	APFC Freddie Stringer Lunch	White Waltham
19th	APFC Start of Season Lunch	White Waltham
22nd	Luncheon Club	RAF Club
22nd	Cobham Lecture	RAF Club
28th	APBF	APH

Cover photos: Airliner and drone in close proximity (iStock/Olaser); T O M Sopwith in Howard Wright biplane at Brooklands

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...

The DAA's report in this issue on Electronic Conspicuity (EC) states: "Without doubt, the proliferation of uncrewed aircraft systems (UAS), especially for those wishing to operate beyond visual line of sight (BVLOS), and developments of urban mobility and EVTOL aircraft, are driving the need for EC and, arguably, the carefree days of flying non-radio, non-EC, such as in class G, are now numbered. EC may well be mandated before too long: if so, the authorities have a duty and a responsibility to ensure that proffered solutions are accessible and proportionate, without undue cost and complexity and not just a pathway of least resistance."

There remains a suspicion for some within the GA community about transponders and other EC devices, just as there is amongst drivers of electric vehicles resisting the installation of tracking devices – in the latter case to enable road-usage pricing as an equivalent of the taxes on the consumption of fossil fuels in road transport, rather than for enhancing transport safety. Those reservations mainly seem to be about allowing 'the authorities' to track the whereabouts of a particular aircraft or vehicle and thus impinging on an individual's right of privacy.

In aviation the desire for tracking is not driven necessarily by the need to know the specific identity of the aircraft (though knowledge that the warning blip on a screen or beep in the ear represents a drone, a helicopter or a glider might be helpful to other airspace users trying to avoid a conflict with it) so much as knowing the position, track and speed of that aircraft. That knowledge is, of course, a direct mutual benefit to all the airspace users involved, and only an incidental benefit to the managers of that airspace in that the overall safety and efficiency of their system are improved.

Their primary interest is not in knowing who has avoided a conflict as much as in knowing that the conflict was avoided. There is a secondary benefit – the confidence that all users can see and be seen means that the airspace may be able to absorb more aircraft with smaller separations in time and distance with no loss of safety. The challenge for the CAA in its consultation on EC is to find a solution that delivers all of the desired improvements in safety, efficiency and user trust, with the minimum extra burdens of weight and cost – and maximum compatibility with what is done in the rest of Europe.

Allan Winn - Editor

IN THIS ISSUE...

NEWS

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NEWS ROUNDUP

GASCO UPDATE

By Liveryman Mike O'Donoghue

The General Aviation Safety Council (GASCo) identified a number of key safety themes and emerging risks during its most recent Council Meeting.

Loss of Control in Flight (LOC-I)

Loss of Control in Flight continues to feature prominently in UK GA accidents. Attendees emphasised the need for renewed focus on energy management, recognition of developing flight instability, and effective recovery techniques. Partial-power events remain a continuing theme in accident and occurrence data.

Approach and landing stability

A significant proportion of recent GA accidents involve high approach speeds, unstable approaches and bounced landings. The importance of correct speeds from the pilot's operating handbook, prompt go-around decisions, and training for bounced-landing recovery was urged.

Engine and power-loss events

Engine failures and partial-power occurrences remain a consistent operational risk. Recent investigations highlight issues including maintenance-related failures, oil-system vulnerabilities, and the impact of oil contamination on electrical systems.

Airspace Infringements

Airspace infringements have decreased slightly year-on-year, but hotspots remain around busy controlled airspace and local flying areas. Increasing numbers of newly licensed pilots have been involved in infringements, reflecting challenges in flight-planning, vertical profile awareness, and over-reliance on moving map technology.

NOTAM Overload

Several attendees expressed concern that the volume of low-priority NOTAMs may obscure time-critical information such as aerobatic activity or Restricted Areas (Temporary). GASCo will continue to support national work exploring improvements to NOTAM presentation and prioritisation.

Rotorcraft and gyroplane safety

Recent accident investigations and operator feedback highlight the need for pilots to remain familiar with manufacturer guidance on helicopter handling, including vortex-ring-state recovery and unexpected-yaw response. Gyroplane operations remain vulnerable to steep approach paths and, in isolated cases, propeller failures.

Medical fitness and cognitive factors

Analysis of accident data continues to show the significance of cognitive performance, particularly among older pilots. Checklists, personal monitoring, and professional advice remain essential tools for safety.

Research and training innovation

The meeting also highlighted new research into the use of virtual-reality and motion platforms to study pilot responses to loss-of-control scenarios. GASCo will support dissemination of these findings as they emerge. □

FAVOUR FOR A LADY (MAYOR)

By PM Richie Piper

A few years ago, as Dame Sue Langley's shrieval term was coming to end, she and Gary invited us for drinks at the Old Bailey, and as we enjoyed convivial drinks, I found myself asking Sue if she would like a flypast by the Catalina for her Lady Mayor's Show. This would be, subject to election, in two years' time. Sue enthusiastically welcomed the possibility.

The Lady Mayor goes plane-spotting!

Six months before the show, the real preparations began. In addition to the usual flying display regulations, there were many other factors and agencies that needed to be considered and involved. A key person was the Pageant Master, Dominic Reid, who was ever helpful and supportive despite all the other aspects of the procession that demanded his attention. At the early stages, the RAF planned to also provide a flypast with a Eurofighter Typhoon. I wanted to ensure we did not get in their way and would fit around their plans, although some people asked if we would be flying in formation. I quickly explained that wouldn't work!

In terms of aviation regulation, we would need to fly under either a SERA exemption or an Article 86 permission (as for all air displays). The CAA and NATS were extremely helpful throughout the process. The SERA exemption would allow us to fly lower over London than normal rules of the air allow. However, if the flypast became known to the public, it would be considered an air display and with so many people involved, to ensure we operated legally I had to obtain an Article 86 permission, adding to my costs.

Most airshows and flypasts have defined spectator and

sterile areas but as we would be flying over London we had to consider and mitigate the risks of the whole flight being over the public. In addition, there are several tall buildings in the vicinity of Mansion House, especially to the East, to account for in our route planning.

FDD REQUIRED

As even this single flypast was considered a display, a Level 2 Flying Display Director (FDD) would be required on the ground. Liveryman Al Lockwood agreed to act as our FDD, but when the amount of work the CAA would require to assess and mitigate risks became clear, he reluctantly had to withdraw but fortunately Roger Steele agreed to pick up the tasks and an intensive period of assessing building heights and optimum routing was undertaken. The CAA permission required a Minimum Safety Distance (MSD) of 230m horizontally and vertically from buildings. This meant we would route from the north at 1,500ft and start a descent at Finsbury Circus to 1,150ft by Mansion House, starting the turn as we flew over the Bank of England. We would then follow the route of the procession to the West, climbing again to 1,500ft. The height of St Pauls (410ft/124m) would mean routing South by the MSD before we were at top of climb.

NATS had approved in principle flying through the London City CTR - indeed, we were given Category E priority for four minutes rather than the usual Category Z. Associated with this ACN approval was the wider route plan and associated NOTAM. Indeed, the NOTAM caused me some consternation as, with a week to go, on one of my many route reviews, I spotted a line on the Skydemon map that I hadn't seen before - it was the route NOTAM! We would also need a dedicated radio frequency to communicate with the FDD, issued by the CAA and licensed by Ofcom.

With six weeks to go the RAF had to withdraw, meaning we would be the sole flypast asset. The BBC wanted us over Mansion House at 10:59:30 local time and in the last fortnight we were told we were opening the show! The pressure was rising and the forecasts were varying greatly, especially with the cloudbase.

One factor post-Shoreham is that the CAA will not issue any exemptions. Display currency requires three displays or display practices in the last 90 days, one of them in the last 30 days. Our previous display would be 35 days before the show, so a display practice was flown the week before at Duxford.

Luckily The Shard is not on the direct route to Mansion House

THE DAY DAWNS

The crew (Phill Petitt, David Legg and me) arrived at Duxford the night before ready for an early and unrushed start. (We display the aircraft with two pilots and have a CAA dispensation to also have a crew chief with us to visually check the landing gear status and assist with emergencies including manual float retraction and emergency gear operation.) I had driven out from London where Dame Sue had kindly arranged for me to sit by her and Gary to witness her installation at the Silent Ceremony in Guildhall. As our ground crew prepared the aircraft, we re-briefed the flight, checked in with NATS and with Roger the FDD, already at Mansion House. During this period the cloud cover and base kept changing but there was a blue hole over Mansion House.

To ensure we met our timing commitment, we held outside the CTR in the Lee Valley. The cloud continued to be an issue around our height, meaning we had to alter our orbits, and we were close to abandoning the flight.

With five minutes to go, we set off for the target and fortunately the cloud was clear enough to comply with our clearance. We were soon descending to Mansion House but there wasn't time to lower the floats for a personal salute to Sue. We were pretty much on time: on the TV coverage you can see the Lady Mayor pointing at us as we turned in front of Mansion House. The Shard, well south of our route, wasn't an issue but, together with the rail bridge to Cannon Street, was a good visual to align our track to Mansion House.

So, mission accomplished after a lot of work and stress. I hope it added to the Lady Mayor's joy for the day and my great appreciation for everyone who made it possible including the CAA, NATS, Pageant Master, City of London Police, the Catalina team at Plane Sailing and Roger Steele. □

LONDON AIR AMBULANCE UPDATE

During my visit to the Royal London Hospital to hand over a cheque for nearly £2,000 to the London Air Ambulance (*Air Pilot* December 2025, p9), the result of fundraising during my Master's year, I was updated on the trialling of portable ECMO, or Extracorporeal Membrane Oxygenation. This is to support cardiac arrest patients whose heart cannot be restarted and the portable ECMO unit, the size of a large coolbox, injects oxygenated blood under pressure into the patient. Without ECMO the patient survival rate is around 10%, with ECMO being trialled the survival rate increases to around 40%. At the time of the cheque presentation ECMO was being trialled two days a week as training and equipment assessment was undertaken. I am greatly appreciative of everyone who contributed to this support of the LAA. *IPM Richie Piper*

UPDATE: YOUTH IN AVIATION

By Liveryman Alasdair Beaton

We have had another successful year in 2025, flying young carers through our Air Pilots Youth in Aviation Scheme. This year we worked twice with Northumberland Aviation, flying 23 Newcastle young carers from Eshott airfield. With Leeds and Rochdale Young Carers, using the Sherburn Aero Club, we also flew another 11 young carers, all of them between nine and 15 years old. Flights were flown in Piper PA-28s, with three young carers taken on each sortie: for the majority, it was their very first flying experience.

Our attempts to fly 25 young carers from Belfast were thwarted on three occasions by the lack of suitable weather conditions but as soon as spring '26 brings better weather, we will return to Northern Ireland and The Ulster Flying Club at Newtownards Airport. Two Company member pilots are planning to complete the Belfast flying programme, which will take to well over 100 the number of young carers that our scheme has sponsored since the project began on 8th March 2021.

Young carers at Eshott

The plan is to next invite Glasgow Young Carers flying and also approach Surrey Young Carers to offer the same opportunity from Fairoaks airport. It looks like 2026 will be another good year for the Company to share our fun of flying with such deserving young people. □

GAZETTE APPROVED BY THE COURT 22 JANUARY 2026

ADMISSIONS

As Upper Freeman

Stuart Paul COOK (OS)
Allison Jane EKE
Simon de LABILLIERE
David Charles SENIOR

As Freeman

Aidan CORREA (AUS)
Tim CUNNINGHAM
Teresa Mary GRAHAM
Yarema NAGOVSKY
Sudheer Kumar SHARMA
Matthew Alexander WOOLLEY

As Associate

Sigourney Obeng ANSAH
Joy CHEUNG LO (HK)
William John David FROST
Tobias Junfei GREEN
Sergey ICHTCHENKO
Finlay David LEDGER
Sameer Sharma PATEL
Andrew PICKER (AUS)
Liam Trigg Gabriel SHARP
Yik Hei Matthew WONG (HK)

ACKNOWLEDGED BY THE COURT 22 January 2026

REGRADE

As Liveryman

Annalisa RUSSELL-SMITH

RESIGNATIONS

Crispin ORR
Richard PILLANS
Gareth WOOD (OS)

DECEASED

Richard BROWNIE
Bruce COUSINS
Gerald HACKEMER

MASTER'S MESSAGE

By The Master, John Denyer

Incredibly, this is my final Master's message; the year has passed so quickly. It has also been one of the busiest of our lives, not least because, from the outset, I resolved to attend everything I possibly could. The calendar has been a lively mix of business and social occasions, but I hope that each has allowed us to represent the Company well and to enhance its standing.

The Trophies and Awards Banquet was, as ever, a magnificent occasion. I hope that everyone there enjoyed it as much as Kate and I did. Since my last message another principal highlight, aside from the tour, was the carol service at St Michael's Cornhill. The choir was superb, as always, and the evening was rounded off perfectly by the warm hospitality during supper afterwards at The Factory House in Leadenhall Market.

I had assumed naively that the New Year might bring a quieter period in terms of City events, but not so. As I will not have the opportunity to report on them afterwards, forgive me for highlighting a few now. We are attending a reception to bid farewell to the Bishop of London, Dame Sarah Mullally, as she prepares to take up her appointment as Archbishop of Canterbury. This will be followed by the City's New Year Service at St Michael's Cornhill, and the Mark Long Trust launch dinner at the Petwood Hotel in Woodhall Spa. I have formal dinners with the Tobacco Pipe Makers, the Fan Makers and the Furniture Makers, as well as a lunch with the Water Conservators. Add to that the Dawn to Dusk awards, the Poulters' Pancake Race, lectures from the Educators and the World Traders, and a visit to Treloars College, and it is clear that the pace will not slacken any time soon.

BOW-WAVE OF GOODWILL

I am deeply grateful to all members of the Court for their support. Throughout the year it has felt rather like riding a bow-wave of goodwill, and I have greatly valued the collective experience and wisdom that has been available whenever needed. By the time you read this, the Court will have elected a new Warden, and the elections of Assistants will be under way. We have a strong team currently serving on the Court, and I have felt privileged to work alongside you. That strength does not arise by chance. It depends on a steady flow of members putting themselves forward for election as Liverymen, and of Liverymen standing for election as Assistants, to ensure a healthy balance of background and experience. My Court colleagues would agree that serving on the Court can be immensely rewarding.

The Australian War Memorial in Canberra on Remembrance Day

In March, I shall be handing over to Master Elect Elizabeth Walkinshaw. I know the Company will be in excellent hands under her leadership, and I look forward to supporting her. I am sure that her year will be every bit as exciting, rewarding and enjoyable as mine has been. There is much about being Master that I shall miss, although the prospect of returning to some semblance of normality – or perhaps reality – does have its appeal.

I am keen to get flying in the Tiger and the Chipmunk again, as there has been little time for that. I have kept active with my band through the year, but am eager to have more time working on new material with them. All of this, however, may have to wait a little longer, as I am scheduled for jury service at the start of April!

I am indebted to our Learned Clerk, Paul, and his team for their hard work; to David Curgenven for his tireless efforts with the Company's visits; to DAA Nick Goodwyn for guiding the Company's technical strategy; and to our Honorary officials, Archivist Peter Elliott, Treasurer Ian Melia, Chaplain Ray Pentland and, of course, Editor Allan Winn, who produces such a well regarded magazine.

Last, but certainly not least, my heartfelt thanks go to my wife, "Konsort Kate", for sharing this extraordinary adventure, for organising her own events and for being an ambassador for the Air Pilots among the other Consorts. Finally, we thank you, the Air Pilots, for placing your trust in us to represent you. It has been a great privilege. □

REGIONAL REPORTS

Regional report: Australia

By Liveryman Adrian Young, Chairman

As 2025 drew to a close, the Australian Region of the Honourable Company of Air Pilots celebrated an extraordinary period of engagement, achievement, and progress. The last three months were defined by connection, collaboration, and a renewed commitment to advancing aviation professionalism and safety.

MASTER'S TOUR – STRENGTHENING BONDS ACROSS AUSTRALIA

The highlight of this quarter was the 2025 Master's Tour, which spanned six cities and over 5,000km, reinforcing the values of fellowship and professionalism. From Perth to Canberra, the Master engaged with universities, aviation schools, and industry leaders, inspiring future aviators and celebrating excellence.

- **Perth**: Visits to Edith Cowan University and Melville High School saw innovation in aviation education.
- **Adelaide**: Awards were presented, including the Master's Australian Trophy and Master Air Pilot Certificates, and a memorable Aldinga Aero Club fly-in.
- **Melbourne**: Training excellence was highlighted at RMIT's Aviation Academy, where scholarship recipient Sarah Kirby exemplified our commitment to supporting emerging talent.
- **Sydney**: Scenic flights combined with recognition of student achievements, including the Australian Region Prize in Aviation Safety.
- **Brisbane**: Fellowship was celebrated at the Working Group Dinner, presenting awards such as the Barry Marsden Award and Grand Master's Australian Medal, and a visit to the Qantas Group Pilot Academy.
- **Canberra**: A fitting finale with strategic discussions involving RAAF, CASA, ATSB, and Airservices Australia, addressing critical issues such as airspace reform, advanced air mobility, and mental health initiatives.

GOVERNMENT ENGAGEMENT – DRIVING STRATEGIC DIALOGUE

The Master's meetings with senior executives from the Department of Infrastructure, CASA, ATSB, and Airservices Australia marked a significant step forward in recognition of the Region's role in shaping aviation policy and safety. Key topics included:

- **Airspace modernisation & OneSKY** – Enhancing efficiency and preparing for AAM integration.
- **Safety management systems (SMS)** – Ensuring compliance by 2026.
- **Workforce development** – Addressing shortages of Licensed Maintenance Engineers and flight instructors.
- **Technology & cybersecurity** – Preparing for digital towers and mitigating emerging risks.
- **Mental health & wellbeing** – Strengthening peer support and advocacy.

These discussions reaffirmed the Region's influence and opened pathways for future collaboration, including on advisory panels and support for STEM initiatives.

SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMME – A RECORD YEAR

Our scholarship programme achieved unprecedented success, attracting **over 100 applications** across three streams: GA Ready, UPRT, and Gliding. Seven outstanding young aviators were awarded scholarships, thanks to the generous support of **Flight Standards (Darwin)** and **UPRT Australia (Brisbane)**. This initiative not only promotes safety and airmanship but also strengthens our membership base by engaging the next generation.

LOOKING AHEAD

Exciting developments are on the horizon. The Australian Region Dinner & Jim Cowan Memorial Lecture in March 2026 following the AGM, will honour our heritage and foster community.

A modernised constitution endorsed by London and set for member vote at the AGM, ensures that governance aligns with contemporary standards while preserving tradition.

IN SUMMARY:

The past quarter has showcased the Australian Region's vitality and influence—from inspiring future pilots and celebrating excellence to shaping policy and advancing safety. As we move into 2026, we remain committed to our mission: promoting professionalism, safety, and fellowship across the aviation community.

The Master awards Upper Freemen Peter Norford (l, Master's Australian Trophy) and Steve Nelson (r, Master Air Pilot)

Regional Report: Hong Kong

By Liveryman Rob Jones, Chairman

November in Hong Kong saw the final leg of the Master's Tour by Master John Denyer and Consort Kate Denyer. The preparations for their visit started months beforehand, to ensure a diverse and interesting week. Thankfully, as this was my second Master's visit as Chairman, most of the groundwork had already been completed - and this year I hadn't just started my Command course, making life much easier.

Whilst our Company objectives include "… maintaining liaison with all authorities connected with licensing, training and legislation…", I also believe in maintaining a strong liaison with other areas around the airfield that also directly affect pilots and navigators. These include meteorological services, air traffic control, engineering and aviation security. I believe that, as an aviator, having a closer relationship and better understanding of these areas enhances airmanship and awareness, thus improving flight safety.

As aircrew, we have to trust implicitly that those on the ground have done their job correctly and proficiently so that we may fly as safely as possible from A to B. In the age of technology, we see less and less personal interaction with those we rely on. No morning met brief from the forecaster, a fleeting chat with the engineer before they head to release the next aircraft, familiar voices on the radio of people we've never met. The Master's visit is a great opportunity to visit all these places around the airfield in quick succession and to meet these people we rely on in a more relaxed and engaging manner.

To start, we visited Hong Kong Aero Engine Services Ltd or HAESL, which repairs and overhauls the Rolls-Royce Trent and RB211 engines used by both Hong Kong and foreign carriers. Having myself relied on several different Trent engines for the past 13 years, I've taken great comfort and reassurance in visiting HAESL to meet and see the many people and machines that ensure such a high reliability and near-faultless operation.

Next, we visited the Hong Kong Observatory, whose people have long been good friends of the Hong Kong Region. Unfortunately, this year we weren't able to visit the main Observatory in Tsim Sha Tsui because of construction works but, nonetheless, had an informative and eye-opening visit to the Aviation Meteorological Office at Hong Kong International Airport Tower. Here we were briefed on the latest use of artificial intelligence to model and predict tropical cyclone trajectories, the monitoring and reporting of windshear and thunderstorm activity using a system called AIRCAST, which monitors the build-up of clouds to predict a thunderstorm 8h ahead of arrival.

The well-attended Women in Aviation event

Following our visit to HKO, we met with Hong Kong Air Traffic Control Association which is always an over-subscribed event! Thankfully the controllers we met were good sports about the number of questions our group fired at them. I think I can speak for most pilots in saying that we all feel a healthy rivalry between us and the controllers as to who knows best! With so many changes recently in Hong Kong airspace, we all came away with a much deeper understanding of the operation from ATC's point of view.

STARTING WITH ENGINES

Throughout the week we had a healthy number of social events to ensure it wasn't just all work and no play. The events were well attended by the members, starting with a cocktail party and junk boat trip in collaboration with the Royal British Legion Hong Kong and China Branch. We rounded off the social events with our Friday night Black Tie Dinner.

The final event of the Master's visit was a Women in Aviation Summit organised by the committee. We lined up nine highly-successful female guest speakers from around the airfield to share with the over 130 young ladies in attendance, some guidance and motivation on breaking barriers and how they got into the field of aviation and achieved success. With the percentage of women in aviation still in single digits, we were extremely encouraged at how well the event was received by the attendees. The post-summit networking event was packed full of enthusiastic young ladies with plenty of questions for our guest speakers! After a break over the festive period, I wish all a Happy New Year. □

Regional Report: New Zealand

By Upper Freeman Ron Thacker, Chairman

I write this report from a hotel room in Oslo, where I am holidaying with my family. We came here seeking a white, Scandinavian Christmas, a far cry from the summer Christmas we usually enjoy in New Zealand. Despite being near the height of summer, New Zealand Christmas celebrations still feature snow-clad trees, reindeer and winter decorations. This harks from our colonial roots but also demonstrates how connected the modern world is. For New Zealand, with its 2,000km moat, that connectedness relies heavily on air transport. Similarly, the defence of our extensive maritime territory relies heavily on aviation assets, both air and space.

New Zealand's aviation history is rich and storied but the future of aviation in New Zealand is as challenging as it is in the rest of the world. We are not training enough aircrew or technicians to support expected future growth in aviation and, for those who argue that unmanned aviation systems will address this shortfall, we are also failing to produce young aviators with the technical and 'soft' skills to maintain and operate these complex systems. Notwithstanding, the Royal New Zealand Air Force recently stood up a Space Operations squadron, a very small unit but one that is working closely with our 'Five Eyes' partners. With this, and the growing space launch industry in New Zealand, our region will increasingly be looking to move our horizons beyond the atmosphere.

SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN

The Air Pilots membership in New Zealand is relatively small and distinctly ageing. We have a wealth of experience but we have perhaps not been particularly effective at sharing that experience. As a result, over the last year we have engaged in a fairly rigorous social media campaign with two broad aims: to promote the Company to a wider aviation audience; and to encourage increased membership, particularly among younger aviators. We have seen some growth in membership, which is encouraging, and our Executive Committee has been actively working on activities to engage with younger aviators. This includes promotion of our monthly technical webinars, development of an aviation skills seminar, and work on targeted webinars for those interested in entering the aviation community.

We are building on the solid platform set by our previous Chair, Liveryman Capt Allan Boyce. Allan was justifiably awarded the Jean Batten Memorial Trophy at the 2025 T&A banquet in recognition of his work across multiple aviation domains over a long period of time. The citation for his award can be found on the Company website (p15 of the Awards and Citations Booklet 2025). Our region continues to be very well served by the Executive Committee, which welcomed a couple of new members at our last AGM. One of those recent arrivals, Upper Freeman Richard Beaton, has been the driving force behind our social media campaign.

This last year also saw our Regional Technical Director, Liveryman Capt Mike Zaytsoff, complete his first full year in the role of Chair of the International Technical Forum. We are delighted that the New Zealand region is able to support so capably the wider Company work.

In November we hosted the Master on the New Zealand leg of his southern odyssey, with activities scheduled in Christchurch, Wellington and Auckland. Despite some unavoidable hiccups with the programme, we gave the Master and his consort a good taste of New Zealand and exposure to a number of our members. At our annual formal dinner in Auckland (held in the RNZAF Base Auckland Officers' Mess at Whenuapai) we also saw the RNZAF (GAPAN) Sword presented to Sqn Ldr Craig Clark in recognition of his exceptional leadership, professionalism, and unwavering dedication as Detachment Commander for the inaugural deployment of the Beechcraft MC-12K King Air to the Southwest Pacific.

Past NZ Chairman Allan Boyce (centre) receives the Jean Batten Memorial Award, flanked by Rob Edwards, the Master, Konsort Kate and new NZ Chairman Ron Thacker

In summary, I believe we enter 2026 in good shape to further the aims of the Honourable Company in our Region and to support the Company's broader activities. □

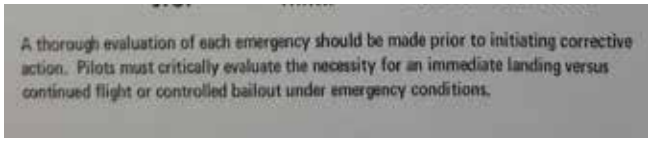
Regional report, North America

By Freeman Hal Adams, Chairman

Who's the student during "flight instruction" sessions? The flight instructor or student? The answer, if given some thought, is *both* are learning. After all, people are the key variable in the learning experience. The static aircraft does not change, nor does the check-list. They are inanimate objects until a pilot or student and instructor are inserted in the situation.

Someone has to be in charge and the aviation authorities have decided the flight instructor is in charge of flight instructing, the overall learning and operational environment. However, flight instructing is a "transactional experience": it is difficult at times to determine who is learning at any particular time.

This student/instructor dynamic seems very "normal", enhanced when the instructor is new and the student is new. However, this interchange, at varying levels of intensity, continues throughout the training relationship. As a good friend, and one of my first flight instructors, continues to remind me, all good flight instructors, new and senior, learn from students.



Remember this!

I mention this instructor-student relationship based on a long-term friendship with a fellow aviator. A little explanation seems appropriate and relevant. As a new flight student, my first flight instruction experience was while I was in the US military. I had to pause this civilian flight training, to deconflict my military flightcrew duties, and that pause lasted for about three years.

A COMMON PASSION

Once I was back in civilian life and attending university, my initial flight instructor was a fellow military veteran. Like me, he was an enlisted flight crew member. We had many common, relatable life experiences. However, overarching connectivity is our common aviation passion involving a deep fascination and passion for flying. We both achieved our commercial single-engine land (SEL) licences with instrument rating, as well as Certified Flight Instructor qualification. My friend secured a law degree and initially a professional government flying position, before establishing an aviation law firm. I went into aviation business management and development.

We continue to "hangar fly", marveling at the student-instructor relationship and dynamics. Our early flight training experiences provided us both with a valuable insight into human behaviour as we learned together. Military combat flight experience, discipline and critical flight crew co-ordination conditioned us to listen more, talk less.

Who is learning the most? (iStock)

The admonition pictured is from one of my multi-crewed aircraft flight manuals and helps to reinforce the need to listen. It was the opening statement on the very first page of the emergency procedures checklist section and had to be memorised. During check rides it was often the first item which the check airman would require the crew member to recite from memory.

My long-time pilot friend and I have ample time and experience behind us and we marvel at the inter-human complexity of flight training. The lessons learned via flight operations experience, whether active or passive, written information and instruction, underscore the interpersonal skills needed by a pilot. This applies across the broad spectrum of pilot qualifications.

A prime example of applied, learned, listening techniques is the result of living in and doing business where English is not the primary language, even when the common language of aviation is predominantly "aviation English". I learned "disciplined listening" out of necessity. I discovered early on that just because a non-English speaker indicates they understand, that may not be the reality. I try to always ask for feedback when conversing with people whose primary language is not English. However, I might point out that there are variations of English, as was an early language lesson learned when I was living in the United Kingdom.

While English is the language of modern aviation, that still leaves the rather bothersome issue of the spoken word. International flight operations can involve rather startling issues, such as radio communications. I have heard some rather strange, as well as unintelligible, ATC readbacks, followed by the usual ATC response of "Say again, (call sign)." It's usually all cleared up in the end but can be a real issue when the voice comm is very crowded and ATC is extremely busy. However, more and more use of data link and less HF (High Frequency) radio for clearances helps. Using data link is a real positive, even if not as much help regarding spoken communication. □

NORTH AMERICA SCHOLARSHIPS

By Assistant Mark Tousey, ASF Chairman

Following its establishment in 2023, the HCAP Aerospace Scholarship Foundation, Inc (ASF) is now fully operational and poised to make its first scholarship grants in early 2026.

In the first stage of its development, the ASF will be providing scholarships for pilots who already have obtained their commercial licence or who will have completed it by the time the scholarship is granted and are working toward their ATPL or type ratings. This will maximise their hiring potential for the industry.

Guided by a USA-Canada-UK board comprising Assistants Mark Tousey and Kat Hodge, Liverymen Peter Allen, Dave White, Lucy Young, and NA Region Chairman Hal Adams *ex officio*, the ASF is fully operational and growing. Last year, we welcomed Kat Hodge to the Board. Kat brings many years of valuable experience as the lead for Company's scholarship programme in the UK.

We have established an Advisory Board comprised of leaders in the commercial and military aviation world in the USA and Canada. Their involvement will widen the promotion of the Company and the Foundation in the North American Region.

During the Master's 2025 North American Tour, the activity of the ASF received praise throughout the US and Canadian fields as a key activity of the North American Region. It is tangible proof of the importance of the Region in supporting the next generation of pilots. It also furthers the global renown of the Company.

Over the course of 2025, the directors secured initial funding to permit the granting of its first two scholarships, and the application process will get underway in early 2026. ASF is forging an affiliation with University of North Dakota Department of Aviation as its first partner in the US. We expect to increase the number of our affiliations in both the USA and Canada soon.

The forthcoming year will also see the establishment of a sister Canadian charity to operate alongside the ASF so that donors from Canada are able to make $Can donations and receive tax receipts and so ASF can make donations to Canadian entities or individuals.

PLEASE DONATE!

We have a dedicated page on the Company website under *International Air Pilots/North America* where you will find details of how you can donate. Our fundraising goal for 2026 is $50,000.

To date, most of our donations have come from private foundations. We would welcome wide support from

The University of North Dakota's massive training fleet (UND)

Company members from the North America Region and beyond. We have established accounts at PayPal, Zelle, Venmo, and Zeffy to make donating as easy as possible. We also accept US dollar cheques made payable to HCAP Aerospace Scholarship Foundation, Inc. Donors may send cheques to HCAP ASF, care of Dave White, 3409 Colt Drive, Plano TX, 75074-2827. All contributions are tax-deductible for US taxpayers and will be acknowledged with a receipt for tax purposes.

Many major employers offer a matching programme for employee donations, and this permits Company members' donations to have an even greater impact. We are aware that Boeing, Delta, United Technologies, Lockheed Martin, General Electric, Northrup Grumman, and Raytheon, amongst others, offer charitable donation matches at no additional cost to the donor.

As always, we ask for your support to widen the net of potential donors by sharing our details with your friends and colleagues. The work of the ASF will heighten the renown of the Company and the NA Region, and in turn allow us to give even more support to the industry with scholarships alongside technical advice and safety training. If you are aware of any corporates or grant-making bodies that you know support education and aviation, we would be happy either to follow up directly with them or by way of an introduction from you.

We are proud to be supporting the North American Region and highlighting its support for young pilots and the aviation sector in the US and Canada. The activity of the ASF is core to the mission of the Company of encouraging those around the world who wish to become pilots, and we are always grateful for your support. □

REPORT: THE YOUNG AIR PILOTS

By Associate Chris Barrott and Upper Freeman Craig Jardine

Moving into a new year and looking forward to the exciting calendar that we have planned for 2026, it's important for us to reflect on 2025 and the successful year that we've had.

Most importantly, we had an extremely busy social calendar, supporting the full range of our membership. The first event of the year was our spring BBQ and fly-in at Breighton, with a fascinating tour of the historic aircraft hangars. We followed this up with our *Experience Gliding* evening and BBQ at Cambridge Gliding Club. Both events were extremely well attended, with them seeing members fly-in from across the country. Summer is a busy time of year for those of us who fly professionally, but we still managed to squeeze in a pub social in London following the August Future Pilot Assessment Day (FPAD), before rounding the summer off with our summer BBQ and fly-in at White Waltham.

The highlight of the year for The Company is the T&A Banquet, and we saw a fantastic turnout of nearly 30 YAPs, the most in recent years. This included the now traditional pub visit beforehand, which was also attended by YAPs who were unable to attend T&A. Finally, to round off the year, we enjoyed a fantastic winter social at the RAF Club. An enjoyable evening of catching up with YAPs old and new was had, with 50 members in attendance.

We had events in conjunction with major airlines, giving our YAPs exclusive access to industry experts. The TUI outreach team kindly hosted an afternoon of workshops covering the industry, interview and assessment preparation, and how to conduct real-world briefings, and socialised in the pub with members afterwards. The recruitment team from British Airways attended Air Pilots House and gave a talk on the industry, the Speedbird programme, and life at BA. Both of these events were extremely successful, and we already have more in the works for 2026.

Throughout the year, the Young Air Pilots continued to support the important promotions and outreach work of the Company, with a number of us volunteering our time at numerous events. We had a large number of members attend Pilots Careers Live in March and November, supporting not only the stand but also the breakout sessions. We also had volunteers at the Guildhall Careers Fair in February, the British Airways Summer Fly-In in July, and the Young Aviators Networking Evening in November, to name a few. There are always more opportunities to get involved with, so please get in touch with the committee if you are interested.

The YAP-led mentoring programme launched this year and we are pleased to see members already being linked up with mentors from the vast Company network. Alongside this, Flying-Start continues to develop as our platform for interacting with potential members not yet qualified to join The Company, and a number of members, supported the re-launch of FPAD. We have seen a number of YAPs celebrate many personal success this year, including landing their first flying Jobs with major airlines such as TUI, EasyJet and Ryanair, or passing various points of their training from their initial PPL, right through to gaining the CPL ME/IR. Well done to all! □

Record YAP turnout at the T&A

The spring BBQ at Breighton

The Christmas Social

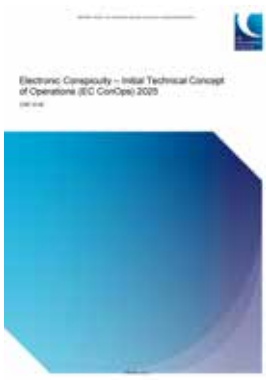
ELECTRONIC CONSPICUITY

From the Desk of the DAA, PM Nick Goodwyn

Our airspace is becoming ever more complex and congested and, as reported in October's *Air Pilot*, airspace modernisation is but one aspect of operations where the interests of our members must be represented. Where appropriate, the thinking of government and regulatory bodies must be supported or challenged to ensure fairness of access to all users and operators, be it GA, CAT, uncrewed, gliding, light aircraft and rotary.

One thing is clear that use of emergent technologies will continue to play a significant part in how we are to fly safely in the near and long term. One key topic is the use of Electronic Conspicuity (EC). In its basic form, EC enables aircraft to "detect and be detected", with the intent of reducing the risk of mid-air collisions and improving situational awareness for users and operators.

Without doubt, the proliferation of uncrewed aircraft systems (UAS), especially for those wishing to operate beyond visual line of sight (BVLOS), and developments of urban mobility and EVTOL aircraft, are driving the need for EC and, arguably, the carefree days of flying non-radio, non-EC, such as in class G, are now numbered. EC may well be mandated before too long: if so, the authorities have a duty and a responsibility to ensure that proffered solutions are accessible and proportionate, without undue cost and complexity and not just those of least resistance.



The CAA's ConOps lays out EC options

COMPANY RESPONSES

Members of the International Technical Forum (ITF) and the Airspace Innovation and Research Tech Group (AIRTAG) recently submitted collated responses to the UK CAA's consultation on its draft *Initial Technical Concept of Operations* (ConOps) for EC.

The ConOps sets out proposed technical requirements, equipage standards and operational use of EC to support safe integration of new and existing airspace users, including UAS, in UK airspace. It describes nine proposed policy positions whilst the consultation also included a call for evidence on a potential EC mandate, which is being explored separately by the CAA and Department for Transport (DfT). The ConOps limits itself to specific regulated radio frequencies and equipage, for example the use of Automatic Dependent Surveillance – Broadcast (ADS–B) operating in the 1090MHz frequency band and which is often a modification of a Mode-S transponder.

Interestingly, the UK ConOps approach is at variance with that of EASA, which has chosen to adopt a wider range of solutions, with broader regulated boundaries, such as integrating Automatic Dependent Surveillance-Light (ADS-L) as well as ADS-B and also use of ground stations that rebroadcast or relay signals (including mobile networks such as 4G), multi-function in-cockpit devices or a combination of these.

COMPLEX BACKGROUND

The background to this is in itself somewhat complex and has been a long time in gestation. It comes with an inherent risk of a residual reticence to embrace or even contemplate all possible options that might deliver a fair and proportional implementation of EC. This risk might result in having to revisit EC, repeatedly, in the future. Simply, is what appears to be a Con-Ops with self-imposed limitations a result of a lack of sufficient resources and urgency to deliver policy triumphing over a will to amend or develop existing regulatory constraints?

The CAA published the draft initial ConOps for EC in July 2025 as CAP 3141 and it states: "Electronic Conspicuity is an essential element to enhance airspace safety and situational awareness by enabling aircraft to be detected electronically. This detection data can be used to reduce mid-air collision risk where appropriately acted upon. While EC improves situational awareness and air-to-air and air-to-ground detection, EC alone cannot fully mitigate mid-air collision risks. This document will focus on the dual aims of enhancing manned aircraft situational awareness and enabling detect-and-avoid for Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS)."

The journey of EC is somewhat complicated and long running. The ConOps is the follow-on work from previous CAA documents such as *CAP 1392* first published in 2014 (with origins in December 2013 as an EC Options Paper) and also *CAP 1391* first published in 2016, and with a third edition in February 2021.

CAP 1392 was in response to an Air Accidents Investigation Branch (AAIB) report following a fatal mid-air collision and through the auspices of the Airspace and Safety Initiative (ASI) Programme, the ASI Electronic Conspicuity Working Group (ECWG) was established as a co-operative work stream to consider how increased EC for users of Class G airspace could improve safety through enhanced situational awareness. The central deliverable for the working group was to develop an industry standard for an EC device against which developers could build new devices.

This Recommendations Paper summarised the findings

ADS-L could be a lighter, cheaper EC option for older, lighter aircraft (Jeremy Shaw)

of the ECWG and developed the findings of the 2013 EC Options Paper. Ultimately it was delivered to the ASI Coordination Group (ASI CG) in order to provide EC recommendations to the CAA to inform its EC Project which was due to launch in September 2014. In essence the ECWG supported the concept of appropriate EC in Class G airspace.

ADS-B-BASED TECHNOLOGY

There was consensus amongst the group that it would be possible to develop an industry standard for a Radio Frequencies (RF) based EC device and that this device could be based on ADS–B technology. By challenging the current standards and regulatory requirements it was thought to be possible to produce an EC device that is low-cost enough, with sufficient benefits and acceptable downsides, as to encourage significant voluntary equipage amongst the GA community.

The intention of *CAP 1391* was to advise on possible equipage needs across the GA fleet to improve safety, and to enable integrated specific Category UAS operations dealing with the interaction of manned-to-manned aircraft as well as manned-to-UAS.

CAP 1391 set out the key outcomes of the CAA-led project to develop a new industry standard for a low-cost EC device. It explored why such a standard was necessary and looked at the key issues that needed to be addressed to encourage more aircraft operators and owners to use EC devices. It then set out a full technical specification that EC devices were required to meet, along with acceptable means of compliance. These specifications were in line with the *CAP 1392* proposals and it should be noted that we are now a decade further forward in terms of technical development. It also noted potential implications for Wireless Telegraphy Act (WTA) Aeronautical Radio Licence and Flight Radio Telephony Operators Licence requirements.

EC was initially developed in the 1940s with the introduction of radar technologies and then transponder technology. More recently, many forms of EC, including 'reduced-capability equipment' (RCE) and 'non-transponder devices' (NTD) have played a part in improving situational awareness for General Aviation.

At the most basic level, aircraft equipped with an EC device effectively signal their presence to other airspace users, turning the 'see and avoid' concept into 'see, BE SEEN and avoid'. Many EC devices also receive the signals from others, alerting pilots to the presence of other aircraft which may assist in taking avoiding action.

Although EC devices such as Mode-S transponders are mandatory for specified aircraft, they are not universally mandatory in the UK for light aircraft that only operate in Class G airspace. Historically, transponders have been deemed prohibitively expensive, as well as being too heavy and/or power-hungry for these aircraft.

THE FLARM OPTION

Unlike ADS-B, Flight Alarm (FLARM) is an electronic collision avoidance system used in general aviation, particularly for gliders, light aircraft, and drones. FLARM has low power consumption and is relatively inexpensive to purchase and install. ADS-B transmits an aircraft's position and track, which tells where the aircraft will be over time if it continues flying straight, but FLARM transmits its expected position over the next 20sec.

Since EC devices are based on ADS-B transmitter/receiver technology, they are not substitutes for transponders where the carriage of a transponder is mandatory.

However, ADS-B offers better geographical coverage than radar including on routes such as Oceanic, has multiple networks and so an abundance of data. It is easy to install, operates on a regulated frequency, is widely adopted and gives detailed surveillance data - position (and position accuracy), pressure, velocity, track etc.

The underlying transmission method of ADS-B has a capacity limit. This can result in loss of signal in areas of high signal density. So, it is good for widely dispersed oceanic traffic, but more risky for intense airport

Getting UAS and manned aircraft to see each other is a major EC challenge (iStock/Olaser)

surveillance or other high traffic density areas - exactly where EC will be most needed. The GPS it relies on can be spoofed/jammed/distorted and the signal has no intelligence - it just continuously fires out a fixed string of data. Lastly, ADS-B cannot be used for two-way communications with aircraft.

ADS-B "Out" broadcasts an aircraft's position, altitude, and velocity to ground stations and other aircraft, while ADS-B "In" is the receiver that processes these broadcasts to

ADS-B has capacity limits in busy airspace (iStock/SMC Jeans)

provide pilots with traffic and weather information.

JUST ONE ELEMENT

While a key enabler, it is important to note that EC is just one part of a broader set of solutions supporting the introduction of BVLOS operations of UAS. This includes capabilities such as: Detect and Avoid (DAA), Command and Control (C2) Links, System-Wide Information Management (SWIM), UAS Traffic Management (UTM), Ground Infrastructure (GI) and Communications.

It is important to note that, for integrating manned and UAS into an airspace volume, EC has limitations. Some technology in use today may not meet requirements identified for tomorrow.

In December 2022, the DfT and the CAA published a joint statement detailing their support for the recommended adoption of ADS-B for manned aircraft and 978 MHz for UAS, utilising existing global standards.

This EC ConOps sets out nine positions that the CAA is proposing to adopt as technical requirements for the airborne use of EC in the UK. As ADS-B EC enables aircraft to transmit their locations and vectors, it allows operators to detect and respond to potential conflicts. For UAS, EC serves to replace traditional see-and-avoid, which has known limitations. Tactical deconfliction provides real-time air-to-air collision avoidance, with systems like FLARM and ACAS issuing short-term warnings before potential conflicts. ADS-B devices can support a detect-and-avoid functionality, depending on the ADS-B In standard and processing systems in use.

Strategic deconfliction offers a broader, pre-emptive approach, allowing conflict resolution before aircraft come into close proximity. Pre-flight planning and deconfliction tools already exist. However, the CAA also views ground-based EC infrastructure as an important step towards providing pilots and operators with information to improve strategic conflict management.

Further, the ConOps Positions propose that within non-segregated airspace, manned aircraft operating at under 140kt IAS must use 1090MHz ADS-B devices. In that airspace, aircraft operating at over140kt IAS must use a Mode S transponder with ADS-B.

A LIGHTER SOLUTION

In 2022, EASA introduced the concept of ADS-L (Automatic Dependent Surveillance – Light). Originally designed for the surveillance of manned aircraft in U-Space airspace, ADS-L led to the creation of two standards: networked and broadcast. Each standard offers unique benefits and addresses different safety aspects, contributing to a comprehensive EC ecosystem. With the increasing complexity of the EC landscape, interoperability becomes crucial, allowing different EC systems to communicate with each other. Interoperability ground stations are those that rebroadcast or relay signals including mobile networks such as 4G, multi-function in-cockpit devices or a combination of these.

ADS-L also provides a link for getting weather and other useful information, and could also provide for an enhanced Flight Information Service (FIS) and quicker SAR support if something does go wrong.

ADS-L is distinct from ADS-B in that the B (broadcast) function has been deliberately omitted in anticipation of the possibility of network communications, but the two are compatible. The "light" in ADS-L refers to the use of low-power, low-cost devices, making it an attractive solution for general aviation, and other aircraft not equipped with certified ADS-B installations. ADS-L transmission is not intended to provide any credit during IFR operations except enhancing pilots' situational awareness. For EASA, ADS-L provides a unified, cost-effective and easy-to-implement solution for these aircraft to enhance their situational awareness and visibility to other ADS-L equipped aircraft, reducing the risk of collisions and improving overall safety.

ADS-L can be transmitted over different links: a standard for ADS-L messages over the SRD860 frequency band is already available, and future specifications will enable ADS-L to be transmitted over mobile networks such as 4G and 5G.

In summary, the EASA approach to EC leans towards enabling flexibility and use of all available (and future technologies) and an appetite for greater regulatory innovation to support all users, especially GA, as well as enabling BVLOS uncrewed operations. The UK ConOps Draft would appear to have some imposed constraints which, as it does state, will require many iterations before final adoption, notwithstanding that it proposes both medium- and long-term solutions. The Air Pilots response to the CAA consultation reflected this challenge.

https://www.caa.co.uk/our-work/publications/documents/content/cap3140/ or /cap1391/ or /cap1392/

https://www.easa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/dfu/4._iconspicuity_ads-l.pdf

https://www.easa.europa.eu/en/research-projects/i-conspicuity-interoperability-electronic-conspicuity-systems-general-aviation □

A VERY LUCKY ESCAPE!

By Assistant Capt Ed Pooley

On 17th February 2025, many of the 80 passengers and crew onboard a Bombardier CRJ-900 regional jet were very fortunate to survive uninjured after a seriously mishandled touchdown on Runway 23 at Toronto, although 21 were injured, two seriously. The aircraft broke into three pieces and a fuel-fed fire started immediately in the detached right wing but fortunately, the fuselage - minus one wing and almost all of the tail section - then rolled to the right and ended up inverted but in one piece with two useable exits clear of fire.

The facts here are drawn from the preliminary report which - as usual - is based only on recorded flight data and not from the cockpit voice recorder, so a full assessment of cause will have to await publication of the final report.

Passengers are helped to escape from the CRJ-900 - note the partially-open flightdeck emergency roof exit

The aircraft was being operated by US regional airline Endeavor Air, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Delta Airlines which trades as 'Delta Connection' on a Delta flight which had departed from Minneapolis-Saint Paul in the late morning. The flight had proceeded normally with the First Officer as the Pilot Flying and with the autopilot engaged until the ILS approach had reached its final stages. The normal VREF+5 approach speed had been increased by 5kt to 149kt because of a gusting crosswind from the right. The autopilot was disengaged shortly after passing 500ft AGL with the runway clearly visible. Once the First Officer had taken over the controls from the autopilot, the flight path and thrust setting (64% N_1) continued unchanged apart from a slight reduction in the rate of descent as 150ft AGL was approached.

At this point, because of what was considered to have been a likely consequence of a performance-increasing wind gust, the airspeed increased to V_{REF}+15 and the First Officer responded by retarding the thrust to "… approximately 43% N_1" where - critically - it remained until touchdown. As a direct consequence of this, the aircraft passed 50ft AGL with a recorded rate of descent of over 1,100ft/min and almost immediately thereafter - with just 2½sec to go until touchdown - an EGPWS 'SINK RATE' warning was annunciated and a right-wing-down attitude began to develop. There was still no attempt to restore thrust and with a recorded 7.5° right bank, 1° of nose up pitch and an unchanged rate of descent, the starboard main gear touched down first and a 3g vertical acceleration rate was recorded.

LANDING GEAR COLLAPSE

The right main landing gear collapsed inwards which caused the right wing to separate from the fuselage. This released "…a cloud of jet fuel which caught fire" and the fuselage then began to roll to the right as it continued forward, detaching most of the tail section in the process before eventually stopping fully inverted.

Only two of the six emergency exits were used but despite the aircraft being upside-down, many of the passengers had managed to exit the aircraft and were assisting the remainder to do so when the emergency services arrived about 5min later. The only occupants to have serious difficulty evacuating were the two pilots who were unable to get into the passenger cabin and had to be helped by two passengers to exit through their partially blocked flight deck roof emergency exit.

The flight Captain had worked for the airline for 18 years but had only 3,570h flying experience of which just 764h were on type. It seems probable that this somewhat low accumulated flight time was a consequence of significant time spent as a simulator instructor - he had flown only 3½h in the previous 30 days and the accident flight was his first for seven days. The First Officer had been with the airline just over a year and had a total of 1,420h flying experience including 418h on type.

The facts released so far do tend to suggest that the lessons to be learnt will centre on the Captain's seemingly ineffective oversight of the First Officer's aircraft handling in manual flight below 500ft AGL. In that respect, the consequences of his (apparent) role as primarily a career simulator instructor rather than a career line Captain may well be a subject of interest. □

THE MASTER'S TOUR PART TWO: AUSTRALIA, NEW ZEALAND AND HONG KONG

On waking up at the RAF Club the morning after the Trophies and Awards banquet, an email from Emirates on my phone reminded me that check-in was open for our flight to Perth on the Sunday. It was time to get packing for the five-week trip!

Forty-eight hours later, we were at Gatwick for the flight to Dubai. It was a relaxing journey, and we got some six hours' sleep on the 10-hour leg into Perth. Arriving early evening, we checked into our hotel and enjoyed a quick explore of the local area, followed by a beer and a light snack before turning in.

PERTH

We had allowed ourselves a day to acclimatise and spent that time exploring the city; particularly Elizabeth Quay and the rather lovely Botanic Gardens in King's Park to the north of the Swan River. There is nothing like a vigorous walk in bright Australian spring sunshine to shake off any residual jetlag.

Suitably refreshed, we were met on day two by Liveryman Adrian Young, Chair of the Australian region. Adrian was to accompany us throughout the Australian leg of the tour for which we were immensely grateful. His presence greatly contributed to the continuity and value of our many meetings. First stop was Edith Cowan University School of Engineering where we were shown round by Murray Terwey, the Discipline Co-ordinator for Aviation. He introduced us to some of his passionate students and gave us a tour of the school's cutting-edge facilities including a virtual reality (VR) lab, simulators and a 3D printing lab. The Australian Region is keen to establish a formal relationship with the Engineering School in the next few months, and I look forward to hearing how this develops.

Talking to students at Melville Senior High School

Next was Melville Senior High School, where Principal Kylie Bottcher introduced us to Teacher-in-Charge of its Aviation Specialist Programme, Graham McGinn. Impressively, the School's teaching aids include a motion-base simulator. We enjoyed a lively discussion with some very engaged year-11 students who were keen to tell us about their studies as well as to hear about the Honourable Company. This involvement of the Australian Air Pilots with schools and colleges was a theme of many of our visits across Australia, and I found it deeply inspiring. In the evening, we enjoyed a relaxed dinner with Adrian and his partner Natalie at a restaurant overlooking the Swan River and Perth's central business district (CBD).

Next day, on the way to the airport, we visited the RAAFA Aviation Heritage Museum which housed such treasures as an Avro Lancaster, Supermarine Spitfire and a Panavia Tornado GR.4. After the three-hour flight to Adelaide, Liveryman Roger Lang and his wife Diane met us at the airport and took us to our hotel.

ADELAIDE

Day Four began with a visit to Nova Systems, where we were joined by distinguished local members Liverymen Barbara Trappett and Rob Moore and Freeman Vlad Zhelezarov. Nova's founder and deputy chairman, Upper Freeman Jim Whalley, gave us an in-depth and fascinating briefing on his company. Jim is a former RAAF fighter pilot and test pilot and graduate of the Empire Test Pilots' School, Boscombe Down. He completed his course just before my time as Boscombe's deputy director in 1997-98 so we had never met but discovered we shared many mutual acquaintances. Jim described Nova Systems as Australia's largest privately-owned defence contractor and the company provides test and evaluation, systems integration, commercial aircraft modifications and professional services from offices in several countries.

Reception at the Naval, Military and Air Force Club, Adelaide

That evening at the Navy, Military and Air Force Club, the South Australian Working Group Dinner was the first of four formal dinners of the tour. With a great turnout, we enjoyed drinks in the warm evening sunshine on the lawn before moving inside for a sumptuous meal. At the end of the evening, I had the great privilege of presenting the Master's Trophy, Australian Region, to Upper Freeman, Gp Capt Peter Norford, recognising his outstanding contributions to aviation and his service as the Region's secretary since 2013. It was an equal pleasure for me to

present a Master Air Pilot certificate to Upper Freeman Steve Nelson.

On day five, Adrian and Australian Regional Deputy Chairman, Rob Dicker drove us to Aldinga airfield south of Adelaide for a day's aviating. Jim Whalley had arrived in his Aérospatiale/Westland Gazelle helicopter and kindly took Kate and me, plus Peter Norford, for a flight along the nearby coast, giving me the opportunity to fly it from the left seat. Then it was time for the for the flying skills test. This involved piloting a Cessna 172 around the circuit under the watchful eye of an instructor who was judging us on accuracy of headings, altitude, turn rates, speed control and accuracy of touch down point. Apparently, my circuit was great, but for landing I might have got closer to the chalk line flying Jim's Gazelle - I am more used to a floaty Tiger Moth than a Cessna with its big draggy flaps! I was delighted, however, to see acting Young Air Pilots Australian Chair Upper Freeman Ben Tyler win the challenge!

Ben Tyler wins the Aldinga Challenge

Day six, and Steve Nelson first took us to the South Australian Aviation Museum which houses some really interesting aircraft. The McDonnell Douglas F/A-18A Hornet, sporting *Sqn Ldr J Whalley* on the side of the cockpit is in excellent condition. The De Havilland DHC-4 Caribou is a surprisingly large aircraft, and we were privileged to have special access to the cockpit. We both also sat in the General Dynamics F-111, with its unusual ejectable crew capsule. It was nice to see an English Electric Canberra, as I carried out some extensive high-altitude trials on an RAE Bedford Canberra when I was working in the space sector in the mid-80s. And finally, I was thrilled to see a GAF Jindivik pilotless target-towing drone on display. I was the very last operator of the type and took it out of service from Llanbedr in 2002 when I was QinetiQ's Director of Ranges. After an interesting morning at the museum, Steve drove us to Adelaide airport for the flight to Melbourne where we checked into the downtown Novotel.

MELBOURNE

Day seven started with a visit to the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) Aviation Academy at Point Cook. Director of the Academy, Lea Vesic introduced us to her passionate team and showed us round the facility. With 40 instructors, the Academy operates 28 aircraft, mostly Cessna 182s, and provides a degree-based flight training programme to 300 students. I was particularly pleased to meet Sarah Kirby, an RMIT flight instructor and recipient of the UPRT Australia Scholarship from the

The Master takes control of Jim Whalley's Aérospatiale/Westland Gazelle

Honourable Company's Australian Region (see 'Brisbane', home of UPRT Australia at Archerfield airport). This scholarship is an excellent example of the Region's mission to support and educate the next generation of aviation professionals. In 2024 RMIT signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with our Australian Region, covering scholarships, aviation research and mentoring. More broadly, RMIT agreed a partnership this year with Qantas to establish a national safety academy, upskilling professionals across all high reliability sectors in Australia, including transport, energy and medicine.

In the evening, we were treated to a very pleasant, relaxed dinner with local members, hosted by Regional Co-ordinator Upper Freeman Tony Alder and his wife Meg. It was great to have an opportunity to talk further with Lea Vesic and hear more about her ambitions for the RMIT Aviation Academy.

At RMIT with Sarah Kirby, Adrian Young and Lea Vesic

SYDNEY

Day eight started with a flight to Sydney where we were met by Rob Dicker. After checking into our hotel, we set about exploring the well-known sights of Sydney before dinner at a restaurant in nearby Darling Harbour.

Next morning we took the train from Wynyard station to Wolli Creek, where Rob Dicker met us and drove to Bankstown airfield. Bankstown is the home of the University of New South Wales Flying Operations Unit, headed up by Professor Brett Molesworth. The Unit delivers flying training and associated theory for the University's Professional Pilot Batchelor degree, its flying and advanced flying diplomas and ATPL theory course. Its

In the Diamond DA40 at the University of New South Wales

modern fleet comprises Diamond DA40 and some Piper PA-44 aircraft.

The Unit kindly took us both up in a DA40, my first time on the type. Departing northeast, we flew up the coast as far as Palm Beach, a suburb in Sydney's Northern Beaches region and where, apparently, the TV series *Home and Away* was filmed. No, I have never watched it either! The coastline is stunning and despite much scanning, I saw no great white sharks! Then it was west to overfly the almost completed Western Sydney International Airport, which is due to become operational in late 2026, initially for cargo

With students at the University of New South Wales

only. I noted the considerable distance from Sydney's Central Business District and the fact that, although a rail link to the city is planned, it will not be in place for some years. We also learned of the impact of the required airspace changes for Western Sydney International on the other airspace users in the Sydney basin including the many GA activities from Bankstown.

Sydney Harbour Bridge from the Botanic Gardens

The new Sydney International West Airport takes shape

Back at the airfield, it was my pleasant duty to present the Jim Cowan Memorial Award to Air Pilots Associate Lachlan Hyde, to whom I had presented the Award's certificate at the T&A two weeks earlier. As the President and General Manager of the Royal Aero Club of New South Wales, Lachlan has been instrumental in revitalising this historic organisation. Under his leadership, the club has transformed from an inactive entity into a dynamic and progressive flying club, marked by innovative training programmes and a thriving membership base. It was also great to be invited to present "First solo certificates" to five students who had recently completed that unforgettable moment in their flying careers.

We caught the train back to Sydney where we had just enough time to explore the beautiful Botanic Gardens, with their unparalleled views of the Bridge and Opera House. Then it was a quick change and back out to an informal dinner with local members at Café Sydney in the Old Customs House on the harbourside, with its own very special views of the Bridge as the sun set.

An informal dinner at Café Sydney

BRISBANE

Day 10 started with our flight to Brisbane where we were met by former Chair of the Queensland Working Group, Liveryman John Howie, who took us to our hotel. John and his wife Gael graciously invited us to their home for dinner that evening where we were joined by another former Queensland Chair Upper Freeman Jon Minns and his wife Kerry.

Archerfield Airport, home of UPRT Australia

Next morning, we were joined by current Chair Upper Freeman John Deecke, Freeman Murray Feddersen and others and treated to a fascinating visit to UPRT Australia at Archerfield airport near Brisbane. We were shown round by CEO Upper Freeman Shane Tobin and Head of Operations Jeremy Miller. Recognising that LOC-I remains a significant cause of accidents, UPRT Australia provides comprehensive upset prevention and recovery training (UPRT) through a range of courses for pilots of every skill and operational level. It provides training in theory and practical flight skills in a controlled environment on a range of high-performance tailwheel aircraft including the Pitts Special and Extra 300. UPRT Australia offers a scholarship for upset prevention and recovery training in partnership with the Air Pilots Australian region; we had met scholarship winner Sarah Kirby at RMIT in Melbourne.

Murray, who had flown to Archerfield from his home base that morning, generously offered us a flight in his beautiful

The LifeFlight crew receive the Barry Marsden Award at the Queensland dinner

Beech Baron to Gold Coast Airport, taking in the spectacular coastal scenery on the way.

At the Queensland Working Group Annual Dinner that evening at the Queensland Club, I was honoured to present the Barry Marsden Memorial Award to Mike Adair and Mark Overton on behalf of the crew of LifeFlight; the Australian Bi-Centennial Award to Marjorie Gillespie, and the Captain John Ashton Memorial Award to Neale Langdon. Additionally, I was pleased to present four Master Air Pilot Certificates and six Freedom of the City of London certificates.

Students do the introductions at the Qantas Group Pilot Academy

On the morning of day 12, Adrian picked us up and drove to the Qantas Group Pilot Academy at Wellcamp, Toowoomba, some 130km to the west. Chief Operating Officer Upper Freeman Pierre Steyn and four of his students showed us round this impressive training facility. The Academy puts 270 students through a 55-week course on 32 Diamond DA40 and DA42 aircraft. Pierre offered me a flight in the Diamond DA42 simulator, and I was pleased that I did not disgrace myself in front of such an experienced audience! It is an intensive course, and the remoteness of the airport means that the distractions of the city are few, but the on-site accommodation where most students choose to live is well-equipped with tennis courts, a gym, and other amenities. As we shared lunch and swapped stories in the mess hall, I was inspired by the camaraderie between the students and their support for each other.

CANBERRA

After flying to Canberra the next morning, we met up at the Crowne Plaza with Liveryman Brian Greeves, Peter Norford and Adrian to prepare for the next day's meetings. Brian, former Chairman of the Hong Kong Region, was to prove invaluable not just on account of his detailed knowledge of the organisations we were to visit and the subject matter, but as the taker of detailed notes from each meeting!

Day 14 provided an opportunity to meet some of the most influential voices in Australian aviation, namely Air Marshal Stephen Chappell (Chief of Air Force), Richard Wood (Department of Infrastructure and Transport), Colin McNamara (COO, Australian Transport Safety Bureau), Pip Spence (Director of Aviation Safety, Civil Aviation Safety Authority), and Pete Curran (Deputy CEO, Airservices Australia). While the Master's visit provides an annual opportunity to open these doors, the conversations are much more than just formalities. They are about sharing global insights, learning from each other and addressing critical industry issues.

Stephen Chappell was appreciative of the awards presented by the Honourable Company over the years to personnel of the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) and of the scholarships awarded by the Company in Australia. The Chief had signed an MoU with the Australian Region in 2024, through Adrian Young's efforts. As a result, there was already joint participation in careers nights, graduation parades and formal dinners. Stephen went on to share his plans to establish a National Air Power Council, aiming to address national strategic needs and foster collaboration. He anticipated forming this council within six months, ensuring representation from the Honourable Company of Air Pilots and various working groups. The Company was seen as an ideal fit for such efforts.

Richard Wood, First Assistant Secretary of the Department of Infrastructure and Transport, explained that his department is focused on aviation policy, and has significant international engagement. Australia is a key participant in the ICAO Advanced Air Mobility (AAM) group. The department has responsibility for the Federal leased airports. Our discussions included the development of Western Sydney International Airport and its associated airspace considerations. We moved the conversation on to aviation training and education in Australian schools and Adrian highlighted its importance and the Company's role. He also raised the matter of membership of the General Aviation Advisory Network and the potential for further engagement, with Richard Wood promising to consider this.

ATSB visit

Colin McNamara, Chief Operating Officer, introduced us to the structure and work of the ATSB. The Bureau covers air, marine and rail safety, though aviation is the largest element of its work. It is recognised as one of the world's top five investigative bodies, thanks to its expertise in both technical and human factors. Our visit to the ATSB labs was particularly insightful. We were shown innovative work being done to modernise safety practices and education through technology and social media. We saw an example of the use of narrated video animation to 'play back' an actual incident with the aim of using visuals to supplement the formal report, making it more accessible.

The meeting with Pip Spence and her CASA team was very positive and particularly wide ranging. After Pip discussed its efforts to deliver regulatory services more systematically; she explained how CASA is aiming to improve service standards. Our detailed discussions covered skill shortages (of engineers as well as pilots),

airspace reform and AAM integration, STEM initiatives, scholarships, flight training funding models, synthetic aviation fuel, GNSS spoofing/jamming, reduced-crew operations and pilot mental health initiatives.

The last meeting with Peter Curran at Airservices Australia centred on airspace modernisation and integration. Drawing from his experience with IATA in Geneva and with Eurocontrol, Peter highlighted the distinctive features of the Australian aviation sector. We discussed the introduction of the new Western Sydney Airport which, together with parallel runway developments at Brisbane, Perth, and Melbourne, is projected to boost national airport capacity by 35%. Airservices has clearly done much thinking around the regulation of AAM and drone integration.

We discussed the issue of cybersecurity and the increasing use of digital towers and Peter postulated that Australia is unlikely to construct further physical control towers. Although GNSS spoofing/jamming is not a big issue in Australia at present, Peter confirmed that CASA mandates a Backup Navigation Network and Airservices Australia is planning to invest SAUS200–300million to replace navigation aids and is deliberating whether to substitute NDBs with VORs.

I have passed the details behind the headlines of all these high-level discussions to our Director of Aviation Affairs for consideration by our International Technical Forum (ITF) and its task groups.

At the end of a busy day, it was great to be able to relax and meet further Company members at the home of Peter and Jane Norford as they graciously hosted us for a BBQ supper.

Laying a wreath at the Last Post ceremony in Canberra

Day 15 was Remembrance Day, and I was honoured to attend, with Kate, two ceremonies at the Australian War Memorial. Laying a wreath on behalf of the Company during the Last Post Ceremony was a deeply moving experience that will stay in my memory. This solemn occasion reminded us of the strong link between aviation and service, and the importance of honouring those who came before us.

On day 16 there was time to do a little sightseeing around Canberra courtesy of Peter Norford. Then it was time to wind-up the Australian leg of our tour in style as top table guests of AVM Margaret Staib, President of the RAeS Australian Division at its Gala Dinner, celebrating collaboration and shared commitment to encouraging aviation excellence.

Having travelled over 5,000km across the region, meeting old friends, making new ones, engaging with members and industry leaders, it was time to move on to the next leg of our tour. Very early next morning, Peter Norford drove us to the airport for our flight to Sydney and then on to Christchurch.

CHRISTCHURCH

Freeman Dr Rob Edwards met us at the airport and drove us to the Novotel on Cathedral Square. From our 11th floor window, we looked down on the cathedral so severely damaged in the 2011 earthquake. Although restoration is under way, it was clear that there was much left to do. We were taken aback at the extent of devastation across the whole city, with many vacant plots where buildings once stood, leaving what are, in most cases, now just gravel car parks. I had not appreciated that although New Zealand as a whole is a geologically active country, the area around Christchurch had no known history of quakes and the fault that it sits on was previously undiscovered.

The earthquake-ravaged Cathedral in Christchurch

On day 18, we met in the Novotel coffee bar with Liveryman and Chair of the Company's ITF, Mike Zaytsoff, Rob Edwards and Peter King, the President of Flying NZ, an association of some 40 New Zealand flying clubs. We discussed the challenges around attracting and retaining instructors. We explored the potential for greater use of simulation to support training and reduce costs (noting the trend of increasing fidelity at reducing cost). Now that spinning has been removed from flight tests and training in most countries, we talked about the possibility of using VR training devices for teaching spin recognition. Knowledge of the risks around mountain wave knowledge is declining and we discussed the need for improved training and

Richard Waugh, Mike Zaytsoff, Rob Edwards and Tim Hughes show the Master and Konsort Kate round the RNZAF Museum's Bristol Freighter

The picturesque harbour at Lyttleton

awareness in all classes of aircraft. We agreed that pilot reports (PIREPs) should become mandatory for moderate or greater turbulence and icing. Partial power loss in a single-piston-engine aircraft is more likely to lead to a serious accident than total power loss and we noted that current training was frequently patchy.

After a tour of Canterbury Flying Club at the airport, there was time to explore the city using the wonderful vintage "hop-on/hop-off" trams that rattle around the streets. We discovered the little-known fact that Mike Zaytsoff is a volunteer tram driver for the Museum of Transport and Technology in Auckland. Because it is Christmas as I write this, I could not stop myself including a photo of Mike in festive tram driver uniform!

Next day we enjoyed a private tour at the Air Force Museum of New Zealand at Wigram with Mike Zaytsoff, Richard Waugh (Honorary Chaplain of the NZ Region), Freeman Tim Hughes and Rob Edwards. After an enjoyable lunch near the cathedral Kate and I went off to spend the rest of the day with my grandnephew who is studying engineering at The University of Canterbury.

On day 20 Rob Edwards treated us to a driving tour across the coastal hills to the stunning inlet at Lyttleton Harbour and round the coast to Sumner Beach where we had lunch at the Beach Bar. All too soon it was time to get to the airport for our flight to Wellington. Surprisingly, for NZ internal flights, there is no airport security, no scanning of carry-ons, no walk-through metal detector, not even the need to show any ID. You just turn up to check-in, scan the QR code on your phone, drop your bags and get on the plane!

Wellington's cable car (not a private one!)

WELLINGTON

Upper Freeman Bill McGregor helpfully met us at the airport and drove us to the Wellington Club. We had a leisurely day ahead and chose to catch the historic cable car up to its top station. This is not the only cable car in Wellington. I was amused to discover during the drive from the airport that many private properties on the steep cliffs are accessed by their own cable cars from the street. Some looked like glass elevators, others a big fibreglass bucket, some are little more than an elaborate stair-lift, but Wellington's personal cable cars do seem to be *de rigueur* for scaling the hilly capital's interminable steps.

Anyway, back to our big red cable car; the car drops you conveniently at the top of the wonderful Wellington Botanic Gardens. We enjoyed a long, leisurely walk down the steep and winding paths through the varied gardens back to the Club. Then it was time to change for a cocktail reception with Air Pilots colleagues in the spectacular top floor bar of the Club, followed by an informal dinner. It was when I was invited to say a few words that I discovered that Regional Chair Upper Freeman Ron Thacker and I had an uncanny tendency to plan to say the same things; we were to experience this more than once! Great minds and all that!

Day 22 was the NZ Government meetings day, starting with the Transport Accident Investigation Commission (TAIC). We, along with Mike Zaytsoff, Tim Hughes and Bill McGregor were hosted by Chief Executive Martin Sawyers, who gave us an introduction to the Commission. Like the Australian ATSB, it is responsible for investigating air, rail and maritime accidents, though in this case, rail provides most of its work. Its 35 staff produce around 20 accident reports each year. We covered familiar topics but gained some different perspectives. PIREPs for icing and turbulence, mountain wave awareness, pilot mental health, partial power loss on single engined aircraft and use of VR training for spin awareness were all on the agenda. Other matters we touched on included ATC understaffing and the challenge of encouraging passengers not to collect their carry-ons before an emergency evacuation.

Next was the CAA, where we met Chief Executive Kane Patena and two of his team, Brendan Odell and Catherine MacGowan. On PIREPs, the CAA is quite active and has been talking to Air NZ regarding turbulence. It expects climate change to impact the frequency and severity of turbulence incidents and wants to maintain a dialogue with the Company. Brendan was especially interested in our views on partial power loss. He is responsible for the flight training syllabus and Mike Zaytsoff agreed to send him some of the Company's thinking on this. Regarding mountain wave, while there had been no reported incidents, there was anecdotal evidence that suggested it should perhaps be added to the training curriculum. Brendan will make a member of his team available to speak with us. Similarly, the CAA is looking at whether VR spin training should be included in the curriculum. The CAA raised its concerns around lithium battery power bank fires as there is evidence of an increasing number of passengers ignoring the rules against carrying them.

It has recently introduced a "Safe Haven" scheme that allows pilots to raise potential mental health concerns

ITF Chair Mike 'The Grinch' Zaytsoff does a shift on the Auckland tramcar

without direct contact with the CAA. Designed by the CAA, the pilots' union NZALPA and a specially created Safe Haven Board, the new programme aims to increase reporting by pilots and air traffic controllers. On broader medical issues, the CAA is working hard at harmonising Australian and New Zealand medical standards.

AUCKLAND

After a couple of days "leave" visiting my nephew's family in the Bay of Plenty, we flew to Auckland where Freeman Bill Bennett met and drove us to our hotel in the centre. Mike Zaytsoff took us out to one of his favourite haunts, the spectacular Piha Beach some 40km to the west, known for its surfing. After lunch with Mike, we took the rest of the day to explore Auckland on foot, stumbling upon "Jean Batten Place" during our wanderings, before enjoying the sunset from the hotel's inevitable rooftop bar.

On day 26 we were off to Ardmore airport where Freeman Brett Nicholls took me for a flight in his Auster J5. Having seen the west coast the previous day, it was nice to see from the air the attractive coastline to the east of Auckland in the confusingly named (for Brits anyway!) Firth of Thames.

That evening's formal NZ Region dinner was at the RNZAF base officers mess at Whenuapai. We have really enjoyed these formal occasions during our tour and this one was no exception. It was my great pleasure to present Freeman Capt Allan Boyce with the Jean Batten Memorial Award. A three-times Chair of the NZ Region, Allan was serving as an Assistant when I was first elected to the Court in 2012. The Air Pilots Sword was presented to Sqn Ldr Craig Clark, OC 42 Sqn, by the Air Component Commander, Air Cdre Andy Scott and I was privileged to also present Craig with a keepsake trophy. The sword had been gifted to the RNZAF by the NZ Region in recognition of our close relationship.

After that splendid evening, it was time to bid farewell to New Zealand as Mike Zaytsoff drove us early next morning to Auckland International to embark on the last leg of the tour.

HONG KONG

Liveryman Pat Voigt met us at Hong Kong airport and ensured we were all set for the train journey to our hotel in Kowloon. Day 28 started with some leisure, acclimatisation and shopping time so, taking the Star Ferry across to Hong Kong Island, we set about exploring some of the sights Kate and I didn't get to when we were last here in 2016.

After lunch, Past Chair Liveryman Valerie Stait met us, and we journeyed to HK Aero Engine Services Ltd (HAESL) to the north of Kowloon. HAESL is a 50/50 joint venture between Rolls-Royce plc and Hong Kong Aircraft Engineering Company Limited (HAECO). Its business is to perform complete repair and overhaul of the Rolls-Royce RB211 and the Trent series of engines, including the massive Trent XWB used on the Airbus A350 and Boeing 787. A complete dismantling and overhaul takes HAESL's 1,200 mechanics just 60 days, and they service 360 engines each year. It is a deeply impressive organisation on a huge scale. We were limited in where we could take photos but www.haesl.com has some great images of this enormous facility.

HAESL's test cell for large Rolls-Royce engines

The next day, after some free time in the morning, we relocated to our final hotel of the tour, at Tung Chung near the airport, where most of our meetings would be held. With five nights here it was the longest we had stayed anywhere for a month! We enjoyed meeting with local members at a casual gathering for cocktails at the Sunset Grill bar on top of the Sheraton, before adjourning inside for an informal dinner organised by Pat Voigt.

Sunset cocktails with Hong Kong members

We spent the next two days in and around the airport with HK Chair Liveryman Rob Jones, his (newly Liveried) wife Sam (both A350 captains) and co-organiser of the visit, Freeman Steven Cheung. We visited the Hong Kong Observatory Met Office in the

Departing Hong Kong's Central Pier for a junk cruise

main control tower. The airport now has two towers covering the two original runways and its new 25R. The southern tower controls runways 25L and 25C, while the new northern tower controls 25R. We learned how the Met Office has pioneered the use of LIDAR for windshear detection and warning, important at this airport not just because of the proximity of the mountains but because of issues with wake around large buildings. We also spent some time admiring the quiet efficiency of the tower controllers and enjoying the very best view possible of this busy airport.

The visit to the Civil Aviation Department's radar control centre was particularly interesting. It controls a large area with a lot of overflights, as well as managing the congested airspace in the immediate vicinity, with another nearby internatiomal airport (Shenzen Bao'an) and Chinese airspace to the north.

In the evening of day 31, after a short Uber ride to Hong Kong Island, we embarked at the Central Pier on an evening junk cruise in collaboration with the Royal British Legion Hong Kong. The junk took us round to the south of the island to the Lamma Hilton Fishing Village Restaurant at Sok Kwu Wan on Lamma Island. We all enjoyed a fantastic authentic Chinese seafood banquet in a rustic quayside restaurant.

Visiting the Met Office in Hong Kong Airport's main control tower

Security behind the scenes

Back at the airport next day we visited the Aviation Security Company (AVSECO) where we were hosted by Assistant Executive Director Richard Skinner. With 4,800 staff, AVSECO is responsible for all of the airport's security operations. We saw behind the scenes in state-of-the-art passenger and carry-on baggage screening, and the impressive Integrated Airport Control. Here, operators monitor all aspects of the airport's operation. A 180° curved wall of screens reports on everything from performance of the baggage system, aircraft stands available, car parking slots, local traffic conditions, operation of the airport people-mover, the airport express to downtown, passenger dwell-time in the terminal food courts, baggage trolley availability, punctuality of flight arrivals/departures, passenger and baggage throughput per hour, etc - real James Bond stuff!

Highlight of the Airport tour - the Canine Unit

The highlight of the visit, however, was undoubtedly the canine unit where we met the sniffer dogs who keep the airport, its passengers and staff safe. The dogs, assisted by their handlers, gave an impressive demonstration of their skills and I think most of the visiting party wanted to take one home!

That evening it was back to Hong Kong for a formal dinner at the Aberdeen Boat Club on the south side of the island. It was, like all the other black-tie events of the tour, a splendid occasion and I was so pleased to present Pat Voigt with the Master's Trophy for his services to the Company. On Day 33 my final duty was to give the opening speech in the Cathay City Auditorium to some 160 young women at a "Ladies in Aviation Summit", organised by Cathay Pacific and supported by The Honourable Company and others. What a highlight to finish on!

Departing the following day for Gatwick via Dubai, I reflected on our experience of the preceding five weeks. As with almost every aspect of being Master, I was struck by just how many activities, programmes and initiatives are organised and supported across the world by so many of our members. I am grateful for everything that all our volunteers do, in whatever country, to engage with the issues that are important to pilots from all branches of aviation and to enhance the reputation of the Air Pilots.

I would like to add my congratulations once again to those to whom I was privileged to present awards and certificates. Recognising excellence is such an important part of what the Company is all about and it is a real pleasure to be involved in that.

Everyone has been so welcoming, and I am immensely grateful to all those who have gone above and beyond in making Kate's and my visit both enjoyable and successful. I have endeavoured throughout this article to credit everyone who has been involved in the tour. It has been great to meet you all and we appreciate the time you have given up in organising the many engagements, meetings and social events. We look forward to seeing many of you again - and do let me know when you are next visiting the UK! □

REPORTS: 2025 SCHOLARS

The Company's 2025 PPL and FI Scholarship winners report on their progress.

KANE STANISLAS

THE DONALDSON PPL SCHOLARSHIP

Being awarded this scholarship has been incredibly special, especially as this was my fourth attempt applying. Each year I gained experience, stayed determined, and kept working towards this goal, so finally receiving the scholarship made it even more meaningful.

Training for my PPL was a challenge I genuinely enjoyed. Every flight taught me something new and helped build my confidence. The standout moment was my Qualifying Cross Country. The weather that day was beautiful, and for the first time I truly felt like a pilot, navigating between airfields independently and enjoying the views from the cockpit. It's an experience I'll always remember.

I'm extremely grateful to Colin Donaldson for funding my training, to the Air Pilots for giving me this opportunity after years of trying, and to Flight Training London for their support and excellent instruction.

Completing my PPL has strengthened my ambition to move onto commercial airline cadet schemes, and this scholarship has given me the confidence to take the next steps in my aviation career.

SHINJI DENNISON

THE SKY DEMON PPL SCHOLARSHIP

Aviation has been close to my heart for as long as I can remember, and I've aspired to fly aircraft ever since I took my first trial lesson at the age of 15 – only two years ago. To say that this summer had been the best in my life would be an understatement: I still can't quite believe that I can call myself a qualified private pilot. Many thanks to the Air Pilots and SkyDemon.

From watching the Red Arrows flying past me, to sitting in my room revising and waiting for the poor weather to clear, my summer was truly a rollercoaster. My training at Euro Flight Training started relatively late, at the start of July, leaving me with just under three months to complete a full PPL. I settled into the routine very quickly, completing 8h of flying and three theory exams within the first two weeks. I completed my training in a Fuji FA-200 Aero Subaru – an absolute joy to fly, and even aerobatic-capable, though that capability sadly isn't included in the PPL syllabus.

The highlight of my summer was the solo QXC. It felt so surreal to park the aircraft and enjoy lunch at a café inside another airport.

I am incredibly grateful to the Air Pilots and the team at SkyDemon for giving me the privilege of becoming a pilot at 17: this opportunity has opened countless opportunities for my future career.

ALEX CORNISH

THE STELIOS PHILANTHROPIC FOUNDATION PPL SCHOLARSHIP

My passion for aviation began with the RAF Air Cadets, where I took every opportunity to fly. The highlight of my cadet experience was completing my first solo at Dundee Airport through the

Air Cadet Pilot Scheme, an achievement that cemented my ambition to pursue flying professionally.

This year, after two previously unsuccessful attempts, I was incredibly proud to be awarded the Air Pilots' PPL Scholarship, funded by the Stelios Philanthropic Foundation. I completed my training with Flight Training London at Elstree Aerodrome, sentimentally significant as it was where I first flew on my ninth birthday.

Training in the Piper PA-28 was challenging and rewarding, from mastering Elstree's circuit to navigating solo to destinations such as Oxford, Duxford, and Wellesbourne. A major milestone was my 175-nautical-mile Qualifying Cross Country, followed shortly by passing my Skill Test with a total of 45h 5min.

I also had the opportunity to fly with 727 Naval Air Squadron at RNAS Yeovilton, an unforgettable experience that offered a real insight into the standards and environment of military flying. I am immensely grateful to the Air Pilots and the Stelios Foundation for making this journey possible, and this scholarship has strengthened my aspiration to pursue a flying career in the Royal Navy.

ANNABELLE DOWSE

THE AIR PILOTS BENEVOLENT FUND PPL SCHOLARSHIP

This summer, I had the incredible privilege of being awarded the APBF PPL Scholarship, completing my training at West London Aero Club, White Waltham. Ever since joining the Air Cadets at 16, I was determined to take every opportunity, starting with the Air Pilots Gliding Scholarship in 2024, the absolute highlight of my summer and motivating me to apply for the PPL Scholarship this year. To my amazement, I was successful and began training at the end of July, just after completing my A-levels.

One of my proudest moments was completing my QXC route: White Waltham — Turweston — Goodwood — White Waltham. It was the part of the course I felt most apprehensive about, yet touching down back at White Waltham after navigating half the country, solo, is a moment I will never forget. Another highlight was IMC flying, where my instructors ensured I had the "proper experience" of flying in clouds before emerging into clear skies above.

During my scholarship, I also secured a place on the TUI MPL Pilot Cadet Scheme. Now, three months into training, it still feels surreal that I will qualify as a 737 Second Officer at 19 – something made possible only through the generosity of the Air Pilots, whose support has truly launched my aviation career, and I will forever be grateful for these opportunities.

AARON GEORGE

THE STELIOS PHILANTHROPIC FOUNDATION PPL SCHOLARSHIP

I still can't believe how far this journey has taken me. This Scholarship has truly been a dream come true. What once felt like a distant ambition, sparked by watching aircraft climb out of Heathrow as a child and through yearly holidays to India, has now become something I have lived and experienced from inside a flight deck. Looking back, I still can't quite believe it!

From my first lesson at Elstree with Flight Training London, to the day I completed my training, every flight pushed me, challenged me, and reminded me why I fell in love with aviation.

The day I took off alone for my qualifying cross country, navigating across the country and bringing G-CDTX back home safely after more than 3h of flying, was the moment it all felt real.

Finally, came my Skill Test: after months of hard work, I completed the final milestone. Stepping out of the aircraft, walking back into the flight school and shaking hands with my examiner, it all still feels surreal. I still can't quite believe it. I am actually a pilot now.

More than anything, I hope my journey shows others that this dream is possible. You don't need a flying background or the perfect path. If you love aviation, if you work hard, ask questions, learn from setbacks, and take every opportunity that comes your way, you can get there.

I am truly grateful to the Air Pilots, Flight Training London, the Stelios Philanthropic Foundation, and everyone who supported and believed in me.

BASEL HAMMOND

THE LANE-BURSELM (BALPA BENEVOLENT FUND) PPL SCHOLARSHIP

Being awarded the Air Pilots scholarship has topped off what had been a momentous year for me, consisting of graduating from my Physics/Astrophysics BSc and securing a graduate job with BAE Systems at Warton. Flying, however, remains my biggest passion and dedication, and I made sure to channel it into the scholarship programme. Building on my previous scholarships, I trained at Booker Aviation, where I worked in operations for three summers.

After my final University exam (Relativistic Mechanics), I carried forward that academic momentum - finishing two exams in the first week and, after a year's gap, already flying my local area solo on a new type. This set the pace and performance standard I'd be aiming to sustain. The

highlight was undoubtedly the solo QXC, which was really the culmination of everything I had learned up to that point. I remember watching my aircraft basking in the sun, believing '*I've truly made it*' - a feeling I won't forget.

I became a private pilot after 47.4h TT, and an average exam score of 95%. I want to give a special thanks to my instructor, Richard McBrien, and mentor, Dee, for their unwavering support this summer.

FREDERICK KINGSLAND

THE AIR BP STERLING PPL SCHOLARSHIP

Aviation has captivated me since childhood, but the spark truly ignited on a flight to Ireland when a captain invited me into the cockpit and said: "I can see you sitting beside me one day." Growing up in Meopham before entering foster care in North Wales, that moment became my anchor. Through every challenge and exam, I held onto the dream of reaching the flight deck.

At 16, I took my first trial flight - terrifying at first, but transformative. Two years later, I was flying solo. My scholarship at Merseyflight ATS began on 8th June 2025. After weather delays, I soon settled into training, rediscovering circuits and building confidence. The pinnacle came with my first solo on 11th August, followed by my Qualifying Cross Country in September, a smooth and empowering journey from Hawarden to Halfpenny Green and Gloucester.

As autumn closed in, I raced the deadline, completing my ground exams and RT licence before finally passing my Skill Test on 24th September — just in time. Now, with immense gratitude to the Air Pilots, Air BP, Merseyflight ATS, and my PPL buddy Kristoff, I'm preparing to join the British Airways Speedbird Pilot Academy in March 2026.

ANDREW POWER

THE CAPT GAVIN SHAW PPL SCHOLARSHIP

I am extremely grateful to the Air Pilots and the Capt Gavin Shaw Scholarship for making this opportunity possible. Flying to me represents a glimpse of absolute freedom, a harmony of trust, precision, and curiosity. My passion for flying was first ignited on my 14th birthday during my first flight at the Scottish Gliding Centre. Earlier this year, I applied for the scholarship. I was invited to interview, an experience that felt truly surreal, especially having not progressed this far the previous year.

The training was unforgettable. Flying the Piper PA-38 at Glasgow Airport and Cumbernauld Airfield, I had the unique chance to view Scotland's landscapes from above, each flight offering a different experience and strengthening my passion for aviation. Highlights included landing in front of an Airbus A380 at Glasgow, a miraculous sunset flight over St Andrews and undertaking my qualifying cross country, a milestone that taught me the importance of resilience.

Passing my Skill Test was one of the proudest moments of my life, marking the culmination of the hard work through pursuing my passion for aviation from the age of 14 and the persistence that was required over summer for the successful completion of the scholarship. I am deeply grateful to the Air Pilots, to everyone at Leading Edge Flight Training, and to all who supported me and mentored me. Thank you especially to Gavin Shaw, whose generosity made it possible for me to obtain my PPL, learning flying and personal skills that will continue to shape my future.

MARY STOKELY

THE BOB DAWSON (BALPA BENEVOLENT FUND) PPL SCHOLARSHIP

Training for my PPL has undoubtedly been the most exciting experience of my life. I have seen a passion I already thought was strong grow tenfold, and I am still finding it grows stronger by the day months down the line. The opportunity to train every day and study for a goal I have always dreamt of has been so fulfilling, and I have especially appreciated the advice and companionship of fellow aviators at the airfield throughout the experience.

Having spent a year before starting university working multiple jobs to try and fund my flight training, I had concluded that getting my licence was far out of reach. This scholarship has been life-changing, as I now have the confidence to go out and start a career in aviation - turning my passion into my daily routine. I want to say "thank you" to everyone who has helped me throughout this process whether it be advice or tips or general encouragement - I am incredibly grateful. Finally, I'd like to say a massive thank you to all at the Air Pilots and the BALPA Benevolent Fund who made this possible: your sponsorship has meant the world to me!

MATTHEW THOMAS

THE SIR SEFTON BRANCKER PPL SCHOLARSHIP

Growing up in the Sussex countryside next to a disused World War Two airfield which held the occasional airshow, my ambition to become a pilot started from an

early age. I've been extremely fortunate over the years, with an AEF flight as a member of the Air Training Corps, accruing some hours on the East Midlands Universities Air Squadron, being awarded a 12h Flying Scholarship by the Air League in 2019 and passing Army Flying Grading three years later.

However, after my second attempt of applying, receiving the call to be informed that I had been awarded the Sir Sefton Brancker PPL scholarship was by far my best achievement to date.

I sat and completed my theory exams prior to the PPL flying training which I commenced in May 2025. As a frontline Police Officer in the Metropolitan Police Service, I had to balance my dynamic shift pattern/commute around flying, which I conducted in a Cessna 152 at Shoreham Aviation. Amongst meeting other YAP members during several events, my other personal highlight was the Skill Test. It was great fun!

This scholarship has given me the confidence and means to continue the modular journey to the flight deck. I am exceedingly grateful to the Company and the respective sponsors. It has been both an honour to be selected, and life changing.

ISABELLA WONG

THE WRIGLEY (BALPA BENEVOLENT FUND) PPL SCHOLARSHIP

My love for aviation started when I joined the Air Cadets at 14, and from my very first flight in a Grob Tutor, I would never have believed to be completing my Private Pilot's licence four years later!

This summer has been a jam-packed whirlwind of theory, meeting other pilots and hands-on soaring in the sky! From my first away landing at Duxford, holding for a Supermarine Spitfire, to flying solo to Leicester on my QXC, I thoroughly enjoyed every day of this adventure, be it flying new techniques to cramming in theory and learning so much every day! Completing my PPL in just two months after finishing my A-Levels in June was extremely challenging and required a lot of commitment, determination and resilience, especially with the two-week straight band of rain and cloud! I am truly grateful for this unique opportunity and all the support I have had over the summer. I cannot wait to see what the future holds!

JAMES MARSHALL

THE NORMAN MOTLEY FI SCHOLARSHIP

Shortly after obtaining my PPL, I developed a strong ambition to become a Flight Instructor. I discovered how rewarding it was to share flying with friends and family, and realised that instructing would allow me to pass on that enjoyment while continually improving my own flying skills. My passion for general aviation extends beyond leisure flying to include aerobatics, tailwheel and formation flying, which led me to apply to the Air Pilots scholarship scheme. After reaching interview stage on my first attempt, I was honoured to be selected for the Norman Motley Flying Instructor Scholarship.

The application process involved a written submission, a video presentation on fuel contamination, and a final interview, for which I delivered an interactive briefing on Bernoulli's Principle. I completed my Flight Instructor Course at the British Aerobatic Academy at Fowlmere Airfield on a part-time basis during June and August. The course combined online ground school, extensive self-study, detailed pre- and post-flight briefings, and 30h of flying in the Grob 115D and Cessna 152.

Learning to deliver clear and effective instructional patter while maintaining aircraft control and situational awareness was challenging but extremely rewarding. I successfully passed my Assessment of Competence and am now instructing PPL students, thoroughly enjoying the privilege of sharing the joy of aviation.

PRIYANKA GHANDI

THE STELIOS PHILANTHROPIC FOUNDATION FI SCHOLARSHIP

I am incredibly grateful to the Air Pilots for giving me the opportunity to obtain my Flight Instructor rating. It has been an exciting, rewarding, and truly enjoyable experience from start to finish. Throughout the course, I found myself constantly learning, building on my knowledge, as well as developing my teaching and leadership skills required to guide young pilots with confidence. Each lesson brought fresh challenges and new perspectives, and I thoroughly enjoyed the balance between the practical and theoretical elements.

The training has not only strengthened my understanding, but also helped me grow in areas such as communication, responsibility and, most importantly, decision-making. I feel fortunate to have been awarded this scholarship, and I look forward to carrying forward the knowledge and experience, sharing my passion towards flying that I gained into my new role as a flight instructor at The Pilot Centre.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to The Stelios Philanthropic Foundation for funding this scholarship. Your support has opened valuable doors for me, and I am truly honoured to have been granted it. □

THE CENTENARY IN 20 ARTICLES

SIR THOMAS OCTAVE MURDOCH SOPWITH CBE HonFRAeS

***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 Liveryman Sir Thomas Sopwith.**

By Assistant Glen Fricker

Sir Thomas Sopwith Is widely considered to be the greatest forefather of British Aviation, his aviation career spanning some 70 years from 1910 to 1980.

Born on 18th January 1888 in Kensington, London, he was the eighth child of parents Thomas Sopwith and Lydia Gertrude Messiter. His father and grandfather were both mining engineers. Tragically young Thomas accidentally shot and killed his father whilst on holiday on the Isle of Lismore in 1898. He was educated at Cottesmore school in Hove and Seafield Park engineering College in Hill Head on the Solent coast near Farnham.

Sir T O M Sopwith by Michael Ross (from a copy held by Brooklands Museum)

Sopwith was an avid competitor not only in the field of aviation, but also in motor racing, both cars and motorcycles, ice hockey and sailing, winning numerous events, trophies and awards along the way.

GROWING WINGS

In June 1906 Sopwith took to the skies for the first time from Battersea in a balloon belonging to The Hon C S Rolls (as in Rolls-Royce!). Fired with enthusiasm, he and business partner Phil Paddon (with whom he sold early automobiles under the name of Paddon and Sopwith from premises in Albemarle St, London) bought their own balloon *Padsop* from Short Brothers and flew it for over 30h in that year,

Inspired by John Moisants' successful first flight across the English Channel with a passenger in mid-1910, he took his first flight in an aircraft with Gustave Blondeau in a Farman biplane from Brooklands. He subsequently bought an Avis tractor monoplane with a 40hp (30kw) ENV engine from Howard Wright, with which Sir Thomas taught himself to fly. His first recorded solo flight, on 22nd October 1910, ended in a minor crash (apparently a frequent occurrence, even by his own admission!) He then "upgraded" to a Howard Wright 60hp pusher biplane, which was very similar to the original Wright brothers aircraft. Between then and 22nd November(!) he had successfully gained enough skill to be awarded Royal Aero Club Aviation Certificate No 31.

Very soon after that he won the first prize of £4,000 by completing the longest flight thus far from England to the Continent. Taking off from Eastchurch on the Isle of Sheppey on 18th December 1910, he was confident of his navigation as far as Dover, but admitted that he was, to all intents and purposes, lost after that. He finally landed in a potato field in near Beaumont, Belgium, the flight of 177 miles having taken 3h 40min.

1911 saw Sopwith sailing across the Atlantic to sample US aviation. While there he won quite a few prizes and accolades including being hailed by the American press as "…the undisputed English champion of the air" and "…the world's tallest aviator"! Despite having voiced his dislike of the Wright Brothers flying machines, he bought one of their Burgess-Wright biplanes and set about modifying it to his own personal taste, with particular attention to the flight control system. Originally this consisted of two levers, (no pedals) both operating in the fore-and-aft axis. The left controlled the aircraft in pitch, the right lever controlling the aircraft in roll, whilst the top of the right lever was articulated to control yaw. He changed these to an arrangement similar to that used today - a single stick to control pitch and roll, and rudder pedals to control yaw.

Sopwith on his Howard Wright biplane at Brooklands

SOPWITH AVIATION BEGINS

Using the prize money from various flying competitions, in June 1912, he set up the Sopwith Aviation school of flying at Brooklands, along with his friend and engineer Fred Sigrist. One of their early students was Maj Hugh (later Lord) Trenchard, later to become founder of the Royal Air Force. Another was Harry Hawker who, after having gained his licence for the princely sum of £50, joined

The Schneider Trophy-winning Sopwith, 1913

the company as a flying instructor and test pilot. On 24th October 1912, Harry Hawker won the British Michelin Endurance prize with a flight of 8h 23min in a much modified (by Sopwith) Wright Model B.

Sopwith used the wings of the Wright and a Bleriot fuselage with a tractor 40hp ABC engine to create the very first Sopwith aircraft. Shortly after, a second followed, this being of similar configuration with three seats and a 70hp engine.

In December 1912 production of the new designs moved to an ex-skating rink in Kingston on Thames. It was during the Kingston years that the company diversified into flying boats and seaplanes, and in April 1914 a Sopwith Tabloid fitted with floats won the Schneider Trophy at Monte Carlo. It was flown by Howard Pixton at an average speed of 86.83mph and went on to set a world air speed record for floatplanes at 92mph. In 1914 Thomas married Beatrix Hore-Ruthven.

RISE AND FALL

During the World War One, Sopwith was well placed to aid the efforts of allied air arms. This necessitated a move to larger premises, first to Canbury Park Road in Kingston, (a small section of the original works still exists), then slightly later to even larger premises in Richmond Road, Kingston. It was from there and from other contractors that some 18,000 Sopwith aircraft were produced for the allied war effort, starting with Tabloid landplanes and Baby and Schneider floatplanes. Later aircraft included the Pup, which was according to Sir Tom, "…a pilot-friendly aircraft, very forgiving" and others with somewhat colourful names more often than not coined by the receiving squadrons - often linked to the aircraft's appearance, hence names like 1½ Strutter, Triplane, Hippo, Cuckoo, Snipe. Perhaps the most famous of all the Sopwith designs was the Camel - so named because of the distinctive hump housing the twin machine guns on the fuselage. Sopwith described the Camel, unlike the Pup, as being "…difficult for the pilots to get friendly with", a demanding aircraft to fly, but very successful as a fighter, with over 5,700 being built.

The first landing onto an aircraft carrier - Sqn Cdr E H Dunning lands a Sopwith Pup onto HMS Furious, 2nd August 1917

With the end of the war, aircraft orders evaporated and (despite diversification into products such as motorcycles and kitchen utensils) this, coupled with anti-profiteering taxes, forced Sopwith into liquidating his company on 10th September 1920.

HAWKER

From the ashes, the H G Hawker Engineering Co was formed back at the Canbury Park Road premises on 15th November 1919, its directors being listed as F I Bennett, H G Hawker, T O M Sopwith, F Sigrist and V W Eyre, with Harry Hawker being the only pilot, the rest of the team being listed as engineers.

Initially Hawker's return to aviation focussed on the refurbishment of war-surplus aircraft, mainly Sopwith Snipes and De Havilland DH.4s and DH.9s, to civilian specifications. On 12th July 1921, the fledgling company suffered the most devastating blow: Harry Hawker was killed whilst testing a Nieuport Goshawk which he was preparing to enter in the Aerial Derby air race.

The Harrier was one of Sopwith's two favourite aircraft - the other was the Camel (LA (Phot) Billy Bunting/MoD)

In 1922 Fred Sigrist became managing director of Hawker, with Sopwith continuing as a director, supporting the new Chief Designer, Capt B Thomson. While continuing work on war surplus aircraft, by now refurbishing Sopwith Camels for the Royal Navy, Hawker designed and built the first aircraft to bear its name, the Duiker.

In 1924 Sidney Camm joined the team at Kingston, becoming Chief Designer in 1925. During this time, Sopwith continued to have input into various Hawker projects, including the Cygnet and Horsley. Under Camm's design leadership, Hawker developed a family of elegant military biplanes such as the Hart and Fury of which over 2,000 were eventually built (many by rival Vickers).

Sadly in 1930 Beatrix died, and two years later Sopwith married Phyllis Brodie Gordon, who also predeceased him in 1978. On 15th November 1932 Phyllis bore them a son, Thomas Edward Brodie Sopwith ('Tommy'), who was to follow in his father's footsteps by competing in racing cars and yachts. He also became a proficient aviator, joining the (then) Guild of Air Pilots and Navigators in 1970 and subsequently, like his father, becoming a liveryman.

Sopwith's competitive spirit continued through the 1930s on land, sea and in the air. Notable competitions included competing for the America's cup in his J-Class yachts, *Endeavour* in 1934 and *Endeavour II* in 1937. He very nearly won in 1934, earning him a place in the America's Cup Hall of Fame posthumously in 1995. Both yachts were designed and built by Camper and Nicholsons, where he was a regular customer, having had a luxury motor yacht named *Vita* built for him in 1927. In 1937 he commissioned Camper and Nicholsons to build him another luxury yacht, the 1,628t *Philante*, at the time the largest private diesel-powered yacht built in Britain. It was impressed during the second world war as HMS *Philante* to become a convoy escort vessel and after the war was returned to Sopwith, who sold her to the King of Norway in 1947.

TOTAL NUMBERS OF AIRCRAFT DESIGNED BY COMPANIES UNDER THE CHAIRMANSHIP/PRESIDENCY OF THOMAS SOPWITH

Name of designing company	Years	Total built in all factories (including licence/contract)
Sopwith Aviation	1912-20	18,106
H G Hawker Engineering	1923-30	1,589
Hawker Aircraft	1931-89	27,126
Gloster Aircraft	1937-61	4,019
Armstrong Whitworth Aircraft	1936-66	2,152
A V Roe	1935-88	20,128
A V Roe Canada	1949-58	698
De Havilland	1962-81	c1,067
Blackburn Aircraft	1963-68	209
TOTAL		75,457

(As listed in Pure Luck, By Alan Bramson, Patrick Stephens, 1990)

HAWKER SIDDELEY

In February 1934 Sopwith masterminded the takeover of rival aircraft manufacturer Gloster Aircraft, and in July 1935 set up a trust to acquire all of the shares of the Armstrong-Siddeley Development Company, along with others, leading to the formation of a new holding company known as Hawker-Siddeley Aircraft Company Ltd.

The Author's father, John Fricker, interviews Sir Tom

This became the most powerful aviation body in the UK, the group consisting of Armstrong-Whitworth Aircraft, Armstrong-Siddeley Motors, Air Service Training and A V Roe as well as Hawker and Gloster.

The group flourished during the late 1930s with orders flowing in for aircraft, Including the one which, arguably, won the Battle of Britain. Designed by a team headed up by Sidney Camm, the Hurricane prototype K5083 was first flown by test pilot George Bulman on 6th November 1935. Famously, Sopwith and his Board sanctioned building the first 600 Hurricanes before an order had been received from the British government, and in 1938 a new airfield and factory were opened at Langley in Buckinghamshire to meet demand for the Hurricane and later Typhoon, Tempest and Sea Fury. Having also produced iconic aircraft such as the Avro Lancaster and Anson during World War Two, Hawker Siddeley companies also went on to build world-beaters such as the Hawker Hunter and Harrier, Avro Vulcan, Gloster Meteor and De Havilland DH.125.

In recognition of his services to aviation, he became a Knight Bachelor in 1953. He was made an Upper Freeman of GAPAN in 1958, and became a Liveryman in June 1959. Sir Tom continued to act as chairman and later president and consultant to the Hawker Siddeley group until his retirement in 1980. According to *Pure Luck*, the biography by Alan Bramson, almost 75,500 aircraft designed by companies of which Sopwith was chairman/president were built between 1912 and 1989.

During his latter years, Sir Tom finally consented to being interviewed, his interviewers including Anna Malinovska, Raymond Baxter (who was flown by helicopter to Sir Tom's residence Compton Manor in King's Somborne Hampshire by Sir Tom's son Tommy), and my own late father. My father recalls Sir Tom of still having a razor-sharp memory (despite being in his late 90s at the time), and a fair degree of wit.

Sir Tom's 100th Birthday was marked by a flypast of military aircraft over his home, which included as many Hawker types as possible. Sir Tom regarded the Harrier and the Camel as being his greatest aircraft, but overall he put most of his achievements down to "Pure Luck". He died at his home in Hampshire on 27th January 1989, nine days after his 101st birthday. □