

## Livery Dinner 23 May 2019

Your Royal Highness, Distinguished Guests, Fellow Masters, Aviators and Friends.

Your Royal Highness

May I first welcome you to our dinner tonight?

It is splendid that you should be with us, not least because of your support of the Light Aircraft Association and its 8000 members – something very close to our hearts, and with your Vice Admiral hat on – to note that 10 days ago HMS Prince of Wales formally became an Affiliated Unit of This Livery.

The ship is magnificent. The Carrier Alliance impressive with a partnership between the services, industry and of note employing some 1000 apprentices.

Two personal observations:

With 7 decks it is not a place for someone of my age.

But more importantly, the quality of the men and women who we met and who serve was a beacon, and an example of excellence.

Stephen – thank you for hosting an outstanding visit last week and for being with us tonight

Whatever happens next, this will be my first and certainly my last chance to speak at our Annual Livery Dinner. So this is a unique privilege.

Around This Hall I see friends who have brought me to this point of distinction.

And I would like to thank all of you for that.

One - who in modern parlance has “Mentored” me throughout my career in this business of aviation, is Sir Richard Johns. He taught Prince Charles to fly – and then he had to cope with me.

The problem I face is that I may receive a de-brief from Dick after dinner.

But I am ready. A long time ago my skin was thickened in my most memorable “interview without coffee” after I had snapped the main undercarriage on one of his Harriers.

Don't do that again - you idiot. These six words did the trick. I am still here to prove it.

So I will approach my words tonight with similar brevity, and hopefully clarity.

I recall my first Livery Dinner when I was invited as the Commanding Officer of a newly Affiliated Unit of the then Guild of Air Pilots and Air Navigators.

I flew a RAF aircraft into London City Airport where I changed into my RAF Mess Kit, much to the amusement, dare I say the intrigue of the travelling public.

I had a brilliant evening and then returned to RAF Germany only to receive a dressing down.

The Harrier was not authorised to operate from London City Airport.

But a dinner like this and in these magnificent and historic surroundings is special for all of us. And to be honest – it takes some organisation which I had not fully appreciated.

To the Chef Mark Page, Louisa Stirling Marta and Beata and Daniela Hunt Cortes and indeed our home team lead by Eloise and all who have made tonight happen.

It has been a splendid team effort. Please join me in thanking everyone who has been involved.

I Think My Message Tonight is Straightforward:

Aviation is a global industry which seeks to deliver:

The security of our country, through the defence of our airspace

Global Reach for Business which is at the heart of delivering growth in our GDP

And fun for all of us as we explore our world in a way which few could have imagined when the Wright Brothers took to the air in 1903.

Today, there is a huge and growing global demand for pilots – estimated to be 80,000 over the next decade

But providing trained women and men to meet the demand is an expensive challenge, and is often met by individual commitment.

Some view Aviation as a “rich person’s job”.

This should not be the case.

A pilot does not need a degree to fly an aeroplane.

An aerospace engineer can start a career as an apprentice.

Yet, aviation is a core component of our national interest, and it needs to be resourced as the way ahead is dynamic and packed with opportunity.

And then there are those who enable flight – they are 90% of our industry.

They are essential to make it happen and as Air Pilots we should engage with them.

As a City Livery Company we play our part along with other Air-Minded Liveries.

I believe that Government, the airlines and the aviation industry as a whole could and should do more:

We should grasp that moment when a child is inspired to fly, engineer and support an aircraft.

We should help them to navigate the pathway to achieve their ambition

And we should coach them to success and mentor them through their career.

So may I offer an example of determination and a way through the maze of becoming part of our industry?

A vignette to share which demonstrates this:

A man who I have known from the day he was borne. And I declare an interest – the man in question is my godson.

He obtained his PPL with a University Air Squadron. The next obvious step was to join the RAF – but at the time the Into Training Target had been met. There was no room for him.

Thereafter, an excellent job in the city failed to quench his thirst for flying.

So he went to Texas; got a “frozen ATPL”, increased his hours with Ryan Air, moved to Norwegian on the B 787 and is now a First Officer with Virgin.

The then boy and now a man cannot be here tonight because he is flying. Say no more.

But This is what we Air Pilots seek to do and support. We should aim to do more and do it better.

We need a coalition – Airlines, Industry, Military Aviation and the likes of our own Company to take children from the class room to flying and supporting aircraft in the skies.

And this needs determination, energy and ultimately money.

We need to help map out clear routes into aviation which often start at a young age.

We need to address the inevitability in the world of aviation of demand, growth, and volume that will focus attention on runway capacity, airport development and perhaps a “Boris Island”.

And once Cross Rail is completed and set for further extension, Boris Island could become a practical reality. But as my words are being recorded for training and quality purposes I will go no further.

So may I reflect on what we do, and offer? We embrace experience – this Hall is full of it

We are Global

We are Independent and we are informed

And our duty is to inspire and help enable the next generation to fly.

If a school leaver can secure a Government Loan to attend University, then why not offer some financial support to those who seek to learn to pilot (and navigate) aircraft?

There is good progress in this area through The Aviation Charter which will be formally launched on 2 July. The Air League and the Aeronautical Society and our guests here tonight are already part of this enterprise. It is for our Company to decide if it wants to be a part as well. Personally, I feel we must.

Meanwhile, there is the challenge of The Northern Powerhouse. I am not talking about HS2 – but about our guest speaker. A woman whose father was an armorer on the Lancaster in WWII and like me one who comes from “Up North” – although we have yet to agree where South ends, and north begins.

The Town of Crewe works for me.

I will not reprise Maggie Appleton’s CV, but as a leader and one who inspires the next generation - it is impressive. Following her appointment as the CEO of the RAF Museum, Maggie has become a welcome member of our Honourable Company. She is a social historian – and she gets people. And Maggie and her Museum team often create that moment when a child is inspired to fly.

Indeed, in partnership with the Royal Air Force, The City, our aerospace industries and others, The Museum helps to light that match, which then ignites a fire. We have all been there and we should encourage more to follow.

But progress in life does not fall in our lap. It requires education, inspiration and team work. This is what a National Museum can contribute and this is why I value and welcome Maggie’s presence here this evening.

So would you please join me as I propose a toast - Inspire to Fly

Maggie, I know how busy you are - so thank you for coming to speak to us tonight.

In a moment the floor and the microphone will be yours. And in pilot speak – “You Have Control”. Thank you