

EDITORIAL

A real miscellany of items this time. Hedley Molland entertained us at our monthly meeting in February with a talk entitled 50 Years of Flying, 1951-2001. It was a most interesting talk but Hedley omitted to mention that he had twice baled out of stricken aircraft. Alan Smith has researched his escapades and they are featured here. Another one of our monthly meeting speakers was Mrs Dawn Harding. I received a letter from this delightful lady expressing her enjoyment at speaking to us about her experiences at the MAEE at Felixtowe. I have published the letter here. I am sure she won't mind!

Russell Bailey has recently stood down as Treasurer and also in his role as excursions organiser. We are greatly indebted to Russell for all his hard work over many, many years. A report on his last trip is also in this newsletter.

One of our long standing members is Jim Ferguson. It was reported in a previous "Runway" that Jim is the holder of the MBE. Jim has asked me to point out that this was an error. No MBE for Jim but as a veteran of the Malta campaign I guess he can justify his share of the George Cross that was awarded to that gallant island!

Many other stories and light hearted offerings. Oh, and Bob Dunnett has been to London to see the Queen!

ED

The following account of a day in the life of a 356th FG pilot reminds us of just how precariously balanced those young lives were. It is by Lt. George L Yoakum of the 365th Squadron, 356th FG, Martlesham

Alan Smith, our Archivist, has kindly sent me the following entry for the 20 March 1944 from the 356th book in the museum:- *"A black day for the Group as 6 P.47s are lost while pilots only claim 1-0-0 in the air and 0-1 on the ground. Col Einar Malmstrom accounts for the air victory when he bounces three Me 109s near Charleville and flames one of them. Ground fire and bad weather are causes of the losses. Among those missing are Lt Bernard A. Tuckey Jr of the 361st killed in a crash off Orfordness; Capt Fred Porter of the 361st, captured after being hit by flak at a Belgian airfield; Lt DeWitt T. Bell, Porter's wingman, who is killed; and Lt Charles J. Garvey, Lt Phillip E. McCullough and F/O Howard P. Maupin of the 360th, the former being captured, while Maupin evades capture and returns in September. Before being shot down, Capt Porter damages an Me 110 on the ground."*

Alan concludes:- *Yoakum flew P-47D 42-76379 "Lil Abner" QI-G. Lt Bernard A Tuckey was killed whilst flying P-47-D 42-8440 QI-P. (Not to be confused with Col. Philip E Tukey Jun.).*

MY MOST MEMORABLE EXPERIENCE

On 20 March I flew 2.5 hours on what was supposed to be an escort mission with the bombers. I was flying on Captain Bailey's wing when we went into a solid

overcast at 5,000 feet and one hour later turned back at 30,000 feet without seeing the top of the overcast. Bailey and I were the only two in the flight of four still together. Apparently, the other two could not overcome the difficulty of flying close formation in clouds with poor visibility. Lt. Tuckey probably fell out in a spin and could not recover in the clouds and did not have enough altitude under 5,000 feet to recover and crashed into the Channel near Orfordness.

After turning back on a heading toward home, our angle of descent was shallow but our speed was well over 220 to 250 mph, much faster than our climb-out speed of 170mph. After several minutes we came out in the clear at 5,000 feet, passing over an unidentified body of water. (No sure whether or not Bailey thought we had just passed over the English Channel). In any case, while Bailey was trying to pinpoint our location while flying at 5,000 feet, we began to receive very close and accurate flak. It was so close, I could hear the explosions. I feared being shot out of the sky and called Bailey on the radio to suggest that we go down to the deck (ground level). Anti-aircraft artillery could not get line-of-sight on low flying aircraft.

At tree-top level there was no immediate threat to our safety and so we began to enjoy the scenery while flying at 50 feet on a heading toward home. On a previous mission while flying low level over Holland, (had turned my gun switch to "camera only" and got some beautiful 16mm pictures of the Zeider Zee and Coastal Installations. This time I wanted better close-ups and so was descending on the targets to bring them into closer range of the camera. I remember shooting a truck driving down a road and other country scenes. Suddenly, a cross-country electric transmission line came into view and too late, I realized that I should have gone under it. My first impulse and reaction was to go over it and I hit the wires going upward at 45 degrees to the land surface. A huge ball of fire or illumination resulted from my contact with the wires but I did not feel any electric shock or force of impact. (Later I learned that the wires damaged both wings, the propeller and the elevator section (tail section) so badly that repair was not feasible and so the plane was put into salvage. It was the first flight in my first personal plane and never had time to remove "Mona Lou" from the cowling.

At 1,000 feet, when the plane had lost excess speed and the nose had dropped to level flight attitude, I discovered that the damaged elevator could not maintain level flight even with the stick in the full back position. In a gradual descent and gradually losing altitude, the plane began to gain more speed. I did not lose hope of regaining control until the altitude was too low to jump. Then I realized that contact with the ground was inevitable and would be disastrous at high speed- I did not want to disappear without someone knowing what had happened and so I called Bailey on the radio, told him that I had hit those wires, could not maintain level flight, and concluded with the British expression, "I think I've had it!" There probably was no more than 60 seconds remaining before ground impact and what happened next, in what I thought was my last 60 seconds on earth, was by providential guidance (another miracle or guiding angel) because my mind was

not functioning normally under the stress of the circumstances. It suddenly came to me as if by some divine inspiration that there was one additional control that was not being used. It was a seldom used trim tab on the elevator for stabilizing the plane on take-off and landing. When that control was cranked in to the maximum, I was able to fly back home with 15 to 20 feet of half inch cable hanging on the plane. Someone hung the wire overhead in the "ready room" and wrote a comment in the STARS AND STRIPES about "the lights going out in Berlin." There are guardian angels!

ROBERT W DUNNETT

On Tuesday 19th July Rita and I went to the Royal Garden Party at Buckingham Palace. I had the invitation from the Lord Lieutenant of Suffolk in May offering us three dates and we choose the 19th July. What a wonderful day. My son Mark took care of the transport and because of my wife's ankle problem; we had a special pass that allowed us to park across the road from the Palace in the park.

On arrival we walked through the court yard into the palace and through on to the terrace, down the steps and on to the lawn. It took some time for us to accept where we really were. We joined an RAF Flight Sergeant (he now knows all about us and yes, he does have an MHAS leaflet!) and his wife at a table on the lawn and for a while watched people from around the world arriving.

The Queen and most of the Royal Family arrived at 4-00p.m. and soon they were chatting to their guests. Rita and I were in the company of most of the Royal family but only talked to and shook hands with Camilla, Duchess of Cornwall and Prince Charles, both charming and friendly. We had tea, cucumber sandwiches of course plus lots of scrummy food and ice cream, a small army of people looking after us.

After the Queen and Prince Philip and the rest of the royals had finished tea, at about 6-00p.m., they returned to the Palace. Rita and I then took the opportunity to stroll around the beautiful garden and lake. It was nearly as quiet as our Museum area! We returned to meet our son at the car at 7-00p.m.

This was a day we will never forget, a day at Buckingham Palace and all thanks to that lump of concrete which is our well known Martlesham Heath Aviation Society Museum.

Robert (Bob) Dunnett

VISIT TO RAF LAKENHEATH 12TH MAY.

Forty-nine of us arrived at RAF Lakenheath, at the invitation of LT Col Dan Debree, call sign TRASH, Commander of the 494th Panther Squadron based at RAF Lakenheath. We had previously met Dan when in November 2004 he attended our Remembrance Ceremony and laid a wreath at the Memorial of the 356th Fighter Squadron USAAF.

On arrival we were shown to the Squadron Bar where we met our host for the day Captain Matt Hundon (Quadro). We were given a briefing about the squadron and

also our itinerary for the day. The party was split into two and we were taken out onto the hardstand where about seven F-15 Eagles were parked. We were given a fairly intense guided tour of the fighter and then allowed look at the cockpit, while Matt and his colleagues answered our questions.

The next stage of our visit was the lunch. It was fantastic, including the iced tea. Whilst having lunch, we had an officer join each table to answer our questions.

In the afternoon we were taken to the Radar building where we were shown the radar facility at close quarters. I found this particularly interesting as we could see an airliner passing over the area of Ipswich where I live. We then ascended the 6 storey control tower and were given a briefing about its function. The view from there is amazing. Standing on the balcony outside we watched the take off of a German Tornado, a touch and go with a KC-135 and the landing of two F-15 Eagles. We missed our opportunity to see the F-15 simulator by overrunning our time at the tower.

The last item in the agenda was a visit to the Memorial Park followed by our goodbyes and vote of thanks. Matt presented us each with a 494th Patch, rounding of a wonderful day. Our hosts really made this a day to remember and their hospitality was second to none, and we left there having made some good friends. Finally we must thank Russell Bailey for arranging this his last trip for the Society and leaving his successor a hard act to follow.

Tarkey Barker

LETTER SPOT

The following is from one of our long distance members, Charles Antell from Beverley in Yorkshire. ED

Dear Alan,

As a long range member of advancing years I use MHAS "Runway 22" as a link to a civilisation long gone!

A couple of questions spring to mind prompted by a paragraph by Ray Blake in the "Martlesham Jottings". The quantity of "Tallboy Grand Slam" bombs at Martlesham surprised me as we always bombed up at Woodbridge in '46/'47, believing that Martlesham runways were too short for safety at that "all-up" weight. Maybe these were brought to Martlesham after Woodbridge closed, or maybe they always had a few stacked away which we never knew about.

The other question was about their fillings. I never did find what was in the one's we dropped in the sea off Orford. I had heard that the bombs we used were filled with some form of wax to make up the weight but maybe the explosive resembled this. It would be very interesting to hear from anyone of your distinguished contributors whether this was so?

We had one 22000 pounder come adrift as we were taking off. It landed in the middle of the runway and ploughed a lone furrow for a few hundred yards before coming to rest. It obviously had no detonators but when lifted out by crane it was all colours of the rainbow on its underside, so it had been quite warm!

Best wishes to all. Keep up the good work!
Charles Antell.

I received the following letter from Mrs Dawn Harding, who spoke to us on June 3rd. of her experiences whilst recording in-flight information on seaplane experiments at the MAEE, Felixtowe. ED

Dear Mr Powell,

When I came and spoke to you all on June 3rd. I wondered whether to tell you a rather rude story! I ran out of nerve on the evening, but here it is now.

I believe the control surfaces of land 'planes were fixed in position when unused, on the ground, by wooden blocks. The system on seaplanes was different for obvious reasons. Just behind the pilot's seat, on the floor, was a row of holes. The wires from the control column each had a ring of the same size which were lined up under the holes and a rake shaped metal tool was put in to keep them in position. Getting the rings and holes lined up was quite tricky and on one occasion my instructions to the pilot were as follows:- Waggle it, waggle it, hold it and I'll put it in!

This would have caused only local merriment if the pilot hadn't had his "Press to Transmit" on. As it was, London Airport Air Traffic tried to find out what the lady was putting in and where she was putting it!!

Thank you for inviting me to your meeting. Your members made me feel very welcome and relaxed,

Yours sincerely,
Dawn Harding.

The following from our member, Kelvin Fellingham:- For Sale.
A collection of over 70 metal diecast model aircraft in an illuminated display cabinet. £250. Reason for selling – room wanted. 01473 620016.

THE DEFENCE OF BRITAIN

In the early 1990's the Council for British Archaeology organised a meeting and subsequent further discussions on the Project to begin a Nationwide survey of all recorded, observed, recalled and remembered wartime sites of WW1 and WW2. There were twelve National organisations involved and leaflets were distributed appealing for volunteers to record sites in their own **areas**. The results were published in the late 1990's and the title was "TWENTIETH CENTURY FORTIFICATIONS". There were about a dozen volumes and the series covered coast artillery, anti-aircraft artillery, airfields, radar installations, anti-invasion defences, operation "Crossbow", the campaign against the VI Flying Bomb and a number of other subjects. It is understood that the current Office of "The Defence of Britain Project", is the Imperial War Museum, Duxford.

Copies of the volumes were sent to all County Archaeological or Local History Departments all over the United Kingdom.

Copies of these volumes in Suffolk can only be seen at the Department of Archaeology, Suffolk: County Council, Shire Hall, Raingate Street, Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk, IP33 1RX. Tel No.01284 352443. The contact is Mr Colin Pendleton and the volumes can only be researched by prior appointment.

In viewing the volumes on the 6th October 2004 in carrying out some personal research I found that a lot of the information was obtained from War Diaries from various sources, the National Archive at Kew, The Imperial War Museum, and other similar organisations.

During my own personal researches I found, inevitably perhaps, some omissions and errors. It is a great pity that this Nationwide research was not carried out some thirty or forty years previous.

Tony Errington

THE "SMART BOMB" OF WW2

Probably because of its local connection the story of Operation Aphrodite is well known to members of the Society. Indeed, I wrote a piece about it in a recent "Runway". You will recall that Operation Aphrodite involved an American experiment of packing "war weary" B17's with high explosive and attempting to guide them to enemy targets by radio control from an accompanying aircraft. The idea was eventually abandoned when it met with no success.

However the United States had been experimenting with radio controlled bombs since the start of what was called the "Azon" project in April 1942. The radio control equipment was the same as that employed in aircraft used in Operation Aphrodite.

Azon fins were a special tail assembly for remote radio control fitted to a standard high angle 1000lb bomb. Gyros were fitted to eliminate weaving. It was to prove a relatively successful weapon, particularly in the Far East where, amongst other successes, it destroyed a rail bridge in Burma. The bridge had previously withstood numerous attacks by conventional bombing. The concept was particularly suited to railway lines and bridges.

In England Azon was first tested and delivered by B24 bombers and crews of the 458th Heavy Bombardment Group, which was based at Horsham St Faith's, now the Norwich International Airport. On May 13, 1944 B-24 Liberators of the 458th Bomb Group dropped 14 bombs against Seine bridges, scoring 14 near-misses. Previously, extensive US trials had shown Azon to be 29 times more accurate than free fall bombs.

However, the American Eighth Air Force were obliged to reject the concept because of the fact that aircraft were obliged to prolong their bombing run in order to guide the bomb to its target. The trajectory of the bomb was guided by radio control of trim tabs on the fins and a smoke generator allowed the bomb aimer to follow the track of the missile whilst it fell earthwards. The bomb was therefore only suitable to be employed in good visibility and Eighth Air Force targets were no places to loiter over in daylight!

The American 15th Air Force in Italy used the Azon radio controlled bomb and direct hits were recorded on Danube locks and the Avisio viaduct south of the Brenner Pass.

Some 14000 Azon tail assemblies were manufactured before the programme was terminated in late 1944 in favour of weapons with built-in automatic homing systems. They can truly be described as the forerunner of today's "smart" bombs and Cruise missiles.

Alan Powell.

THE ROAD TO NOWHERE

The road to nowhere is straight and long,

The checks are made the leader's gone,

The lucky charm is checked and kissed,

A prayer is said there's nothing missed.

Our last tour of duty is going well,

Propellers whirl, the engine's noise swell,

They reach a crescendo the craft starts to shake,

We're second in line, last decisions to make.

The road to nowhere stretches before,

As the aircraft moves the engines roar

We reach the main runway it's our turn to go,

Our trusty ship. Able, Charlie, Zero,

The wheels leave the runway, they're now tucked inside,

We're free of the earth, there's nowhere to hide,

There's two hours to go before targets are seen,

Then hell will break loose but we'll work as a team,

Above the clouds we all feel secure,

But we know that below us the gun crews feel sure,

Its time for action, the bombs are all primed,

Our Buddies around us, perfectly timed.

All hell breaks loose our bombs are gone,

It's time to turn and head back home,

What's that noise? I felt no pain,

There's something red splashing my face like rain.

We stand on the runway, our ghosts shaking hands,

Is this what they call the promised land?

Our luck ran out and our hopes have gone,

The road to nowhere is straight and long,

In Honour of those who gave their lives

David Ford

Printed by permission from the Guild of Aviation Artists Quarterly news and sent to me by Vicky and Mike Gunnell. ED.

1. Every takeoff is optional. Every landing is mandatory.

2. If you push the stick forward, the houses get bigger. If you pull the stick back, they get smaller. That is, unless you keep pulling the stick all the way back, then they get bigger again.

3. Flying isn't dangerous. Crashing **is** what's dangerous.

4. It's always better to be down here wishing you were up there than up there wishing you were down here.

5. The **ONLY** time you have too much fuel is when you're on fire.

6. The propeller is just a big fan in front of the plane used to keep the pilot cool. When it stops, you can usually watch the pilot start sweating.

7. When in doubt, hold on to your altitude. No one has ever collided with the sky.

8. A 'good' landing is one from which you can walk away. A 'great' landing is one after which they can use the plane again.

9. Learn from the mistakes of others. You won't live long enough to make all of them yourself.

10. You know you've landed with the wheels up if it takes full power to taxi to the ramp.

11. The probability of survival is inversely proportional to the angle of arrival. Large angle of arrival, small probability of survival and vice versa.

12. Never let an aircraft take you somewhere your brain didn't get **to** five minutes earlier.

13. Stay out of clouds. The silver lining everyone keeps talking about might be another airplane going in the opposite direction. Reliable sources also report that mountains have been known to hide out in clouds.

15. There are three simple rules for making a smooth landing. Unfortunately no one knows what they are.

16. You start with a bag full of luck and an empty bag of experience. The trick is to fill the bag of experience before you empty the bag of luck.

17. Helicopters can't fly they're just **so** ugly the earth repels them.

18. If all you can see out of the window is ground that's going round and round and all you can hear **is** commotion coming from the passenger compartment, things **are** not at all as they should be.

19. In the ongoing battle between objects made of aluminium going hundreds of miles per hour and the ground going zero miles per hour, the ground has yet to lose.

20. Good judgement comes from experience. Unfortunately, the experience usually comes from bad judgement.

21. It's always a good idea to keep the pointy end going forward as much as possible.

22. Keep looking around. There's always something you've missed.

23. Remember, is not just a good idea. It's the law. And it's not subject **to** repeal.

24. The three most useless things to a pilot are the altitude above you, runway behind you, and a tenth of a second ago.

HEDLEY MOLLAND - THE STORY OF HIS TWO EJECTIONS.

Flg Off. Hedley Molland of No 263 Squadron based at Wattisham, who was destined to be a double ejectee, made history when he ejected from his Hunter Mk 5 (WN989) at 25,000ft at an indicated Mach 1.1. It was fortunate that he was so high because although his True Air Speed (TAS) was around 760mph, his Indicated Air Speed, which determines the degree of air blast, was about 480kt. The Hunter was not a supersonic aircraft, its maximum speed in level flight being in the order of Mach 0.93, but in a shallow dive from altitude it could exceed Mach 1.0, a feature which was an attraction at air displays before the supersonic bang created by breaking the so-called sound barrier was banned.

On 3 August 1955, Molland was in a pair of aircraft that had climbed to 40,000ft to carry out practice interceptions on each other. After 10 minutes of this leader called for a tail chase. Molland acknowledged and the chase was on. Both aircraft were still at 40,000ft with Molland some 400yd behind the leader flying at full throttle at an Indicated Mach Number (IMN) of 0.86, when the leading Hunter went into a steep turn to port. He then straightened out and started a full-throttle dive of about 30°. Molland, still about 400yd to the rear, dived his aircraft and was soon touching Mach 0.98. He had just experienced the customary slight forward movement of the stick associated with reaching that Mach number when the leader started to pull out. He tried to follow but although he pulled the stick back to the limit of its travel, the Hunter's nose would not rise. The nose in fact began to drop and the 23-year-old pilot felt himself being lifted slightly from his seat by negative 'g'. Immediately he trimmed full nose up from the half-division nose down he had set before starting the tail chase. He then throttled back but this had no noticeable effect on the angle of dive. At 25,000ft with the stick fully back, the aircraft diving at between 70° and 80°, it was quite clear that something was seriously wrong with the Hunter's power controls and recovery was impossible. So, releasing the stick, Molland put his right hand on the hood jettison release and his left on the ejection seat blind handle. The hood went cleanly and the air blast swept in, sucking his maps and other loose oddments out of the cockpit. The force of the blast caused his vision to fade so he quickly pulled the blind with his left hand and did not bother to pull his feet back off the rudder bar. The last he saw of the Mach meter it was registering Mach 1.1. He heard the seat fire, felt himself spinning through space and then blacked out. Recovering consciousness he found that he was sitting upright in the seat and, looking up, saw the drogues streamed out. His left arm was twisted round the side of the seat and he made several unsuccessful efforts to pull it back. Each time it blew round the side of the seat again and in the end he decided to let it stay where it was. During the ejection Molland had lost his left shoe and sock, helmet, oxygen mask, both gloves and his watch which had been on his left wrist. All three dinghy leads had become detached but he managed to reconnect one of them with his right hand before separation occurred at 10,000ft. There was a jolt as his parachute opened

and soon afterwards he noticed a circle of foam on the sea where his Hunter had crashed. Taking stock of his surroundings he worked out that he was going to land some miles off the coast near Felixstowe. Unable to swim, he took no chances and inflated his life jacket whilst still at some height. After splashing in he bobbed to the surface and within a few minutes was picked up by a tug, a crew member from which dived into the sea to help. Later he said that although he had always been comforted by the thought that the seat was there if needed, he didn't think he stood a great chance of escaping at the speed he was travelling. The two actions required at that time to jettison the hood and then operate the seat had led to many discussions in the crew room about the amount of turbulence that would be created once the hood had gone. It was felt that this might well lead to difficulty in ejecting, so Molland and his fellow pilots had spent some time practicing the technique of operating the hood jettison with one hand and the seat blind almost simultaneously with the other. This worked for him but the one-sided pull on the face blind resulted in his left arm, instead of lying in front of his chest, pulling to the left and being blown around the side of the seat and fractured. His legs too were separated by the ram effect of the air blast and the forceful abduction injured his left hip joint and pelvis. Other injuries consisted of minor bruises including a black eye and small haemorrhages in the eyelids. However, the Mk 2H seat had worked to perfection and after a period in hospital Hedley Molland, who at the time of his first ejection had 40hr on Hunters, returned to flying.

Ten years later, on 29 September 1965 and now a Flight Lieutenant, he joined the double ejectee club when he abandoned his Lightning, F3 XP739. The Lightning was the only British-designed and built Mach 2.0 fighter to serve with the RAF, so it is somewhat ironic that whilst piloting a transonic Hunter, Hedley Molland ejected at above Mach 1.0 but when flying a fighter that could easily surpass this speed in level flight, he was travelling at about 250kt but very much lower. Making his approach into Wattisham and with five miles to run to the runway threshold, both engines on the Lightning flamed out. The pilot immediately took to his ejection seat and landed safely at Chapel Farm, Stonham, whilst the Lightning flew on for a while then crashed at Battsford.

(extract from 'Eject Eject' by Bryan Philpott Ian Allan 1989.)

Alan Smith.

AIR MINISTRY CIVIL AIRCRAFT COMPETITION 1920

Amphibious Section

In 1920, the Air Ministry, in an effort to encourage the development of Civil Aviation in this country after the end of the First World War announced a Competition in two classes, landplane and amphibians. After discussions it was decided that each competition would be split into two classes, those with capacity of between two and six passengers and the second, whether twin or single engined, carrying more than six passengers.

In the Amphibian class three aircraft emerged, others failing to appear for the tests.

Fairey Aviation entered a modified Fairey III; the N.10 registered G-EALQ, which was the only floatplane. It was a two-bay biplane with a side-by side, two-seat passenger cockpit behind the pilot. It was powered by a 450 hp Napier Lion engine. The retractable wheels were mounted between the floats and carried on a steel frame, rectangular in plan and triangular in side elevation, hinged at its forward cross-member to the floats and rotatable about the hinge by means of a wheel in the pilot's cockpit.

The Supermarine Commercial Amphibian was a single-engined flying boat powered by a 350 hp Rolls Royce Eagle VIII engine. The wheeled undercarriage consisted of two steel tube structures, hinged below the bottom inner planes and under the innermost struts. A rotatable tailskid was coupled to the air rudder and also served as a water rudder. It had a special tiller, accessible to the pilot only when he stood up. Because of this it gave him a clear view to steer in narrow and crowded waters.

The Vickers Viking III, G-EAUK, was powered by a 450 hp Napier Lion mounted independently of the wing structure on a pylon mounting. It was developed from the Viking II and incorporated various changes from it, including a lengthened nose, a redesigned tail skid-cum-water rudder and a small rectangular fin was added above the upper tailplane.

The whole competition was approached by the three teams in a light hearted, but deadly serious manner.

The Fairey entry was flown into Martlesham Heath by its pilot, Lt. Col Vincent Nicholl, on 6 September 1920 and arrived with seawater still dripping from its floats. Nicholl had alighted 10 minutes earlier on the River Orwell at Felixstowe, and his two passengers were too air sick on the gusty day to distinguish between the rough terra firma of Martlesham and the rising choppy sea.

Not to be outdone, the Supermarine crew, captained by Captain J.E.A. Hoare, arrived in true marine fashion, wearing heavy jerseys and grey trousers tucked into big sea boots, Hoare was also wearing a Norfolk jacket. (The registration of the aircraft G-EAVE raised a cheer for it echoed a well-known advertised maker of uniforms who gave credit.)

The Vickers pilots, Captains Stan Cockerell and Stan Broome bought two little sailors hats and painted the name of their entrant "Viking III" in gold on the black hatbands. Because the machine visibly rocked when climbing away, it was explained that the two pilots usually pummelled each other in a battle to be the first pilot.

The requirements of the tests were as follows –

Fuel load to include petrol and oil sufficient to fly 350 nautical miles At 1,000 ft at a speed of not less than 70 kts and a load of 500 lb. to include passengers, if carried, and life belts, but not to include the crew. Each machine should be

capable of flying level at or above a speed of 80 kts. with full load at sea level and should be capable of flying level at or below 40 kts with full load at sea level.

Other requirements included -

A self controlled flight of three minutes at 5,000 ft to check if the machine would fly itself at this height and with enough height to recover if the machine failed to do so.

Formula W/G reliability and economy tests to be flown at a height of between 1,000 and 2,000 ft where W is the weight in pounds of useful load and G the number of gallons of petrol actually consumed during two 3½ hr. flights at 80 kts (recorded as percentage economy efficiency).

Self controlled glide in which the engine is to be throttled down or switched off at 5,000 ft and the pilot to remove hands and feet from the controls, taking over again at 4,000 ft or below.

Alighting tests – the machine to land over balloons at a height of 25 ft. and in the take-off test it is allowed a run of 400 yds.

Water tests.

Alighting and getting off tests where the machines would start from a buoy and pass as high as possible between marker boats 75 yds apart 600 yds from the starting buoy. The machine then to fly to Martlesham Heath and land.

Special marine tests were; - Taxiing on the water including a figure of eight, normal anchoring and mooring, and mooring out over 24 hours in both fair and moderate weather, and a getting off and alighting test in rough water. Finally there was a towing test, where a motor boat supplied by the judges would tow the machine.

As the Supermarine aircraft was flown for the first time with full load as laid down, it was thought that the propeller was unsuitable, and Vickers kindly lent them one from the Viking. With a short trial flight the take-off run was still excessive and so the original was restored.

During the trials the Supermarine aircraft underwent no adjustments or replacements and it was the only one to complete all the tests. Its many landings proved the efficiency of the undercarriage. It was also the only machine, which suffered no failure of its amphibious gear, and the only one to carry all the navigation instruments suitably grouped.

The Vickers machine won the first prize of £10,000. The second prize of £4,000 was awarded to the Supermarine entry who had this doubled to £8,000 because of its excellent design and in showing outstanding performance on its lower powered engine. The third prize of £2,000 went to Faireys .

The career of the Supermarine Commercial was short lived as it crashed the following month and was not rebuilt.

The Fairey machine was operated on communications duties from Hamble and was finally retired from duty at the end of 1922. It was recorded that during its lifetime, N.10's airframe survived nine engines.

The Vickers machine was used in 1921, in a series of tests to determine the feasibility of passenger services from the River Thames to the River Seine in Paris. The journey took only 2½hours.

It later went for trials on HMS Argus for which it was serial No. N147, the deck handling and operating trials were quite satisfactory, taking off easily and landing with no external aids other than the deck arresting wires. It was scrapped in 1925.

Alan Smith

MONTHLY MEETINGS ROUNDUP

May, and our meeting this month featured Mr Ian McLachlan with a talk entitled, “Aviation Archaeology”. Ian has done much work over many years tracing the whereabouts of aircraft that crashed during WW2 and retrieving artefacts from the sites. It was an illustrated talk and Ian’s obvious enthusiasm for his subject made for a most entertaining evening. He has written a book about the subject entitled “Final Flights”.

Our meeting in June and we welcomed Mrs Dawn Harding, who, as a teenager straight from school found herself recording in-flight information at the Marine Aeroplane Experimental Establishment at Felixtowe. The subject of the talk was, “Memories of MAEE Felixtowe”. Dawn spoke with affection of her experiences flying in the aircraft there at the time. The Solent was a development of the Short S.45 Seaford, which was in turn a development of the illustrious Sunderland and it was experiments with the Solent that Dawn was principally involved with. However, the era of flying boats as passenger aircraft was drawing to a close and BOAC were shortly to withdraw their services.

Dawn Harding was clearly thrilled with her time at Felixtowe and her enthusiasm shone through.

Our July meeting featured an illustrated talk by Mr Chris Bartlett and the title of his talk was, “Through the Looking Glass”. Another large audience were treated to a most informative talk by Chris. Bartlett, who has recently retired as chief technologist from British Aerospace Systems.

Chris, who was accompanied by his wife, had been for many years involved in a very British success story. The development of “head-up displays in aircraft. He traced the history of the science from the earliest gun sites in Great War aeroplanes through to the highly complex technology of the modern aeroplane. Although principally employed in fighters, the use of head-up displays is now common in civil airliners. The UK have historically developed and sold far more of this equipment than any other country.

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We would like to welcome the following new members:- John Grace, Gavin Hamilton, Dawn Harding, Roy Harding, David Hayter, Roger Horne, Daphne Jacobs, Ray Jacobs, Don Judge, Tim Last, David Lewin, Howard Morris, Roger

Newson, Joan Shephard. With apologies to any folk who have been inadvertently left off the list.

Isn’t nice to see a few more lady members.