

Squadron Buzz



Fleet Air Arm Squadron
linking former, current and future naval aviators

Issue No 56 Dec - 2010

Photo by Andy Durston



Lt Andy Durston & Mr Tony World soar the Alps in PNGC's Grob Motorglider

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Airfield Quiz

This hazy photo of Chivenor taken en route Plymouth to Swansea for the FAAS visit in May failed to faze the squadron airfield recognition experts. RMB Chivenor, (EGDC), was correctly identified firstly by Jeremy Cozens who phoned at 1305 followed by a Pete Pengilly email at 1624, with third place on the podium going jointly to Simon

Wilson and John Beattie who phoned in at 1814 on publication day. Chris Palmer got it also later in the day with Peter Lovegrove and Stuart Law getting an honourable mention for correct IDs later in the week.

For many years now I have been trying to get a picture of an airfield with snow on the ground for the Christmas Buzz and have finally managed it thanks to the very kind offices of the airport depicted below. Opened in 1963 by the local Labour Council, closed in 1967 when control of the council switched to Conservatives but extended and reopened again in the early 70s when Labour regained command. Now a modern bright airport well equipped and easy to get into even if cloudbase is low being located at sea level in otherwise mountainous country. A very easy to identify mystery airfield, (there will beano excuses), as I am sure you will all agree.



[Buzz 56 Mystery Airfield? Answers to Ed please.](#)

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From Editor

I hope you like the cover picture taken by Andy Durston soaring over the French Alps en route from the mountain gliding sites of La Cerdanya in Spain to St Auban in



France. Leaving Lee on the 8th Novembers PNGC CFI Andy, (son of Squadron member David) together with Chief Tug Pilot Tony World, covered in excess of 2000 miles in 8 days reaching heights of over 14000ft in the club's Grob 109 motorglider. Just shows what can be done, even in November, if you really go for it. The Christmas Buzz is with us once again and I hope you will all enjoy it. There are two event reports one from Wattisham where all the Apache pilots I asked said they would infinitely prefer a Harrier to help them in Afghanistan rather than a than a Tornado! Written by Tim Nicholas the article brings back memories of a very pleasant Taranto Day visit. The second event, reported on page 19, our final one for 2010, was the splendid Squadron Dinner in HMS Collingwood. Roger Dunn provides a most amusing article on page 5 describing how he beat the Germans in a piston Provost at one of their international rallies. John Ford extols the virtue of getting back to basics in a simple aeroplane using the Mk1 eye-ball, map & stopwatch method of Navigation, on page 10, whilst at the other end of the spectrum on page 12 ,Mike Moore, (son of Editor), describes what it was like to be taught how to fly the English Electric Lightening. On page 15 our new treasurer, John Marriot, has been persuaded to recall his time in the 'Andrew'. He joined back in those halcyon days of 1953 when the RN was desperate for pilots even allowing National Service entrants to gain their wings in just two years then go back to civvy street as members of a select club invited to fly fast jets at weekends and even get paid for it, how times have changed. The final article in this issue is an account of a flight to deliver an ancient C150 to Oslo back in May. It was a real adventure, especially landing in Germany, a country where neither Sue or I had previously set foot. Enclosed within this Buzz, for all members, should be the new membership renewal form designed to cut the hassle out of contributing to squadron funds. As soon as you get it fill out both sections, send the bottom bit to your bank and the top bit to John Marriot in the stamped addresses envelope provided. It is essential that we get the money in or the Squadron will die!

Have a Brilliant Christmas
and make the most of 2011

Phil

Contributions to Squadron Funds - New Method

By Phil Moore

In order for this magazine to be produced and the squadron pursue its objectives such as support for FAAOA Gliding scholarship courses etc it is crucial that we maintain a healthy reserve of funds. In the past much effort has been expended each year by the 'management' chasing up some people who wish to retain membership but have forgotten to send a cheque. The overwhelming response to this situation from members has been "please can we get rid of the cheque and do it all by Bankers Standing Order". Enclosed with this Buzz therefore is the new FAAS Membership Renewal Form which unlike the old pink form which had to be sent in with your cheque every year only needs to be completed once to indicate that you have initiated the standing order with your bank. Please cut the form along the dotted line, fill out the bottom half specifying your annual contribution, (minimum £25), and send to your bank. You can of course contribute more than the minimum or change the amount at any time by instructing your bank. The bit between the Asterisks, (eight lines from the bottom), can be deleted if you know you have paid up for this year. The top half of the form needs to be filled in to tell the treasurer you have sent off the bottom half i.e. the FAAS BSO form. New members please fill in everything, existing members however need only record their name and rank on leaving the service. If any of your personal details are wrong however as published in the last members list, (June 2009), then please fill in the correct information. Make sure you tick the green "I have sent my bankers standing order form to my Bank" box and then send to the Treasurer/Membership Secretary John Marriot, in the stamped addressed envelope provided. You can now sit back and relax safe in the knowledge that the squadron will continue to survive without you having to remember to fill out forms or send off a donation every year.



New Members

Neill	36 Maun Street	01536770861
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Adventures with Bill Walker Part I - The Defeat of the Germans

By Roger Dunn



Whenever I see Henry Cooke's splendid Piston Provost. I am reminded of an amusing adventure with my old friend Bill Walker. Bill was an ex WWII pilot with a "can do" approach to life. In addition to being a competent pilot, he was an extremely good squash player and an Olympic

bobsleigh driver. He had a taste for aircraft with large engines. When the first civilian Provost came on the market, it was a natural buy for Bill. It had been a prototype that had been used by Alvis for the development of the Leonides engine installation. Shortly after he made his purchase, Bill invited me to join him on the Deutscher Aero Club International Rally. He thought that the Teutonic appearance of his Provost would go down well in Germany. We had an uneventful flight to the starting point in Baden Baden, apart from a stop to quench the thirst of the Leonides. Bill was right about the aircraft's German appeal. Soon after we arrived, we had an admiring crowd. I think few had heard of a Percival Provost, let alone seen one. A wag in the crowd quickly renamed it as "Villy's Varplane", a name that was to stick with the Germans. The following morning we arrived at the airport for the start of the navigation competition. We were expected to take-off and fly down some valleys; passing over various check points at set times and land in Altenrhein, Switzerland, for lunch. Unfortunately, the weather was terrible. It was raining and the cloud base was low. We assumed that the flight would be cancelled. This was not to be the case. We were issued with our start time and target times over the check points. The only other British entrant, a couple in a Jodel, decided to remain firmly on the ground and prepare for the banquet in the evening. We decided that the organizers must have some feedback about the weather along the valleys. They had observers stationed at the checkpoints. The cloud base was well below the hill tops so we would be flying in a triangle. If the triangle became too small, the prudent course would normally be to turn

back, whilst there was sufficient width to make a turn. We realized that if we turned back we would be meeting a swarm of German aircraft flying in the opposite direction in a confined space. That did not seem like a good idea. We decided that the only safe Plan B would be to climb out of the valley on instruments. Unfortunately, in Germany, such a course was completely verboten. In the UK, all that was required at the time was a PPL and a knowledge of the Quadrantal Height Rule. We were faced with a choice between safety and German regulations. Safety was the winner. The Provost was one of the faster aircraft, so we had an early start. We found the first checkpoint and passed over it at about the right time. We proceeded down the valley. What we had feared, came to pass. Our triangle became smaller and smaller. The time had come for Plan B. Bill opened up the Leonides to take off power and we climbed into the cloud. It was not a comfortable feeling knowing that there was granite off each wing tip. We both monitored the compass and the DI to make sure we were following the centre line of the valley. Once we exceeded the height of the highest mountain, about 3,300ft, we were able to relax a little. There was a huge amount of distracting chatter in German and English on the Baden Baden frequency so we turned the radio off. The Provost was fitted with a primitive but reliable radio compass. We tuned it to a beacon, which I think must have been Friedrichshafen. It was beyond the last mountain and before Lake Constance. We picked up a good signal and headed to the beacon. Once we passed the beacon we knew exactly where we were and we let down through the cloud over the lake and used a back bearing to steer towards Altenrhein on the other side of the lake. We then kept low to keep off any primary radar: there were no transponders in those days. Finally, we did a dog leg to the right to pick up the official rally track. We did not wish Altenrhein to record any QDMs from the wrong direction. We called Altenrhein, who responded with exactly the right QDM, and we made an uneventful landing. We were met at the aircraft by a large reception committee. We were relieved when they appeared to have smiling faces and shook us warmly by the hand. They clearly were not planning to arrest us. We were soon to discover why they were so happy to see us. They had received numerous telephone calls from Baden Baden about the lost British competitors. They thought we were impaled on the side of a mountain, but there had been no reports about us from the ground. It transpired that other competitors had experienced the same problem with the shrinking triangle, but they had all turned back and created a very dangerous situation. The organizers realized what was happening. They stopped anyone else from taking off and instructed everyone who was airborne to turn back. This at least had all the aircraft travelling in roughly the same direction. Each aircraft was checked in as it returned.

Everyone was accounted for, except Bill and I. Back in Altenrhein, Bill and I soon realized that the town had gone to great lengths to welcome us. The mayor was present and a marquee had been erected on the airfield for 200 diners. There were at least two film crews present and the local firms had provided presents for all the competitors. Bill and I sat down for lunch, but we could not do justice to the fare. The local aircraft factory had been specially opened up for us to tour after lunch. We rode in one of several buses with our guides to the factory and received VIP treatment. When the time came to return, we packed the aircraft with as many presents as possible and set course to Baden Baden. Unfortunately, we had not allowed for the tail rising when we packed the aircraft. In flight, we were constantly troubled with boxes of Badedas falling over our shoulders. The weather had improved considerably and we were soon back at Baden Baden. We faced a new problem. How did we explain our arrival in Altenrhein without admitting to breaching German regulations. We decided that attack was our best defence. When any pilot enquired about our flight we would simply rebuke them for not coming to the excellent reception that those in Altenrhein had provided. When anyone enquired about the weather we responded with our favourite phrase, "in England the weather is like that all the time". Nobody guessed our method. The banquet in the evening started with long speeches in German, which we did not understand. After a while, we heard our names mentioned and everyone started to look at us. At first, we were concerned that we may be in trouble for our flagrant breach of the German regulations. Soon the faces turned to smiles and people clapped. We realized that we were about to be awarded the prestigious German Navigation

Trophy. At first, we were not sure that we should accept it, but it became apparent that we had little option. We were told that this was the first time that a non German entrant had won this trophy. Some of the German entrants took this to heart and challenged us to a return match at the next rally in the calendar at Ballyfree in Eire, but that is another story.



FAA SQUADRON VISIT TO WATTISHAM

By Tim Nicholas



Downwind Right Hand for Runway 23

The 21st October is an auspicious date in the Royal Navy's history, and one that no doubt did not bypass John Marriot and Brian Hamilton when organising the visit. It was certainly an appropriate

date for an outing by a group of ex RNers. In the

event, the day dawned bright and clear, much as it had done at Trafalgar some 205 years earlier. Fortunately, that's where the similarity ends. Thankfully, this year the only opposition was a stonking headwind for those going home to the west, though it was nothing that couldn't be handled by the aviators of the FAA Squadron. Five light aircraft plus a Griffin helicopter from Shawbury made the trip to Wattisham Airfield in Suffolk. A larger contingent came by road, bringing the total numbers to 32. The purpose was to visit the home of the British Army's Apache helicopter. Once the arrival formalities were completed, we made our way to the Officers Mess for coffee where we were met by our host for the day, Captain Phil Wilkinson. The base commander, Colonel Neale Moss, then formally welcomed the FAA Sqn to the station before briefing us on the history of Wattisham and explaining its current role as the main base for the Army's front line Apaches. Following this, Lt Andy Harcombe, a Jungly by trade, and one of the two RN exchange pilots at Wattisham, gave us the maritime slant when he talked us through a recent embarked trial aboard HMS Ark Royal. The Apache Longbow has a very narrow track undercarriage and a high centre of gravity and is therefore not an obvious choice for embarked operations, but by imposing the almost unbelievably restrictive ship's flying limits of 1 degree in pitch and 2 degrees in roll, it survived. Our resident Wings, John Ford, asked all the relevant questions, which revealed that speedy acquisition of the skills for deck handling and maintenance by the normally land based REME was not easy and the exercise proved a steep learning curve. It served to remind us all how complex and dangerous a place is the Flight Deck of a carrier. Following a very pleasant curry lunch, it was time to move across to the 'waterfront' for a



Jo Gordon and Phil Wilkinson



look at the hardware. Our guides were Captains Phil Wilkinson and Jo Gordon, both experienced Apache operators. Such was Jo's enthusiasm for the Apache that there must be a place for her on the sales team of Westlands in the future. She waxed lyrical about its capabilities, firepower and survivability, whilst leaping in and out of the

cockpit in a way that left the rest of us feeling positively inadequate. She and Phil explained that whilst the 2 person crew will both be qualified pilots, crew members normally specialise either in operating the weapons systems, or in flying the aircraft. In this case Jo specialises in the role of handling pilot, (from the rear cockpit), whilst Phil operates the considerable array of sensors and weapons systems from the front. Just as we were all getting into our stride looking at automatic chaff and flare dispensers, nodding knowledgeably at missiles and comparing the relative merits of 30 mm armour piercing rounds, it was time to move on to the final part of the visit. This was the Apache Simulator. Simulator instructor Mr Mick Favager, an ex army pilot himself, provided an insight into how much realism can now be created in simulators, and how essential it is for the

Simon Askins in the 'hot seat'



front seat weapon system operators in particular to stay on top of their game by constant practice with the 'play station' controllers that manage the Apache's sensors and weapons. All too soon the day was over and it was time to launch into that stonking headwind with just a thought that there might another toy to add onto that ever growing Christmas list.



The Mighty Apache!!

The Other Way

By John Ford

Many of us flying GA aircraft for fun do so with headphones clamped over our ears, heads down in the cockpit staring at instruments or twiddling knobs. In our daily life we are assailed by every kind of noise, the roar of traffic, loud music and the sound pressure of crowded places. So do we really need, in good VMC, to talk so much? I think that many requesting a “Basic Service” from an ATCU subconsciously believe that they are receiving some kind of control giving them a misplaced sense of security. Maybe the less experienced feel happier hearing the sound of other human voices. This is a delusion of course for the pilot is not being offered any form of traffic separation or collision avoidance.



John arrives at Yeovilton for the BBO

A friendly controller at a quiet time may give some advice but nothing is guaranteed. In Southern England working Farnborough Radar at a busy time is an unrewarding experience. The density of aircraft on frequency and controller workload positively precludes any possibility of help with separation. Indeed it may be less safe because the volume of extended chatter and the requirement to remain attentive to one's own callsign proves a considerable distraction. Signing on with a LARS can lead to another problem, the inability to report leaving its frequency before running out of radio range due to the uninterrupted stream of calls – and a telephone bollocking from the controller after landing. The value of asking for a “Basic Service” from a smaller airfield is also questionable. Most do not have radar and information that there are 3 known aircraft in its local area, when for example passing Goodwood which is also a focal point for many cross Channel flights on another frequency, lends little to flight safety. There are satisfying skills to exercise using electronic navigation systems in cross country flight but in good visibility are they really necessary? An insidious dependence on GPS is growing amongst the younger generation of aviators. There is another way. The Rollason Turbu-



lent, an open cockpit miniature low wing monoplane powered by a VW engine is the ideal mount in which to experience the "Other Way" There is little to attend to inside the office except an ASI, altimeter and basic E2B compass so there is plenty of time to look outside and enjoy the true magic of flight. Primary Navigation skills are rather different. They start with pre flight preparation; most important when flying non radio to check NOTAMS for restricted airspace and give a call to the Red Arrows notification briefing line especially at weekends. Unfold the 250,000 scale chart and examine your route picking out significant check points at 10 – 15 mile intervals or better still follow a convenient line feature, railway or motorway. Draw in the track and spin the Dalton to calculate wind corrected headings and time at check points. There is no room in a Turb cockpit for a knee pad so all this and a list of likely frequencies needs to be zipped into a plastic map case and jammed between the right leg and the cockpit wall. Pooleys of necessity goes into the small locker behind the pilot's head together with his spare shirt, socks and toothbrush. Failure to properly pre fold the map may result in the flight being terminated before going off the chart – no hope of re folding it in the air! Once airborne its time to recall lessons learnt during distant training days; settle the E2B remembering advice about compass precession in turns, pick a land feature 5 to 7 miles ahead and fly towards it. Relax and enjoy the sense of detachment from a crowded world below. When approaching the next check point do not be seduced away by apparently sighting your mark well off track. Continue to fly the calculated heading/ time and the circle of uncertainty after a short leg cannot be more that 2 miles across. So you are now well on the way floating serenely along at 1,000 feet, the frivolous wind blast plucking at your collar, watching the pattern of fields unfold below and looking down into trim village gardens. Perhaps following a railway line with no navigation concerns wondering how long it will take to overtake that miniature train before it slows for the next station. Finally on arriving safely at your destination take a moment to savour the satisfaction of using these "Other Way" skills which took our aviator forbearers, before the era of electronic guidance, to distant places round the world. There are some who would contend that flying non radio is controversial? Not in my book, but what do you think?



The 'Frightening'!



By Mike Moore

'You have control'... 'I have control'... I pull the throttles back. Hopefully this will give my brain a chance to catch up as I must have left it behind



somewhere and my instructor has been climbing in full dry power! 90%... 85%... **We're still going up like a rocket!** I level off, bit of trim. He shows me a loop, 'Now you show me a barrel roll'. That's it, out of fuel, back to the circuit, one demo, one practice, which I'm sure was heavily directed and we're down. Taxiing back, nose bobbing up and down as I struggle with the handbrake on the stick which lazily follows my commands. 30 minutes chock to chock. **It's 1987** and I've just completed trip one in the most amazing

and awesome aircraft you could ever fly... **The Lightning!** Seriously, it climbs at 450kts converting to Mach 0.9. This occurs at around 18,000 feet and if you don't raise the nose because you're still thinking about the after take off checks, you'll be supersonic in no time and that's just in dry power. Squeezed together side by side, wearing thick immersion suits with lots of insulation underneath, the cockpit is very cramped and the instructor is right there on top of your every move. Trip 4. Practice diversion to RAF Waddington. Its only 20 miles down the road which of course takes seconds. Rejoin checks – you can't tune the ILS frequency but pre-select a corresponding letter. I'm all over it. Some crazy analogue offset tacan display but 'checks complete'. The needle shoots across the display. Damn, still doing 400kts. I'm on a 12 mile final, IMC and 90° to the approach. Forgot to slow down. **How did we get this fast?** No fuel for an orbit. Airbrakes out, throttles idle, 4G right turn – that should do it. No 2 throttle up to flight idle before we lose the generator (they didn't work at low RPM). 'Localizer established' (ish), made it – just get the gear and flaps down as the glideslope meets us and regain the localizer from the other side. I think my instructor is mildly impressed at my recovery – didn't seem to affect my sortie grade though. Circuits trip next and then first solo, that's 5 x 30 minute trips so far (you are actually supposed to do it in 4). I remember that first solo as if it were yesterday. Leave the gear down, saves fatigue. 7





circuits – min fuel landing from the last approach which quite honestly, I think was the first good one I'd made. **High speed run next** – well what did you expect. I'm in the **single seat Lightning F Mk 3, XR718**. Had to fly a triangle to get back with any fuel at all. Climb up over the North Sea, lower the nose, both throttles full Afterburner. The ASI is a horizontal strip with a sliding mach scale. I

don't really remember exactly how fast I went, I think about Mach 1.6 or 1.7. What I do remember is the tacan clicking the miles down, **1nm every 4-5 seconds!** I also remember the fuel gauge, I could actually see the needles moving over the scale (and it was a very small scale). Task complete, burners out (yes you do have to rock them through the gate), turn back, slow, climb, descend, rejoin, that weather front seems to be coming in a bit sooner than forecast. Better get below this cloud pretty quick. No IRT yet so it will have to be a visual approach. Rejoin checks, change freq, change squawk, I'm a one armed paperhanger! The transponder - well the cockpit was so small there just wasn't anywhere else to put it - right down the back on the RHS. Experienced lightning pilots change the code by feel. I look back at my Attitude Indicator. It shows white for sky and black for ground except now its all wrong. There's an absolute vertical line on it with black on one side and white on the other. Altimeter still spinning down (well in this aircraft it was always spinning somewhere). What's going on? I slowly roll, it slowly rights. **I had gently rolled onto a knife edge** (keep that one quiet I think). Coasting in just below the cloud at 2,000'. Approaching the circuit – damn that cloud is getting low and now it's starting to rain (only years later did I ever wonder how I had been authorized to go flying without an IRT on a day like this). 'Join – break - land'. Downwind at 1,000 feet. The downwind leg goes ridiculously quickly but 'checks complete'. No fuel of course but not quite on minimums yet. Now my problems are just beginning. I'm lining up with the runway but I just can't see it. The rain is getting heavier and obscuring the forward view. It's hard enough to land when you **can** see the runway, approaching at 175 knots with less than a 2° final approach path. There's no wipers on the Lightning (probably tried that and they just blew off). However, there is a little switch down on the LHS near the throttles somewhere which blows air on to the



windscreen to clear the rain. I glance down – it's not there, I can't see it! I can't find the switch, I can't see out!... 'Going around - request Low Level Circuit'. Cloud now just below 1,000 feet. Downwind at 500 feet, 'Checks complete'. Now I've got about 3 seconds to find that damn switch before turning finals **and there is no more fuel!** I look away from the bleak Lincolnshire landscape – found it! It was right there next to the throttles and was hidden by my hand. I look up. The rain clears. **Shit! All ground! No sky! I pull hard into the buffet.** Altimeter damn will you stay still! I remember it dips just below 300 feet, seems higher as I'm flying down a valley (RAF Binbrook is on top of a hill). Altimeter lags a bit as well. Turn-



ing finals, I can see the runway - next moment I'm down. Better fess up to the Flight Commander, someone must have seen me. They did. One of the staff was taking off at the time. On review, and then the final chop ride. 7 Solo flights in the English Electric Lightning F Mk 3. Total solo flight time 3 hours and 5 minutes. **Unforgettable!**

How's Your Day Going?

I was sitting at the bar, staring at my drink when a really big, trouble-making motor-biker steps up next to me, grabs my drink and gulps it down in one go."Well, what are you going to do about it?" he says, menacingly, as I burst into tears."Come on, man," the biker says, "I didn't think you'd CRY. I can't stand to see a man crying."" This is the worst day of my life," I say. "I'm a complete failure. I was late to a meeting and my boss fired me. When I went to the parking lot, I found my car had been stolen and I don't have any insurance. I left my wallet in the taxi I took home. I found my old lady in bed with the gardener, and then my dog bit me." "So I came to this bar to work up the courage to put an end to it all, I buy a drink, I drop a capsule in and sit here watching the poison dissolve. Then you arrive and drink the whole thing! But enough about me, how's your day going?"



National service in the Fleet Air Arm 1953-1955

I was one of a small band of lucky ones who left school at just the right time to benefit from the (then) apparently urgent need, following the Korean conflict, to train aircrew. At the time all young men had to do two years



National service in the armed forces. I was attracted by a small brochure to apply to fly with the Navy. Aptitude tests (4 days at RAF Hornchurch) and interviews at Admiralty followed. I passed, and was duly summoned to report to Daedalus in August 1953. One week drawing kit and basic drill followed, then transport to Portland harbour to join HMS Implacable as an NA2 (Upper Yardman) for 13 weeks basic training



in No 41 course RNVR, alongside three thousand other lower deck trainees. Implacable and Indefatigable were the two principal training ships at the time for lower deck and National Servicemen. A tough 3months of routine including all aspects of basic seamanship and discipline, sleeping in hammocks, scrubbing out the Officer's heads at 6am, all seemed worth putting up with for the prospects of what we hoped would come, and, as Upper Yardmen, we were expected to excel in all things. The, possibly envious, eyes of all the other trainees were constantly on us. As events turned out, life became progressively more interesting, starting with a trip to the Scilly Isles, a run ashore on St Mary's (tea courtesy of the local Women's Institute), a hurried departure, leaving part of the crew on the island, when the carriers started dragging their anchors; then four days riding a storm in the Irish Sea, on our way to the Clyde. During this storm Indefatigable had two crew washed overboard from the quarterdeck, but were rescued by a superb bit of seamanship – the Captain stopped the ship, turned through 90 degrees and drifted downwind to find them – amazing! Our Clyde visit was cut short by an urgent order to go to Portsmouth to load a regiment of the Argyle and Sutherland Highlanders and all their equipment, and take them at full speed to British Guiana (now called Guyana)





to suppress an uprising. Only one problem – the harbour at Georgetown was not deep enough for Implac., so we had

to go to Trinidad, and trans-ship everything. A problem, but a blessing for us, as we got to run ashore, not that one could do a lot on basic NA2's pay of four shillings a day. Having offloaded the Regiment and all its' stores, Implac was now free to “show the flag” by visits to Barbados, Jamaica, and back to Barbados, before returning at slower speed to Portland. During this trip, 41 Course sat their final exams, just as the 3 months came to an end. Most of us passed. The few who didn't had to start the 3 months all over again. There were some real tears, when they had to watch those who had passed being measured for officer's (in my case Midshipman's) uniforms by Gieves or Bakers tailors. So now, as a Temporary Acting Midshipman RNVr (a hidden threat there?), I was posted to HMS Siskin at Gosport (“addl., not to join”) for pre-flight training – to last for three months. In fact the threat was real, because any of us who failed any part of the course was promptly returned to the lower deck as a fish-head, for the remainder of his two years National service – quite an incentive! The first pleasant surprise was to be wakened each morning by a steward bringing in a cup of tea – quite a change from “show a leg” in Implac., followed by stowing the “mick” in a mess shared with 30 or so other NA2s. Pre-flight training consisted of a mix of classroom and some physical activity, a visit to the submariner's escape tower, and grabbing the opportunity to fly as passenger whenever an a/c was going somewhere – I once went to Culdrose on a letter delivery. There was emphasis on developing speaking ability, and, of course OLQs (Officer-like qualities). One senior officer was responsible to act as a surrogate uncle with the task of ensuring our table manners were up to Officer standard. More exams, then, six months from joining up, a posting to RAF Syerston for the start of flying training in **Piston Provosts**, which had just begun to replace the Harvards. It was Spring 1954. Syerston followed the usual routine:- half the day flying, half in the classroom. Two or three were chopped, but most passed the critical “first solo”stage.



There were not many accidents, though I did lose my instructor who was killed with a student trying to recover from unusual positions on instruments. Loads of circuits and bumps, aerobatics, instrument flying, formation, and cross countries at high and low level – I once saw a policeman looking at me as I flew off-course over Rotherham. Eventually we started night flying, which is where I had a hitch – my appendix burst, and I spent three weeks in the

RAF hospital in Lincoln with peritonitis. I did recover, but had lost so much time that I was “back-coursed” to No 43, extending my Syerston time from six to nine months, and my Provost hours to 140, of which 10 were at night. Now December 1954, we were posted to Valley for advanced training



ing in **Vampires**. I was nineteen and a half, and still a Ty. Act. Midshipman RNVR. It was cold and windy and we slept in tiny nissen huts, each with a coke fired stove that never had time to heat the place up. We flew T11s

and single seat FB5s doing the same range of exercises as in the Provosts, but higher and faster and more fun, with the Welsh valleys to explore. I felt sorry for the Anglesey farmers who had all those noisy 'planes going round the Island at low level – a low level navex meant three circuits, done dual first, then solo; and there were lots of us, My principal instructor was French – Lieutenant Cornuche - seconded to No 7 squadron. We got on well except for the horrendous amount of garlic he filled the cockpit with – before shutting the canopy, I had to turn the oxygen on fully. Other instructors I flew with, who some readers will have known, was Paul Millett, then a Lieutenant, and Cliff Evans. My first cross-country was a surprise; Valley to Oakington, near Cambridge; Breaking cloud on the descent, 30 minutes from take-off, I found myself over the sea. Strange, I thought – Oakington is nowhere near the sea. The met. people had not mentioned the jet stream that took me over 100 miles further than planned. Fortunately, I had enough fuel to correct the error. Not many accidents at Valley; I remember one – a high altitude Mach run at night over Merseyside which just vanished, never to be found. Methinks he tried to exceed the Vampire's limit (0.83) and just disintegrated over the Irish sea. Another pilot wrote off seven aircraft, without hurting himself and caused his C.O. to terminate his training, even though not one of the write-offs could be proved to be his fault. His engine exploded on his first solo, yet he still landed safely. 50 hours dual in T11s, and 45 solo, mostly in FB5s in 6 months resulted in award of “wings” and promotion to Ty. acting S/Lt (A) RNVR, in June 1955 (days after my 20th birthday), at which point the remaining 13 members of the course were posted – seven to A/S training at Culdrose, in Fireflies, and six (including me) to Lossie for fighter training in Seahawks – a three month stint. Those three months were glorious – a warm fine summer – swimming in the sea, and the Seahawk was such a joy to fly. Unfortunately there were several fatalities – one where the plane hit the ground just after take-off – pilot's eyes still in the cockpit? Two others, a week apart where the a/c struck the wires of towed drogue targets and the pilots ejected, but didn't survive. And a fourth in which one of my course didn't clear the top of one of the Cairngorm moun-



tains. I escaped accidents, though did have one “hairy” experience:- I was doing my first high level formation exercise, just ten days from starting flying the **Seahawk**, and with just five hours in the log. The instructor was in a Meteor, and I was one of two in Hawks. We had just reached 30,000 feet, when we were

summoned to land as soon as possible because one of Lossie's infamous Haars had just rolled in. Rapid descent just begun, when things started to go wrong; first the instructor's radio failed, as did the other wingman's; then we all iced up and almost lost sight of each other. I was now leading the formation, being talked down by GCA. My first sight of the ground was just as we crossed the threshold. Anyhow we did make a successful “three-ship” landing. I think I deserved a green card from that moment. I lost several pints of sweat – but my faith in Lossie's GCA was now absolute. My two years and six weeks National service (I had signed on for the extra six weeks to do the AFS course at Lossie), had now come to a sad end – I had enjoyed it so

much and I was transferred to a reserve squadron, 1833, part of the Midland Air Division at Bramcote, commanded by Bertie Vigrass, flying **Attackers** from the nearby RAF station, Honiley – Attackers burnt the grass at Bramcote. I would have signed up for a long commission in the RN, but for the fact that I had a place at Cambridge to read Mechanical Science (engineering), and , because I was in the Reserve, would be keeping current with flying experience –



even my “white card”, What would today's undergraduates give for the opportunity to have a squadron of jet aircraft available to use at weekends whenever one wished – and be paid for flying them?!!! Weekends were spent working up to deck landings (my first) aboard Bulwark during the two weeks continuous training which were also part of our reserve commitments. We did ADDLS at Honiley using the recently invented mirror landing aid, and were within a few days of “landing on”, when the Suez crisis took Bulwark away. 1833 spent the two weeks at RNAS Ford. I so loved the Fleet Air Arm, that I seriously intended to sign on again, for a regular commission, after gaining a degree. However, fate intervened, and the entire Reserve was closed down in 1957; I did not want to be retired from the Navy in my twenties, so I persevered, after graduation, with a career in Civil Engineering, and flying only light aircraft at my own expense. So, fifty three years later, more than half of the life of the Fleet Air Arm, I feel honoured and privileged to be reconnected with the Service through membership of the Fleet Air Arm Squadron.

Squadron Dinner at HMS Collingwood – 27 November 2010

By Phil Moore

Forty Three Squadron members and their guests enjoyed another brilliant annual dinner at HMS Collingwood on Saturday 27th November. Michael Ryan's TB10 and the Ferbrache's 114 touched down at 1500 on Friday in perfect weather from Yeovilton and Guernsey but the Beattie, Miles and



The 'Boss' beds down GBOIT alongside Colin's Commander

Holliday flyers expected am Saturday eventually decided not to sally forth due to a snowy forecast, arriving by car instead. Although, contrary to the met man's predictions there was actually no snow at Lee throughout the weekend, in Yorkshire the Vigrass's were completely stranded in a

foot or so of the white stuff and along with Bernard Maslin who was unwell, sadly had to call off at the last minute. Seventeen of us did enjoy a very pleasant Osborne View lunch overlooking the snowy Solent before all joining up in Collingwood at 1700 for our first ever AGM. This was expertly handled by Michael Ryan who explained the need to get slightly formal in order that we can reap the benefits of a properly constituted service affiliated body. Our new Treasurer and Membership Secretary, John Marriot, described the requirement for the Bankers Order method of collecting donations and how it would be initiated by the FAAS Membership Renewal Form included with this Buzz. At 1900 we all gradually gathered in Collingwood's magnificent Bar to admire the beautifully presented U shaped table layout



Collingwood Elegance

and to gain some 'flying speed' before the dinner gong was bashed at 1945. The event was presided over by Michael Ryan, ('the Boss'), who congratulated everyone on another very successful year and thanked the Collingwood caterers for their outstanding efforts. He introduced the guest of honour Rear Admiral Terry Loughran who gave a most amusing and inspiring speech.



Michael Ryan in 'full flow'

The Admiral entertains



The Chairman of Fly Navy argued that despite the current 'hammer blow' to our carrier fleet we should not be down-hearted but continue to work together as one of the many organisations supplying much needed support to the Fleet Air Arm. Our Lady Speaker this year was Helen Holliday who outlined her career in music then aviation and explained how grateful she was to the Squad-

ron for widening her flying horizons and also fixing her up with husband 'Doc' whose birthday it was! This was followed by Phil Moore who praised Helen for her contribution as an outstanding 'flying companion'. He thanked the many contributors to the Buzz magazine in 2010 and awarded the trophy to John Ford for his article 'Plus Ca Change' in the last two Buzzes of this year. Sunday morning saw the resident revellers repair to the dining room for a delicious wardroom breakfast, (if only I could cook fried bread like that at home!), and some significant socialising before departing back to base. Michael Ryan lifted 'India Tango' into the frozen air of Lee on Solent at midday for a 'Christmas card' journey back to Yeovilton. Later on Colin & Val Ferbrache coaxed their Rockwell Commander 114 skyward past the white cliffs of Cherbourg and even whiter Jersey Airport, (closed), to the recently cleared runway at Guernsey. Another



Happy Revellers



Admiral Loughran and Helen Marriot

brilliant squadron dinner in the tradition and splendour which, I believe, only a military mess can provide. Many thanks are due again to HMS Collingwood Wardroom Mess President for providing such a splendid venue, to the MCA, HPASU and SEEDA for letting us use the airfield at Lee and not least to the Boss, (and Charlie) and Pete and Sue Morehead , for organising it all.



David Lockspeiser and Tony Ashmead

Oslo Adventure – 23-25 May 2010

By Phil Moore

It is not often that opportunity for a free exciting aerial adventure pops up so when my Boss invited me to deliver an ancient Cessna 150 to Oslo there was no hesitation. Sue would navigate and we would both get used



Rollout - Lee on Solent

to seeing the world float by at 90 mph just as it used to in the Auster. Our first leg was to Ostend in Belgium; not previously visited and looking somewhat GA hostile in Pooleys. Full of fuel, two people and baggage, the earth's curvature played a significant part in our detachment from Lee on Solent's 05 runway as one hundred of Mr Lycoming's horses strained hard to shatter the Sunday morning silence. The weather was

brilliant, except for a ten knot headwind which gave us significantly less groundspeed than most of the traffic on the A27. We slowly slid by Deanland where Charlie Pappa had just finished a fifteen month refit, then coasted out at Lydd. Out across the Channel, well at sea, past the Grave-lines Nuclear site on what we thought at that time would be our longest overseas crossing. Ostend approach cheerfully encouraged us to 'keep

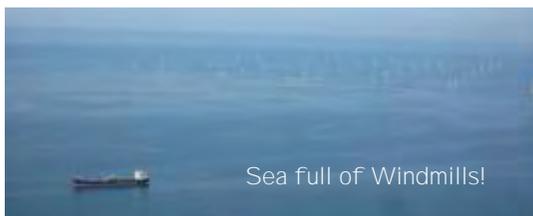
pedalling' for a twenty mile final to runway 08. Contrary to expectations the Belgians were all lovely, laying on fuel, customs, loos and landing fees. Holland was next after a nail biting climbout over congested city buildings we headed straight for Texel having been warned away from Midden Zee-



Final, (ish) 08 @ Ostend

land due to an airshow. Our modified route would necessitate at least an hour over water with nothing but a host of stationary ships and hundreds of windmill farms for company. Whilst still fifteen miles off the coast my trusty garmin 296 said "lost satellite reception!" Was this some kind of joke? Charlie Pappa was fitted with an ancient skyforce GPS which Sue had coaxed into life but now that too was saying "fix unobtainable". Either the Americans were doing their satellite maintenance or we were in a bad area. Thankfully, Den Helder has a VOR and Texel stood out well in the gold plated CAVOK. Even the satellites came back to life on short final to this very busy grass airfield. It is difficult to recall a better reception anywhere than the one we had at Tex-

el. Very friendly staff, easy to use self service fuel, no hassle ATC despite intense activity by aircraft and parachutists, and also a superbly appointed restaurant and bar. We were well



Sea full of Windmills!

Texel's friendly Tower



tempted to stay the night but, noting that the light puffy clouds had suddenly become Flensburg bound we were soon wizzing east spanking along over the ground at 105 knots according to the now compliant GPSs. After the last leg we had become completely inured to flying out of sight of land so, having vaguely followed the coast to Wangerooge, boldly set off across Helgoland Bay direct to

Flensburg. The weather at first was brilliant but after a while we noticed a slight haze on the sea which ever so slowly built up into a solid bank of cloud. Bremen info confirmed the weather at Schleswig, 20 miles south of our destination, was OK so we pressed on until in range of Flensburg who were reporting an 800 ft cloudbase. We descended through a hole, keeping clear of two enormous windmills the terrifying blades of which scythed their wicked way up to 578ft! We landed in light rain and drizzle.

After six hours ten minutes of Clyde Cessna's 'posterior vibro massage' we were very glad to be in a taxi for a night at the Tulip Hotel. The next day after some valuable Norwegian weather updates from our ground support team in UK, (Brian Cornes), we said goodbye to Germany planning to fly right through Denmark to Halmstad in Sweden. Sadly, despite pleading with Jeppesen, Transair, and the military, I was completely unable

to get a proper map of Denmark before departure having to rely on my trusty Navbox Quickplan 6 programme. This showed three VORs to route by on the north coast of Denmark's islands ODN, TNO and NOA. Apart from the weather, which was virtually VMC on top, departure from Flensburg was OK until we lost both GPSs on the climbout! Fortunately I had already locked onto the ODN VOR and just followed the needle until



the Satellite signals returned which took about ten minutes. It was as well they did for when we tried to track NOA the VOR needle was lifeless. I tried a 'go to' on my 296 which incredibly insisted that NOA did not exist! What were we to do? Then Sue had the bright idea of interrogating CP's ancient skyforce database which was quite happy to

Flensburg in the rain and drizzle!



Halmstad runway through the rain!



direct us to where the old NOA, (now defunct), had been! Halmstad was approached from the sea under a ragged cloudbase full of rain showers. With a wind of 280 degrees 18 knots to runway 01 our arrival was going to be somewhat asymmetric, thankfully the available concrete was just wide enough to cope. After a short stop to recover heart rates and refuel, getting

airborne again in the unforgiving crosswind, was even more dramatic. I held Charlie Pappa on the runway until well above flying speed before smartly rotating into the climb. This resulted in a serious sideways lurch into the angry sky narrowly avoiding a set of runway lights. We climbed up through the rain showers routing close to the Swedish coast tracking the BAK VOR up by Goteborg. The weather miraculously improved to reveal some magnificent scenery. ATC were helpful and courteous. It all became very pleasant albeit not good forced landing terrain, very hilly, rocky and the grassy bits infested with tall trees. After a little over two hours we passed Stromstad and entered Norway. Either side of our track angry dark clouds had started to deploy heavy curtains of rain but we were blessed with a ten mile corridor of clear air all the way to Oslo. Our destination Kjeller, was a military airfield with all sorts of PPR requirements listed by Jeppesen, none of which we had, so hassle was expected. At 1825 we said goodbye to the nice lady at Oslo Fornebu International and with some trepidation called up Kjeller on the military frequency. Thankfully it must have been after pack up time as all was quiet so we just made blind calls and landed at 1830 exactly eleven hours flying time from Lee. Oystein Eckner, the new owner, his mum and brother were there to greet us and were delighted to welcome Charlie Pappa to Norway. Her name

Destination - Kjeller Military AF



Oystein - Proud new owner



would soon be changed to Charlie Kilo Sue and I spent the evening in celebration and the next day touring Oslo before returning by Norwegian Airlines the following day in 2 hrs 20 minutes to Gatwick exactly five times faster than we flew out.

Diary of Events 2011 (Provisional)

March 26th	Winters End at Cotswold (Kemble) (Simon Wilson 01747837812)
May 7th & 8th	Yeovilton Flying Standards (Michael Ryan 01935812470 & Dave MacKay)
May TBA	Chivenor * (TBA)
June 18th—25th	French, Belgium & Dutch Deployment * (Phil Moore 01243 374681)
July TBA	Duxford or Shuttleworth *
September 3rd	Summer Barbecue (Sue Moorehead 01749672791)
September TBA	Ireland Long Weekend * (Denis Woodhams ? 01789763347)
October TBA	Shobden * (Andrew Eames ? 01432840691)
November 27th	Annual Dinner at HMS Collingwood (Sue Moorehead 01749672791)

* Members of the FAAOA living in the area will be invited by the Squadron to join in the asterixed events above

The **Squadron Buzz** is the quarterly "Newsletter" of the Fleet Air Arm Squadron. The editor invites contributions including photographs from all members (e.g. Reports, Letters, News, Anecdotes, Flying Information etc.). Please submit for Buzz No 57 by the deadline date of Friday 25 February 2011 to :

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