

# Historic Aircraft Association

Newsletter



October 2018

## Air Leasing sweep the skies !



2018 Conrod Trophy winners turn back the clock, with a *schwarm* of Buchons at Duxford's Flying Legends

Fresh from their success in winning the Historic Aircraft Association's Conrod Trophy, Richard Grace and his team turned every head at this year's Flying Legends display, with a scorching airfield attack sequence in four Hispano Buchons, reviving 50 year old memories of **The Battle of Britain** film, which started with a spectacular strafing attack by these very aircraft, on the south perimeter of Duxford airfield.

Air Leasing have renovated no fewer than three long dormant airframes in the past 12 months, all of which emerged from 45 years storage at the Texas ranch of Connie Edwards, and unflown since the end of filming in 1968. Altogether, 6 Buchons were acquired, in lieu of payment from the film company, and a further airframe is now located at Sywell for Air Leasing's restorative treatment.

Richard Grace received the trophy from HAA President Rick Peacock-Edwards during the Spring Display weekend at Duxford.



## Sir Adrian Swire

The HAA is saddened to mark the passing of long-term member and supporter, Sir Adrian Swire. He was the chairman of John Swire & Sons from 1987-1997 and 2002-2004.

With a life-long passion for flying, he held a private pilot's licence for 60 years. During his time in Hong Kong, whilst maintaining directorship of several companies, he joined the Royal Hong Kong Auxiliary Air Force, where he operated Austers.



Experience and opportunity led him to rather heavier metal, when he bought the now-famous Spitfire IX MH434, in which his repertoire included 'gentle aerobatics'. That aeroplane was eventually sold to Ray Hanna, but he did retain ownership of Rapide G-AKIF from 1973, though the aeroplane has been operated by Classic Wings at Duxford for some years.

An energetic supporter of numerous aviation-based organisations, including the RAF Benevolent Fund, he was also the first Chairman of the Spitfire Society. Sir Adrian died on 24 August, 2018, aged 86.

## John Farley AFC OBE, 1933 – 13 June 2018

Born in 1933, John recalled in his autobiography, *A View From The Hover*, that just before the outbreak of the Second World War, he witnessed the Graf Zeppelin airship pass gracefully over his home in Hastings, provoking a lifelong love of aviation.

Following RAF service, a civilian career with Hawker Siddeley followed, with sales demonstrations around the world. John will forever be associated with the Harrier, and he first flew the P1127 in the early 1960's, and like fellow Test Pilots also flew the very different Short SC1 VTOL aircraft, which had four lift engines and one for forward propulsion; he described managing all five engines as one transitioned between forward flight and the hover as being 'like a frantic organ player'.



John became Dunsfold's Chief Test Pilot in 1978, demonstrating the Sea Harrier at the SBAC Farnborough Show and going on to become world renowned for his display and test flying. He was a great supporter of the HAA, a Council member, and despite his almost legendary reputation and experience, John remained one of the most approachable and engaging aviation enthusiasts you could hope to meet.

## 'Keeping It Real?'

### Flying the *historics* in the 21st Century

One hundred and fifteen years after powered flight began, the pioneering aeroplanes are now *really* old, and even the celebrated classics of WW2 are perhaps 75 years old. Here in the UK we are privileged to enjoy a very active historic aircraft scene, and an industry of world-class restorers and specialist engineers to keep alive the traditions and skills required.

In some respects, with technological advances, we are more capable than ever, and indeed we have witnessed the re-emergence of some outstanding flying restorations barely conceivable not too many years ago, such as the classic Hawker biplanes of the 1930's.

Spitfires and Hurricanes have continued to thrive, with multiple examples returning to the flightline each year, restored from wartime wreckage, in some cases. These restorations have brought into focus the enduring question, something of an 'elephant in the room' which essentially asks "Is this a restoration or a replica?" That is difficult to answer, since there does not seem to be an accepted *industry standard* regarding the percentage of new material incorporated.



New build Spitfire, incorporating some original components

From an enthusiast's point of view, and from the owner's perspective, the label *replica* is not one willingly embraced, with overtones of *look alike* imitations and something not genuine, which is not particularly flattering, but more importantly could perhaps reduce market value, and that affects the viability of undertaking such expensive projects.

As time goes on, the harder it is becoming to locate surviving aircraft to restore, and the more fragmented and insubstantial the remains. The three Buchons returned to flight by Air Leasing are highly unusual in this current era, being virtually intact, and stored in perfect dry conditions for nearly half a century, making the task more a case of re-commissioning than complete restoration.

In contrast, most of the Spitfires and Hurricanes emerging now have, indisputably, a very high proportion of new metal and wood, though where possible original components are of course retained. A good example is the Peter Vacher ex-Indian Hurricane, which still has most of the original airframe and engine, but this differs, for example, from the exquisite Mk 1 Spitfires produced by ARC, which incorporate quite a small percentage of the original aircraft whose identities they wear, really just a few minor parts.

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The question which could be asked is '*does that matter?*' and actually, from a market perspective, seemingly not, with newer restorations seen to command broadly similar prices to more familiar well-known survivors. Though internet enthusiasts forums still sometimes simmer with the '*real or replica*' debate, there slowly seems to be a growing public understanding and acceptance that as time goes by, if we want to continue to see historic aircraft in the air, they will need to conform to contemporary airworthiness standards. (cont)

#### Keeping it real (cont)

There are also circumstances in which total originality is not a practical proposition. In the earliest days of aviation, wing warping was used as a flight control mechanism, but a recent fatal accident to a Fokker E-1 illustrates the hazards of such original, though flawed engineering, and any further proposed utilisation is unlikely to receive official sanction. Authentic or not, safety comes first.

The last few years have seen no fewer than three restored Mosquitos take to the air, after nearly two decades absence. The key factor making this possible was the availability of new-build wooden fuselages, built on the jigs of Glyn Powell in New Zealand. In the UK, Airframe Assemblies on the Isle of Wight fabricate new Spitfire fuselages and flying surfaces, and their output has been essential in most of the Spitfires which have returned to the skies in recent times.



Neglected wooden airframes, like this Mosquito, are often beyond restoration.

As we look to the future, it seems inevitable that supporters of historic aircraft will become more familiar and comfortable with ‘recreations’, ie, airworthy aircraft which represent a continuation of the identity and at least some parts of an original airframe, but of necessity using much new build structure. The DH-9 of Guy Black, is an example of this, conserving ‘the soul’ of the aeroplane, whilst its mortal bones were largely consumed by termites. David Bremners much-admired Bristol Scout owes its origins to the same philosophy.



Comper Swifts, a Mew Gull, the *Mystery Ship* racer, even a DH88 Comet, all welcome additions to the UK’s historic aircraft fleet.

It seems that if the iconic aircraft of the past are to remain a familiar sight in the skies of the 21st century, then as a community we maybe need to embrace a pragmatic and sustainable outlook, and accept that a technically accurate aeroplane can have a valued place in the historic aircraft fleet, whatever the age of its core components.

A.S

## FROM THE CHAIRMAN'S NOTEBOOK

### SIX MONTHS ON – WHERE ARE WE?

I last wrote some notes for this Newsletter back in February this year and reported on the preliminary work of the All Party Parliamentary Aviation Group for General Aviation (APPG/GA), and I mentioned a Fourth Working Group was being added to the APPG GA to cover heritage aviation interests which includes historic aircraft and those involved in air show activity.

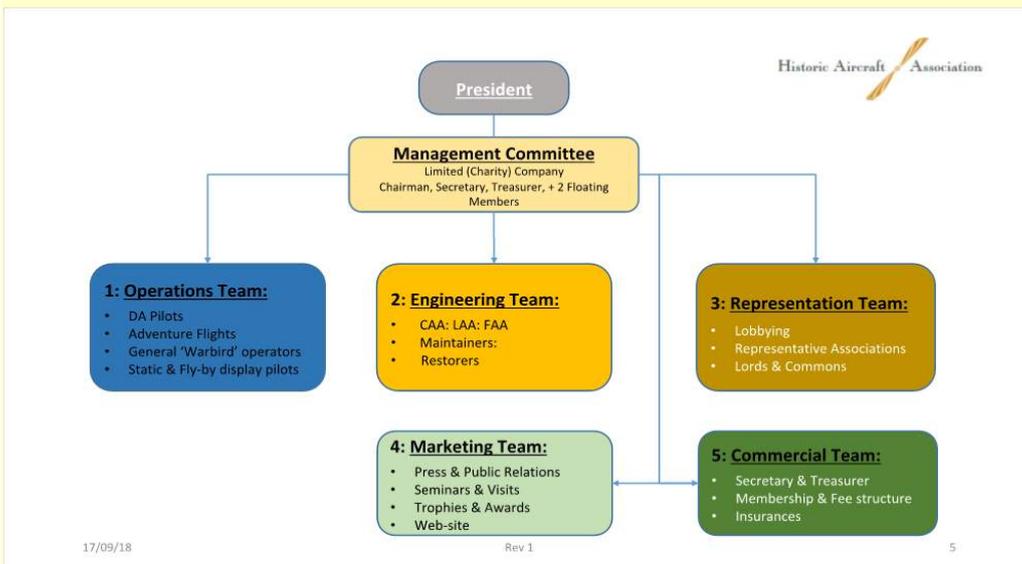
This Group was formed and it has met 3 times since then under the joint Chairmanship of Robert Courts MP and Dr Robert Fleming. HAA Member for Regulation and Safety Administration Stephen Crocker and myself both sit on the Heritage Working Group and have been tasked with the development of risk-based safety management systems and oversight for the heritage aviation community. Essentially that is exactly what Steve and I have been working on within the HAA for the past 9 years so the task already fits like a well worn glove! Progress has been good and we have moved the meetings 'out of town' as a better means of getting useful work done. At Westminster our meetings were always constrained to 1 hour being the time limit of use of any meeting room in the House of Commons. The Heritage Working Group recently met at Oxford Airport and conferred for 3 hours resulting in the achievement of some real work. For example we are arranging for Dr Jonathan Aleck the Australian CASA Associate Director of Aviation Safety and Executive Manager Legal & Regulatory Affairs, together with Mr Peter Pring-Shambler Director of Self-Administration Warbirds Ltd, to visit the UK late Autumn this year to brief the APPG GA and other interested MP's on how SAM is working successfully in Australia. It is anticipated that there will be an opportunity for the Australians to also brief the Aviation Minister and the CAA CEO, DASR and Head of the GAU during their visit.



The HAA has been asked to come up with a definition of 'Heritage' and 'Historic' aircraft. This has been something of an old chestnut for sometime, and within the HAA Management we have gone around and around the question trying to find a generic solution. We have come to the conclusion that probably the only answer is to list heritage and historic aircraft by specific type. Age does of course come into it, but for those aircraft flying, or are potentially to be restored to flying condition, the heritage value is often in the province of the owner. The decision as to which historic aircraft should be maintained in airworthy condition is one the purchaser of the project makes, not the likes of an association such as the HAA. We therefore think that it is the registry where aircraft that have a heritage interest are to be found. An aircraft type will qualify as an historic aircraft if it has a place in the history of aviation and is important to the UK's aviation heritage. The HAA will therefore provide a list of aircraft types currently airworthy that have an historic/heritage value taken from the CAA aircraft register.

We will still keep in mind those that have complexities, or peculiarities where special handling skills, and special maintenance skills are required in areas where those skills are no longer commonplace in aviation today. It is precisely in this area that the HAA needs to play a part of providing a sound risk based management system to take into account those special skills required.

At the AGM earlier this year we announced a new management structure for the better working of the Association.



We asked for volunteers to lead the new Teams that had been created and so far a few slots have been filled but we are still short of Team Leaders.

Our President Air Commodore Rick Peacock-Edwards is still with us as President but has announced his intention of retiring at the next AGM. Malcolm Ward is doing a stalwart job as joint Treasurer and Secretary. However we do need a volunteer to take over as Secretary. Stephen Crocker is working with Barry Tempest on the Representation Team that covers regulatory affairs, and the Commercial Team is being led by Richie Piper. Alan Vogel and Andy Smith are heading up the Marketing and Events Team, with Oliver Wheeldon taking the lead on Operations which covers Warbird Operators, DA Pilots, Adventure Flights (aka SSAC) and historic pilots representation. There is no lead for the Engineering Team as yet although there are several volunteers in support of engineering matters like Kevin (Taff) Stone and Andrew Edmondson.

This situation has led me to believe that the time has come to rationalise our situation by recognising our weaknesses as an Association that is lacking active leaders with time and energy to take the HAA forward. At the same time we should recognise our historical strength that was identified by the HAA Strategic Review Team last year. They reported that the need for a representative association remained. The SRT also identified the less than desirable level of representation for operators and pilots. Since this was the original aim of the HAA, and the Association was set up as a pilot register for display flying, it seems more obvious now that there should be one organisation representing historic aircraft owners, pilots and display pilots. BADA have been doing an excellent job of taking care of the interests of air show organisers and display aircraft. Their aims as an association are similar to those that the HAA was founded upon.

#### Chairman's notebook cont

It would appear that BADA feels the same as we do about combining our resources. We have therefore initiated discussions with BADA as to how we might achieve a merger of the 2 organisations into one representative association. The present Chairman of BADA Barry Neal has the same ideas about risk based safety management as us and the synergy seems to be there already. In fact at this year's BADA AGM Barry displayed a proposed management re-structure that looked remarkably like our own shown above!

We will therefore be holding preliminary discussions in October to explore how a merger with BADA might be achieved to the benefit of all, and not forgetting the most important element of our Community. The restorers and continuing airworthiness maintenance organisations need to be strongly represented too, and under the SAM system, as I have said so often, their wishes would come true!

O W (Wally) Epton FRAeS Chairman

## Aviation Connection at Highclere Castle

On a Sunday morning in September at Highclere Castle (better known by its fictional name Downton Abbey), a dedication ceremony took place for a new statue of an airman to commemorate the crew of a B-17 and 7 other aircraft which crashed on the estate in WW2. HAA member Steve Bohill-Smith has assisted Lady Carnarvon researching the aircraft wreckage discovered, including a P-38, two Mosquitoes, a Lysander, a Whitley and a Proctor, as well as the B-17.

The ceremony of dedication included speeches from HSH Princess Sophie of Hohenburg, the great granddaughter of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand (whose assassination started WW1), the Belgian Ambassador, various religious leaders as well as Lord and Lady Carnarvon. The ceremony closed with a flypast by a P-51 Mustang flown by HAA member Cliff Spink. The airman statue was carved by wood sculpture Simon O'Rourke from a Cedar tree that had fallen on the estate and circled by three benches in the form of a P-38 tailplane, with transparent uprights containing small parts of wreckage from each of the crash sites.

The view from Highclere Castle across the South lawn leads towards the statue and beyond to the ridge where most of the aircraft crashed. Just the other side of this ridge is Seven Barrows, where Geoffrey de Havilland first flew an aircraft of his own design - an important event for many HAA members.

**Richie Piper**



*Lightning tailplane bench*

## Membership Secretary required.

The HAA still urgently needs a volunteer for this vital role, to maintain the high standards set by Wendy. Please apply at [info@haa-uk.aero](mailto:info@haa-uk.aero). Members will have noted that we have elected not to supply individual membership cards this year, but we do have a record of subs paid, and ask that any outstanding subs be paid as soon as possible. It would greatly ease the admin if payment is made via standing order, and we can supply a form on request.

# Historic Aircraft Association Annual Symposium

RAF Museum Hendon  
Saturday October 27th

**Cold War Warriors**  
**Fast Jets of the 60's**

**Avro - The Pioneering Years**  
**Personal Recollections of a Great British Company**

**RAF 100 - 'Flying the Icons'**



**Spitfire Documentary**  
**Filming the Fighter**

**Special Duties over Germany**  
**Rusty Waughman DFC Lancas-**

**Full Day Event.** Admission by ticket only. HAA Members £28, Non members £34. Includes refreshments on arrival, and private 2 course lunch.

For tickets and info visit [www.haa-uk.aero](http://www.haa-uk.aero)

**Photo - courtesy of Ian Black**