

# Historic Aircraft Association

Newsletter

March 2018



The Historic Aircraft Association was delighted to announce that the 2017 Darrol Stinton Trophy was awarded to renowned aircraft restorer Guy Black. The trophy is awarded in recognition of outstanding individual endeavour and achievement within the world of historic aircraft.

Whilst his teams at Retrotec and Aero Vintage have previously been recognised for their remarkable restorations, and particularly their efforts in locating, rescuing and resurrecting to flying condition a range of iconic British biplanes, it was the founder Guy Black whose vision and energy brought it all into being. The impeccable standards of engineering and commitment to excellence have returned to the skies iconic types thought long extinct, most notably the Hawker Fury and Nimrod biplanes. Guy's most recent restoration, the remarkable DH9 was unveiled in 2017, and is expected to take to the air early this year



Guy's companies are also noted as key suppliers of components, making possible the continued operation of historic types such as the Hawker Hurricane, including two flying restorations in 2017 alone, and a further example almost complete.

The award was made on the occasion of the 2017 HAA annual symposium at the RAF Museum, Hendon, by HAA President Air Commodore R S Peacock-Edwards CBE AFC, and witnessed by Chairman Wally Epton .

## Guy Black tells all in DH9 account

Guy's gripping presentation at the symposium was very well received, and members might be interested to seek out the forthcoming book, due at the end of March **DH9 :From Ruin To Restoration** - Author Andy Saunders (with Guy Black) Publisher. Grub Street.

*"In 2000, quite by chance, aircraft restorer Guy Black of Aero Vintage located the hulls of at least two Airco DH9 bombers in a remote part of India - hidden away in what had been a Maharaja's elephant stable at his palace in Bikaner, Rajasthan. They were truly remarkable finds, and extremely rare examples of a near-extinct and important WWI aircraft type - none of which had survived in Britain. Recognising their importance to the UK's aviation heritage, and excited by the challenge of restoration, Guy set about negotiating their purchase and returning them back to England.*

*Here the whole intriguing story is told - fully illustrated step-by-step - from discovery to recovery, through to research, restoration, re-construction and first flight, all in fascinating, meticulous detail. Also covered is the account of the restoration of the first DH9 to be completed, now housed as a non-flying exhibit at the IWM Duxford."*



## Keith Sissons

Keith, who will be remembered by thousands of airshow goers for his immaculate displays in Plane Sailing's Catalina and the B-17G Sally B, gained his PPL at the age of seventeen, later becoming a CPL and ATPL, and in 1958 began flying commercially.

A long-standing member of the Tiger Club and an enthusiast for water-borne aviation, he became the driving force behind the club's Seaplane Section. Operating Sea Tiger G-AIVW, Keith also flew for a BBC TV documentary on Sir Francis Chichester, the Tiger disguised as an earlier Gipsy Moth. He was later to captain Sally B, renamed *Memphis Belle*, during filming of the movie of the same name. Keith's professional career saw him flying Transmeridian Air Cargo's Canadair CL-44Ds and Shorts Belfasts.

Keith was a founding member of the Historic Aircraft Association, and in 2013 was awarded the status of Honorary Vice-President, in recognition of his years of dedication to the operation and displaying of historic aeroplanes and lifelong contribution to the aviation community.

## The passing of Duncan Simpson OBE, HAA Founding Member

HAA members and Council were saddened to hear of the recent death of Duncan Simpson. He was a founder member of the Association and was heavily involved in setting its principals and objectives in the beginning. Duncan contributed to the establishment of the display pilot register and display authorisation system eventually adopted by the CAA. He was variously Chairman and a Vice President of the HAA and offered advice and guidance on a range of issues affecting historic aircraft. His remarkable flying career spanned over 40 years, and we are honoured to outline in more detail his flying achievements on the HAA website, - <https://haa-uk.aero/>.

## Historic Aircraft in the UK - 2018 'Warbird' Stocktake

Nearly 40 years after the founding of the HAA, much has changed, in the scope and numbers of historic aircraft seen in UK skies. Perhaps the biggest single factor has been the influence of a few individuals, whose growing and evolving collections have brought types not previously seen. Owners such as Stephen Grey, Mike Collett, and Doug Arnold all imported numerous rare types through the '70's and 80's and beyond, much appreciated the airshow-going public. However, international trade works both ways of course, and in 2018 the trend is presently not so much in our favour for various reasons, including a weak pound and a more challenging operating environment



It is useful for the HAA to review the state of the 'industry' as we presently see it, as that may better indicate where our influence can help to further support an active and flourishing historic aircraft scene. It is not all bad news by any means, but certainly there have been major changes, in what one might call the warbird 'fleet', a loose classification starting with high performance pre-war biplanes, through WW2 types and up to the classic jets.

The following historic types, once familiar sights, are no longer resident in the UK.

Grumman Hellcat    Grumman Tigercat,    P.47 Thunderbolt,    B.25 Mitchell,    Ju 52  
Grumman Avenger    A.26 Invader              P.38 Lightning              Bell Cobra              Mosquito

In recent times we have seen numerous P.51s depart, another P.40 late 2017, and in January 2018 yet another Mustang and a Spitfire Vb left Duxford for Turkey and the USA respectively.

On the up are Spitfires (36 flyers) and Hurricanes (9) with both types set to increase this year. Of Mustangs, Sea Furies, P 40's, Bf 109 (Buchon), Gladiators, and P.36 Hawk we have just 2 flying examples of each, Yak types (7) Hawker Biplanes (5) and single examples of Lysander, Blenheim, Lancaster, B-17, Catalina, Bearcat, Wildcat and Corsair. 31 Harvards are registered, though not all are currently flying. There are 4 airworthy DC-3s.

Vintage jets have fared rather worse, with the retirement/export of the Vulcan, Sea Vixen, T 33, Sabre, Venoms, various Meteors, all Canberras, most Hunters, and Seahawk, leaving a UK fleet of just one Vampire (for sale), a few Jet Provosts, 2 Gnats, and maybe a Hunter or two. A pair of Meteors still fly on with Martin Baker (ejector seat trials) and a further airworthy Meteor heads to the USA in April.





As mentioned above, the long-term investment of a small number of wealthy enthusiasts has historically been key to the import and/or restoration of a wide variety of airworthy historic aircraft in the last few decades, but as long-familiar collections now scale down, fresh input is certainly needed to uphold variety and maintain UK aircraft numbers.

Whilst warbird activity generally has dipped in recent times, Spitfires and Hurricanes are flourishing in the UK, with two-seat Spitfires particularly in demand, now that their money-making potential is endorsed by the CAA. The operators have been busy, flying even throughout the winter and bucking the warbird trend to hibernate through the darkest months. The legendary status of the Battle of Britain fighters ensures huge interest and desirability, giving them a monetary value high enough to justify the enormous cost of total restoration/ recreation from often very fragmented remains.

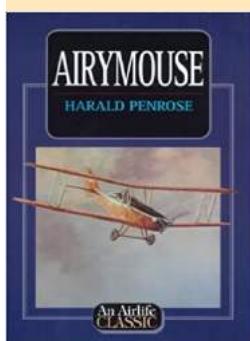
Looking ahead, the most eagerly anticipated historic aircraft type which could be welcomed back into UK skies is the Mosquito, and the last five years have seen three airworthy restorations, two in New Zealand and one in the USA. The CAA seem receptive to the prospect and given the huge public interest, a UK based 'Mossie' is by no means out of the question.

Andrew Smith

## AIRYMOUSE AWAKES

One historic aircraft that is as far away from a powerful 'warbird' as you can get, yet still has a fascinating history, has recently been woken from hibernation in a barn in rural Hampshire.

"Airymouse" is a Currie Wot ("call it Wot you like" said its designer), a tiny 22-foot wingspan single-seat biplane originally commissioned by Viv Bellamy of the Hampshire Aeroplane Company and built by its pre-war designer Joe Currie in the 1950s.



The aircraft was subsequently sold to former Westland chief test pilot Harald Penrose, who gave the aircraft its title and on his retirement wrote a much-admired book of the same name, on the pleasures of low and slow, open-cockpit flying.

The aircraft, in storage following the death of its previous owner, was acquired by HAA member Steve Slater. In early January it was transferred by road to Turweston in Northamptonshire. After some gentle restoration it is expected to take to the skies again in the early spring.

## FROM THE CHAIRMAN'S NOTEBOOK

### THE APPG AND UK AIR SHOWS

Members will probably have heard something about the recently formed All Party Parliamentary Group for General Aviation (APPG/GA) The Group has a website at <http://www.generalaviationappg.uk> where you can read their campaign objectives.

When the Group was set up on the 17<sup>th</sup> February last year the Chairman Byron Davies MP assisted by Red Tape Challenge inaugurator Grant Shapps MP announced their plans to pursue the main concerns that were stressing the General Aviation community.

Byron Davies and Grant Shapps recognised that the three main concerns were:

Protection of UK airfields from closure and re-instatement of airfields recently closed.

Create a fairer system of taxation on pilot training and on aviation fuel.

Organise airspace for all aviators to prosper



As these pressures affect historic aircraft owners and aviators the HAA executive felt strongly that we must be a part of this important Parliamentary initiative. Myself, your Hon Secretary and member Stephen Crocker were invited to attend the inaugural meeting and at that meeting we were able to get across some of our HAA policy views especially with regard to change in the regulatory and oversight system.

The APPG/GA work was slowed down last year by the snap General Election announced in the Spring for the 8<sup>th</sup> June. Unfortunately Byron Davies lost his seat at that election and the leadership of the APPG/GA was suddenly left vacant. With MPs busy dealing with re-organisation of Government and Brexit matters it was difficult to find time to focus on General Aviation concerns. Lord Ahmad who was Minister for Aviation moved on, and for a brief period Lord Callanan was in the post only to be

replaced quite soon after by Baroness Sugg of Coldharbour. By the Autumn of last year Grant Shapps had rallied the parliamentarians back to the cause, and alerted the Secretary of State for Transport the Right Honourable Christopher Grayling to the stresses GA was experiencing and how general aviation business was in decline. The Secretary called in Byron Davies and appointed him as The GA Champion within DfT and asked him to continue working on the APPG/GA with Grant Shapps.

Since the introduction of recent new airshow regulation (CAP403) and additional oversight requirements, airshows in the UK have seen a 30% reduction in activity. Many major air shows have been cancelled or severely curtailed. Restrictions placed upon heritage jet aircraft such as the continuing application of the BCAR Airworthiness Complex Category requirements; the grounding of Hunter aircraft post-Shoreham and subsequent un-grounding with retention of display manoeuvre restrictions, plus restrictions placed on straight-wing heritage jets, has gradually led to aircraft being sold abroad and airshow appearances being cancelled.

#### THE APPG AND UK AIR SHOWS (cont)

The restrictions currently in place on historic jet aircraft particularly Hunters and other swept wing jets, combined with other recently introduced rules and regulations are stifling the historic jet aircraft displays and air shows generally. The APPG/GA leaders accepted that there were serious problems that needed to be addressed and that solutions could only come from above through Government directives formulated by the Department for Transport and transmitted down to the CAA.

As a result of this lobbying by HAA and BADA the APPG/GA are looking at adding a fourth objective to their campaign – that of saving air shows and the introduction of better safety management for air display activity. The aim would be to embrace a risk-based safety management system with oversight provided by a BADA/HAA joint venture administration under delegated authority from the CAA.

Following the investigation of the Shoreham accident the AAIB recommended that the Department for Transport: “*commission, and report the findings of, an independent review of the governance of flying display activity in the United Kingdom, to determine the form of governance that will achieve the level of safety it requires.*” Unquote from AAIB Accident Report No 1/2017 G-BXFI

The CAA has refused to entertain delegation of safety management oversight to neither the HAA nor BADA because current CAA management personnel do not trust the community to take care of safety. This is deeply insulting to those people in the historic aircraft and air show community who have been granted licences, approvals and dispensations by the CAA to undertake responsibilities for safety on behalf of the CAA.



Many will say that the CAA has relaxed in its oversight of the community. One example might be the introduction of Safety Standards and Consent (SSAC) to enable passengers to fly in the backseat of a Spitfire. It is less than amusing to me that the CAA used the safety management system we gave them as the draft Adventure Flight Guide in our ESAM, to then write their own version as SSAC! The Adventure

Flight Guide was the work of HAA member Stephen Crocker, and gifted to the HAA, only to be plagiarised by the CAA GA Unit as if it was all their own work.

Another example of the CAA heading off proposals for delegation has been the introduction of the BCAR Airworthiness A8-20 series. These regulations allow approved historic aircraft maintainers some additional flexibility in oversight. But this is only under dispensations granted by the CAA – not delegated - and therefore by virtue of privileges that can be withdrawn if the CAA finds the operator no longer acceptable to the Authority! The A8-20 series of BCARs was written specifically to stave off any delegation of oversight responsibility, and thereby ensure the CAA maintained full ultimate control.

The HAA Exposition on SAM together with its Business Plan has been sitting on the CAA GA Unit desk now for over 18 months. The CAA Chief Executive, and the Head of the CAA GA Unit have placed any proposals for delegation on the back burner until the Shoreham accident Coroner's Enquiry is completed. This could take many years. It is our view, and this was endorsed by the previous Aviation Minister Lord Ahmad, that such a delay is unnecessary.

Through the APPG/GA we will continue to work with our friends in BADA to bring about the introduction of a better risk-based safety management system for governance of historic aircraft and air shows. We have already determined the form of governance that will "achieve the level of safety the historic aircraft community requires" It would be administered by those who are involved on a day-to-day basis, not by CAA inspectors who know little or nothing about historic aircraft restoration and flying.

In the meantime, your Council are continuing to work on the re-organisation of the HAA to become an effective body capable of accomplishing the best possible outcomes for its members. The HAA wants to continue supporting the historic aircraft and the airshow community in a campaign to ultimately manage its own safety in a more cost effective manner. We want aircraft activity to return to that seen in previous decades, and sustain growth into the future.

**Wally Epton**

Chairman HAA

### **HAA Annual General Meeting and Flying Forum**

Old Warden, Sunday March 18th 2018

The AGM proceedings begin at 10.00, and are followed by a safety review of the 2017 display season, and 2 presentations on contemporary operation of historic aeroplanes ( speakers tbc ). Bring along your HAA membership card and feel free to explore the whole of the Shuttleworth Collection at no charge. Lunch can be purchased in the museum canteen

All members are requested to indicate their intentions regarding attendance at the Annual Meeting to aid administration and to assist the caterers. Please contact the Secretary by e-mail at: [info@haa-uk.aero](mailto:info@haa-uk.aero) or by post:

**Malcolm Ward, HAA Secretary, The White House, 23 Mill Road, Hartford, Huntingdon, PE29 1YJ.**

Those wishing to fly in should contact the collection for PPR.

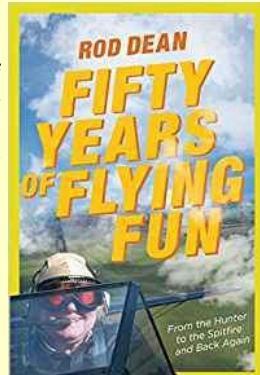
### **New Members**

The HAA is pleased to welcome Jeremy Radcliffe, David-John Gibbs, and Mungo Chapman

**Fifty Years of Flying Fun** Author: Rod Dean. Published by Grub Street: <https://grubstreet.co.uk> £20

First appearing in 2015, this title remains an excellent insight into the high octane world of historic aircraft display flying, though the bulk of the book is a highly readable account of Rod's RAF career on the Hunter and Jaguar. The chapter recalling RAF Germany in the late 1970s struck a chord and rekindled memories from my own time there in the early 1980s. No doubt those who served in Aden, Muharraq or Oman will also find much to stimulate nostalgic thoughts.

Later chapters cover Rod's civilian display-flying career, and his efforts to join the exclusive circle of warbird display pilots. Certainly it helped that he chose to take a marketing role when he left the RAF, rather than fly for the airlines, which left him free to fly at weekends.



It also helped that whilst taking part in Red Flag in Nevada, he chose to spend his spare time not in the fleshpots of nearby Las Vegas but on a tour of airfields and aviation museums in somewhat more distant California. That led to a flight in a Harvard and a burgeoning friendship with its owner, who years later let Rod check out in his Harvard. It certainly helped that he served his apprenticeship displaying a light warbird replica, a scaled-down Focke-Wulf 190. But I suspect that the real reason that Rod graduated to the top drawer of display pilots was simply that he is a consummate professional, with a huge wealth of experience, and the self-discipline to expand that experience slowly and methodically. The subtitle of the book is "*from the Hunter to the Spitfire and back again*" and that sums up neatly the scope of Rod's display flying career.

If you attended the HAA's symposium at the RAF Museum in October last year, you will have been privileged to hear Rod recount some episodes in this memoir. You will also recognise the style of his writing, not a polished, ghost-written account, but a first-hand tale of RAF life in the sixties, seventies and eighties and of the air display circuit in the eighties, nineties and "noughties." There is a fair bit a chronological chopping and changing from one chapter to the next, but that is a small price to pay for Rod's crewroom banter and no-nonsense prose. This is a book by a pilot, for pilots, and the author wisely excludes almost all detail of his extensive career outside of the cockpit. A cracking tale and a good read. Recommended.

Malcolm Ward

### Historic Aircraft Engineering Conference Autumn 2018

Stop Press: Arrangements are being made for a conference in the Autumn to be jointly hosted by the HAA and Royal Aeronautical Society. Further details will be circulated shortly (see website) and in the subsequent newsletter. This will be a full day event, with catering available.