

Historic Aircraft Association

Newsletter



August 2017

2017 UK Airshow Season gets underway The *ups* and *downs* of a busy year



A quintet of Hurricanes, for the first time in forty years, Duxford July 2017

The UK's air displays are the most visible manifestation of historic flying, and the 2017 season has caused quite a few headlines, though not always for the right reasons. The first public gathering was at Halfpenny Green (Wolverhampton) and was a spectacular demonstration of what happens when a low mounted jet engine (Vampire) meets a poorly surfaced runway. The resultant flying lumps of tarmac caused the subsequent closure of the runway, and drew unwanted attention to the operations of an already beleaguered vintage jet scene, which seems to dwindle by the month, and indeed that Vampire itself is presently advertised for sale.

Abingdon was the venue for the first air display of the year, and was notable for *two* engine failures in the course of the display, with the Twister ultralight forced to make a hasty gear up landing on the grass. Later in the afternoon, the replica Avro 504 was making its debut appearance with the Great War Display team but sadly sudden loss of power compelled a swift arrival in the 'outfield' on the airfield perimeter. Thankfully, both incidents were handled with great skill, and the Avro was undamaged, though the Twister took rather more of a knock, and the pilot suffered back injuries.

The Sea Vixen was the star attraction for Duxford's May show, and defied the doubters who predicted it would be dogged by technical snags and yet again be a 'no-show', as was the case for much of last year. A triumphant display was overshadowed by an undercarriage problem back at Yeovilton, and Cdr Simon Hargreaves was forced to land gear up, which he performed with the utmost skill and judgement.



Gladiator after force-landing in crop

The touchdown was as smooth as could be hoped, but even so has caused damage to the airframe that is estimated to represent up to two years work, and cost perhaps in excess of £1 million. The failed component was a broken drive shaft on a hydraulic pump.

First class airmanship was again on show at Old Warden in early June when the collection's Gladiator experienced a rough running engine, at the close of the show. With insufficient height to make a circuit,

(cont) the pilot elected to land immediately into wind, in an adjacent field of barley. The forced-landing caused no damage to the biplane, but there was considerable anxiety amongst the crowd as it sank from view behind trees. It is possible that the lack of axle on the undercarriage reduced the risk of inverting upon contact with the crop. After the felling of two small trees on the airfield boundary, the Gladiator was returned to its hangar the same evening.

On a more encouraging note, a new shape was seen this season at Old Warden, in the shape of the magnificent Sopwith Camel reproduction, the final creation of the Northern Aeroplane Workshops, who were awarded the Historic Aircraft Association Conrod Trophy in 2014. This is a perfect stablemate for the resident Pup and Sopwith Triplane, which was also built by the NAW. Following a landing incident three years ago it has also been returned to full airworthiness.



Flying Legends at Duxford in July was the scene of more drama, when the visiting P-51B lost its canopy on its first pass. Landing with slight damage to the fin, it remained on the ground for the rest of the event, a sad ending to an epic trans-Atlantic visit. The very end of the Sunday display saw another Mustang in trouble, when *Miss Velma* lost power on downwind leg, and turned in for an early landing. Lack of height forced the pilot to turn away from the airfield, and put down in a field the far side of the M11. With the gear retracting on touchdown, damage to the wing structure was minimised, and the aeroplane was recovered within 24 hours, and set back on its wheels, looking, at first glance, not too badly damaged. Initial investigation points to a fuel supply issue.



A previous Duxford resident, Spitfire Mk XIX PS890, now residing in France, also ran into trouble recently at the L'aérodrome de Longuyon open day, and crashed badly on take-off from a grass strip, ending up inverted with a broken spar. Spectators rushed to lift the aeroplane, and successfully released the trapped pilot, in the absence of any emergency services. It was the pilot's first flight on type.

The safe handling of four mid-display engine failures without major damage to airframes or persons reflects very well upon UK display pilots and their standards of airmanship, most notably in the Mustang incident, which occurred almost directly over the M11 motorway, and could have ended very badly indeed.

HAA Membership Renewals

Membership secretary Wendy Hinchcliffe has requested that overdue subscriptions are settled as soon as can be arranged. Please return your cheque to the Membership Secretary: Mrs Wendy Hinchcliffe, 56 Corby Road, Weldon, Corby, Northants, NN17 3HT. Email: w.hinchcliffe@googlemail.com

Jo Ayres reports with details of a recent visit arranged for HAA members

Our trip was to the **Boscombe Down Aviation Collection** at Old Sarum. On arrival we enjoyed a very interesting introductory talk from Project Director **Sqn Leader John Sharpe**.

Boscombe Down Aviation Collection (BDAC) was formally opened by the late Air Commodore Colin Cruickshanks on 1st April 1999, but was behind the 'wire' until it moved to Old Sarum and opened to the public on the 1st of July 2012. It became a Private Not For Profit Company limited by guarantee in May 2007, and then a registered Charity in June 2011. The Collection is based on aircraft, vehicles and artefacts historically associated with the Boscombe Down site. The Collection is run by the Members and is staffed by volunteers.



The Boscombe Down Aviation Collection (BDAC) tells the history of Boscombe Down and explains the place it has in the history of flight and flight test. In essence the aim is to preserve the past for the future. Military flying began at Boscombe Down in 1917 and continues to the present day. Experimental operation began in 1940 and the site remains at the forefront for testing as the UK's and Western Europe's only dedicated military flight test centre. Boscombe Down has played a very significant role in the history of flight and flight testing.

The collection of aircraft, put together over 12 years, also includes a full-scale replica BE2b biplane which was the first aircraft to use Boscombe Down in 1917. There are also artefacts including dummy missiles, ejector seats and 1,200 model aircraft. The museum is unique in that it has only aircraft that either flew from Boscombe Down or were used as test aircraft. There are a number of aircraft that are complete, some under restoration, and quite a few cockpit sections, most of them open so you can sit in them.

They also have a Meteor simulator running on MS Flight Sim X, which is an excellent experience. One of the volunteers provides an useful briefing and assists with the throttle, flaps, etc. You can take off, perform high G turns, vertical rolls and land safely back at the airfield. A great day was had by all and we were able to get very *hands on* with the exhibits - my personal favourite part of the visit was going inside the De-Havilland Comet C2 XK699 Sagittarius . **JA**

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Book Review **The de Havilland Mosquito - Through the eyes of a pilot**

Author: David Ogilvy. Published by Amberley: www.amberley-books.com. £14.99.

HAA members will be familiar with *David Ogilvy*, as a former Vice-President, but also because of his long and active contribution to our kind of flying through AOPA and the Shuttleworth Trust. He is well qualified, probably uniquely so, to write about the Mosquito from a pilot's perspective. David joined the RAF after the end of the war and served on Mosquitos for 3 years and continued to fly the type after leaving the RAF, on test flights, displays and ferrying the aircraft over many years.

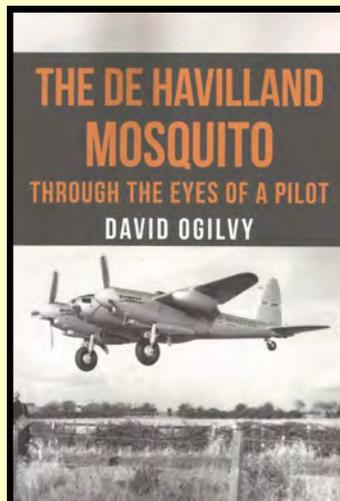
This is a slender book, but it delivers in spades the promise of the title. Its 95 pages contain no fewer than 70 crisply printed black & white photographs, amongst which are some fascinating illustrations of the various things that have been hung on the aircraft, including dive brakes, gun turrets and the more familiar radar and cannons. There is no index, no list of references and only a scant bibliography, so this is not a book for those seeking pointers for further research. It is however, a book which pilots will savour. The author has the knack of bringing the reader into the cockpit with him and imparting a clear sense of what the Mosquito was like to fly. The first few chapters cover in some detail the history of the aircraft, its early testing and introduction to RAF service. But the real value of the book is in the later chapters, in which David evocatively describes the characteristics of the Mosquito as a flying machine and as a weapon of war.

In these days where the operation and maintenance of ex-military aircraft is required to be conducted strictly according to original documentation, the author presents a hair-raising example of why that is not always the best policy. The Pilot's Notes for the trainer version of the Mosquito, the T3, contained no warning of the tendency to swing on take-off, let alone guidance on how best to handle this. Moreover, the specified height and speeds for the single-engine approach are dangerously low, giving no margin for error.

The author gives a graphic description of what happens if the Mosquito is mishandled on one engine: he witnessed three accidents where the aircraft had been allowed to get low and slow on a single-engine approach: all were fatal. He reminds us that more crews were killed in single-engine practice than after real engine failures, yet controversially defends the practice of requiring pilots to make four fully-feathered landings each month, rather than setting zero thrust on the "dead" engine. He argues that the psychological effect of seeing the stationary propeller blades adjacent to the cockpit impresses on the pilot that opening up the "dead" engine is not an option and that he is thus better prepared to cope if he subsequently loses an engine for real.

I suspect that this publication has been a long time in reaching the book shelves, as the 1996 fatal accident at Barton is referred to as having been "almost 20 years ago." However, it was worth the wait. What can £15 buy in historic aviation today? A few seconds in a Spitfire or a few minutes in a Tiger Moth. Or a few hours vicarious Mosquito flying with David Ogilvy. Highly recommended.

Malcolm Ward



Historic Aircraft Association Ties

We have recently received a new batch of HAA ties, and are pleased to offer these to the membership at just £12.95.

Orders can be placed through our website, or, looking a bit further ahead, purchased at the annual symposium at Hendon in October.

C-54 escapes the axe

HAA member Alan Vogel is leading a dedicated group of enthusiasts in their efforts to save, restore and operate a C-54 Skymaster, which had become a dispiriting sight after 15 years open storage at North Weald. This rare surviving aircraft was delivered to the United States Army Air Force in 1945 as C-54D-1-DC (42-72525) and immediately transferred to the US Navy as a R5D-3.



It was later converted to a C-54Q in 1962 (56498). The aircraft was retired in 1972 after 30 years' service during WW2, Korean War and the Vietnam War. We have evidence of the aircraft being based at Naval Air Station Agana on Guam, Hawaii and Iwakuni in Japan. She took in vital live blood for wounded soldiers, supplies and operated in the Pacific theatre from 1945 to 1972.

She was sold to the agricultural industry in 1977 for aerial spraying operations and again in January 1996 when the registration was transferred to Atlantic Warbirds Inc. of New Hampshire. A \$500,000 restoration was carried out and the aircraft, together with another DC 4, were flown to England to feature in a film about the Candy Bombers that operated out of England during the Berlin Airlift of 1948 & 1948 taking in much needed aid, food, clothing and fuel to the starving population of Berlin, surrounded by the Russian Army. Sadly the film was dropped and so there was no longer any use for the two DC4's that flew in to North Weald in Essex.

Alan is enthusiastic about the prospects for the vintage transport. "We have secured this aircraft and need all your support to now restore the aircraft. A survey has been carried out by a top engineer and the opinion is that she can be returned to flight and is worth saving!

The aim is to raise a total of £350,000 to get her airworthy. She will be operated and tour the UK airshow circuit and abroad as a visiting classroom. We want people to have a hands on visit and climb on board and see, feel and smell what this old work horse is really like."



HAA Strategic Review

Members will be aware that over the last few months a Strategic Review has been undertaken, to identify how the HAA can remain relevant and effective in the continuing promotion of historic aircraft restoration and safe flying. The recommendations can be examined in full on the HAA website, but in summary are as follows.

The HAA should continue as the representative association of the historic aircraft community in the UK. The current Mission Statement should be modified to place greater emphasis on and encompass both flight operations and engineering of historic aircraft.

The services to the historic aircraft flight operations and industry engineering inclusive of continuing airworthiness should be the raison d'être of the HAA.

The HAA should arrange talks with the LAA Executive to explore the possibility of the HAA becoming a sub-set of the LAA. (in hand) The SRTF considered that by engaging with a larger existing organisation such as the LAA this could strengthen the HAA. Liaison with other organisations such as the VAC and AOPA were considered to be important too, and talks have been scheduled to take place soon.

Pilotage of historic aircraft inclusive of safety should be the responsibility of the HAA and the Association should be the first "port of call" for pilots aiming to convert onto historic, vintage and veteran aircraft types. The HAA should offer training, education and mentoring of pilots in much the same way as it did when it was first formed.

The HAA should work with the CAA GAU to provide pilot mentoring and training to give confidence to air show organisers that display pilots can be relied upon.

Assist operators with their applications for SSAC by offering a suitably acceptable template when submitting their applications to the CAA GAU. Although the Head of the CAA GAU had verbally suggested there was not much the HAA could do to help with the SSAC the SRTF felt that nonetheless the HAA should work with the CAA GAU to develop this template.

Increase activity in fund raising to provide sensible income to achieve the objectives of the Association – for example possibly employing a CEO for which funding over and above ordinary membership subscription income would be needed.

The SRTF further concluded that the cultivation of the ordinary membership should continue through the Annual Symposium, regular "behind the scenes" visits, and promotional advantages that could be developed.

Strategic review (cont)

The SRTF was firm in its resolve that the need for a representative Association still exists and the HAA was that association.

The SRTF concluded that the HAA needs to do a much better job of representing the best interests of the historic aircraft community.

The SRTF also concluded that the HAA needs to re-organise its committee and attract younger, active members on to the committee to energise its direction toward becoming the engineering and operational representative body that would truly promote and protect the interests of the philanthropic owners of historic aircraft.

Immediate Action Items

The SRTF recommended that action items of immediate priority were:

Arrange talks with the LAA Executive to explore the possibility of the HAA becoming a sub-set of the LAA.

Assist operators with preparation of their SSAC applications by preparing a template together with the CAA GAU.

Edinburgh University Air Squadron Association

‘Winkle’- One of the world’s greatest pilots.

A bid has been launched to commemorate one of the world’s greatest test pilots **Eric ‘Winkle’ Brown** near his boyhood home town of Edinburgh. The tribute to Winkle, who died last year aged 97, will involve:

A bronze statue of Winkle outside the main pedestrian entrance Edinburgh Airport, formerly RAF Turnhouse, where he learned to fly.

Providing some of today’s adventurous youngsters, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds, with the life-changing opportunity of learning to fly through Winkle Flying Scholarships.

Former pilots of Edinburgh University Air Squadron, are behind the move to raise £75,000 as a memorial to the man Desert Island Discs presenter Kirsty Young described as **“making James Bond look like a slacker”**.

<http://www.edinburghuas.com>



Historic Aircraft Association Annual Symposium

RAF Museum Hendon

Saturday Oct 28th 2017



Historic Aircraft in the Airshow World

- Epic Restoration -

DH-9 to the sky

- Flying Soldiers -

Army Historic Aircraft Flight

- Pilot's Perspective -

20 years of Air Displays

- Private Fighter -

One man and his Hunter

FlightSafety
international

WJE



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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