

# *Vintage & Classic*

The Journal of the Vintage Aircraft Club



[www.vintageaircraftclub.org.uk](http://www.vintageaircraftclub.org.uk) | Issue 63 | Autumn 2018



# The VAC Committee

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## VAC Committee

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## General Data Protection Regulation

In accordance with the new EU directive concerning Data Protection, the VAC committee have put together the VAC policy and set up a sub-committee to ensure all updates are made at regular intervals. A copy of the policy document can be found on our website.--

## Aim of the VAC

The aim of the Vintage Aircraft Club is to provide a focal body for owners, pilots and enthusiasts of vintage and classic aircraft by arranging fly-ins and other events for the benefit of its members. The Vintage Aircraft Club is a member Club of the Light Aircraft Association and supports the General Aviation Awareness Council.

## Disclaimer

"Vintage and Classic" is the quarterly journal of the Vintage Aircraft Club and as such is a privately produced magazine. The views contained within its pages do not necessarily reflect those of the Editor or the Vintage Aircraft Club. The magazine is free to members, but £5.00 when purchased separately.

Cover photo: John Dible's Foster Wikner Wicko GM1 is the sole survivor of eleven built. Tim Badham



## New members

- Tim Scorer of London
- Keith Williams of Solihull
- John Edwards of Shepperton
- David Ratcliffe of Fleet
- Anthony Milburn of Surbiton
- Mark Slater of Bedfordshire
- William Tollett of Oxford
- Lynn Allen of Silverstone
- Robert Mott of Banbury
- Jon Hartle of Droitwich Spa
- Lynn Williams of Aberdare
- Michael Souch of Southampton
- Edward Toulson of Wakefield
- Jack Bradley of Keighley
- Stephen Parsons of Tenterden
- Tom Harris of Leighton Buzzard
- Mike Lodge of Hailsham
- Rob Lamb of Northampton
- Ben Faulkner of Hampshire
- Anthony Milburn of Surbiton

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In the Summer issue we included the first part of David Beale's story about flying his Belfair to the Czech Republic, part 2 will appear in the Winter edition

# Letter from the Chair

It seems no time at all since my last letter when we were crossing our fingers for good flying weather and looking forward to attending summer events in the UK and abroad! Well aviators and air show attendees have enjoyed many wonderful flying days and evenings and VAC members have been able to attend many of the events to which we are invited.

On a personal level, I've been a little frustrated by the sight of our Prototype Beagle Pup tucked up in the corner of the hangar all season and I'm sure that frustration is felt by some of you who have ongoing projects. However a ride in the lovely Miles Magister at Brighton, with thanks to Charles Sunter, and a flight over Whitby in the Chipmunk KDN to see tall ships in the harbour soon put a smile on my face!

On your behalf I was invited by the RT Hon. Grant Shapps to attend the All Party Parliamentary Group reception at the House of Commons and was particularly pleased while there to be asked by the Aviation Minister, Baroness Sugg, to tell her about the VAC. No problem, and it was a real pleasure to show her the VAC merchandise and recruitment stall at the LAA Rally. She promised to read the VAC magazine on the train!

As you will read elsewhere, the LAA Rally was an amazing event, not only because it was ice cream weather, but also because of all the hard work put in by so many people to make it happen. Congratulations to the LAA organisers and a really big thank you to Cathy Silk and team who work hard on behalf of the club. We were really pleased to chat to you all as you passed by the VAC stall and to see the wonderful contribution you made on the



Whitby as seen from Chipmunk G-AKDN

airfield where the true diversity of the VAC fleet could be seen! A big welcome to all of you who made the decision to join the VAC at the Rally. You won't regret it!! It was the time of year too for the selection panel to get together to find a suitable recipient of this year's Liz Inwood Taildragger Scholarship. We had many very suitable candidates and difficult decisions to make as a result. Congratulations to Jon Hartle on receiving the 2018 award and we look forward to following his progress in training and meeting him at our events.

I am pleased to tell you that Steve recently spent an enjoyable afternoon with our President, David Ogilvy, at Aerospace Bristol. David has always been well published and is happy to share his aviation stories with us. We look forward to hearing more from him in the future.

As I write this the Committee is still making final preparations for the AGM in October and by now you will have been sent the details

of the business end of the day either in the post or by mail chimp. I am always keen that the AGM is an opportunity to meet socially as well so we are providing a light lunch, as we did last year, and hope to celebrate the RAF 100 with a collection of VAC aircraft in military colours! Please bring as many as you can! As 2019 is a time to celebrate fifty-five years of the VAC we are looking towards a Summer fly-in event as part of that celebration. We have plenty of ideas and suggestions for winter events and will keep you posted.

Thank you to Tim Badham for an excellently compiled and very readable first edition as the new Vintage and Classic editor. Thank you too to Trevor Jago from North Weald who does the lay-out for us. I am looking forward to seeing this issue when it arrives through the letter box!

Anne Hughes

# From the Editor

Feedback about the new style “Vintage & Classic” has been most encouraging and I thank you all for your comments about the Summer issue. The most popular article in that edition turned out to be “The Finmere Years”. Shortly after it was published I was contacted by Alan Chalkley, who asked if I might be interested in hearing about how the Club came into being. This was a dream come true as he had been involved right from the outset. Alan very kindly agreed to put some notes together about those initial years of the Club. Amazingly, he even found the original letter from Roy Mills that instigated the meeting at which the VAC (or Vintage Aircraft Group as it was

Tim Badham



Return of the unique Mercury to the UK shows the vibrancy of the vintage scene.

known for a while) was set up. This edition of “Vintage & Classic” includes an article based on conversations with Alan and his detailed notes. We now have a fascinating insight into why the Club was created and some idea of the challenges faced by that enlightened band of enthusiasts who made it happen.

I was delighted that Alan made the long trip across from his home in Wales to the LAA Rally at Sywell which enabled us to meet up. I had last met Alan when I took some air-to-air pictures of him flying his Comper Swift back in the 1980s – of course neither of us has changed a bit since then!

I plan to include further articles about the VAC's history in future editions, to not only remind us of our roots but also to reveal how much the Club has helped maintain people's interest in older aeroplanes and their operation. Copy for the next edition should reach the Editor by 14 December.

**Tim Badham**  
tim.badham@btinternet.com

## Liz Inwood Taildragger Scholarship awarded for 2018

In common with many other aviation organisations the VAC is aware of a rapidly widening age gap within the membership. In order for the club to thrive and survive we are aware that we need to encourage and attract younger members to share our enthusiasm for flying vintage aircraft. It is also important that we pass on the skills to fly these aircraft which typically have the older type of conventional undercarriage – the taildraggers. For this reason the Taildragger Scholarship was set up by the Liz Inwood Trust along with the VAC and we are pleased to make this annual award available to qualified pilots, under 36 years old, with 100hrs or more enabling them to train for up to 5 hours at a recognised flying school. Each year the selection panel will chose one pilot out of the many applicants. All the details of the scholarship are on the VAC website at [www.vintageaircraftclub.org.uk](http://www.vintageaircraftclub.org.uk)

Michael Niklos



Jon Hartle receives the Linwood award

The 2018 Liz Inwood Taildragger Scholarship has been awarded to Jon Hartle from Worcestershire. Jon who was nominated at the LAA Rally at Sywell, is the third recipient of the annual award which was set up in 2015 by the Liz Inwood Trust with the VAC in memory of Liz Inwood. Originally trained as an artist, Liz was a passionate aviatrix and flying instructor who amassed over 1000 hours of flying aircraft such as the de Havilland Tiger Moth and Hornet Moth. Liz was an inspiration to many fledgling pilots and was particularly enthusiastic about vintage flying. This year's scholarship was launched at the end of May and

applicants were required to have 100 hours PPL and to be 35 years old or younger. Jon Hartle has 130 hours and has already added a Night Rating and Instrument Rating to his license.

Jon says, “I am deeply honoured and privileged to be awarded the ‘Liz Inwood’ scholarship for 2018. Having been interested in aviation since a very early age, through my father working within the industry, the goal of becoming a pilot never left me and I gained my licence in 2015 at Wellesbourne airfield.

“I applied for the scholarship because I always wanted to fulfil my ambitions to the very best of my ability and to give back the things others have shown me. This scholarship is keeping alive the memory of Liz Inwood and to be able to keep that going, and to be able to showcase what it means, is truly special. The VAC is a wonder. ■

Anne Hughes



Roy Nerou sent his Chilton G-AFSV to the LAA Rally, seen here with the Mew Gulls

## VAC Events

Anne Hughes

You will see on our listings that many of our events in the Summer say “VAC Invited”. We are fortunate as a club to receive these invitations and they give you an opportunity to meet up with VAC members at an event that suits you. Next year we are holding two key Summer events for VAC members, one will be our 55th celebration fly-in and the other is to celebrate 50 years of the first flight of the Beagle Bulldog. We are also hoping, by choosing a later date, that some of you will be able to fly into Shuttleworth in April for our Dinner and Awards Evening and weekend event.

### VAC at the LAA Rally

We are fortunate to receive an invitation from the LAA Rally organisers to bring our merchandise and recruitment stall and also to have the opportunity to take over Speakers' Corner! The two hours allotted to the VAC on the last day of the Rally proved to be quite a challenge, particularly as the invitation was offered very close to the event. However, we were able to put on a continuous programme which included photos of vintage aircraft, with thanks to Colin and Gillian, and samples from our VAC film archive of the flying days at Finmere.

We were also fortunate to be able to interview Alfie Badminton who, at fourteen, is our youngest VAC member and is learning to fly at Bagby. Alfie's confidence with the microphone was an example to us all and I would particularly like to thank Alfie and his instructor father, Mark, for a fascinating contribution to the programme. We awarded Jon Hartle with the Liz Inwood Taildragger Scholarship – congratulations Jon – and Ed Hicks finally received the Tony Harold Memorial Picture. What can I say about the enthusiasm and dedication of Cathy Silk, Vron Tanner, David Phillips, Janet James, Stephanie

Gemini G-AKHP arrives at the LAA Rally

Peter March



Giles and many more of you who tirelessly welcomed all-comers to our stall? The stall itself is really just like the tip of an iceberg. Months of preparation go into planning the items that are on sale, which included this time sourcing and printing a copy of one of Jo Jurd's excellent cartoon pictures for a club T-shirt. Cathy also set out the stall in her hangar at home to make sure it would fit in the allotted area and the Thursday of the Rally saw her crew hauling boxes, bags and rails into the marquee to set up. Thank you! Many of you visited the stall to chat, renew memberships or to buy. Some of you arrived to join the VAC for the first time. The Minister of Aviation arrived to see what we get up to and to say hello, and others wanted to chat about aircraft, bring memorabilia or tell us about the beginnings of the VAC. All of you were most welcome!

## Autumn Fly-In Turweston

There is a good reason why we organise ground events alongside fly-ins! We didn't enjoy the best of weather days for our Autumn gathering but we were treated to a few very special aircraft that arrived including a real treat in seeing the immaculate Fox Moth with thanks to Mark Miller! The VAC stall set up in the hangar alongside Tim Crowe's bookstall so we had two opportunities to open our purses! Both did well and thanks again to Cathy Silk and crew for bringing the merchandise.

In the hangar Alan Turney set up the Sokol for the pre-flight competition and in the warmth of the LAA members lounge we enjoyed light refreshments with a viewing of Kath Burnham's photos of her work in India training pilots to fly the Dakota. That and our VAC competitions won by Alina Swietochowska and Steve Slater and the many VAC visitors who called in for a chat made for a

Anne Hughes



Paul Morton



Tim Badham



Founding member Alan Chalkley visiting the VAC at the Rally.

super day and thanks are due to Chris Brown and Turweston Flight

Centre for organising the fly-in. We look forward to seeing you back at Turweston on 28th October for our Spooky Stories! You can find details of our future events on the back page and you will be updated regularly through the mail chimp emails and on our website.

### E-mail VAC information and updates

If you have an email address but aren't receiving our updates on at least a bi-monthly basis it is very likely that we don't have your email address to contact you. In order to get the latest news, particularly about

Anne Hughes



The Sales area ready at the Turweston fly-in

Anne Hughes



events, please send your email address to our membership secretary, Stephanie Giles.

### VAC AGM 13th October 2018

After a very positive meeting in Wellesbourne we are pleased to say the Vintage

Aircraft Club Ltd has been dissolved and has now become the Vintage Aircraft Club. The vote was unanimous as was the vote to approve the new constitution. All the original committee were re-elected with the exception of John Broad who, owing to many other commitments, decided to stand down. The only administrative change you will notice is the change to our new bank account (see page 23).

We also selected the photos for our 2019 VAC Calendar. Among others the following aircraft are included: Dragonfly, Aireymouse, Sokol, Travelair, Bristol Scout and Pietenpol! We need to order a minimum of 100 calendars so please send your order to me by email or post – cost including postage £7.00. Delivery before Christmas.  
Anne Hughes (VAC Chair)

Ian Atherton



## Out and about in classic style

Members Ian and Jan Atherton have taken full advantage of this year's glorious weather to get out and about to several aircraft gatherings over the last few months.

Ian is one of the lucky chaps who get to fly the M1C Sokol (Falcon) G-AIXN, which is based at Turweston. So far this year Jan and Ian had several fun days out in the Sokol, including the Fenland Daffodil Rally, a Vintage Fly-In at Compton Abbas, and the

Ian Atherton



The Sokol also put in an appearance at Duxford



Ian and Jan's two aircraft at Enstone ready to depart for the LAA Rally

Wings & Wheels Event at Brighton in Yorkshire (near Burn GC where he first learned to fly gliders back in the late 1980s). The Sokol was also to be seen at the Bonus Day at Duxford. (We look forward to hearing more about this rarity in a future issue of *Vintage & Classic*.) Jan owns Jodel DR.200 G-AYDZ which is notable as the first (001) production prototype built by Robin after acquiring Jodel. Jan runs the Jodel UK website and ran a stall at the 2018 LAA Rally to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the initial flight of the first Jodel D.9 Bebe.

Thus it was rather fitting that the winner of The Wilkinson Sword (best Jodel) and the Malcolm Allan Trophy (most meritorious arrival by air) was the excellent Spanish registered D9 EC-ZCZ flown by owner/builder Jose Carlos Martinez Bauvdivo all the way from Portugal.

Jan and Ian flew to the Rally from Enstone but in separate aircraft – Jan in her beloved Jodel and Ian in his classic Fournier RF-4D G-BHJN. ■

Ian Atherton



This was the icing on the cake at Sywell!

Ian Atherton



The owner of this Jodel came a long way for the cakes!

# Princely Grasshopper flies again

It was rare to attend a VAC gathering at Finmere without seeing olive-drab coloured Aeronca G-BFAF in the circuit, taking yet another VAC member for a ride from its base. This was courtesy of its owner David Harper, who was a staunch supporter of the Club and spent a huge amount of time organising events as Rally Secretary and later as Chairman.

David had bought this lovely little observation aircraft from Chet Parham, who was serving with the USAF at nearby Upper Heyford. Chet airfreighted the aircraft to the UK for recreational flying and operated it on the US register as N797US.

This Aeronca became the subject of Royal attention when Wellesbourne was officially opened as a civil aerodrome on 13 March 1981. A little event was organised to celebrate the launch and the organisers invited HRH Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh to conduct the ceremony. This was approved and he duly flew in aboard a Royal Flight Andover.

Prior to unveiling a commemorative plaque, Prince Philip was to be introduced to dignitaries and those involved with the airfield project. Despite a round robin having gone out to aircraft owners and various flying clubs inviting them to witness the launch, perhaps due to it being a weekday, fewer visitors than hoped for turned up. So unexpectedly, we members of the VAC found ourselves being asked to join the line-up of people to be introduced to His Royal Highness!

David was proudly wearing his VAC badge on his flying suite and chatted about the Club then he invited Prince Philip to look over his Aeronca which he had brought over from Finmere. The Prince seemed suitably impressed

Paul Morton



G-BFAF restored and now active again

Dave Hudson



Dave Harper flying G-BFAF off the Finmere runway in 1979

Cartoon by Jo Jurd



HRH approved of Dave's machine

- of course he knew his stuff when it came light aircraft, having once flown a Turbulent with the Tiger Club. Following that memorable event the Club's cartoonist Jo Jurd produced a wonderful drawing recording David's Royal appointment!

Some years later when G-BFAF needed inspection and attention, some work was completed but it never flew again in David's

ownership. His interests had shifted towards historic military vehicles he also owned and took to displays. The Aeronca became hangar bound at Finmere for decades.

This year has seen a change of fortune, as its new owner Dave Crompton has rescued G-BFAF and restored it to flight. It is now resplendent in U.S. Army Korean war scheme. Built in 1947 and allocated serial 47-797, it served as an L-16A "Grasshopper" during that conflict. It is now reportedly based at Abbots Bromley and was recently noted by Paul Morton visiting Otherton airfield in Staffordshire. It would surely receive a great welcome if it were brought to a future VAC gathering. ■

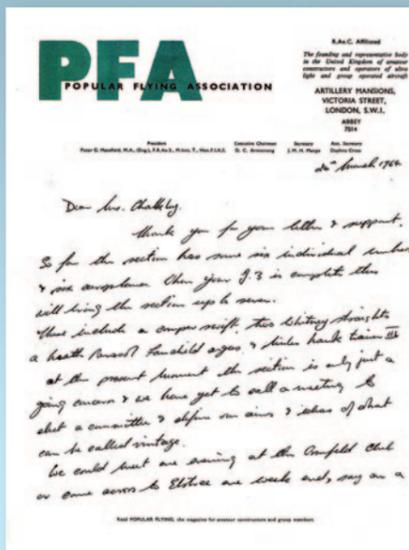
# How it all began

We discover from Alan Chalkley the origins of the VAG

During the 1950s British light aviation was reasserting itself in the aftermath of the war. Old civil aeroplanes freshly released from impressed military use, plus other pre-war machines that had simply been stored away, were back in private hands. In addition, Clubs were using former military trainers, AOP and communication types such as Proctors, Messengers, Austers, Argus and numerous Magisters / Hawk Trainers and Tiger Moths. New designs or versions of existing types also emerged, from the likes of the Miles, Percival and Auster stables.

However, by the mid-1960s the restraints and austerity of the immediate post-war period was less evident and British light aviation scene was in a state of transition. Concerns had been raised about the integrity of the bonding in some older wooden aeroplanes and costly inspections were deemed necessary. It was however possible to purchase new and very capable metal aeroplanes, many of them emanating from the U.S.A. This, along with a general desire for modernity and speed, didn't bode

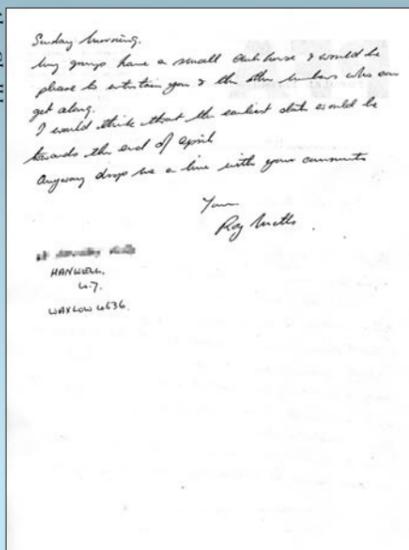
Alan Chalkley



This letter from Roy Mills initiated the VAC

well for the survival of those older aeroplanes. Thankfully, in some quarters there was a passion to make sure this country's aviation heritage was not lost. One person determined to do something about this was Roy Mills. In 1964 he convened a meeting of like-minded folk and this was the genesis of Vintage Aircraft Club. Alan Chalkley was involved in the VAC inaugural meeting and remains a member to this day. It

Alan Chalkley



was good to catch up with him at this year's LAA Rally and find out first hand how the Vintage Aircraft Club came into being. Alan soloed in the RAF on the Prentice and trained further in America on the Harvard. He flew F-84 Thunderjets with the USAF before being posted to an RAF F-86 Sabre squadron in Germany. He later joined B.O.A.C. and was flying VC-10s by the time he became a committee member of the Vintage Aircraft Group (now the Vintage Aircraft Club).

This Argus was operated by the MPM Group. it is now displayed at Cosford.

Dave Hudson



Alan Chalkley



Members pose in front of a Tiger with the Vintage Aircraft Group banner

Alan now shares with us how the V.A.C. came into being and gives an insight into the early days of the Club, some of the challenges faced and fun that they had.

...

"...Precious aviation heritage was threatened...a vintage aircraft club must be set up!"

Sunday 16 April of 1964 turned out to be a bright day – not just because the weather was sunny, but also because twelve people met together and set up the Vintage Aircraft Club!

Back then Roy Mills was Secretary of the Popular Flying Association. His "day" job was at Glaxo Pharmaceutical Labs, but he conducted his PFA role from nearby Elstree airfield where Pooleys let him use a spare office. Roy was also a Trustee of the MPM Flying Group which operated Fairchild Argus G-AIZE and Hawk Trainer G-AKKR. He had become increasingly concerned that vintage aircraft were in jeopardy in the wake of the adoption of newly developed types. He decided something needed to be done so he contacted like-minded owners of classic aircraft and others with an interest in aircraft preservation. He organised a meeting for that Sunday at Elstree and a dozen folk turned up. Tom Hayes in a Chilton racer and Alan Chalkley in a Chipmunk both arrived by air. Rex Coates (at that time a BEA Engineer) arrived by road, as did

Miles Magister-owner Terry Jones. Ted Wilkinson (an Elstree local) was there and John Owen came down from the Midlands Preservation Group. Finally, half a dozen members of the Northern Aircraft Preservation Society turned up en bloc.

A genial Roy Mills galvanised everyone into action by stressing that "our" precious aviation heritage was being threatened by the modern and exciting advances in jet-propelled travel and public attention on speed records. Only a few years earlier Peter Twiss had attained the World air Speed Record in the Fairey Delta at 1132 m.p.h.! The British aviation scene was buoyant at the expense of older aircraft. Indeed, two obsolete Dragon Rapides had just been burnt to ashes to free up hangar space. It was vital that something be done and everyone there agreed that a "Vintage Aircraft Club" should be set up. The conundrum was just what did constitute a "vintage" aeroplane? After some debate it was determined that any aeroplane built during or before 1939 (25 years old in 1964) would qualify. Alan suggested this definition be extended to include aircraft designed before 1939, even if they were constructed later. Alan was pleased his amendment was accepted as he recalls: "I had just purchased a Piper J3 Cub built in 1947 but designed in 1937". (Cub G-ASPS

was kept by Alan up until four years ago and is now operated by Steve Slater.)

To move matters forward roles were assigned. Roy offered to become Chairman – but due to his PFA load would have no time to be an "active" Chairman! His offer was gratefully accepted.

Two Secretaries were appointed, John Owen for Midlands and the North and Alan for the Southern area. Terry Jones became Treasurer and Rex Coates volunteered to be Rally Organiser. Ted Wilkinson was Royal

Aeronautical Society representative. The Northern Aircraft Preservation Society members declared that they were determined to visit hangars at airfields to rescue abandoned "vintage" aircraft and transport them to their own "home-made" storage facilities. That meant they sometimes cut off wings to facilitate transport or storage, but in the belief that expert engineers or craftsmen could restore them to "as new" condition" at some future date.

The next quandary was whether the organisation should be a Club or a Group? Then Roy Mills "dropped a bombshell"! He reminded everyone that all or most of the aircraft we were anxious to save were "factory built" and therefore not eligible for the issue of a Permit to Fly by the P.F.A. After we all absorbed this bleak fact, Roy proposed a solution. There was a clause in the P.F.A. constitution rules that a group (consisting of at least 20 members) could be set up to allow all "Group members" who owned vintage aircraft to have them inspected by P.F.A. inspectors.

Apparently, the Air Registration Board (foregoing authority to the C.A.A.) had ruled that all wooden aircraft assembled with Casein glue must be completely stripped and dismantled then re-glued with Epoxy-resin (Aero-Dux etc). This applied to all Miles and Percival aircraft and was clearly

an impossible task as the Casein glues were extremely strong. Fortunately, the P.F.A. had received a dispensation to have their wooden aircraft inspected by P.F.A. approved inspectors to ensure the Casein glued airframes were still airworthy. Hence the Vintage Aircraft Group was born thanks to our founder Roy Mills!

## The first VAG fly-ins

The first two fly-ins, in the Summer of 1964, were organised at Denham and Blackbushe, plus a third at Halfpenny Green. Alan explains that:

"Alas my work with B.O.A.C. kept me away from all of them. However, I was able to make the fly-in at to the U.S.A.F. Open day at Lakenheath air-base. Rex Coates and I flew there in my newly overhauled Piper J3 Cub G-ASPS and we arrived at the agreed time 12.00hrs. Also, there were Luton Minor G-AFIR and Ernie Lingard from Boston, Lincs. The air show began at 13.00hrs with two huge USAF B-29 bombers arriving overhead and a simulated bombing raid on the airfield as pyrotechnic "explosions" erupted on the field below the B-29s. It was just like a movie set! But the whole show was interrupted by a low-flying a rather tatty Topsy Belfair belonging to one of our members doing a "beat-up" at low level! Needless to say, we were no longer welcome and we all made a hasty departure and were never invited again."

"The miscreant pilot in the Belfair was immediately "sacked" from the V.A.G., but his behaviour did place an unfortunate highlight on a small proportion of the then 70 members. They enjoyed low flying and "showing off". The message wasn't lost on our resourceful Rally Organiser Rex Coates, who devised the popular "South Coast Barnstorm". All V.A.G. were invited to Shoreham Airport. When all were assembled, Rex briefed them for a handicap race to Portsmouth aerodrome (i.e. slowest away first and fastest last).

Dave Hudson



Alan's Cub at Lakenheath in May 1965

Tim Badham



Robinson Redwing G-ABNX was flown a VAG meets by John Potheary

All the low-level addicts could take the sea route around the coast past Selsey Bill, thence to the old Portsmouth aerodrome at Thorney Island for cream and strawberry teas."

"Meanwhile, myself and Rex in the Cub plus fellow airline pilot John Potheary flying his Robinson Redwing G-ABNX, flew at 2000 ft. or higher direct to Portsmouth and re-joining all the others tucking in to their cream teas. Always a memorable afternoon, the "South Coast Barnstorm" was a very popular event but ended in 1967 when Portsmouth aerodrome was closed. By then, led by Ernie Lingard (who flew a Topsy Trainer G-AFVN) and his fellow pilots from Boston had discovered Long Mountain airfield at Welshpool. (This was long before Welshpool airport had been built 8 miles to the West of Long Mountain on the Lowlands of the River Severn).

At Long Mountain the V.A.C. (by now a Club) had its first "Summer Camp" weekend. The airfield,

owned by John DeQuincey, was operated by the Montgomeryshire Ultra Light Flying Club, whose Chairman and C.F.I. Claude Millington owned and flew Tiger Moth G-ANJK. We were all made very welcome by the Club. Most had tents but those with transport travelled to a hotel in Welshpool. By the Winter of 1966-67 the Vintage Aircraft Club had settled down for a successful and enjoyable year ahead. We had gained nearly 200 members (including Harold Boulton, designer of the iconic Handley Page HP.42 airliner. We had also managed to eject the habitual low-flying fraternity.

At the P.F.A. A.G.M. in 1965 Roy Mills was voted in as its new Chairman. He offered the unofficial job of the V.A.C. Chairman to me and I accepted, together with Raymond Blain and Rex Coates we produced a quarterly "Vintage News" magazine, printed on foolscap sized paper with photographs on engineers "blue-print" paper. The first edition included the shape and

Tim Badham



Moth Minor Coupe G-AFNI with the VAG at Halfpenny Green in April 1965

dimensions of the V.A.C. logo. It consisted of a red "V" and yellow "wings", cut from red and yellow "Fablon" to stick on the fins of our aircraft. (There were no plastic decals or transfers in those days, but the logo is still in use today.)

## The Blackbushe fiasco

At an indoor meeting just prior to Christmas 1966 the Committee decided that a visual record of some of our aircraft taking off and landing was needed. It was decided to hold the event at Blackbushe Airport. As one of the owners of a cine camera and with my own J3 Cub hangared at Wycombe Air Park (formerly RAF Booker) I volunteered my services as cameraman.

The meeting was convened on a sunny Sunday in April 1967 and twelve vintage aircraft took part. They were all briefed by the Airport Manager and Air Traffic Controller. They stipulated the runway in use and emphasised the importance of minimum height of 1500 ft. downwind over the new village of Yateley, some of whose

residents were campaigning to have this old airport closed. So, promptly at 13.00 hrs. I set my camera tripod up adjacent to the active runway and was able to take "action" pictures of each vintage aircraft taking off and landing.

Just as the last of the twelve vintage aircraft landed, a little yellow aeroplane appeared, completely unannounced, low-flying over Yateley village and apparently bobbing up and down over the houses! It was only when it landed that we saw that it was a brand new Druine Turbulent. Its proud owner and builder's name was "Colin". Then he took off and presumably flew home.

It was the following Wednesday, when the local newspaper was published, that we realised the damage that the little yellow aeroplane had done to our Group. "It was like the blitz" one householder complained to the journalist. "We were being dive-bombed". My solicitor, who was also a keen pilot, telephoned me that evening. "I don't like the look

of this low-flying incident – it will lead to more serious matters. You are due for your Command Course on the VC-10 next year and I advise you to relinquish your Chairmanship of the Vintage Aircraft Group as soon as possible and advise all your members who were at Blackbushe last Sunday and may be contacted by the Police, to ensure that they do not make a statement unless accompanied by their own solicitor!"

"I therefore convened an Extraordinary General Meeting at Cranfield, which was attended by many dedicated P.F.A. members. Bill Woodhams was elected as the new Chairman after a very close fought debate between both Rex Coates and Bill. I took no part in the vote."

## Onwards and upwards

"Bill Woodhams proved to be a very pro-active Chairman and soon co-opted his close friends Carl Butler and artist and pilot Tony Harold. Tony took over the task of producing and printing the quarterly V.A.G. magazine and retained the "V" winged original logo."

"Changes were also being made in P.F.A. engineering and thanks to Bill Woodhams and Carl Butler (both highly qualified engineers) the P.F.A. allowed all British factory-built vintage aircraft to be issued with P.F.A. Permits to Fly and inspected by P.F.A.-approved inspectors. Thus, Bill Woodhams changed our name back to the "Vintage Aircraft Club" in 1968." ■

Magister G-AKKR was another MPM Group mount.

Dave Hudson



# Certifying the Auster 9

Bill Fisher

Bill Fisher



WZ672 was purchased by F&H from RAE Bedford and was the first to obtain a MAOA Permit to Fly. It was sold to Ken Ecclestone who took it to the United States in 1986.

The Auster 9 was the first “new” military design from Rearsby to go into series production and when declared surplus did not benefit from the work carried out to certify the earlier models. Furthermore because of the limited number released, and the financial problems at BEAGLE, factory assistance was not available. The first batch of Mk. 9’s to be sold appear to have been purchased by “Dizzy” Addicote, a Vickers Test Pilot on the VC-10 and display pilot on a number of aircraft, including “Sally B” and the B-25. They were sold on, some not getting registered but XN437 was registered as G-AXWA to Thomas Platt of Oldham in January 1970 and G-AXVY, the former XK417

and G-AYUA the former XK416 were both registered to Gordon B.E. Pearce, later known as Jim Pearce who imported a number of WW II wrecks from Russia and is responsible the EP-9 now displayed in the Museum of Army Flying, although neither obtained a Permit to Fly at that time. Slightly earlier WZ711 had been registered as G-AVHT to Mike Somerton-Rayner, then based at Middle Wallop and to later become Commandant of the Army Historic Aircraft Flight. He had been attending Tiger Club events for same time in AAC Mk. 9’s, usually XR240 or XR241 but brought ‘VHT’ still fitted with its Bombardier until converting it to take a Lycoming, as a Beagle E.3 look alike. He also entered XR241 into the England -

Australia Air Race as the official Army entry. It was registered as G-AXRR to facilitate flight over territory where having a fully military Auster could prove a problem and after the race it was returned to Army service. Mike had worked closely with the then A.R.B. and persuaded them that the Auster 9 was an unsuitable type to enter private ownership. The AAC had believed the type had a wing drop problem on landing and as a result Les Leatham, then the Auster test pilot went down to Middle Wallop to test fly the aircraft which were claimed give the biggest problem. Having found no issues he then had a sandbag tied to the top of the lift strut and demonstrated that it could be landed without the

Bill Fisher



Many issued to ATC units were vandalised. F. And H. (Aircraft) Ltd. bought two, providing wheels, brakes, undercarriage liquid springs and tail wheel assemblies. Although delivered without an engine they had come with a serviceable prop!

wing dropping. He left advising the type did not have a problem but the training of the instructors needed to be looked at! Surplus Mk. 9 were issued to A.T.C. Units, usually to be parked outside only to be vandalised, and it was not until 1975 that further Mk. 9’s were offered for sale by tender. These were XP280, XR240 and XR269 located at RAF St. Athan and WZ672 at RAE Bedford. By this time Arthur Heath and I had rebuilt the Beagle Mark Eleven G-ASCC and as a result, had met up with John Lees, an ex Inspector at Austers and Beagle, who had performed more than 50% of all the flights recorded in ‘SCC’s Journey Log Book. I had seen an Auster 9 visiting Biggin Hill is about 1965 and mentally put it on my wish list. Two of the earlier disposals, by then looking very tired, had been stored in the blast pen where the County Flying Club clubhouse was situated and we had been discussing civilianising the Mk. 9 with the A.R.B. The situation regarding operating ex military aircraft was far different 40 years ago and those which were operating needed a

degree of manufacturer’s support, which was why it was only the Hurricane G-AMAU owned by Hawkers, Spitfire G-AISU owned by Vickers and the Spitfire T.8 G-AIDN operated by the Hampshire Aeroplane Club (where Viv Bellamy was married to a member of the Fairey family) that would appear at flying events. The matter was, however, being disputed and a number of people with a warbird interest had formed the Military Aircraft Owners Association to press their case. They included Doug Bianchi, Doug Arnold and Arthur Heath, then Technical Director of Field Aircraft Services and the Chief Engineer on Lancaster G-ASXX maintenance. This pressure resulted in the A.R.B. deciding to look at a special Permit to Fly specifically for ex military aircraft, which would allow 25 flying hours per year and required a Certificate of Safety for Flight to be signed which would have a validity of 5 hours or 7 days. As far as the Auster 9 was concerned, however, they were still taking the advice of Mike Somerton-Rayner, who had had to

incur the expense of replacing the engine in G-AVHT. Arthur was concerned that upsetting the A.R.B. could have repercussions with his licence (apart from anything he was at the time the most highly licensed engineer in the UK) and I had a reputation for being a very difficult person to deal with, having made flight with Lancaster G-ASXX although the A.R.B. had declared they would never happen. We agreed however to press our case, with Arthur giving me the ammunition and me despatching a missile at what became the C.A.A. Arthur believed that at some stage they would either relent or shoot themselves in the foot. Eventually, with each case being countered with a response as to other similar situations, the matter came down to two issues: the lack of Bombardier spares, where we responded that if grounded because we did not have a suitable engine spare was not an airworthiness issue and the fact that the magneto was a duplex magneto, having the two magnetos married together, with a single drive. I asked the C.A.A. to explain these concerns, in detail, in a letter, which they duly did. A letter duly arrived stating that aircraft where the magneto had a single drive, which if it failed would cut off both mags, was unsafe and could not be operated in the UK. “GOT THEM” was Arthur’s reaction as he knew that DC-6s, then still being operated on Commercial Air Transport for the holiday industry had Duplex mags. A letter was therefore despatched to my M.P., enclosing a copy of the C.A.A. letter and asking that, in view of the major safety issues detailed in the letter, all aircraft fitted with duplex magnetos should be grounded. It was not long before I received a phone call from Gatwick, explaining all the problems were due to my having applied for the wrong sort of Permit and we should have

applied for a Military Aircraft Permit – although at the time none had actually been issued.

As F. and H. (Aircraft) Ltd., Arthur and I had purchased XR240 and XR269 and also the aircraft at Bedford. I only wanted one of the three at St. Athan and knew that Leicestershire Museum wanted one, but suspected there would not be a lot of interest, so offered a low bid on whichever Leicester did not get. Both had to be collected from St. Athan by road, with XR240 being registered as G-BDFH and taken to Sibson, our overflow airfield for the Chipmunks being purchased and XR269 being taken to Duxford which was then being developed as a historic aircraft airfield by the Imperial War Museum. WZ672 was registered as G-BDER and, because it was in flying condition, we requested a Permit to move it to Sibson.

Although I was not particularly liked at Gatwick, relations with the Luton Office were far better, because they had worked with Bill Bowker on the Farm Aviation aircraft and knew the Bill was working on the Chipmunks we purchased. Consequently I received a call, saying that the Luton office had been asked to issue the Permit recommendation and because Doug Webb lived not far from RAE Bedford, could he do it on Friday as he hoped it would give him an extended weekend. On arrival at RAE he was shown round the fleet, offered a cup of tea, shown the log books then given lunch and treated extremely well – except he had not seen the aircraft! When pressing he was eventually told that because they had a desperate need, although sold, RAE had decided to take WZ672 down to Farnborough, because it was so much quicker than going by road. Military aircraft are not struck off charge until removed from Ministry property so, although paid for, it was still on charge to the RAE. They also admitted that

they had had to play the numbers game with the Treasury as they needed a BAC1-11 and the Treasury would not allow them to increase their complement of aircraft. As a result they sold the Mk. 9, bought a 1-11 from Court Line for rather more money and all air taxi flights thereafter had to be done with a 125, because although they allowed the Mk. 9 to be flown by pilots with a PPL, that was not possible with the 125. Don't worry, it was only our money that was being wasted. Eventually WZ672 returned from Farnborough, the crew confirmed it had no defects, because it never had defects and the surveyor got home, having missed out on his short day. On the Monday he phoned me to say that, whilst having nothing to do at Bedford, he had read all the maintenance records and studied in detail the conditions for the new Permit. He explained that it would only be for 25 hours flying and that it had to be maintained in accordance with the Military schedule – which I already knew. He then went on to say that the aircraft had more than 25 hours remaining until its next check, and as that was the case he was going to recommend the issue of a full permit, but we had to remove the military marking, RAE having already painted over "Aero Flight Bedford" on the cowlings. I explained that a dispensation not to display a civil registration had been issued – so we were ready to go flying.

At that time I was a member of the International Auster Pilots Club, whose members included Graham Kilsby (later to make his name in the US as Tony Graham) and he organized an Auster Fly-In at Weston-Super-Mare. As we wanted to attend I had to apply for an exemption from the 5 hour rule. Of course I was asked why and I explained that with a head wind, if Arthur issued a certificate at Sibson before take-off he would then have to go to Kidlington on his way home to meet the aircraft,

because we could not guarantee getting back to Sibson within the 5 hour limit. Common sense then prevailed and the 5 hour limit was removed for all types.

XR269 was sold to Adrian Tuttle and Carl Tyers, who traded in their Autocrat G-AJDW and owners of other Mk. 9's began to undertake rebuilds. The fabric on WZ672 was in very poor condition and it was eventually sold to Ken Ecclestone, who took it to the United States where it was registered N803KB and we started work on XR240. The engine had been inhibited numerous times and vast amounts of inhibiting grease had to be removed from the induction system however we eventually got it to start, although it laid smoke like a Destroyer for about an hour of ground running, before settling down. The other issue with the engine was that it had been bought surplus in a packing case, without a log book. Although it looked to be a very low time engine its hours were unknown. The military life was 800 hours; so as it could be run on condition I tried to suggest that we should start a log book at 1,000 hours, but this was not accepted. Instead I was told to start it as unknown so all subsequent flying hours became hours since unknown, but it never let us down. With the first M.A.O.A. Permit having been issued, other owners of military aircraft began to apply and different surveyors had different ideas. Some asked for the aileron droop to be deleted for example, whilst this was retained on both G-BDER and G-BDFH. Each had a different reason why certain parts of the Permit did not work for them and, with changes of staff at Gatwick and different attitudes by surveyors we eventually reached the position that we have today. ■

Via John Coker



## Reading Flying Group 50th Anniversary John Coker

**O**f all the aircraft which have attended VAC gatherings over the years, the one which has probably visited events more frequently than any other is Tiger Moth G-ANFM. When the VAC was "based" at Finmere this yellow and silver Tiger was regularly flown across from its then Booker base by various VAC members including Arthur Brook and more often by Tony Harold. Tony occasionally delighted onlookers with a session of aerobatics! G-ANFM also featured amongst the subjects drawn by the VAC's cartoonist, the late Jo Jurd.

This ubiquitous Tiger is operated by the Reading Flying Group which is enjoying a special anniversary this year, as described by their Chairman John Coker. On the first of August 1968 at Wycombe airfield Ted Lay brought together a number of pilots who, enjoyed flying Tiger Moths, ten shares of £100 each were on offer to purchase Tiger Moth G-ANFM. Eight shares were taken up, two were held by Ted and the Reading Flying Group was

Drawing by Jo Jurd



Jo Jurd's evocative drawing of 'FM' departing Finmere in 1981

formed. By 1970 all the shares had been purchased and in 1973 the group was expanded to 12 equal shares. Initial subs. were £2.50 a month and the flying rate £4.0 per hour wet. Now 50 years on advancing years prevent Ted flying, but he is still our Hon. President and the group is still very active with the same aeroplane operating out of White Waltham airfield and flying up to 150hrs/year. We often wonder if a syndicate operation for 50 years with the same aeroplane is a record, it must surely come close.

The RFG has always been an active group, taking part in most events involving DH Moths and other vintage aircraft. When the RFG was formed "FM" was still wearing the colours of "Thunderbird Six" having recently been used in the full length "Thunderbirds" cinema film in which she was flown by the late ATA. pilot Joan Hughes. "The Awakening of Emily" (later just called "Emily") followed in which the late Neil Williams did a very accomplished aerobatic sequence in her. More recently she appeared briefly in "The Kings Speech".

"FM" has long been a member of the Diamond Nine, now of course "The Tiger Nine" display team and will continue in that role on her return from current maintenance work. She attended nearly all of the Woburn Abbey weekends as well as most of the DHMC events and many Vintage Aircraft Club events since the formation of that Club. Participation in these events along with private trips have taken her all over the UK as well as several trips to Europe for displays and DHMC/VAC touring events. Over the years she has

made five trips to the Bex airshow in Switzerland where in 1980 she won overall prize.

Inevitably over the years members have come and gone, many going on to own their own Tiger Moths and continue flying in "The Tiger Nine". Those of us still fortunate enough to be flying "FM" are well aware of the care and diligence of former members such as Len Mitton who flew "FM" for 49 years and guided and protected both the group and the aeroplane so well. We must also acknowledge the invaluable work of the late

Ben Borsberry who rebuilt and maintained "FM" for many of her years with RFG. Ben kindly passed on much of his experience to enable current members to carry out a lot of the maintenance now permitted under LAA certification and he is sadly missed.

RFG has been a most enjoyable and successful operation for the last 50 years. We all hope that we can continue to pass on vintage flying skills and preserve our piece of history for decades to come. ■

# Scottish field of play

Nigel Hitchman

*It's not every day that you get to land on a football pitch – but when it's on an old WWI aerodrome, things become even more interesting! Nigel shares with us his flying adventure during August from Hinton to some interesting sites in Scotland:*

I had planned a 3-day trip to Scotland for a couple of fly-ins and to see the sights, also stopping off to meet up with friends at Eshott on the way. I needed to be back Sunday evening, to go to work on the bank holiday Monday, so a good eye was kept on the weather. However, the weather had other ideas, so it was all done as a day trip. Hinton direct to Perth, meeting up there with my friends from Eshott for breakfast, then to the Montrose fly-in, a quick stop at Glenrothes for fuel, then to the other side of Scotland for a fly-in at Glenforsa on the Isle of Mull, then home via a quick stop at Kirkbride and flight through the Lake District. At Montrose the fly-in was on the current day football pitches on



*Hawk Major G-ADMW carries the colours into which was impressed for military use.*

the old Montrose Air Station which were opened up for the day. Montrose was the first operational military airfield in the UK opened in 1913 with no2 squadron Royal Flying Corps. (presumably the previous airfields used by RFC aircraft were not military airfields, which is why Montrose was the first.) Great that the locals opened up the playing fields on the old Air Station and made a runway so we

could land there. What great thinking and organisation, where I'm sure many places would say it's too difficult and have an army of lawyers and bureaucrats putting obstacles in the way. The airfield was busy all day with visitors from flex-wings and autogyros to a good variety of home-builts and even a vintage Stinson 108. Montrose Air Station Heritage center was open with their



Nigel Hitchman

*Nigel achieved his ambitious day trip by using his personal rocket ship!*



Nigel Hitchman

*Montrose was already an airfield by the start of WWI so this visitor was rather appropriate.*

excellent expanding display, the highlight being G-ADMW/DG590 Miles Hawk Major which they recently acquired from the RAF museum, it had been in storage for the last 50 plus years except a brief appearance in the Army Air Corps museum at Middle Wallop.

They have also recently acquired the Anson which was kept for spares by Air Atlantique. Perth airfield is always a hive of activity, by far the busiest GA airfield in Scotland with a great variety of microlights and homebuilts together with a few

vintage machines and some more modern training aircraft. The CASA Jungmann, G-CGTX is based at Archerfield near East Fortune and had intended going to Montrose but the crosswind was too much at the time he was there, so wisely diverted to Perth to refuel. The Luton Minor G-ATCJ was first registered in 1965 and seems to have first flown in 1975 built by RM Sharphouse in Yorkshire, it spent its initial years at Bagby and then was sold all around the country, but never appeared at many fly-ins. Moving north to Scotland in 2006, its been out of permit since 2009 and now with its third Scottish owner Sandy Hutton, is ready to fly again. Mull is a great airfield to visit, with the hotel on site and spectacular scenery all around. On previous trips to here I've flown around the Island and also gone off to Plockton and Skye and there are plenty of other places to visit. This time it was just a quick stop to see what was there for the fly-in, take in a bit of scenery and then head south ahead of the weather. The Stearman is based here during the summer living outside (used to be owned by Dave Gilmour of Pink Floyd, but that may have changed years ago!) Quite a trip 6hrs 20 minutes flying in my Vans RV-6, I think around 850nm covered and some great sights seen! ■



Nigel Hitchman

*This immaculate Luton Minor greeted Nigel at Perth*

G-AFPN showing its graceful lines, about to land Shobdon's broad runway

Swift departing to Hinton

Tim Badham



# Not all Moths are biplanes

Dave Edwards

By 1936 De Havilland could see the writing on the wall for biplanes. Most of the competition were producing monoplanes, and indeed the RAF were introducing the Hurricane and Spitfire. So Sir Geoffrey instructed his young team of designers to come up with a modern training machine to provide ab initio flight experience for budding fighter pilots. They came up with the sleek and beautiful from any angle DH 94 Moth Minor.

The prototype first flew in 1937, but on a spinning exercise with Geoffrey junior and John Cunningham on board the aircraft refused to come out of a spin, the pilots elected to bale out, and the prototype ended up as a pile of wreckage. Amazingly, presumably because it crashed near Hatfield, the bits were gathered up and rebuilt, re numbered and sold to Australia. Last I heard of it, it is about to be rebuilt, yet again, in New Zealand, in the Bay of Plenty. The spinning incident delayed production until 1939, during which year nearly 100 DH 94s were built. The aircraft proved popular with flying clubs, whose members appreciated a modern looking aeroplane with good performance and a reasonable price of £575.

Tim Badham



The wings of a Minor can conveniently be folded. This airworthy example flies in New Zealand.

With the outbreak of war in September '39, all unfinished airframes, jigs and tooling were sent to De Havilland Australia, at Bankstown Airfield, where a further 40 were built. I first came across G-AFPN s/n 94016 in 2008, when it flew into Shobdon for its annual from Welshpool. It was owned and operated by Bob Jones and Tony Maitland. Being instantly attracted to this lovely machine I had to find out more about it and what an interesting story it had to tell. Built in May of '39, its first owner was Leonard Halcomb, he kept it at Firbeck Hall Country Club, on the attached airfield built under the direction of Capt. Tom Campbell-Black, but by February '40 it was taken on charge by the

RAF, and given the s/n X9297. From 20 MU Aston Down it was issued to the Air Gunnery School at RAF Stormy Down near Porthcawl, then to it's home for the rest of the war, No. 1 Empire Air Armament School at RAF Manby. Its many duties there included air experience flights, communications hack and training. It was also given to John "Cats Eyes" Cunningham, for him to fly around the night fighter bases during the day, to boost moral. After a fairly hectic war 'PN must have been looking forward to a more peaceful time, but not a bit of it. She was totally rebuilt and in 1951 sold to Don Robertson. Don was a pioneer of aviation in Alaska during the late 1920s, where, flying for his uncle's flight company, he opened up routes to small

Tim Badham



The Minor has a massive perforated air brake

Tim Badham



The wing aspect ratio is seen to advantage in this view.

Tim Badham



The aircraft is usually flown from the front seat.

Tim Badham



It carries its old military serial to honour its wartime use and also carries a typical pre-war style CofA emblem.

settlements, to improve the lot of prospectors and trappers alike. Eventually taking up his country's call to bear arms at the start of the war, he joined the Royal Navy as a test pilot, under Eric "Winkle"

Brown, giving exemplary service throughout the war.

Don was a member of the Royal Aero Club, and raced 'PN as "Race 20", for ten years, winning the 1953 Grosvenor Challenge Trophy at Southend, where he came third the next day in the Kings Cup. All 'this proved a bit much for 'PN, as on the way home the engine lost oil pressure and Don was forced to land at Gravesend which was rapidly becoming a housing estate, thus becoming the last light aircraft to ever use that airfield. For more about Don, the Moth and several other machines, read his excellent book, "Those Magnificent Flying Machines: A Pilots Autobiography". By 1976 'PN was living in the Strathallan Aircraft Museum, owned by Sir William Roberts, where she ventured into the air for various displays. Sold from there in 1986, she passed through several owners to end up at Welshpool. Following the untimely demise of

Tim Badham



The wooden construction is evident in this example being restored in New Zealand

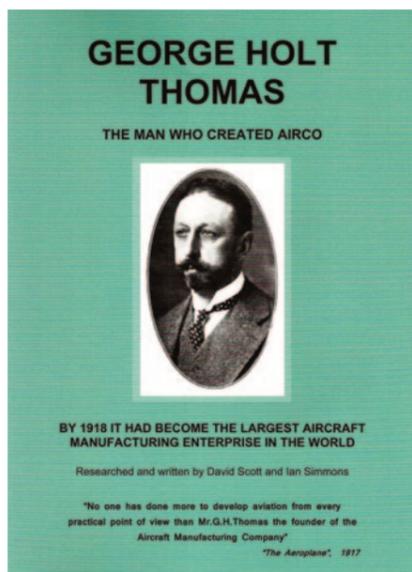
Bob Jones, I approached Tony Maitland in 2012, to see if I could acquire Bob's share of the Moth, and he agreed I could. So now I am the proud part owner of a rare aircraft, 'PN is the only airworthy Moth Minor in the northern hemisphere, there are two in Australia and one in New Zealand. (There is also one in the USA – recently sold by the CAF to a private owner for restoration. Ed.) She is a delight to fly, 100 mph cruise at 2,200 rpm on 90hp, is the sort of performance you expect from much younger machines, not bad for an aeroplane that is eighty years old next year. She is rubbish to land in a crosswind on a tarmac runway, there are brakes but they are the original De Havilland ones, so long may we remain ground loop free, on the grass at Shobdon! ■

# George Holt Thomas – The Man Who Created Airco

By David Scott and Ian Simmons

Boarding pass in the pocket; security checks done and a wait in the departure lounge at Heathrow and we are ready for a trans-Atlantic flight in a Dreamliner, expecting to arrive at our destination in time for dinner! We may have spent less than a month's wages and know that millions of fellow passengers will be in the air, across the globe, at the same time. The 21st century traveller does this with a certain nonchalance, more concerned about in-flight catering than anything else.

Over a hundred years ago, George Holt Thomas, a man of vision and determination, peeped through the curtains of the earliest days of aviation and saw the future would be in commercial aviation. He was born in 1870 and ventured from the world of publishing to found the largest aircraft engineering and manufacturing business in the world at the time – Airco. With thanks to the painstaking and fascinating research by David Scott



and Ian Simmons this biography steers us through the world of an amazing entrepreneur. Their use of many archival photos, press cuttings, letters and articles brings to life the man who time forgot! We recently drew attention to the very first scheduled commercial flight in 1919, (Channel 5 "100 Years of

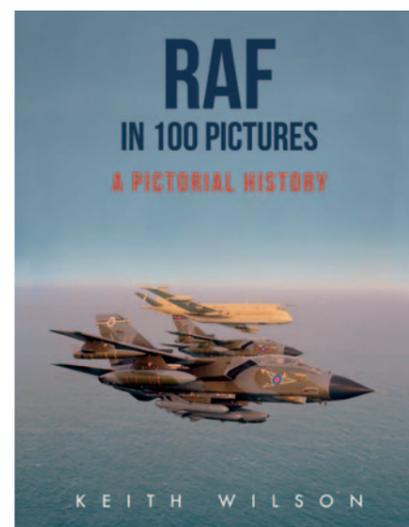
Flying") a story related in the book, in an Airco DH-4. It was Holt Thomas who founded Air Transport and Travel and his aircraft were widely used in those early days of commercial flight, having completed their role as bombers in WW1.

Sadly Holt Thomas died in 1929 and now has no known grave. This is the man who sought to open the eyes of the British government in 1917 to the fact that, being an island, we must move on from using the sea to using the air for travel. "This time we must be first," he said in a lecture to the Aeronautical society. There was a mountain of bureaucracy to be climbed but George Holt Thomas was a shrewd and innovative businessman who was prepared to face the challenges of the day. It is noted that he declined a knighthood in 1918 and it would seem for many his name has slipped from the pages of aviation history. With thanks to David Scott and Ian Simmons he can now take his rightful place among the great

names in aviation of the early twentieth century. ■

Price £12.00 (+£3.00 p&p) from 21 Ellsworth Rd, High Wycombe, Bucks, HP11 2TU.

Anne Hughes



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The 100th Anniversary of the formation of the RAF has been the subject of several books. This book, a photographic record gives a somewhat different view of its history.

Written by Keith Wilson, himself a regular contributor to *Pilot* magazine results in a very concise and informative book with where possible a good deal of detail to the photographs.

The book opens with a copy of the declaration of the forming of the RAF and also with a copy of the letter from King George V to Lord Rothermere, Minister for Air. It concludes with the Queen's message of congratulations.

The varied choice of the photographs starts with the acknowledgement of the formation of the WRAF and their roles in the latter stages of the war. All periods of the RAF along with its various roles are covered right up to the present day with the introduction of the F.35 Lightning II.

The photographs both black and white and colour are well reproduced portraying both the aircraft and the personnel in their many roles. ■

Paul Loveday

# VAC New Bank Account – Important News for You

We are re-organising our banking arrangements to make things easier for you. We are no longer using the account set up for Vintage Aircraft Club Ltd and from 1st July 2018 you will need to advise your bank if you pay by Standing Order for your membership and cancel the present arrangement with that account. There is a form on our website, or you can use the following bank details to set up your standing order to ensure your membership renewals:

Bank: Lloyds Bank plc, Ashford (309028) Branch

Account name: Vintage Aircraft Club

Account number: 73453760

Sort Code: 30-90-28

Membership fees are £25.00 and due on 1st April each year.

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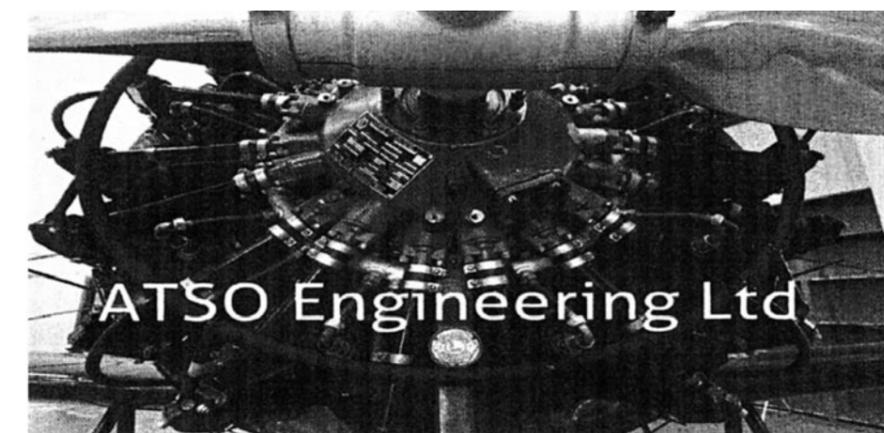
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# Dates for the diary 2018 / 2019

## 2018

Sunday 28th October – VAC All Hallows Fly-In at Turweston with Ground Event – Spooky Stories – Flying Superstitions and Airfield Ghostly Encounters. We have some stories but you are welcome to join in! 1pm-2pm

Saturday 17th November – VAC Members visit to Uxbridge Bunker. 15 places. Bookings only. Check Uxbridge Bunker Website before you book re prices and lots of steps!! Please reply to this email if you'd like to reserve a place.

Sunday 9th December VAC Safety Day at Turweston “ I learnt about Flying from that!” with Air Vice Marshall Lindsay Irvine. 12.30-2pm. LAA Members' Lounge.

## 2019 CELEBRATING 55 YEARS OF THE VAC

Wednesday 16th January 2019 – VAC Poetry and Nostalgia Evening at White Waltham.

Sunday 17th February VAC Early Spring Lunch 12 noon – Aviator Sywell .S.A.M. Talk on 'The Avro Canada Story' 14.30

Saturday 2nd March – RAF Signals Museum Henlow

Saturday 6th April – Dinner and Awards at Shuttleworth. Booking details later in the year. Contact Peter Wright when we have sent out the details.

Saturday 13th April – VAC Daffodil Fly-In, Fenland

Sunday 19th May – Bulldog 50th Birthday Event – Turweston Aerodrome. Celebrating the first flight of the prototype Beagle Bulldog.

13th-15th June – VAC at Aero Expo

22nd -23rd June – VAC at Bicester Flywheel

29th – 30th June – VAC 55th Birthday Celebration Weekend at Brighton. Camping, BBQ, transport to accommodation and a tour of the hangars all on the cards!

Further details about the Club, contacts and events can be found on the Vintage Aircraft Club website [www.vintageaircraftclub.org.uk](http://www.vintageaircraftclub.org.uk)

### Vintage Aircraft Club

c/o Light Aircraft Association

Turweston Aerodrome, near Brackley, Northants., NN13 5YD

*Spanish Jodel D9 fronts the LAA Rally scene*

