


# The Airey Fairey

Journal of The FLEET AIR ARM Association



Issue 11 Winter 2003 – 2004





**THE FLEET AIR ARM  
ASSOCIATION**

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Contributions for inclusion in "The Airey Fairey", the official journal of the Fleet Air Arm Association, are most welcome and should be submitted to the Editor prior to the deadline shown below. Whilst every effort is made to include them, due to space limitations, this is not always possible. However no article is wasted as those not used are retained for possible future use. Where there are events of general interest and dates for these are after the issue of the magazine, they will of course be included. Should you wish for articles and/or photos to be returned then please enclose a S.A.E.

### **Submission DEADLINE for the next issue (Summer) is 30th June 2004**

With respect to originals I can scan a variety of photographic media, prints up to A4 in size are acceptable as are 35 mm or APS (as a complete cartridge not individual frames) film. With larger film formats please enquire before submission of negatives or transparencies.

Photographs in newspapers and magazines are not of sufficient quality for copying, only originals will do.

I can also OCR pages of printed text. Non-fancy fonts work best here e.g. Times-Roman (Serif) or Helvetica (Sans Serif) or near equivalents.

If you want any submitted material returned then please include a suitable SAE.

If you are intending to scan and send resultant data files by e-mail please contact me for advice on optimising quality and yet minimising image file size.

**Note: the term 'National' has been officially dropped from the title of the FAAA.**

**Back issues are available for Issues 9 Winter 2002 – 03 and 10 Summer 2003 only.**

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**EDITORIAL**

Wishing all readers a Happy New Year and helping that sentiment along by keeping this section as brief as possible. Thank you all branches and members who have sent in contributions, some of which I have left on hold for next issue. The new year brought in a number of time sensitive, or late submitted but germane items which I thought worthwhile checking out and including. One is the campaign for the Arctic Convoy Veterans Medal and another is a soon to be published book by Ray Sturtivant.

On the topic of books; Harry Bannister of Derbyshire Branch has produced one entitled 'PONAM A Base of the Long Forgotten Fleet' after 9 years of research. All of the units are noted, e.g. MONABs, MSRs, MMs, Matmus, MMHUs and many more, with their complements and the parts they played during the Pacific/Japanese campaign of 1944/45. The book has ISBN 1-84375-024-4 as is available direct from the publishers by visiting <http://www.upso.co.uk/harrybannister> or by telephone: 01424 853349 at £12.99.

Ray Thomas has sent me a lively account by the late Tony Pullin (Watford Branch President) of an exploit whilst Tony was a pilot with 882 Squadron, Wildcats [possibly on Searcher -Ed.]. In order to do this justice I am looking for photo's of a Wildcat of this era and preferably of this Squadron.

Parting shot: I have discovered that Minas Gerais, ex-HMS Vengeance was put up for auction on e-bay! More in the next Issue perhaps. Will this story run and run?

## Letters to the Editor

**‘Publish and be damned.’** (Attributed to Arthur Wellesley, Duke of Wellington)

Dear Mr Smith,

I hope that you will take this missive in a light hearted way although the content does raise a few points I think!

**1. Question....**Having checked in both Chambers and Collins dictionaries I can only find both words in the name of our journal spelled without an ‘E’ – only the builders of Swordfish and Firefly aircraft (among others) use an ‘E’ in their name. So where did our spelling come from?

**2. Question....**In these days of Human Rights, European Courts etc, how can the Royal Navy justify its edict “full set or clean shaven”? I’m sure if somebody took the matter up legally we would see some tars with ‘tashes .....

**3. Question....**According to a brief mention on television plans are afoot to update the design of the white ensign to show the involvement of the Royal Marines. We have had quite a number of revisions to the design of our fighting ships and aircraft, over the years ..... has the time not now come to ditch the old fashioned uniform in favour of (say) a beret with metal badge and a tunic and trousers similar to those of the army and RAF? After all Nelson has been gone quite a few years along with the need for bell bottoms, collars to keep tarred ‘bun’ [well I think that is what he wrote –Ed.] of the jumper, the silk, the lanyard .....

**4. Question ....**Dare you publish this letter? and ..... will I have to resign if you do?

With kind regards

Yours sincerely

*Pete Mowlam (Essex branch but not an official communication!)*

Taking the last **question (4)** first: Yes (So there! ;-)) and No (unless I get much flack).

On **Question 1**, I would think that the spelling is from common usage and in the written form of that most often heard as speech has been carefully chosen so as to avoid any ‘pansy’ inference and yet provide a distinctive title. Many a newsstand magazine bears a title that stretches English language usage somewhat. As far as I am concerned I have simply carried on with the title under which the journal was known since its inception.

On **Question 2**, I think the long standing traditions of the Royal Navy make it worth keeping the difference of facial hair standards. Although I am not sure how well full sets, or any extraneous facial hair for that matter, suit modern warfare conditions where the need to don NBCD protection could quickly arise.

On **Question 3**, Perhaps it is not for we veterans to comment as we will not be required to wear any future service fashion and I am personally unsure of the feeling within the service. However, for what it is worth, I think it unhelpful to mess with fine traditions which help make the Senior Service distinctive. Personally I was thankful that we in the Fleet Air Arm wore RN pattern uniform rather than that of the RAF.

What do other FAAA members think about the issues raised?

*-Ed.*

## Stories behind the Cover Pictures.

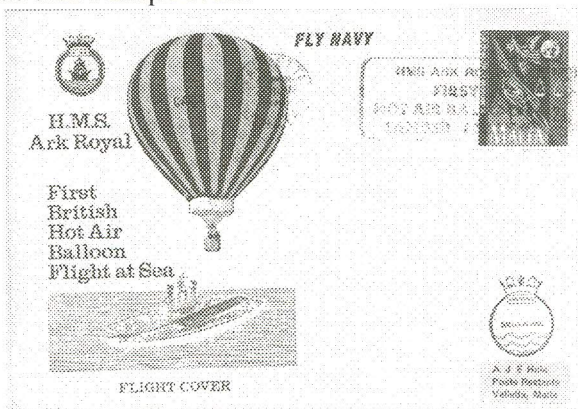
### Hot Air Balloon G-AVTL

It having been the festive season my mind turned to balloons and I thought it apt to include one on the cover. Each picture is from a sequence of eight taken, of an unusual event I think you will agree, by the editor whilst serving on HMS Ark Royal in late 1970.

G-AVTL was brought aboard Ark Royal by one of the pilots of 849 B Flight, the then Lieutenant Terry Adams. It was decided to launch this balloon from Ark Royal's flight deck whilst south of Malta as the sun was rising early one morning. Lieut. Adams came up with the idea that special printed envelopes (covers) would be printed and sent ashore with the ships mails to commemorate such a unique event.

For the Captain of Ark Royal, who just happens to now be our Patron Sir Raymond Lygo KCB, this event was rather more exciting than we 'goofers' watching appreciated.

Steaming at 8 knots towards Malta to provide zero wind over the deck became a nail-bitter as the launch became protracted. I'll let Sir Raymond provide some idea of a Captain's problems by quoting a piece from his book 'Collision Course':



Above: Example envelope flown ashore by balloon G-AVTL.

*'We duly positioned ourselves not far from Filfa and proceeded directly towards the Island. We started the run from not too far away because we didn't want the balloon to have to go too far. However, delays occurred on the deck while they were trying to get the right amount of flame, and laying the balloon out properly, or stop it blowing up with air or whatever was the problem, and we were getting closer and closer to Malta itself. Eventually my Navigating Officer, normally a calm and collected man, began to draw my attention quite forcibly to the fact that if we continued on this course for very much longer, we would run aground! I examined the chart as calmly as I could, and decided that yes, he probably was getting close to the truth but we could hold on for a little longer and so, we held on.'*

A card (marked Solent Covers) within the example envelope has the following description on it:

*'The first British hot air Balloon Flight at sea was flown from the flight deck of H.M.S. Ark Royal by Hot Air Balloon "Bristol Belle" G AVTL, 63,000 cu. ft. — first British*

*designed and built hot air balloon. Owned and operated by Hot Air Group. Pilot: Lieut. Terry Adams, Royal Navy, Fleet Air Arm Pilot.*

*The "Bristol Belle" is some 70ft. tall and is 50ft. in diameter. She is classed as a three-man Balloon capable of flying for approx. two hours at all up weight. She is made of high tenacity, polyurethane rip stop nylon sewn in 26 gores alternating red and white. The Basket is of traditional Wicker interwoven with continuous loops of stainless steel.*

*A three-million B.T.U.'s per hour propane burner heats the air to its maximum temperature of 100 C. and provides very responsive height control in flight.'*

The flukes of air currents at dawn very nearly caused the balloon to miss the island and Captain Lygo had visions of attempting to manoeuvre the ship underneath the balloon as it descended. Fortunately the balloon had just managed to cross the coast and before being borne back out to sea the pilot stopped burning and brought the balloon down in a field, somewhat short of the intended landing spot near Valletta.

## **The Memorial Cloth**

The picture, by Duncan Cubitt of Key Publishing, on the lower rear cover of this issue is included by courtesy of Duncan Cubitt and FlyPast magazine. The picture shows Peter Roalf and Les Hutchins (Chairman of Hitchin Branch) on the RNA stand at Duxford in June 2003 holding the cloth. Peter has written in with the following:

'The embroidered cloth sewn entirely by Shipmate Peter Roalf of Essex Branch started life back in 1984 with the central motif of the Badge of the Royal Naval Association beneath which is the crest of 814 Naval Air Squadron in which Peter had served in 1963/4 and which had at the time become the first Naval Air Squadron to be affiliated with a Branch of the RNA, Harlow, that town's crest being worked in.

Peter then added the Three Naval Aircrew Badges along with that of the earlier Royal Naval Air Service. He then added the crests of all the Carriers in which he served (albeit some for very short periods). Namely, Theseus, Vengeance, Eagle, Hermes, Melbourne, Victorious, Albion and Bulwark. Other ex-Naval Association badges were added often at the request of the members of those associations.

After inviting members and others to sign the cloth so that the signatures could be worked in, it was suggested by Admiral Tony Whetstone that signatories be asked to make a donation to charity. From this action over £400.00 has been forthcoming and has shared by RNA/RNBT/RNHF/SSAFA and other charities.

As time passed, Peter felt the need to increase the size of the cloth and added strips some 10 inches wide around the original. Into these areas he decided to work the Crests/Badges of Air Stations and Ships in which he had served or with which he had some association e.g. 'chummy' squadrons. These started with Royal Arthur and ended

with 706 Squadron. 814 Squadron figured as the squadron on embarked in no fewer than four different carriers in one year, interspersed with disembarkations to Simbang and Khormaksar. 814 was also the first Wessex squadron to be embarked in HMAS Melbourne when we went aboard to give the ships staff some experience in operating turbine driven helicopters. To those of us who had had experience of the Light Fleets the accommodation was very similar but with bunks rather than hammocks.

Peter is often asked, "Who are the most famous people to have signed?" and "How many signatures are there on the cloth?" The total number is in excess of 900 (that was some years ago) and the famous people include Lady Mountbatten, Admirals Jock Slater, Desmond Cassidi and Raymond Lygo are amongst the signatories as are a Chief of the General Staff (A Field Marshall) and a General of the United States Air Force SACEUR.

In the vicinity of the badge of The Far East Prisoners of War is a memorial to our "Palembang Nine" who were so dastardly murdered on 15<sup>th</sup> August 1945. That alone makes it right to call it a memorial cloth in addition to the very many signatories who have since passed on to that Great Hangar in the sky.'

## **News From Around the Branches**

### **Angus Branch**

The 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration Luncheon was held on Friday 26 September 2003. A most enjoyable occasion. The menu was considered to be very nice and the entertainment was indeed first rate, as one would expect from Harry Will, Marlene Kerr and Winnie Sangster at the piano. A great mix of song, verse and frivolity! It took a song or two to get the company singing along with Harry and Marlene. It was good fun. It was also pleasing to know that the six widows who attended thoroughly enjoyed the evening.

*Des Mardle, Secretary.*

### **Bournemouth & District Branch**

The branch has had a busy and interesting year with talks by Ken Baylis on his African exploits and Nigel Whitely from St Dunstons, following on from that other remarkable man Terry Bullingham. Alan Clifford gave an enlightening talk on Rating Pilots. A Battle of the Atlantic 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary service at Christchurch Priory was attended by members and an excellent evening with the Aircrew Association at Boscombe Down was enjoyed. Our Christmas party provided some unexpected excitement, our 11 cars required escorting across the active runway by motorcycle outriders with flashing lights both on arrival and when leaving due to the bridge to the club being flooded. In both directions we were required to wait for a slot in the air traffic.

*Jo Towler*

### **Bristol & District Branch**

Our branch members make the 'Weymouth Veterans Service and Parade' a must and thus attended on Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> June 2003. The parade formed up by the British Cenotaph opposite the Prince Regent Hotel, in glorious sunshine, S/M Graham Mewha presenting our branch standard. The band of the Royal Engineers led the parade along the sea front past the saluting dais adjacent to the United States War Memorial.



I don't think that I have seen more people lining the route.

The Fly Navy Heritage Trust Supper at RBL Patchway, Bristol on Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> June 2003 was a very enjoyable social evening attended by Commodore Rhod Palmer and his wife from Yeovilton. Rhod gave a good report on matters at Yeovilton. It was good to hear of the coming together of the FAA Museum, RNHF and the FAA Church which should bring in more much needed revenue.

As I was in the Far East from 1950 – 1952 and a member of the Korean Veterans Association, Somerset and Avon Branch, I presented our branch standard at a service of thanksgiving and remembrance at St John's Church, Weston-Super-Mare on Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> July 2003 to mark the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the End of the War in Korea. Bristol FAAA Branch Secretary Reg Veale and Treasurer Bill Davis also attended. Thirteen standards were paraded including our own BKVA, presented by S/M Danny Schofield who is also a Bristol Branch member.

Another nice morning dawned on the occasion of the Battle of Britain Parade and Service on Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> September at RAFA Club Westbury-on-Trym. The address of the Rev. Andre Hart included details of the FAA involvement which included 804 (Sea Gladiators) and 808 Squadrons (Fulmars). 56 FAA pilots were involved, some flying Hurricanes or Hurricanes. Bristol Branch standard was presented by Air Training Corps Cadet Vernon of 2442 Squadron.



Above: Bill Davis and Reg Veal on an RBL stand in an Asda supermarket.

Four FAAA members had a brief appearance in 'Perfectly Frank' on BBC1 Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> September. Did you spot them? PRO Ron Sandry and six other branch members attended the FAAA meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> September.

*Eric Pit, Chairman*

## Derbyshire Branch

Since the October branch meeting, we heard the sad news that Bob Johnston had passed over the bar. Bob has been a real pillar in our branch, having been secretary for the last nine years, and he was an example of dedication in all aspects of the branch business, he will be sadly missed by us all.

Dear Ed.

I am passing this on to you because it has definitely worked for me. By following the simple advice I read in an article, I have finally found peace. It reads —

**“The way to achieve inner peace is to finish all the things you have started.”**

I looked around to see all the things I had started but not finished. So, today I have finished one bottle of white wine, a bottle of red wine, a bottle of Drambuie, my Prozac, a large box of chocolates and six cans of lager. **You have no idea how good I feel!**

*Tom Bowen*

Well Tom, after that mixture I doubt that many would be feeling particularly good! –Ed.

## **Eastbourne Branch**

Earlier this year our branch was given the opportunity to visit St Dunstons where our blind member Nigel Whitely took us for a tour of the facilities. St Dunstons is an organisation which provides training and care for ex servicemen, women and members of the emergency services who are blinded in the course of duty.

Nigel Whitely was a member of the British Blind Sports Archery Team representing the UK (the only nation thus represented) at the International Para-Olympic Committee Archery International Tournament, Nove Mesto Nad Metuji, Prague, Czechoslovakia.

Nigel and the other UK archers Derek Haggard, Sandra Nesbitt and David Schofield shot a visually impaired International Round (B2 Tactile-Compound) shot at 30m with 36 arrows at 40mm, 60mm, 80mm and 122mm targets, Nigel managing a new British International record score of 709.

Another Great Britain and International Record was achieved by Nigel and Derek by drawing on an Olympic Round of 72 arrows with a score of 243. This was the first time it had been shot by visually impaired archers at a record status international shoot. Nigel has since bettered his score by achieving 715 at the Sussex County Championship.

*Many thanks to St. Dunstons for providing information on the archery internationals.*

*Barry Simons*

## **Greater Manchester Branch**

Our Annual visit to Portsmouth took place in September. During the visit we made our Annual Pilgrimage to the Memorial and Lee-on-Solent, which this year coincided with the 64<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the outbreak of WW2. A short service was conducted by the Naval Chaplain from HMS Sultan, the Rev. Andrew McFadden and a wreath was laid. Following the service we had lunch in the Senior Rates Mess at HMS Sultan.

This was followed by a nostalgic visit to the airfield at Daedalus where we



Above: Jim Buie, Rev. Andrew McFadden, S/B Len Milward and Arthur Gardner (Chairman)

inspected a Catalina and two Dakotas and visited the Coastguard. On our final evening we were entertained in the Senior Rates Mess at HMS Nelson.

*Jim Buie, Secretary*

### **Watford Branch**

The Watford branch had another very enjoyable year with social functions where we had opportunity to 'Get Together', which we all feel is 'What we are all about'. We currently have 28 Full members and 15 Ordinary members who loyally support all our functions.

For 5 days commencing April 28<sup>th</sup>, our Social Secretary John Russell arranged a 5 day break at the Ullswater Hotel, Bournemouth, with 31 members thoroughly enjoying a break away together with even the weather being good to us. The branch plaque was presented to the hotel management, which they received with pleasure and is now on display in the bar. On the 18<sup>th</sup> of June, John Russell, once again demonstrated his organising skills by arranging a day out to the Ferryman's Inn on the banks of the Thames near Oxford for a coach load of 44 of our members where a roast lunch was provided followed by an excellent old fashioned music hall type afternoons entertainment.

Nearer to home we had our Summer Social at St Lukes hall in Bricket Wood on Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> July, no 'Beetle Drive' this time but Bingo, Quiz and Dancing with the ladies providing a buffet which surpassed anything that any of us had seen the likes of before. A wonderful evening and get together enjoyed by all.

*Ray Thomas, Chairman*

### **Scarborough FAAA Re-union**

This year's re-union was again at the Hotel St. Nicholas but due to last minute cancellations numbers were down at a disappointing 88.

The weekend's festivities began on Friday evening with a sherry reception and a quiet get together in the hotel bar. The Gala dinner grace was said by Len Owen, Chairman of Derbyshire Branch and the following dancing was enjoyed by the ladies, at least.

Fred Sandy had travelled from Nova Scotia to be there and was sat with Barry Simons who was thanked, during the speeches, for the superb organisation which ensured a most enjoyable weekend.



**Above: Chairman and Mrs Fred Wadley after the dinner, His eyes are not closed. Honestly!**

Andrew Lindsey, Yorkshire Branch, raised in excess of £200 for the RN Historic Flight.

*With thanks to Barry Simons and Arnold Thompson for their reports.*

## HMS Ringtail – RNAS Burscough Memorial

Largely due to the efforts of a local resident, Mr Laurence Critchley, the local parish council have agreed to the erection of a Memorial on the site of the former air station to honour those who served there and to act as a focal point for information about the role of the air station.

*Jim Buie. Manchester Branch. Secretary.*

I have spoken to Mr Critchley and he told me that funding and the design of the stone had been agreed and that a plaque will be made. The nearest Fleet Air Arm Association branch (Manchester) and Royal Naval Association will be helping with the organisation.

It is possible that the dedication could take place in September or October of 2004.

There is the possibility of a ceremonial flypast as favourable noises have been received from the direction of RNAS Yeovilton.

Those with any additional input into this event can contact Mr Laurence Critchley on 01695 576978 (home) or 0151 966 3886 (work).

*-Ed.*

## WW II Russian Convoy Medals Campaign

Many members will already be aware of the campaign to persuade officialdom in this country to allow the medal offered by the Russians to be awarded to those who took part in the Arctic Convoys, thus respecting the wishes of those who took part in this campaign or the wishes of relatives of those veterans since deceased. It is understood that this part of the campaign has been successful.

However, this does not ensure that those who took part in these convoys have obtained a just result. A local Portsmouth paper, 'The News', is running a campaign to persuade those in Whitehall to have a specific medal struck and awarded for that campaign, one of the most arduous of WW II. To elaborate on the reasons for this award I quote, with the permission of the newspaper's political editor, from that paper.

### **What the campaign is all about.**

- ❖ Of the 20,000 naval heroes, an estimated 2,000 are still alive.
- ❖ But like their mercantile comrades, they have never been given a campaign medal in honour of their extraordinary bravery.
- ❖ They ran the gauntlet of submarine and air attacks through sub-zero conditions to take munitions, food, fuel and other vital supplies to Russia.
- ❖ These efforts probably saved Russia from being defeated, which would have made an Allied victory over the Nazis almost impossible. [Some historians point out, correctly, that without this convoy effort the Russians may have been tempted to side with Germany, releasing German manpower and materials for use in France, making any allied landings in Normandy either impossible or terribly costly. – Ed.]

- ❖ But in 1946, the Arctic campaign veterans were scandalously overlooked because Russia had become an enemy instead of an ally.
- ❖ Veterans of the campaign started their push for a medal in 1997, saying the Cold War was over and Britain and Russia were no longer enemies.
- ❖ But the men who served in the Arctic were told they could have the Atlantic Star, a medal for a different campaign.
- ❖ In a further snub, most were unable to qualify for the Atlantic Star because it had a six-month continuous service requirement, which applied to just six of the Arctic convoy 670 ships.
- ❖ All other second world war campaign medals had a qualification period of just one day. [This of course makes the Atlantic Star condition of 6 months look bad. – Ed.]
- ❖ Years of wrong can be overturned by a simple intervention from the Prime Minister Tony Blair.
- ❖ The campaign demands that he asks the honours and decorations committee in Whitehall to recommend to the Queen that she order the creation of the new Arctic medal.
- ❖ This is above all an issue about how Britain treats its heroes. The prime minister must act now to end almost 60 years of injustice.

If any FAAA or serving FAA members would care to join the News in this campaign then please send a letter, ensuring that your name and address are present and that the letter is signed, with the following wording (which has been taken from a 'coupon' in The News of Monday January 12 2004):

*Dear Tony Blair,*

*I believe Britain should honour the Arctic Convoy heroes who endured horrendous conditions to supply Russia and therefore help bring about the defeat of Nazi Germany.*

*Please now end decades of injustice by asking the Honours and Decorations Committee to make a request to the Queen to create a new medal specifically for those brave men.*

Please post your letter to:

Last Chance For Justice  
c/o David Maddox  
Newsroom  
The News Centre  
Hilsea  
Portsmouth  
PO2 9SX

David Maddox is political editor of The News and wording from that paper has been included with his permission. David Maddox can be reached on 02392 622131 or by e-mail: david.maddox@thenews.co.uk

## WILL THE LAST ONE TO LEAVE PLEASE TURN OUT THE LIGHTS.

### *A Requiem for Lost Youth*

By Eddie Mortlock

#### **Tale (or Tail) piece from last issue:**

He had no home, no family and no friends. The Navy had been his whole life and now, totally unfit for life outside he viewed his imminent discharge with despair bordering on panic. He would usually be joined by a three badge Stoker in similar circumstances, whose general demeanour would not have been out of place in a funeral parlour. Each evening they would bemoan their fate and keep their fears at bay by drinking themselves into oblivion.

..... To be continued

#### **Second and final part:**

During the early part of the evening before their minds became befuddled, they would be morose and a bit aggressive towards me, considering all aircrew pampered smart-alecs.

Once for example, when the Chief caught sight of a book of poetry I often carried with me, he growled, 'A bloody load of rubbish if you ask me,' which I hadn't, 'you lot are as soft as shit' he continued. 'You wouldn't have lasted five minutes in my old ship. The Captain was a right bastard', he added nostalgically, 'never read a book in his life and wouldn't allow any on the ship. Give the ratings a book to read,' he used to say, 'and you end up with a boat load of bloody commies complaining about leaks in their hot water bottles. Give the swine poetry to read and they'd soon be knitting balaclavas for the vicar's church fete'.

He was a hard hypocritical sod. He loved his rum, never thought it was a good idea to issue it to the lower deck. 'Interferes with their work,' he said, 'and work as we know is the curse of the drinking classes. Now take old Stokes over there', he pointed to the Stoker, 'loves his tot and the only book he ever opens is his Pay Book, or a quick dip into 'Men Only' to look, at the pictures. It's done him no harm. Has it Stokes?'

The stoker nodded sadly and responded with his usual party piece. He had once heard someone say that when Nelson put his telescope to his blind eye and said 'I see no shits', he was referring to the fact that there was no Fleet Air Arm around. Every time I came into the bar he would raise an empty glass to his eye and say 'I see no shits', and the Chief would come as near as he ever did to a smile.

As the evening wore on they would become progressively sadder, like men awaiting execution. Most evenings we would gather, often joined by the cook, but seldom. anyone else and help ourselves at the bar. Nobody ever paid for anything, for no one was in charge of the bar. As soon as our glasses were empty, the stoker would say "It's my

round” and fill them up. The high light, if you could call it that, came with the singing.

When three sheets to the wind, the old chief would go over to the gramophone in the corner and with fumbling hands put on his favourite record. A First World War song and those two old soaks, three if the cook was there, who had boozed and blustered their way through service life, would sing:

*“There’s a long trail a winding,  
Unto the land of my dreams,  
Where the nightingales are singing,  
And the bright moon beams”.*

I would be persuaded to join in and arm in arm we would sing this song over and over again, until the tears streamed down the face of the old Chief, for he knew there would be no nightingales singing for him. no moon beams to lighten his way, his trail as with the Stoker and possibly the cook’s, came to an end when the war finished and his future was bleak.

One other song, an old favourite from the music halls, was also subjected to constant repetition. This was the stoker’s favourite:

*“If those lips could only speak,  
If those eyes could only see,  
If those beautiful golden tresses,  
Hung there in reality”.*

And it would be the stokers turn to be sad, for he confessed that he had once fallen in love with a whore in Port Said.

*“If those lips could only smile  
As they did when you told me your name.  
But its only a beautiful picture,  
In a beautiful golden frame”.*

And out would come a photograph of a fly-blown lady of the night, indistinguishable from the camel near to which she was standing.

‘I should have married her,’ he would repeat over and over again, I would nod unsure if he was referring to the camel or the lady.

The cook was the most cheerful of the three, though that isn’t saying much, for he had two more years to do and knew, so to speak, where his next meal was coming from.

By and large they were a sad lost and lonely lot, the flotsam of service life, wasted lives washed up on the shores of despair.

The cook came always with a large tray of bangers, sometimes hot, sometimes cold and his first words never varied, ‘Fancy a banger tonight Chief?’

The Chief would look up with a nod, 'What about you Stokes?' and he too would nod.

In the beginning he never asked me, but as time progressed and it became obvious they could never eat them all, I would be invited into the banger circle, much akin to being elected into a Masonic Lodge.

Night after night I ate the wretched things until they came out of my ears. Considering we had them more often than not for lunch and dinner, I began to hate the sight of them, but dare not refuse for fear of offending them. I began to suspect that all over the place little groups of old RN bod's gathered in secret to eat bangers. No doubt there is an ex serviceman's banger association with crossed banger badges, chipolata tie pins and salami cuff links. If there is, I won't be joining.

More and more these evenings reminded me of a church service that never changed. First there was the grumpiness and then the jokes at my expense. This one never ceased to have them rolling on the floor. 'When you kick the bucket Stokes,' the cook would ask, 'who would you like to attend your funeral?'

The stoker would pretend to consider, then say, 'I would like all the aircrew who have been working up here to come and dance on my grave.'

The cook would feign surprise, 'really Stokes,' he would reply, 'I thought you hated them. Where would you like to be buried?'

The stoker would look at me with a sly grin and say, 'AT SEA.'

We would then all roar with laughter pretending we hadn't heard it every evening for the past week. This would be followed by the cook giving such a filthy rendering of 'The boy stood on the burning deck', that even the stoker looked embarrassed and gave the Chief the opportunity to ask me if that little number was in my book of crap.

When the singing and the humour began to wear a bit thin and the mood became melancholic, I would slip away to walk through the silent station to my bed in one of the rows of empty huts.

Awakened one morning by Reveille crackling over the tannoy, my eye caught the maze of spider webs that hung from the roof and criss-crossed the bunks. I noticed also the dust accumulating on the windows and floor and I realized it was time to go.

I packed my bags ready for departure the next morning, then walked around the airfield for the last time.. I collected what ever money was due to me from the Wren isolated in the Pay Office. 'Lucky Devil,' she moaned, 'by the time I leave I'll be certifiable.'

I also picked up my travel warrant and the chit for my demob outfit. Shortly before supper I went along to the control tower to watch the sun setting on my service life, then to the dining hall for supper.



The place was empty, but the cook still catered for a full house. He looked a little sad when I told him I was leaving and he said I should drop in tomorrow for breakfast when he would give me something to eat on my journey. Later I went to the bar for the nightly ritual of booze, bangers and song. We went down that long, long trail at least a dozen times. Wept over lips that could never speak and the lost love from Port Said and as usual the cook appeared with his tray of bangers. The knowledge of my leaving cast an air of gloom over the evening, for it foreshadowed their own departure.

Strangely, I had grown rather fond of these old codgers drifting, like the ancient mariner, on an empty ocean towards the sunset of their lives. When they were too drunk to notice, I left without the embarrassment of goodbyes or exchange of addresses. I never knew their names, or where they came from, but for a brief moment we shared a life. The next morning I went down to breakfast and the Cook gave me a large bag of bangers and a loaf of bread. "That should keep you going" he said. And then I was off.

Sitting in the little local train puffing its way through the countryside, I saw in the distance the control tower still silently waiting for the planes that would never come again. The White Ensign could still be seen waving above the entrance and it was my turn to feel sad. A little old lady sitting opposite me noticed my discomfort and leaned forward and patted my hand. "Have you lost someone?" she asked sympathetically.

My thoughts went back over the last few years and I found myself replying "Yes thousands". A little later she mentioned in passing, that she found life difficult, what with rationing and restrictions, so I gave her the bag of bangers. I've never bought a banger since.

Changing trains at the main station, I was soon on my way to Northampton where I picked up the only suit I was ever to own but never to wear, a trilby hat that would look well on a bank manager and a tie that would lie forgotten in a drawer. Yes, I heard the nightingales alright as I headed down that long, long trail to home. The same trail that will lead us to Yeovilton to reaffirm a brotherhood formed so long ago in the skies and on the seas of the world.

Fifty years on our footsteps may falter, the moon grows less bright, but hopefully, however faint, the nightingales will still be singing.

As I write this, I have beside me the book of poetry that I carried with me throughout my service life; it has almost as many flying hours as I have. I open it at random to see the lines:

*'They are not long, the days of wine and roses,  
Out of a misty dream,  
Our path emerges for a while, then closes,  
Within a dream.'*

## The Master Reference Gyro.Mk1 (M.R.G.)

The M.R.G.Mk1 first appeared in the Naval Scimitar in 1958 as the Dynamic Reference element of the Integrated Flight Instrument System (I.F.I.S.), which had been designed to meet OR.946. This Operational Requirement set out to provide a new set of flight instruments replacing the pre-war and wartime Blind Flying Panel.

This had comprised six air operated flying instruments:- Artificial Horizon, Directional Gyro, Turn and Slip Indicator, Air Speed Indicator, Altimeter, Rate of Climb Indicator and with a separately mounted Magnetic Compass was to be found in most British built aircraft. This common feature plus a system of colour coding the bezel rings of other common cockpit instruments must have simplified the task of pilots transferring to new British types, unlike U.S. aircraft, which had no common system.

I.F.I.S. was planned to take advantage of the analogue electronic systems, available during the 50's, to provide a new central flight instrument display, which incorporated the Mach meter now needed in our jet aircraft, but additionally transmitted identical data to other user systems such as Autopilot, Radar and Sighting systems. The sensor for each servo driven display was remotely sited and for obvious reasons a series of small independent standby or emergency instruments were added strategically around the cockpit. This created a further problem because in the case of an instrument failure the pilot had then to decide which one was telling the truth. This confusion was the cause of an early loss of a Sea Vixen.

Back then to the M.R.G. which was the first British example of a "stable platform" carrying a vertical gyro and a horizontal gyro in a single instrument case. Essentially the Vertical gyro was slaved to the vertical by mercury switches and the stable platform was driven into alignment with the vertical gyro so that in manoeuvres the displacement of the platform with the M.R.G. casing represented the roll and pitch attitude of the aircraft relative to the ground and could be transmitted electrically to user systems. The horizontal gyro was linked to a fluxgate compass.

The weaknesses of the M.R.G. Mk1 were fundamental and resulted in equipment that was unreliable both operationally and electronically. These defects were not uncovered by flight-testing prior to service in aircraft whose normal flight operations were far more sedate than those encountered in aircraft such as the Scimitar. During manoeuvres "g" forces displaced the mercury switches and these could not then provide a true vertical reference; additionally in the M.R.G. the vertical gyro was mounted at one end of a cantilever arm, which flexed under "g" and further drift errors occurred and often toppled the gyro so that the erection system failed to re-establish the vertical reference after manoeuvres.

Defects in the M.R.G. could only be rectified after unsoldering and separating the two halves of the gas-filled large aluminium casing. This required a great deal of skill and

heat and carried the risk that the tinning on the joint might be damaged. An imperfect joint would allow the mixture of Helium and Nitrogen gases in the casing to leak.

One routine fault was failure of the potentiometers detecting platform movement. In normal operation the servo-motors drove the platform into alignment with the vertical gyro as soon as an error was detected, so that the potentiometer pick-offs spent their entire lives wearing away the centre of the wire wound potentiometers.

Testing an M.R.G. was obviously not easily managed on a ship and initially the clean room on Victorious was at Hangar level and only later moved to a lower compartment where ship movement was reduced. Much damage was done during transit of replacement gyros because there was no locking or caging system.

During early service the M.R.G. Mk1 managed < 10 hrs M.T.B.F. but, although some improvement was made, by 1986 the surviving records showed only 36 hrs M.T.B.F. The Sea Vixen, like the Scimitar, was only fitted with the M.R.G. Mk1 but the Buccaneer S Mk1 was equipped with the complete I.F.I.S. still with the M.R.G. Mk1. After the disastrous experience with M.R.G. Mk1 in those three aircraft the Buccaneer S Mk2 was fitted with the vastly more reliable Sperry Rotorace Gyro System.

Nonetheless the concept initiated in the M.R.G. has continued and many aircraft are now equipped with much smaller and reliable Attitude and Heading Reference systems (A.H.R.S). The stable platform evolved into Inertial Navigation systems carrying gyros and accelerometers and it has now been replaced by the laser-gyro strap-down system. This has eliminated most moving components bringing greater reliability.

By the time I.F.I.S. was in service on the Buccaneer Mk1 new Operational Requirements called for a Head-up Display of Flight Instruments; this could only be achieved by electronic means and the development of such systems have since logically led via digital computers to helmet mounted sighting systems and the full glass cockpit. These systems have considerable redundancy and thus reliability.

Evolution thus appears to have brought some rewards, but way back in 1958 the "Per Ardua" bit of the R.A.F. motto had a lot of significance to Fleet Air Arm maintainers as well.

*Bill Drake*

### **Can You Help?**

Have any of you got information on George Thomas Scroggie stationed at Brunswick, Main, from December 1943 to April 1945 on 899 Squadron?

Please contact Mr Peter Scroggie on 0151 526 3104 (home), 07759 257045 (mobile) or Mrs Linda Scroggie on 0151 934 4885 (work), 07762 089687 (mobile).

A Stand-Eazzzy Word Search

A Y D N I W L R I H W E A T T A C K E R  
 B S T R I A S R O C C B M E F U S K T O  
 H O L R A T I M I C S R R L C K W A R Y  
 S F I R E F L Y L L E I S K Y A C E V M  
 I D N Y O C H Y E I F E O R H L H D O N  
 F T O E G C N M R A A O A A L C R N O S  
 R Y E R N X A R E V D I E E T A E R E H  
 A L G P A C A S I N D S H A G V E A E A  
 E F R S F H K X A E S B C O A H P N X R  
 P R U O A Y E R R E O Y N E A R A T E K  
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 D N D E A K E M G K H F T P A T D L A B  
 A P T C I V D N L A B L U J S N R D L L  
 E Y C N Y X E J E U E P P R P A O C R A  
 S U G W T V Z S J T F H A A Y H W A U T  
 B A R R A C U D A S E A F O X P S T S R

There are fifty aircraft names hidden in the matrix above, all of which have served with the Fleet Air Arm or Royal Naval Air Service. Take care with one of the three lettered names as this also occurs twice in other names, this may lead you to think, erroneously, that you have found its separate occurrence.

Word Search word list:

- |                 |               |              |            |
|-----------------|---------------|--------------|------------|
| 1. SEAHURRICANE | 13. ATTACKER  | 26. SEAHERON | 39. NIMROD |
| 2. FIREBRAND    | 14. SEAVIXEN  | 27. SEADEVON | 40. SEAFOX |
| 3. SEAHORNET    | 15. ALBACORE  | 28. WILDCAT  | 41. FULMAR |
| 4. SEAHARRIER   | 16. SKYRAIDER | 29. CORSAIR  | 42. WESSEX |
| 5. FLYCATCHER   | 17. GANNET    | 30. FIREFLY  | 43. CUCKOO |
| 6. SWORDFISH    | 18. WALRUS    | 31. SEAFURY  | 44. SHARK  |
| 7. BUCCANEER    | 19. HOVERFLY  | 32. SEAHAWK  | 45. CAMEL  |
| 8. BARRACUDA    | 20. SCIMITAR  | 33. MARTLET  | 46. LYNX   |
| 9. DRAGONFLY    | 21. SEAVENOM  | 34. HELLCAT  | 47. SKUA   |
| 10. WHIRLWIND   | 22. STURGEON  | 35. AVENGER  | 48. WASP   |
| 11. SEAPRINCE   | 23. SEAFIRE   | 36. PHANTOM  | 49. PUP    |
| 12. SPEARFISH   | 24. SEAFANG   | 37. WYVERN   | 50. ROC    |
|                 | 25. SEAKING   | 38. OSPREY   |            |

## The Book-Shelf

A selection of books that may be of interest.

**Deacon, Ray. (2001) 'Hawker Hunter Fifty Golden Years',** Vogelslang Publications. Blackboys, East Sussex. ISBN 0-9540666-0-X

This very well illustrated book catalogues all the Hawker Hunters that were either airworthy or had the potential for being made airworthy at the time of going to press. There were over a hundred of them!

As the FRADU at Yeovilton used the naval variants of the Hunter, the T8, GA11 and PR10/11, until late then many of the survivors are of these types. Indeed one Harley Light fitted GA, flown by Brian Grant, features on the rear cover.

Other Hunters had a more chequered career. One of these built as Mark 4 XF947 was retired from the RAF to RNAS Arbroath (HMS Condor) as a ground instructional airframe (A2568) before being made surplus to requirements in 1970.

Hawker Siddley purchased the aircraft and refurbished and converted to F.Mk 58A, being sold to the Swiss Air Force with serial number J-4104. Following a second retirement in 1994 the aircraft went to a private owner being ferried to Dunsfold in 1996.

Jonathan Whaley is the current owner and has the aircraft finished in the most spectacular colour scheme and known as 'Miss Demeanour'. A superb air to air shot of this aircraft adorns the front cover of this book.

'Miss Demeanour' can at present be seen in the Delta Jets hangar at ex-RAF Kemble, Gloucestershire. As, often, can Brian Grant be seen as he takes passengers up for paid 'jollies' in a two seat Hunter, frequently black finished T.Mk.7A WV318 (G-FFOX). If you have about £1500 spare you too could book a 45 minute flip.

Ex-899 Sea Vixen Mk2 personnel may remember Jonathon Whaley by his enthusiasm for using the flaps in a dog-fight and commensurate involvement with fitting and rigging replacement flap systems.

**Duke, Neville DSO, OBE, DFC (2 bars), AFC, Czech Military Cross. (2003) 'Test Pilot'.** Grub Street. London. ISBN 1-904010-40-7. The current, 2003, edition was first published in hardback by Grub Street in 1992 and in 1997 as paperback, the first edition being published in 1953.

Anybody alive during the 1950s is likely to have heard the name Neville Duke and associate it with the Hawker Hunter. His record breaking run along the South Coast in 1953, when he set a new world airspeed record for a closed circuit in modified Hunter prototype WB188, will ensure his name continues to reverberate into the future. It is fair to say that the Royal Navy owes a debt of gratitude to Neville Duke for his fine

work in test flying two superb aircraft from the renowned Hawker stable, aircraft that played such an important part in the fixed wing operation of the Fleet Air Arm in the 1950s and 1960s, namely the Sea Hawk and the Hunter and their respective prototypes the P1040 and P1067.

Neville Duke carried out displayed fine airmanship when he landed the damaged WB188 when the port undercarriage was sucked out just at the start of a high speed practice run. The minimal damage to this valuable prototype from the successful two-point landing undoubtedly saved the Hunter development program and what was to become a much loved aircraft type. That Neville Duke had put in not a little practice at landing near wrecks during an illustrious wartime record (28 confirmed kills) probably had some bearing on his success in landing the troubled WB188

**Hiscock, Melvyn. (2003) 'Hawker Hurricane Inside and Out'. The Crowood Press. Marlborough, Wiltshire. ISBN 1-86126-630-8.**

This book provides a fascinating insight into the structure and fittings of another Sidney Camm masterpiece, that Cinderella of the Battle of Britain the Hawker Hurricane. This book is full of both general and detail photographs, mostly in colour, and is a must for those involved in restoration. This book could also be of interest to those who once worked on, or flew, these aircraft or who have retained an interest in aircraft structures.

**Hobbs, David. Cdr. RN (retired). MBE. (2003) 'Royal Navy Escort Carriers'. Maritime Books. Liskeard, Cornwall. ISBN 090777199-8**

This very detailed book fills an important gap in the literature which describes the World War 2 Royal Navy and its Fleet Air Arm. It is fair to say that the escort carriers had an effect on the allied war effort out of all proportion to their size, the size of their air-groups and of their initial cost.

The main section of this book details the history, of each escort carrier that served with the Royal Navy. Each history comprises a list of dates and the significant events that marked each date from build to ultimate fate. In some cases the hulls lasted into the 1970s with the ex-Attacker being converted into a floating hotel as the 'Philippine Tourist' in 1978, being gutted by fire in 1979 and towed to Hong Kong for breaking in 1980.

Such is the extent of this books coverage but there is more.

The numerous useful appendices include: Ship Names and Pennant Numbers, Pennant Numbers and Ship Names, Former United States Navy CVEs transferred to the Royal Navy (this list gives USN Name, Hull Number and RN Name), Escort Carriers built in the USA specifically for the RN, Deck Recognition Letters (with the provisos that some letters were duplicated and letters were frequently changed), Detailed Endurance Figures (based on HMS Smiter).

Appendix Six, 'Naval Air Squadrons Embarked in Escort Carriers', takes each individual carrier in turn and lists the embarked period for each naval air squadron along with the type and number of aircraft borne.

Appendix Seven, 'Escort Carriers – Technical Details', provides the leading particulars for each escort carrier class.

Appendix Eight, 'Alphabetical List of Convoy Code', is just what it 'says on the tin' and is a rare and useful compilation that will aid readers of other books that deal with World War Two convoys.

Appendix Nine, 'Aircrew Adventures', is the vehicle for two remarkable downed aircrew escape stories.

A comprehensive Glossary is followed by an Annex that contains a wealth of interesting photographs, taken aboard HMS Premier, of internal and external details which could represent the typical escort carrier.

David Hobbs has done a remarkable job in collating such a wealth of information and thus creating a most valuable work of reference.

My only, very minor, reservation is on the organisation of the main section where the carriers are taken in strict alphabetical order regardless of class. Thus, if reading the book from cover to cover in a linear fashion some mental readjustment with respect to leading particulars is required. Arrangement of the ships by class, and then alphabetical order within a class, would have perhaps eased this.

However, it really depends on how you approach a book such as this and I would not like to detract from the overall excellence of this work.

**Jones, Barry. (2003) 'British Experimental Turbojet Aircraft'. The Crowood Press. Marlborough, Wiltshire. ISBN 1-86126-621-9**

This excellent book contains a wealth of information on the many experimental types produced by the ever inventive British aircraft industry. Aircraft from Armstrong-Whitworth, Avro, Boulton Paul, Bristol, De Havilland, Gloster, Handley Page, Hawker, Hunting, Saunders-Roe, Fairey, Short, Supermarine are presented with superb colour three angle views along with extra views showing variants with marked detailed differences.

In any field of human endeavour we sometimes have to proceed down blind avenues so far to discover how not to do things. This book describes some aircraft that fall into that category, for example the stainless steel Bristol 188. However, other experimental aircraft described formed the basis for successful types. Types such as the Hawker P1040 (Sea Hawk), P1072 (Hunter) and Supermarine Type 525 (Scimitar).

Other aircraft covered by this book were research vehicles that aided the successful development of aircraft that had very successful service lives. Examples in this latter category are the Avro 707 series for the Avro 698 (Vulcan), Fairey Delta 2, HP115 and BAC 221 (Concorde), PI127 (Kestrel and Harrier).

Another cause of aircraft remaining experimental was official vacillation and often downright perverseness. Certainly the devastation inflicted on the British aircraft industry by the infamous Sandys' White Paper is an example of the latter. The potential for development from the Fairy Delta 2 is clear. What a wasted opportunity amongst many such.

**Kemp, Paul. (2000) 'Convoy! Drama in Arctic Waters'. Cassell Military Paperbacks. ISBN 0-304-35451-1**

Although a reprint of a book first published in 1993 this book should now be brought to the attention of those currently in authority who would delay the award of a medal to those who took part in the Russian Convoy campaign and associated operations.

This book provides the context within which some of those escort carriers described in David Hobbs' book operated. The book also demonstrates clearly the dramatic impact that an indigenous air group had on the survivability of ships in such convoys. This book provides another lesson for that re-learning that modern politicians appear to need.

**Twiss, Peter OBE, DSC. (2000) 'Faster Than The Sun'. Grub Street. London. ISBN 1-902304-43-8. This is a paperback edition of a book first published in hardback 1963.**

Faster Than The Sun is a vehicle for relating the story behind the Fairey Delta 2 test flights and subsequent world airspeed attempts in 1955. Peter Twiss's penmanship ensures that this book provides a very readable account within the context of his life.

The airmanship that Peter Twiss displayed in getting the aircraft back on the ground, in more or less one piece, with a dead-stick landing after suffering engine flame-out through fuel starvation at 30000 feet was quite extraordinary. Especially so considering the fact that he had to conserve his marginal hydraulic pressure for flying controls thus only with what was left could he lower the undercarriage, drooping the nose was out of the question. In the event only enough hydraulic pressure remained to lower and lock the nose-leg as Peter Twiss brought the aircraft in with his minimum angle of vision being slightly above parallel to the runway. Perhaps deck-landing had prepared him for this.

Subsequently, the superlative flying put in to fly through two virtual hoops at 38000 feet during the record runs, not once, not twice but repeatedly to achieve eventually success, even though the team didn't realise it at the time, is matchless.

Each hoop was directly above two time-linked recording cameras, one at RNAS Ford and one at a sewage farm near Chichester. Positional accuracy was essential whilst flying



through each of these hoops to ensure that the aircraft was captured on film through a very long focal length lens aimed precisely at a spot seven and a quarter miles up in the sky. Each run also had to be within strictly defined height limits to ensure that the recorded speed was achieved in level flight.

The fact that the FD2 carried only just enough fuel to climb to the required height, complete two supersonic runs and then return to base meant that there was a high probability of another dead-stick landing if Peter Twiss got things only slightly wrong. This book provides a fascinating account by a talented and courageous, yet modest and understated, man. Peter Twiss is another name which will echo down the history of aviation. If you have not read this book yet then go for it, although a detailed account of Peter Twiss's contribution to Gannet development will have to be looked for elsewhere.

**Wellham, John DSC. (2003) 'With Naval Wings'. Spellmount. Staplehurst. ISBN 1-86227-227-1**

'The Autobiography of a Fleet Air Arm Pilot in World War II' is the understated sub-title of this fascinating, and well written, account of one man's very varied war. John Wellham provides a superb account, as a participant, of the raid on Taranto. This however is only one part of the author's large contribution to the operations of the Fleet Air Arm during that war.

Those of you who like to have a laugh at the expense of the 'light blues', will doubtless chuckle over some of the content of page 14. No, I am not about to give the game away. Read the book. You will not regret the time thus spent.

**Woodman, Richard. (2000) 'Malta Convoys'. John Murray. London. ISBN 0-7195-5753-4**

'Not another such book,' I hear you groan, but wait, as time passes then fresh and germane material comes to light and in the right hands an informative, yet interesting account can be weaved. Richard Woodman has two important qualities for being 'the right hands'. Firstly he is a professional seaman and navigator of long standing, having been an officer and captain with the Blue Funnel (Alfred Holt) Line and also with Trinity House. Secondly he is a story weaver with considerable talent as readers of his Nathaniel Drinkwater novels know. If you are into the Hornblower and Patrick O'Brian genre and have run out of reading then look them out.

Without a doubt the endeavours and achievements of the Fleet Air Arm form a strong thread running through this account. The dire consequences of inadequate preparation in equipment and manpower terms prior to World War II are highlighted again and again.

This book should be a must read for all those who think fleets can operate in conflict zones without adequate air cover. Moreover air cover controlled by, and working with, the fleet that it is supposed to protect.

**FLEET AIR ARM FIXED-WING AIRCRAFT SINCE 1946****Ray Sturtivant with Mick Burrow and Lee Howard (ISBN 0 85130 283 1)**

At the end of the Second World War the strength of the Fleet Air Arm had reached around 11,000 first and second line aircraft, including reserves. These numbers soon began to shrink as American Lend-Lease aircraft were scrapped or returned and the service adjusted to lesser peacetime demands, the piston-engined carrier and training aircraft giving way to their jet-powered successors in the process. Over the ensuing decades the number of squadrons gradually declined, only a relative handful surviving. With the change to helicopters for many functions, and the demise of the fleet carriers, the only fixed-wing first-line aircraft now still in naval service are a relatively small number of Sea Harrier jump-jets, and even these are operated jointly with the RAF's Harriers.

In the period covered by this book, fixed wing naval aircraft saw considerable service between 1950 and 1953 during the Korean War, and were briefly in action during the Suez Campaign in late 1956. By the time of the Falkland War in late 1982 the only practical fixed-wing capacity was the few Sea Harrier squadrons, which acquitted themselves well.

This book gives detailed individual histories of all FAA aircraft flown from the beginning of 1946 until the present day, the earlier entries following on from those in the authors' previous book 'FAA Aircraft 1939 to 1945'. In all over 8,500 aircraft are covered, including those British-built aircraft which served in the post-war years with the Royal Canadian Navy and Royal Australian Navy carrying British serials. In most cases precise movement dates are given between units as well as details of both minor and major accidents including the names of aircrew involved. An index of names has nearly 7,000 entries.

One can safely say that no major air force has ever had its aircraft detailed in such depth and over such a lengthy period as has been achieved in this unique book, which reflects the efforts of nearly half a century of dedicated research into British post-war naval history by the main author.

This 576-page book includes over 200 black & white and colour illustrations of all the aircraft types involved as well as 16 pages of colour photographs and colour side views of FAA aircraft.

Air-Britain members £32.50\*, Non-members £48.00.

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E-mail [mike@absales.demon.co.uk](mailto:mike@absales.demon.co.uk)

Other Air-Britain publications are still available

(\*The lower prices for the books listed apply also to serving and former Fleet Air Arm members as well as members of the Society of Friends of the Fleet Air Arm Museum)

**PUBLICATION DUE APRIL/MAY 2004**

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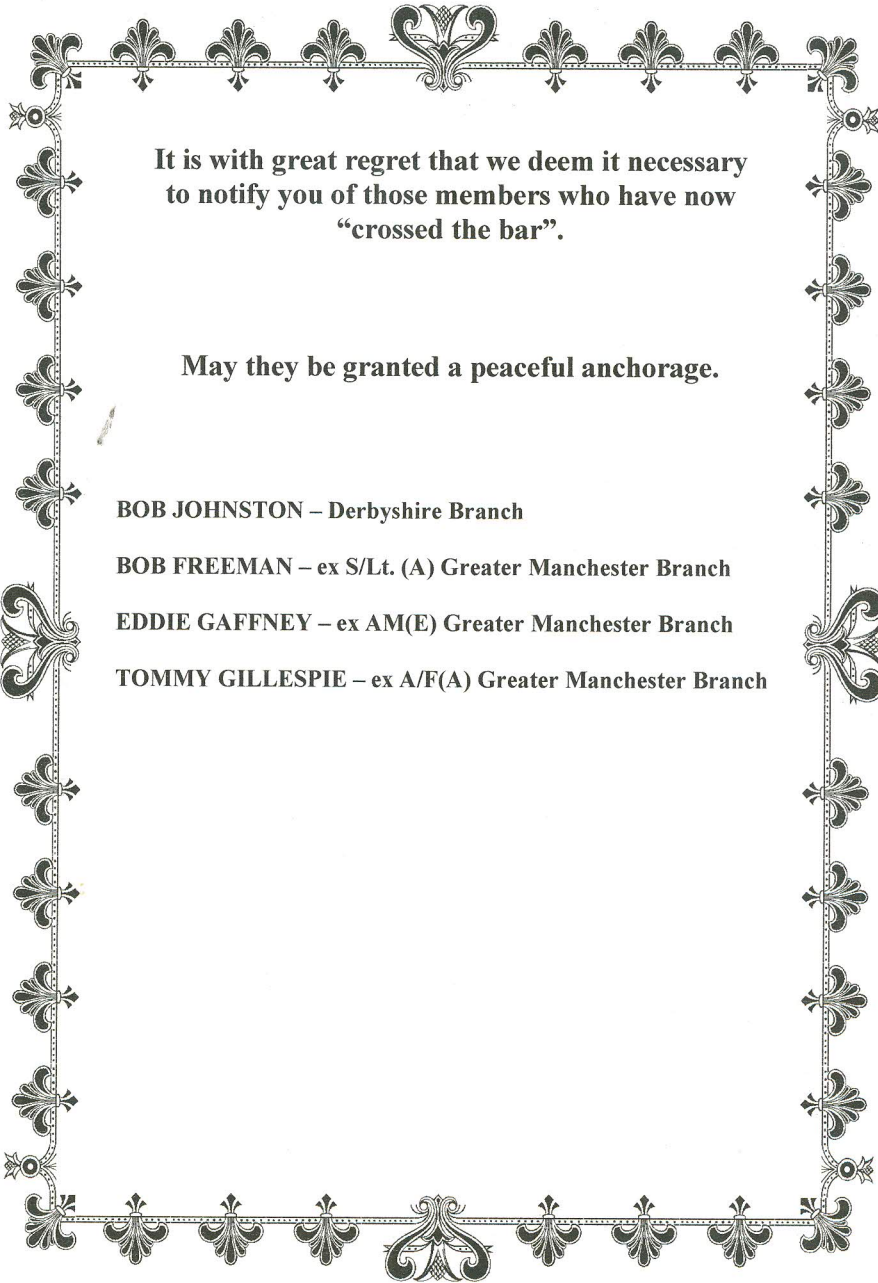
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It is with great regret that we deem it necessary  
to notify you of those members who have now  
“crossed the bar”.

May they be granted a peaceful anchorage.

**BOB JOHNSTON** – Derbyshire Branch

**BOB FREEMAN** – ex S/Lt. (A) Greater Manchester Branch

**EDDIE GAFFNEY** – ex AM(E) Greater Manchester Branch

**TOMMY GILLESPIE** – ex A/F(A) Greater Manchester Branch

## LIST OF ACCOUTREMENTS ON SALE FROM THE TREASURER. Summer 2003

ITEM	Cost (Incl. P&P)
Ties .....	£7.50
Gold Wire Blazer Badges.....	£11.00
Silk Emb. Blazer Badges .....	£8.50
Life Member Lapel Badges.....	£1.00
Members Lapel Badges (Gilt) .....	£1.50
Associate Members/Spouse Lapel Badges (Chrome) .....	£1.75
Ladies Head Scarves .....	£8.50
Beret Badges .....	£7.00
Car Stickers .....	£1.25
Membership Cards .....	£0.15

### ITEMS BOUGHT TO ORDER

Short Sleeve Pilot Shirt, in White or Sky Blue .....	£15.00
Long Sleeve Pilot Shirt, in White or Sky Blue .....	£15.00
Acrylic Sweaters .....	£16.75
Lambswool Sweaters .....	£25.00
Colours Available: White, Navy, Red, Light Blue (Acrylic ONLY), Black, Grey, Bottle Green and Royal Blue.	
Sizes when ordering: 32" to 56" in 2" stages. Shirts S, M, L, XL and XXL.	

Orders to the Treasurer. PAYMENT WITH ORDER PLEASE. Cheques made payable to the Fleet Air Arm Association (National).

Items will be ordered by the Treasurer and sent direct from the supplier to the purchaser. The invoice will be sent to the Treasurer in order to prevent non Members of the Association from purchasing these items.

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