

The Airey Fairey

Journal of The FLEET/AIR ARM Association



Issue 9 Winter 2002 – 2003





**NATIONAL FLEET AIR ARM
ASSOCIATION**

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Contributions for inclusion in "The Airey Fairey", the official journal of the National 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.

**THE DEADLINE FOR THE
NEXT ISSUE (SUMMER)
IS 30th May 2003**

We have had some changes to the National Executive Committee since the last issue (No. 8) therefore the cast list will be repeated here.

Chairman	William (Bill) Watson	01273 890757
Vice Chairman	Barry Simons	01825 872539
Secretary	Eric (Tug) Wilson	01952 541622
Membership Secretary	Arnold Thompson	02392 786443
Treasurer	Ben Worship	01329 284917
PRO	Ron Sandry	01179 509638

Elected Members

Brian Bingham
01903 770295

Len Owen
01332 514030

Fred Wadley
02088982560

ex Officio

Vice Presidents

Ron Golightly
02088 945234

Terry Labalestier
01214 445011

National Standard Bearer

Sheena Mewha

EDITORIAL

There was a well known golden rule in the service about not volunteering for anything. I do not recall actually volunteering for the editorship of **The Airey Fairey**. It happened more by accident whilst exchanging email with the previous editor. Barry having discovered that I was quite familiar with computers wondered if I would consider the job. I replied in the affirmative, not thinking for one minute that I would end up on a short list of one. Perhaps everybody else heeded that old golden rule.

Barry Simons has done a sterling job in getting this journal off the ground and I aim to manage things as well as he. However, this magazine is your magazine as well as our magazine. It is a co-operative venture and can only be as good as the content. To ensure continued interesting content I do need your help by the submission of interesting tales and reminiscences.

Without a doubt we are a dwindling band but one with a wealth of interesting experiences to relate. It is inevitable that sooner or later all these memories will be lost unless recorded somewhere. Many of you may be aware of 'The Fleet Air Arm Handbook 1939 - 1945' by David Wragg. Now I am not sure if there is a similar volume to cover the post WW2 years in preparation, perhaps there ought to be. At the very least, we could ensure that the experiences of many of our members are recorded for posterity here before it is too late. This journal could then become a source for the person writing a sequel to the 'The Fleet Air Arm Handbook 1939 - 1945'.

At this juncture I would like to re-iterate a point made by Barry (Issue 7) " " that many submissions are obviously cut from other sources and un-accredited, this despite the previous editor's warnings about breach of copyright. Such material cannot be used without written permission from the copyright holder being submitted with the material. Photographs in newspapers and magazines are not of sufficient quality for copying, only originals will do.

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

I am also willing to accept original text articles by email. Pictures are a different matter. Please do not email these until we have discussed file formats and compression etc. Also I would be obliged that you look for the settings in your email client (program), typically Outlook Express, that ensures e-mail is set to send as **Plain Text** and **not** as the default setting of HTML as I do not use Windows for email. If unsure I can advise.

I am considering the possibility of increasing the frequency of publication of this journal. Many journals produced by other organisations such as ours are quarterly or three times a year. I do need more submissions from members. Lack of material has been the prime reason behind the delay of this issue. Moans about this delay have been reported but I certain that these would have been louder if you received a magazine cut down to 16 pages.

Perhaps there would be more support for **The Airey Fairey** if there were more issues per year. The magazine could have much more immediacy with reports of events around the branches and those planned for the future. It would also offer a chance to publish many more of those 'Lamp Swinging' tales that you are about to swamp me with. You are aren't you?

Please let me have your feedback on this. Whilst I can understand the sensitivity of some members to any extra charges that this may involve I do feel that it could be beneficial in the long term by increasing appeal and thus numbers of copies produced. It could be that if we can increase circulation over certain thresholds then the costs per copy could actually drop.

As you will already have noticed the cover of this issue of The Airey Fairey is radically different to its predecessors. Apart from giving this journal a fresh look, a redesign provided the opportunity to print many more coloured images than previously.

Thus greater coverage of the, unlikely to be repeated in our life-time, event of Laying-up of the Old and Dedication of the New standards was possible. The unique nature of this event is also why I have given it prominent coverage within the journal's pages, so that those who could not attend get a feel for the atmosphere of the day.

THE NATIONAL STANDARD

*The 'Laying Up' of the Old and
The Dedication of the New*

Chairman's Address (for The Airey Fairey):

As most of you will be aware the Association have acquired a new Standard which was dedicated in Saint Bartholomew Church at Yeovilton on Wednesday September 4th 2002 with the old Standard being 'laid up' in the Church during the same ceremony.

The service, conducted by the incumbent minister The Reverend Mark Jackson and the Reverend Peter Clark, was one of the better services of Dedication I have attended.

Peter, who served 27 years in the RN as a PTI leaving in the rate of Chief Petty Officer before taking the cloth, is an Honorary Member of Eastbourne Branch of the FAAA and ministers to the Parish of East Hoathly in East Sussex where I am sure you will always be made welcome at his services.

The event which has been mentioned by many as one which will never be repeated was generally voted a success by most who attended and contrary to some opinion was neither hastily nor badly organised. I believe we owe a great debt of gratitude to the Commanding Officer of HMS Heron and his officers. Particularly the AWSO Lt Dunkley RN who was extremely helpful, cheerful and worked very hard on our behalf.

The buffet was meant to be precisely that, not a main meal and the cost of labour it must be remembered does not come lightly.

The Committee have some problems to overcome but I feel we are up to the task and as I have said before I welcome constructive criticism. With the cooperation of all our members we can maintain the standards we have always enjoyed. Remember, it is your Association, you made it good, only you can keep it good.

William (Bill) Watson. Chairman, National FAAA

The following Press Release was issued by the National Fleet Air Arm Association:

On September 4th 2002 at the Fleet Air Arm Memorial Church, St. Bartholomew Church, R.N.A.S. Yeovilton nearly 200 Association members and guests assembled to witness The Laying-up of the Old and The Dedication of the New Standard.

The Old Standard was presented by John Grant, the New by Don Armstrong-Rich. The service was conducted by The Reverend Mark Jackson R.N. and The Reverend Peter Clark. Musical accompaniment, including the Last Post and Reveille, was provided by the Royal Marine Band C.T.U. Lympstone.

Following the dedication service a march past of Association members was led by the National Standards, of the Fleet Air Arm Association, Royal Naval Association, Association of WRNS, Aircraft Handlers Association and 13 standards representing Association Branches. RNA No. 4 Area and Branches, Merchant Navy Association Branches and TS Vindicatrix (MN).

The salute was taken by the Association Patron, Admiral Sir Raymond Lygo KCB and the Fleet Air Arm Association President Bill Watson with a flypast by the Swordfish 'City of Leeds' (piloted by Lt. Cdr. Bill Murton with Mr Tony Smith and Mr Neil 'Fraz' Fraser in the back as ballast -Ed.) of the Historic Flight.

The day was rounded off with a buffet and liquid refreshments in the Nuffield Centre.

The Association wish to thank Commodore Covington, RNAS Yeovilton and his Staff for all their assistance in making it a memorable day.

*Ron Sandry
P.R.O. Fleet Air Arm Association*

For those of you interested and with internet access information on the Swordfish Heritage Trust can be found at: <http://www.yeovilton.org.uk/>

I thought the following small excerpts from the Order of Service to be worth including here for the benefit of those who could not be present.

THE BIDDING

Chaplain: 'We meet together in the presence of God to take part in the hallowing and dedication of the new Standard of the Fleet Air Arm Association which is to represent to you your duty to God, your Queen and your Country and to witness thereby to the purposes and ideals of the Fleet Air Arm Association. Wherefore I call upon you who are members of this Association and the whole congregation here present to pray humbly to Almighty God that he will bless this Standard now to dedicate to His Glory and that His grace may be granted you to carry out the high aims that you share.'

The National Standard Bearer will then present the New Standard to the Chaplain saying: 'Reverend Sir, we have brought this new symbol of our brotherhood that it may be hallowed and made worthy. We pray therefore to bid God's blessing upon it.'

Chaplain: 'I am glad to do so. Members of The Fleet Air Arm Association you have come to renew your pledge of service and to ask the blessing of God upon your Standard which is to represent to you your duty to God, your Queen and your Country. Are you ready renew your pledge?'

Answer: 'We are ready.'

Chaplain: 'Will you honour the Standard now committed to you?'

Answer: 'We will honour the Standard.'

Chaplain: 'May God prosper your Association, accept your service and keep you steadfast in your obedience to his will, to the service of God and of our fellows.'

Answer: 'We pledge ourselves.'

Chaplain: 'In continual remembrance of our pledge and in token of our resolve faithfully to keep it –'

Answer: 'We dedicate our Standard.'

The Chaplain then places the Standard on the Altar and unfurls it saying:

'In the faith of Jesus Christ we dedicate and set apart this Standard to be a sign of our duty towards our Queen and our country in the sight of God.'

In the name of The Father, and of The Son and of The Holy Spirit. AMEN

Standards in Attendance

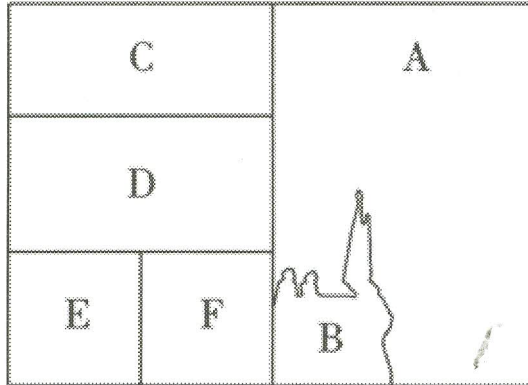
National Standards

FAA Association (Old)	–	John Grant
FAA Association (New)	–	Don Armstrong-Rich
RN Association	–	Ron Smith
Association of Wrens	–	Carol Gibbons
Aircraft Handlers Association	–	Ray Wrigglesworth

Branch, RNA & MN Standards

Birmingham	–	S.Dutton
Bristol	–	Eric Pitt
Derby	–	D.Massey
Eastbourne	–	not paraded
Greater Manchester	–	Len Milward
Solent	–	Ron Chitty
Watford	–	J.Russell
Yeovil	–	Bob Ridout
N ^o 4 Area RNA	–	Joy Haskins
Frome RNA	–	D.Haskins
Watford RNA	–	K.Sutterthwaite
T.S.Vindicatrix (MN)	–	John Davies
Merchant Navy Association	–	'Wings' Barry
Merchant Navy Association	–	Dave Caple

A key with captions was thought to be the simplest means of providing essential information, and credits to the cover pictures:



- A Admiral Sir Raymond Lygo K.C.B., FAAA Patron, is presented with an Association shield by the FAAA Chairman Bill Watson. Picture: The Editor.
- B Standard bearer Don Rich (Eastbourne), parading the new National Standard before Admiral Sir Raymond Lygo KCB and Bill Watson. Picture: Photographic Section, HMS Heron.
- C Standards bearers formed up prior to the start of the programme of flying display, church service and parade. Picture: The Editor.
- D Swordfish 'City of Leeds' conducting a 'salute' flypast piloted by Lt. Cdr. Bill Murton with Mr Tony Smith and Mr Neil 'Fraz' Fraser in the back. Picture: The Editor.
- E FAAA Chairman Bill Watson escorting Admiral Sir Raymond Lygo K.C.B., Rear Admiral Scott Lidbetter, Flag Officer Maritime Aviation and Commander Peter Morgan, DSC, Executive Officer HMS Heron, to St Bartholemew Church. Picture: The Editor.
- F Standards turned and about to lead off into the church. Picture: The Editor.

News From Around the Branches

Bournemouth & District Branch

Our year has been a busy one, Cdr. Bryan Woods giving a most interesting talk on Mac ships. We had quite a few who worked and flew on that Atlantic run, One of our late members Ray Jeffs, who flew from those Mac ships, gave us some wonderful talks including his exploits on the Lilly Pad. He is sadly missed.

Then we had Terry Bullingham, who was a speaker with a wonderful command of words and experience. He was terrific. Those of you who have not heard him are sadly missing out.

Thanks to our PRO Ted Phillips we have welcomed four new members.

If any of you feel like a trip to Bournemouth a welcome awaits you at The Flying Club on the fourth Friday of the month for 1930

Jo Towler

Bristol & District Branch

Pride of place in our events must go to the Laying Up of the Old National FAAA Standard and dedication of the New at the FAA Church Yeovilton on Wednesday 4th September 2002. I presented Bristol Branch Standard and 19 members also attended. Before we marched to the Church most would have noticed the cloud of smoke in the direction of the RNHF [Royal Naval Historic Flight - Ed.], and not long afterwards above us came the Swordfish (this must have brought back memories for WW II veterans).

Our branch Standard was presented and members took part in the parade and Drum Head service at the RAFA [Royal Air Force Association - Ed.] Wesbury-on-Trym, Bristol on Sunday 15th September 2002. It's not widely known that Fleet Air Arm pilots took part in the Battle of Britain. We continue to support the RNHF and are nearing our average donation total of £1,000 per year.

Eric Pit, Chairman

Derbyshire Branch

The Derbyshire Branch of the FAAA were amongst those who paraded their standard in front of H.M. Queen Elizabeth at the Pride Park Stadium (home

of Derby County F.C.) on August 1st 2002. Standard bearer was Dave Massey and Tom Bowen had a 'chat' with the Duke.

Comments on The Standards Ceremony of 4th September 2002, 'The service at St. Bortholemew's Church went down very well, the Church was packed, and the servicewas quite impressive, music was provided by a RM band. After the service, we were entertained to some nostalgic flying by a Fairy Swordfish from the Historic Flight. The event was concluded by a buffet and a good old natter at the Nuffield Club before we departed. Thanks go to Dave Massey, our standard bearer, who as usual did our branch proud and also for doing the driving there and back.

One of our own branch members, George Offley, is now the editor of the Ottawa/Hull Naval Association newsletter in Ontario, Canada. George is a fully paid up member of our branchIt is nice to know that our Fleet Air Arm Association branch is represented overseas.

Tom Bowen

Solent Branch

The year started with our annual Christmas draw with approximately £700-£800 of prizes and about 50 members turning up at our HQ, namely Lee-on-Solent Community Centre. This was followed by a very successful and entertaining Burns Night Supper and Dance held in the WOs' mess HMS Collingwood. Our annual visit, with a full coach of members, to the Albert Hall and the Mountbatten Festival of Music in February was thoroughly enjoyed as were the pre-show drinks at the mews pub, the Ennismore Arms.

March saw many of us in Amsterdam where The Airborne Museum at Arnhem was visited as were Vollandam, Delft and the Delft Factory. Another highlight was an entertaining canal boat trip through Amsterdam.

A Jubilee Bar-B-Q was held at the Fleetlands football club and more good food was consumed at a most successful Taranto Night Dinner, with 180 people in attendance, held in HMS Collingwood's WOs' mess with the guest of honour being Sir Michael Layard K.C.B., CBE. We raised £200 for the Rowans Hospice at Purbrook .

A children's hospice, Naomi House Sutton Scotney has had money raising support from our branch for a number of years. Recently John Grant

(Chairman Solent Branch) , Paul Saynor (President and PRO WO's Mess, Collingwood) and I visited to hand over a further cheque for £100 to add to the previous presentation of two £400 plus rocking chairs. Naomi House has eight bedrooms and excellent facilities, including accommodation for family members, to help provide that all round care that very disabled and terminally ill children benefit from so much.

Ralph Wintle, Social Secretary.

Watford Branch

It is with great sadness that we report that two of our members have 'crossed the bar'. Tony Pullin, our President, crossed the bar on the 10th June 2002. Tony was Lieutenant DSC, RNVR. He received the DSC for gallantry, skill and devotion to duty in a highly successful air attack on the U-boat base at Kålbøtn [Norway - Ed.] in May 1945. He was Senior Pilot on 882 Squadron Wildcats on HMS Searcher and was involved in raids on Tirpitz and later served in the Far East. Tony missed his first ship by a day due to wartime railway disruption. Rather a good thing for him as that it turned out for that ship was HMS Hood. George Fawn, a relatively new member who had not enjoyed the best of health, had been a fitter on 882 Squadron at the time Tony had been Senior Pilot.

Eric Gower, who is a branch founder member, one who has given faithful service to both the FAAA and the RNA, was unanimously chosen for the post of President which he accepted considering it an honour. It was with great pleasure that we honoured Doug Wyatt with Branch Life Membership following his release from National Chairman.

We offer many thanks to our Social Secretary John Russell, ably assisted by his good lady Betty for the organisation that went into our four day break at Warners, at Lakeside in May. The Summer Social at our meeting place T.S. Renown was a good evening, the excitement of the dreaded Beetle Drive endangering our hearts.

Ray Thomas, Chairman

Scarborough Re-union 2003

This is intended to be held at St. Nicholas Hotel, Scarborough from Friday 3rd October 2003 until Monday 6th October 2003.

A Stand-Eazzzy (Wake up at the back there!) Quiz

Numbers in brackets indicate previous Airey Fairey Issues that may help.

1. Founding branches of the Fleet Air Arm association. (2)
2. The renowned FAA pilot who carried out the first carrier landing by a jet aircraft.
3. Ugly duckling of a torpedo bomber that looked anything but as sleek as its piscine namesake, an appraisal of which appears in the book 'Wings of the Navy' by answer to 2 above. (1 & 4)
4. Name of the last WW2 FAA operation in Europe. (3)
5. A conundrum of code with loose Elgar associations. (8)
6. Naval counterpart of the Supermarine Spiteful.
7. The Holman projector threw light on a subject or a hand-grenade, which? (7)
8. Number of the first Naval Air Squadron, formed 2nd May 1933 - which also had an Elgar (loose) connection. (5)
9. 'Hot Rod' name for an aircraft conceived as a fighter but which eventually entered FAA service as a torpedo bomber to late for WW2 but of which Mk IVs, of 813 Squadron, took part in the Victory flypast over London in June 1946.
10. Prominent connection between Russian SAM Kotlin 365 'Bravvy' and the FAAA.
11. Colloquial term for the class of 8 pre-Dreadnought battleships two of which, Africa & Hibernia, were the vessels used for the first aircraft launch from a British warship, moored and under way respectively.
12. Name the ships which were the following Royal Naval Air Stations, clues in brackets for those too young to remember:

RNAS Abbotsinch	HMS (Calidris alba)
RNAS Donibristle	HMS (Falco columbarius)
RNAS Eglinton	HMS (Sula bassana)
RNAS Evanton	HMS (Turdus pilaris)
RNAS Stretton	HMS (Sylvia atricapilla)
RNAS Worthy Down	HMS (Falco tinnunculus)

Now, back on your heads readers!

This is how you will need to be if you want to cheat using page 26.

A Tribute to Eddie Humphries, Bristol & District Branch.

It was reported in the previous issue of the Airey Fairey (8) that Eddie Humphries had 'crossed the bar'. It may not be common knowledge that Eddie was a serial benefactor to his branch and that after his passing his widow Win, abiding by his request, donated a signed photographic print of the last FAA Field Gun run to the Patchway HQ of The Royal British Legion. It is therefore by request I include this story by S/M Eddie Humphries:

In 1953 while serving as a L/AM (E) on H.M.S. GLORY during the Korean War, we frequently visited the royal Naval Air Repair Station at Iwakuni, Japan. Volunteers were called for to replace existing personnel at Iwakuni, apart from suitability (trade etc) a deciding factor was time spent at sea allowing a break from sea life. However I was lucky enough to be among the chosen few, so on the next visit to Iwakuni I was to join the Repair Section. One of the first jobs I had was to fit 'drop tanks' to a Sea Fury.

This was very routine and caused no problems. However on completion, the Petty Officer who supervised and was responsible to over sign my work decided to carry out a full engine power check. The Fury was secured to the concrete apron with a 'Belly band' and I took up my position on the wing tip as he grinned at me from the cockpit and gave the start engine signal. I seem to remember the coughs and splutters, usually an indication of a badly primed engine, and then clearing into a more normal running note. After the warming up period he gave me the signal that he was about to carry out a full power check, which proved OK.

Fuel transfer from the drop tanks was checked, being visible through the transparent pipes. The P.O. throttled back to slow running with a big grin on his face and the accompanying thumbs up. Suddenly there was an almighty bang as the two drop tanks jettisoned from the wings, the one on my side just missing my feet. The broad grin on the P.O.'s face turned into a look of disbelief, it was my turn to have a grin on my face. The P.O. had completed the test to its ultimate and had proved to me that to my credit even the jettison mechanism worked.

Being full of fuel and made out of light gauge metal it didn't do the tanks much good, the P.O. had that "It came off in me hand Chief look on his face

as he went off to explain to his superiors. To end this short tale I shall never forget this incident and I doubt if the Petty Officer (Anon) ever will. A visit to the stores "Two more drop tanks please" and away we go again. (ARE YOU THAT P.O.?).

There is a World Wide Web (WWW or W³) site dedicated to British Forces in the Korean War which may be of interest:

<http://www.britains-smallwars.com/korea/British-Forces.html>

When I Joined Up

A long time ago I got a letter in a brown envelope with O.H.M.S. on it. The letter invited me to go to Butlin's Holiday Camp in Sheerness. When I got there they gave me a new suit, it was dark blue with flared trousers and a little round hat. They offered me half a dozen jobs, and I chose Air Mechanic because I thought that it would give me more chance not to get my feet wet.

They then put me working on flying machines, not the ones of today with holes at the front, these had big fans and Infernal Consumption engines. The men that took them up into the air are called pilots. We must have had two Chinese because I kept hearing the others talking about WON WING LO and WOT WENT WONG. I heard a lot about them so they must have been popular!

Then they put me on a big ship with a flat roof!

Yours Aye - Ronnie (Dixie) Dean, Daedalus Branch

A POST-WAR TRAGEDY

I anxiously waited for the beginning of the year 1948. In January I would be 17 and I had already received notification to attend the RN Recruiting Office in Southampton on the 3rd of February. To cut a long story short, I arrived at the Recruiting Office as instructed and after passing the various tests, I was told to wait until August, when I would then be old enough to join the Royal Navy.

On 17th August 1948 I joined the service, at H.M.S. Royal Arthur, Corsham, Wilts. After surviving an initial six weeks of square bashing and instruction, I had elected to become a Naval Airman. On the 9th of October 1948, together with many other 17 year-old classmates, I was drafted to H.M.S. Illustrious for an initial course of introduction into the Fleet Air Arm.

Needless to say I was completely 'green' to the ways of carrier life and the ship was so crowded that, with a few others I found the only space left to sling my hammock was on the cable deck, where the ship had great open sides. This allowed the October wind and spray to blow across the deck and this together with the movement of the ship made my introduction to sleeping in a hammock a very cold and uncomfortable experience.

Gradually, together with my fellow-classmates, I began to learn the daily routine on board ship. At this time, H.M.S. Illustrious was steaming up and down the Channel, landing on such aircraft as Sea Hornets, Barracuda's, Firefly 1's and even an early Sea Vampire.

The ship usually made port at night and on several occasions we anchored in Portland Harbour. It is quite a large harbour and at the time there were several well known 'big ships' anchored there, such as the Battleship 'King George V'. Weymouth was a popular nighttime venue and we would line up for inspection, before catching the liberty boat for a 'run ashore'.

On the night of Sunday 24th October 1948, I was duty watch and stuck on board, while many of my young mates went off for a night out in Weymouth. For some reason a strong feeling of foreboding came over me, like a heavy dark weight pressing down on me. I could not understand or explain the feeling, which persisted all that evening.

I had always been a bit arty' and often drew cartoons and sketched aircraft and ships. On this particular night I sat down and drew a sketch of the sea and a looming black figure, with outstretched arms, rising out of the sea, it was very macabre.

After finishing my duties for the night, I jumped into my hammock and tried to sleep. My sleep was fitful, with moving figures and raised voices, disturbing my sleep. Finally, came the dawn. It was then that I discovered the terrible event that had occurred the previous night.

The H.M.S. *Illustrious*, 'liberty boat', a pinnacle under the command of a Midshipman and crammed with sailors returning from their run ashore, had hit rough weather and heavy seas in Portland Harbour. It had overturned and 29 sailors were missing, feared drowned. The majority of them were young Naval Airmen, many only seventeen and some eighteen. The tragedy hit the newspaper headlines the following day. Many of my friends, I would never see again.

It was something that you might expect in war, but it was a tragedy in peacetime and took many young lives.

On the 29th of October 1948 we fortunate few, the remnants of the Naval Airman Training Class, were drafted off H.M.S. *Illustrious* and taken to a Naval Air Station in the Midlands.

Omar Fowler (Ex - L/A (E) 1948 - 1956

On Courage

An Apophthegm published in the Shearwater Aviation Museum (Canada) Foundation Newsletter, Spring 2002.

As was the Young Fighter Pilots story which follows it.

Courage is not the absence of fear but rather the judgement that something else is more important than fear. The brave do not live forever but the cautious do not live at all. The key is to allow yourself to make the journey. You will be travelling along the road between who you think you are and who you can be.

Terry Goddard

Young Fighter Pilots

There was a squadron party in the woods and suddenly there was a downpour of thunder and rain.

Two young fighter pilots ran for about 10 minutes in the pouring rain, finally reaching their car just as the rain let up. They jumped in the car, started it up and headed down the road, laughing and of course, still drinking one beer after the other.

Suddenly an old Indian man's face appeared on the passenger side and tapped on the window! The passenger screamed, "Eeeekkk! Look at my window!!! There's an old Indian guy's face there!" (Was this a ghost?!?!?!?) The old Indian man kept knocking, so the driver said, "Well open the window a little and ask him what he wants!" So the fighter pilot rolled his window down part way and, scared out of his wits, said, "What do you want???" The old Indian replied, "You have! any tobacco?" The fighter pilot, terrified, looked at the driver and said, "He wants tobacco." "Well give him a cigarette! HURRY!!!" the driver replied. So he fumbles around with the pack and handed the old man a cigarette and yelled, "Step on it!!!" rolling up the window in terror. The pilot presses the gas pedal up to 80 MPH, they calm down and they start laughing again, and the other pilot said, "What do you think of that?" The driver replied, "I don't know. How could that be? I was going pretty fast."

Suddenly there was a knock on the window AGAIN and there was the old Indian man. "Aaaaaaaaaaaaaa, there he is again!" the fighter pilot yelled. "Well see what he wants now!" yelled back the driver. He rolled down the window a little ways and in a shaky voice said, "Yes?" "Do you have a light?" the old Indian quietly asked. The passenger threw a lighter out the window at him, rolled up the window and yelled, "STEP ON IT!"

They are now going about 100 MPH and still guzzling beer, trying to forget what they had just seen and heard, when again there was another knock! "Oh my God! HE'S BACK!" He rolled down the window and screamed out in stark fear, "WHAT DO YOU WANT?" The old man gently replied, "You fighter pilots need some help getting out of the mud?"

Anon

Minas Gerais - ex HMS Vengeance

There has been some talk around the Association of moves to buy and bring the Brazilian aircraft carrier Minas Gerais back to the UK as a museum and tourist attraction. The thinking is that this ship is the last of the Light Fleet Colossus Class carriers which served with the Royal and Commonwealth Navies and thus the last example of a typical British aircraft carrier.

Reports have appeared in many newspapers, including The Daily Telegraph and also on television news bulletins for example the BBC. For those Net connected have a look at:

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2002/06/16/nmod16.xml> and <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/2126607.stm> for relevant articles.

An internet search has turned up a site entitled 'Friends of HMS Vengeance' at: <http://www.fleetairarmarchive.net/vengeance/Index.html> which is the work of Graham Falkner-Drucker.

Graham's interest in matters Fleet Air Arm apparently stems from an uncle Lt Cdr R.S. Baker-Falkner, DSO, DSC, who was 8th Naval TBR Wing (comprising 827 and 830 Barracuda Squadrons) leader for the attacks on Tirpitz in 1944.

This site informs of attempts being made to affiliate with a number of Fleet Air Arm and Naval organisations in the UK and abroad including in Brazil and Australia, one of which was the Fleet Air Arm Museum at Yeovilton. Telephone conversation with the curator of the FAA Museum revealed that he was unaware of this.

The FAA Museum curator also pointed out that the costs of buying, moving and keeping such a vessel would be enormous. Those aware of the campaign to save the C Class destroyer Cavalier will have a feel for the gargantuan task involved in raising cash to buy, move, restore and maintain a vessel the size of an aircraft carrier, albeit a relatively small 'light fleet' type.

Would such a 'tourist attraction' berthed somewhere on the south coast of England drain resources from existing ships and museums which are just keeping their heads above water or would it add to the attraction of the area and boost the visitor numbers for these? This is a question that also deserves serious consideration.

Also Minas Gerais has been extensively rebuilt above the waterline and has a markedly angled flight deck. Radar and communications fits are not original thus the ship bears little resemblance to the original Colossus Class as would have served with the RN and RAN.

Light Fleet Carriers of the Royal Navy – A potted history.

The attrition of Royal Navy aircraft carriers during the early war years along with the need to provide adequate fighter cover for fleets in home waters, the Mediterranean and Far East indicated a need for carriers to be rapidly increased in numbers. The Illustrious class were thought too expensive in materials and build times for a rapid increase in numbers based upon this design. Thus the DNC finally decided on cheaper merchant vessel type hulls (but with greater sub-division), designed by Vickers-Armstrong because of full commitments elsewhere, with reduced defensive armament and no armour so that merchant shipping yards could rapidly construct to a target time of 21 months.

In the event only four, Colossus, Vengeance, Venerable and Glory, were completed before VE-day with the completion of Ocean between then and VJ-day. The remaining three, Theseus, Triumph and Warrior completing after the war along with the two aircraft repair carriers Perseus and Pioneer. Six vessels of the similar, but slightly heavier, Majestic class followed; Hercules, Leviathan, Magnificent, Majestic, Powerful and Terrible. The distinctly larger Hermes Class of four vessels, Albion, Bulwark, Centaur and Hermes followed in slow time during the 1950s.

These light fleet carriers proved attractive to many navies other than the Royal Navy. Colossus went to France as Arromanches, Venerable to the Dutch as the Karel Doorman and then Argentina as 25 de Mayo, Warrior also ended up with Argentina as Independencia, Hercules to India as Vikrant, Magnificent to Canada (returning to RN reserve in 1957), Majestic and Terrible to Australia as Melbourne and Sydney respectively and Powerful went to Canada as Bonaventure (the 'Bonnie').

Vengeance went to Australia from 1952 until 1955, being then returned to RN reserve until sold to Brazil in 1956.

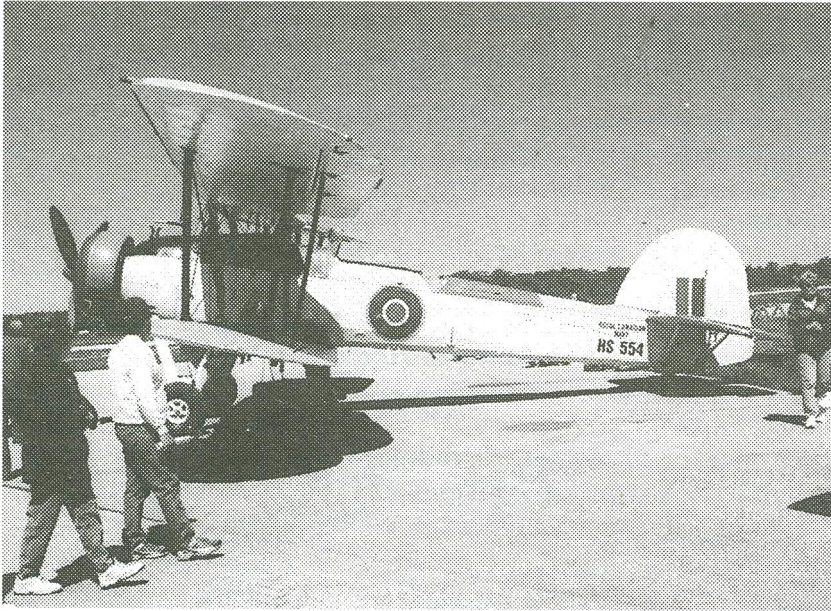
For those interested there is a H.M.S. Vengeance Association which has a WWW site at: <http://www.hms.vengeance.btinternet.co.uk/vassoc.htm>

A Flying Swordfish in Canada

This brief article has been prompted the kind submission of material, including a 6x4 colour print, from Jo Towler of Bournemouth Branch who was sent it by their Canadian member Les Wellington.

Les had written a brief article to provide background for the Fairey Swordfish that was to appear at the 2002 Collingwood (Ontario, Canada) Air Show. Les is Director of Aircraft Maintenance for the Canadian Classic Aircraft Foundation situated at Collingwood airport.

The picture below is a monochrome reproduction of a crop from the photograph of what purports to be Swordfish Mk II HS554.



In an article 'A Swordfish Flies in Canadian Skies' by David Blais in Aviator Magazine September 2001 it is stated that HS554 was originally a Mk IV but has now been restored as a Mk II. However, according to W.A. Harrison in 'Fairey Swordfish and Albacore' (Crowood Aviation Series, The Crowood Press, Ramsbury, Wilt's. ISBN 1 86126 512 3) HS 554 was one of the eighth batch of the fourth group (of 400) built by Blackburn under Contract No. B.31192/39 as a Mk II.

The Mark IV Swordfish was a MK II with an enclosed cockpit which stretched from pilot to rear gunner, the latter having a clamshell type forward pivoting canopy to clear the machine gun arc. The cockpit cover modification was installed as protection against the extremely cold air encountered by crews flying with N^o. 1 Naval Air Gunners School from the Canadian base at Yarmouth, Nova Scotia.

The first Swordfish Mk. IVs were taken on by N^o. 1 Naval Air Gunners School in February 1944. HS554 did all the test and approval flying in the UK. This aircraft and all the Mk IIs at Britannia Royal Naval College were sent to Yarmouth for their modification. Other MK IIs on the strength of N^o. 1 Naval Air Gunners School were modified locally. Thus HS554 has a rather unique claim to fame if the current airframe is based upon the original of HS554, but is it?

David Blais writes, 'Bob Spence (Spence in Harrison - Ed.) bought his first derelict Swordfish at the Ernie Simmons (Simmonds in Harrison - Ed.) estate sale near Tillsonburg on Labour Day Weekend 1970. Along with two friends, Ted Sharp and Bob Tinney, he purchased HS554 for \$1,630'. Three more derelict Swordfish were purchased for spares and patterns in succeeding years. Harrison writes that, '...Ernest Simmonds, an eccentric collector of military hardware, bought seven for £15 each and put them in his collection.' (Never mind the Antiques Road Show, hang onto those junk aircraft bits. - Ed.)

HS554 consists of about sixty percent new parts, including the wing and tail spars the SAE 1345 steel for which had to come from Britain. These spars posed a particular challenge as did the fabric wing coverings which were sewn by Mrs Nina Turner of Utica, Michigan. Inspections and technical advice were provided by two AME's Al Woyatz and Watt Martin.

Other Swordfish projects are apparently in progress. Keep us informed please Les. By-the-way Les; the Swordfish 'arguably the ugliest aircraft ever designed'. Avro Bison or Blackburn Blackburn anybody? There I'm arguing.

With thanks to Jo Towler and Les Wellington. I had planned to use this material for a more thorough look at the Swordfish in the next issue because of a local (Solent area) Swordfish hero and a painting of one of his exploits. Can I hang on to the material for the time being Jo?

The Book-Shelf

A selection of books that some may find of interest.

Those known to be NOT in print annotated thus: NIP

Robbins, Guy. (2001) 'The Aircraft Carrier Story 1908 - 1945'. Cassell & Co, ISBN 0 304 35308 6. Describes the development and use of naval aviation in the RN, USN and IJN. Includes detailed coverage of the early years, particularly those events appertaining to the vacillation of policy for, and difficult genesis of, naval aviation in the RN during WWI, and after.

Wragg, David. (2001) 'The Fleet Air Arm Handbook 1939 - 1945'. Sutton Publishing, ISBN 0 7509 2596 5. Includes; historical background, overview of wartime operations, recruitment & training, squadrons, wings and carrier air groups (includes aircraft types operated and lists of COs), wartime British aircraft carriers, shore bases and naval air stations amongst other sections of interest. Recommended.

Brown, Captain Eric, CBE DSC AFC. (1980 & 87) 'Wings of the Navy'. Jane's Publishing Ltd (1980), AirLife Publishing Ltd (1987), ISBN 0 906393 87 6. A comprehensive pilot's overview of the most important aircraft types operated by the FAA during WWII, includes detailed cutaway and cockpit drawings for each. NIP

The above title should, perhaps, be leavened with a read of:

Crosley, R.M. Commander 'Mike', DSC & Bar. (1995) 'Up in Harm's Way'. AirLife, ISBN 1 853105554. Highly recommended. NIP, however a paperback edition is due to be published September 2003.

Kaplin, Philip. (2001) 'Fly Navy'. Aurum Press, ISBN 1 85410 767 4. Carrier operations of the RN and USN during WWII and since.

Ward, Commander 'Sharkey'. (1992) 'Sea Harrier Over the Falklands'. Orion (paperback), ISBN 1 85797 102 7. Rivetting account of the SHAR action from the perspective of the CO (Ward) of 801 Squadron. Thought provoking and difficult to put down. Controversial for some. Recently re-published. Recommended.

I have had this request from Graham Bebbington:

HMS Daedalus II Commemorative Bench

Clayton Hall

As some of your readers will be fully aware, HMS Daedalus II, a RNATE, was evacuated to Clayton Hall, Newcastle-under-Lyme from Lympne in 1940. The Hall is now the home of Clayton High School, and staff and pupils are involved in the refurbishment of the historic garden.

As author of the story of HMS Daedalus II - Ship Without Water (Churnet Valley Books), I thought it appropriate to suggest that a bench, or some other item of garden furniture, might be included in the scheme, to commemorate the naval period, and this has been agreed. Hopefully, an official handing over ceremony will be held in the Spring/Summer.

Should anyone wish to donate towards the provision of a commemorative bench, cheques should be forwarded to the undersigned and made payable to 'Clayton High School (HMS Daedalus Bench Fund).'

Thanking you in anticipation,



GRAHAM BEBBINGTON

27 Trentley Road
TRENTHAM
Stoke-on-Trent
Staffs, ST4 8PH
Tel: (01782) 65987

Can You Help?

Bristol Branch

From S/M Bob Worth (Tel. 01179 670304): any information regarding Stan Lewis, Pilot's Mate of 821 Squadron HMS Glory 1952-53. His son Darren Lewis would like to find anyone that knew him as his father never talked about his service time.

Norman Mortimer is searching for old shipmate Ray Weeks from Ponam Island (MONAB 4), Pacific. Last known whereabouts of Ray Weeks was Ashton Gate, Bristol. Contact Norman at 12 Cecil Terrace, Bemerton, Salisbury. Wilts. SP2 9ND Tel. 01722 500951 or Reg Veale on 01454 898363.

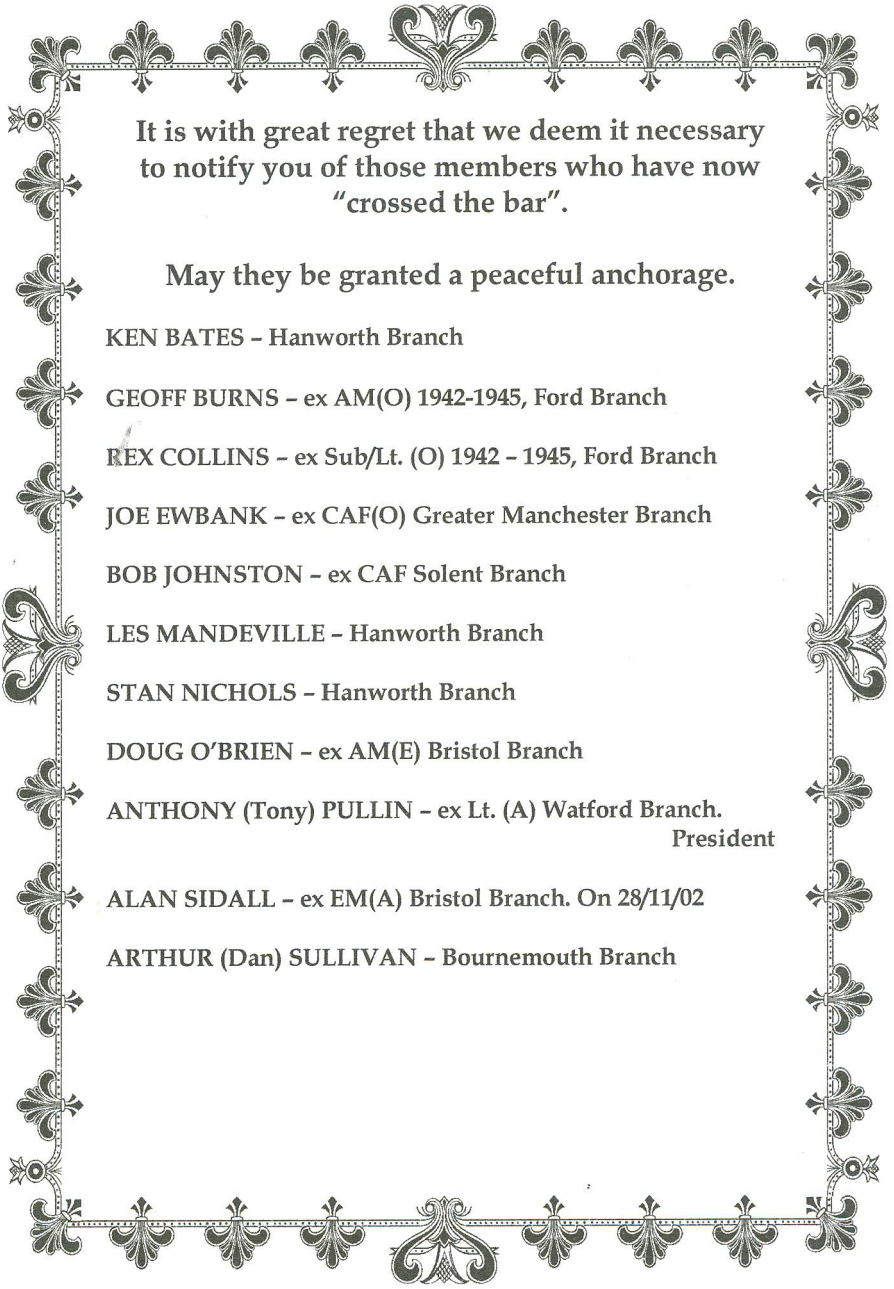
I'M Tired

Yes I'm tired, for several years I've been putting it down to old age, poor blood, lack of vitamins, saccharin, obesity, dieting, yellow wax build up and another dozen maladies that make you wonder if life is really worth living. But I found out it aint any of that, I'm tired because I'm overworked. The population of this country is 51 million, 22 million are retired, that leaves 29 million to do the work. There are 19 million at school, that leaves 10 million to do the work. Two million are unemployed and four million are employed by local Government. That leaves four million to do the work. Three million are employed by county councils, leaving one million to do the work. There are 690,000 in hospital, 379,998 in prison which leaves two people to do the work, you and me and your sitting on you're a!?!£ reading this newsletter, **NO WONDER I'M BLOODY TIRED.**

Reg. Veale

Answers to Stand-Eazzzy Quiz on page 14

(1) Birmingham, Gosport and Hanworth. (2) Captain Eric (Winkle) Brown. (3) Barracuda. (4) Judgement. (5) Emigma (Rigar - Emigma Variations). (6) Supermarine Seafang. (7) Hand grenade. (8) 800 Squadron (Rigar - were equipped with Nimrod A/C). (9) Firebrand. (10) Our Patron, Admiral Raymond Lygo K.C.B. was Captain of HMS Ark Royal when she collided with that Kollin. (11) The Wobbly Eight - King Edward VII Class. HMS Africa at Sheerness. HMS Hibermia in Weymouth Bay. (12) Sanderling, Merlin, Gannet, Fieldfare, Blackcap, Kestrel in that order.



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.

KEN BATES - Hanworth Branch

GEOFF BURNS - ex AM(O) 1942-1945, Ford Branch

REX COLLINS - ex Sub/Lt. (O) 1942 - 1945, Ford Branch

JOE EWBank - ex CAF(O) Greater Manchester Branch

BOB JOHNSTON - ex CAF Solent Branch

LES MANDEVILLE - Hanworth Branch

STAN NICHOLS - Hanworth Branch

DOUG O'BRIEN - ex AM(E) Bristol Branch

ANTHONY (Tony) PULLIN - ex Lt. (A) Watford Branch.
President

ALAN SIDALL - ex EM(A) Bristol Branch. On 28/11/02

ARTHUR (Dan) SULLIVAN - Bournemouth Branch

LIST OF ACCOUTREMENTS ON SALE FROM THE TREASURER. Winter 2002

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)	£1.25
.....	
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.....	£15.00
Acrylic Sweaters	£16.75
Lambswool Sweaters	£23.75
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.

