

The Airey Fairey

Journal of The FLEET AIR ARM Association



Issue 10 Summer 2003





**THE 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.

Submission DEADLINE for the next issue (Winter) is 30th October 2003

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.

The inset photograph of XP924 in new Red Bull colours is used with the kind permission of Rob Wilson (www.militaryaircraftphotos.co.uk). All other cover photographs of XP924 were taken by the editor at the 'Sea Vixen 50're-union which took place at RNAS Yeovilton on 29th September 2001. The front cover inset of XJ571 at The Southampton Hall of Aviation is also by the editor.

Detail from 'Moment of Truth' published by courtesy of Buccaneer Distributions.

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

Back issues are available for Issue 9 Winter 2002 – 03 only.

We have had more changes to the National Executive Committee (see Bill Watson's resignation letter on page 5) since the last issue (No. 9) therefore, once again, it is thought helpful to repeat the cast list:

Chairman	Fred Wadley	02088 982560
Vice Chairman	Doug Wyatt	01442 265121
Secretary	Arnold Thompson	02392 786443
Membership Secretary	Arnold Thompson	02392 786443
Treasurer	Ben Worship	01329 284917
PRO	Ron Sandry	01179 509638

Elected Members

Brian Bingham	Len Owen	Fred Wadley
01903 770295	01332 514030	02088982560

~~~~~ ex Officio ~~~~~

### **Vice Presidents**

|                      |                           |
|----------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>Ron Golightly</b> | <b>Terry Larbalestier</b> |
| 02088 945234         | 01214 445011              |

### **National Standard Bearer**

Alan Mathews 01952 813086

~~~~~ Wanted ~~~~~

Volunteer to serve as a Member of the Central Committee (Headquarters).

EDITORIAL

This issue has been rather later going to press than I would have preferred. However, with the unprecedented events at the AGM, necessitating an Extraordinary AGM and subsequent ballot to elect a new executive committee I thought it worth hanging on for a couple of weeks so as to be able to include the details of the new committee. Suddenly there was more than enough to fill the two obstinately blank pages staring at me.

In the last issue I suggested that it was about time that the stories of those in the Fleet Air Arm who made the exploits of the aircrew possible were told in print and in a book, or books, dedicated to this topic. There are a number of anecdotes to be found in books on various aspects of Fleet Air Arm operations and the ships involved but these seem always to be nuggets buried deep.

As it happens, since the last issue was published, I have been presented with three individual stories that go some way to address this. However only one of these has full publishing planned and this after some soul searching and risk assessment by the author.

It would appear that publishing one's biography is something of a financial risk, requiring the author to pay considerable sums up-front to what is classed as a 'Vanity' publisher, unless of course one is a revered household name (or J.K. Rowling). Certainly I believe that this was the case for our illustrious Patron with his extremely interesting 'Collision Course', listed in The Bookshelf. Now if an Admiral has to resort to such, what hope others of lesser prominence?

Certainly this is what Lt. C.S. (Bill) Drake RN rtd. C.Eng.M.I.E.R.E.M.B.I.M. discovered despite having a forward written by Rear Admiral A.R. Rawbone C.B. A.F.C. Bill's book, 'A Bit of a "Tiff" Reminiscences of Fifty Years in Aviation' contains much of interest to anybody involved in fixed-wing FAA operations during the 1940s, 50s and 60s and in particular Sea Hawk, Scimitar or Buccaneer aircraft. Bill, after retirement, was involved in the target drone programme at Llanbedr, see his illuminating Sea Vixen drone contribution on page 18 of this issue. The author informs me that for publication he has made revisions and additions to the earlier draft which I saw, my reading of which indicates that this is one to look out for after the October 2003 publication date.

Eric Mutton ('The Day I Met God', AF Issue 1) has sent me a CD containing his full autobiography with a view to duplicating and selling it as a money-making scheme for the FAAA. This is a good idea in theory but in practice there could be issues of copyright associated with some of the material it contains. If Eric would like to contact me (my e-mails do not seem to have been received) then we could perhaps iron-out some of these difficulties.

Our member in Israel, Zvi Avidror, was also kind enough to send me a copy of his very remarkable story, see Letters to the Editor.

The Chairman's Resignation Message

6 East View Fields
Plumpton Green
East Sussex
BN7 3EE

30th March 2003

All NFAAA Branch Delegates

Due to medical restrictions I am unable to attend today's meeting so I ask you to listen to this all the more carefully.

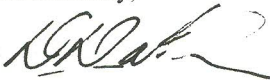
It is very worrying to hear of the troubles that beset our Association at this time. Since I took office we have lost five branches, or at least the loss of Helaton and Weymouth have merely surfaced, the other three have closed as far as I know for economic reasons. They are IOW and NE Tyne. Prior to that East Kent and St Helens left for reasons too complex to enter into at this point and of course Yorkshire branch also disappeared some time ago.

The Association is at a crux again, with accusations being levelled and innuendo flying around, all of which is likely to tear the Association apart and I would at this time refer you all to Rule 1.3a—OBJECTIVES.

This is your Association and you run it the way you wish with the agreement of the majority of the membership. If it is your intention, as I have heard, to deselect the Committee so be it, but please for the sake of your Association be sure that you have sound potential replacements in mind.

Finally, since my operation in January, sleep deprivation has given me a lot of time to mull over the tribulations of the NFAAA and I have experienced extreme disillusionment and have decided to resign from the Chair. I hope the Association continues to thrive and I wish my successor every success.

Yours sincerely,



William Watson

Perhaps the following is apposite:

There was an important job to be done, everybody was sure that somebody would do it.

Anybody could have done it but nobody did it.

Somebody got angry about that because it was everybody's job.

Everybody thought anybody could do it, but nobody realized that everybody wouldn't do it.

It ended up that everybody blamed somebody, when nobody did what anybody could have done

Everybody should not blame somebody for not doing things

To their satisfaction when nobody (else) would do them.

Letters to the Editor

On HMS Pioneer

I have received the latest edition of Airey Fairey and think the cover is a great improvement. However there is an error in the article on the Light Fleet Carriers. The Carrier concerned is HMS Pioneer.

She was laid down as HMS Athelion, then renamed HMS Mars, and finally HMS Pioneer. She was commissioned on the 8 February 1945. There is a good photograph of her in Aircraft Carriers of The World by Roger Chesneau. There is a structure on the after end of the flight deck, a sheer-legs forw'd and a crane amidships.

I was serving with Mobile Service and Repair Unit (MSR 5) aboard the Escort Carrier HMS Arbiter with the British Pacific Fleet.

We left Sydney in mid May 1945 for the forward base, HMS Pepys, 2500 miles away in the Admiralty Islands. When we arrived at Mantis and entered Seadler Harbour, HMS Pioneer and ELMS Deersound were anchored at the inner end of the harbour. The Deersound was a Liberty ship converted into a floating workshop repairing and overhauling engines and propellers.

A few days after VJ Day these two ships were still there when together with HMS Striker we sailed for Sydney.

The Second World War Experience Centre in Horsforth Leeds is collecting stories, photographs, letters and other memorabilia of people who lived through the war whether or not they served in the Forces. These will be kept in the archives for future generations to see and read. I am enclosing a leaflet explaining the work of the Centre. I am one of the many volunteers who work there.

Alex W. Hodgins

Sorry for the error Alex my eye wandered to the wrong row of a table as I scanned across and inadvertently took in the dates with respect to sister ship Perseus. Thank you for putting me right and also for the extra information which may well be of interest to others. 'The Second World War Experience Centre' is at: 5 Feast Field (off Town Street), Horsforth. Leeds. West Yorkshire LS18 4TJ. Visits are by Appointment and can be arranged on: 0113 2584993. Archival/Academic enquiries on: 0113 2589637, Fax 0113 2582557. E-mail: enquiries@war-experience.org
Website: <http://www.war-experience.org>

- Ed.

TAG this film for us

In 1942 I had the privilege of serving at 3148 Kestrel, Worthy Down on 756 Squadron training TAG's. At that time we also had the company of Lt Olivier affectionately known to us as "Larry"

During his stay he, with other well known personalities in the film industry, made a film on the station depicting the training of TAG's. When it was completed those not on duty were invited to the local cinema in Winchester to see the film. There was the usual banter and cat-calls when someone appeared on the screen.

I have approached the museum at Yeovilton through the Yeovil IAAA to find if there is any trace of that film but to no avail.

Therefore I am asking through the Magazine if anyone has any knowledge of its whereabouts as it would very interesting to see it again

S.A. Henshaw. Yeovil Branch

I have carried out a WWW search on this one and came up with a Royal Arm Pay Corps connection: <http://www.sparsholt.ac.uk/rapc/history2.html> and an e-mail address for a Major Nick Bayes. I duly emailed to the address but have failed to get even the auto-acknowledgement that it had been received. **Can anybody else help?**

- Ed.

More on Swordfish

The article on the Swordfish HS554 is of particular interest to me. All war time Swordfish were built by Blackburn Aircraft, Leeds. Before going into the FAA I worked for one of their sub contractors in Leeds building the wings. These were then taken to Sherburn in Elmet on the outskirts of Leeds where Blackburns had a factory.

According to "Blackburn Aircraft From 1909" HS554 was built while I was there. Several years ago when the aircraft magazines reported that she was flying again I wrote to Bob Spence with this information and got a very nice letter back.

In the FAA I was an AMIL and served with 766 Sqdn at Inskip (HMS Nightjar). This was Operational Training Unit No I and operated 32 Swordfish. From there I went out to Australia and joined the British Pacific Fleet.

I am a member of the Leeds Swordfish Support Group. We have a good relationship with the team at BAE at Brough who are rebuilding a Swordfish and are always keen to hear from anyone who worked on the aircraft during the war.

I see from this months Aeroplane [*March or April 03 Issue? - Ed.*] that Duxford are restoring their Swordfish. If you want any more on the Swordfish I will be pleased to help if I can. Incidentally our President and our late Vice President flew Swordfish at Taranto.

Alex W. Hodgins

From our member in Israel

Zvi Avidror originally related his story 'My Way to the FAA' in Issues 4 & 5 of The Airey Fairey but for the benefit of more recent subscribers I'll repeat, in very brief resume of the beginning of his story as background for a part of his letter which follows.

In April 1939 the 14 year old Hans Freier (as Zvi was then known), the son of an ex-artillery Major of the Imperial Austro-Hungarian Army, found himself as a refugee on a decrepit Greek tramp steamer in the Mediterranean bound for the coast of Palestine some 35 miles to the east and south of Haifa. Hans was with his father, mother, brother and 300 other refugees fleeing from those putting Hitler's purges of Jews into effect.

The tramp steamer was spotted by a patrolling Hurricane and then shadowed by a Royal Navy Hunt class destroyer so that when the refugees landed there was a reception committee waiting.

The sight of the destroyer at full speed had fired the imagination of Hans and from that moment his aim was to join the Royal Navy. Capture on the beach was followed by journey to a transit camp, this included an unpleasant march through Isdud (the port of Ashdod today) being pelted with cow dung, rotten vegetables and spat on by Arabs. —Ed.

'My original name was Hans Freier. When I presented myself at the enlistment office of HMS Moretta, Haifa, I was told by a "stripy" RPO: "Son, with a Gerry name like 'Hans' you won't get far in this Navy. So how about changing it to Henry?" I took his advice and until my demo(b) in late 1946 my first name was Henry.

Years later my surname was changed as well. In 1972 my family and I were invited by Amos Ben-Gurion to his father's 80th birthday celebration at Kibut Sde-Boker in the Israeli desert. Before the ceremonies started, Amos presented us to Mr David Ben-Gurion, the founder of the State of Israel. When my son's turn came to be introduced, the "Old Man" asked him: "Where are your plans young man?"

To which my son, who had just turned 18, replied: "I am joining the Israel Air Force like my father did in his time."

The Old Man, hard of hearing, cupped his ear and asked Amos, "What was that name again?"

"Freier" said Amos.

Ben-Gurion immediately said: "No, no, the boy can't join the Air Force with a Germanic name like that."

To this my son, as quick as a wink, said, "What do you suggest then Mr Ben-Gurion?" For a few minute the Old Man played around with variations of "Freier" in Hebrew and came up in the end with "Avidror", which is a literal translation of a "free man". Next day we all trooped to the Minister of Interior and had our surname changed to Avidror.

Zvi Avidror

News From Around the Branches

I have not heard from the Ford Branch for a while and hope that this is not due to the postal black-hole that seems to exist in the Portsmouth and Fareham areas.

Angus Branch

This branch now regularly sends me a copy of their newsletter. Thank You Des. –Ed.

Jack Newman, ex AA1, is looking for Dave Palin, ex AM1. Jack has written a book about two fictional guys who served aboard a carrier in the sixties entitled ‘Thomos’s Last Ship’. A copy of this book can be downloaded free from:

<http://www.condor49ers.org.uk>

and using the button link with the book’s title.

This branch’s monthly newsletter has a regular **Cairniehill ‘Joker’** slot, two in recent issues I thought worth sharing with a wider audience.

‘A woman walked into the kitchen to find her husband stalking around with a fly swatter.

“What are you doing?” She asked.

“Hunting flies.” He responded.

“Oh! Killed any?” She asked.

“Yep, 3 males, 2 females.” he replied.

Intrigued, she asked, “How can you tell?”

He responded, “3 were on a beer can, 2 were on the phone.”

The other from Jack Edward:

You know when the world’s gone mad when the best rapper is a white guy, the best golfer is a black guy, the tallest guy in the NBA is Chinese, the Swiss hold the America’s Cup, France is accusing the USA of arrogance and the Germans don’t want to go to war.

Bristol & District Branch

This branch regularly sends me a copy of their newsletter. Thank you Eric & Reg. –Ed.

Eric reports that a “slight push” at a meeting on 9th December 2002 ensured that over £1000 was donated to the RNHF which is now the Fly Navy Heritage Trust.

A Tribute to Eddie Humphries: following the presentation of the picture of “The Last FAA Field Gun Run” by his widow Win, the picture now holds pride of place in RBL Patchway, where we hold our meetings. In April we had a visit to MOD Abbeywood, near Bristol. Any other branches interested in a visit should contact our secretary S/M Reg Veale.

In February we were concerned to hear of the resignation of S/M Sheena Mewha, the first National lady Standard Bearer. During her year of service in that position she was proud to present the Standard on eight occasions. I can only say thank you to Sheena for that.

In May 2003 I made a return visit to Billy Butlins at Skegness, where I joined up in 1944, which had ceased to be a holiday camp to become HMS Royal Arthur. To commemorate the more than 200,000 who passed through a Memorial Obelisk was unveiled. Branch Vice Chairman S/M Ron Frost, who did the work on the project, could not attend but was thanked very much for his efforts. A fully kitted out wartime service chalet is kept on display for holiday-makers to view, along with the new obelisk.



Above: Bristol Branch FAAA members assembled outside their meeting place.

Eric Pit, Chairman

Derbyshire Branch

This branch regularly sends me a copy of their newsletter. Thank you Tom. –Ed.

Canada resident member S/M George Offley was involved in the 2002 Remembrance Service leading the parade to the Cenotaph in Manotick, a district of Ottawa. George had a cadet lay a wreath on behalf of the Derbyshire Fleet Air Arm Association. George is Vice President of his local association and editor of their newsletter.

Tom Bowen

Essex Branch

In September 2002 a group of ex-service men and women from Basildon made an emotional visit to Arnhem for the 58th Anniversary of the battle. Whilst there a wreath was laid on the grave of Air Mechanic Leonard Hooker, who was killed along with his RAF crew. Air Mechanic Hooker was on loan to 38 Group RAF for D Day and other activities, as were many others.



The wreath was laid by ex POAF(E) John Quinell, who was also in 38 Group, and flew over Arnhem in Stirling bombers dropping supplies, John was in 196 Squadron RAF operating at KEEVIL.

Les Day

Hanworth Branch

Shipmate Bill Neale of Birmingham Branch 'Crossed the Bar' on St. Georges Day 23rd April 2003. Bill was one of the founder members of the Fleet Air Arm Association and became National Secretary when he took over from Doc Halliday, who was the first National Secretary. Bill and I became great friends and was one of my main supporters when I arranged to have our first National Standard made.

On presenting the new standard to our members at the AGM in 1988 it was Bill who proposed that I should be the standard bearer, this came as a great surprise to me, as I had no thoughts whatsoever of carrying it, but everyone else agreed with Bill and I must say it was indeed a privilege and an honour to have done so. Bill was very proud of the The Fleet Air Arm Association of the past and it was his wish that I carry the National Standard at his funeral and this I thank God I was able to do on Friday 2nd May 2003. Cheerio Mate!

Terry Lowden

N.E. Hants Branch

I was invited to go on the Not Forgotten Association Group Holiday June 25th – 30th 2001. The group of thirty people was made up of Navy, Army and one WAAF.

Monday morning we met up in the Union Jack Club and were allocated room with all facilities. Evening drinks and dinner were followed by a weeks programme briefing.

Tuesday we visited the Household Cavalry witnessing the pre-Buckingham House Parade inspection. This was followed by a tour of the barracks, there being entertained to drinks and lunch. This was followed by an afternoon trip to the London Eye before returning to the UJC for dinner.

Wednesday was mostly taken up with a day at Wimbledon where we had a packed lunch and later on at 4pm we were taken for the traditional strawberries and cream tea. After a return to the UJC for dinner we went to the Tower of London to witness the Ceremony of the Keys. After this we were entertained in the Warder's Mess – what a night!

Thursday involved a boat trip on the Thames to look at the Thames Barrier and then back to Greenwich for a walk about and look at Cutty Sark with lunch and tea being provided on board. Dinner back at the UJC was followed by another good evenings entertainment including singers and comedians.

Friday saw us visiting the home of the Vice President of the Association Sir Carron Greig. One of our number, an 80 year old Algerine Association member, (was) volunteered to swim three lengths of the pool. Sponsorship raised £40. Returning to London we were entertained by a Senior WO, who had quite a few good jokes to tell, in the London District Sergeants Mess where we had drinks and supper. This WO had been asked to stay on beyond his retirement to officiate at the Queens Jubilee Parade in 2002.

Tony Cooke

This material has only just been received but I thought the Not Forgotten Association worthy of mention. This association was founded in 1919 by a famous singer of the time, Miss Marta Cunningham, for improving the quality of life of the Ex-service Disabled. Their first patron was HRH Princess Mary, later Princess Royal. Princess Mary was succeeded by HRH The Duchess of Kent who in turn was succeeded by the present HRH The Princess Royal. See: <http://www.nfassociation.freeseve.co.uk/> for more. *-Ed.*

Solent Branch

The branch members were treated to a superb pig-roast at the WO's & Senior Rates mess HMS Collingwood on Saturday the 5th July during the course of which a raffle raised over £100 for the Naomi House children's hospice. Branch members enjoyed a very successful stay-over trip to Ireland earlier this year and are anticipating another interesting trip to Bruges, Belgium 21st – 25th May next year, with a trip to the Menin Gate planned. The cost is £250 per person B&B and including coach and trips. Ralph Wintle, Social Secretary, deserves a vote of thanks for all the effort that he has put into branch social functions, not the least of which was that of the strawberry picking.

-Ed.

Scarborough Reunion

The FAAA re-union is set to go ahead at the St. Nicholas Hotel from Friday 3rd October to Monday 6th October 2003.

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

A Requiem For Lost Youth

By Eddie Mortlock

“Today when the blossom still clings to the vine, I’ll eat your strawberries and drink your sweet wine. A million tomorrows will all pass away, Ere I forget all the joys that are mine today”.

The words of the song coming over the radio in the deserted control tower could have been written just for this moment. Sitting alone there by the window, I was watching the evening sun drop gently down to the horizon, to vanish like a great golden orange into the sea beyond.

For a while the airfield and the sky were awash with colour and the sea sparkled and danced with fire, then darkness came like a curtain and extinguished the light. It was, as the song says, one of the joys of the day, but one with a shadow, for this great cosmic display marked not only the end of the day, but marked also the end of my time in the Fleet Air Arm.

Demobilization came to most of us rather suddenly. To some it came as a happy release from the petty restrictions, discomforts and the unbridgeable class divide. Others were less happy with the parting from friends, and ordered way of life and an end to the last great adventure that might come their way. To me it was a mixture of both. I loved the flying and comradeship but hated the stupidities.

Many strange things were to happen to me during my service life, but none would be stranger than that of my leaving.

After fifty years I should have forgotten these things. Let go of the past, but sometimes in the small hours the young lad that clutches my youth to him, calls me back and I go over them again. But the jumble of those days does not fall easily into place. They lie scattered over the years like pieces of broken glass, reflecting a million changing images, but never the whole. Many of the details, names, time, place, the order of things fade into the mists of time, become shadows that flicker like old silent films across the years, but the substance of those days’ remains.

I remember dearly the Captain announcing that demobilisation would begin, with priority given to those with the longest service or special needs, to be followed in order of seniority and job commitment. Those who needed time to make arrangements could stay on until convenient to leave. There were a number of options open to me in Civvy Street but there was no hurry so I opted to stay on for a while.

Ah! What a change. For once life became civilized. There was nothing to do, no discipline, as most of the officers and NCOs were hostilities only and were on their way out each batch to leave would be an excuse for a drunken run ashore, the next day spent in recovery and repentance.

This went on for several weeks, the station steadily running down until it began to resemble one of those deserted mining towns in a Hollywood western. The huts and workshops emptied, the administrative offices barely functioned and soon I was the only one left in rows of huts and probably the only aircrew member on the base.

Where once there had been the ceaseless roar of engines, the shouts and laughter, the coming and going of thousands, there was now only silence, hypnotic in its intensity. At times it was eerie, unreal. Reveille would echo around the empty buildings disturbing no one but the birds and the ghosts of the departed. The White Ensign would be raised and lowered by unseen hands.

A lonely guard patrolled the entrance with no one, friend or foe to challenge, a liverish Jaunty waited in vain for someone to insult. In the dining hall a three badge nothing of a cook still catered for hundreds, unwilling to accept that only a few isolated figures would turn up and sit like monks of a silent order, picking over the steaming bangers and mash that the cook continued to produce in enormous quantities, reversing as it were, the parable of the five loaves and the three fishes.

I was fast becoming a Robinson Crusoe, shipwrecked on a deserted island and I found it fascinating. I was never bored, happy perhaps to be alone for a change. The days came and went, most beginning with a stroll around the station or along the coast. I taught myself to drive using the control van, going round and round the perimeter track until competent. Petrol was limitless. No one asked me what I was doing for there were few to do so and no doubt I could have driven home in it had I wished.

An almost daily ritual was a visit to the Control Tower where the sole inhabitant, a P0, sat like a lighthouse keeper, holding a lonely watch for planes that would never again arrive or take-off, where nothing happened and we would sit looking over the silent airfield, make endless cups of tea and reminisce about our service.

On one visit he produced numerous rolls of medal ribbon that he had found in some cupboard and for several days we awarded each other every conceivable campaign medal, even one for good conduct. On one visit the P0 said he was off in the morning and handed me the keys to the tower, saying, "its all yours". I had inherited an empty kingdom.

On other occasions I would walk around the silent hangars that stood like massive Egyptian tombs, the planes mummified and soon to be consigned to a watery grave. The workshops were littered with spanners and still opened maintenance manuals, oily thumbprints. The last reminder of a once busy life.

In the corner rows of batteries stood waiting to be charged. A pair of overalls hung on a peg and a stained teacup on a workbench, but not a living soul. It was like a visit to a graveyard or a theme park on closing day. The life had gone. They were monuments to the past.

During one of my wanderings I came across the hut where we had handed in our flying kit. It lay where we had left it and rummaging amongst the pile I retrieved my own kit, which I subsequently used for several years on my first motor bike. One afternoon I went into the hut used as a chapel. A bible still lay on the small wooden lectern. The notes used by the departed padre for his last sermon lay on a side table. I looked at them and saw he had written out a passage from Ecclesiastes. "I have seen servants upon horses and princes walking as servants upon the earth". "Amen", I said to that, for here the top brass drove around in staff cars, while we walked.

I continued to draw my pay from a solitary Wren Officer who was slowly going mad in an otherwise deserted block. "How much do you want?" she would ask and I would usually add an extra quid if I needed it, knowing it would be deducted at a later date.

The only other Officer I ever saw was a Subby who had got his commission only a few days before the war ended and this was his first posting. The poor devil had missed it all and he walked around with his head hung in shame, dreading no doubt, the question to be asked in later years, "What did you do in the war Daddy".

Once in a while I went ashore to the nearest town, but that too was lifeless. The streets and pubs empty so I ceased to go. What little entertainment there was, I found in the bar on the station and I went there most evenings. It was nearly always empty except for an old RN Chief whose time had expired before the war. He had been kept on for the duration, a sad lonely figure, his features ravaged by time and booze.

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**

The FAA Buccaneer Association

This is a newly formed organisation intended for all those who worked on Buccaneers during their naval careers to be eligible for membership. The second re-union will take place at the WO&SR Mess at RNAS Yeovilton on Saturday 25 October 2003. Contact Dave Clark, 13 Lyde Road, Yeovil. Somerset. BA21 5AS; Tel: 01935 474862. e-mail: daclark@faaba.org.uk, or visit <http://www.vimart.co.uk/FAABA.htm>

Foxy Lady - The only flying Sea Vixen

Other than Hawker Hunters, which are numerous enough to be able to put on a show of their own, there are few historic British military jet aircraft on the air show circuit. Incredibly one of these few is Sea Vixen Mk2 XP924 under the civil registration of G-CVIX. I write incredibly, for this is a very complex aircraft to operate, one which requires a wealth of resources to support.

Indeed, the costs of operating aircraft such as this are escalating rapidly with many operators of historic aircraft report near-prohibitive insurance premiums. This is without considering the obvious costs such as spares (tyres could soon be a problem for the Sea Vixen so I hear), fuel and oils. If you want to see aircraft like this flying again then do not delay and if you are able and willing offer your support. Revenue from airshow appearances increasingly falls short of paying for all of this.

XP924's last role, after retirement from military service, was intended to be as a D Mk3 target drone operating out of Llanbedr on the ranges at Aberporth. I'll leave it to Bill Drake, who was involved with the conversion programme, to explain in his contribution which follows this article. Suffice to say that the target drone conversion is the reason for the comparatively gaudy colour scheme, as seen in the cover pictures, that this aircraft has worn since, until now.

The aircraft's paint scheme has recently become even more eye catching, almost as gaudy as Jonathan Whaley's (Delta Jets) Hunter 'Miss Demeanour' in fact, with colours and logos specified by new sponsor Red Bull. Pictures of this aircraft in the new paint scheme were published in the July 2003 edition of Flypast. A superb underside shot of XP924 in Red Bull colours by Rob Wilson (www.militaryaircraftphotos.co.uk) can be seen on the rear cover of this issue.

XP924 was one of a batch (XP919 – XP925) built as Mk 2s at Howarden, Chester during 1963. The 'powers' at Yeovilton praised the high standard of cleanliness in its new aircraft. What they did not know was that Desmond Penrose, test pilot, on inverting the first during flight testing was showered with assorted AGS spares and dust. About 100 items were subsequently counted and measures were taken to counter this problem. Unfortunately the next aircraft to be tested, XP920, proved to have even more loose articles. After this Desmond Penrose was required to invert every new Sea Vixen at 20,000ft and open the cockpit canopy whereby a combination of gravity and pressure equalisation evacuated most loose articles (thanks to Tony Buttler for this little anecdote, the source is cited below). **So, if you were on the ground in the Chester area during that period and it occasionally 'rained' nuts, bolts, washers, split-pins etc. then you now know why!**

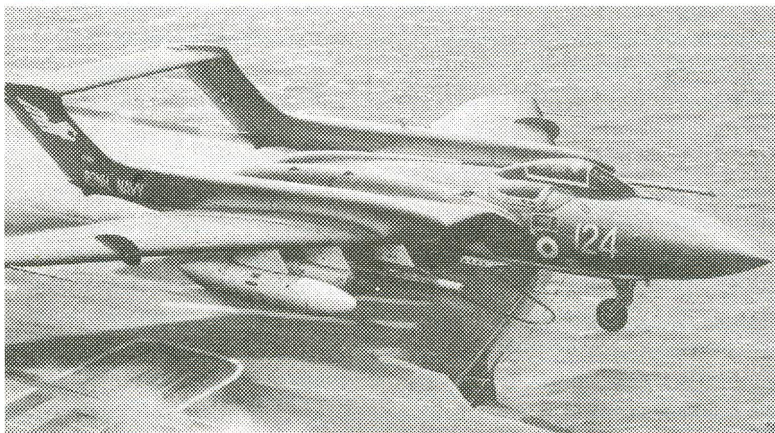
It would appear that XP924 spent its entire operational career on 899 Squadron on and off HMS Eagle. 899 Squadron appears to be the only Sea Vixen front line squadron to not play 'musical aircraft carriers'. Yes, the politicians did take one away (aircraft

carrier) whenever the music stopped! After retirement from 899 Squadron XP924 was ferried to Llanbedr where it was stored until 1975, then going to RAE Farnborough for the drone conversion programme.

That XP924 is still in airworthy condition is largely down to the late Marcus Edwards, Sea Vixen pilot, who with a team led by Gwyn and Garry Jones managed to get CAA certification on the civil register as G-CVIX in February 1996. This was an incredible achievement.

Ex-Luftwaffe Starfighter Pilot Sepp Pauli flew the aircraft with CAA permission from Llanbedr to Swansea. In 'de Havilland TWIN BOOMS' Adrian Balch writes, 'There, work began in earnest to get it up to full CAA display standard in the hope of displaying it in the 1997 air show season. XP924 flew 800 of its total 1140 hours flying time with No. 899 Squadron, much of it aboard HMS Eagle and Marcus Edwards had flown it 24 times between January 1965 and July 1970, so it is hoped that it will be repainted in with No. 899 Squadron's white winged-fist insignia'.

Marcus Edwards' dream has not been fulfilled due to his untimely death and it now looks like it will not come about for sometime yet. This is the price paid for the sponsorship that covers the costs of keeping such an aircraft in airworthy condition and what is more flying. Further information on this aircraft's display schedule and the operators can be found at: <http://www.dehavilland.net/home.html>.



Detail from 'Moment of Truth' by Robert Tomlin (the original is colour) which depicts XP924 being launched from HMS Eagle whilst with 899 Squadron.

Prints can be had from The Fleet Air Arm Museum (01935 840565), RNAS Yeovilton, Ilchester, Somerset. BA22 8HT or the publishers, Buccaneer Distributions (08456 443215), Lancaster Buildings, 29A Central Avenue, Wigston. Leicestershire. LE18 2AB.

The original artwork is still available from Buccaneer Distributions, if you have £1200 lying around spare!

Sea Vixen XP924 – The Target That Never Was

To those of you who slaved in, over or under a Sea Vixen perhaps the notion of seeing the last of these tormentors of hangar slaves ending their days being shot down in flames may seem a very fitting end indeed. However as usual the master plan devised by people less knowledgeable in the mysteries of Naval Aircraft was never to reach fruition.

It happened that in 1981, 10 years after I retired from the Navy, I became a Project Manager for the Directorate of Trials Guided Weapons and found that one of my major projects was the conversion of 23 long retired Sea Vixen 2's into Target Drones replacing the last two Meteor U16's. Warning bells had started to ring even before a call from the Rapier Project Manager wished to know when the long promised Sea Vixen would be ready for his weapon trials.

Investigation showed that several aircraft were under conversion and production had been authorised before development trials had even started; the state of the remaining aircraft was just as they had been left when retired, including one whose tail booms had literally been sawn off. Not a promising start and worse was to follow; the drone control system critically depended upon the Master Reference Gyro (MRG) a notoriously unreliable instrument which had entered its service life on the Scimitar and had tormented me first on 803 Squadron and then as its project officer at Farnborough.

As if this was not enough it transpired that no plans had been made to accept the Target on to the Range at Aberporth and it was quickly made clear by the Range Safety Officer that he would never permit a Sea Vixen within Rapier range of the Rangehead because the flight path of 20 tons of damaged Sea Vixen at 500 to 600 kts posed a serious threat.

At this point I was able to cancel the project on Cost and Safety grounds and disposed of all but two aircraft, one of which was XP 924. These two aircraft would then be used manned under drone control for controller training, as target chase aircraft and for system control trials on the assumption that an alternative Full Scale Target Drone would be needed. A study of safety and reliability showed that indeed the M.R.G. would so degrade the reliability that flight over the range could never be accepted within the safety standards that had now been devised.

XP924 and its partner continued in the roles as intended until their retirement and of course still flies as "Foxy Lady" under Civil Registration. There was in the end to be no successor U.K. Full Scale Target Drone following the cancellation of the Sea Vixen D Mk3, although that is another story.

Bill Drake

I seem to recall that an MRG failure was the root cause of Sea Vixen XJ520's crash into a muddy field on a wet and windy night in February 1966. I was amongst the troops searching for the QFI (found in the remains of the 'coal hole') and trainee pilot, the latter being found alive. XJ520 was one of my DI regulars whilst on 766 at the time. 766 did not use XJ520's call sign 711 again after this event, it being the third 711 to crash. – Ed.

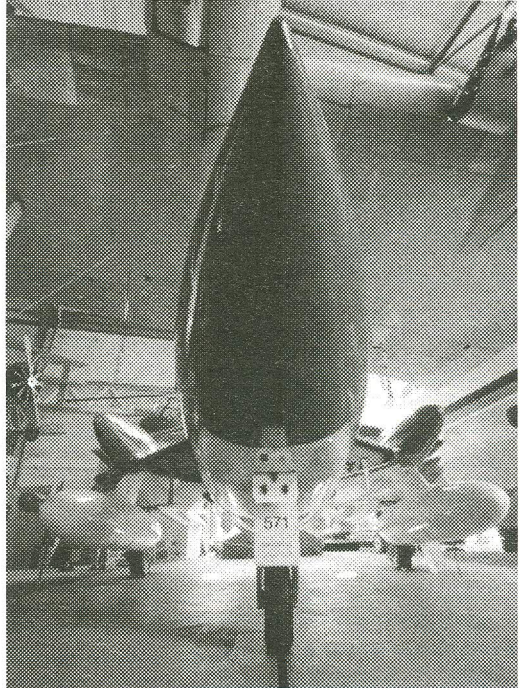
Sea Vixen on New Static Display

Sea Vixen Mk2 XJ571, formerly at the Brooklands Museum, can now be seen on its new specially built platform at The Southampton Hall of Aviation (02380 635830). This aircraft, which looks very smart but does not have its usual pair of Avon 208 engines fitted, is on long term loan to the Southampton museum.

The move from Brooklands took place on February 4th. The move was conducted by the naval Mobile Aircraft Support Unit once Gulf commitments and then industrial action by the fire service had been circumvented by a move date change. This latter so that the police authorities involved were able to issue the necessary wide-load moving permits.

The aircraft, by virtue of being built at Christchurch in Hampshire in 1959, fits in with the museum's collection policy of holding exhibits that have a connection with the wider Solent Area. XJ571 as a preserved representative of its type is recognised as a British Aviation Preservation Council National Benchmark.

A new book on the Sea Vixen, 'The Sea Vixen File' by Tony Buttler is in preparation. That Tony Buttler is a Sea Vixen fan is clear from the opening sentence, 'BIAS FREELY ADMITTED, the de Havilland DH. 110 Sea Vixen is one of the author's favourite aeroplanes.' In his article 'Secrets of the Sea Vixen' in Air Enthusiast No. 87, May/June 2000. Another detailed article, 'Sea Vixen Britain's first missile specialist' appeared in Air International Vol 40. No 4 April 1991.



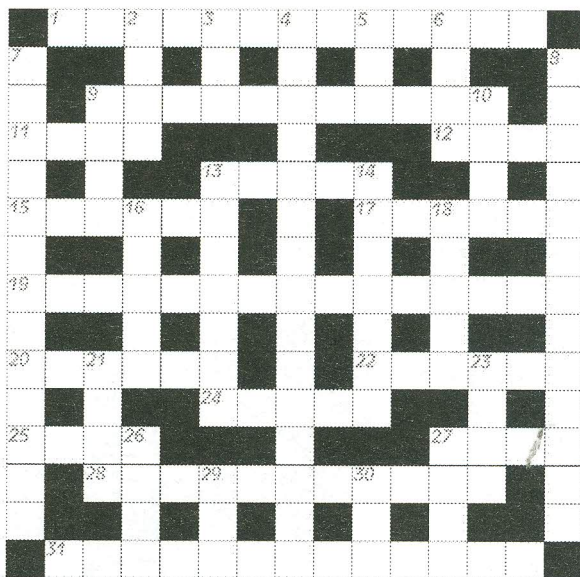
Above: Ex 893 Squadron Sea Vixen Mk2 XJ571 in The Southampton Hall of Aviation beneath the starboard wing of a Sandringham flying-boat
Photo' – The Editor

A few books (there are only a few in existence) on the Sea Vixen are cited in The Bookshelf. Those interested and with web access could do worse than visit;

<http://www.thunder-and-lightnings.co.uk/contents.html>

for a more comprehensive list.

A Stand-Eazzzy Crossword



Answers
Page 26

Clues Across

- 1. Aircrew front and back office – twin-seat rooster mine (6,7)
- 9. Venus for early birds (7,4)
- 11. Foxtrot echo periodically, certainly not wood (4)
- 12. Muppet drops November for a bit of Malta (4)
- 13. Gains from tangled snare (5)
- 15. Tail-less pitch and roll control (6)
- 17. Dropped 'aitch' from dense shrubbery, required for bridge watch-keeping (6)
- 19. Essential pre-flight info' from Professor Fog (7,8)
- 20. Stag top gear (6)
- 22. Perhaps you have one handy now for a fresh start (6)
- 24. One in decoration for up or down (5)
- 27. Manufacture (4)
- 28. Interceptor sounds like champion boxer (1 1)
- 31. Leading swept chamber of ICE (5,8)

Clues Down

- 2. Gas light (4)
- 3. Period could have indefinite (article) start (3)

- 4. Middle of David is as deduced by Newton (6,2,7)
- 5. Trigonometric salad ratio? (3)
- 6. In short succeeded SPRay Arrester Gear (4)
- 7. Sounds like directed arms for the girls (6,7)
- 8. Vertically challenged flying fish king for post WWII reconnaissance-bomber (5,8)
- 9. Oliver's request sans please (4)
- 10. Example of 7 with ET gone home, not the hard place (4)
- 13. Limit of aural receptors generates affection (7)
- 14. Inertia, electric, cartridge, Palouste or gas turbine (7)
- 16. Essential of aquavit alcohol (5)
- 18. He in charge comes again with a hot beverage (5)
- 21. Secures sorted site (4)
- 23. Explosive trigger will scorch (4)
- 26. ICE cycle or tin-fish fuel (4)
- 27. Repair, and with 27 time to do it (4)
- 29. Extendable emergency electricity or hydraulic pressure generator (3)
- 30. Short, mountain soldiers of little weight (3)

The Book-Shelf

A selection of books that may be of interest.

Adcock, F. J. (1983) 'From the Ground Up'. Airlife. Shrewsbury, England. ISBN 0 906393 21 3 Covering the whole period from early British military aviation to the WWII the book necessarily contains material relating to the RNAS and the Fleet Air Arm.

It is perhaps pertinent to quote some of Fred Adcock's words from the 'Author's Forward' to this book. I am sure many of us would echo his sentiments.

'When I retired from the R.A.F. in 1957 a still active interest in military aviation led me to the discovery that practically no standard information was available about service ground crews, and a subsequent decision to try and rectify the omission.

Scores of books have been written about the exploits of service aircrew. The greater majority of these describe the parts played by service ground crew in their individual saga in a mere sentence, some in as much as a paragraph. Only two books have been written about airmen, one by an Air Chief Marshal and the other by a wartime clerk.

Aircrew deserved all the recognition they subsequently received, for their profession was at all times responsible, frequently hazardous, sometimes positively dangerous, particularly in time of war. They will, I am sure, agree with me that they enjoyed their flying. A few of them will also agree that they struck up a rapport with their own particular ground crew. But the severe discipline of the inter-war years in the services created a wide gap between officer and man which impeded the understanding of the other.

R.A.F. other ranks have been amongst the least publicised of all the services groups'.

Not to mention those of the Fleet Air Arm. – Ed.

Manning, Charles. (Ed.) (2000) 'Fly Navy The View from the Cockpit 1945-2000'. Leo Cooper, Pen & Sword, Barnsley. England. ISBN 085052 732 5

Interesting read, particularly the Gannet v. Blue Steel Vulcan episode, '...for the want of a nail', springs to mind.

This book includes an amazing sequence of photographs of a Sea Hawk, with power still on, smashing into the Fly 1 deck park on Centaur whilst in the Moray Firth during 1955. Lt. Maurice Tibby in the hot seat and ELO Sam Janes being pushed over-board by the errant aircraft, both officers belonged to 803 Squadron.

The introduction of every decade, or part thereof, is rounded up with a tally of those killed in each of four categories as summarised here:

| | 1945-9 | 1950s | 1960s | 1970s | 1980s | 1990s | Total |
|------------|--------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| pilots | 141 | 335 | 101 | 28 | 25 | 1 | 631 |
| observers | 15 | 49 | 55 | 5 | 10 | 0 | 134 |
| aircrewmen | 9 | 21 | 11 | 4 | 6 | 1 | 52 |
| others | 25 | 38 | 26 | 8 | 1 | 0 | 74 |

Moore, Cdr. John, USN Ret (1997) 'The Wrong Stuff'. Speciality Press Publishers and Wholesalers, 11481 Kost Dam Road, North Branch, MN 55056. USA.
ISBN 1-883809-10-X

After suffering burns when his Grumman Panther was hit from behind by an overshooting McDonnell Banshee and tipped over-board in a ball of fire from the starboard forward deck park of the USS Essex, he recovered and went on to further adventures as a test pilot. John was involved with the Chance Vought Cutlass at Miramar and the Flexdeck program at Patuxent River. He was later involved with the space program including Apollo launches where he has a few harsh words about the deaths of Gus Grissom, Ed White and Roger Chaffee in the 1967 Apollo One Command Module fire, on Launching Pad 34 at the Kennedy Space Centre.

His description of the Vampire; 'It was like a toy. You felt like you were flying a jet made by Radio Shack', grated a bit. What flying indigenous jet aircraft had the USA designed when that aircraft first took to the air? Otherwise a thoroughly good read and of particular interest to anybody involved with the UK flexible deck programme or who saw the Cutlass operating from carriers.

Lygo, Admiral Sir Raymond; K.C.B. (2002) 'Collision Course Lygo Shoots Back'. The Book Guild, Lewes East Sussex. ISBN 1 85776 5141.

Sir Dennis Thatcher set the seal on this autobiography in his forward, 'Sir Raymond Lygo is one of the great achievers of the last half century and he has written an autobiography of rare quality with wit and style'.

In the chapter 'The Carrier Battle', Sir Raymond describes his part in helping to preserve a fixed-wing navy despite all the machinations in Whitehall and friendly fire from the RAF, blue on blue in quite a different sense. [I had read about the RAF's 'funny' maps of the Indian Ocean with Australia in the wrong place, somewhere before. - Ed.]

Sir Raymond relates his part in the planning and organisation of the newly acquired naval Phantom's participation in 'The Daily Mail Transatlantic Air Race' of 1969, with once again some interesting insights into inter-service rivalry.

Having described in earlier chapters his time learning the arts of ship operation and navigation, in HMS Veryan Bay and in command of HM ships Lowestoft and Juno, Sir Raymond relates his time as Captain of HMS Ark Royal. This, of course, includes an account of the famous Kotlin incident.

[I have clear memories of this incident from having to visit the bottom of the ship to check Juliet – Starboard was closed up. I was in the dark on two counts whilst down there. Literally and metaphorically from not being sure what had caused the big bang that had thrown me off my feet in the AED workshops and thus I was waiting for the next big bang, with thoughts of WW3 having started and with nobody having yet told me! – Ed.]

The above only skims the surface of 'Part 1 The Navy' which is followed by an account of Sir Raymond's amazing involvement with the aircraft industry in 'Part 2 British Aerospace'. Once again some interesting insights into the wheeling and dealing that goes on in the background behind the media's headlines.

A remarkable book, one difficult to put down.

Davies, Lieutenant-Commander Brian, A.F.C. R.N. (2001) 'Fly No More'. Airlife Publishing. Shrewsbury. ISBN 1-84037-273-7.

This book also contains photographs and narratives describing the remarkable sequence of events involving 803 Squadron Seahawks in the forward deck park of Centaur found in 'Fly Navy The View from the Cockpit 1945-2000', mentioned above.

This is another fine tribute to one man's contribution to naval aviation particularly his involvement with the trials and tribulations of bringing the Phantom F-4K (FG1) up to a safe operational standard. Few, I am sure, realised at the time what a near run thing it was. To use an Americanism, the aircraft very nearly stayed the clunker it was in its early days due to trouble with the Spey engines.

I, like many others involved in the Phantom programme soon after introduction, have cause to remember the frequency with which we changed engines in those days. I still do a Phantom engine change in my sleep from time to time.

Another excellent read for those involved in the fixed-wing Fleet Air Arm.

Airlife Publishing went into administrative receivership earlier this year but has now been acquired by The Crowood Press.

Birtles, Philip. (1986, 1999) 'De Havilland Vampire, Venom and Sea Vixen'. Ian Allen Publishing, Shepperton. Surrey. ISBN 0-7110-1566-X.

Although interesting in as much as the early days of development of the Vampire, DH 108 and the engines that powered are described in some detail the section on the DH 110 and Sea Vixen is rather brief. Despite the brevity detail of specific aircraft involved in trials, production points and Squadron equipment and operation histories are included. For those looking for detail of particular aircraft service histories then the forthcoming 'The Sea Vixen' file may be worth waiting for. Those looking for more detail of Sea Vixen development and proposals should look to the sources cited on page 19.

Balch, Adrian. (2002) 'de Havilland TWIN BOOMS'. Airlife Publishing. Shrewsbury. ISBN 1-84037-250-8.

In contrast to the Birtles title this larger format paper-back book is full of colour, almost without exception, photographs. Indeed the main mission of the book is as a vehicle for publishing a host of colour photographs not seen in print before. The Sea Vixen section is a larger proportion of this book than that of Birtles with some interesting narrative relating to the salvation of XP924 in airworthy condition.

More Carrier Battles?

Well, after reading Sir Raymond Lygo's account of the one going on around some of us in the 1960s one wonders if we are in the midst of another. There is a brouhaha going on at the moment with respect to the costs, building to budget and so on of the proposed carriers. Perhaps the comments of one defence analyst, Stewart Slade, are near the mark.

'There is a lot of garbage and disinformation being circulated about CV(F) at the moment. There was some stuff put out a few weeks back about the program being on the verge of collapse due to disagreements between Thales and BAE Systems - when those were discredited, these [stories of not being able to build to budget -Ed.] have started to circulate. I've made some enquiries and the current reports have no official foundation. In fact, there is a discrete enquiry going on as to who is responsible for circulating the bad data.

One finger of suspicion is pointing at the RAF - they have a long history of trying to sabotage any and every RN aviation program [1]. It does appear that there are some RAF officers [2] who are assiduous in repeating any negative information they hear about CV(F), however the current feeling is they are the medium, not the source.'

He suggests that another finger of suspicion points at DCN, there being a power battle going on in France between them and Thales. There also appear to be question marks over the deployment of JCA (Joint Combat Aircraft) which it seems will be owned by the RAF! I certainly hope that those looking after the long term interests of the Royal Navy with respect to air defence are on their guard.

-Ed.

Organised Religion in the FAA

As erring matelots I can't recall us being troubled by religion in early days. But, washed ashore at TINS Condor (Arbroath '44) they had Sunday Divisions AND mandatory Church afterwards — a full house complete with RC fallout and no roll call! Jumpering-up after a week in comfortable overalls and sea-boots came hard, until someone discovered that Methodist services coincided with parades. Even Their Lordships conceded that we couldn't be in two places at once, so we put overcoats over jerseys and re—mustered, clandestinely, as Methodists. But Authority wasn't daft; it conducted crash inspections of messes. Those not on parades had to submit breathing tickets which recorded not only non-sub rate, part of ship, and whether you could swim, but also the religion you were born with. That scrubbed round the Methodist touch and the subsequent drop in gate money bewildered the presiding minister — a nice old chap who wore gaiters and collected butterflies.

Then a buzz said that Holy Communion ('early church'), enabled one to miss Divisions and church (with no miss-muster), so again, we put overcoats over jerseys and mustered. Services started early and seemed rather strange — we thought we might have become R.C. 's without knowing it. But on leave, when my mother once thought of enquiring if we had 'Church', I replied smugly: "Oh yes! We attend Holy Communion." My mother was aghast! "YOU can't take Holy Communion," she said, "YOU haven't been confirmed!" — "What's confirmed?" I said — and that was the end of 'early church'.

Divisions time, and it was no use hiding in the mess baggage room, they always looked there — but there was a hatch leading into the rafters. They crouched on joists up there until Gestapo had been round, and the last one up was pushed down to do a recce. It soon got uncomfortable, so we hauled up kitbags and hammocks, and reclined like silent eastern potentates. A lamp was produced, and we read or played cards (brag, ha'penny limit) — until one Sunday morning someone folded his News of the World and pumped-up kitbags to get his head down and disturbed an equilibrium that held kitbags, hammocks, twelve matelots and one dealer in orbit.

Someone once decreed "Let There Be Light!" — And There Was Light, and you blinked in it as the ceiling gave way and precipitated an itinerant shower into the attentions of a nearby Crusher with comet tail of killick snatchers and Commander's Report!

I feared it was judgement from above on me, for trying to oil out of organised worship. But, before the Commander (a fearsome RN, beak—nosed bird with twice the standard issue of eyebrows) could interview me, there was a 'most immediate' draft chit: My skills were required aboard a carrier lying with bated funnel smoke at Greenock, and I thought there WAS someone up there looking after me after all.

But, after two days aboard that flat—top I knew there wasn't

Ted Phillips. Bournemouth

HMS Vengeance – Is this some kind of (bad) joke?

Incredible as it seems (according to a report in the Sunday Times of June 15, 2003), Nicholas van Hoogstratten (sentenced to ten years for manslaughter earlier this year) is to purchase this vessel, more recently the ex-Brazilian Minas Gerais, for use as a floating centre for asylum seekers staffed by 300 category D prisoners.

The Sunday times reported that Hoogstratten's legal advisors have offered to buy the vessel for £2.25 million to act as an offshore asylum centre and have written to the prison service with respect to staffing with category D prisoners. It would appear that the Home Office thinks the idea has merit but are uncertain that category D prisoners would be allowed to work for the immigration service looking after asylum seekers.

This is more than a hint of the surreal here; a convicted felon (who was also jailed in the 1960s for his part in a hand grenade attack on a business associate) owning a centre staffed by category D prisoners supervising asylum seekers!

The HMS Daedalus II Commemorative Bench at Clayton Hall, Newcastle – under – Lyme, Graham Bebbington's Appeal

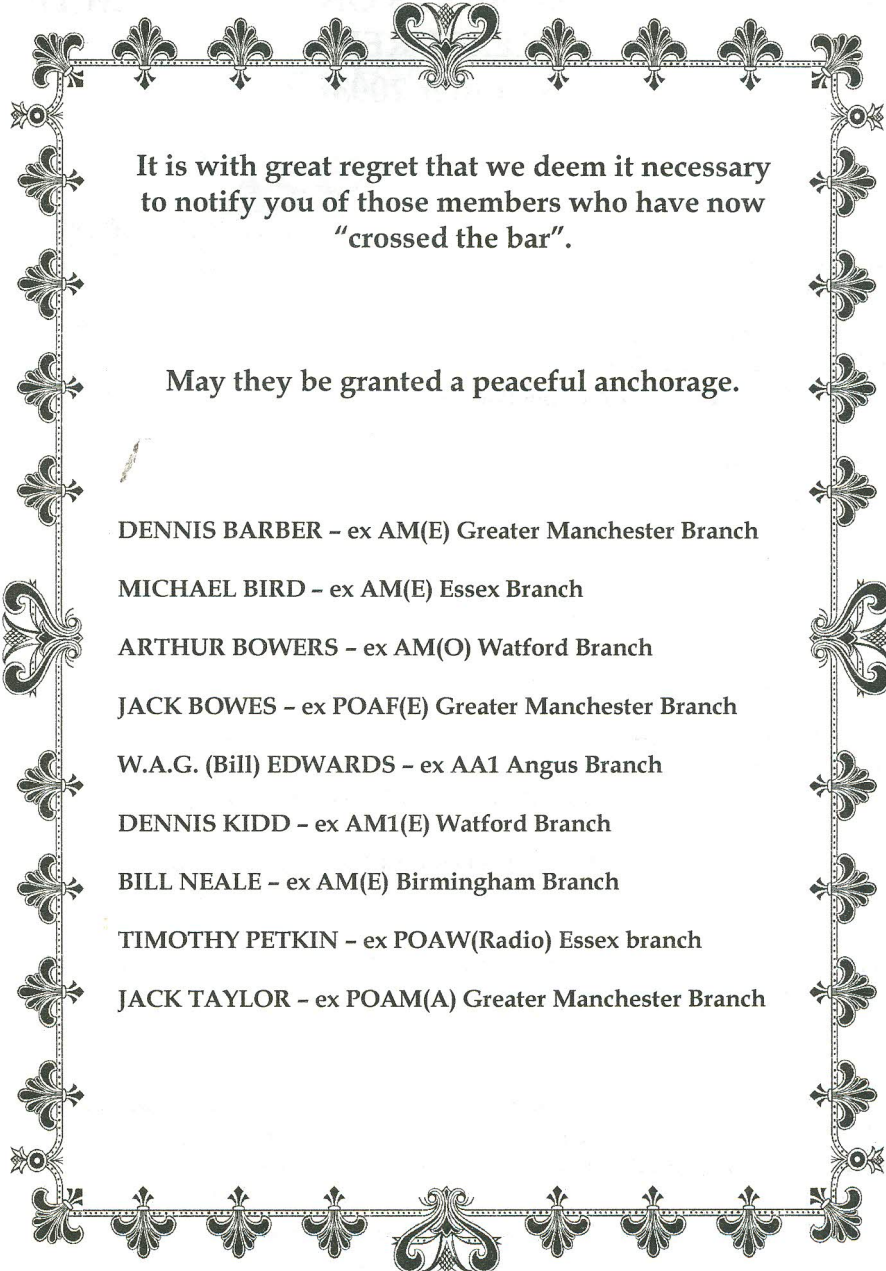
In a letter expressing thanks to those readers who responded to his appeal Graham writes: ' I am pleased to inform you that the funding is now in place for the Commemorative Bench which will be handed over to Clayton High School at 12 noon on Friday 4th July. Rear Admiral Henderson CB., CBE (former Flag Officer Naval Aviation) will officially hand over the bench to school officials, and the act of blessing and dedication will be performed by Canon John Ridyard of Lichfield Cathedral. '

Graham also mentioned that his book, ' The Fledglings – the story of HMS Fledgling ', ISBN 1 897949, was published at the end of May by Churnet Valley Books. Priced at £8.95 for those interested.

Answers to Stand-Eazzzy Crossword on page 14

ACROSS 1. Tandem Cockpit 9. Morning Star 11. Iron 12. Gozo 13. Earns 15. Elevation
17. Ticket 19. Weather Forecast 20. Antler 22. Eraser 24. Stair 27. Make 28. Starfighter
31. Front Cylinder

DOWN 2. Neon 3. Eon 4. Centre of Gravity 5. Cos 6. PUAG 7. Guided Weapons
8. Short Sturgeon 9. More 10. Rock 13. Endears 14. Starter 16. Vital 18. Cocoa 21. Ties
23. Sear 26. Otto 27. Mend 29. RAT 30. HLI (Highland Light Infantry)



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.

DENNIS BARBER - ex AM(E) Greater Manchester Branch

MICHAEL BIRD - ex AM(E) Essex Branch

ARTHUR BOWERS - ex AM(O) Watford Branch

JACK BOWES - ex POAF(E) Greater Manchester Branch

W.A.G. (Bill) EDWARDS - ex AA1 Angus Branch

DENNIS KIDD - ex AM1(E) Watford Branch

BILL NEALE - ex AM(E) Birmingham Branch

TIMOTHY PETKIN - ex POAW(Radio) Essex branch

JACK TAYLOR - ex POAM(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) | £1.25 |
| | |
| 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.

Printed by Jenners Print, 8 St. Mary's Walk,
Hailsham. BN27 1AF
Tel: 01323 441848

