
Museum of Berkshire Aviation

January 2000

News for Museum Members

In This Issue: Check out the progress of the Engineering Section, the Museum film archive, Beatrice Shilling, Fokker G-1, glider evening at Lasham and that poem!

Welcome to the second Newsletter from the Museum of Berkshire Aviation. Hope you enjoy the articles.

ENGINEERING SECTION - PROGRESS REPORT

by Geoff Etridge

First as you will probably have noticed, the Martinet is coming on apace. Since we have got the services of Ian Simmons who is a carpenter by profession, things have moved along a lot faster. Due to his expertise and the help of the other members of the Wednesday crew we are getting along quite nicely with the woodwork on the wings and fuselage. The engines have now been returned from Robin Days workshop along with other artefacts. We will soon be getting in touch with Deltair, who are overhauling the propellers, to see how they are progressing.

All of the right hand side of the Gannet is now stripped and under coated, ready for painting. When we can locate the correct colours and type of paint we will do the business.

The workshop has now got a very good range of tools and equipment, thanks to a lot of donated tools by various people. We have also just obtained a lot of duralumin sheet which was surplus

to requirements at the Army Helicopter Repair Facility at Arborfield. This will allow us to manufacture parts as and when needed. We could do with some cutting and bending tools if anybody has some available.

I hope we will be able to do some tidying up on the Dakota during the winter months. If we could get the instrument panels back together it would be an improvement.

The Herald Society chaps have now got the material to start on the Student rebuild. They have agreed that we can cooperate with them in order to speed things along. Good luck to all concerned.

Finally, thanks to all of the Wednesday crew for their support during the summer, as without their efforts a lot of things wouldn't happen at the Museum.

The Museum Film and Video Archive

by Alan E Lott

Since the May Newsletter Ken Fostekew has obtained a steel cabinet for secure storage of our films and video tapes. The key holders are Ken and me; this should prevent films and especially video tapes from 'wandering'.

I have not made any further significant progress with the listing of the remaining films but I have

consolidated the identification of reels, cans and cassettes by attaching descriptive labels, as well as just my arbitrary list numbers. Quite a tedious business. Once the dark nights return I shall continue to examine the remaining films.

We now have several video tapes donated by Jack de Coninck including the Fairey Aviation film of the Gannet mentioned as missing in the May Newsletter. Also we have the 16mm film of the Goodyear inflatable aeroplane kindly donated by Dick Gordon. As a result of information entered on the Internet, a former chief test pilot of Handley Page, John Norris, contacted us. The result was that John has donated to the Museum two 100 ft reels of colour 16 mm film. The first is a series of air-to-air medium close-up shots of a Miles Master II in RAF roundels and camouflage; this must have been taken about 1942 and just the sort of material we are seeking. The Kodak return carton had an additional label stating 'Miles Aircraft Ltd; News Reel No. 68' but no place or date. The carton also has a Kodak 'process before' date of 1946. The machine has the identification number DL194 on the rear of the fuselage; I have now obtained a copy of a Movement Card for this machine from Ian Thirsk, Curator of Film, at the RAF Hendon Museum. He also has informed me that he has several other Miles Aircraft Ltd Newsreels and has invited me to visit Hendon to view them. The second reel supplied by John Norris is a much edited and spliced print of the interior of a wind tunnel. Jean

has positively identified this as the Miles Aircraft Ltd wind tunnel that was located at the Miles Aircraft Ltd., Aeronautical School at Davis Farm, Woodley, which was demolished in 1986. John Norris said that these reels had been in his attic for over 35 years and that he has never seen them. In return I've supplied him with a VHS copy.

Julian Temple has recently sent Ken a BETAMAX camera tape taken by S.J. Beamish in 1986 of Jean, Julian Temple and Geoff Beckett paying a final nostalgic visit to the Miles Wind Tunnel just before it was demolished in May 1986. I have transferred this to video tape with added captions.

My appeal for information on members' videos has met with a minimal response. Robin Day has loaned us four VHS camera cassettes extracts from these may be suitable for our Museum video; we have yet to see others from his collection. We are still without any pre-war film of aircraft or related activities in Berkshire.

Following the film show in January Harry Fraser-Mitchell requested the loan of the Halton film. He has now had a video copy made which has been shown at the AGM of the Handley-Page Society.

Later as a result of contacts made by Doug Rough during a visit to Scotland we received a request from Ian Foster, Secretary of the Handley-Page 57 Rescue of Grangemouth for a video copy of this film. I arranged for a Super-VHS master to be made by a lab in Truro plus two VHS copies at their expense and we received a VHS copy for our

Archives as a reciprocal gesture. Handley-Page 57 Rescue now plan to run off copies for their members; also they are hoping to have it



shown during a local affairs programme on a local Scottish T.V. Channel.

I have been making enquiries of several American Aviation Museums concerning a short length of very old 35 mm silent film in our



Archive. Some replied, some didn't. At first it seemed to be film of a Douglas DWC/0-5 World Cruiser of 1924. (See World Aircraft 1918-1935 - Sampson Low Guides page 219). The American Aviation Society of Santa Ana were the most responsive but could not give a positive identification. The puzzle centred on the very large white numbers on the fuselage; F-82. However, research carried out by Brian Lamb has now satisfied me that this plane is a DT-2B, the forerunner of the DWC/O-5. Seven of these planes were built in Norway in 1922 under the first manufacturing licence granted to a

foreign country by Douglas. This close-up air-to-air film must be extremely rare footage.

Regarding 'rare' footage after some six months I have yet to obtain a sight of the three Super-VHS cassettes of pre-war Miles Aircraft footage made by the

RAF Hendon Museum. This has been passed around from David Bancroft to Peter Amos to Julian Temple but so far, I regret to say, not to me in spite of

several requests. However, I have received through Jean, copies of correspondence by Julian Temple dating back to 1985 in which a quite comprehensive list of films of Miles aircraft apparently held at RAF Hendon. I have not yet had the time to follow this up but hope to do so once I am back from holiday. This is separate material from that on the S-VHS video tapes.

Mr John Shearsmith, editor of the Amateur Cine Enthusiast magazine has suggested that we should consider approaching the Arts Council or similar bodies for a grant to build a replica Martin Harper projector to accompany this rare, unusual film. This is a good idea but will have to take its place 'in the queue'.

The history of Miles Aircraft Ltd is obviously of major interest to the Museum and like many other concerns some diversification took place. Last year, Jean called my attention to an article in the Miles Magazine of October 1947 titled "Sound Reasoning - Development In Detail" by Robert Russell. This article describes a new and

unorthodox system of printing films onto the 16mm gauge to improve the quality of the sound reproduction. The original idea was developed and patented by an employee, Martin Harper and was granted Patent Specification No. 509009 in January 1938. Special equipment consisting of a perforator, printer and projector were designed and manufactured under the personal direction of Mr F.G. Miles who was a keen cinematographer. In my private capacity I purchased a copy of the original patent from the British Library and subsequently I wrote a more detailed article than that published in the Miles Magazine. This article was published in the magazine "Amateur Cine Enthusiast" to which I contribute articles quite frequently. It appeared in the ACE for Spring 1999, Volume 10, No. 1. I assumed that this system had been abandoned at the outbreak of war and that no traces would remain. However, a few weeks after publication I received a 'phone call from a Mr R. Corrigan MBKS to say a friend had shown him my article and he had a 50 ft reel of Harper film - it was only black leader but it had the unusual perforations. He kindly supplied me with two six inch lengths. One I have mounted on a card with a copy of my article for display in the Museum when space can be found. The other I have retained for my private collection for use when I give talks to other societies.

In January 1932 the P & P School of Flying had begun to offer parachute training courses. Instruction was provided in conjunction with the British Russell Lobe Parachute Company and five pupils had made descents by 4th March. One 15 year old, Miss Hazel Wooton, attracted extensive newspaper coverage particularly since a photographer parachuted simultaneously from another aircraft and took cinematograph pictures of her descent, claiming after that it was the first time this

had been done. It would be marvellous if we could discover this film if it still exists. One approach will be to trawl through the extensive microfilm records of the local newspapers in the Reading Main Library. The first step would be to discover who the photographer was and if he was working for any organisation. Any volunteers with a few hours to spare?

Then a great surprise; A few weeks later Reg Corrigan 'phoned again to say that when helping a friend to sort through many reels of film he had acquired from another private collector he had found two rolls of about 2,000 ft of Harper film complete with pictures and sound track. Obviously this was the find of a lifetime and after consulting Jean, I was able to acquire this remarkable footage for our Archive. It is not possible to run it on a normal projector but static inspection reveals that it contains two concert performances by the world acclaimed genius Ignacy Jan Paderewski who died in the USA in 1941. Of course piano music is the most severe test one can apply to any sound reproduction system. An even greater surprise was that the same footage contained Episode 8 of the feature film "The Franchise Affair". This feature film went on general release in 1950 ! Therefore someone was still experimenting with such equipment as had been made as late as 1951-52. Do any ex-employees of Miles Aircraft or Handley-Page remember anything about this? Because the equipment survived the war, there now seems to be a sporting chance that it is still 'in hiding' somewhere. Can anyone throw any light on this or if the inventor Martin Harper is still alive?

To conclude this episode, two days before writing this article a long standing friend of mine from the early days of the original Reading Movie Society presented me with a photocopy of a page from the now extinct Reading Review of

September 1947. This has a heading "Revolution In The Cinema" Martin Harper Beats The Americans. This full page article contains many exaggerated claims for the system which could not be justified. However this again provides proof that the system survived the war.

Any additional information will be welcome.

Request ...

by Jean Fostekew

My next book is a biography of Beatrice Shilling (of Miss Shilling's Orifice fame) and so if anyone has any first-hand or even second-hand data or information on her or her husband, Squadron Leader George A. Naylor, D.F.C., I would be very grateful if they would contact me on 0118 9340712.

... another Request

by Mathieu v/d Bosch

For many years Dutch aviation enthusiast have been trying to find as much information as possible concerning the Fokker G-1, a type of aircraft that played a great role in the Dutch aviation history. About 2 years ago some people founded the "Fokker G-1 Foundation" with the hope that their combined efforts will perhaps lead to more results.

But why this letter to your museum?

Because one Fokker G-1 found its end in the vicinity of Reading. I've been trying to find something about the G-1 in Reading, unfortunately without any positive results (since 1985 I've been corresponding with Mr. Julian Temple) because this particular G-1 is very famous in the Netherlands. I'll make another

attempt again to find someone who is willing to help me a little. Perhaps it's best to explain why this particular G-1 became so famous.

During their invasion of the Netherlands, the German armed forces captured several Fokker G-1 belonging to the Dutch army air support. The Germans decided to use the Fokker G-1 in the trainer role with the Luftwaffe and gave the Fokker factory the order to repair the damaged G-1's and to finish several G-1's which were on the production line. On the 5th of May 1941, the Fokker test pilot H. Leegstra managed to escape with one of these aircraft to England. After some time with EAF at Farnborough and 13 M.U. at Henlow the G-1 went to the Philips and Powis factory where it had been standing outside the factory for an unknown time until it was scrapped.

The people from the " Fokker G-1 Foundation " will be very pleased if you can help us to contact people who might be able/willing to try to find any information about this unique Fokker G-1. Perhaps former Philips and Powis employees or local historians might know something.

(Editor: Now its over to those knowledgeable people out there, can any one help?)

Who Are They?

by Anon

Who are these guys ?
What is this noise ?
Bang, hammer, shout, wallop,
Oh it's the Wednesday boys.

What can they be up to ?
Foundations, gardens, plastic toys,
There's a lot of swearing,
Oh it's the Wednesday boys.

Pop rivets pop, generators
Growl, the noise annoys,
An aircraft mutates,
Oh it's the Wednesday boys.

Massive shows of strength,
Feats of incredible joy
You cannot image,
Oh it's the Wednesday boys.

They can do *anything*
And one even enjoys
The dirt and the swarf,
Oh it's the Wednesday boys.

What would we do without 'em?
The Museum's eulogy cloyes,
But they are THE MEN,
Those Wednesday boys.

Forthcoming Lectures and Visits RBAS

Tuesday 4th January - *Peter Cooper* - An aviation insurance assessor sees aircraft in most undignified positions... and Peter photographs them for us!

Tuesday February 1 - Annual General Meeting plus Graham's Special Treat...

Tuesday March 7 - *Jim Spencer* - Ex-Fleet Air Arm... Flying Avengers off Escort Carriers.

Tuesday April 4 - *Bob Court* - Casualty Evacuation using Stinson L5 Sentinels in Burma during WW2.

THE LASHAM GLIDING EXPERIENCE

by John Kite

On Monday 21 June 1999 a group of keen would be flyers descended on the Gliding Centre at Lasham.

Thirteen museum/aviation society members booked in and signed the necessary disclaimers,

then handed over their cash to take part in the Lasham gliding evening.

This year was first time lucky, being a very pleasant early summer evening (last year it was cancelled twice before getting a decent evening).

Unfortunately we did not get any strong thermals this year, but everyone got a flight in a club glider (K13 and K21) and were towed up to 2000 feet by the club tug aircraft (Robin DR400). No one was lucky enough to get an extended flight this time due to low thermal activity, but all present enjoyed the 20 minutes or so of flying they did get, ably supervised by the duty instructors, Paul Viner and Dave Bowtell

Two of the party, John Kite and Brian Lamb, were able to arrange a flight in the motorised "Falk" aircraft and this was quite an experience, although Brian confessed to certain qualms when the engine was switched off at about 800 feet; in his own Jodelle this would be an emergency landing situation

We had heard that the Catalina which came to Lasham, but could not locate it. We have since heard that it is at Lasham and was purchased by a group of three aircraft engineers who intend to restore it to flying condition

To summarise, a very enjoyable evenings flying was had by all, concluding with a social get together in the club bar with the instructors

Our thanks to Paul Kite who arranged the evening, our two instructors, Paul Viner and Dave Bowtell, not forgetting Brenda who did all the administration

We are hoping to repeat this event in June 2000 and posters should be up in April.

The P & P Players

Extracts from a letter to Jean Fostekeew.

by Mrs Jeanne Dollery

Thank you so very much for your letter and the book - I have been in haze of nostalgia ever since Saturday!

Dear little Mary Miles, as I knew her - "The Boss" - Mr. G. Roberts, took delightful pictures of her when she was three years old - having a "Teddy Bears Picnic" at Lands End House dressed as Red Riding Hood.

Then Mark Everard walked into the Stationery Department with the girl - Ruby Dudden - where the Handley Page playing cards came from - and he also produced "Cinderella" and another variety Show that we gave at the Palace Theatre!

They - lovely Mary Booker - Miles Martin Pen Company - her husband Michael - his surname eludes me - wrote a lovely book about her called "Richard and Mary" based on letters he found in their cottage in Wales - in the attic in a parcel - after her death - the "Richard" being Richard Hillary of "The Last Enemy" book. Beautiful reading - I've tried to get it recently from the library without success.

Then the photocopier - the first piece of photographic equipment to cross the Rhine after hostilities had finished - A RAF Officer collected it from the Boss's office he having "worked on it" and it was in the shape of a very large suitcase!!

Then the "Biro" - all the secretaries were given one - looked like a real fountain pen - they were super for shorthand - also a thing of the past I believe !! Shorthand, I mean, certainly not the Biro!!

There, for a little while John Justin was attached to Reproduction Dept. - he was gorgeous!! Married Esme Fisher and then I think she married Capa !!

The Reproduction department covered all photography - aerial - still - printing and developing pictures - Photo Lofting - printing of all drawings - and stationery! You have nearly got my memory bank at full speed !!

Then, of course the Dollery name - actually I am a Mrs. - my husband was H.E. "Tom" Dollery, Reading School, Berkshire, Warwickshire and England cricketer - sadly now in the Big County Ground in the sky - he died in 1987. He was dear man - we married in 1936 so you see I'm really quite ancient - I went to the Convent school a little time before Alma Cogan and Marianne Faithful.

I knew two Kathleen West's - lived in Norris Road - they would remember me as Jeanne Miller [?]

I came from a long line of licensees - my grandmother kept the Saracens Head, Duke Street, no longer there. Various Aunts and Uncles - the Three Tuns, Oatsheaf, Red Lion, Sailors Home, and then my husband and I had two pubs - & Mark Everard came to see us in Cundsworth [?] in the 50's.

I can't recall any of the other names mentioned, - you must be near Waterers Seeds in Twyford. I did know a girl named Vera Hayden who lived in Twyford & Tom was friendly with the people who kept that dear little country pub as you go into Twyford.

My mother lived in Shepherds Hill - she moved to Hook & was in her 102nd year when she died - a really lovely lady!

I'm sure you will never wade through this epistle - it is the longest letter I'm sure I have ever written!

I'd love a copy of the cartoon if at all possible - Dr Csato put drops in my eyes for me at one stage - I had very bad conjunctivitis - he was a lovely bloke - all the Miles friends were - I remember so well the afternoon that Walter Capley got killed - so sad.

Finito or I will go on forever !!
Best wishes to you and yours

Target Towed Operators

Extracts from another letter to Jean Fostekeew.

by Mr W. F. Havies

The commanding officer, Group Captain Allaway called a meeting of all the airmen who had been accepted for training as air crew and wore the white flash. He asked for volunteers to go on target towing and not one of them would volunteer, so he ordered them to take down their white flashes. I was allowed to keep mine, though it was more trouble than it was worth as I was pulled up several times and asked why I had not complied with the C.O.'s order and had to explain to them that I was a T.T.O. and had been for some time. We could not get any rank and were not given a flying brevet. Those who got a war service pension of course lost out because their pension was an A.C.'s rank whilst the one in front of the aeroplane was an officer or senior NCO and the pilot had a nice steel sheet behind him, but the T.T.O. only had perspex and was nearer to the target which was only 1200 feet away, not a lot of room for error.

I was accepted for aircrew on the 21st January 1944 and was told I would be in my course within 12 days, but I was still waiting and I feel sure it was because I was the senior T.T.O. that I was kept off my course, very unfair.

The last straw was when I applied to join the Air Crew Association I was told I could not as I did not have a flying brevet. My replied was I wonder how many of your pilots and gunners would still be walking around if we had not let you practise on us. I feel that we should have had the observers flying brevet as we were not up there on joy ride.

On a lighter note, it would appear at the Polish Air Force thought more

of us than the RAF. I recently applied to the Polish Air Force Association to see if I could get a replacement of the miniature Polish pilot wings (mine having been purloined) which had been presented to us by F/Lt Kukakowski the C.O.. Not only did they present me with a replacement badge, they also gave me a war time Polish pilots wings to keep as a memento.

I must get down to writing my letter before it is too late, as I feel that our case should be aired in memory of the Towed Target Operators. I do not think there are many left now.

Good knowledge of radio procedure..

Scene 1: it's night over Las Vegas, information Hotel is current and Mooney 33W is unfamiliar with procedure and talking to approach control...

Approach: 33W confirm you have hotel.

33W: Uhhhhh, we're flying into McCarren International. Uhhhhh, we don't have a hotel room yet.

Approach control was laughing too hard to respond. The next several calls went like this:

Approach: United 5, descend to FL220.

United 5: United 5 down to FL220; we don't have a hotel room either.

Flying this thing?

Have you ever been on a plane and seen pilots sitting in the passenger cabin? Well, this is not that uncommon. Most airlines at one time or another need pilots at an airport other than the one they're based at to cover a flight. This is known in the industry as "deadheading." In some cases, due to weather, mechanical problems or crew flight time legalities, crews are called out at the last moment to catch a "deadheading" flight.

This leads us into our story.

During taxi out for takeoff on a Boeing 727 the plane suddenly stopped. While still on the taxiway, the flight attendant in the back began to lower the aft stairway. Behind the plane was a van with flashing lights. The van came to a screeching halt and out jumped 3 pilots. They grabbed their bags and started to run for the plane.

As they ran up the stairs, the pilot in front continued running up the aisle shouting "I can't believe the stewardess got the plane this far. I didn't even know she knew how to start the engines!"

You can't believe the startled look on the passengers' faces. Led to believe that these were their pilots, the passengers were left sitting there in total shock. To think that your flight is preparing for takeoff and there aren't any pilots on board! Of course, unbeknown to them, these pilots were just deadheading and the regular flight crew was actually driving the plane.....

Final Thoughts from the Editor

I hope you enjoyed this second newsletter. Don't forget that this is your newsletter, let me know what you think of it and what you would like in the next issue. If you want to write an article, I would be pleased to hear from you.

Also, please don't forget that the Museum still needs volunteers to man the museum on Sundays throughout the Winter. If you want to help, please let me know, below you can find my e-mail address. Finally, its now easier to remember the website for the Museum, just type:

<http://fly.to/MuseumofBerkshireAviation>

e-mail:

MuseumofBerkshireAviation@fly.to

