



NEWS SHEET

Here's hoping you have been jabbed or shortly will be.

Tom Payne RIP 1923 - 2021

It is with great sadness we have to report the passing of Tom Payne. He died peacefully in his Care Home on Sunday 7 February 2021 in his 97th year.

He was forever linked with Hemel Hempstead having lived there for most of his life. He joined the Hemel ATC and a few years ago donated books and memorabilia to the Squadron. He was a strong supporter of the Aircrew Association, The DeHavilland Moth Club and his beloved Aylesbury and Halton RAFA.

He often talked of his entry to the RAF. Like many wanting to serve he lied about his age and was not caught out. Throughout his life Tom was 'giver' in

everything he did. As I found out as Editor, Tom was a regular contributor to our Newsletter.

I decided to leave it to Tom to describe his flying career, originally printed in the Newsletter in May and June 2014. (see Pages 4 and 5)

We send our condolences to his daughter Jill Shepherd who looked after him at home in his latter years, but in typical Tom form, he insisted on moving to a Care Home to give Jill a break.

Tom's funeral is Monday the 15th March at Garston Crematorium at 1.40pm. There is a limit of 20 but CACA will be represented. Donations to The Alzheimers Society

RIP Tom you will be sadly missed by so all who knew you. **GL**



The official handover by Tom Payne of his framed photograph 'Together Again', of the two Lancasters, to Chairman of RAFA Aylesbury and Halton Derf Mockford on 4 March 2015

Tales from the Tower **by Tony Brown MBE**

I have given a lot of thought about relating this story because it's much better told than written down. I also felt the need to protect the miscreant and of course the whole thing has been made up. There is not a word of truth in it. Or is there?

Many years ago, in the last century in fact, air traffic control in the Highlands and Islands was provided by the CAA and before that the Ministry of Civil Aviation and before that the Board of Trade. Most of the airfields were very quiet and most controllers were volunteers as they liked the solitude and environment. The hours were usually 8 to 5 and only 3 controllers were required to cover a seven day week. This worked fine until one went on leave. To solve this it was arranged that at the larger airports such as Edinburgh or Glasgow a few controllers would be trained to work at their parent unit and at one other small airport. Every few weeks they would pop over to wherever they were qualified and make up the numbers. The only problem was getting there depending on where it was. It usually involved a train ride and a boat trip which might only run on alternate days. However this particular controller had his own Cessna 172 and the Unit managers were quite happy to pay for the fuel because of the overall saving in cost and travel. You now have the background.

It had been the usual quiet day without a cloud in the sky and our replacement controller was at peace with the world. The airfield closed in 45 minutes, the two club aircraft had returned and were locked in the small hangar and the daily scheduled ATP had arrived and departed. That was it for the day and everything pointed to a quick trip round the island in the Cessna. What could possibly go wrong.?

The controller gets airborne and is enjoying himself north of the island when.

"Stornaway tower this is Speedbird 123"

Tower ". Speedbird 123 pass your message"

Aircraft " We are a backup flight from Aberdeen with eighteen oil rig workers on board. Their helicopter from the rigs was delayed and they missed the earlier connection to you and in view of the numbers the company decided to get them home today. You are probably unaware of the movement as Prestwick centre said they couldn't get you on the landline so have transferred us to you a bit earlier than normal".

Recovering from his initial heart attack the controller passes the weather and accelerates to maximum speed although knowing that he's not going to get back first.



Cessna 172

BA 123. "Tower. It's such a beautiful day can we do a quick orbit of the town and if so do you have any other aircraft on frequency and can I talk to him?"

Tower with high pitched voice "Yes. GABCD"

BA 123. "GABCD what's your position and intentions"

GABCD " Northern part of the island returning to the field"

BA 123. " Thank you .We are much closer. We will beat you in"

BA 123. "Tower. Can you give us the latest wind and pressures please?"

Tower does so then.

BA123. "Tower. I think you are in that aircraft!!!!"

GABCD. "No I'm not !"

BA123. "I think you are !!"

GABCD. "No I'm not!!"

Speedbird reports on final and is cleared to land followed by GABCD who then clears himself to land five minutes later.



BA ATP, a regular site at Stornoway.

Parking the aircraft and seeing his pension going down the drain the controller walks slowly back to the tower only to find the Speedbird captain sitting on the doorstep. "Hello" he says "I came over to discuss air traffic procedures with your twin brother. Unfortunately the doors locked so he's probably gone home so we will call it a day". With that he gave a knowing wink, shook hands and walked off.

Phew, a career saved !



A few more knots please!



Stornoway Tower

Ed: Thank you Tony for another excellent story and a quick chance to wish you a Very Happy Birthday for 13 February 2021 (and your secret is safe with me). Let me assure you all these "Tales from the Tower" have all been true. Yes I am sure many of them if told on "Would I lie to you" would be voted a lie but no every one is true. Yes names and registrations have been changed to protect the innocent. Tony spent a lot of his career at Manchester and was a very welcoming voice to airliners and club aircraft when on "approach" or "tower" duty.

**Tom Payne's flying experiences
from 1942 to 2008
Tiger Moths to Lancasters**

The first time I flew in a DH82 Tiger Moth was November 9th 1942, a year and 3 days after Attestation and 6 ½ months after joining the RAFVR. It lasted 30 minutes but they were the most exciting ½ hour of my life to date. The instructor was a Sgt. Inman and it was at No.4 EFTS, Blackburn Aircraft Company airfield, Brough near Hull.



RAF Tiger Moth

I recall it was very cold and we had to march from our billets round the perimeter to the flight offices and aircraft dispersal area. Before flying we had hours of practice in prop swinging and aircraft handling on the ground. The following 4 weeks were filled with lectures and flying, flights lasted from 30 to 60 minutes with various lessons in stalling, spinning, aerobatics and recovering from unusual positions until finally on December 2nd after 12 hours dual I had my solo test and first solo flight which lasted all of 10 minutes.

Finally departing from Brough on December 10th in high spirits thinking at last I am a flyer, reality sunk in when I arrived at Heaton Park Manchester with thousands of other would be pilots waiting to be sent overseas for further training.

My next flight was to be on March 29th 1943 at 35 EFTS Neepawa, Manitoba Canada, in their version of a Tiger Moth the DH82C which had the luxury of a canopy.

The hours of circuits and bumps mounted up, afte



Canadian built Tiger Moth (with canopy)

5 hours dual I was off solo and life was very good as I gained experience and confidence. Sadly my first instructor, Sgt. Smith killed himself but his pupil escaped, after he "beat up" a recovery truck on the precautionary airfield and misjudged his height. I was on a "precautionary approach" at the time when my instructor suddenly took over and flew at low level back to Neepawa to advise them of the crash.

The lesson learnt by witnessing such a tragedy has stayed with me ever since, whilst the temptation sometimes when low level flying to go lower still, I always refrained from doing so. Tree tops and chimneys belong where they are, keep well clear and you can't go far wrong.

Whilst flying in Canada was regarded as safe it was easy to get lost with the featureless landscape, no radios were installed in our aircraft, the railway line running East-West was a main feature as were a few rivers and lakes. Grain storage silos alongside the rail track usually had the name of the "town" (village in UK term) painted on them so could be read and checked on the map. Several fellow trainees fell by the way side on the course, some applied for re-training as navigators, bomb aimers, flight engineers or wireless ops, very few chose to return to civvy street and wait for call up.

The servicing at Neepawa was carried out mainly by civilian engineers, unfortunately I think that their skilled personnel had all joined the services and the men left to undertake the work did not perform too well. The number of aircraft that were rejected by instructors and trainees meant that practically every day time was lost.

My first major scare whilst flying happened quite unexpectedly, I was solo practicing aerobatics so was at about 6,000 feet, I had dived and pulled up or a stalled turn which fell away. Muttering to myself I then attempted a slow roll, it was a disaster, the plane just wouldn't go where I tried. Still puzzled I re-checked the controls, having walked round and checked all movements manually on the ground before start up, I was sure everything was O.K. To my horror I found that the port aileron wasn't responding to the stick.

I tried "slow" flying and found that the aileron drooped as the speed decreased, this acted like flap, only having heard about flaps in theory of flight lectures, I was getting a lesson

in real life which I wasn't prepared for. Without radio contact I was on my own, I tried landing approaches whilst still at around 4,000 feet, and worked out the only way to land was by doing a wheelie. Keeping flying speed and just hope the runway was long enough for me to get the tail down and brake safely. Yes we had brakes, no tail skid, as we had tarmac runways.

I managed to land safely on my first attempt, it was harder to taxi back to the parking area but after shutting down and reporting to the Flight Commander, I was sent to talk about the problem with the Maintenance Section. They examined the controls and checked the plane out, finally apologising to me for one of their staff who had "used incorrect wire",

I questioned them further and it turned out that fuse wire was commonly being used to connect several linking sections throughout the system as there was a shortage of pins. Unfortunately he had used 5 amp instead of 30 amp which was why it failed.

I passed all tests and with some 74 hours flying Tigers moved on in Mid-May to continue my pilots training on twin engined Oxfords at Swift Current. Here I finally succumbed to Scarlet Fever which had broken out on the troopship, this delayed my getting pilots wings until late October 1943. This probably saved my life, many of my earlier mates returned to the U.K. and reached Squadrons only to lose their lives, it took me another year to get to O.T.U flying Wellingtons, flying Lancasters at a Con-

version Unit in early 1945 meant that the war in Europe ended before I reached a Squadron.

Whilst piloting a Lancaster was wonderful, flying Tiger Moths was and is better, being alone in an open cockpit cannot be beaten. I have been fortunate to have flown in some 84 different Tigers plus 16 different Chipmunks in a my career in the RAF and RAFVR.



G-APLU taxiing at Woburn

Only one DH 82 Tiger Moth out of the 84 is still flying in the U.K. today. It is T 6825 G-APLU owned by Mike Vaisey (now a CACA member). It is kept at Rush Green, I was to have flown in it to Cambridge last year for their celebration day of having Tiger Moths in continuous service there for 70 years, a strong cross wind prevented it, so I unfortunately had to do the trip by road.

Ed: *I had a message after Tom died from Steve Crofts who Tom passed the books to. Steve continued to chat to Tom about once a month and heard all about his time in Hemel. I hope that once we get back to normal, we may through Steve be able to renew our links with 1187 Squadron Hemel ATC. I will keep in touch with Steve as it would be good to keep those links open in Tom's memory.*

We have of course a Cup which we presented to the Squadron some years ago, so it would be fitting if we could present it on their awards night, as we have done in the past.

So watch this space.

Who would be an Examiner? - in "Oz"

G'day Mate,

I am writing to you because I need your help to get me bloody pilot's licence back. You keep telling me you got all the right contacts. Well now's your chance to make something happen for me because, mate, I'm bloody desperate. But first, I'd better tell you what happened during my last flight review with the Civil Aviation of Australia Examiner. On the phone, Ron (that's the CAA d*#*head), seemed a reasonable sort of a bloke. He politely reminded me of the need to do a flight review every two years. He even offered to drive out, have a look over my property and let me operate from my own strip. Naturally I agreed to that.

Anyway, Ron turned up last Wednesday. First up, he said he was a bit surprised to see the plane on a small strip outside my homestead, because the "ALA" (Authorized Landing Area), is about a mile away. I explained that because this strip was so close to the homestead, it was more convenient than the "ALA" and, despite the power lines crossing about midway down the strip, it's really not a problem to land and take-off, because at the halfway point down the strip you're usually still on the ground.

For some reason, Ron seemed nervous. So, although I had done the pre-flight inspection only four days earlier, I decided to do it all over again. Because the prick was watching me carefully, I walked around the plane three times instead of my usual two!

My effort was rewarded because the colour finally returned to Ron's cheeks. In fact, they went a bright red. In view of Ron's obviously better mood, I told him I was going to combine the test flight with some farm work as I had to deliver three "poddy calves" from the home paddock to the main herd. After a bit of a chase, I finally caught the calves and threw them into the back of the ol' Cessna 172. We climbed aboard but Ron started getting onto me about weight and balance calculations and all that crap. Of course I knew that sort of thing was a waste of time because calves like to move around a bit particularly when they see themselves 100 metres off the ground! So, as you know, it's bloody pointless trying to secure! However, I did tell Ron that he shouldn't worry as I always keep the trim wheel set on neutral to ensure we remain pretty stable at all stages throughout the flight.

Anyway, I started the engine and cleverly minimized the warm-up time by tramping hard on the brakes and gunning her to 2,500 RPM. I then discovered that Ron has very acute hearing even though he was wearing a bloody headset! Through all that noise he detected a metallic rattle and demanded I account for it. Actually, it began about a month ago and was caused by a screwdriver that fell down a hole in the floor and lodged in the fuel selector mechanism; the selector can't be moved now, but it doesn't matter because it's jammed on "All tanks," so I suppose that's okay. However, as Ron was obviously a nit-picker, I blamed the noise on vibration from a stainless steel thermos flask which I keep in a beaut little possie between the windshield and the magnetic compass. My explanation seemed to relax Ron because he slumped back in the seat and kept looking up at the cockpit roof. I released the brakes to taxi out but, unfortunately, the plane gave a leap and spun to the right. "Hell", I thought, "not the starboard wheel chock again." The bump jolted Ron back to full alertness! He looked around just in time to see a rock thrown by the prop-wash disappear completely through the windscreen of his brand new Commodore. "Now I'm really in trouble," I thought!

While Ron was busy ranting about his car, I inored his requirement that we taxi to the "ALA" and instead took off under the power lines. Ron didn't say a word, at least not until the engine started coughing right at the lift off point, and then he bloody screamed his head off - "Oh God! Oh God! Oh God!" "Now take it easy Ron," I told him firmly. "That often happens on take-off and there is a good reason for it." I explained patiently that I usually run the plane on standard MOGAS, but one day I accidentally put in a gallon or two of kerosene. To compensate for the low octane of the kerosene, I siphoned in a few gallons of super MOGAS and shook the wings up and down a few times to mix it up. Since then, the engine has been coughing a bit but in general it works just fine, if you know how to coax it properly. Anyway, at this stage Ron seemed to lose all interest in my test flight. He pulled out some rosary beads, closed his eyes and became lost in prayer; (Cont'd Page 7) didn't think anyone was a Catholic these days. I selected some nice music on the HF radio to help him relax. Meanwhile, I climbed to my normal cruising altitude of 3,000 metres. I don't normally put in a flight plan or get the weather because, as you know, getting FAX ac-

cess out here is a bloody joke and the weather is always "8/8 blue" anyway! But, since I had that near miss with a Saab 340, I might have to change me thinking on that!

Anyhow, on levelling out, I noticed some wild camels heading into my improved pasture. I hate bloody camels and always carry a loaded 303 rifle-clipped inside the door of the Cessna just in case I see any of the bastards. We were too high to hit them but, as a matter of principle, I decided to have a go through the open window. Mate, when I pulled the bloody rifle out, the effect on Ron, was bloody electric! As I fired the first shot, his neck lengthened by about 15 centimetres and his eyes bulged like a rabbit with Myxomatosis; he really looked as if he had been jabbed with an electric cattle prod on full power! In fact, Ron's reaction was so distracting that I lost concentration for a second and the next shot went straight through the port tyre! Ron was a bit upset about the shooting (probably one of those pinko animal lovers I guess) so I decided not to tell him about our little problem with the tyre.

Shortly afterwards, I located the main herd and decided to do my fighter pilot trick. Ron had gone back to praying when, in one smooth sequence, I pulled on full flaps, cut the power and started a sideslip from 3,000 metres down to 100 metres at 130 knots indicated (the last time I looked anyway) and the little needle rushed up to the red area on me ASI. What a buzz, mate! About half way through the descent, I looked back in the cabin to see the calves gracefully suspended in mid-air and mooing like crazy. I was going to comment to Ron on this unusual sight but he looked a bit green and had rolled himself into the fetal position and was screaming 'his bloody head off. Mate, talk about being in a bloody zoo! You should've been there, it was so bloody funny!

At about 100 metres, I levelled out, but for some reason we kept sinking. When we reached 20 metres, I applied full power but nothing happened. No noise, no nothing! Then, luckily, I heard me instructor's voice in me head saying "carb heat, carb heat." So I pulled carb heat on and that helped quite a lot, with the engine finally regaining full power. Whew, that was really close, let me tell you!

Then mate, you'll never guess what happened next! As luck would have it, at that height we flew into a

massive dust cloud caused by the cattle and suddenly we went I.F. bloody R, mate! You would have been really proud of me as I didn't panic once, not once, but I did make a mental note to consider an instrument rating as soon as me gyro is repaired (something I've been meaning to do for a while now). Suddenly, Ron's elongated neck and bulging eyes reappeared. His mouth opened very wide, but no sound emerged. "Take it easy," I told him, "we'll be out of this in a minute." Sure enough, about a minute later we emerged, still straight and level and still at 20 metres. Admittedly, I was surprised to notice that we were upside down, and I kept thinking to myself, "I hope Ron didn't notice that I had forgotten to set the QNH when we were taxiing." This minor tribulation forced me to fly to a nearby valley in which I had to do a half roll to get upright again. By now the main herd had divided into two groups leaving a narrow strip between them. "Ah," I thought, "there's an omen. We'll land right there." Knowing that the tyre problem demanded a slow approach, I flew a couple of steep turns with full flap. Soon, the stall warning horn was blaring so loud in me ear that I cut its circuit breaker to shut it up. but by then I knew we were slow enough anyway. I turned steeply onto a 20 metre final and put her down with a real thud. Strangely enough, I had always thought you could only ground loop in a tail dragger but, as usual, I was proved wrong again! Halfway through our third loop, Ron at last recovered his sense of humour. Talk about laugh. I've never seen the likes of it. He couldn't stop. We finally rolled to a halt and I released the calves who bolted out of the aircraft like there was no tomorrow.

I then began picking clumps of dry grass. Between gut wrenching fits of laughter, Ron asked what I was doing. I explained that we had to stuff the port tyre with grass so we could fly back to the homestead. It was then that Ron really lost the plot and started running away from the aircraft. Can you believe it? I saw him running off into the distance, arms flailing in the air and still shrieking with laughter. I later heard that he had been confined to a psychiatric institution - poor bugger!

Anyhow mate, that's enough about Ron. The problem is I got this letter from CASA withdrawing, as they put it, my privileges to fly, until I have undergone a complete pilot training course again and undertaken another flight proficiency test.

Now, I admit that I made a mistake in taxiing over the wheel chock and not setting the QNH using

strip elevation, but I can't see what else I did that was a so bloody bad that they have to withdraw me flamin' license. Can you?

Ralph H. Bell
Mud Creek Station

Ed: *My thanks to Gp Capt David Greenway for passing this one on.*

Your 2021 Committee

Chairman - Des Richard
37, Southdown Road, Harpenden, Herts, AL5 1PG
Tel: 01582 763779
Email: des.richard@ntlworld.com

News Sheet Editor/Secretary:
Graham Laurie
19 High St, Prestwood, Gt Missenden, Bucks
HP16 9EE
Tel: 01494 863492
Email: graham@kitty4.co.uk

Membership Secretary - Ian Mason
65 Sunnycroft, Downley, High Wycombe, Bucks
HP13 5UR
Tel: 01494 439845
Email: ian.mason197@ntlworld.com

Treasurer - Rod Finn
67 Hayfield, Chells Manor Village, Stevenage
SG2 7JR Tel: 01438 350115
Email: rodfinn@btinternet.com

Welfare: - David Bray
23a Aylesbury Road, Wing, Leighton Buzzard,
Beds LU7 0PD Tel: 01296 688425
Email: adbbray@aol.com

Programme Secretary - Bill George
Blossom Cottage, 54, Green End Street, Aston Clinton,
Bucks, HP22 5EX Tel: 01296 630998
Email: bill.bbgi@btinternet.com

Chit Chat

As we continue in "Lockdown 2" your committee have been in touch with each other, so that news does get around. David Bray has been telephoning around and so has Rod Finn. In fact it was Rod who had been trying to get in touch with Tom Payne and then we heard the sad news from his daughter.

I am glad to report that Roy Briggs is doing OK although like us all is getting a bit fed up with lockdown. Ron Doble has had a few ups and downs but when we last heard he was up. Sandy Lowe did get Covid and spent time in Stoke Mandeville. We are glad to report he is doing well and when we last heard he was volunteering at SM in their testing facility - another "giver"

By now I think just about everyone has had their first Covid jab and personally I think the government have done this superbly. I had mine at the Marlow centre and it was incredibly well organised, plenty of volunteers to help the professional staff and if these things can be, I would say it was a very pleasant experience but I suppose flying round the world for years you get almost immune to having an arm full of jabs

Our Chairman is in regular touch via email and keeps us on our toes. Once we get back to meeting each other for real we will be discussing the future of the Chiltern ACA but we will need to know how we can meet legally before we go ahead. Greenacres will have of course suffered like so much of the hospitality industry and our thoughts go out to Dave, Steph and all the staff.

Now to the age old problem of the Newsletter Editor position. It is my intention to stop doing the News Sheet once we are through Lockdown. Yes, like us all, I have had a little more spare time at the moment, but once we are free to go about our normal lives, I intend to do that fully. As I have said in the past I will send out an email about the next meeting, but that is all. If you want to continue the Newsletter in any form then please think about giving your time to it. We have just lost Tom, one of the biggest "Givers" to the ACA, so we need someone to step up. It takes as much time as you want to give and does not have to take over your life!

We might hear some news from Boris next week as to the future. Let's hope it is not too long before we can meet again. In the meantime - Stay Safe