

NEWSLETTER

Book for May and June Events (Back page)

April Meeting

We welcomed back **Richard Smith** from BAA Operations. His presentation was this time about the 'Runways at LHR'. We soon realised that it was not a simple matter to keep the airfield operating on a daily basis when every 10-12 years the runways required completely resurfacing. No good putting up a few cones and say 'land to the right of the cones', it simply has to be all or nothing!

Richard explained the various surfaces that have been tried over the years, together with the methods employed to check the runway for wear, temporary repairs and a major resurfacing. All the work has to be done between 11.00pm and 6.00am, when the jets start to fly again.

May Buffet Lunch - 16 May

Tickets at £5.00 are be available for our May Guest's Lunch by post (enc cheque and stamped addressed envelope) from Graham Laurie (address on Page 8)

Diamond Jubilee Garden Party - 12 June

Bill George is hosting our Jubilee Garden Party at his home in Aston Clinton. He will provide a Buffet Lunch with wine. Tickets are now available at £12 per head. This will include a £5 donation to Bill's charity.

The date is Tues 12 June at 12.00 Noon at Blossom Cottage, 54, Green End Street, Aston Clinton, Bucks, HP22 5EX. Booking Form on Page 8

Visit to National Arboretum

The British Legion in Hemel are running a coach-visit to the National Arboretum in Staffordshire on **Sunday 12th August 2012**, so if you are interested please contact:

Sarah Carmichael

01442 216891

07881 553237

Birthday Congratulations

I do not normally cover Birthdays in the Newsletter but mention must be made of **Phil Potts** who achieved 90 years at the end of April, our congratulations go to him. Like many young men his early life was fashioned by the 2nd World War. He bailed out over France, was captured and endured the 'Long March'. He like many of his colleagues has dedicated his life to helping others, to ensure we do not have to endure the early life he did. Thank you Phil.

Another anniversary I must mention is that of the late **Les Calvert**, who had he lived would have been a centenarian this month. I mentioned about those who served in the 2nd World War dedicating their lives to others. Nobody did this more than 'Little Les with the BIG heart'. He was a welfare officer extraordinaire and did so much for the Chiltern Branch. Let us remember Les and also think of dear Rosemary who survived him, may she be comforted by her memories of such a wonderful man.

If you would like to read Les's story please get in touch and we can pass it round.

HM Armed Forces Veterans Badge

For generations our Armed Forces have served our country across the world in many roles from war fighting, peacekeeping and reconstruction to home defence. In so doing, they have defended our country, our way of life and our cherished values. A large number of our veterans are young and active and now use the skills, the discipline and the leadership they learned in the Armed Forces to benefit their civilian employers and the wider community. The Ministry of Defence Strategy for Veterans highlights that because of all this it is important to focus on supporting veterans of all ages by celebrating, and raising public awareness of, their achievements and their contribution to society. To promote recognition of veterans by the wider British public the unique and unifying symbol of the HM Armed Forces Veterans Badge is available to all those who have served in HM Armed Forces.

The HM Armed Forces Veterans' Lapel Badge was launched in May 2004 by the then Minister for Veterans, to raise the profile of veterans by assisting the wider public to recognise them. The first veterans badge was issued to Lord Healey, a veteran of the Battle for Monte Cassino, on 10 May 2004, which initiated the roll out of the badge to the generation who served in the Second World War. Since then eligibility to apply for the badge has been extended in sequential phases and now all veterans are eligible to apply.

The badge is an enamelled, engraved, and pinned, lapel badge featuring the words "HM Armed Forces – Veteran", which encompass the Tri-Service, Anchor, Crossed Swords and Eagle motif. Its symbolism is intended to unite all veterans in recognising the commonality of their service, to encourage a sense of unity and community between surviving veterans and to ignite public recognition of our veterans and their continuing contribution to society.

Eligibility Criteria: All those who have served in HM Armed Forces, including Volunteer and Regular Reserves

The only exception is for War Widows and Widowers who are in receipt of a War Widows/Widowers Pension paid by the Service Personnel and Veterans Agency. This also includes those who have received an award of Survivors Guaranteed Income Payment (SGIP) under the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme. This is in recognition of the fact that their death was due to their military service.

How to apply. Please ensure you complete the form **(available from our Secretary, Graham Laurie)** including your service details as fully as possible.

You may post or fax your completed form to the Service Personnel and Veterans Agency.

Another option is to download the form, complete it electronically, save the form and return to the Service Personnel and Veterans Agency by email.

If you wish, you may call the Freephone number to apply. Please ensure you have to hand all the details asked for on the application form.

Postal address:

Service Personnel and Veterans Agency,
Norcross
Thornton-Cleveleys,
Lancashire,
FY5 3WP

Fax:

01253 330561(UK Only)
+44 1253 330561 (Overseas)

Email:SPVA-VeteransBadges@mod.uk
Freephone Helpline

Free: 0800 169 2277 (UK only)

Free: 0800 169 3458 (Minicom UK only)

If you live in Hertfordshire, your MP (being an ex serviceman) has made it easy with a form which you return direct to him at the House of Commons. Again we have copies of this form, so nothing could be easier. He will then arrange a date for the presentation at the RBL in Hemel Hempstead.

See the next page where two of our members attended the function and received their badges.



Roy Briggs with Mike Penning, Member of Parliament for Hemel Hempstead and Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Transport



Roy Briggs and Gerard Northwood in the line up

Book Review

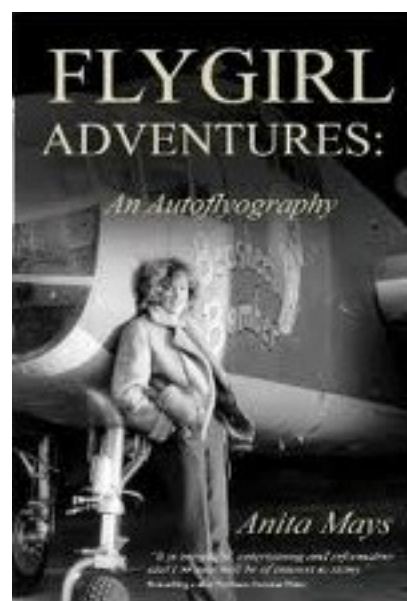
I was giving a talk recently on 'The History of Royal Flying' when Anita popped up to the front for a chat. She has recently written a book on her career which started with basic training for a PPL, then as an Assistant Flying Instructor before moving into the corporate world, flying the rich and famous.

Anita Mays has had many unique adventures during her career, from coping with turbulence when The Rolling Stones were on board to freighting a Second World War bomber, a Mitchell B25, across the Atlantic and being arrested in deepest Russia! The book is entitled 'Flygirl Adventures', An Autoflyography. Anita describes the book as "a celebration of the aeroplane, flight and of the beautiful natural wonders I've seen from the cockpit."

I had a particular interest, as many of the places were familiar to me, our jobs were not a million miles apart but it has general appeal and I would recommend it as a great read, written in a lively style. We hope to get Anita to speak to us next year.

Ed: The book is published by Austin & Macauley at £9.99. Available through Amazon or booksellers. The ISBN number is: 978 1 84963 050 4

Graham



Get those Log Books out!

From **Tom Payne:**

I was interested to read Walter Cooper's Profile, pity no dates were given as sometimes other members can cross reference to events, especially the mock raid on Kiel. I too was on it, and the date was 5 Jul 45, flying a Lancaster out of Mildenhall, with 10 others, we climbed to around 15,000ft just below but sometimes in cloud, approaching target we were getting smothered by 'window' - so heavy that I throttled back and dropped a few feet. As the cloud thinned I found myself under a B17 that appeared to have all crew members except the pilot, shoveling the stuff out of every orifice!

Had I not dropped when I did we would have hit him, we were pre warned that the raid was to test German Radar by some 600-800 planes flying over the target using 'window'. No turning back was advised, especially when closing in on the target, where converging aircraft were closer together. Marvelous that on the larger raids, collisions were far less than the 'boffins' predicted, around 1/3rd of aircraft could suffer!!! They were prepared to sacrifice 2,000 men per raid - how lucky we all were, me especially as Scarlet Fever at SFTS put my Graduation back by 10 weeks, of those getting their wings in July '43, several lost their lives but I had to wait until October for mine and that meant a further delay in UK for over a year.

Interestingly I am listed as F/Sgt on the 5 July flight in Squadron records, my Warrant received last year (by King George V1) has a date of 3 July 45.

The best flights were 'Baedekers' (Cooks Tours), taking around ground staff on trips over Germany, flying around 1,500 - 2,000ft from Dunkirk - Cologne - Aachen - Solingen - Hagen - Mohne Dam - Kamen - Hamm - Essen - Dortmund - Duisberg - Wesel etc. The ground staff enjoyed these 4 1/2hr flights, the prime purpose being to show German civilians that the RAF was still very much alive and kicking. Considering some 100 - 150 aircraft took part every day, weather permitting, the people on the

ground must have been terrified as they saw the size of the Bombers that they only heard at night, a few weeks earlier.

I had one of the first Lancs modified to carry female passengers, a curtain was fitted round the 'Elsan'!, quite a few WAAF's enjoyed these trips. Longer flights involved trips to Italy to bring back Army personnel - 20 at a time - with luggage in the bomb bay - 7 1/2 hours in the fuselage from Bari to Tiddenhams, 2,000ft up along the Mediterranean and up over France, all at fairly low level, so they didn't freeze! No 'George' used because a few losses thought to be caused by gyro failure or controls accidentally moved in the fuselage by our passengers.

Those were carefree days, how different from the strict radio messaging by today's pilots, as noticed on Project Propeller!

Ed: *So there we are, were any of you on the same raids? We will advise a date when you can bring in your log books and we can see if we can match up some raids*

**Celebrate the Diamond Jubilee
in style
at our
Garden Party
Tuesday 12th June 2012
1200 Noon**

**hosted by Bill George
at
Blossom Cottage,
54, Green End Street,
Aston Clinton,
Bucks, HP22 5EX
Tickets application on Page 8**

Air Training Corps and Gliding

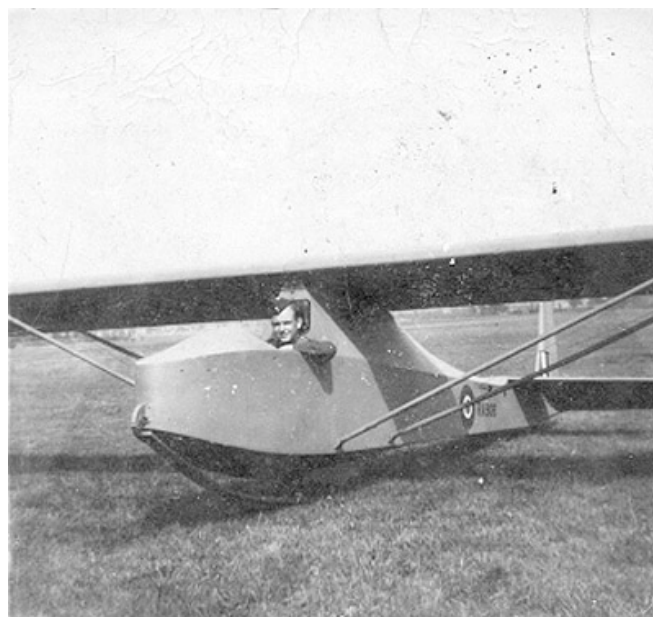
Stan Colley writes:

At the start of WWII in 1939 I joined the Air Training Corps, No 127 (City of Wakefield) Squadron. The Commanding Officer was a wealthy industrialist and ex pilot of the Royal Flying Corps in WWI. Our Sergeant Major was a wonderful man who had been a regular in the Royal Air Force in the 1930s, Warrant Officer King. We loved drilling and marching with him and the Sunday Church Parades through Wakefield, led by our bugle band were memorable occasions. During the next two years I was introduced to aircraft recognition, theory of flight, engines, signaling and general service discipline. In September 1941 we were in camp at RAF Finningley and on my eighteenth birthday I enjoyed my first aeroplane flight. It was in a Handley-Page Hampden, a light bomber that had a crew of four when on operational duties. I was in the nose cone (the bomb aimer's position) and we were airborne for about twenty five minutes - a marvellous experience. A few weeks later I was interviewed at RAF Cardington, Bedfordshire, accepted for aircrew training and signed on in the RAF VR.

After training as a pilot in Canada with the Commonwealth Air Training Scheme, I served five years until my demobilisation in 1946. I had enjoyed my flying experiences, so after the war I joined the RAF VR 'the weekend flyers' at Doncaster No 9 Reserve Flying School. After I had been there a few weeks I noticed the gliding activities taking place to one side of the airfield. I soon found out this was No 24 Gliding School ATC and it didn't take me long to introduce myself to the Commanding Officer and his staff. I volunteered my services and after a period of instruction and tests, I became an instructor on the staff.

The routine on a gliding school in the 1940's was elementary compared with today. There were only single seat gliders, so all the instruction took place

on the ground. The gliders were Kirby Cadets with a single central wheel, and a nose and tail skid.



Kirby Cadet

The winches with some 2,500ft of rope for towing and launching the glider from ground level, were ex-barrage balloon winches. Other vehicles called 'Beavers', for ground towing and rope retrieving duties, were ex-armoured cars with the superstructure cut down to look like open jeeps. For the first introduction to the flying controls we had a Daglin glider with the fabric stripped from the wings to prevent it leaving the ground. The student sat in the nose seat and was introduced to rudder pedal and control-column movements. As the winch pulled the machine towards it along the ground, the wingtips were held by staff members until the forward speed was sufficient to keep the glider straight and level; these 'ground slides' were repeated several times.

The following week the student would be introduced to the Kirby Cadet - a glider that could fly without instrumentation (only a ball-toggle to release the cable when at height. He was introduced in stages to; maintaining straight and level, pulling back the control column to become airborne, putting the column forward to return to the ground (*continued on Page 6*)

(continued from Page 5)

and maintaining straight with the rudder pedals. These 'low hops', up to 10 or 20ft from the ground attached to the winch rope, were repeated many times before the student was taught to release the winch rope and attempt slight turns to port and starboard prior to straightening up and landing straight ahead. All the operations were initiated by signals to the winch driver (2,000ft away from the launch point) using bats, like on an aircraft carrier.

So following the 'low hops' the student would do many launches to increasing heights above the ground, releasing the rope, turning to port or starboard as instructed, then straightening up to land ahead. The instructor would constructively criticise and reassure after each launch as the training proceeded. Over the next six weekends the practices were repeated up to heights of 200 and 300ft. After eight weeks of practice we were able to complete the course, with the student doing a complete circuit of the airfield; after releasing the winch at about 600ft the student would do four ninety-degree turns to port with straight and level flight between them to land after a flight of about a minute. These courses went on for some three years and we had no accidents - no pupil suffered injury of any kind. I have always thought this quite an achievement for youngsters who had never even seen a glider before.



Sedbergh T21

Then in late 1950 a transformation. We were issued with a new glider - Sedbergh T21. Side by side seating with dual controls. It revolutionised the training and it was also a performance sailplane capable of soaring in the right conditions. From the outset we could take the pupil into the air and demonstrate all the procedures. Of course this resulted in much shorter courses, 100% safety and better performance all round but in May 1952 the Government decided to cut down on territorial expenditure, so my involvement with the gliding and flying came to an end after many happy memories.

However thanks to my family there is a footnote to this story. To celebrate my 70th birthday they arranged for me to have a flight in a hot air balloon over Prestwood and Great Missenden. About 40 minutes of quiet travel over the treetops, followed by the traditional glass of champagne. Then in 1995 with my friend Ellen, we flew in Concord from New York to London in three hours and twenty minutes. For my 80th birthday the family arranged a helicopter ride over Central London at a level of 1,000ft. It lasted thirty minutes and we flew over the Thames from the Dome to the Embankment, with splendid photo opportunities along the way. That was in early August 2004 and two weeks later I had a gliding lesson at Booker. We were aero towed to 2,000ft and by thermal soaring we reached 3,000ft and remained airborne for about forty minutes - brilliant.

So my wings are still flapping!

Ed: *Currently George Biggs' son is undergoing glider training at the London Gliding Centre at Dunstable Downs. we will try and get a modern day version of the training to see how it has changed. The safety record in the late 1940's does seem remarkable. Alas their fixed wing colleagues were not doing as well! Thank you Stan for another excellent roam down memory lane.*

Programme**Welfare**

All events at 1030 for 1100 at Greenacres unless advised (*)

May 16	Guest Lunch*	1200 Noon
June 12	Diamond Jubilee	Garden Party*
June 20	Alan Bowles	TBA
July 18	Colin Gent	RR Merlin
August 15	Roger Miller	Halton and beyond
19 Sept	Guest Lunch*	1200 Noon
17 Oct	Alan Merriman	Flight Testing

Your Committee**Chairman****Geoff Hulett**

11 Pearsewood Gardens, Stanmore, Middx HA7 1NU
Tel: 0208 952 4092
Email: banghulett@btinternet.com

Newsletter Editor/Secretary

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

Membership Secretary**Gerry Sealy-Bell**

31, Hempstead Road, Kings Langley, Herts, WD4 8BR
Tel: 01923 262707

Treasurer**Ian Nelson**

13, Mentmore Road, St. Albans, Herts., AL1 2BG
Tel: 01727 856677
Email: ian6304@googlemail.com

Welfare**Bill Hyland**

57, Limes Avenue, Aylesbury, Bucks., HP21 7HD
Tel: 01296 415386
EMail: johnhyland228@btinternet.com

Programme Secretary**Bill George**

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

Please note Bill's new email address

Bill Hyland reports:

Things seem to be getting a little better as the 'winter woes' go away. A former member John Gourd (Army Air Corps and fellow civilian Air Traffic Controller) is very poorly. It was really good to see Dave Francis at the April meeting, having thrown away crutches but still a bit asymmetric with just one stick, but we gather not for long. I have been doing the usual ring rounds and thank you too, to those who have been making the odd call, such as Ron Doble, it really does cheer our members up, particularly those who the Newsletter is the only contact. Keep it up.

Bill

Membership

We offer a warm welcome to a new member, **MIKE VAISEY**. He is also a member of the deHavilland Moth Club, the Light Aircraft Association and the Vintage Aircraft Club and has 2500 flying hours on Tiger Moth's, Cessna 180 and others, so very much an active pilot. Please add him to your membership list:

263 VAISEY M (Mike) 28 Newford Close, Hemel Hempstead, Herts HP2 4QZ Tel: 01442 215625 GL

Our total membership is now 73

Gerry

Service at the Air Force Memorial**Runnymede**

Sunday 13 May 2012 at 11.00am

Wreaths will be laid on behalf of the Commonwealth Air Forces and Ex Service Organisations in honour of the 20,458 members of the Commonwealth Air Forces who lost their lives in the Second World War 1939/45 while operating from the United Kingdom and North West Europe and who have no known grave.

No tickets required but please arrive by 10.30am

Guests Lunch at Greenacres
12.00 Noon Wednesday 16 May 2012

Please reserve seats at the lunch. I enclose a cheque for £..... (**£5 per head to 'ChilternACA'**), and a Stamped Addressed Envelope

Name(s):.....

Address:.....

..... Postcode:.....

Telephone:.....

Please return to : Graham Laurie, 19 High St, Prestwood, Great Missenden, Bucks HP16 9EE

Please remember to enclose cheque (Payable to Chiltern ACA) & Stamped Addressed Envelope

Diamond Jubilee Garden Party
1200 Noon Tuesday 12 June 2012
at 'Blossom Cottage, 54, Green End Street, Aston Clinton,
Bucks, HP22 5EX (Tel: 01296 630998)

Please reserve seats at the lunch. I enclose a cheque for £..... (**£12 per head to 'W George'**), and a Stamped Addressed Envelope

Name(s):.....

Address:.....

..... Postcode:.....

Telephone:.....

Please return to : Graham Laurie, 19 High St, Prestwood, Great Missenden, Bucks HP16 9EE

Please remember to enclose cheque (payable to W George)& Stamped Addressed Envelope