



Woking and District Aircrew Association

www.aircrew.org.uk/woking

Newsletter

2 May 2020

Editorial

Welcome to our first COVID-19 newsletter!

We are very conscious that the comradeship of Woking ACA is greatly diminished by the lack of the human contact that characterised our normal association meetings.

To make at least a small inroad into that gap until restrictions are lifted, we hope you will contribute something to a series of these newsletters so we can all keep in touch to at least this limited extent. We also wish to try making contact on line (see below).

Please send items or ideas to me at akribie@ntlworld.com.

David Jackson

Future Plans

We've been holding committee meetings on Zoom and conclude that the best way to celebrate release from detention would be to have a subsidised outing for lunch at an interesting location, possibly Tangmere museum.

Details will, of course, depend on the time

of year and what facilities are suitable in the prevailing weather. If it is too close to our 14 December Christmas lunch, we'll go for that first and an outing in the New Year.

Meanwhile, if anyone has any other ideas for branch activities compatible with the restrictions, please get in touch.

Membership

We currently have 28 paid-up members for 2020 including two who we have not heard from for years except for their subs. If anyone knows of Air Cdre A Thomas or Alex Ball, please advise the treasurer.

Virtual Branch Meeting

**ACA Woking invites members to
attend a scheduled online
ZOOM meeting at**

1400 on Tuesday 5 May 2020

**via [https://us02web.zoom.us/
j/84536656205](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84536656205)**

Meeting ID: 845 3665 6205

Memories from the ACA Woking Archive

Looking back nostalgically to the days when the Woking Branch membership exceeded 150, here are a couple of extracts from reports written some twenty years ago by the branch PRO, the late Paul Holden.

Formed in 1988 by just seven men, the Woking Branch has gone from strength to strength, not only in membership but social activities, monthly meetings and a great deal of charity work, including lunches and our very important and well-attended Flying Evening.

The original venue was the Ex-Service Men's Club in Maybury Road, soon the be followed by a move to the then Cotteridge Hotel, where membership increased slowly and it became obvious that a much more interesting venue was required- one that would bring along new members and more scope for social gatherings.

We approached Fairoaks Airport and were welcomed with open arms by the manager, Robin MacKay, who kindly allowed the use of the Flight Centre and its very welcome bar.

Typical of Paul's regular reports is the following from April 2001 of an evening meeting at Fairoaks.

Aircrew Learn About The Falklands

At their March meeting, members of the Woking Branch of the Aircrew Association enjoyed a most inspirational talk about the Falkland Islands from a former Lancaster Pilot in the Pathfinder Force, Geoff Moir DFC, FRGS, FRPSL.

Following his wartime career, Mr Moir became a schoolmaster. He became interested in the Falklands as a result of his hobby of philately; so when he was offered a post-retirement opportunity to reopen a school at Fox Bay in the

Falklands following the Argentinean conflict, he accepted with alacrity, and lived happily from 1982-86 on a remote farm on the western island.

On his return in 1986, he became concerned to refute the number of misconceptions he found about the Falklands, and set out to lecture and write about the islanders, and their struggle to diversify their skills from their basic sheep farming, as the bottom dropped out of the wool market. In addition to this, his talk covered the proud history of 168 years of peaceful government from the UK, and the decisive Battle of the Falkland Islands in 1914, in which every German ship was sunk, to achieve naval control of the South Atlantic. During the Second World War, the 2,500 population of the whole group of islands donated £10,000 to buy 10 Spitfires, which all took part in the Battle of Britain.

On his return to the Falklands in 1998, he was amazed and delighted to see new roads, modern and successful schools, and a developing tourist industry to absorb and entertain the increasing numbers of cruise ship passengers, which arrive almost daily.

ACAW Coach Outing 9 May 2007



One day we'll be allowed out again!

Recent RAF Happenings

The Russians are (Still) Coming

Typhoon FGR4's from Coningsby and Lossiemouth, supported by Voyager air-to-air refuelling aircraft, were scrambled on three occasions in March to intercept and shadow Russian Tu-142 {Bear} and Tu-160 {Blackjack} aircraft flying to and from the Atlantic. These unannounced flights passed through the Scottish Flight Information Region and crossed routes used by civilian airliners, but did not enter UK sovereign airspace.

RAF Carries Aid to Syria

An RAF C-17 Globemaster of No 99 Squadron, Brize Norton, has recently delivered 37 tonnes of humanitarian aid destined for the war-torn province of Idlib in Syria to the Turkish border airfield at Hayat.



Operating in the reverse direction, an A-400 Atlas, also from Brize Norton has, as members will have heard, collected a cargo of much-needed PPE for use by the NHS. This proves that it is impossible to write anything these days without mention of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Poseidons Come to Lossiemouth

The first of nine P-8A MRA1 Poseidon aircraft has arrived in Scotland from the USA. These maritime patrol aircraft, distinguished from the ubiquitous Boeing 737 by its various protuberances, will



eventually be operated by Nos 120 and 201 Squadrons at RAF Lossiemouth.

No 216 Squadron Re-forms

Some members will remember the visit ten years ago to RAF Brize Norton and climbing aboard a Tristar of No 216 Squadron. The Tristars have gone and the squadron disbanded in 2014.



No 216 Squadron has now reformed at RAF Waddington as an unmanned aerial vehicle unit to develop and operate the 'swarming drone' concept designed to confuse and defeat enemy air defences.

A Sad Farewell to Ernie Taylor

With great regret we note the passing of long-time branch member Ernie Taylor. Our sympathies and every best wish go to his family and friends.



Ernie receiving his ACA Presidential Commendation in 2005

Rather Older RAF Happening

At the beginning of 1965, 230 squadron with Whirlwind 10 helicopters was hoping for a posting to South Cerney from Gutersloh. Instead the squadron was posted for a year 's unaccompanied tour to Borneo, to reinforce the helicopter force already there.

I was on leave in Scotland when the telegram arrived with instructions to get back to Gutersloh as soon as possible, to help ferry the aircraft back to Odiham and then on to a carrier for transport to Borneo. Most of the squadron were already on embarkation leave and I found myself leading a formation of the last four helicopters, 3 crewed by SAR crews who had been dragged from Annual Leave. Their sense of humour was at a low ebb!

The plan was to fly to Woensdrecht in the Netherlands and top up with fuel which would take us all the way to Odiham.

The flight to Woensdrecht was routine, but the weather forecast for the rest of the trip was a westerly wind at about 45 kts which meant that we would probably have to refuel at Manston.

We left Woensdrecht and followed the Dutch /Belgian coast. It quickly became clear that the wind was stronger than advertised! The maximum cruising speed of the Whirlwind was 95 knots and our ground speed was around 30 knots. In fact we were passed by a tram which was travelling along the coastal road behind the tourist beaches. It is fair to say there

was no-one on the beach that afternoon!

Ostend appeared, where I negotiated with Shell that the RAF would pay for our unscheduled top-up!

Eventually, we arrived at Manston, where we topped up yet again. HM Customs were in a benign mood and did not search the helicopters which were full of loot from a 2 year tour in Germany!

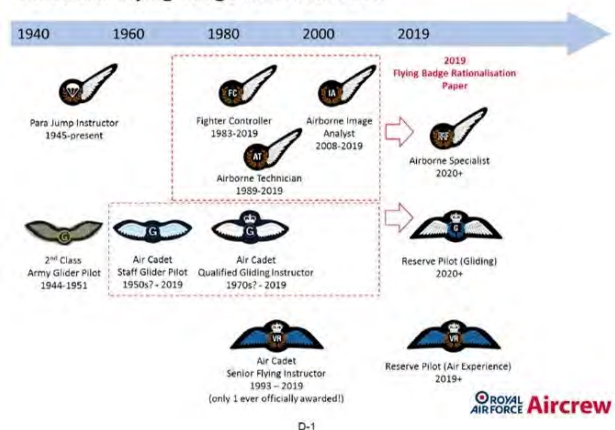
New Aircrew Badges

Current UK military aircrew badges are shown on [RAFweb](#).

Over the years, the roles for non-pilots aircrew have become steadily more specialised and spawned a number of related aircrew brevets. It seems that the decision has now been taken to simplify this system.

The plan is to amalgamate the Fighter Controller, Airborne Image Analyst and Airborne Technician into a single half-winged brevet and to have just one winged badge for Air Cadet Staff Glider Pilots and Air Cadet Qualified Gliding Instructors. The Air Cadet Senior Flying Instructor badge was updated last year.

Other RAF Flying Badge Rationalisation



With thanks to PPrune.org for the news and picture.

Need Some Free Entertainment ?

[Work Jokes](#)

[British Comedy](#)

[YouTube](#)

[Billboard](#)

[What's on Stage](#)

[Royal Opera House](#)

[Glyndebourne](#)

[Metropolitan Opera New York](#)

[National Theatre](#)

[Royal Albert Hall](#)

[Time Out](#)

[Cnet](#)

Chiltern Branch Newsletters

The ACA Chiltern Branch is also generating newsletters during the virus shutdown. These can be viewed through the News column at www.aircrew.org.uk.

What Aircraft is This ?

Can you help identify this aircraft for the AJJ Jackson Collection at Brooklands Museum?



Answers to archive@ajjcollection.co.uk.

Les Bigwood

An extract from Upside Down Nothing on the Clock, the book of ACA Woking aircrew memories.

We had almost reached home from a sortie to Germany. We found that a 1,000lb bomb was hung up, and we also had fire break out in one of the port engines and were losing height



very rapidly. The skipper got us on the intercom and told us to do what we thought best, so three of the crew got out immediately. We were actually at only 90 feet above the deck and the ground came up alarmingly rapidly. I finished up with a severely damaged back, neck, both legs, a badly fractured left wrist and a smashed nose. I spent a very long recovery period in Roehampton hospital.

I have had to give up marathon running and ice hockey, but on the whole it could have been worse.

A master of understatement.

Woking ACA Committee Members

Post	Holder
Chairman	Ron Hepburn
Vice Chairman & PRO	Bill Bawden
Secretary & Welfare	Tony Boxall
Treasurer & Webmaster	David Jackson
Deputy Treasurer	Tony Rest