



Woking and District Aircrew Association www.aircrew.org.uk/woking **Newsletter**

12 March 2021

Editorial

We have just held a committee meeting to discuss options for the future of Woking ACA. Our proposals rest on two assumptions: that relaxations of lockdown rules follow the published timetable; and that members will welcome what is proposed.

The proposition is that we re-start monthly lunch meetings as soon as practicable and hold a formal lunch before the return of winter weather threatens further COVID restrictions. In addition, we would like to have at least one outing.

- May 18th is just after indoor groups of up to 6 will be allowed again, so we suggest booking enough tables of 6 at our usual pub to cater for demand from members.
- After that, we could consider mixing venues and sometimes lunching at other venues including, assuming their catering is still open, Blackbushe airport and Lasham Gliding Centre.
- A formal lunch at our usual golf club to replace the lost 2020 Christmas event would seem safer than a Christmas event which would be threatened by another return of the virus as temperatures drop.
- An outing to an aviation venue, for example Tangmere or Middle Wallop museums.

We suggest holding the formal lunch during August or September to have the best chance of avoiding restrictions and would be grateful if members would email their thoughts and preferred date range as requested in the covering email sending out this newsletter.

Meanwhile, we plan to continue with Zoom meetings. The next one is at 2pm on 16 March - link below.

As you can see, this edition is very thin. Newsletters depend on contributions from members. Previous pleas have singularly failed to generate much enthusiasm, so please do let me have something for the April edition.

David Jackson

**ACAW Zoom Meeting
1400 Tuesday 16 March**

Click **HERE** to join

RAF Happenings

RAF Refuels French Fighters

Two Royal Air Force Airbus A330 Voyager tanker aircraft based at RAF Brize Norton have refuelled four French Air Force Dassault Mirage 2000 aircraft during the latter's 4,000 mile journey to take part in Exercise Shaheen in Djibouti. The Voyagers, one forward-positioned in Greece, provided air-to-air refuelling throughout the flight transferring 90,000 litres to the French fighters.

Chinook in Mali

Further Anglo-French co-operation was evident when an RAF Boeing CH-47 Chinook helicopter from No 27 Squadron based at RAF Odiham provided support to French counter-insurgency operations in Mali. The Chinook flew a large fuel container on an external sling to a forward operating base in the African Sahel region.

UK's first uncrewed fighter aircraft

The UK's first fleet of uncrewed fighter aircraft is one step closer to reality following a £30 million contract to design and manufacture a prototype in a three-year deal supporting more than 100 jobs in Belfast.

The uncrewed combat aircraft will be designed to fly at high-speed alongside fighter jets, armed with missiles, surveillance and electronic warfare technology to provide a battle-winning advantage over hostile forces. Known as a 'loyal wingman', these aircraft will be the UK's first uncrewed platforms able to target and shoot down enemy aircraft and survive against surface to air missiles.



Team MOSQUITO, which also includes Northrop Grumman UK, will mature the designs and manufacture a technology demonstrator to generate evidence for a follow-on LANCA programme. If successful, Project Mosquito's findings could lead to this revolutionary capability being deployed alongside the Typhoon and F-35 Lightnings jets by the end of the decade.

Nostalgic Night for Aircrew Association

This press release by the Branch PRO, the late Sir Paul Holden, to local newspapers in August 2001, recaptures the atmosphere of ACA meetings at Fairoaks at that time.



Captain Eric Brown, CBE, OBE, DSC, AFC, RN

In perfect flying weather, former aircrew members of the local branch of the Aircrew Association, meeting at the Flight Centre at Fairoaks Airport, were treated before the meeting to a demonstration flight by its owner, retired Concorde Captain Roger Mills, of the Miles Speed Hawk Six racing aircraft built in 1935, which was the subject of Ron Paine's talk the previous month.



ACA members watching the flypast



Hawk Speed 6

This clean low wing monoplane, which has now been beautifully restored to pristine factory-new condition

and is kept at Fairoaks Airport, showed off to perfection its turn of speed which enabled Ron Paine to win the post-war Kings Cup Air Race six times in a row, and keep the SBAC Trophy in perpetuity.

Then, after the usual Club Business, members enjoyed an outstanding talk by Captain Eric "Winkle" Brown on Flight Testing at the Royal Aircraft Establishment at Farnborough. During 31 years in the Navy, including operational tours on aircraft carriers, and clocking up a world record number of successful carrier landings, he was seconded to the Flight Testing Centre at RAE, at a time when they were concerned with proving the catapults which launched Hurricanes and Spitfires off merchant ships in the middle of the Atlantic, to protect convoys from being shadowed by long range Luftwaffe Condors which could report their positions to waiting packs of U-boats. After a somewhat hairy demonstration of a Spitfire launch to Sir Winston Churchill (whose brainchild this idea was), they got down to the serious business of investigating the onset of compressibility which aircraft of the time were beginning to experience at high speeds at high altitudes. This made them uncontrollable as they approached the sound barrier, which at that time was not understood.

During his career, Captain Brown flew no less than 487 different aircraft types. Because of the build-up of this unrivalled experience, and his fluency in German, he was appointed to follow up the Allied advance into Germany, and take charge of flight testing all the captured German aircraft. In this role he found astonishing evidence of just how advanced German aircraft design had been. They had produced the first jet aircraft in 1939, long before Frank Whittle's experiments, and had built their first jet fighter, fitted with ejector seats, in 1946.



Heinkel 219

Their Heinkel 219 Night Fighter was fitted with two 30 mm cannon firing 60 degrees upwards, and on its first operational sortie, the prototype shot down six Lancasters.

And their Me 262 designed with 28 degree swept back wings, and fitted with four 30 mm cannon in the nose, was undoubtedly the most formidable aircraft in World war II, being at least 100 mph faster than any other aircraft in the sky at that time. Fortunately for

us, it only became operational in late autumn of 1944, but for a short time it had a very high kill rate. Between 1940 and 1943, the Japanese had the best fighter in the world – the Zero – which had a kill rate of 12 to 1. Only when the Hellcat entered service with the US forces, and earned the highest kill rate in the world of 19 to 1, was the Zero outclassed at last.



Zero



Hellcat

Captain Brown, who had spoken entirely without notes, was thanked for an outstanding presentation, full of anecdotes and fascinating sidelines on the aviation history of the time, and laced with an encyclopaedic memory of performance figures for an astonishing range of World War II aircraft, which had the audience, many of whose memories are beginning to fade, gasping with admiration

[And here are some of the other aircraft mentioned by Captain Brown. Ed]



Tempest 5



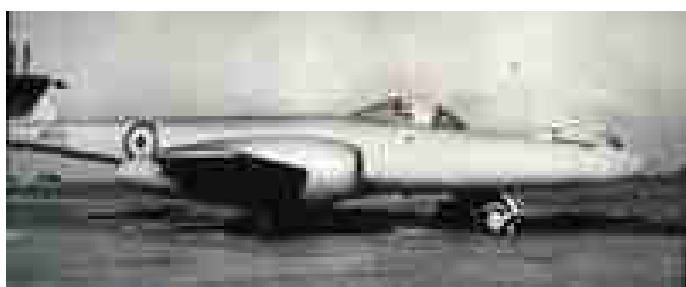
Heinkel 178



Me 163



Arado 234



Prone Meteor

TALK DOWN

Two pilots were talking in a bar. One asked the other what was the worst air traffic controlling he had experienced. The second told the following story “We were coming in to (airport name redacted to avoid embarrassment), it was blanketed with heavy fog and the ILS was out, so we were talked down by the radar controller. He tells me we are on course and to begin my approach. He tells me when I am left or right, high or low, all the way down to minimums then he says the runway is ahead and I should be able to see it and I am cleared to land. Sure enough the runway was right in front.”

The other pilot at the bar says “Hold on, that sounds like some good controlling to me!”

“You think so?,” said the other. “Have you ever tried to land on a runway 250 feet long and 6,000 feet wide?”