

UPDATE

CONTROL COLUMN

THE E-MAGAZINE OF THE AEROPLANE COLLECTION

PRESERVING AVIATION HERITAGE SINCE 1962



‘Soft Hands Stanley’ take the controls!

- See page 3 for the full story.

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News from the Editor's Chair



The last UPDATE failed through the lack of articles, lets hope I get more material this time.

Its up to the members to make this happen.

This edition has a variety of aviation articles and a mix of other non related topics. If you have picture you would like on the front page please send it to me. My photo interests range far and wide as you will see in this issue, lots more will follow in future issues.

To stay up to date you must visit our website, which will give all the latest news.

The article by John Stanley will be of interest as he flies the Spitfire "Hands On".

Hooton Park will hopefully be a part of future articles as we are a resident group there.

Colin Schroeder you are a star, please keep the stories coming, I know I keep going on about it, but without any stories I cannot continue to publish this NEWSLETTER.

Having said I will use non aviation related stories, please send me them. The only criteria, they must be interesting.



Some Coincidences By Bob Pick

The Museum of Science & Industry in Manchester

Some of the aircraft in the Museum's Air and Space Gallery are on long term loan from The Aeroplane Collection, and when they decided to celebrate the 50th anniversary of their beginnings, they chose MOSI as the place to have it. I have known members of TAC almost as long as I have been a Friend of MOSI, and before that, the Manchester Air and Space Museum. So I applied to attend their meeting and was welcomed.

One of the first people I saw was Paul Connatty. I had not seen him since I was flying as a private pilot at the Lancashire Aero Club, at Barton, and had no idea that he had also been one of their members. After appropriate reminiscences, he asked me if I remembered an Instructor named Ed Pape. I said I did, (and that Ed had come from Lincolnshire, and that his grandmother had been a friend of a friend of my mother). At that time Paul was flying a Citabria, a two-seat, high-wing tailwheel aircraft, and Ed was not checked-out on the type. He asked Paul to check him out on it, because the LAC did not at that time have any tailwheel aircraft in the fleet. Paul did, and Ed was then checked out officially by the LAC Chief Flying Instructor, Don Graham.

Neither Paul nor I knew then that Ed was also an Officer with a Cadet Force squadron, but some time after his checking out with Paul, he had gone with his cadets to RAF 8 Squadron at Lossiemouth, where they had been give flights in a Shackleton. As an officer, Ed had been offered the No.2 seat on the flight deck, and, knowing that Ed was a civilian instructor, the captain asked if he was current on tailwheel aircraft, Ed said he was, and was told:"You have control".

Ed told Paul about this, but sometime later, he said to him: "You know that Shackleton I flew at Lossiemouth, it is now in the Museum in Manchester!".

My Spitfire Day Out By Prof. John Stanley

The Spitfire I was privileged to fly was built at Castle Bromwich in July 1944 and delivered to 39 MU (Maintenance Unit).

She was subsequently shipped to the Mediterranean Allied Air Force with 215 MU and served with RAF 253 Squadron during 1945 with markings 'SW-A'.

Later transferred to the Italian Air Force as 'MM4100' and the Israeli Air Force as '0607' and then '2067' in 1952. She was found partially buried on a Kibbutz by

Rob Lamplough and sent back to England in May 1983. In 1985 Charles Church restored and converted her to a Supermarine Type 509 Mk.IX Spitfire in trainer configuration. Registered as G-CTIX she flew again on July 25th 1987. After Charles Church's death she was sold and ended up in Florida as N462JC 'SW-A' with Jetcap Aviation.

Purchased by Anthony Hodgson and brought back to the Aircraft Restoration Company (ARC) of Duxford. PT462 is now kept at a private strip in Wales.

In the event that the aircraft bursts into flames or becomes uncontrollable the pilot will say **"Bale out! Bale out!"**

"He will not say it a third time because he will be gone."

This was my first conversation with the co-pilot of the Dragon Spitfire, a Mk.9 two seater kept in North Wales. Our conversation marked the start of the birthday present bought my my wife for my 60th birthday in 2004. My passion for flying started at school as a cadet in the CCF (Combined Cadet Force) and in the days when the RAF were sponsoring flying scholarships I learned to fly, getting my PPL (Private Pilots Licence) in March 1962.

Having flown Tiger Moths, Austers, Piper Colts, Piper Tripacer and Piper Caribbean, student poverty and then family poverty, coupled with ill health meant that a flying pastime was beyond my reach. When I asked my cardiologist whether I might fly again he categorically said no.

I asked whether the CAA would consider my case if I wrote to them and he said no. When I asked why he replied that he was the advisor to the CAA. I thought that this meant that my flying career was at an end. My wife is and always has been a tremendous support, and cognizant of my secret passion for aircraft, planned with a friend of mine to arrange a flight in PT462.

My friend and I arrived at the airstrip in Wem, Shropshire and being very keen we arrived early.

As we waited a variety of light aircraft took off and landed, then a different sound was heard. The distinctive crackling of the Merlin preceded the long curved approach of the Dragon Spitfire which came in and touched down gracefully with a perfect three point landing.



The taxiing in to the refueling point was noisy, a quick burst on the throttle and then silence. Anthony Hodgson got out and disappeared into the control tower. His No2 made his way over to us and took me inside the tower where I met Anthony and was issued with my flying overalls and parachute.

Proud as punch and eager to get in the Spit I was held back by the instruction to wait until I had been briefed properly.

"In the event that the aircraft bursts into flames or becomes uncontrollable the pilot will say"

We then went through the exit procedure, whilst standing on a rickety wooden step ladder looking into the rear cockpit, which was as follows:-

- 1) Disconnect your microphone/headset plug (if you don't then as you exit the aircraft you will break your neck).
 - 2) Pull the canopy release toggle above your head.
 - 3) Break the canopy seal by striking the canopy with both elbows simultaneously. The canopy will fly off.
 - 4) Release the seat belt clasp.
 - 5) Open the hatch on your left.
 - 6) Jump out, count to 10, pull your parachute D handle.
- When I had recited this three times without a mistake I was allowed into the aircraft where I had to demonstrate my understanding and short term memory by repeating and demonstrating this another three times.



My Spitfire Day Out continued

When I had recited this three times without a mistake I was allowed into the aircraft where I had to demonstrate my understanding and short term memory by repeating and demonstrating this another three times.

After this Anthony got in and I was invited to put my feet on the rudder bar as, unlike the Mustang, the Spit has no floor.

We started up after a delay because of the queue of light aircraft awaiting their turn to take off. The Merlin has a tendency to overheat if idling for too long. Taxiing to the runway was noisy as the canopy was open in the pilots cockpit and mine. We turned onto the runway having to zig-zag across the airfield as the forward view whilst taxiing is nil. After applying full throttle we started to move and within what seemed no time at all we took off and apparently 5ft off the ground he raised the undercarriage and did a full power climbing turn to starboard - WOW! That was such a rush.

The cloud ceiling was at about 1000 ft and as we were governed by VFR (Visual Flight Rules), we did some power dives and tight turns and then after about 10 min he said "Would you like to fly it?". My faint memory from my school days reminded me to say "I have control". "You have control" came back the reply. "Just fly her straight and level". There is no doubt that the Spitfire is an extremely sensitive aircraft. It has a tendency to be a very sensitive to pitch control so 'chasing' pitch control is counterproductive and leads to violent porpoising which I managed to avoid. "Turn right" - again the controls are hypersensitive and they say that to turn right in a Spitfire all you have to do is 'think right' and it is true. A lovely right turn followed by a left just seemed to happen.

A 180 degree turn and a 500ft climb were followed by the pilot asking me how long it was since I had flown an aircraft and I replied "41yrs".

His comment I shall remember until my dying day, he just said "You haven't lost it!" and then went on to say "I wish I had more surgeons to fly with, you all seem to have such soft hands".



The Halton Comet

by Dennis Stead

In the L.R.N. No. 88 Issue 1 2013 I described my visit to the Trenchard Museum at R.A.F. Halton to return my old service cap. In early March 2013 I received a parcel; it was in the form of a cardboard tube. When I removed the end cap of the tube I was able to withdraw a rolled up piece of paper. I was delighted to find when I unrolled the paper that it was a copy of a painting. It depicted a DeHavilland Comet aircraft landing on the grass airfield at R.A.F. Halton and the artist was Brian Payne. The accompanying letter stated "I thought you would like it as a memento of your time here as you were involved in the event". I remember quite well the event as I was one of the R.A.F. Policemen given the task of closing the road between the villages of Weston Turville and Halton. I often thought what was members of the general public would have thought being stopped by a military policeman on a public highway.

I framed the print and hung it on the wall up above the television set. In time I began to think that I would like to know more about the aircraft. So I started searching on the internet and found that the aircraft was the sixth Comet produced. Throughout its manufacture it was known by the Constructors Number 6006 and was destined for the Ministry of Supply to do test work on the new Rolls Royce Avon engines which were to power the Comet Mark 2's. It was classed as the prototype Comet Mark. 2 and was dubbed as 2X. It made its maiden flight on 16th. February 1952 and carried the registration G-ALYT. During its test life it was based at the De Havilland airfield at Hatfield in Hertfordshire. It did venture to Khartoum to carry out tropical trials. The final test was to fly with a water spraying rig fitted in front of the starboard (left hand) outboard engine intake to assess the de-icing capabilities. In 1954 the aircraft was withdrawn from use by the DeHavilland Company and it is not clear what happened to the aircraft over the next few years. It made the short flight from Hatfield to Halton on 28th. May 1959, with John "Cats Eyes" Cunningham at the control, flew to R.A.F.



Hooton Park - Mid-Air Collision by Colin Schroeder

As motorists speed down the M53 motorway passed the three 1917 Belfast Hangars next to the Vauxhall factory at Hooton Park. They would be unaware of a tragic mid-air collision between two aircraft which took place there on Thursday 20th June 1918 killing the three occupants.

One of those killed, was 21-year-old Captain William Reginald Guy Pearson flying Avro 504J serial number B8604. Pearson was born in Parbold Lancashire the second son of Dr. Reginald and Minnie Pearson. He was educated at Ashdown Park and Berkhamsted, where his classical attainments promised a brilliant University career. Prior to serving in the Royal Flying Corp (RFC) then the Royal Air Force, Pearson had served with 17th Battalion Royal Fusiliers.



Avro 504 similar to the two aircraft

On joining the RFC he became an observer with No.2 Squadron in 1916. Returning to England, he completed his training as a Scout pilot, and by July 1917, he was flying DH.5's over France with No.32 squadron. At the end of July 1917, he along with three other pilots from No.32 squadron had downed three German aircraft. On his own, he shot down two more German aircraft, on the 21st & 22nd of August. He rounded off his tally of seven kills on the 4th and 5th of December, sharing in the shooting down of two more German aircraft. He became a flight commander and gained his captaincy, and was mentioned in despatches.

At Hooton Park Captain Pearson was a flying instructor with No.4 Training Depot Station (TDS), and was considered one of the most careful and skilful of pilots. On this fateful day, Pearson had on board a student, 28-year-old Lieutenant William Smith MacFarlane MC. MacFarlane was born in 1890 the son of Mr & Mrs W. W. MacFarlane of Tipperlin Road, Edinburgh and was serving with the 5th Battalion Royal Scot's.

The other aircraft, Avro 504J serial number D7562 was piloted by 2nd Lieutenant Vincent Jerome Flynn. Flynn an American was born in New Jersey, the youngest of three sons of Irish immigrants Michael and Mary Flynn. His date of birth is unsure and cause for some miss understanding, but was possible 1899. He had been a student at St Michael's Parochial School, Jersey City until the age of about 13 when he started studying for the priesthood at St Joseph's College, Baltimore. In March 1917 he enlisted in the United States Army and was commissioned at El Paso during General Pershing's Mexican campaign against Pancho Villa. Soon after, he was found to be under the required age for a commission. Resigning from the Army, he made an unsuccessful attempt to join the United States Aviation Service. He then entered St Francis Xavier College in New York.

In October 1917 he crossed the border into Canada and joined the Royal Flying Corp (RFC). Here he learnt to fly at Toronto. He became a flying instructor at Camp Benbrook in Texas, and then moved to England in February 1918. He was commissioned as a temporary 2nd Lieutenant (on probation) in the General list of 15th February 1918, with the appointment being confirmed later in the month. The records show that Flynn was 20 when he died, but he may well have only been 18.

Being a Roman Catholic Flynn was buried in St. Mary of the Angels in Hooton on the 24th of June. His body was exhumed in early 1922 and interred in the Holy Name cemetery Jersey City USA. The Commonwealth War Grave Commission (CWGC) attempt to ensure that the fallen have an engraved memorial head stone. Although Flynn had been brought home to be laid to rest with his family there was no CWGC head stone. In 2007 local genealogist David Railton discovered that Flynn did not have CWGC head stone and passed this information to the CWGC. They started the necessary process of erecting the memorial to him in the Jersey City cemetery that is now in place



Flynn's final resting place Jersey City USA

Pearson is buried in St Mary's churchyard Eastham where he has both a CWGC head stone and an original 1918 head stone. MacFarlane is buried in Dean Cemetery Edinburgh. The day after the collision, the Cheshire coroner recorded a verdict of accidental death on all three. As the result of a collision between the two aircraft whilst practise flying at about 1,000 feet.



Pearsons funeral cortege leaving Hooton Hall



Pearsons 1918 Grave stone St.Mary.s Eastham

Avro 504J serial number B8604 was part of a batch of 200 built by Parnell and Sons, Eastville, Bristol. Avro 504J serial number D7562 was one of a batch of 300 built by A.V Roe in Newton Heath, Manchester.

DAVID ARKLE COLLECTION - KEMBLE 2009





THE VICTORIA CROSS

By David Eastwood

With kind permission from the Altrincham History Society

The World War 1 commemoration has rightly given much publicity to our heroes and the deeds for which they were awarded the highest possible awards for their valour. However none of the publicity I have seen has given any details of the history of the Victoria Cross or of the much more recently created George Cross.

It is assumed that both awards are equal in value; the difference is simply that the Victoria Cross is for extreme courage in the face of the enemy, whereas the George Cross is awarded for similar heroism either in civilian life or in a military situation not under fire. As a hypothetical example, a bomb disposal officer might qualify for a VC by making an unexploded device safe while under fire, or for a GC for the same deed while away from the enemy. When worn, the Victoria Cross and the George Cross take precedence over all other decorations. Until 1856 there were no medals given for heroic actions in war. True medals were struck for the Battle of Trafalgar in 1805 and the Battle of Waterloo in 1815 but they were campaign medals, not essentially for bravery, and in any case were only given to officers. However in 1856 Queen Victoria signed a Royal Warrant which instituted the Victoria Cross. It could be given to anyone of any rank irrespective of his or her background (no woman has yet won a Victoria Cross) and "all persons [were] on a perfectly equal footing in relation to the eligibility". It was intended "to be highly prized and eagerly sought after by the officers and men of our naval and military services." It was therefore the most democratic honour in the annals of military and naval history and has remained so ever since. The first award ceremony took place on 26 June 1857, when Queen Victoria held the first investiture ceremony, awarding the Cross of her name to sixty two men who had distinguished themselves in the Crimean War. The first person to be nominated for a Victoria Cross was a twenty-year-old Irishman, Charles Davis Lucas, who was serving on HMS Hecla on the 21st June 1854. The ship was struck by a live fizzing shell, which would probably have sunk the ship when it exploded. Lucas picked it up in his bare hands and threw it overboard. It exploded as it fell into the sea! It is fair to say that it has become more and more difficult to win a Victoria Cross and that a number of the first recipients would have been given some lesser award if their action had taken place in some later war. However it has always been rightly extremely rare and although millions of men and women have served in the two World Wars and all the lesser conflicts since 1854, only just over 1,350 awards have been made, many of them posthumously, which goes to prove that only an act committed in the most perilous circumstances in which even survival itself is a matter of extreme doubt has qualified for the award. In fact, in January 1879 the famous Battle of Rorke's drift took place, in which no less than eleven Crosses were awarded. It is unlikely that so many Crosses could now be awarded for a single action; as an example, the Battle of the Imjin River took place in 1951 during the Korean War; many heroic deeds were carried out and the survivors of the Gloucestershire Regiment were unanimous in recommending their Colonel, Lieutenant Colonel J.R. Carne, to represent the entire regiment in being awarded a most remarkable Victoria Cross. This year we are of course commemorating Captain Edward Bradbury. But Altrincham has produced another recipient of the Victoria Cross in the person of Private (later Sergeant) William Speakman, who won his award during the Korean War and lived here until he moved to Cornwall quite recently. Looking further afield, we find the famous Group Captain Leonard Cheshire of Chester, whose award was given in September 1944 not, unusually, for a single heroic action, but for four years of "careful planning, brilliant execution and supreme contempt for danger". Major Kenneth Muir, also of Chester, was another veteran of the Korean War, who refused to leave his position although heavily outnumbered and under heavy fire until wounded men had been evacuated. He was himself mortally wounded. Another VC for a Cheshire man was to Trooper Horace Ramsden, also of Chester, who under heavy fire in 1899 during the Boer War picked up his severely injured brother and carried him for nearly half a mile until help arrived. No less than twenty three Victoria Crosses were won in the First World War by men from Manchester and the surrounding areas

MY OTHER PHOTO INTERESTS

BRIDGES



MIDDLESBROUGH TRANSPORTER BRIDGE



POOLE HARBOUR SAIL BRIDGE

BATTLEFIELDS



CULLODEN APRIL 1764



FLODDEN FIELDS 1513

LOCOMOTIVES



BR Class 4MT 2-6-4T tank engine
Gloucestershire & Warwickshire Steam Railway



GWR 7800 Class 7812 *Erlestoke Manor*
Bodmin & Wenford Railway

SEND IN PICTURES OF YOUR INTERESTS

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