

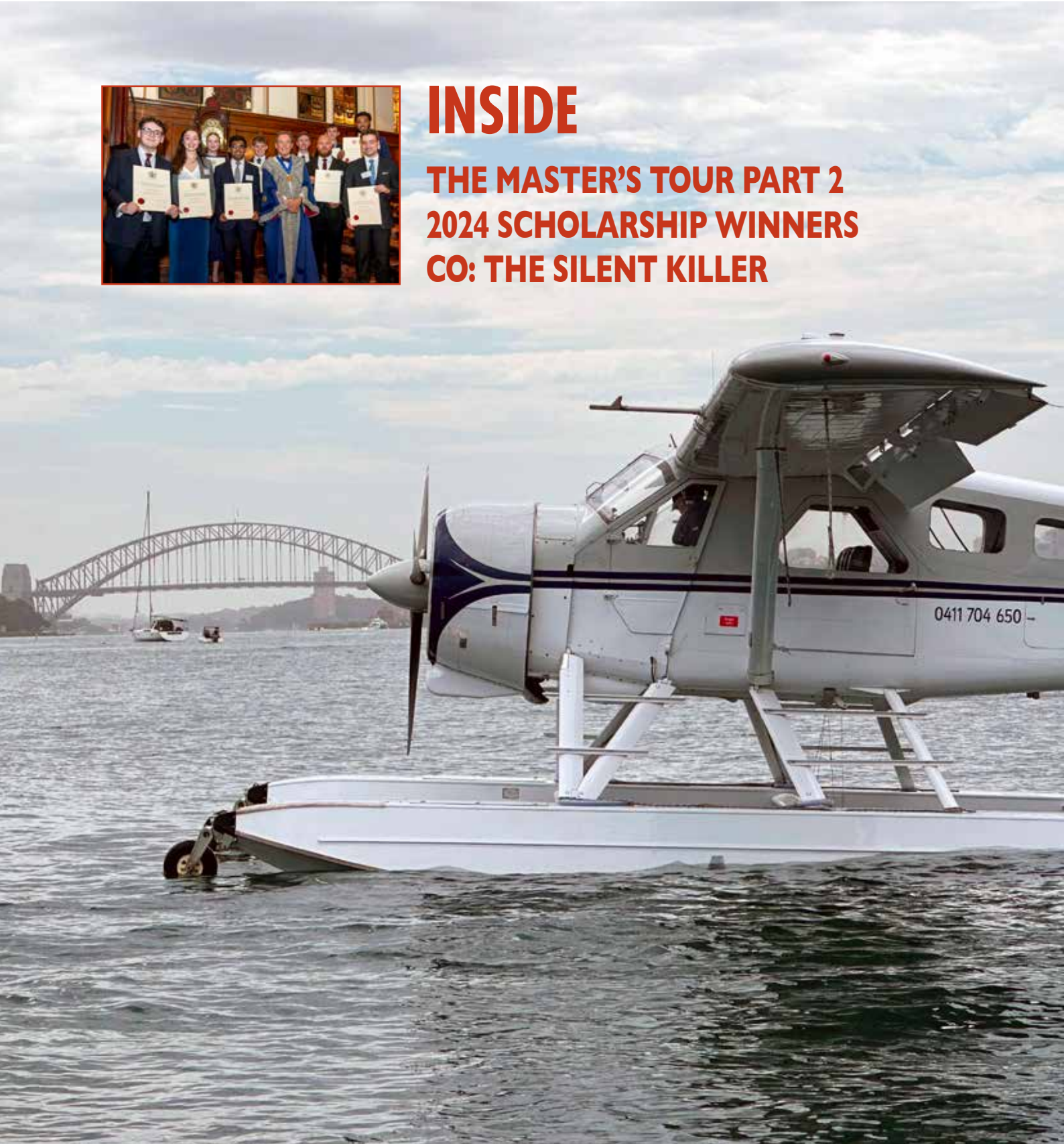


# AIR PILOT



## INSIDE

**THE MASTER'S TOUR PART 2  
2024 SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS  
CO: THE SILENT KILLER**





## THE HONOURABLE COMPANY OF AIR PILOTS incorporating Air Navigators

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His Majesty The King

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**CLERK:**  
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website via this QR code,  
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X, @AirPilotsCo



# DIARY



## Applications for Visits and Events

Details and application forms for Company events and visits are now available only online – either on the website or via links in the electronic newsletter and events bulletins.

### FEBRUARY 2025

|                  |                     |      |
|------------------|---------------------|------|
| 11 <sup>th</sup> | APFC talk: Dave Fry | Zoom |
| 13 <sup>th</sup> | GP&F                | APH  |

### MARCH 2025

|                  |                                       |                        |
|------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------|
| 5 <sup>th</sup>  | APPL                                  | APH                    |
| 11 <sup>th</sup> | APFC talk:<br>PM Rick Peacock-Edwards | Zoom                   |
| 13 <sup>th</sup> | GP&F                                  | APH                    |
| 13 <sup>th</sup> | Court                                 | Cutlers' Hall          |
| 24 <sup>th</sup> | AGM & Installation                    | Merchant Taylors' Hall |
| 27 <sup>th</sup> | APT/AST                               | APH                    |

### APRIL 2025

|                  |                             |               |
|------------------|-----------------------------|---------------|
| 6 <sup>th</sup>  | APFC Freddie Stringer Lunch | White Waltham |
| 10 <sup>th</sup> | GP&F                        | APH           |
| 13 <sup>th</sup> | APFC Start of Season Lunch  | White Waltham |
| 23 <sup>rd</sup> | Luncheon Club               | RAF Club      |
| 23 <sup>rd</sup> | Cobham Lecture              | RAF Club      |

Cover photos: De Havilland Beaver on Sydney Harbour (R Piper); PPL Scholarship winners, 2024 (Annabel Moeller)

## Guidelines for submissions to Air Pilot

Please submit contributions as follows:

- Text in word document, including your name below the title of the piece;
- Photos as separate attachments, not embedded in emails;
- All images to be sent as jpeg files with a file size of at least 2MB;
- Attachments totalling more than 15MB to be sent via WeTransfer only.



# A MESSAGE FROM YOUR EDITOR...



The recent loss of an Azerbaijan Airlines airliner after it sustained suspected missile damage while trying to land at Grozny in Chechnya raises questions about the state of preparedness and risk awareness of airlines and air traffic management systems

operating in or near conflict zones. Whether or not missile damage is confirmed eventually as the cause of the crash, the problem is serious enough to have prompted EASA to issue an expanded conflict-zone advisory for Russian airspace, advising against all operations, regardless of altitude, within five Russian airspace regions.

Importantly, the expanded advisory applies to foreign air carriers (including Azerbaijan Airlines) which have obtained third-country authorisation to operate in Russian airspace. Well over 20 airlines – mainly from the Middle East, Asia and Africa but including a handful of (non-EU) European carriers – still operate into Russia or overfly its airspace. This is despite increasing aerial combat activity by both Russia and Ukraine, and the concern that the operators of defensive systems deployed by either country are neither reliably capable of, nor prioritised on, discriminating between innocent civil traffic and hostile flights. The situation is aggravated by the deliberate degrading of satellite navigational systems.

Quite apart from the mass of information possessed and used professionally by air traffic management systems, the ability to track civil airliners, clearly identified by type, registration, operator and routeing, live on apps like *Flightradar24*, is now routinely available to pretty well anyone in much of the world. Indeed, the increasingly erratic track of the Azerbaijan airliner on its ill-fated diversion from Grozny to Aktau in Kazakhstan was widely available on publicly viewable sources in the aftermath of the crash.

It is easy to forget that such information is not available or used universally, and that the priorities of those manning anti-aircraft defences in a conflict zone are not those of the casual user of a smartphone app. It would therefore seem incumbent on all those involved in enabling or operating civil flights, not only around Russia and Ukraine but in or near all other conflict zones globally, be they in the Middle East, Africa or elsewhere, to err on the side of caution. In particular, those countries where conflicts are live need to be more rigorous in closing their airspace, at least temporarily, to civilian traffic when combat is underway or deemed likely or imminent – a responsibility in which Russia, in particular, seems to have been deficient in the Azerbaijan Airlines case.

*Allan Winn - Editor*

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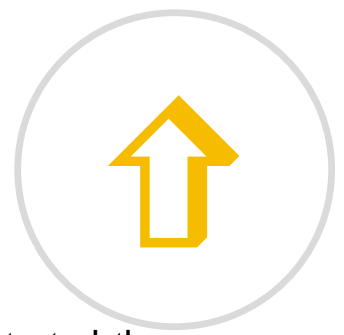
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# NEWS ROUNDUP



## AWARDS EXTRA

During the second part of his Tour - to Australia, New Zealand and Hong Kong – the Master took the opportunity to present Annual Awards to some of those from these regions who were unable to be present at the Trophies & Awards Banquet in London in October 2024. He was also able to present a number of Master Air Pilot certificates.



Wg Cdr Chris Ross receives the Barry Marsden Award on behalf of 3Sqn RNZAF at Ohakea



Aminta Hennessy receives her MAP certificate in Sydney



The Master's Australian Award is awarded to Tony Alder in Melbourne



The Master's Hong Kong Award is received by Valerie Stait



Cameron Marchant receives his MAP certificate in Melbourne



Ray Clamback receives his MAP in Sydney



John Cook (l) with the Jean Batten Award and John King (r) with the Hugh Field Aviation Journalism Award in Auckland

## DARROL STINTON MEMORIAL TROPHY

*Awarded to PM Wally Epton*

The late Liveryman Darrol Stinton was a former Farnborough and Civil Aviation Authority Test Pilot and founder member of the Historic Aircraft Association.

In the 1970s, whilst working for the CAA as a Test Pilot, Darrol was test flying an increasing number of historic, classic and vintage types for which civilian owners were seeking Permits to Fly. In 1978, in answer to CAA

concerns about the ability of private owners to properly maintain and display heritage aircraft, Darrol, together with Hawker Chief Test Pilot Duncan Simpson (Past Master of the Air Pilots) and a Council of four other Test Pilots, established the Historic Aircraft Association. Darrol's aim was to ensure that historic aircraft were reliable to fly, and would be flown by "good egg" pilots beyond reproach

who could be relied upon to fly them safely.

The purpose of the Council of Test Pilots was to create an association that would monitor air display and piloting standards, share information and make appropriate recommendations to the CAA. The work of the HAA introduced the Register of Pilots who were accepted and approved to display historic aircraft at air shows.

For more than three decades, Darrol worked as a Vice-President of the Association and the excellent safety record of historic aircraft at air shows across the UK is part of his fine legacy. He helped create the system of "Display Authorisation" which evaluated the performance of individual pilots and helped frame regulations which ensured that any potential display incidents were kept away from crowds.

Following Darrol's death in 2013 the HAA instituted a new trophy in his memory to be awarded in recognition of outstanding individual achievement in the operation and preservation of historic aircraft. This trophy is awarded annually to an individual who is considered by the membership of the HAA to have made a great contribution to British historic aviation.

#### **NO 101 IS THE WINNER**

The recipient of this year's award was PM Wally Epton who was one of the very early members of the HAA, having joined in 1979. He still very proudly has in his possession his original Register of Pilots authorisation



*HAA President, Liveryman Sir Gerald Howarth, presenting PM Wally Epton with the DSTM trophy in front of the RAF Museum Hawker Hurricane - an aircraft type that Wally was privileged to fly during his RAF service with the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight (Howard Cook)*

certificate number 101. He only later found out that he was not the 101<sup>st</sup> pilot to be awarded a display authorisation certificate by the HAA, it was just that the HAA Secretary and registrar at the time allocated membership numbers starting at 100 to those display pilots who were not test pilots at the Shuttleworth Trust. Only Shuttleworth test pilots had numbers below 100 and, of course, Darrol Stinton was Number One. □

## **APFC WINTER REPORT**

*By Liveryman Rob Owens, Chairman*

The APFC enjoyed well attended End of Season Lunches held at the West London Aero Club at White Waltham on 13<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> October.

The very popular evening Zoom Winter Talks commenced with the first given by PM AM Cliff Spink in November. There are always five talks planned, with one each month from November through to March. These talks successfully bring together the members of the Flying Club and Cliff's recent talk produced one of the highest numbers of participants.

All APFC talks are on-line via Zoom and are open to members of the Air Pilots Flying Club, their invited guests and all members of the Honourable Company of Air Pilots. The talks are recorded so that they can be reviewed or watched by anyone who has been unable to attend. The dates for these talks and all APFC events are on the Company Calendar. Registration to view these talks needs to be done by making contact with the APFC Secretary Tom Kinnaird.



*The well-attended end-of-season lunch at White Waltham*

I would like to thank all the APFC Committee for their time, which results in a strong and well managed Air Pilot Club, and all members for the continued support. □

## 2024 SCHOLARSHIPS PRESENTATION

The 2024 PPL and Flying Instructor Scholarship winners were presented with their certificates at the November Court meeting, and afterwards joined members of the Court for a reception and dinner. In the absence of the Master on his Tour, the proceedings were back in the control of PM Jonathan Legat for the evening. □



*Flying Instructor Scholarship winners: Lewis Bricknell (Swire Scholarship) and Poya Sodagar (Norman Motley Scholarship) with PM Legat*



*PPL Flying Scholarships: (l to r) Piers Austin Foss (Lane-Burselm/BALPA Benevolent Fund Scholarship); Eleanor White (Grayburn Scholarship); Sophie Gairdner (Wigley/BALPA Benevolent Fund Scholarship); Shivam Patel (Sky Demon Scholarship); Chris Edmunds (Dunmore Scholarship); the IPM, Jordan Smith (Sir Sefton Brancker/Air Pilots Trust Scholarship); Ciaran Haverty (Bob Dawson/BALPA Benevolent Fund Scholarship); Thomas Laidlar (Air Pilots Trust Scholarship); Darrell Kovak (Donaldson Scholarship); James Wilson (Air Pilots Benevolent Fund Scholarship)*



*Scholarship winners and their families meet the Court*

# GAZETTE APPROVED BY THE COURT 23 JANUARY 2025

### ADMISSIONS

#### As Upper Freeman

Jason Robert ATKINS (HK)  
Zoe Rachelle DAVIES (HK)  
Tanis Helena HERRIOT (HK)  
Bradley Paul Burton JACQUES (HK)  
Ashley James MARGERRISON  
Roger MILNE (NA)  
John William RAWLINGS  
Hedley TARDREW  
Richard TOBIANO (AUS)

#### As Freeman

Janice Fay ANDERSON (AUS)  
Geoffrey Peter DAVIES  
Barbara Elaine HOLDER (NA)  
Keith Charles KNOWLES  
Emile MARDACANY  
Ian PSAILA  
Christopher Graham RADFORD  
Edward James SLAWSON

#### As Associate

Henry Albert CLARK

Piers Morgan GALE  
Ali HASSNAIN  
Jonathan Patrick Munro INDERWICK  
Sienna Alice KLEIN (AUS)  
Ethan LE CHEVALIER  
Molly Rose LOVEMAN  
Annie Beatrice ROSSER (AUS)  
Hamish Ryan WURST (AUS)

### ACKNOWLEDGED BY THE COURT 23 January 2025

#### REGRADING

##### To Livery

David JOSLYN

##### As Freeman

Jenna GOOBY (AUS)  
Gretta Frances KINGSTON (AUS)

#### RESIGNATIONS

Dheeraj BHASIN  
Peter DOBSON  
Gareth DORE (NA)  
Maisie-rae HAYNES

Brendan NOLAN  
Lokesh SHARMA  
Mark SIMICH (NZ)  
Roy TARGONSKI  
Brian WHEELER  
**DECEASED**  
Geoffrey MILSOM  
Roger SMITH  
Peter TAIT





# THE MASTER'S MESSAGE

*By The Master, Richie Piper*

It is a well-used phrase that time passes quickly when you are having fun.

Accordingly, this is my last Master's Message and written before Christmas before handing over to the Master Elect John Denyer in March. I wish John and Kate all the best for their year and hope they enjoy it as much as Gill and I have. It also reminds me of one of the first inputs I had on the Court, many years ago. Observing the handover to the new Master during the Installation, I felt it would be truer to our aviation roots if the outgoing Master says to the new Master, "You have control" and they reply, "I have control". I was pleasantly surprised that this suggestion was immediately adopted!

The Carol Service, and supper afterwards, is always a guaranteed way to get into the Christmas spirit. Our church at St Michael's Cornhill provides an exceptionally

overseas. We are the only Livery Company with overseas Regions, reflecting our industry's global reach. This is not only valuable to our Company in terms of influence but in particularly the work of our International Technical Forum under new chair Mike Zaytsoff. The Regions have also assisted various Lord Mayors in their overseas missions.

## AN AMAZING EXPERIENCE

Although, as I write, there are three months of the year to go, considering the year so far, I am struck by three thoughts: it has been an amazing experience to represent the Company; we have been so lucky compared to previous Masters whose year was so compromised by Covid-19 restrictions; and we have greatly valued the support of so many members throughout the year. This has included many kind messages as our daughter faced a serious illness and initially limited Gill's role as Mistress.



*The beautiful interior of St Michael's Cornhill*

high-quality service with the amazing choir under the direction of Jonathan Rennert and our own Honorary Chaplain Ray Pentland conducting proceedings. The breadth of choral music ranges from the traditional - the beautiful music for *In the Bleak Midwinter* composed by Harold Darke (who was Director of Music at St Michael's for 50 years from 1914) - to a new composition by the organist for the service, Makoto James. The soaring descants for the final verses are incredibly stirring. Incidentally, did you know that St Michael's has appeared twice in the spy series *Slow Horses*?

You will read the report of the Master's Tour Part 2 elsewhere in the magazine, but it is one of the privileges of being Master not only to visit our Regions but also to see the amazing reach and work of our members

Fortunately, as things improved, Gill could get more involved as the Mistress, especially on the Tour.

Followers of this column will have noted my past comments on the state of our Armed Forces after sustained underinvestment for many years. Travelling around the world reveals a similar picture, with perhaps the exception of the USA, but a greater recognition in needing to address the shortfall against growing threats. A recent briefing by ACM The Lord Peach highlighted how innovation is seeking to address the capability gap together with closer NATO partnerships. It was pleasing to note the recent award received by Upper Freeman Grp Capt Peter "Willy" Hackett, who heads the RAF Rapid Capability Office Airborne Experimentation Unit, in recognition of such innovation. One area that Lord

Peach highlighted is the readiness of business to scale up quickly, with British industry not yet being ready to engage. The example of the Ukraine refocusing its furniture manufacturing industry on drone component production was cited, and again has echoes of World War Two with de Havilland Mosquito production undertaken in Britain by our furniture industry.

Recently the new Sheriffs, Alderman Greg Jones KC and David Chalk, took office shortly followed by Alderman Alastair King as the new Lord Mayor, and we wish them all a successful year. The Ven Ray Pentland, our own Honorary Chaplain, is the Lord Mayor's Chaplain. The new Lord Mayor is focusing on "taking the handbrake off" business to promote economic growth. We will seek to highlight the readiness of industry to scale up defence production to be considered as part of the Lord Mayor's strategy.

We have just opened our Scholarships applications in the UK and the Foundation in North America is in place to raise funding for Scholarships, in the USA and then Canada. The Australian Region has also set up a Trust. All these initiatives are designed to grow our scholarships and attract further sponsorship. The Scholarships team can always use more help with sifting applications, and I can recommend the satisfaction to be had in helping out. Being involved in helping young people get their first taste in aviation is very rewarding.

### SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

We are in the final stages of establishing a new Social Media policy to extend our reach to young people by publicising a number of the activities of the Company that are relevant to that audience, such as the work of Scholarships and Careers teams. It is hoped that by giving posting freedom within a defined scope, social media agents can garner more attention whilst we ensure we minimise reputational risk.

I am pleased to see that the growing number of younger members in the UK is being replicated across the Regions, especially in Australia and Hong Kong. This not only ensures the Company is in good health, especially for the future, but also has a positive impact on the delivery of the various programmes we have on helping young people in aviation. At a dinner in Australia, it was nice to see, Australia Regional Chairman Adrian Young not only celebrate 30 years of membership but to also welcome his son as a member.

This is the time of year when Liverymen can stand for election as a Court Assistant. This not only gives you a great insight into the working of the Company but also provides many opportunities to contribute to a variety of areas of the Company's work. This is also the first step to becoming Master, generally having served as Court

Assistant for a term, before standing for election as a Warden. I wish everyone standing for election the very best of luck.

### A PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR

I hope everyone had a wonderful Christmas with families and friends and wish you a prosperous New Year. I am aware a few members have had a difficult year with health matters, and I wish them all the best with their recoveries.

May I offer Liveryman Colin Bell and Upper Freeman Mike Clews my warmest congratulations on behalf of all Air Pilots on being awarded the British Empire Medal in the New Year Honours list. Colin's BEM is for charitable fundraising and for public speaking to keep the memory of veteran combatants alive. Colin richly deserves this award and continues his work at a spritely 103 years of age. I am sure many of us will celebrate with Colin at the RAF Club during 2025. Mike, founder and leader of the Joystick Club, whose pedal planes appear at so many aviation events, is awarded his BEM for services to young people through the promotion of aviation.



Liveryman Colin Bell BEM



Upper Freeman Mike Clews BEM

I still have a few Air Pilots key rings left with a banner saying "Remove Before Flight" one side and "I am an Air Pilot" on the other. They are on sale to raise money for the Master's charities and also publicise the Company, so as the saying goes: "Stop me and buy one!"

*Air Pilot* magazine has a wide circulation, and I frequently receive positive feedback on it from members and non-members alike. Like many activities within the Company, it relies on a great team giving their time and skills. I am sure you would join me in expressing your appreciation to Editor Liveryman Allan Winn and Deputy Editor Liveryman Chris Long, together with their sub-editing and proofing teams for producing an interesting read every two months.

Finally, can I express my thanks and appreciation to members for your trust in giving me the honour and privilege of being Master. I have sought to represent the Company as best as I can. It has been a wonderful experience. □



# REGIONAL REPORTS



## Regional Report: Australia

By Liveryman Adrian Young, Chairman

As we close out 2024, the Honourable Company of Air Pilots - Australian Region has much to celebrate and reflect upon. This year has been marked by significant events, inspiring visits, and continued growth in our membership. Listed below are the highlights from the Master's Tour and other notable activities.

### MASTER'S TOUR HIGHLIGHTS

**Perth, West Australia:** Master Richie Piper and his wife, Gill, began their tour with a visit to the RAAF Aviation Heritage Museum. Master Piper, a Catalina pilot, was particularly captivated by the museum's Catalina exhibit. The tour continued with an engaging session at Melville State High School's Aviation Studies Centre, where Master Piper inspired students with his expertise and enthusiasm.



*The Master at Melville High School in Perth (Adrian Young)*

**Adelaide, South Australia:** In Adelaide, the Master visited Flight Training Adelaide (FTA), where he interacted with student pilots and shared his wisdom. A formal dinner at the Naval and Air Force Club allowed members and Young Air Pilots to connect with the Master, fostering a sense of camaraderie. The visit concluded with a day of flying activities at Aldinga Aero, where Young Air Pilot Steven Shen won top honours in a landing competition.

**Sydney, New South Wales:** The Sydney leg included an informal dinner at Circular Quay, meetings with Qantas Group Chief Pilots, and a luncheon at the Boathouse at Rose Bay. Two Master Air Pilot Certificates were presented to Aminta Hennessy and Ray Clamback, recognizing their exceptional contributions to aviation.

**Canberra, Australian Capital Territory:** In Canberra, the Master met with key figures in Australian aviation, including CASA CEO Pip Spence and ATSB's Chief

Commissioner Angus Mitchell. A tour of the Australian War Memorial's aircraft collection provided deep insights into Australia's aviation history. The Master also officially recognized the Australian Air Force Cadets (AAFC) as an affiliated organization of the Company.

**Brisbane, Queensland:** The Brisbane visit featured

a tour of Aviation High School and the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS).

The Master engaged with UPRT Australia, discussing its approach to pilot safety and training. The QLD Working Group hosted a dinner where Geoff Sartori received the Australian Bicentennial Award, and Bob Harris and Grp Capt Malcolm Hurman were awarded Master Air Pilot Certificates.



*The Australian Air Force Cadets is a new Affiliated Unit*

**Melbourne, Victoria:**

The tour concluded in Melbourne with the signing of an MOU between the Australian Region and RMIT Aviation Academy, marking a historic partnership. The Master also toured the RAAF Museum and presented the Master's Australian Trophy to Capt Tony Alder and a Master Air Pilot Certificate to Capt (Retd) Cameron Marchant.

### FINAL MEMBERSHIP WEBINAR

The final membership webinar of the year featured Matt Hall, Red Bull Air Race Champion, as the guest speaker. Matt provided great insight into his career and the attributes that have propelled him to world champion status. His talk was both inspiring and informative, offering valuable lessons to all members.

### MEMBERSHIP GROWTH

Our membership continues to grow, and we are proud to announce that the Australian Region now has over 315 members. This growth is a testament to the vibrant and engaged community we have built together.

### FESTIVE SEASON GREETINGS

On behalf of the Executive Council, we hope all Air Pilots had a wonderful and joyous festive season and with you every success for 2025. □





# Regional Report: North America

By Freeman Hal Adams, Chairman

Yes, an aerospace museum. Not just any aviation museum, rather, a premier, world-class collection that chronicles and highlights our collective human flight desires, successes and failures, from gliders to spacecraft, in war and peace. All under one roof to share with the world. The National Air and Space Museum Steven F Udvar-Hazy Center located just a short distance from Washington, DC, and likely on every pilot's wish list to see and experience.

Like many of our Members, I am very aware of the Udvar-Hazy Center. Over the years friends who have visited it have said it is a "must experience", especially for someone whose entire career, like mine, is firmly anchored in aerospace. Recently, I finally had the opportunity to visit. My wife, who worked in aerospace for 30+ years, and greatly enjoys aviation museums, demanded that we experience the museum, or she would go on her own. With that subtle "motivation", I am very pleased we finally made it.

## MEMORABLE VISIT

Making the visit particularly memorable, was Bill Pinney, Liveryman and Udvar-Hazy Center museum guide, who was kind enough to let us join in his walking tour group, followed by a behind-the-scenes private tour of the restoration area. Bill is a "retired" Gulfstream 650 Captain and former US Air Force pilot, and did a spectacular job of briefing everyone and answering numerous questions, mostly from my wife! It was a wonderful day and even more so with Bill's insights, stories and vast aviation knowledge as well as his expansive knowledge of the museum's collection.



Bill Pinney shows new North America Chairman Hal Adams around the Udvar-Hazy Center

The vast Udvar-Hazy Center collection included some aircraft with which I had personal connections. As one enters the facility and descends from the entry to the main display level, the first aircraft that you encounter sets the tone of the whole collection. Welcoming everyone is the big flat black SR-71, Lockheed's famous Mach 3+ "Blackbird" strategic reconnaissance aircraft. "Hulking" and "dominating" are more apt first reactions. Although this

was far from my first exposure to the famed airframe, I still stop, think and collect my wits, every time I see the bird.

The SR-71 was referred to as the Blackbird and nicknamed "Habu", the common name for a pit viper endemic to Okinawa, from where it operated between March 1968 and January 1990. My first in-person exposure to the "Habu" was in 1968 during my first tour of duty at USAF U Tapao Air Base, Thailand. I was a young airman aircraft technician, and recent technical school graduate.

"U-T", as we called our base, was, at the time, a massive complex, with mainly Boeing B-52 strategic bombers and KC-135 aerial tankers and a runway that is 3,400 m (11,000ft) in length. We were part of the Strategic Air Command (SAC) and a highly secure base.

## AN UNUSUAL HAPPENING

In mid-1968, while on duty, something very unusual happened when I went to retrieve a needed aircraft part from our secure storage hangar facility just across the ramp from our shop area. The first indication of something unusual in progress was that, as I approached the hanger from the ramp, I noticed the usually open hangar doors were closed and secured by a fully armed combat security team. I approached and was told to immediately leave the area, period - even though I had my secure-area identification.

On my return to our shop, I explained the situation to the shop chief. While our shop chief was on the phone discussing the situation with our maintenance control center (MCC), a curious work order appeared, delivered by hand and required a supervisor signature, as it had a classified stamp across the whole page. It was very out of the ordinary, and a first for this to happen in a maintenance squadron.

However, this was not nearly as unusual as the work order. A work order normally includes the aircraft tail number, parking spot and detailed write-up of the issue. This work order was missing all but the maintenance issue description and a note for the shop chief to proceed, in person, to the MCC for further details. The work order basically said that the aircraft could only get about 80% thrust on the right engine at Mach 3+, flight level 800. This was not a B-52 or KC-135, and certainly not our base Gooney Bird (Douglas C-47)!

While we were expressing surprise and a lot of curiosity, an armed USAF officer and several armed security police entered our shop and confiscated the interesting work order. In very clear language he indicated to us that we



*The SR-71: "Breathtaking", "overwhelming" and dominating the display*

were to forget what we had seen and not to discuss it with our colleagues. We all got the point.

#### **ALL BECOMES CLEAR**

The next day, all became clear to us. It was rather hard to hide the big, odd-looking black aircraft and the two astronaut-garbed flight crew members. It looked like most of our base personnel showed up for the SR-71 Blackbird Habu departure. Clearly, it appeared to be the worst kept secret on the base. We were all on good behavior as the heavily armed security teams roamed the ramp and pointedly reminding us, via loudspeakers, that cameras were strictly forbidden and violators faced courts martial. So warned and briefed, we knew we were in for something interesting when the aircraft departed. We clearly did not realize just how exciting a departure it would be. The first indication of something special was the starting of the engines via an external, very loud, engine start cart using two Vee-8 racing car engines. Once the engines were up and running and the ground and flight crews were ready, the SR-71 taxied to the runway 36, South "Hammerhead" (run-up areas at ends of the runways 18/36) for departure checks. Then the show began, short but breathtaking.

The takeoff "show" was indeed spectacular - and very noisy. The Blackbird, while seriously noisy in decibels, had a screech that seemed to just penetrate your body. I have since experienced that SR-71 screech on several occasions and there is nothing like a Blackbird take-off. While the SR-71 preflight and noise was quite a show, the take-off was overwhelming. At the Hammerhead, the SR-71 pilot powered up, afterburners on, released brakes, "shot" down the runway, rotating about halfway along

it, went vertical, climbed and disappeared, all the time staying within our airfield boundary. The Blackbird seemed to spring into the air. It was maybe the best airshow experience I have ever witnessed, and I will never forget it. Thank you Kelly Johnson, Lockheed and that USAF SR-71 flight crew!

A couple of years later, while I was in flight crew training on B-52s as a Defensive Fire Control Operator, I had another very brief airborne encounter with an SR-71. We were on a B-52 initial crew training mission and heading North from our central California training base. At about FL310 we received an ATC traffic advisory as we passed close by Beale Air Force Base, just outside its climb corridor airspace. The controller advised "fast climbing traffic" at our 8 o'clock, low transitioning to 3 o'clock position. At the call, I was watching on my aft-scanning radar, and received, on the next sweep, a very faint indication at about 6 o'clock, slightly below. Before I could respond, ATC said traffic was passing our 4 o'clock high and "no conflict". The whole episode took all of about 3-5sec. ATC shortly thereafter advised that the traffic was an SR-71 on climb-out from Beale AFB. The fact that I received even a faint return was amazing, not to mention the SR-71 high climb rate.

Years later, after achieving my commercial, instrument pilot ratings and while an executive in the avionics business, I talked to a couple of former SR-71 pilots regarding my early encounters with the U-T Blackbird. Both had a good laugh, and one said, with a smile: "They got very tired of having to dodge those old lumbering B-52s!" The National Air and Space Museum Steven F Udvar-Hazy Center SR-71 Blackbird Habu display and facility tour were phenomenal. □



# Regional Report: Hong Kong

By Liveryman Rob Jones, Chairman

It was a great honour to host the Master on his Regional visit during November.

A huge thanks must be given to all who hosted us and all the members of the region for attending the events throughout the week, and indeed the year, as without them none of this would be possible.

We as Air Pilots are still in the process of recovery here in Hong Kong: our membership levels are buoyant and, indeed, recovering from the loss of many of our friends and colleagues who have moved on to new adventures and continue to do so. It has also been a pleasure recently to welcome back some former members to our region.

Growing the membership, re-engaging with aviation authorities and youth engagement have been my main goals since taking over as Chairman, and we endeavoured to show our efforts to the Master during the week he spent with us. Since I took over, we have visited a different location around the airfield each month: my hope has been that each time we visit we learn a little more about what goes on around us behind the scenes - the more knowledge we have, the safer our operation will be.

## OBSERVATORY VISIT

During the Master's visit we were welcomed by the Hong Kong Observatory which has been a long-standing friend to the Air Pilots. Its personnel have shared with us knowledge about the local weather phenomena, how they are forecasted and an insight into what we can expect in the future. We were shown around the Air Traffic Control tower, to witness the controllers in action. We also spoke about the opening of the three-runway system here in Hong Kong and its new complexities with regard to simultaneous departures and engine-failure escape routes and the surrounding terrain.

We were able to visit Cathay Catering, which gave a fascinating insight into how an average of 60 000 meals a day can be produced. The tour of the kitchens was followed by my personal highlight, the tasting menu!

We visited Hong Kong Aero Engine Services Limited (HAESL), the joint venture between Rolls-Royce and HAECO, which repairs and overhauls almost 365 engines a year at its enormous facility in Tseung Kwan O.

## KEEPING VAST NUMBERS SAFE

Behind the scenes at HKIA, the Aviation and Security Organisation guided us through the processes used to keep safe vast numbers of passengers and cargo, the numbers of which are difficult to comprehend. In the last 12 months, a mere 4,500 employees oversaw

30million people, 345,000 movements of aircraft and 4.8million tonnes of cargo pass through the airport here. A particular highlight of the Master's visit was the opportunity to visit the airport's canine section, where we witnessed a demonstration of obedience and explosives detection.



Aspiring pilots meet the sniffer dogs at HKIA (Rob Jones)

Youth development is something I strive to build on, given the great difficulty for young Hong Kongers to even get near an aircraft. Unfortunately, we're not able to offer scholarships at this moment here in Hong Kong, given the vast cost required to send just one youngster overseas to experience their first flight. So, we offer the most valuable thing we can, our time. Considering how busy we all are, time really is precious. I am therefore extremely grateful to those who willingly give up their time to encourage the next generation.

During the Master's visit we hosted 120 youngsters for a three-hour program in the Cathay Pacific auditorium. This has been recognised as one of the largest youth aviation events to have taken place in HK. We shared with the youngsters what we can offer as Air Pilots going forward, that we are on the cusp of offering Aptitude Testing at an extremely competitive price and are in the initial stages of setting up a mentoring programme. We presented to them information on the Air Pilots, who we are and some of our history, principles of flight, a day in the life of an airline pilot and some information on joining organisations that can help their preparations, notably with Hong Kong Air Cadet Corps.

We hope the Master and Mistress enjoyed their time with us and look forward to the next Master's visit when we can display what we've achieved. □





# VISITS: A 15-YEAR RECORD

By Liveryman David Curgenvan

I joined the visits team in 2010, taking over from the late Mike Glover. Fifteen years on, I feel that Members might be interested in what has happened in that time.

A total of 558 individual members (not guests) have

|                | No. of Visits | Total Attendees | Average per Visit |
|----------------|---------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| 2010           | 5             | (No record)     | (No record)       |
| 2011           | 16            | 528             | 33                |
| 2012           | 13            | 409             | 31                |
| 2013           | 15            | 326             | 22                |
| 2014           | 19            | 708             | 37                |
| 2015           | 18            | 469             | 26                |
| 2016           | 12            | 480             | 40                |
| 2017           | 19            | 567             | 30                |
| 2018           | 20            | 586             | 29                |
| 2019           | 16            | 790             | 49                |
| 2020           | 0             | (Covid-19)      | 0                 |
| 2021           | 5             | 105             | 21                |
| 2022           | 9             | 325             | 36                |
| 2023           | 12            | 356             | 30                |
| 2024           | 10            | 293             | 29                |
| <b>TOTAL</b>   | <b>189</b>    | <b>5942</b>     |                   |
| <b>AVERAGE</b> | <b>13</b>     | <b>424</b>      | <b>31</b>         |

attended at least one visit in the last 15 years. In 2019, I enhanced my database in order to identify the individual members (not guests) who attended each visit. Of the 1,869 attendees in the last six years, there have been 347 different individual members attending an average

| DONATIONS FROM AIR PILOTS VISITS |                     |                     |
|----------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| YEAR                             | TO AIR PILOTS TRUST | TO HOSTS' CHARITIES |
| 2011                             | £230                | £1,430              |
| 2012                             | -                   | £2,075              |
| 2013                             | -                   | £200                |
| 2014                             | £2,080              | £1,315              |
| 2015                             | -                   | £4,100              |
| 2016                             | £2,500              | £1,610              |
| 2017                             | -                   | £1,555              |
| 2018                             | £4,000              | £1,130              |
| 2019                             | £9,000              | £4,525              |
| 2020                             | -                   | £250                |
| 2021                             | -                   | £192                |
| 2022                             | -                   | £500                |
| 2023                             | £4,000              | £600                |
| 2024                             | £3,000              | £2,450              |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                     | <b>£24,810</b>      | <b>£21,932</b>      |
| <b>GRAND TOTAL</b>               |                     | <b>£46,742</b>      |

of five visits each, in a range from one to 37 visits per attendee. These are individual emails: many of the outgoing messages went to multiple addresses. These are, of course, only the emails which have passed through visits@airpilots.org and do not include those which have gone through the computers of my team.

| Garden Parties 2011-2024<br>(included in the Summary of Visits above) |                  |                  |              |        |
|---|------------------|------------------|--------------|--------|
| Year  | Place            | Meal             | Ticket Price | Guests |
| 2011  | Halton           | Hog Roast        | £55.00       | 175    |
| 2012  | Shuttleworth     | Picnic           | ?            | 55     |
| 2013  | (None)           |                  |              | (None) |
| 2014  | Shoreham         | Fully catered    | £95.00       | 116    |
| 2015  | North Moreton    | Picnic/Hog Roast | £35.00       | 69     |
| 2016  | White Waltham    | Picnic           | £30.00       | 106    |
| 2017  | Charlton Park    | Hog Roast        | £65.00       | 95     |
| 2018  | Highclere Castle | Picnic           | £70.00       | 116    |
| 2019  | Biggin Hill      | Fully catered    | £85.00       | 145    |
| 2020  | (None)           |                  |              | (None) |
| 2021  | (None)           |                  |              | (None) |
| 2022  | Andrewsfield     | Hog Roast        | £80.00       | 83     |
| 2023  | Popham           | Hog Roast        | £90.00       | 47     |
| 2024  | Brooklands       | Fully Catered    | £88.00       | 98     |

I have not recorded the time spent working on visits, but I guess approximately 8h/week, or 6,000h in 15 years, PLUS all the hours spent by the rest of the team!!

Finally, I would like to record my heartfelt and sincere thanks to the members of my team who have helped deliver our great success in the last 15 years, sincerely hoping that I have not missed anyone: the late Mike Glover; Arthur Thorning; Christopher Ford; John Davy; the late Graham Powell; Andy Richardson; Jeff Cleary;

David Alexander; Ian Davies and Nathaniel McMurray. On top of that list, of course, are the Master and Past Masters who have all been so helpful in their respective years, and the Clerk and office team who have all done their bit! □

| Emails from 2015 to 2024 |               |
|--------------------------|---------------|
| 2015                     | 3,953         |
| 2016                     | 1,610         |
| 2017                     | 1,804         |
| 2018                     | 1,362         |
| 2019                     | 2,553         |
| 2020                     | 660           |
| 2021                     | 1,120         |
| 2022                     | 2,134         |
| 2023                     | 2,664         |
| 2024                     | 1,571         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>             | <b>19,431</b> |



# THE SILENT ASSASSIN IN THE COCKPIT



*From the Desk of the DAA, PM Nick Goodwyn*

Many members of the Air Pilots, whatever their level of experience or sector of aviation in which they operate, will be aware of one of the most deadly and silent assassins that can lurk in the cockpit.

Carbon monoxide poisoning has been cited as a factor in multiple GA accidents globally and has been highlighted in recent times, notably by regulators and by accident investigators in the UK, Europe, the USA and Australia amongst others.

It is therefore perhaps timely to raise awareness around minimising the likelihood of carbon monoxide (CO) contamination, highlighting the hazards associated with exposure to CO and to advocate for the use of carbon monoxide detectors in general aviation (GA) aircraft which are more susceptible to CO, and to protect pilots and passengers.

Although many pilots of GA piston-engine aircraft understand the risk posed by CO, the same may not be said for passengers who may fly in them on a commercial or recreational basis.

## NEW SAFETY DIRECTIVE

To that end, the UK CAA has introduced a safety directive effective in January 2025 that prioritises the protection of passengers who are not expected to be aware of the risk posed by CO in piston-engine aircraft, by introducing a limited mandate requiring an active CO detector for specified piston-engine aircraft operations.

The CAA says that, in the UK, since 2000 there have been three accidents, of which two were fatal and one non-fatal, and fifteen other incidents where CO may have been a causal factor. The potential dangers of CO exposure have been highlighted by the UK Air Accidents Investigations Branch (AAIB) in several recent accident reports, most notably following the fatal accident involving Piper PA-46-310P Malibu, N264DB, on 21<sup>st</sup> January 2019.

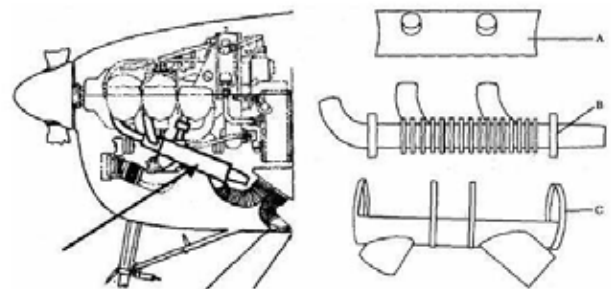
(N264DB was lost in international waters and is included in US accident statistics. The accident investigation was delegated by the State of Registration - USA - as represented by the NTSB, to the State of the Operator - UK - as represented by the AAIB).

The AAIB report for N264DB identified fifteen other UK events since 2000 where CO may have been a factor. In eleven of those a CO monitor alerted the crew to the presence of CO; in one case the crew was reported to be nearly unconscious when the aircraft landed and on

four other occasions occupants experienced nausea and light-headedness. The AAIB also identified seven other reported occurrences of exhaust fumes in the cockpit where no CO detector was present. Additionally, the number of reported CO events has increased in recent years, likely due to better reporting. From 2020 - 2023 (inclusive) the CAA received 34 Mandatory Occurrence Reports (MORs) related to CO, but there is likely an under-reporting issue at play, especially considering that those who do not have a CO detector will be unaware of a potential CO problem.

## COLOURLESS, ODOURLESS – AND DANGEROUS

CO, formed by the incomplete combustion of carbon-containing materials, is a colourless, odourless gas that can cause damage to the brain, heart and nervous system. Symptoms of exposure include headache, fatigue, sleepiness, breathlessness, and degradation in performance. Continued exposure to elevated concentrations can cause unconsciousness and death.



*Figure 1. Six-Cylinder, Horizontally Opposed Reciprocating Engine (Heat Exchanger Upper Sheet Jacket (A), Collector Tube (B), and Lower Sheet Jacket (C))*

When CO enters the bloodstream, it mixes with haemoglobin (the oxygen-carrying protein in red blood cells) to form carboxyhaemoglobin (COHb), which reduces the ability of blood to carry oxygen to vital organs. Symptoms worsen as COHb levels rise in the body. Furthermore, CO susceptibility increases with altitude, putting those who fly at increased risk. Mild CO poisoning may only be indicated by a slight headache and can be mistakenly dismissed as something much less significant.

The physiological effects of CO poisoning are cumulative and take a very long time to disperse. Even a low level of CO ingestion, below the level that causes immediate physical symptoms, will cause a progressive reduction in blood oxygen levels which will reduce pilot performance and potentially cause permanent damage to the brain,

heart and nervous system. It is therefore a mistake to assume that a cockpit contaminated with relatively low levels of CO is acceptable as the cumulative negative effects on human performance may not be noticed.

**TABLE 1. SYMPTOMS RESULTING FROM CO EXPOSURE**

| Parts per million CO | Time    | Exposure or Symptoms  |
|----------------------|---------|---|
| 50                   | 8h      | Maximum exposure allowed by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (US figure) over an 8h period |
| 200                  | 2-3h    | Mild headache, nausea, fatigue  |
| 400                  | 1-2h    | Serious headache, life threatening after 3h   |
| 800                  | 45min   | Dizziness, nausea, unconscious within 2h, death within 2-3h   |
| 1,600                | 20min   | Headache, dizziness, nausea, death within 1h  |
| 3,200                | 5-10min | Headache, dizziness, nausea, death within 1h  |
| 6,400                | 1-2min  | Headache, dizziness, nausea, death within 25-30min  |
| 12,800               | 1-3min  | Death   |

**TABLE 2. PERCENTAGE OF CO IN THE BLOOD AND POSSIBLE SYMPTOMS**

| Percent CO in Blood | Typical Symptoms   |
|---------------------|--|
| <10                 | None   |
| 10-20               | Slight headache  |
| 21-30               | Headache, slight increase in respirations, drowsiness  |
| 31-40               | Headache, impaired judgment, shortness of breath, increasing drowsiness, blurring of vision            |
| 41-50               | Pounding headache, confusion, marked shortness of breath, marked drowsiness, increasing blurred vision |
| >50                 | Unconsciousness, eventual death if victim is not removed from the source of CO                         |

Piston engine aircraft are known to produce particularly high concentrations of CO that are directed away from the aircraft via the exhaust system. However, cracks in the exhaust system and/or poor sealing can result in CO entering the cabin.

**DETECTING CO**

The insidious nature of CO makes it very difficult to detect unaided. Active CO detectors provide audible and/or visible warnings in the presence of elevated carbon monoxide levels and are a highly effective means of alerting a CO threat. These devices can either be portable and ‘carried on’ to the aircraft or permanently installed. The UK CAA advises that active CO detectors broadly fall into the following two categories:

**Aviation standard** - Active CO detectors approved in accordance with an aviation standard (e.g. ETSO-2C48a) can be permanently installed in aircraft and usually offer better cockpit integration as well as additional functionality. It is also becoming increasingly common for active CO detectors to be built in as standard with other aviation equipment such as ADS-B and even headsets.

**Commercial off the shelf** - There is a wide range of competitively priced commercially available active CO detectors designed for use in domestic environments. Although not specifically approved for aviation use, findings from the CAA’s 12-month study of low-cost active CO detectors suggest that these devices can function reasonably at typical recreational GA altitudes. Some of these detectors display CO levels in real time and offer data logging capability, helping pilots to be aware of low-level CO and detect any small changes over time, both of which could indicate the start of a problem. Commercially available devices meeting an appropriate industry standard such as EN 50291-2 are recommended.

Installing or carrying an active CO detector on board does not require CAA approval. Active CO detectors can be permanently installed in UK Part 21 and UK non-Part 21 aircraft as a ‘standard change’ under the provisions of CS-STAN (Standard Change CS-SC107a) without any CAA involvement. Portable CO detectors can also be carried on board without any airworthiness approval. Regardless of which active CO detector is selected, pilots should ensure the device is functional, audible (and visible if equipped with a digital screen) and securely positioned in the aircraft before each flight. In addition to active CO detection, adherence to a thorough and regular maintenance programme is key to minimising the risk of CO poisoning.

**THE REQUIREMENTS**

The UK CAA Operational Directive directs operators of piston-engine aircraft that are:

- (a) registered in the United Kingdom; or
- (b) registered other than in the UK and intending to conduct flights within UK airspace, to comply with the following requirements:

From 1st January 2025, operators of piston engine aircraft, but excluding:

- (a) Single-seat aircraft;
- (b) Aircraft with an open cockpit/cabin;
- (c) Aircraft performing aerobatic manoeuvres, unless as part of a Safety Standards Acknowledgement and Consent (SSAC) operation;
- (d) Aircraft with piston engines located above/behind the cabin, unless cabin heat is also provided via an

exhaust heat exchanger or a combustion heater;

(e) Aircraft with only wing-mounted piston engines unless cabin heat is also provided via an exhaust heat exchanger or a combustion heater

must ensure that a functioning active carbon monoxide detector, capable of alerting via aural and/or visual means, is present in the aircraft when operating with any passengers on board who do not hold a recognised pilot qualification. (If all occupants hold a recognised pilot qualification, an active carbon monoxide detector is not required, but is nevertheless highly recommended.)

EASA published its own Safety Information Bulletin (SIB 2010-19 dated 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2010) and particularly made reference to piston-engine helicopters and aeroplanes. It had received a specific Safety Recommendation concerning a muffler internal failure on a helicopter. The cone had blocked the exhaust gas outlet flow, resulting in engine power loss on take-off. This particular muffler configuration was noted as common or similar to many other general aviation aeroplane mufflers, not being limited to helicopters only. EASA recommended that exhaust systems be completely inspected when the engine is replaced as well as for regular scheduled inspections, and noted that aeroplanes that do not operate on a continual basis, or those located in humid climates, are also more likely to have a higher rate of exhaust system component deterioration.



The muffler surrounding the exhaust pipes is the potential source of CO leaks (iStock/Bondariev)

### COLD WEATHER EFFECT

The US Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) published a report in October 2009: DOT/FAA/AR-09/49 *The Detection and Prevention of Carbon Monoxide Exposure in General Aviation Aircraft*. It reviewed a total of 71,712 accident cases between 1962 and 2007 from the NTSB database. Unsurprisingly the review of cases revealed that the CO-related accidents occurred throughout the year; however the accidents caused by leakage in the muffler

or exhaust systems were more prevalent in the colder months. Furthermore, it was shown that the majority of the mufflers in CO-related accidents had been in service for more than 1,000h without component change.

The Civil Aviation Safety Authority of the Australian Government published *Airworthiness Bulletin AWB 02-064 Issue 5 – 30<sup>th</sup> June 2023: Preventing Carbon Monoxide*



Aviation-specific CO monitors are readily, and cheaply, available

*Poisoning in Piston Engine Aircraft*, again after a recent aviation incident investigation by the Australian Transport Safety Bureau (ATSB) had revealed that several of the occupants of the incident aircraft had elevated levels of CO within their blood samples.

With the increased focus on the insidious safety risks surrounding CO and the new directive in the UK for the carriage of CO detectors in GA aircraft, as we emerge from the gloom of winter; dust off the aircraft that have lay dormant over the winter and chase the blue skies of spring, we need to mitigate the risk of the silent assassin in the cockpit. □

CAA Safety Notice SN-2020/003 18<sup>th</sup> July 2023: *Carbon Monoxide Minimisation and Detection in General Aviation Aircraft*

<https://www.caa.co.uk/our-work/publications/documents/content/sn-2020-003/>

Safety Directive SD – 2024/001 V2, 30<sup>th</sup> August 2024: *Active Carbon Monoxide Detectors for Piston Engine Aircraft Operations*

<https://www.caa.co.uk/our-work/publications/documents/content/sd-2024-001/>

UK CAA *Your Safety Sense* Leaflet for Carbon Monoxide Safety, October 2024

<https://www.caa.co.uk/media/xs5axnpi/safety-sense-leaflet-34.pdf>

<https://rosap.ntl.bts.gov/view/dot/36961>

<https://ad.easa.europa.eu/ad/2010-19>

[https://www.casa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-06/awb\\_02-064\\_issue\\_5\\_-\\_preventing\\_carbon\\_monoxide\\_poisoning\\_in\\_piston\\_engine\\_aircraft.pdf?utm\\_source=Swift%20Digital&utm\\_medium=Email&utm\\_campaign=Airworthiness%20Directives](https://www.casa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-06/awb_02-064_issue_5_-_preventing_carbon_monoxide_poisoning_in_piston_engine_aircraft.pdf?utm_source=Swift%20Digital&utm_medium=Email&utm_campaign=Airworthiness%20Directives)



# SCHOLARSHIP REPORTS 2024

*By the Scholarship winners*

**At the November 2024 Court Meeting, the successful PPL and Flying Instructor scholars for the year were presented with their certificates before they and their families joined members of the Court for supper. Shortened versions of their written reports and thanks to the Company are presented below.**

## PPL FLYING SCHOLARSHIPS



### **JAMES WILSON - AIR PILOTS BENEVOLENT FUND SCHOLARSHIP**

I had a spectacular summer flying, completing my PPL after starting five years ago. Flying has always been a passion and personal goal. I applied for a Company scholarship;

my third attempt. Following the interview, I was ecstatic to hear the news I had finally been successful.

With the help of the team at Leicestershire Aero Club, good weather conditions and the resources provided by the Company, I was able to make swift progress with my training and theory exams. Flying to Duxford on my QXC among the World War Two aircraft was a real treat, as was passing my skill test, shaking the examiner's hand and realising I was now part of the club.

I intend to finish the final year of my degree in Aeronautics and Astronautics then work as an engineer, saving funds for my ATPL, aiming towards a career as a commercial pilot for a charter company such as NetJets. I would like to thank both The Honourable Company of Air Pilots and The Air Pilots Benevolent Fund for granting me such a profound opportunity to make significant progress towards my flying career.



### **THOMAS LAIDLAR - APT TRUST SCHOLARSHIP**

I find that gaining competency in any task is a rewarding process and in no other setting have I revelled in that challenge to the extent this scholarship has offered.

The experience has opened my eyes to the sheer depth of the aviation industry. This was my second attempt at applying for this PPL Scholarship. Despite being unsuccessful the first time around, I feel certain this learning opportunity helped me for my application this year.

I found out after my interview that I was the first reserve in case a spot opened, so when I was called by the office a month later, and told that a new sponsor had been found,

I could not have been more thrilled. Keeping a course using a compass, map, and stopwatch has given me a feeling of freedom I've yet to find elsewhere. I completed my flying with the amazing Pilot Flight Training at Oxford Kidlington. The skill test took only 2½h, and just like that, I was a pilot! My immeasurable thanks go out to the Honourable Company for letting me loose on a Cessna for two months.



### **DARRELL KOVAC - THE DONALDSON SCHOLARSHIP**

October officially marks the month I completed my PPL course at Stapleford Flight Centre, and it's been a wild ride. I kicked off this adventure back in the summer, and for the most part, the weather was great, but as the deadline approached, the weather started turning on me, but we got through everything!

One of my proudest moments? Nailing 100% on not one, not two, but three consecutive exams. When the examiner told me my scores, I was honestly in shock, but it just goes to show that if you put your mind to something and work hard, you can exceed even your own expectations. I would add a shout out to my instructor, Parsa, who has been patient, encouraging, with a sprinkling of tough love, and full of stories about the "good ol' days" of his PPL flying.

Now that I've got my PPL in hand, I'm officially a pilot! How cool is that! Next up: the Commercial Pilot Licence and ATPL exams. The sky's literally the limit. This whole experience has been an absolute blast, and I can't wait to see where my new wings take me!



### **CHRISTOPHER EDMUNDS - THE DUNMORE SCHOLARSHIP**

I've aspired to be a pilot for as long as I can remember. Growing up, I took every chance to engage in aviation, from joining the Air Cadets and flying a glider solo on my 14<sup>th</sup> birthday, to going solo in the

Grob Tutor with Oxford University Air Squadron. After four years of applying, I was thrilled to finally secure a scholarship from The Honourable Company of Air Pilots.



In early July, I began my PPL training at Full Sutton Flying Centre in East Yorkshire. My routine quickly set in, with daily flights and evening study sessions. I experienced the thrill of my first solo in the Piper PA-38, followed by an unforgettable Solo Qualifying Cross Country Flight. Flying over familiar landmarks and landing at airfields across northern England built my skills and confidence. By August, I'd completed 45h of training, all nine theory exams, and was ready for the skill test. Passing felt like a dream come true, and I'm deeply grateful to everyone who made this possible. For aspiring pilots, the Company scholarship is a life-changing opportunity.



**ELEANOR WHITE - THE GRAYBURN SCHOLARSHIP**

This past summer I was lucky enough to be awarded the Grayburn scholarship, allowing me to complete a full PPL at Lee-on-the-Solent with Phoenix Aviation. Under the guidance of

my instructor - who had only recently completed his own flight instructor course - I began the most incredible summer of aviation.

The training wasn't without its challenges. Aircraft availability was tight at times because of inspections or repairs, but the club's relentless effort ensured that I always had opportunities to fly. Whether it was quick circuits to keep skills sharp or longer lessons, the team's support made all the difference.

Whilst the whole experience was incredible, a standout moment was my first solo where I got the chance to taxi out behind a Supermarine Spitfire! My current aspirations are to fly with the military - maybe one day I'll be able to fly one myself with the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight!

This experience not only taught me how to fly but how to keep a cool head under pressure and really built my confidence. I am immensely grateful to both Mr Grayburn and the Honourable Company for affording me this opportunity.



**PIERS AUSTIN-FOSS - THE LANE-BURSLEM SCHOLARSHIP (BALPA BENEVOLENT FUND)**

Having finished my first year reading Aeronautical Engineering, I didn't anticipate how busy the summer of 2024 would be. After experiencing the cancellation of a previous

scholarship, I applied for the Air Pilots PPL scholarship, hoping it would kickstart my career. This has proven successful, and I am now a licensed pilot!

A standout flight was leg two of my QXC, with a planned

route of Lydd-Goodwood. Whilst en route, Farnborough Radar informed me that Goodwood's main runway was closed, with strong crosswinds on the remaining runway. After assessing endurance and personal minimums, I diverted to Shoreham. This experience reinforced the importance of staying sharp with in-flight diversions, preparing me for my upcoming skill test.

To build confidence before my test, I undertook a tricky solo NAV. I elected to transit the London CTR solo routeing Ascot-Burnham, which tested my abilities to handle a CAS transit at low level, whilst remaining clear of the Inner Zone and the Waltham ATZ. I remember glancing out the window, staring down Runway 09L at Heathrow, watching an aircraft entering the flare.

I am forever grateful to all those at the Air Pilots and BALPA. This has been a summer I will never forget.



**SOPHIE GAIRDNER - THE WIGLEY SCHOLARSHIP (BALPA BENEVOLENT FUND)**

This summer I had the incredible opportunity to earn my Private Pilot's Licence (PPL)! My aviation journey began when I joined the Air Cadets just before turning 16.

That decision, though small at the time, has had a huge impact on my life. I received a five-hour Air League scholarship in 2023 and became a Flight Staff Cadet in a Volunteer Gliding Squadron. Thanks to the Honourable Company, my dream of gaining a PPL came true through its generous scholarship.

A PPL requires nine theoretical exams, a radio operator's licence, and 45h of flying. I balanced my training with my Year 12 A-level mocks, and once school ended, I trained intensively at Booker Aviation, Wycombe. My first solo flight was nerve-wracking but absolutely amazing. Navigation training, especially on cross-country flights, was challenging, and weather delays increased the challenge. But when the skies cleared, I completed my solo qualifying cross-country, and went on to pass my final skill test.

This life-changing experience wouldn't have been possible without the BALPA Benevolent Fund and the Air Pilots.



**JORDAN SMITH - THE SIR SEFTON BRANCKER SCHOLARSHIP (AIR PILOTS TRUST)**

Being awarded this scholarship is one of my proudest achievements to date, topped only by being issued with my PPL. At the beginning of the summer, I knew it was going to be an immense

challenge, in part because of the volume of training that

awaited me but also the fact that I would also be flying full time as cabin crew for a long-haul airline.

This summer was truly enjoyable and the fast-paced training environment has been one I have thrived in because of my passion and determination to make the most of the opportunity. Each stage of training, from the hours spent studying to the hours in the air, has been difficult but ultimately they have culminated in an outstanding achievement.

The highlight was certainly my qualifying cross country. The time spent on my own aviating, navigating and communicating was exhilarating and something that I'll never forget.

I'd like to thank the Honourable Company for selecting me for the Sir Sefton Brancker Award, for believing not only that I was deserving of this award but also that I had it in me to succeed.



### **SHIVAM PATEL - SKY DEMON SCHOLARSHIP**

The cockpit truly is the best office! Summer 2024 has been a fantastic experience. Over the last few years, I have flown in the Grob Tutor whilst on Bristol University Air Squadron and at Tayside Aviation on the Air Cadet

scholarship. My training had been stop-start due to factors like Covid-19, my apprenticeship, and fleet groundings.

This changed when the Air Pilots office introduced me to Phil Mathews, a Liveryman in the company, at Cotswold Aero Club. Phil had trained previous scholars and welcomed me to the club. I started flying on June 6th, completing the Skill test on 15th September. As I am now in my final year of a degree apprenticeship, balancing work and study was second nature. I quickly found my progression in flying was faster than the written study!

My biggest challenge was developing a robust navigation technique, which I proudly focussed on to have a successful qualifying cross country. I very much look forward to applying to the numerous airline-sponsored pilot pathways soon. I would like to express my thanks to SkyDemon and the Air Pilots for their generous sponsorship.



### **CIARAN HAVERTY - THE BOB DAWSON SCHOLARSHIP (BALPA BENEVOLENT FUND)**

My flying journey started in 2016 when I took my first trial lesson. From this

moment onward, I knew I would stop at nothing to achieve my boyhood dream of becoming a commercial pilot. After applying for this prestigious scholarship each year since 2020, I was thrilled to be awarded the Bob Dawson PPL scholarship from The Honourable Company in 2024.

Having moved from Ireland in early June, I commenced training at Redhill Aviation Flight Centre. What ensued was a thrilling summer of flying! As my logbook began to fill, my confidence as a pilot grew. Flying solo for the first time was an unforgettable experience.

As the PPL skill test neared, I focused on perfecting navigation, emergency procedures, and instrument flying. Passing the test was one of the most rewarding moments of my life!

I am deeply grateful to BALPA for sponsoring this scholarship, to The Honourable Company for facilitating it, and to Redhill Aviation for its excellent training. Special thanks to my instructor, Sharandeep, for his guidance throughout. I'm excited for what lies ahead!

### **FLIGHT INSTRUCTOR SCHOLARSHIPS**



### **LEWIS BRICKNELL - SWIRE SCHOLARSHIP**

Becoming an instructor has been a goal of mine ever since gaining my PPL, so I was delighted to receive the Swire Scholarship in April 2024. Balancing the course around full-time work was challenging. However, thanks

to the support from my instructors and the convenience of having the airfield close to where I worked, I was able to finish the course in minimum time.

The course has significantly sharpened my handling skills and knowledge. As an instructor, your attention is on delivering an effective lesson, all whilst keeping good situational awareness of your position, other aircraft, height minima, fuel, etc. This can be particularly challenging for exercises such as spinning, where there is not a lot of time get your words in!

I am pleased to say I am now a Flight Instructor at the British Aerobatic Academy, and in my first week, one of my students completed their first solo! I look forward to developing my flying even further to teach Upset Prevention and Recovery (UPRT) and Aerobatics

I am extremely grateful to the Air Pilots and the Swire Foundation for sponsoring my course. They have made this dream become a reality. □



# THE MASTER'S TOUR

## PART 2: AUSTRALASIA AND HONG KONG



The whirlwind of the Trophies and Awards Banquet was quickly replaced by final packing and a flight to Perth, Australia via Hong Kong with an unwelcome 9h layover, which extended to over 10h due to delays. The Cathay Pacific lounge closes a few hours before the final flights, but at least we could have a refresher shower.

Both flights were on Boeing 777ERs of similar fits.

Brits are usually blamed for bringing bad weather with them wherever they go. We experienced a strange phenomenon in that wherever we went, the weather improved, becoming sunny and warmer. It was an unusual but welcome experience!



*The nose hangars at the Swan River Catalina base in World War Two*

for the first time as the Australian Regional Chair, Adrian Young, is based there. Originally from Queensland, Adrian has had an extensive career with Qantas, starting on the turboprop fleet and adding accountable manager and chief pilot for the commuter operation alongside flying the Airbus A320 and looking after the Fokker 100 fleet. This, we would learn on the Tour, is one of many hats that Adrian wears alongside managing relationships with flying training academies and aviation schools that benefit from his energy and commitment.

Adrian met us from the flight and took us to our accommodation, as he would do on many future occasions, as he had decided to accompany us on the Tour of Australia to meet with his regional colleagues.

One thing which is a challenge to visitors to Australia

is the frequent use of peoples' nicknames and abbreviations for places, made even harder when, after formal introductions using their full names, conversation immediately reverts to nicknames: it takes a while to realise they are talking about the same person!



*Mission symbols, Aussie-style, on the Perth Lancaster*

### PERTH

We were able to get a good view of the Western Australian terrain on a cloudless day as we flew into Perth. Perth was on the Tour itinerary



*The Master and Mistress meet a fully-armed Catalina*

### Catalina time

As members may know, I have a particular interest in Consolidated Catalinas, being a pilot shareholder of one based in Duxford. Australia has a rich history in operating these aircraft, and Gill and I visited the Royal Perth Yacht Club which was previously the location of Catalina operations in Perth. We were fortunate to be hosted by the Club's archivist who detailed much about the history of the Catalina flying. One surprise was the use of Nose Hangars: these large structures allow aircraft to "nose in" to get the cockpit and engines under cover for maintenance once they had been winched up the slipway. The first aviation museum of this part of the Tour was the Air Heritage Museum at Perth, which interestingly has a number of modern accommodation blocks for veterans alongside. Naturally this had much on the operation of Catalinas, but also the establishment of air services across Australia. It was interesting to see the original features of the Catalina on display with the rear gun tunnel (ours has an airstair there) and nose with bomb aimer window and forward gun turret, thoughtfully reducing the pilots' forward vision!

A prized exhibit is an Avro Lancaster Mk VII, built in Birmingham and the final production version, designed for tropical operation as part of the Tiger Force, the British contribution to the invasion of Japan, and not ultimately required. The tail gunner's turret had the four .303 machine guns replaced with two larger-calibre 0.5in weapons. The bomb tally markings beneath the cockpit feature an Aussie hat with black background for a night

mission and white for a day mission.

There was an interesting exhibit on Robin Miller, known locally as the "Sugarbird Lady" to many aboriginal children, who whilst training as a nurse was also learning to fly. Having qualified, she sought permission to provide polio vaccinations in western Northern Australia, flying into remote locations, giving the vaccines on a sugar cube. She later also flew for the Royal Flying Doctor Service and came sixth in the 1973 All Women's Transcontinental Air Race across the United States, also known as the Powder Puff Derby. She packed a lot into her 35-year life, sadly cut short by cancer.

We visited the Aviation Section of Melville High School which provides a syllabus for aviation studies for high school students including a school motion platform to go with their basic C172 simulator. It was then time to head for Adelaide.

## ADELAIDE

In brilliant sunshine we visited Flight Training Adelaide (FTA). Business Development Manager Michael Wallis showed us around the impressive facilities catering for everything from flying to accommodation. Whilst acknowledging cadets had to work hard, everything is provided for them to focus on achieving their flying qualifications. We met many graduates from FTA whilst on the Tour who enjoyed their time there. Interestingly the Australian government provides young people with student loans, with aviation one of five subjects with an exemption for a higher limit.



*Regional Chairman Adrian Young (l) and the Master with young members at the Adelaide formal dinner*

Formal dinner was a very pleasant affair, and was the first demonstration of the growing strength of the younger members of the region. It was good talking with them and at the next event.

A traditional fixture of the Tour is the barbecue at Aldinga airfield which was, perhaps, the first demonstration of the care needed with the strong Australian sun. Hats, shade and sun cream were the order of the day. A key activity here is the landing competition, this year in a



*Steven Shen (l) wins the Aldinga spot-landing competition*

220hp Cessna 172 in strong and gusty conditions. The grass runway the wind favoured also had tall trees at the threshold generating more turbulence, sometimes requiring full aileron deflection to keep the aircraft the right side up. The heavier engine and greater power meant the controls were heavier in roll and pitch compared with a standard 172, and the instructor preferring an approach speed of 75kt.

After one practice circuit, the next was the one to be assessed. The actual painted lines across the runway were rather faint and hard to pick up until almost upon them. There seemed to be more lines than mentioned in the briefing, but I went for the second one. Somehow, I got a joint perfect score with young member, Associate Stephen Shen, who flies from Aldinga and was rightly awarded first place for a better landing attitude.

## SYDNEY

Arriving in Sydney before our room was ready, we explored the harbour and climbed the Harbour Bridge to get an interesting view of the Opera House. We met later with Qantas Group Chief Pilots and Heads of Safety. Naturally, pilot recruitment was a key focus, but also pilot welfare is getting much focus, and we discussed initiatives such as the Air Pilots Peer Support Network. A very pleasant lunch in Rose Bay followed (chosen as it was a Catalina operational base) with the opportunity to present MAPs to Ray Clamback and Upper Freeman Aminta Hennesey.

Ray was originally in the logging industry and then had an extensive career as a ferry pilot (including three ditchings!). Aminta struggled to get into flying due to a lack of funds but by being resourceful, found her niche in instruction as well as ferry flying. Ray and Aminta joined forces in 1985 to start their own flying school including ferry operations, selling the business in 2018. After lunch, Gill and I took a small boat out into the harbour to watch Steve Krug land his de Havilland Beaver floatplane: afterwards he took us for a flight over Sydney Harbour and the north beaches including Manly.





*The "Chook on a stick"  
Australian-American Memorial*

## CANBERRA

Canberra is the capital of Australia, and was a compromise between Sydney and Brisbane for that status. Hence it is a new city created early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the layout designed to complement the local terrain with the Parliament House the centre of a hub-and-spoke arrangement. One spoke led up Anzac Parade to the Australian War Memorial and another up Kings Avenue to Australian Defence Force Headquarters with what is known locally as the "Chook on a Stick" or, more correctly, the Australian-American Memorial erected in 1954 by Australia to recognise USA assistance in World War Two. This is where we met Grp Capt Pete "Norf" Norford who is secretary to the Australia region.

Meeting with AVM Harvey Reynolds (Deputy Chief of Air Force) reinforced our partnership with the Air Cadets and highlighted our awards. We also met with Pip



*AVM Kym Osley receives the  
Affiliation certificate for the  
Australian Air Force Cadets*

Spence (CEO, CASA), Angus Mitchell (Chief Commissioner, ATSB) and Rob Sharp (CEO, Airservices Australia) to position the independent contribution Air Pilots can make to aviation standards, resulting in invitations to joint industry committees and forums.

I had managed to arrange for the team to visit the Australian War Memorial storage facility where we were guided round by Jamie Croker. There we saw a preserved photo reconnaissance variant of the General Dynamics F-111 which Norf's team had supported.

I was very pleased to formally present to AVM Kym Osley, Chair of the Australian Air Force Cadets (AAFC)

Foundation Board, the certificate of affiliation with the AAFC, marking the work of the region to build a strong partnership with this key youth organisation.

## BRISBANE

Arriving in Brisbane, Liveryman John Howie and Gael welcomed Adrian, Gill and me with a dinner at the prestigious Queensland Club. The next day saw us visit the Aviation High School to hear more about its Aerospace Gateway Program.

The Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS) has legendary status around the world, and I remember being taught at school about the service and how children on stations were schooled via radio. The RFDS is organised by territory, and we had the privilege of being shown round the Queensland headquarters by Clayton Nankivell, Head of Flying Operations and Chief Pilot. There are maps showing Europe overlaid on Australia demonstrating that the latter is twice the size of the former, giving an idea of distances people have to travel for healthcare. This is the primary role of RFDS, either to transport people for treatment or to deliver clinics where people live. Around 13,000 aeromedical retrievals and 26,000 clinic consultations are performed each year in Queensland. In addition, 1,300 medical chests are maintained in rural locations to give access to essential emergency supplies.



*RFDS Chief Pilot Clayton Nankivell with the Queensland Air Pilots*

The Beechcraft King Air is now the main workhorse of flight operations for RFDS, which has successfully introduced the B360, which offers greater range and speed, in the last few years to complement the large numbers of B200 and a few B350s. The operations room gives a good insight into complexity of daily ops, often to remote dirt strips, with a focus on innovation and sustainability, and it was due to move to a new operations centre at Brisbane airport soon after we left. As we inspected the new B360, we met CEO Meredith Staib who was videoing Christmas messages for the organisation.

## LOC-I training

Loss Of Control-Inflight (LOC-I) is seen as one of the major accident cases in Australia. During Covid-19 Shane Tovin, CEO & Senior Instructor at UPRT Australia, decided to set up Upset Prevention and Recovery Training for



*Pitts Special is one of the aircraft used by UPRT Australia*

GA pilots, initially on an American Champion Decathlon but UPRT now also has a Pitts Special and an Extra. It was pleasing to hear how Mark Greenfield of Ultimate High in the UK has assisted Shane to set up this valuable training resource.

We visited the Queensland Club and its large saltwater crocodile again for the formal dinner where I again had the chance to make presentations on behalf of the Company, including the Australian Bicentennial Award to Geoff Sartori, Livery certificate to Deb Evans and MAPs to Grp Capt Malcolm Hunter and Robert Harris.



*Jon Minns and the Master lay wreaths at the RSL Remembrance Service*

I had the great honour of laying a wreath to pilots and navigators on behalf of the Company at the Returned and Services League Remembrance Service at the Shrine in ANZAC Square whilst Upper Freeman Jon Minns laid a wreath for his squadron association. It was a moving occasion which featured a 15-year-old schoolgirl who had won an award and travelled to the Somme and witnessed the Menin Gate ceremony. The ceremony featured not only the bugle for the Last Post but also bagpipes, to ensure that the occasion was well marked.



*Lea Vesic of RMIT is bringing RAAF basic pilot training back to Point Cook*

### MELBOURNE

Our final stop in Australia was Melbourne. Travelling out to Point Cook, a military aviation site, we were welcomed to the RMIT (Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology) Aviation Academy to meet several students and hear how they are progressing. Director Lea Vesic and her team run a very effective operation and will soon return Air Force basic



*The sumptuous Melbourne dinner*

pilot training to Point Cook

The commandant, Wg Cdr Emily Cameron personally showed us around the Air Force Museum. As with many other government-funded museums, the emphasis has changed from restoration to preservation and updating the stories it tells. Nevertheless, there were some excellent exhibits highlighting RAAF history.

The final engagement in Melbourne was a formal lunch in the Australian Club, where I had the great pleasure in presenting the Master's Australian trophy to Upper Freeman Tony Alder and an MAP to Upper Freeman Cameran Marchant.

Gill and I took the opportunity to visit Albert Park and do a lap of the Grand Prix circuit. However, as we only had e-bikes, our lap time was not too impressive! We then flew to Queenstown in the South Island of New Zealand.

### NEW ZEALAND

Queenstown is popular both in the summer and winter, being a prized ski resort, and through the kindness of a member, we had an excellent place to stay. The undoubted highlight was flying over the mountains in a Cessna 208 to Milford Sound and then undertaking a 2h boat cruise to marvel at the fantastic mountains and waterfalls together with dolphins. Gill had recently lost her father and the memory of when he did the 10day extended Milford Track walk at age 72 was much in her thoughts.

Whilst we were there, we heard that when Australian Region Chair Adrian got home from accompanying us on the tour, he and Natalie got engaged. Absence clearly makes the heart go fonder, and we offered our hearty congratulations.

### WELLINGTON

We arrived in Wellington and were met by the ever-efficient Upper Freeman Wg Cdr Ron Thacker, NZ Region Secretary. We were in Wellington for most of the official meetings. Ironically, due to the Maori Hiko protest the first meeting was via zoom. Meetings with the CAA, Transport Accident Investigation Commission (TAIC) and Aviation Industry Association highlighted two local issues:





*Meeting the NZ Chief Inspector of Accidents, Naveen Kozhupakalam*

concerns over the CAA merging its investigations team with the enforcement operation, and the low reporting rate of incidents, estimated by the CAA and TAIC to be below 20%. These two issues appeared to be linked with concerns over a Just Culture at the regulator.

The CAA Chief Executive Keith Manch confirmed that the CAA was committed to a Just Culture, but not a blameless one, and recognised that it would be essential to rebuilding trust. Martin Sawyers CEO of TAIC expressed concerns that low levels of reporting will not help identifying trends and improving safety. New Zealand Region Chairman Allan Boyce and the NZ Region committee have long experience of the local aviation industry and will continue to monitor and advise on working to the highest standards.



*AVM Darryn Webb, Chief of the RNZAF, receives a memento of the Master's visit*

We had already met AVM Darryn Webb, the Chief of the Air Force at a cocktail party. Visiting him at Defence headquarters, his interest in the history of his command was clearly evidenced by the displays around his office and the passion with which he speaks about it.

A case in point was the picture of VC winner Sgt James Allen Ward, who was awarded the VC for climbing out onto the starboard wing of his Vickers Wellington in flight to extinguish a fire. It is strange to talk to the head of an Air Force that has no fast jets, but for many years New Zealand's military strategy has relied on it being a long way from any aggressor, a strategy that modern threats in the region are causing the government to review. The focus of the RNZAF is therefore on helicopters and heavy transport. When we were there its Lockheed Martin Hercules C-130Hs were completing their final missions, but fortunately they have been replaced by a fleet of new C-130Js. If only we in the UK still had ours!

## RNZAF OHAKEA

The RNZAF used to have a memorial flight comprising a North American Harvard and DH Tiger Moth. Sadly, the Harvard was badly damaged in a forced landing and cost pressures led to the closing of the flight. However, a happy arrangement with the Biggin Hill Collection fulfils that role, utilising RNZAF pilots. The desire to fly the collection aircraft is cited as a great benefit to the Air Force in terms of aircrew retention.

Here we saw the excellent work of the Flight training Wing and tried the Beechcraft Texan II simulator. We also presented the Barry Marsden award to 3 Sqn for its sustained rescue operations following a tropical storm. We also witnessed Ron Thacker's skills as a helicopter simulator as we flew in the NH Industries NH90 simulator, complete with missile launches.

Brendon Deere welcomed us to the Biggin Hill Collection. RNZAF Chief Darryn had previously told us of someone looking forward to visiting the 'Big Gill Collection' at Ohakea! Occupying two immaculate hangars at Ohakea, the collection has four flying aircraft, all with great relevance to New Zealand military aviation. Perhaps the most important is the Supermarine Spitfire Mk IX which wears the codes of Battle of Britain Ace Al Deere, DFC and bar, Brendon's Uncle. It was restored by the team in New Zealand from an aircraft which had been previously a gate guardian.

On a personal note, it was nice to see and climb aboard a DH Devon, as the type was used for Royal Aircraft Establishment locations such as Farnborough, Bedford and Boscombe Down. My father, as an RAE scientist, frequently travelled in the Devon.

We were hosted for visit of Massey University at Palmerston North airport by CEO Ashok Poduval, who has had an extensive aviation career and is well placed to lead this facility to train commercial pilots as part of an aviation degree. Massey has invested in a Diamond DA42 simulator which is paying dividends, and is experimenting with Virtual Reality simulators for all its fleet.

## AUCKLAND

Freeman Brett Nicholls arranged a visit to Ardmore airfield, and the first stop was Pioneer Aero, well known for its Curtiss P-40 restorations. There we saw a Douglas SBD-5 Dauntless restoration in progress for a well-known collector, as well as a similar Douglas A-24B Banshee previously used as a wind machine by MGM Studios, and Brett's own P-40 project. The Dauntless had been recovered from under water: it uses the Wright R-1820 engine but requires the -62 variant to have the correct reduction gearing. The wing centre section and fuselage jigs give a clear indication of large size of the Dauntless.





*The fuselage of Brett Nicholls' Curtiss P-40*

The P-40 that Brett is having restored has an interesting history, and it is clear how passionate Brett is about keeping it as original as possible to preserve its history. He has collected most of the parts needed for the restoration. The aircraft is NZ3147 and its only "kill", via a number of unfortunate mistakes, was another RNZAF P-40 from a gunnery school training sortie. When the gun camera switch was pressed, live rounds fired that damaged the hydraulic system, with pilot successfully executed a forced landing in field without injury. Unfortunately, we couldn't visit Avspecs Ltd to see the DH Mosquitos as its team was in the USA collecting a Boeing B-17.

We then headed to New Zealand Warbirds and its World War One and World War Two-and-onwards hangars. The Bristol Scout had an American-made Le Rhône rotary engine, a legacy of the technology the USA needed when it entered the war. A rail signalling company built these engines under licence and this particular motor was built in 1919. Brett's Tiger Moth is immaculate and is a good example of over 400 of the type built in New Zealand, initially from kits shipped from the UK and then manufactured locally. The New Zealand variant does not have anti-spin strakes or slats.



*Bristol Scout with American-made Le Rhône rotary engine*

The other hangar contained the key aircraft for the visit, a North American Harvard Mk2\* in which Brett generously would be taking me over the beautiful Auckland seascape

and for each of us to fly a few aeros. The Mk2\* has some, but not all, of the additions of the Mk2b or Mk3. One thing missing is a tailwheel lock-something whose importance Harvard pilots will understand! We remained outside the Auckland International airport zone and flew to the shores of Auckland Central Business District and Devonport before heading out past a number of volcanic islands before climbing for some aeros. What a wonderful way to finish off the New Zealand leg of the Tour.



*Brett Nicholls takes the Master flying in the Harvard*

The final formal dinner in New Zealand was held at Whenuapai air base hosted by Grp Capt Mike Cannon, former air attaché to UK. At the culmination of a very pleasant dinner, I had the pleasure to present, along with New Zealand chairman Allan Boyce, the Hugh Field Aviation Journalism Award to John King, and the Jean Batten Memorial Award to John Cook (John had actually spent three days with Jean Batten after one of her record-breaking flights). Both Johns have had amazing careers in aviation but were suitably modest.

## HONG KONG

The next day saw us take the 11h flight to Hong Kong in an Airbus A350 with a night landing in low scud at Hong Kong International airport. The aircraft belly camera showed, when we broke out of cloud, what appeared to be offset approach lighting but was, in fact, the Macau bridge which disappears into a tunnel.

Air Pilots have long been welcomed by the Hong Kong Observatory (HKO). It historically provided three key services; forecasting, time and magnetic observations. The time service was delivered by dropping spheres from the tops of two hilltop towers. The use of guns and cannons was reserved for tropical storm warnings so that ships in local water could hear the warnings.

We were given a warm welcome by Director of the HKO, Dr Chan Pak-wai, who had recently been elected co-Vice President of the World Meteorological Organization, and Assistant Director Mr Chan Sai-tick. Visiting its office in the HKIA main tower allowed us to view the observatory gallery which is adorned with cameras for the tower



*Two of Hong Kong Airport's three towers*

controllers. HKO provides comprehensive weather forecasting – especially of tropical storms - for the airport and, indeed, all of Hong Kong. We also had a chance to visit the visual control room. There are now two towers in operation for the opening of the third runway as well as the standby tower. The third runway opened whilst we were in Hong Kong, that being the centre runway. The resulting missed approach procedures are a little challenging, especially 07R with an engine out.



*At the Hong Kong Observatory*

HKO utilises various internal and external models and other data sources such marine buoys, three to the west and two to east of the HKIA. It also uses AI to refine the forecast before the twice-daily forecast review for human forecasters to decide on the actual forecast. Interestingly

a forecaster still draws the isobars on the synoptic chart using their skills to interpolate between the data points. We also got the chance to be TV forecasters!

### **Cathay Pacific visit**

Jaap Roest, the COO of Cathay Dining (a recent rebranding of the catering operation), welcomed us to a visit of their food preparation facility and sample tasting. They supply other airlines such as Qatar and Jaap recommended the Louise range made in partnership with a Michelin star restaurant. Chef Wayne provided us with a wonderful tasting selection and expanded on the challenges of catering for different regional palettes and aircraft reheating ovens. The team has an example of every aircraft oven in the R&D department, to prove the meals work. It is clear the pain felt when the guidance on serving is not followed.



*Master and Hong Kong Chairman have control of Cathay's 747 sim*

After visiting Cathay Pacific dispatch to see the iPad-based departure process, we were very generously given time in the airline's Boeing 747-400 sim with Liveryman Gary Rickard driving the sim and HK Chair Rob Jones assisting in the right-hand seat. Sadly, the old Kai Tak chequerboard approach is not loaded in the sim anymore, so after a take-off and landing at Chek Lap Kok following some low-level flying around Hong Kong harbour, the famous JFK Canarsie 13 approach was flown. Gill then flew in all-female crew with Sam Jones as she performed a take-off from Hong Kong airport. Gary reported the sim was being kind that day; he certainly gave us benign conditions to enjoy the experience!

The visit to HAESL, a joint venture between Rolls-Royce and Hong Kong Aircraft Engineering Company Limited (part of the Swire Group that also own Cathay Pacific), was a fascinating chance to see the latest hi-bypass turbofans up close. The compressor main fan is like a work of art. HAESL's 1,100 staff service and repair Rolls-Royce Trent engines, outputting one a day after a two



*AVSECO's massive control room*

to three-month turnaround. There is a comprehensive indoor testing cell with an 8h routine covering functional test, parameter compliance and performance calibration. The visit was kindly hosted by Production Manager Cary Chow, and was very popular amongst younger members of the Hong Kong region.

#### **Screen time**

AVSECO is the company responsible for airport security, passenger screening, baggage and cargo x-ray screening at Hong Kong International Airport, employing 4,500 people. Assistant Executive Director Richard Skinner and Deputy Executive Director John Lamond gave us a comprehensive briefing on all its operations, and we then toured the passenger screening facilities we would use for real in a few days' time. AVSECO has invested heavily in



*The Master's party goes to the (sniffer) dogs of AVSECO's Canine Unit*

new technology resulting in quicker throughput, although like other airports it has had to reintroduce the liquid ban temporarily. Going underground allowed us to see the baggage handling and its graphical status wall. However, if we thought that was impressive, the airport control room was on a much larger scale. It includes ground transportation to the airport right through to departures and arrival together with stand status. There are over 100 positions below the giant curved screens, with additional positions at each end for airlines as required. It rather dwarfs NASA's Mission Control! Behind the control room

is the incident room, rather like COBRA, to deal with any emergencies such as tropical storms.

A popular stop was the canine unit where 18 dogs are based to help with screening, with both explosive dogs and drugs dogs (in terms of detection skills). We had a demonstration of dogs detecting luggage containing drugs and explosives, where we chose where identical suitcases were placed. The dogs had a 100% success rate. They have a working life of 8 years and then are offered for adoption and are very much in demand. Their handlers often keep them after the dog's retirement. You might be surprised that the dogs are taught commands in English; as the trainers, spoken commands are quicker and clearer in this language. The dogs have a real grass-covered area on top of their building in the centre of the airport for exercise and training. I think a few members would happily have smuggled a dog out!



*115 youngsters get to hear about aviation careers and the Air Pilots*

The final event was a visit for 115 school children and cadets, organised by Freeman Steven Cheung with support from his fellow Hong Kong Air Pilots. I explained what the Honourable Company of Air Pilots is and how we help young people get their start in aviation. Having no civil flying in Hong Kong rather limits some opportunities, but the region finds opportunities overseas for scholarships.

It wouldn't have been the full HK experience without visit the Dakota bar, known locally as something quite different! There are some amazing pictures on the wall including 747s passing the checkerboard on the approach to Kai Tak. An enjoyable evening ensued. We also enjoyed the usual evening Junk cruise around the harbour

As we concluded a busy but very enjoyable Tour, we could reflect on all the wonderful people we met, we enjoyed helping advance regional and global Company causes, generating new members and celebrating the work and achievements of award winners and regional committees. We hope to return some day and see more of the people and places we briefly got to enjoy. □

# INTO THE OVERSHOOT

*A round-up of less-formal items which have caught the Editor's eye*

## WARMWELL WINDOW

On the sunny morning of Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> December at Warmwell church in Dorset, (in contrast to the weather in the rest of the UK) the new stained glass window commemorating RAF Warmwell (1937-46) was dedicated. The dedication was led by AVM Giles Legood, RAF Chaplain-in-Chief, with the Lord Lieutenant of Dorset, Michael Dooley, in attendance and organised by Liveryman Gerry Gerrard. The Master writes: "I was pleased to attend with other Air Pilots including Liveryman Ian Whittle, who helped Gerry with fund-raising efforts by giving a well-attended talk previously. With the sun streaming through the window, it showed off the attractive design splendidly." □



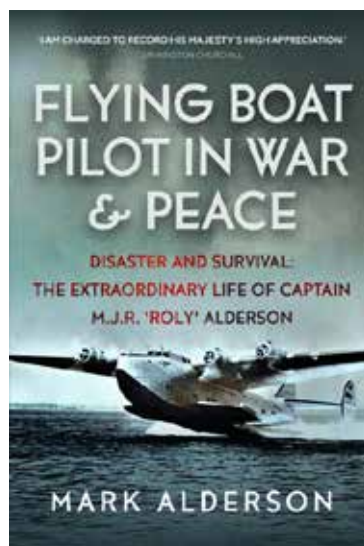
*The Master with Liverymen Gerry Gerrard and Ian Whittle at the window*



*The Warmwell memorial window*

## BOOK REVIEW: FLYING BOAT PILOT IN WAR AND PEACE, BY MARK ALDERSON

*Reviewed by Liveryman Peter Elliott*



Books on commercial aviation in the inter-war period are relatively rare, and those on civil flying boats in the Second World War even more so. Mark Alderson has chronicled the career of his father, late Liveryman Capt M J R 'Roly' Alderson who joined Imperial Airways in 1933 and then flew for BOAC until his retirement in 1966.

After learning to fly with the Cambridge University Air Squadron, Roly worked as a draughtsman for Fairey before joining Imperial Airways. His initial airline flying was in the Middle East, after which he flew from Croydon on European routes before transferring to the Handley Page HR42 and long haul to India. In 1936 Roly converted onto flying boats, a role which would last nine years. He gained his captaincy on Short C-class flying boats and a detailed account is given of the ditching of *Cavalier* in the Atlantic in January 1939. Alderson became part of a select group of pilots flying BOAC's three Boeing 314 Clipper boats.

In the Autumn of 1944, he returned to landplanes – Douglas Dakotas, and Avro Yorks and Lancastrians – and two years later joined BOAC's Development Flight, assessing new aircraft that might become part of the airline's fleet. This culminated with the de Havilland Comet; he became the Fleet Manager, and finally Technical Manager of Flight Operations.

Mark Alderson has made good use of his father's logbook, photographs and other papers and offers insights into his father's character. The many photographs add to the text, but in several cases have not reproduced well – the publisher's fault, rather than the author's. Overall, the book throws light on an era of commercial aviation that is rarely explored, and on a man who perhaps should have been much better known outside his profession.

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