



# THE HAWKER ASSOCIATION

## NEWSLETTER NUMBER 9 - SUMMER 2005

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### EDITORIAL

Website: [www.hawkerassociation.org.uk](http://www.hawkerassociation.org.uk)

There have been lots of contributions sent in by Members which add to our knowledge of what it was like to work at Hawkers at different times. Thank you all very much...and please keep the stories coming in!

The AGM was not well supported; in fact there were nearly as many officers as Members present. Next time would you prefer the AGM on a Wednesday, before a regular meeting? We realise this would prevent working Members from attending but there are many more who are retired. Let me know what you think.

Several Members, including Reg Hippolite in Northern Ireland, have said they would like an Association tie, so the Committee is going ahead to get quotations. The tie will feature a sloping version of our three aircraft logo.

See you at Duxford - it will be a great day out!

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### PROGRAMME FOR 2005

Wednesday 8th June	Summer Barbecue. Hawker Centre, 12.30 pm.
Wednesday 13th July	Once Upon a Time I was a Regional Executive - Peter Boxer.
Wednesday 10th August	Social gathering with video.
Wednesday 7th September	Visit to Imperial War Museum, Duxford. Depart 9.30 am (details below).
Wednesday 14th September	Social gathering with video.
Wednesday 12th October	The Influence of German R&D in WW2 - Ralph Denning.
Wednesday 9th November	Beyond the Harrier; Kingston's Projected Harrier Successors - Michael Pryce
Wednesday 14th December	Christmas Lunch. Hawker Centre, 12.30.

Unless stated otherwise, meetings are at the Hawker Centre - the old Sports & Social Club - and start at 2.00 pm. Lunch and drinks are available beforehand, tea afterwards, and there is a large, free car park.

### VISIT TO THE IMPERIAL WAR MUSEUM, DUXFORD

A coach has been organised for this visit. The coach will depart from and return to the Hawker Centre where Members may leave their cars free of charge. The price, including museum entrance, is £15. Please book with Percy Collino at preceding meetings or 'phone him on 0208 337 8143.

### THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The AGM was held on Saturday 23 April. However, rather disappointingly, only 15 Members turned up, apart from the President, the Chairman and 9 Committee members.

The Chairman, Ambrose Barber, noted that there were no elections this year as offices are held for two years. He went on to say that the Association had enjoyed a year of active and satisfactory consolidation, that activities had been well supported, that membership renewal, after some prompting, had been high and that the Newsletter had continued to be popular. He remarked that the Editor was relied on contributions from Members and urged them not to hang back. It was satisfying that past colleagues were re-establishing contact and that this included some associates who had worked alongside us and wished to continue that association. The Committee would like to welcome such people and a separate category of membership has been drafted for Members' future approval. Ambrose observed that we had been well served by our speakers on a wide range of topics (all have been reported in the Newsletter. Ed.). Following the successful Middle Wallop visit last September a coach visit to Duxford has been planned for 2005. The Chairman closed by thanking the Committee members for their efforts and by asking Members for their thoughts on how things might be improved. (write to the Editor. Ed.)

The Secretary, Barry Pegram, reported that since the last AGM membership had increased from 328 to 348. It was evident, he continued, that membership growth depended on personal contacts and recommendation by existing Members. The membership distribution was similar to last year: 66% local, 29% distant and 5% overseas. Ladies' membership had increased by 10% and working members accounted for about 18%. The Secretary had still not received membership renewals from 15 Members and that at the end of April it would be reluctantly assumed that they were no longer interested. Attendance at talks had been 50 - 70 and at social

gatherings 25 - 30; the Christmas lunch and summer barbecue attracted 60 - 70. All events could therefore be viewed as successful.

The Treasurer, Mike Hoskins, reported that at the end of the financial year funds stood at a satisfactory £2427. We had had to pay for the use of the Hawker Centre but this had been well covered by Percy Collino's raffle, for which he was thanked. A donation had been given to the Royal Aeronautical Society for the restoration of a cartoon of Neville Duke which now hangs in the Members' Lounge. Although there was no immediate need to increase membership fees this might change if, say, Hawker Centre or printing charges went up. Mike thanked Ken Alexander for independently examining the accounts which were adopted by the Members present.

## **REMINISCENCES OF A SALESMAN**

On 9th February John Parker gave an engrossing and witty talk, delivered in his inimitable style, on some of the less well known Kingston sales campaigns.

Prior to joining Hawkers John had a varied and fascinating career in the RAF which he joined straight from university in 1942, undergoing flying training in South Africa before joining a Hurricane OTU in Palestine. 1944-45 was spent with 208 Squadron in Italy flying fighter-reconnaissance on Spitfires. Next it was to a Communications squadron in Heliopolis, Egypt, flying a variety of aircraft from the Fairchild Argus to the Lodestar, Ventura and Dakota. From 1947-53 he flew Meteors with 263, 245 and 601 Squadrons and instructed at the Chivenor fighter OTU. In 1953 he was posted to Malaya during the Emergency as Senior RAF Intelligence Officer, Air HQ, returning to the UK and Staff College in 1957. He was then delighted to be given a command; but extremely disappointed to find that it was a helicopter squadron, No. 275 Search & Rescue, equipped with Sycamores. However, on arrival he found that the helicopter world was urgently in need of development so it turned out to be a challenging posting. Helicopter operations were very much in their infancy with accident and death rates higher than front line fighters. From 1959-63 he joined the Air Ministry Operational Requirements office covering OR.345 and Hunter Mk9 and 10, and in 1964 was appointed Wing Commander Flying at Odiham and was awarded the AFC for his work on developing helicopter operating techniques and flight safety. From 1966-67 he was Station Commander at RAF Sharjah before moving to the British Embassy, Washington DC where he made all the logistical arrangements for the operation of the Harriers during the Transatlantic Air Race.

In 1969 John retired from the RAF to join HSA Kingston where Bill Bedford had begun to put together a proper sales department to take the place of the previous one which had consisted solely of John Crampton. In spite of trying to sell a product costing a million pounds a copy the lack of facilities "beggared belief." Potential customers had to be briefed in the Executive Lounge with a temporary screen and projector. There was no adequate office space and apparently nobody cared. This prompted Bill to assemble his team under umbrellas on the flat roof outside his office and to send a photograph to John Glasscock saying "This is what we have been reduced to." JLG returned the photo inscribed "Why aren't they out selling?" Gradually they became better equipped but it was several years before a proper presentation theatre was built.

John continued with stories of many sales campaigns but space has forced your editor to select just a few. Ecuador provided a good example of highs and lows experienced, and the complex manoeuvres required, when campaigning for a sale. Firstly the Ecuadorian Air Force (EAF) had to be persuaded that the Harrier was suitable for defending the border with Peru. Secondly a means of payment had to be devised which would reduce the strain on the national budget and this was tackled by investigating a counter-trade deal involving Ecuador's biggest export; bananas. Commonwealth Preference protected the West Indian banana trade so increasing UK imports was not possible. However, and this was before the Berlin Wall came down, there were Eastern Bloc markets, particularly in Hungary. From there, by arranging trades, it would be possible to finish up in a usable currency. The EAF top decision makers were equally divided between Harrier and Jaguar but the C-in-C favoured Harrier. However, the C-in-C retired and was replaced by a Jaguar man. Also, the BAC agent was the technical representative who had come with the EAF Canberras, had stayed on and 'grown up' with the officers who were now in senior positions, so his influence was considerable. Nevertheless John continued to push the Harrier, but no decision was made. One day John awoke to find soldiers in his hotel foyer and tanks in the streets; there had been a coup - with excellent results for Kingston. The new C-in-C was Col. Morejon, the Air Attaché from London, who considered the Harrier essential. He was quickly made Minister of Defence; even better! Soon John was asked meet him and flew out to Ecuador and called at the Air Attaché's office to get an update on local affairs. Apparently Morejon had paid a formal farewell visit to the airbase near Guaquil where the base commander gave him a Meteor to fly himself back to Quito. He spun in on the approach and was killed. His successor was pro Jaguar and the Harrier's fate in Ecuador was sealed.

In Venezuela, after nearly two years of hard work, Vernon Lidstone and the Minister of Defence signed a contract for 24 Hawks on 25 March 1982. As is normal a period of 30 days was allowed before the first payment was due. Unfortunately, on 1st April, Gen. Galtieri invaded the Falklands and the president of

Venezuela, in a gesture of Latin American togetherness, withheld payment while he waited to see what would happen. By the time the dust had settled, the Venezuelan government found that, despite exporting 1.8 million barrels of oil per day, they had a cash flow problem and the Hawk contract was cancelled. Vernon and John worked hard to recover the situation but eventually had to let it go. The saga was reported in 'Zeta', the Venezuelan equivalent of 'Time' or 'Newsweek'. On 1st August 1982 the headline ran "The Government bought Hawk secretly and now say they haven't the money to pay for them." The article continued "All this year 'Zeta' has followed the movements of John I Parker, the BAe Hawk representative. On the day following Gen. Narvaez Churion taking up his post as Minister of Defence, Parker submitted to his office a demand for payment in respect of the contract signed secretly by Gen. Leal Pucchi one week before the outbreak of the Falklands war." 'Zeta' continued "The Hawk is a project that is characteristic of a decadent British industry. It is operated only by such countries as Zimbabwe and Kenya. On the other hand the Alphajet is fully accepted in Europe and seems superior to the Hawk in every respect. Finally the Alphajet package is 30 million Bolwares (£ 40m) cheaper than that from England where their industrial inefficiency results in higher costs." They didn't buy Alphajet either!

John's last big job was on the 1988 Hawk Far East tour which took in Australia. An order eventually materialised 12 years later, an example of the long time scales involved in selling military aircraft. However, the record is held by India which, John said, took 15 years.

Looking back over 20 years at Kingston, John said his main memory was the support given by various departments. After an initial period of suspicion it was realised that the only way to stay in business was to sell the product profitably, resulting in unstinting support - except for the shop steward's mafia at Dunsfold. Whenever there was an aircraft to go to an air show or sales tour they conducted running battles with management over the make up of and conditions for the ground crew, threatening to boycott the deployment if their demands weren't met. Nevertheless, John considered himself greatly privileged to have represented two first class aircraft on the world's markets and to have mixed with the people who created them. But there was another side; long periods away from home, hours wasted in airport departure lounges, standing around baggage carousels and sitting in hotel rooms waiting for the 'phone to ring. As for these hardships, John quoted an old RAF maxim: "If you can't take a joke, you shouldn't have joined!"

After many questions the vote of thanks was given by Les Palmer who noted that John had always been a master of understatement.

## **THE SEA HARRIER**

On May 11 Cdr Tim Gedge AFC, RN (Rtd) gave a fascinating talk centred around his wide experience with Sea Harrier. Tim's Fleet Air Arm career started in 1963 and he retired in 1996. In between he flew Sea Vixens and Phantoms off the big carriers Victorious and Ark Royal, was CO of the first Sea Harrier squadron, 800 NAS, and of 809 NAS during the Falklands campaign, had postings at the Dartmouth Staff College, with the Directorate of Naval Air Warfare and the Directorate of Operational Requirements as well as with the British Naval Staff in Washington DC. He now runs a wooden boat building academy in Dorset ensuring that those skills are kept alive. Clearly a total naval aviation person!

Tim started by briefly covering the background to the Sea Harrier - P.1154 cancellation and navalisation of the Harrier GRMk1 - before moving on to the introduction into service of the Sea Harrier FRSMk1. In 1979 Tim was selected to form the Sea Harrier Intensive Flying Trials Unit which in 1980 grew into the 800 NAS. There followed sea trials in Invincible and Hermes and demonstration flying at the 1980 SBAC show. He remained CO until early 1982 when he handed over to Lt Cdr Andy Auld. Tim then became heavily involved in devising a response to the Argentine attacks on South Georgia and the Falkland Islands. The solution was that the Royal Navy should send a task force and Tim now had to solve the problems of getting the carriers, aircraft and other ships to the South Atlantic. Two carriers were to go; Invincible with 8 Sea Harriers and Hermes with 12, which amounted to 2 squadrons with 20 pilots. Tim was then given the job of forming a third front line squadron of 10 aircraft at Yeovilton, 809 NAS, necessary because 'expert opinion' was that the 20 Sea Harriers would all be lost in 2 1/2 days! However, Tim discounted this view and suppressed it as being unhelpful.

The FAA had the highest praise for the Sea Harrier and its simple, well proven systems. There were shortcomings in the radar, the inertial navigation system 'crashed' when operating south of the equator and the radar warning system was a distraction, but these were worked round. The AIM-9L had to be cleared and 6 were successfully fired in Yeovilton trials, the only mod. being minor file and hacksaw work on the launcher. The -9L was the advanced all-aspect Sidewinder and much has been made by analysts of the importance of this feature to the success of the Sea Harriers. However, all AIM-9L kills were from stern shots for which the already cleared -9B would have been satisfactory. The escape tactic adopted by the Argentine Air Force Mirages was to turn away and light the afterburner, a fundamental mistake when opposed by heat seeking missiles.

Tim had arrived at Yeovilton on April 6 and on the 30th he led 6 of his 809 Squadron's Sea Harriers, accompanied by 2 RAF tankers (which were rotated), on the 3700 nm flight to Ascension Island, via Gambia as nobody knew at that time if the Harrier could fly the full 8 hour trip. They arrived on May 1 and on

the 5th flew to the Atlantic Conveyor 'instant carrier' and VL'd on the pad at the forward end. The naval architects at Bath had looked at the merchant fleet and found two suitable ships. Conveyor was docked at Liverpool and a conversion team set to work. Tim then did 6 successful VLs and the ship was cleared as operationally capable in 24 hours. Once on board the Harriers were sprayed with WD40 and wrapped up for the voyage south. One aircraft was kept at readiness for self defence purposes. Once south 809's aircraft transferred to Hermes and Invincible. Later the Conveyor would be destroyed by two Exocets with the loss of Chinook helicopters and valuable stores.

HMS Sheffield was also destroyed by an Exocet missile which got through when the ship's radar was temporarily blocked by a satellite radio transmission. HMS Coventry too, was destroyed by mischance. Knowing she was to be attacked by A-4s the command decided to respond with missiles so the Sea Harriers were held off. Unfortunately an escort vessel crossed in front and blanked the missile radar view, with disastrous consequences.

The Falklands look like the western Highlands of Scotland - lots of islands and water with scattered settlements amongst the peat. A search was made for an amphibious landing site and San Carlos, well protected by hills, was selected. The landing would be opposed, not part of current doctrine which assumed air superiority already established. There were 174 Argentine fighters available versus 20 Sea Harriers, as well as 10,000 Argentine troops. However, the landings went well.

The Sea Harriers were operating from 150 - 250 miles out from San Carlos requiring careful fuel planning. Besides the primary combat air patrol work the aircraft carried VT fused 1000 lb bombs which were dropped on Stanley airport from altitudes up to 35,000 ft to remain out of reach of the anti-aircraft guns. The aircraft were outstandingly successful with only 1% of planned sorties missed. The great operational flexibility of the Sea Harrier in appalling weather conditions was invaluable and its ability to VL its greatest asset. In extremis they would have been landed on frigates or destroyers so there were lots of 'decks' available.

After the Falklands Tim visited North America to lecture about the war. He was often asked if it would not have been better to have big carriers with conventional aircraft. His answer was that the war would have been lost (unless it had been politically acceptable to use a strike carrier to 'nuke' the Argentine mainland). The ship pitch limits would have made operations impossible for F-14/F-18 type aircraft because the downhill slopes generated by South Atlantic swells would be similar to the aircraft approach angle. The ski-jump and VL capability allowed the Sea Harriers to operate on comparatively wildly pitching decks. VL is the key capability.

Lessons learnt were applied to the FRSMk2 (now FA2, being withdrawn from service): Blue Vixen radar with look-down capability, AMRAAM missiles usable in cloud, ECM that worked and more fuel in larger drop tanks. However, the FRSMk2 needed too much pilot involvement compared with the FRSMk1. A replacement, to NST6464, was also studied (P.1216 etc) but not funded. Warton even proposed a tail sitting EFA (Typhoon now). Imagine landing back at night on a pitching and rolling deck!

Looking to the future Tim noted that the new RN 60,000 ton (Invincible is 20,000) carrier is planned for 2012. This will be a new environment and RN deck personnel should be training now on US carriers. The aircraft will be Joint Strike Fighters...and these MUST be the VL variant. Meanwhile all Sea Harrier squadrons will have been disbanded in 2006, with 800 reforming with the Harrier GR 9A. This is considerably slower than the FA2 and has no air-air capability so the fleet will, once again, be dependant on shore based fighters (or the USN).

During question time Tim noted that prior to Falklands operations the FAA had not been allowed to contact friends in France to arrange air combat practice with Mirages. However, a Mirage did visit Cottesmore for simulated air combat with a Harrier two-seater, flown by an RAF (ground attack) pilot with an FAA (fighter) pilot aboard but not permitted to fly. Unsurprisingly the Harrier lost. Tim also observed that the Argentine A-4s scored many hits on ships but because they released too low the bombs did not have time to fuse. Asked about the RAF Vulcan attacks Tim replied that although only one bomb hit the runway it did demonstrate to the Argentines that the RAF could easily reach their homeland if necessary.

The vote of thanks was given by Duncan Simpson who quoted Sir Sydney Camm on watching the P.1127 at Farnborough "...and what the hell have we given birth to now?" "A pilots' aeroplane, fun and a joy to fly!" according to Cdr Tim Gedge.

## **WARTIME HAWKERS**

Doug Halloway, who worked for Hawkers at the beginning of World War II, remembers those important and exciting days...

November 1938; the Kingston electricity station was on fire. No lighting was available for the Hawker factory in Canbury Park Road for three days. Candles were used so that we could continue working until 5.30 pm.

I was working in the 'rib shop' at that time with Eric Brooks and Theo Ball, just two names I remember. Jock Walker and Wally Rayner were chargehands and Freddy Davis foreman. Gamble, Sellars and Simmons were floating supervisors who sacked or suspended anyone for three days without pay, for the slightest misdemeanour,

as I personally discovered - fortunately Jock Walker saved my day. I also spent some time on Hurricane centre sections and over the road on wings on the 'Plane Floor'.

When war was declared air-raid shelters were built where the cycle racks were, on the outside of the factory in Canbury Park Road, with another shelter behind 'The Rink' with cycle racks on top. When the sirens sounded I was one of several who had to run down the road to the Rink shelter behind the Regal cinema.

In 1940 Hawkers spread out to many different areas for safety and greater production: Acton, Perivale, Tolworth and other places. Langley would take over from Brooklands for final assembly and flight testing. The rib shop moved to an ex-German factory on the Slough Trading Estate. Initially there was no heating so dustbins were positioned in the factory, filled with coke and used as braziers. Several glass panels were removed from the roof to let out the smoke. Brick air-raid shelters were built inside along the centre of departments but were only used officially if enemy aircraft were very near.

A lot of female labour was employed and I was assistant chargehand over about 50. Harold Wyatt worked with me and Jack Paice was brought in as chargehand. We were never hit by bombs but there was a sad event one day when the husband of one of the women turned up with their 12 year old daughter. When the mother went to the front entrance the husband stabbed and killed her; obviously a domestic disagreement.

Tommy Bray was the manager there and when I volunteered for the Navy in 1942 he wouldn't release me. From 1940 to 1942 I was working all hours at Slough. I would leave Kingston by coach at 7.00 am and some days not get back until 10.00 pm. Saturdays and Sundays we worked until 5.30 pm, especially during the Battle of Britain. Kingston was bombed several times; the Regal was hit one night and the blast blew out the front of The Three Fishes pub across the road. I stayed in bed that time as there was only one aircraft. Another evening as I was walking home from the coach, a raid was in progress and as I walked past the factory in Canbury Park Road I heard bombs coming down, which had me worried as I was right alongside the obvious target. Fortunately Hawkers was spared that time but a block of flats in Park Road was destroyed with, I believe, several casualties.

I lived in Canbury Avenue, about 300 yards from Hawkers, and one night I had just gone to bed when I heard the bombs falling. This time they were on target. One fell alongside the cinema, the second hit Hawkers in Canbury Park Road, the third knocked four houses down in Deakon Road and the fourth fell in the back gardens just across the road. I got dressed this time and went out to see if I could help but there was nothing I could do except roll up telephone wires which had been brought down along the road. So, back to bed as I had the 7.00 am coach to catch.

In 1943 the build up for D-Day, the invasion of Europe, was starting, so I volunteered for REME and this time I was able to join HM forces. I joined up in March 1943, ready for my free cruise to France in June!

## **HAWKERS IN THE 50s**

Brian Drew remembers his early days at Kingston...

In 1950, when I was 14, I was taken by my mother for job interviews in a lovely old house in Penrhyn Road. We were sent into a room with walls lined with filing cabinets and in the centre was a middle-aged man sitting behind a desk. He looked at my school records and after some contemplation asked me what sort of job I would like; would the railways interest me? Or, when I showed no interest, the buses? Still no interest. "Well, what about making aeroplanes?" Instantly I replied "Yes please!"

A week later I duly reported to Personnel at the old Sopwith factory in Canbury Park Road and after the regulation medical I was offered a job as an apprentice. The next six years remain with me as fond memories; the original wooden floors and the great people I worked with.

My first duty, I was informed, was each morning and afternoon to go to a converted shed in a nearby road that served as a cafe and collect the tea and sandwiches. I asked if I went by the loading bay steps, above which I worked. This caused a smile and at that point a rope with a loop in it was produced. The system was for me to be lowered down the outside wall which was about 10 feet high and on my return to pass up the orders. Then it was my turn to collect my own.

A number of incidents come to mind when I think of Canbury Park Road, some funny and some not. I remember giving my trainer some lip when he ordered me to draw a rubber hammer out of the Stores. My ear still tingles when I think of him leading me by it to the counter. I once inadvertently caused a walk-out. Next to me two men were putting together the fin of a Sea Hawk. The man working on the riveting block had a piece of swarf get in his eye so while he was down in Medical his mate asked me to stand in for him. This was a no-no for an apprentice so all the union men walked out.

A sombre incident was when a man slipped while working over an acid degreasing tank and went in up to his waist. You could hear his screams all over the factory. Less sombre was my cycling incident. We had a cycle rack in the next road which you got to by an alley-way through to Canbury Park Road. Well, at clocking-off time I used to run down the road and up the alley, then I had to cycle up Canbury Park Road to get home. On one summer afternoon I had collected my racing bike and, head down, I was bombing along and failed to notice that

the traffic had stopped. The next sensation was finding myself with two others in a two-seater car with my head in the passenger's foot well and the rest of me draped over the boot. The road was crowded with hundreds of Hawker staff leaving the factory so I was plagued with jibes for months afterwards.

Some other memories. A mate of mine who had a bed-sit in Kingston from Monday to Friday but at the finish of work on Fridays he would don his cycle gear and pedal up to Ipswich...and back again on Sunday afternoon. The staff who went down to the loading bay to fill their cigarette lighters by lowering them on a wire into the lorries' petrol tanks; I guarantee that two thirds fell off into the tanks. The 1953 visit of HRH the Duke of Edinburgh; not much of an event for the men but the ladies in the Planning Office went mad!

I am very proud to have been part of the firm and still have great pleasure putting aircraft together. The old unforgotten skills have been used on a string of them including two Hunters (Brooklands and Farnborough), a MiG 21 and a two-seat Lightning.

### **ROY GOODHEART REMEMBERS**

Roy's widow, Pat, sent the following extract from his personal biography. It starts after he had been demobilised and worked for a short time as a builder and at Rollasons of Croydon as a tool maker....

My next job was with Hawker Aircraft Ltd, Richmond Road, Kingston-on-Thames, or to be correct, Ham Common. I well remember the first time I walked into the factory. It struck me as very large, very noisy, very smelly and none too clean. The Rollason workshop was quite modern at this time as it had been bombed during the war and rebuilt, and walking into the Hawker workshops, which had hardly changed since the first war, there was quite a difference. The building had a semi-circular wooden roof supported by wooden beams made up in a criss-cross fashion and the top half of the walls and the roof structure were a dingy white.

From the outside the building looked like a collection of very large Nissen huts. The Design Department lay parallel with Richmond Road with the workshops at ninety degrees to it. Offset was a canteen and an administration block. The canteen had pigeons up in the roof timbers. These were cleared out at regular intervals but were always a possibility at lunch time. There was a Robin hangar, a relic from the war (these were small hangars disguised as houses and set up on dispersed airfields.) The whole site was enclosed by a corrugated iron fence. This ran parallel to the Richmond Road but was set back with a wide swathe of grass planted with a line of trees outside. In the next few years all of this was to change. A very large office block was built at the Richmond Road end to accommodate the Design Dept and administration and later the works was re-roofed and another office block built at the rear of the site.

As a fitter in the Experimental Dept on the shop floor I had to do three months probation in the Detail Section (this was obligatory) and then on to the main Experimental Section where I worked on a Seahawk that was being fitted for mattress deck landings. This was a system where the aircraft took off from a trolley which was released when airborne. The landing was achieved by the arrester hook picking up an arrester cable pulling the aircraft down onto an air-filled, sea-water lubricated mattress. It was an attempt to rid carrier borne aircraft of the weight of the undercart and associated hydraulics, allowing increased fuel capacity and range. In time this scheme was abandoned. The next aircraft I worked on were the Hunter prototypes.

After five years I was made redundant (no redundancy pay then) and got a job at the Decca Radar Research Labs. at Hersham as an instrument maker. After two years Hawkers wrote and asked if I would go back to Experimental - with the same pay and conditions as when I left! This was "instead of starting back at square one of the pay structure." I agreed to go back to Hawkers and worked on the prototype P.1127s.

In 1965 I applied for and joined the Structural Test Department, within the Design Department, and had to go back to school at Kingston Tech. in the evenings. Our work was concerned mainly with the structural integrity of the aircraft. At some time later the name was changed to Ground Test Services (GTS), still within the Design Dept but our area of interest increased so that we were involved with other aspects of aircraft testing as well as structures. In 1982 a grading system was started and later the Company started flextime which was very welcome as it meant that as long as we worked the total hours for the week, any extra hours we did could be saved and be taken as time off the following month.

As a test engineer I worked on Harrier, Hawk, miniature detonating cord at RAE Farnborough and Woolwich Arsenal, bird strike at BAe Hatfield and RAE Farnborough, the Ski Jump at RAE Bedford, gun firing at Dunsfold and Enfield, fatigue investigations using our scanning electron microscope, static and dynamic fatigue testing and rig design, sound level investigations and cryogenics; so I had plenty to do. It was a fascinating job with lots of toys to play with; and they even paid me at the end of each month! One of my achievements at work, after working hours and at lunch time, was the making of a film of our test work. I did quite a lot of film editing for John Fozard, the Harrier Chief Designer, and would 'nick' bits of his films that he did not use, and as I did the high speed filming I also gleaned material from these films. The medium has now changed from film to video tape but it is quite gratifying that my work was still being shown to new arrivals and visitors until site closure.

My total time in test engineering was 23 years and with the Company 34 years. The Ham factory no longer exists and the site is now a housing development. This year (2000) Dunsfold will cease to be a BAe site

and some kind of development will take place there. It is a real shame that both Kingston and Dunsfold will have closed down and been sold off, considering the fascinating history of both sites, especially Ham which goes back to World War I.

## **HALF A CENTURY IN ENGINEERING**

Doug Britton reminisces about his life in aviation; service and civilian....

I left school at 15 with very little in the way of academic qualifications but with an interest in both woodwork and anything mechanical. I tried for a carpentry apprenticeship and was taken on by a furniture manufacturer (John Sadd & Co) in Southend-on-Sea. This was to be the first serious mistake of my working career as for the next 6 months my only employment was to sandpaper off the rough edges of hospital temperature chart boards (those they used to hang on the end of the beds). Even though eventually given the additional task of drilling the small hole at the top (!! ) I gave up all hope of seeing this as a job I was ever going to enjoy so I gave in my notice after about a year.

I then enquired about engineering apprenticeships in the armed forces (was this to be my second major mistake?) In January 1955 after successfully negotiating an entrance exam and a medical (cough please), I duly embarked on a career as a vehicle engineer after successfully completing a 3 year engineering apprenticeship at the Army Apprentice College, Chepstow. This was a good all-round engineering grounding covering not only vehicle design, repair and maintenance but also more general subjects such as blacksmithing, welding, machining and sheet metal work. Lady fortune then took a hand in my career. In 1958 the Army Air Corps was being formed from the old Air Observation Post (AOP) squadrons whose engineering support was being provided by the RAF. In future this would be an Army responsibility, in particular that of the Royal Electrical & Mechanical Engineers (REME) into which I had just graduated. The top 15 of my course were offered the opportunity of becoming Aircraft Engineers. Twelve of us accepted (I think it was the lure of the distinctive light blue beret that did it.)

So, off to Middle Wallop for a 10 (yes, that is ten) week conversion course learning all about aircraft construction, the theory of flight etc and in particular about the 'Auster Mk 9 light reconnaissance aircraft'. At the end of the 10 weeks I passed a trade test and was duly qualified as an Aircraft Engineer Class III, being qualified to work on ALL aircraft systems: airframe, engine, electrics and radio (5 trades!). I then did a manufacturer's course at Saunders Roe in Southampton on the 'Skeeter' helicopter.

My first posting was a 3 year stint in Malaya/Singapore. I went out a green, wet-behind-the-ears sprog and came back older and wiser. Over the next 23 years I worked on various fixed wing aircraft : Austers Mk 6,7 &9, Chipmunk and Beaver, then on the rotary winged Skeeter, Sioux, Scout, Gazelle, Lynx and Alouette. I served in Hong Kong, Brunei, Germany, Cyprus, Canada, British Guiana, Northern Ireland and all over the rest of the UK. Having completed my 23 years of service with the exalted rank of WO1 (equivalent to RSM) I was ending my service career at Middle Wallop as the Maintenance Development Engineer assessing new aircraft tools and servicing procedures. Pondering my next career as a civilian (I had been offered jobs as s Queen's Messenger, Bursar at a girls school and manager of a newsagents) when out of the blue I got a call from Tom Hussey asking if I would be interested in a job with British Aerospace.

I hotfooted it straight to Kingston for a job interview with the formidable Bud Simmonds and the more gentlemanly Gordon Jefferson and was straight away offered a position in Mods Admin under Bud, which I eagerly accepted. I started work at Kingston in January 1981, joining the Engineering Management Dept as Assistant Hawk Mods Administrator. The Mods Admin team comprised Bud Simmonds, Tom Hussey, Doug Borland and Peter Liley, all under the ever watchful eye of Peter Hickman. Tom and Doug looked after Harrier mods, Peter and myself took care of the Hawk working very closely with the Hawk Project Manager, Chris Farara.

Three years later I was promoted to Head of Airworthiness Engineering, under the wing of Peter Hickman, when Jack Mills retired in 1984. The then Airworthiness Section, not the much larger Department it became later, was responsible for all aspects of Harrier and Hawk certification evolving from the Form 94 to the present day DACPA. Over the years a number of ex Army Air Corps people joined the Company: Tom Hussey, Gordon Robb, Keith Frost-Bridges, George Southern (RPO) and Rob Welch. Through to my retirement from BAES in May '04 I worked with Barry Pegram, Alan Woolley and finally, for a few brief months, Martin Beard, the present Chief Airworthiness Engineer. I can look back on almost 50 years of uninterrupted employment around aircraft, starting as a spanner bender in the Army Air Corps and finishing as a pen pusher with British Aerospace (no apologies, that's how I still think of the Company). I have fully enjoyed both phases... and now intend to fully enjoy my retirement!

## THIRTY YEARS AGO

In March 1975 Hawker Siddeley News reported the following.

Mr Herbert Smith, who was Chief Designer for Sopwith Aviation in World War I, has been awarded Honorary Companionship of the Royal Aeronautical Society. The names Sopwith Camel, Pup, Snipe and Triplane are part of aeronautical history and of world-wide renown. Today, 85 year old Herbert Smith is again involved with the Triplane - the Northern Aeroplane Workshops, members of the British Aircraft Preservation Council, are constructing a Sopwith Triplane for the Shuttleworth Trust.

## HAWKER ASSOCIATION MEMBERS - APRIL 2005

**A:** Mike Adams, Ken Alexander, Peter Alexander, John Allen, Terry Ansty, Alma Apted, Steve Apted, John Arthur, Alan Auld, Bryan Austin. **B:** Colin Balchin, Ambrose Barber, Ray Barber, Derek Barden, Peter Barker, Geoff Barratt, Graham Bass, Ken Batstone, Dennis Baxter, Colin Bedford, Anne Beer, Guy Black (A), Keith Bollands, Paul Boon, Cliff Bore, Steve Bott, Pat Bott, Bob Bounden, Alan Boyd, Roy Braybrook, Clive Brewer, Laurie Bridges, Ian Brine, Doug Britton, Peter Brown, Christopher Budgen, Roy Budgen, George Bunt, Reg Burrell, Robin Burton, Ron Bryan. **C:** Bert Callan, Richard Cannon, Maurice Carlile, Chris Carter, Bob Catterson, Ken Causer, Jeremy Cawthorne, John Chacksfield, Colin Chandler, Jenny Chandler, Keith Chapman, Gerry Clapp, JF Clarke, John Cockerill, Bob Coles, Percy Collino, Brian Coombes, David Cooper, Paul Cope, Patricia Cosgrove, Ron Cosgrove, George Cotterell, Nick Cox, Eric Crabbe, Shirley Craig, John Crampton, Russ Culley, RG Curtis. **D:** Roger Dabbs, Clive Dalley, Andy Dalton, John Danse, Afandi Darlington, John Davie, Ken Davies, Philippa Davies, Trevor Davies, Diana Dean, Norman Devielli, Mike Dodd, Lambert Dopping-Heppenstal, Jack Dowson, Dick Duffell, Jean Duffell, Peter Drye, Neville Duke, Chris Dunhill, Mike Dyke. **E:** John Eacott, John Eckstein, Andy Edwards, Dave Edwards, Tony Elliott, Norman Evans, Roy Evans, Frank Ewen. **F:** Ian Falconer, Mike Fantham, Chris Farara, John Farley, John Farrow, Geoff Fieldus, Mike Finlay, Wilf Firth, Ann Fletcher, Richard Fletcher, Colin Flint, Dave Fowler, Mike Frain, Harry Fraser-Mitchell, Geoff French, Mike French, Heinz Frick. **G:** Roy Gaff, Mike Gane, John Gardner, Patricia Gardonio, Peter Gates, Sandie Gear, Mark Gerrard, Alan Gettings, Tony Gibbs, John Gilbert, Maurice Gilson, John Glasscock, Eric Goose, John Gough, Andy Green, John Green, James Griffin, Barry Grimsey. **H:** Douglas Halloway, Clive Handy, Liz Hargreaves, Simon Hargreaves, Bryan Harman, Dawn Harris, Guy Harris, Thelma Harris, Brian Harvie, David Hastie, Eric Hayward, Bob Head, Sheila Hemsley, Ted Hemsley, Jock Heron (A), Tony Herring, Keith Hertenberg, Frederick Hewitt, Merlin Hibbs, Richard Hickey, Peter Hickman, Reg Hippolite, Keith Hobbs, Chris Hodson, Gordon Hodson, Derek Holden, Doc Holliday, Ralph Hooper, Linda Hopkins, Paul Hopkins, Jean Hopper, Mike Hoskins, Dawn Howes, Terry Howes, Simon Howison, Gordon Hudson, Gavin Hukin. **I:** Pete I'Anson, John Ieronymides, Len Illston, Maive Impey, David Ince (A), Brian Indge. **J:** Keith Jackman, John Janes, Gordon Jefferson, David Jelley, John Johnson, Ian Jordan, Trevor Jordan, Robin Jowit, Alf Justin. **K:** Brian Kent, Dennis Ketcher, Bill King, Dave King, Martin King, Charles Kirk, Ralph Kuhn. **L:** Barry Laight, Mike Laker, Charles Lamb, Richard Lane, George Latham, Pam Lawrence, Valerie Lawrence, Andrew Lawson, Ron Leader, Geoff Lee, Mark Lewis, Vernon Lidstone, Andrew Lloyd, Gary Lockley, David Lockspeiser, Norman Long, Gordon Lorrimer, David Lovell. **M:** Albert Magee, Al Mahoon, Mick Mansell, John Marsh, Bill Marshall, Bob Martin, Dennis Mason, Brian Maton, Don McGovern, June McKeon, Ronald Mears, Mike Mendoza, Jim Middleton, Kit Milford, Jack Mills, Brian Monk, Pat Moon, Leslie Moore, Pauline Moore, Pat Moran, Nicholas Morland, Pete Munday, Carole Murphy, Gloria Murphy. **N:** Martin Nash, Anthea Newman. **O:** Roger O'Brien-Hill, John O'Sullivan, Robin Owen. **P:** Les Palmer, John I Parker, John L Parker, John Partridge, John Pearce, Barry Pegram, Martin Pennell, Bill Phillips, Ted Pincombe, Dick Poole, Don Pratt, Dave Priddy. **Q:** John Quinn. **R:** Clive Radley, Frank Rainsborough, Colin Raisey, Brian Ralton, Paul Rash, Diane Raymond, Vanessa Rayner, Douglas Reallf, David Rees, Peggy Remington, Francis Rhodes, Geoff Richards, Bill Richardson, Chris Roberts, John Rodd, Eric Rubython, Malcolm Ruscoe-Pond, Peter Ryans. **S:** Helen Sadler, Roger Samways, Bernie Scott, Alex Seaman, Ray Searle, Arthur Sharpe, Peter Sibbald, Bill Sherwood, Jack Simmonds, Sadie Simmonds, Duncan Simpson, Derek Sims, Gerry Sims, Charles Smith, Don Smith, Harold Smith, John Smith, Karl Smith, Pete Smith, Selwyn Smith, Roy Sparrow, Peter Spragg, Cora Stanbury, Vivian Stanbury, June Stephens, John Strange, Carroll Stroud, Mike Stroud, Christine Strudwick, Tony Strudwick, Douglas Stubbs, Bill Swinchatt. **T:** Brian Taylor, David Taylor, Stuart Taylor, Brian Tei, Reginald Thompson, Geoff Tomlinson, Graham Tomlinson, Terence Tompkins, Rod Tribick, Ron Trowell, Frank Tuck, Bert Turner. **U:** John Underhill. **V:** Herbert Valk. **W:** Brian Walden, Terry Walker, David Ward, John Webb, Harry Webb, Patrick Webb, Graham Weller, Rob Welsh, AP West, Bryan West, Judith Westrop, Jenny Wheatley, Phil Wheatley, James While, Jan White, Mick White, Roy Whitehead, Annette Williams, Sally Williams, Colin Wilson, George Wilson, Paul Wilson, Dick Wise, Helen Woan, George Woods, Trevor Woods, Len Woodward, Alan Woolley.

We are sad to record the death of **Roy Goodheart**. Our sympathies go out to his relatives and friends.