

Bournemouth Aero Club Newsletter

Winter 2009

The Year Review

It's that time of year when we look back over the year that's gone by, and review how things went. Well, it was our first year as BAC and we must extend our thanks to Carl and Rachael (and their helpers) for making us so welcome! Your committee has worked hard to bring you a range of activities: we had visits organised to "Milestones" in Basingstoke, to the Tank Museum and to look over the de Havilland activities at Bournemouth.

There were BBQs, and the memorable one was organised for the Red Arrows, complete with Red Arrows crew members, by our friends at BRAA. We had skittle evenings, two navigation/treasure hunts (without even leaving the Club-house), quizzes, a successful photo competition, and two outstanding lectures by Brian Witt ("More of Whale Island"), and the other by Phil Holt ("The Battle of Britain Memorial Flight")

And who could forget that Easter bonnet competition when just about everyone responded to President Sue's rallying cry – and just about everyone, including the men, exposed their creative talent and put aside their inhibitions!

There were two outstanding outside events your editor recalls – "The Festival of Music" by the Royal Signals Band at Poole Lighthouse in aid of the John Thornton Young Achievers Foundation, The other was the Ladies' Night Dinner Dance at Dudsbury Golf Club. Although numbers were down on previous years, it was a very successful evening, and we had a few more square inches to dance to the cool music of Peter Francis on the keyboard.

Thanks to all of those members who put in an appearance on Thursday evenings, and as President Sue has said on several occasions – "Use it or lose it!"

Thanks also to Martha who looks after us so well on these evenings with a bright smile and a merry word or two of banter!

And let us not forget the committee members who give up so much of their time to organise the events on our behalf, so well with careful attention to detail, that they go off without a hitch.

Santa's Visit to BFC Café

Santa made a visit to BFC Café on Saturday December 19th and an excited Rachael made him very welcome with a glass of warming spirit and mince pies. There were equally excited children tingling with anticipation as Santa gave out his presents, all proudly watched by mums and dads, grandfathers and grandmothers. The reindeers complied with CAA regulations by sporting yellow tabards whilst parked on the apron at holding point Juliet!

Gone Missing!

There are two serious losses that need reporting. The first involves the loss of a photograph album which contained records of previous club events going back many years. It went missing during the refurbishment of BFC Café so if anyone has any information on its whereabouts, would they please advise Mark Wigmore on 01202 894049.

The second loss involves a framed Red Arrows Signed Protocol, a much treasured gift from the Red Arrows to BRAA. It was hung in the Red Arrows corridor at BFC Café and went missing overnight, a few weeks ago. Anyone with any information, please contact Terry Trevett on 01202 876530.

Annual General Meeting

The AGM has been fixed to take place on 18 March 2009 at the BFC Café at 1945 for 2000, so put it in your diaries now. There will be some important issues to discuss as well as the usual election of committee members so please come along and have your say about your Club. The Club membership year runs from 1st April to 31 March so you can conveniently renew at the AGM.

Watch the website, www.baeroclub.co.uk or notice board in case there are any changes in the arrangements for the AGM.

Bill's Sting

You would be forgiven for wondering if Bill Field was really going to buy a new aeroplane to replace the Grob 115 he disposed of earlier this year. Well, it's all happening and Bill has actually placed an order with the expectation that the kit will arrive in March and be flying by May. Watch this space for news of progress. The order has been placed through a Danish company because, until 31st December, they do not charge any VAT. The loophole then closes, so Bill has been dashing around getting all the paperwork sorted before the deadline expired. Thank goodness for email – could not have been done in the time without it!

100 Years Ago

Private Planes fly on Army Exercises

Wiltshire, England, September 1909

Three junior British Army officers flying their own French airplanes on Salisbury Plain have persuaded commanders to accept aerial reconnaissance in autumn manoeuvres. Lancelot Gibbs and Bertram Dickson fly Farman biplanes and John Fulton a Bleriot monoplane. The British Army has shown little interest in airplanes. The cavalry says that they frighten horses, and in February an army report saw "no trustworthy evidence" that airplanes had a future. But, as author H.G. Wells puts it, "the world cannot wait for the English!"

Bleriot hospitalised after crash in Turkey *December 15, 1909*

His ill fated flight today, in the heart of the Ottoman Empire, was seen by a large crowd. The flying ground here is small and the winds strong. The crowd was impatient which prompted Bleriot to attempt a flight. He lost control at 60 feet and crashed in from 26 feet. He survived after crashing into the wall of a house.

Poole Flying Boats

If you're interested in the history of the flying boat activity that was based in Poole Harbour then you need to know that there is a charity called "Poole Flying Boats Celebration". The organisation is intent on preserving the memory and the archives of the flying boat era associated with Poole Harbour and the cost of membership is quite modest. They organise lectures and presentations, and in addition there are visits and outings. If you are interested the website is at www.pooleflyingboats.com and for membership details you can write to Bertie Bowman, 113 Commercial Road, Parkstone, Poole BH14 0JD.

Last Man out of Tarrant Rushton

Flyers are very familiar with the airfield of Tarrant Rushton about ten minutes (by plane) to the north west of Bournemouth, as one of the VRPs (Visual Reference Points) surrounding the control zone. It is easy to spot from the air (hence its status as a VRP) and the positions of the runways and perimeter track are prominent, even though the tarmac has been removed for many years. Without going into the detail of the airfield's history, it was of prime importance during the war, and particularly on 5/6th June 1944 – D Day. It was from Tarrant that many of the gliders and parachute troops were to leave for the battlefields of Normandy.

Ken Hawkins is a local businessman who was in the business of major plant hire during the 1980s. He had a contract with a company in Bordeaux to supply some specialist equipment but something went wrong and the incorrect equipment was delivered. He had a very irate customer on the phone, and the first thought was to high tail it down to Bordeaux, placate the customer, and then come up with a plan to resolve the problem. He needed to get there fast, so he decided to rent an air taxi from Bournemouth – a Cessna 172. He had never been in a light aeroplane before, but undaunted he and his pilot set off without delay. There was full cloud cover, and a low cloud base, and the entire route to Bordeaux was exactly the same, so he never saw the ground. The first he saw of Bordeaux was when they broke out of the cloud on finals and there in front of them were the approach lights. He was mightily impressed!

The customer was highly delighted by Ken's thoughtful and timely intervention and the whole problem was resolved amicably. So impressed had Ken been with the pilot's ability (and the aeroplane's) that he decided he had to become a pilot, and graduated some time later clutching a private pilot's licence.

Another of his customers was contracted to break up and remove the runways at Tarrant for it to be returned to farming. What a thrill he thought, to be the last man to fly out of Tarrant, and he went for it. Not as easy as you might first imagine for permissions were required from a whole host of

agencies, including the CAA, the police, emergency services etc. He did a thorough ground inspection to make sure there were no abnormal surface areas on the runway, walking its entire length carefully, before flying in.

He arranged for the contractor to advise him before he started breaking up the runway, and off went Ken in a Cessna 172, with his son on board, to do the deed. First he flew low over the runway to make sure all was well and nothing untoward had occurred since his ground inspection. He landed without any problem, but was surprised that the press had got wind of things and were there to capture the moment.

A quick chat and a photograph or two and he was ready to line up. An uneventful take off was done and a return to Bournemouth followed, with the enviable entry in the log book of a landing and a take off at such a distinguished airfield.

I expect Ken was a little nervous about the whole thing for it was certainly something out of the ordinary in aviation experiences, but not nearly as nervous as those brave men who took off on the 5th/6th June, 1944, without any knowledge of where precisely they were going to land.

If you want to see the original cuttings that appeared in the newspapers, go to www.baeroclub.co.uk

50 Years Ago

Pan Am begins round-the-world flight

New York, 10 October 1959

Pan Am's newly-acquired Boeing 707-321 *Clipper Windward*, inaugurated the company's first all-jet, round-the-world service today. It is scheduled to encircle the globe in slightly more than two days. The service, routed via San Francisco, Honolulu, Manila, Karachi and Rome has put Pan Am very much in the forefront of the world's airlines. The 707 is clearly a winner. Only BOAC's Comet 4s offer real competition on the lucrative trans-atlantic route, overtaking TWA, whose piston-engined L-1649As are no match for the jets. While the British and US giants battle it out over the Atlantic, the race is on among other airlines to buy the 707 and the DC-8. If deliveries are kept up, at least 11 airlines will be using jets between Europe and North America next year, something BOAC said would not happen.

New Format

Regular readers will notice that there are no photographs in this issue. We intend emailing the Newsletter to a high proportion of the membership, and who might not have compatible software to view a mixed picture/text format. If you are not on email, do not worry as you will receive it through the post!

And Finally

If you would like to make a contribution to our Newsletters at any time in the future contact Ron Clarke on 01202 708309. If you would like to make a contribution to the website, again contact Ron or the email facility available at the website. Take a look at the Photo Gallery – your club related picture could be there for us all to enjoy!

And Finally, Finally

Have a really happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year