



THE HURRICANE

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE NORTH WEALD AIRFIELD MUSEUM ASSOCIATION



EDITION: NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2013



END OF SEASON

The time for the museum to close its doors on another summer season is drawing closer but we have a few of our normal weekends left for visitors and always the possibility for a private visit out of normal museum hours even during the winter close period as we prepare for the new 2014 season.

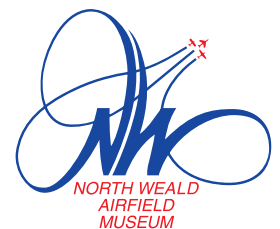
Next year we will be marking the Centenary of the first year of the Great War from August 2014, this working up to the Centenary of North Weald Airfield itself in 2016. On the

way we will be marking the effects of the war on the local population and the air raid on North Weald that marked the arrival of total war in the village. Be sure to visit us often.

The museum closes for the winter break on 30 November and reopens on Saturday 15th April 2014. The museum may be closed but you can always check out our research facilities, we have an extensive library, by checking out the website, e-mailing or writing to us. We have a telephone line [01992 523010] but writing an e-mail is better and faster during the closure period.

Although the museum is closed it may be possible for groups to attend during the winter and at other times outside normal opening hours. There is an admission price of £5 per person for groups and out of hours visits (£2.50 under 16). This can include a talk on the museum and airfield on arrival and refreshments in our conference room [subject to availability].

DIARY DATES



Armistice Service

This year the annual commemoration of the fallen will be held on **Sunday 10th November 2013**. Entry to the museum is free and light refreshments are available.

Annual General Meeting

This year the Annual General Meeting of the North weald Airfield Museum Association will take place in the museum conference room on **Sunday 1 December 2013** at 3pm.

Members Social

A 'Friends of North Weald Airfield Museum' social will take place at the museum on **Sunday 15th December 2013** at 3pm. If you are not already a member of the museum you can always attend as a guest of a member or join us for just £12.50 pa.

Working with others

North Weald Airfield Museum is a part of the Essex Museums Group and is mentored by Tony OConnor of Epping Forest District Museum Service. Epping Forest District Council supports our museum financially. As you may have seen in the local press EFDM has now closed for a major £2M Heritage Lottery funded refurbishment that should see it closed into 2015 but it will continue to mentor North Weald and operate the Lowewood Museum at High Street, Hoddesdon EN11 8BH each week from Wednesday to Saturday. Check out the website www.broxbourne.gov.uk/lowewoodmuseum



On another level North Weald has been working with the Epping and Ongar Railway on promotions. We now have an all-weather sign by the bus stop North Weald railway station directing passengers to ask the drivers to be dropped off at the stop nearest to Ad Astra House. You may recall a similar image in the last edition.

The artwork was based on an original advertisement for Austin cars that appeared in an issue of Flight from 1939. It turned out to be a useful bit of artwork in that it came with the depiction of three Westland Lysander aircraft flying over the car. North Weald operated a few Lysander's in the early days of what became Special Operations Executive [SOE] flying into occupied France. The Gauntlet biplane image added is one of a series produced specifically for the museum by Ian Commin [see later].

Next season the Epping and Ongar Railway will have its own display space in the museum to mark the cooperation.



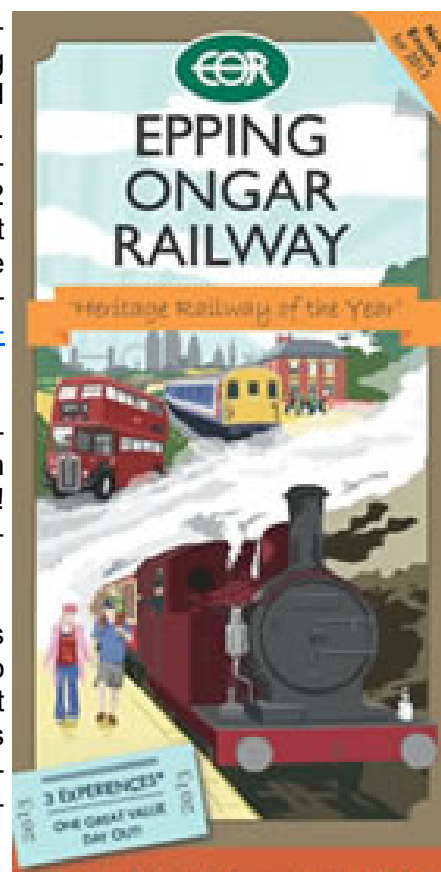
North Weald Station Bus Stop ©PAR

Getting to the museum

Accessing the museum if you do not have a car can be problematical as there is no standard bus service. Thankfully the Epping Ongar Railway runs its heritage **339** bus service every weekend throughout the day from before we are open until after we close. It provides an ideal connection from the museum to Epping London Underground Station. The fares for the bus only are only £2 and senior citizen cards are accepted. An added feature is that the museum now has an antique reproduction styled sign on the bus top at North Weald EOR Station. Full details on the bus service can be found at <http://eorailway.co.uk/your-visit/timetables-and-fares/>

The railway is very much event led to keep up the interest of potential visitors and recently included the October 31st - "Steam and Scream" Halloween Specials! Halloween fun on the train! Decorated coaches, Halloween treats and fancy dress competition.

On November 29th Ongar will be putting on its Christmas Lights and EOR will be joining in the celebrations by bringing Santa into town and light up Ongar. With funfair, carol singers, late night shopping and evening train services to get you into the Christmas spirit. Also look out for the November 30, December 1, 7-8, 14-15, 21-23 - Santa Specials and the December 8 – 31, January 1 - Mince Pie Specials. Details on the EOR website.



Blenheim Night Fighter

The last remaining flight-worthy Bristol Blenheim in the United Kingdom has been revised to feature a shortened fighter version nose as featured on the Blenheim's that served at North Weald early in the war,

Steve Wagstaffe one of the museum's Trustees has been in touch with Ron Scott of the Blenheim Society concerning the rebuilding of the Blenheim as the Mk 1 night fighter and sounding out whether the revised aircraft might be tempted to fly to North Weald for at least a photo-shoot. The approach is informal and nothing has yet been put to the plane's trustees but it may be acceptable to them when the aircraft joins the air show circuit.

It is a remodelling of the aircraft that has not been seen in English skies for more than six decades.

The features on the airfield known as "E" says that were restored last year as a permanent memorial to the Norwegian 331 & 332 squadrons were actually constructed to house and protect the Blenheim aircraft so getting the restoration to park in them for a while would seem a good aim.



North Weald's First Air Ambulance The St. John Air Wing 1971-1993



North Weald based Hertfordshire Air Ambulance ©PAR

Most readers will be aware that North Weald currently hosts the Hertfordshire Air Ambulance, a charity helicopter emergency medical service [HEMS] operated in conjunction with Essex Air Ambulance flying from Earl's Colne near Colchester. What many will not be aware of is that North Weald has a longer history of air ambulance operations, over forty years longer in fact.

Twenty years ago, in 1993, a major part of North Weald Airfield's heritage drew to a close when the air ambulance operation operated by St John Ambulance was closed down.

The Air Wing commenced its life as a special function of the Epping Division of the St John Ambulance Brigade in the wake of a 1967 one-off flight of a young German motorcyclist taken in a coma to St Margaret's, Epping. He was not expected to survive but eventually was flown home to Germany after lying in Epping for three months.

At that time there was no means in place to fly people or body parts around the UK never mind Europe and the World. Even the RAF and USAF, when approached, were unable to help.



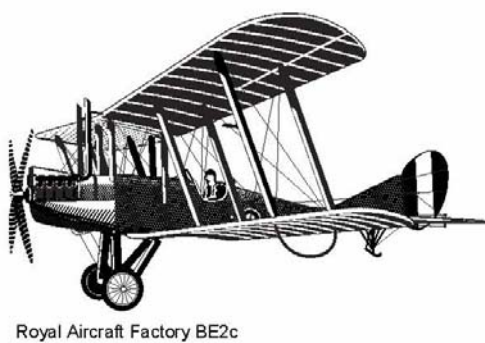
Britten-Norman Islander ©PAR

The Hospital Secretary, Pat Bowen, President of the Epping Division of St John's Ambulance, approached his friend Eric Thurston owner of a charter flying company operating out of Stapleford Tawney airfield with the problem and Eric agreed to undertake to fly the unconscious youth to Germany at only the cost of the fuel.

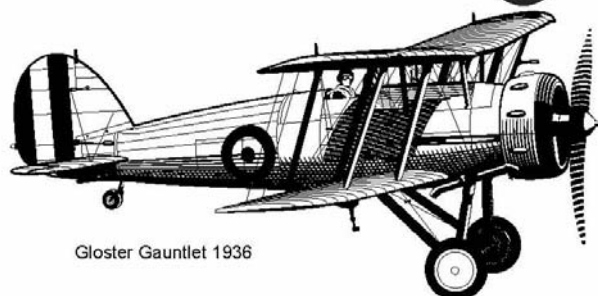
The aircraft used was a new Britten-Norman BN-2A Islander, which he flew to Hanover where he transferred the youngster to a German Luftwaffe helicopter for the final stage of the journey. The patient died a year later, having failed to regain consciousness.



Armstrong Whitworth Siskin 1926



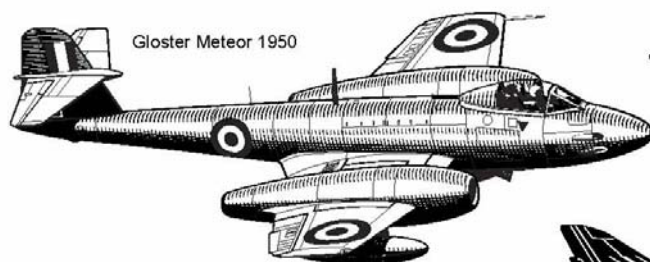
Royal Aircraft Factory BE2c



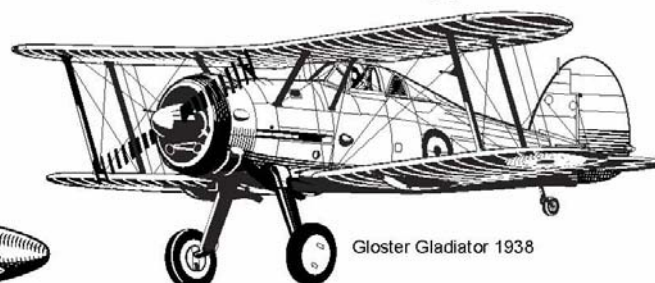
Gloster Gauntlet 1936



Hawker Demon 1935

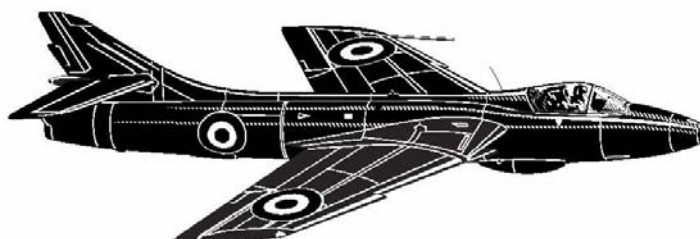


Gloster Meteor 1950



Gloster Gladiator 1938

Hawker Hunter 1955



The new large signs at the museum

The line up of sponsored scalable images now available to NWAMA for publication and other uses has grown. Small here, but also as new large museum signs. More examples are due.

MUSEUM OPENING TIMES

The museum is closed for the winter until April 2013

When we open again entry will, as usual, be free for members.

Except on Special Event Days visitors will be charged standard rates for entry:

Adults	£2
Concessions	£1.50
Children [5-15]	50p

Group rates vary but generally there is a minimum charge of £5 per person or £50 per group.

CONTACT

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Epping

Essex CM16 6AA

Telephone: 01992 523010 [24/7 answering]

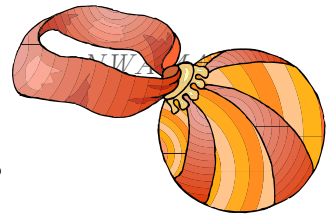
office@northwealdairfieldmuseum.com

www.northwealdairfieldmuseum.com

Registered charity: 1081157

ADVERTISING AND THE HURRICANE

One way in which the NWAMA can earn income and to finance the production of hard copies of the Newsletter is advertising. Advertisers need circulation beyond the membership and they also need to know who is reading the Newsletter. If you pass this edition on please let us know who to so we can help finance your reading!



MUSEUM SHOP

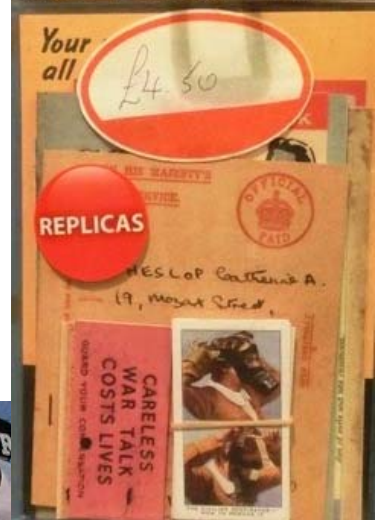
Hasn't the year gone quickly?

Nearly closing time for the museum and Christmas and the problem of presents, already on the horizon. Fortunately NWAMA can help you a little if you have an aviation buff in your present circle. We can offer you a great selection of mugs for your recipients tea, coffee or warming winter cocoa and some great and unusual aviation designs.

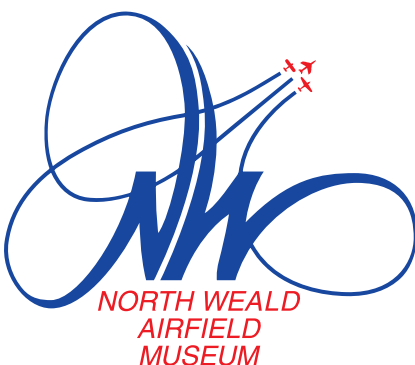
There is a good range of prices too from 'pocket money' to 'How much?'

This year there is a unique Christmas card featuring an image of a Hawker Hurricane taken in the protective pens at North Weald, badges, key rings, DVD's, Airfix plastic kits, replicas, stickers and much more including a new book on the Norwegian's flying from North Weald.

How do you get them?



Get over to the museum this month [November] or perhaps check out the gift options on the museum web site. Hopefully these images will whet your appetite for buying from us.



The one off flight led to the planting of an idea in those at St. Margaret's Hospital and Pat Bowen's continued interest in the possible use of light aircraft for ambulance work eventually gelled with a need expressed by surgeons at the Royal London Hospital for transport facilities for kidneys which became available for transplant. After removal the organs had only about an eight-hour window of opportunity, after which the likely success of the transplant waned and that was a product of time and distance from donor to recipient – aircraft suggested a possibility of speeding the transfer over hundreds of miles.

Discussions took place early in 1972 between the DHSS, the London Hospital, Scotland Yard, St John Ambulance and a few volunteer pilots, leading to the establishment of a flying service under the aegis of the Brigade. Many of the group had also played a part in the creation of the RIAT Air Show in the same period. The Harlow Group Hospitals Committee generously provided accommodation at St Margaret's to be used as a Flight Control Centre.

The Air Wing came into being on 2 February 1972 to provide a volunteer air service for the rapid transport of organs, drugs, blood supplies, and patients in emergencies when other means are not available. The functions of the air wing built up over two years.

The air wing could usually have an aircraft in the air one hour after the initial call to the flight control centre, and special landing facilities were made available through co-operation with the R.A.F., R.N., and United States Air Force in the U.K.

The controllers, originally 18 in number but 12 were found to be an adequate number, were volunteers ensuring a round the clock service, firstly out of a small room in St Margaret's, before the old chapel was converted in 1974 to a new Control Centre and Operations Room with an operating console, and map-lined walls showing the UK, Western Europe and Scandinavia. There was a separate room with a bed for the night duty controller.



The control room and a special issue Royal Mail postage stamp ©File

It was some years before charity helicopter air ambulances were operating and the St. Johns operation was seen in a similar light to the later charity air operations with some fund-raising and significant donations being directed their way from a supportive public. One example of these fundraising events being the nomination of the then fledgling St John Air Wing as the Biggin Hill Air Fair charity for one year.

The organisation and administration of the Flight Control Centre at Epping, along with the selection and training of Flight Controllers was the responsibility of Wing Commander Harry Drummond. Most of the team tasked with the contacting the nearly 100 aircraft available to the service were still engaged in earning a living, so it was not practical to man the centre continuously. To cover the times when the Control Room was unmanned there was an answering machine giving out the duty controllers telephone contact number.

The service relied upon the dedication and enthusiasm of pilots and controllers and co-operation from the Civil Aviation Authority, the Royal Air Force and the Royal Navy. The Ministry of Defence ordered all airfields in the RAF and RN to open on request from the control centre.

Flights were often accorded priority status and there were instances where air traffic control at major airports held incoming airliners in the "stack" or held departing aircraft on the ground so that Air Wing aircraft were able to land or take off without hindrance. In what were significantly quieter

times London Heathrow changed the runway in use to minimise taxiing time, and Paris Orly twice opened in the middle of a controllers' strike to facilitate the movements of Air Wing aircraft.

From the late 1950s the Automobile Association [AA] operated aircraft on traffic spotting duties. The activity grew, as did the size of their aircraft, and they started the repatriation of patients from the Continent to the UK. The St. John service operated on behalf of the AA in support of their service bringing back sick or injured AA members with full nursing service from St John Ambulance Air Nursing Attendants in conditions much better than those usually found on the scheduled airlines.



AA Cessna Titan was used for traffic spotting and ambulance work ©A-B

The pilots [and aircraft owners] were reimbursed with the cost of their fuel, oil and any out-of-pocket expenses but not the full cost of operating their aircraft – assessed as being at least double the bare outlay on fuel and oil. As a registered charity the St John service was not permitted to charge for its help, but there was an arrangement with the Organ Matching Service and the AA whereby those organisations refund costs incurred, plus a small percentage to cover postages telephones and expenses.

On 4th July 1976 a Piper PA28R-200-2 registered G-BBOP operating for the St. John Air Wing was preparing to land at North Weald with three persons on board after a short trip from Saffron Walden. Earlier that day it had flown to Saffron from Cornwall to drop off one of its four passengers for a St. John's Ambulance presentation.



The wreckage was in the road works for the M11 ©PAR

During a descending turn to line up with the runway for final approach, the two year old aircraft collided with an eighty two foot high radio mast and crashed in amongst the caravan accommodation and works for the new M11 London-Cambridge motorway on the western edge of the airfield. Little damage was done to works items on the ground and no injuries occurred.

The deaths in the crash included the pilot, Ron Wingfield, a retired RAF pilot from St. Austell in the West Country. Once a Hurricane pilot he had left the service in 1973 and was aged 55 years at the time of the crash. The second fatality was his elder brother Ray Wingfield from Colchester, then aged 64 years. The surviving occupant of the crash was a female family friend that had gone along for the ride. Daphna Aloni from Edgeware had been staying with her family at the Wingfield's West Country home. Her age was given variously as 24 and 27 years.

It was agreed that the Piper was making too low an approach to the airfield, but following the correct line. No radio contact was taking place with the Piper, the usual glider pilots frequency being different from that the powered aircraft might have been on. Furthermore it was not expected at the airfield.



Pat Pattison (left) and Bob Paterson of the St John Ambulance Air Wing, which has been awarded the Royal Aero Club's Britannia Trophy

The Piper was registered to Peter Clifford Aviation Ltd., and carrying the markings for "Plastestrip PVC Extrusions, London & St. Austell" as well as St. John Ambulance Association and a race number of 72 on the fin. It was a sad end to services rendered by the former fighter pilot.

In 1985 the Queen presented the Air Wing with the Britannia Trophy, perhaps the greatest honour which can be bestowed on any organisation or individual in the world of flying.

In April 1987 The Cornwall Air Ambulance was the first service of its kind in the UK, initially as a health service funded resource and then wholly charity funded. More were to follow and they brought a new style of operation that relied on charitable donations but dispensed with volunteer pilots and loaned aircraft for employed crews and paid for pilots and airframes.

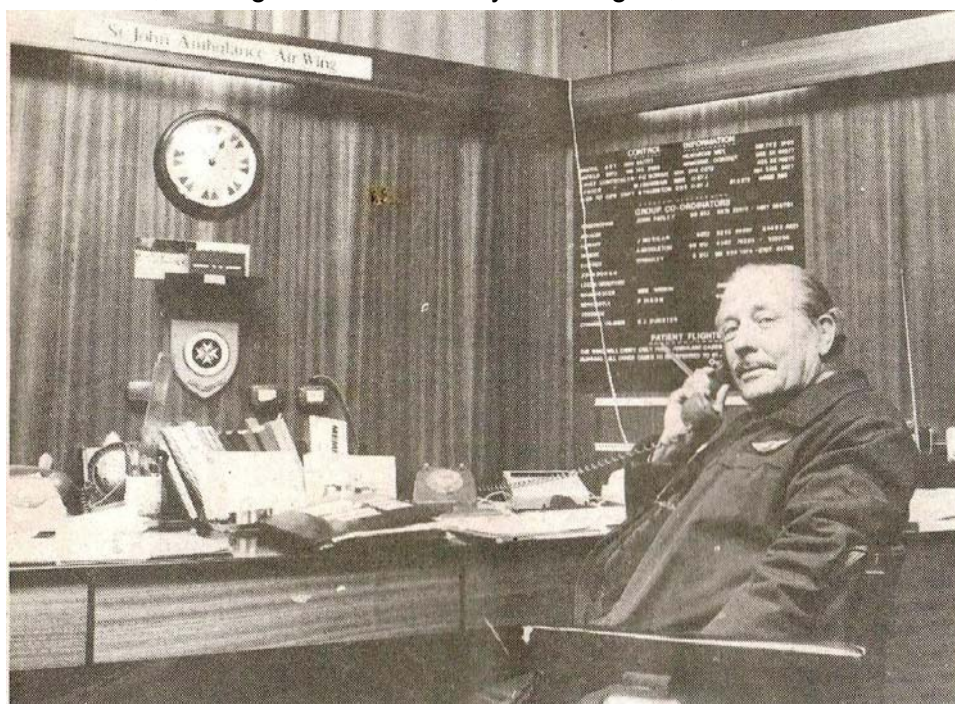


The charity flying system was cut back by changing regulations. In the late 80s the Civil Aviation Authority demanded that the carriage of surgical transplant teams required commercially registered aircraft and pilots. Extra regulations and operational costs meant that the Air Wing could thereafter only deliver unaccompanied organs in boxes. With such a restricted brief, volunteer controllers stopped coming forward, and finally, on 23 June 1993, its activities were terminated.

In its 21 years the Wing flew over 2,500 successful missions, totalling over one million miles, 9,000 flying hours and the volunteer ground controllers gave up 185,000 hours of their time. Compared to the current efforts put in by modern HEMS those numbers are low but, importantly, they were all voluntary hours and they did provide the bedrock upon which air ambulances today operate.

Although the flight operations halted St. John's continued to maintain charitable giving related to the funds left over from the Air Wing organ transport scheme through the giving of awards into the 21st Century.

Travelling Fellowships of up to £10,000 each were available to help organ donation recipients widen their knowledge and experience, learning new techniques or fostering relationships with coordinators in other centres were aimed at scientists, surgeons, physicians, nurses and others whose work benefits transplant patients. In 2007 the fund awarded over £30,000 to nine recipients, the largest award in that year being £7,000.



■ Mac McConnell pictured in the St John Ambulance Air Wing control room

Over the years several of the former volunteer controllers involved in the scheme were rewarded for their efforts by the St. John's Organisation and Central Government with the former investing several of them with medals and decorations and the latter including at least one MBE.

For a detailed account of the Air Wing from beginning to end, I refer readers to On a Wing and a Prayer – The Story of The St John Ambulance Air Wing by Norman Franks, published by St John Ambulance, a Foundation of the Order of St John.)

Contemporary West Essex Gazette report on former RAF Officer and NWAMA Secretary Mac McConnell [©Guardian Newspapers]

Nearly twenty years later Mac's activities were rewarded, another event captured by the local media [see next page].



Left, the 1992 report on the award of the Order of St. John to Mac and below just some of the archive material held by the museum on Mac.

Thanks to several sources including the Charles McConnell Archive [held by the museum] covering his time at North Weald and Hornchurch, Guardian Newspapers and Loughton & District Historical Society.



Recent visit

The extended family of Ottar and Erik Malm two brothers who were pilots who flew with the Norwegians from North Weald in 1942-44.

Sergeant Erik Malm is listed in the North Weald Debt of Honour as being shot down whilst serving with 332 Squadron at North Weald on 24 July 1942. Ottar served with 331 in the same period and flew from where the Squadron now stands. He too was shot down in 1942 but survived the incident only to be grounded by the Norwegian authorities who feared he too might be lost to the family. He went on to serve in Sector Control and was promoted to Lt the war before returning home to his family.

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MEMBERSHIP DETAILS

HOW TO JOIN

We accept all currencies in welcoming you to museum membership—becoming a Friend of North Weald Airfield Museum—as long as it means the same as £12.50p!

You can join through the museum [website](#).



**RAF North Weald
Main Gate Area**
(Taken from RAF map 1954)

11. STATION OFFICES
7. MAIN STORES
6. W.O. MARRIED QUARTERS
21. POWER HOUSE
25. RESERVOIR (100,000 GALLS)
19. FIRE TENDER HOUSE
12. GUARD HOUSE
10. PUMP TRAILER HOUSE
120. SMALL ARMS STORE
207. POST OFFICE
13. TECHNICAL LATRINES
90. RAF REGIMENT HQ
77. R.C. CHURCH
15. C.E. CHURCH & ARMOURY MAINT.
- EWS. EMERGENCY WATER SUPPLY
205. FOAM STORE
204. OLD WATCH OFFICE
65. A.M.W.D STORES & MESS HUT
108. PARACHUTE STORE
16. RIFLE STORE & ARMOURY
107. REPAIR WORKSHOP (PART USE CINEMA)
109. TRAILER SHED
18. A.M.W.D TRANSPORT
- 27A. FUEL STORE
27. FUEL STORE
211. LATRINE BUCKET CLEANING
5. BOMB STORE (SEMI SUNK)
66. RADIO MAINTENANCE
210. BULK OIL INSTALLATION (100 GALLS)

1954



**ROYAL
AIR FORCES
Association**

Friendship | Help | Support

North Weald and Ongar Branch

Formed in 1953 the North Weald Branch of The Royal Air Forces Association [RAFA] meets on the second Wednesday of each month at **The Squadron**, situated in the centre of the historic and still very active North Weald Airfield.

Meetings commence at 12 noon with lunch at 1pm, followed by a speaker or entertainment. Members can also enjoy regular social activities at a variety of venues and take an active part in airfield and local community events.

If you are an ex RAF service man or woman, why not come to one of our monthly meetings, where you are sure of a warm welcome and pleasant company. If you are not ex RAF you will be equally very welcome and, if you wish, could join as an associated member.

For more information please contact Branch Secretary Yvonne Grace
on 01277 2215514

Be part of something special

Team Vodka

Every air show would like to have a jet display team to provide an aerobatic display but they are very expensive and as a result a number of less costly piston engine teams provide an alternative showpiece and the Aerostars are perhaps the most well known for both longevity and the number of aircraft they offer in the formation team. North Weald tends to be the acknowledged base of the Yak based aerobatic teams but that is partly because the airfield is the centre of training in the craft.

Team Vodka, is a group of like-minded individuals aspiring to create a smaller formation team of their own, operating their Yak -52 aircraft. Each of the pilots is a product of the regular 'Formation School' run every year and originally conceived by Anthony Hutton. The team hope one day to fly a three ship display involving dynamic formation aerobatics, opposition passes and a solo. For now, they are flying together when they can to build up to this goal. There are a number of hurdles to attain first and they are working closely with the UK Civil Aviation Authority [CAA] to hone their flying expertise to an acceptable standard.

The day I caught up with the fledgling team at North Weald [August 10] their leader, Rich Davies in his 52 G-XYAK, went 'tec' promoting the pilot of Yak G-YOTS, Jon Windover, into team leader for the day.

Each of the aircraft is a Yak 52 powered by a Russian Ivchenko Vedeneyev M-14P nine cylinder, four-stroke, air-cooled, petrol-powered radial engine producing 360 hp (268kW), The standard aircraft is fitted with a Vedeneyev V530 two bladed propeller but G-YOTS flown by Jon Windover has the three bladed MT-9.

All the fully aerobatic aircraft operate on a Permit to Fly basis.

The August display flight was to entertain a private summer party at a small strip near Paddock Wood in Kent. North Weald was the meeting point for all three aircraft and pilots to meet up, pre-flight the aircraft and plan the tactics of the transit flight and display even though only one of the Yak's was based there.



The Yak has a voracious appetite for oil! ©NWAMA



The second Yak arrives ©NWAMA



Jon and Jean run through the briefing notes while they await the third Yak

Jon was pouring the last of three plastic oil bottles into the receptacle in front of the cockpit as the first of his team, Jean Munn in G-JUII, taxied in alongside him. Jean is an accomplished aero engineer who currently holds the post of Chief Engineer at the Shuttleworth Collection at Old Warden.

Acquiring the fully aerobatic aircraft in the first instance is financially attractive but these are robust military machines not designed to offer the cosy economics of the standard private aircraft designed from scratch – it is the thrill of their capabilities that gives them the edge and dissipates the negative sting of the running costs.



Team Vodka - one small part of the continuation of aviation at the old airfield ©NWAMA

To add to the oddness of the event briefing gathering arrangements it transpired that one of the pilots virtually flew over the venue to get to North Weald as it made its way from its home base. Etienne Verhellen may fly a British registered Yak [G-CBSS] but he is firmly based in his home country of Belgium and flew in from there as Jon and Alain were finalising initial flight planning over coffee outside in the sun at The Squadron. A full, face-to-face team briefing is always the best option if circumstances allow and Etienne made no exceptions on the day (perhaps a result of his previous life as a Belgian Air Force pilot).

The flight to Kent was uneventful but plans for a run and break on arrival were delayed due to the circuit being full of aircraft flying at half the speed (Tiger Club Turbulent Team, Tiger Moth Diamond 9 Team and various non-radio bi-planes!). The run and break eventually achieved, they landed on and undertook their display later in the day. Team Vodka hope to work up to their goal in early Spring 2014 when the weather and consistency in training will allow them to get their CAA endorsement. www.teamvodka.co.uk

THE TECHNICAL BIT

G-YOTS YAK-52 Serial No.:9010308 **Engines (Propellers):**1 x IVCHENKO VEDENEYEV M-14P (MT-PROPELLER MTV-9-K-C/ CL250-27) **MTOW:**1415kg **Total Hours:**659 at 31/12/2012 **Year Built:**1990 **Owned by:** G-YOTS GROUP, ORPINGTON

G-IUII YAK-52 Serial No.:9111604 **Engines (Propellers):**1 x IVCHENKO VEDENEYEV M-14P (VEDENEYEV V530 TA-D35) **MTOW:** 1415kg **Total Hours:** 360 at 31/12/2011 **Year Built:** 1991 **Owned by:** ALAIN LEOPOLD GRISAY, LONDON

G-CBSS YAK-52 Serial No.:833707 **Engines (Propellers):**1 x IVCHENKO VEDENEYEV M-14P (VEDENEYEV V530 TA-D35) **MTOW:**1415kg **Total Hours:**1416 at 31/12/2011 **Year Built:** 1983 **Owned by:** ETIENNE JEAN FERNAND VERHELLEN, BELGIUM

G-XYAK YAK-52 Serial No.:899413 **Engines (Propellers):** 1 x IVCHENKO VEDENEYEV M-14P (VEDENEYEV V530 TA-one) **MTOW:**1415kg **Total Hours:**1058 at 31/12/2012 **Year Built:** 1989 **Owned by:** RICHARD DAVIES, WOKINGHAM



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**Emergency Control Centre
Fire, Ambulance and water bowser**

PICTURE TAKEN CIRCA 1956 BY SAC C. REYNOLDS



**THE SAME BUILDING.
PICTURE TAKEN MAY 27 2013 (NWAMA)**

MAINTAINING STANDARDS

As the past and present trustees of NWAMA know all so well, it takes hard work to set up a museum to gain accreditation status. Over in Weston-super-Mare [Avon] the Volunteers and Staff of the **Helicopter Museum** has gained The Arts Council of England National Accreditation Status - an upgrade of a status it first gained in 1997. Since then the standards have become much more stringent and collections are also required to demonstrate progress. There are currently just under 1800 museums participating in the scheme, demonstrating their commitment to managing collections effectively for the enjoyment and benefit of users. In the coming months the unpaid volunteers at the North Weald museum have to also meet new revised standard of accreditation to retain its current status, a never ending process of checks that the museum world imposes on both professional and volunteer organisations to ensure standards do not slip.



The Helicopter Museum, which celebrates its 25th Anniversary next year, houses the World's largest collection of rotorcraft including two aircraft of the Queen's Royal Flight. Many of its rare exhibits enjoy top benchmark status on the National Aviation Heritage Register. www.helicoptermuseum.co.uk

Helicopter specific museums are pretty rare but even so there is to be a second museum in the UK from next year. Plans have been unveiled for a **North-East helicopter museum** combined with a ground-breaking venture in the rehabilitation of disabled former armed forces personnel.



The proposals, revealed at an event in Durham last month is the brainchild of retired Army Air Corps engineer Duncan Moyse. The museum has already acquired several helicopters and will be developing the collection into the future. Designs for submission of a full planning application are ready, and can be viewed on www.facebook.com/durhamhelicoptermuseum

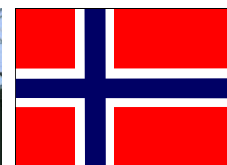
THE GREAT ESCAPERS

The ones that got away

Jens Muller 331 Squadron Spitfire FN-N (AR298)

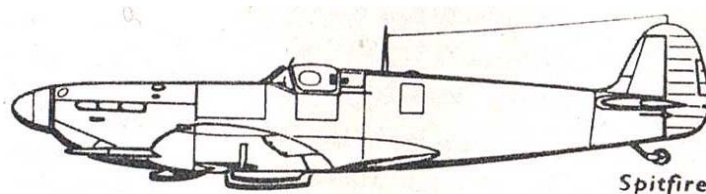
Müller was born in Shanghai, China, the son of Norwegian engineer Ejnar Jønsberg Müller (1872–1943) and British actress Daisy Constance Russell (1891–1978). Jens Müller had one brother, the Norwegian movie director Nils R. Müller. The brothers grew up in Aker, Norway. Müller had already received a pilot's license at age eighteen in 1935. Müller was studying in Zurich when World War II broke out. In May 1940 he arrived in England.

By 1942 he was an officer in 331 (Norwegian) Squadron at North Weald in England. On 19 June 1942, after completing a so-called "Roadsted" mission, his Spitfire Mark V (FN*N tail number AR298) was shot down by a German Focke-Wulf Fw-190 just off the Belgian coast after running out of ammunition. He escaped the plane by parachute and managed to paddle ashore unseen in his inflatable dinghy after 66 hours but was caught by an alert German sentry almost immediately.



Per Bergsland 332 Squadron AH-D (AB269)

Born in January 1918 Per Bergsland spent his youth in sporting activities. During the 1930s he competed in orienteering, representing the club IL Heming. In 1939 he was placed second at the individual Norwegian championship in orienteering held at Modum. When war broke out he joined the Norwegian forces in the UK and by early 1942 was a member of the RAF 332 Squadron stationed at North Weald airfield. Exactly



two months after Muller was taken prisoner Bergsland's Spitfire VB AB269 AH*D was shot down by a German FW-190 during the Dieppe Raid on 19 August 1942. In order to protect his family in Norway from German reprisals, he hid his Norwegian nationality. After arriving at the POW camp, he gave his name as "Peter Rockland" (*Per* = Petrus, meaning rock in Greek, and *Berg* meaning mountain or rock in Norwegian) to the Germans.



In what later became known as the "Great Escape," which Müller had contributed to by constructing an air pump for ventilation of the tunnel, the two Norwegians were among the 76 prisoners of war who managed to escape from the camp (now: in Żagań, Poland). They caught a train to Stettin in Germany (now: Szczecin, Poland), where they intended to meet one of Roger Bushell's contacts in a local brothel. However, while there, they made contact with a Swede who offered to aid their escape, telling them to wait down at a pier in the harbour. After some time they realized the ship had left. They spent half the night in a boxcar, slept the next at an inn, and on returning to the harbour the next evening, met two Swedish sailors who helped smuggle them past the harbour authorities.

The ship arrived in Gothenburg, where the two Norwegian pilots quickly sought out the British consulate. They were sent by train to Stockholm and were flown to Scotland from Bromma airport. From there they were sent by train to London and shortly afterwards to 'Little Norway' in Canada.

Out of the 76 POWs who escaped, only three managed to reach neutral countries and freedom. The third successful escapee was the Dutchman Bram van der Stok, who escaped to Spain with the help of the French resistance.

After the war, Müller worked for Det Norske Luftfartsselskap (DNL), one of the companies that merged into Scandinavian Airlines System. He retired in 1977.

Bergsland served as an instructor at flight school in Canada before he transferred to the RAF Ferry Command, where he was assigned to fly with a combat unit.

In 1946, Per Bergsland began as a pilot in Fred Olsen Air Transport. He later became Chief Pilot and Operational Manager. Per Bergsland became CEO of Fred Olsen Air Transport in 1968 and CEO of Widerøe from 1970 to 1981. He died in June 1992.

The remaining 73 escapees were captured. Adolf Hitler wanted to execute them all, but Hermann Göring persuaded him not to do this, and fifty were shot as an example by the Gestapo.

The remaining 23 were held in the custody of the Gestapo before being sent off to other camps. 17 were returned to Stalag Luft III, four were sent to Sachsenhausen, and two to Colditz Castle.

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