



THE HURRICANE

The Newsletter of the North Weald Airfield Museum Association

MAURICE MOUNSDON THE LAST OF THE FEW

On the eve of a year where the Battle of Britain will once again be at the forefront of our thoughts one of the last surviving pilots who fought in the Battle of Britain during World War Two has died aged 101.

Flight Lieutenant Maurice Mounsdon was one of only four remaining members of The Few - a group of 3,000 airmen who defended the skies above southern England from the Nazis in 1940. He died on Friday 6th December 2019 and was the last of The Few to have flown from RAF North Weald in defence of Britain.

The head of the RAF, Air Chief Marshal Mike Wigston, said Mr Mounsdon's bravery should never be forgotten.

The Battle of Britain led to the deaths of 544 RAF pilots and aircrew.

Their bravery and sacrifice in withstanding the greater numbers of German pilots of the Luftwaffe and a possible invasion was recognised by then Prime Minister Winston Churchill.

"Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few," he told MPs.

Churchill's "Few", as RAF crew, who included Polish, Canadian and New Zealand pilots among others, became known, have been celebrated ever since.

Mr Mounsdon was described by his nephew, Adrian Mounsdon, as a "great man" who would be missed by his family,

ACM Wigston said he was "deeply saddened" by Mr Mounsdon's death, saying the veteran had "fought for and won our freedom".

"His was a remarkable story, which will continue to inspire this and future generations of the Royal Air Force, his bravery and sacrifice should never be forgotten," he added.

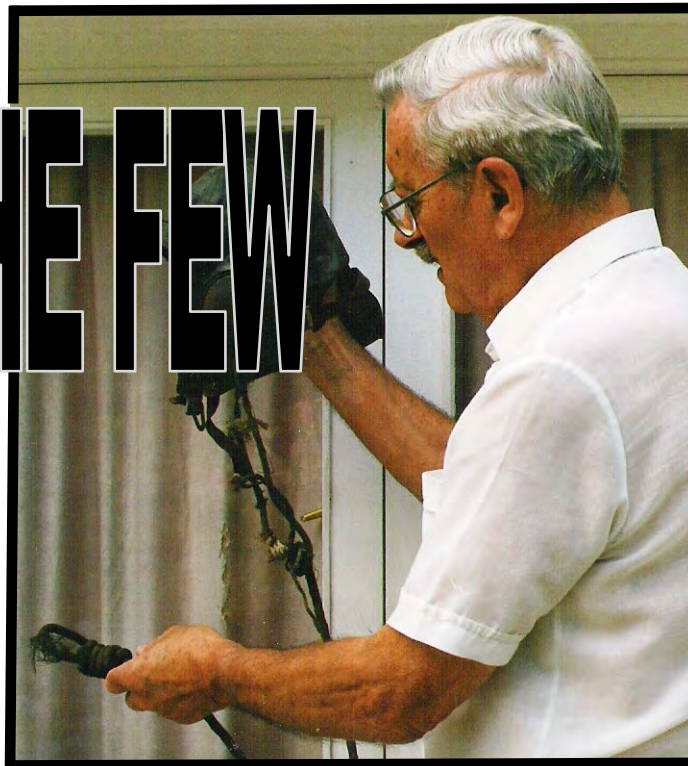
Mr Mounsdon was serving with 56 Squadron out of North Weald when he was sent out to intercept some bombers on 31 August 1940.

He managed to shoot at one of them, but then a German cannon shell hit the fuel tank of his Hawker Hurricane.

"I was on fire. There was only one thing to do and that was to get out as fast as possible," he told the BBC.

"I was badly burned, but I rolled the aircraft over and came down by parachute from 14,000ft."

The flying helmet he was wearing on that fateful mission was donated to North Weald Airfield Museum by Maurice and is one of its prized exhibits. [BBC]



Maurice Mounsdon with the helmet donated to North Weald



THE HURRICANE

The Newsletter of the North Weald Airfield Museum Association

Due to the unexpected death of Maurice Mounsdon this edition has two front pieces.

December 2019



Although a little quieter than some this years Museum Open Day in September attracted many first time visitors to the building to see the classic cars [and tractor!] and stalls outside.

As this issue is completed and closing for publication the museum is closing for winter and looking forward to a little tender care and attention. The four closure months will soon pass and we can look forward to a busy open season in 2020.

With 2020 looming we might yet find our heads spinning with a whole tranche of commemoration events mainly related to the Second World War [1939-45].

The year marks some important milestones including the 75th Anniversary of the End of WWII and other important commemoration dates, including: -

75th Anniversary of VE Day (May)

80th Anniversary of Dunkirk (May)

80th Anniversary of the Formation of the Home Guard (May)

80th Anniversary of the Battle of Britain (September)

Taking a wider viewpoint some historians say we could also be looking to mark the passing of the 75th Anniversary of the Dresden Bombing (February), the 75th Anniversary of the Potsdam Meeting (July) and the 75th Anniversary of VJ Day (September). But I suspect that each of those is going to be a step too far for a fighter airfield in deepest Essex.

Historically the important anniversary for North Weald in 2020 will be The Battle of Britain in September but other dates to bear in mind at the North Weald Airfield Museum are that it will reopen after the winter break for Easter and be open each Saturday and Sunday as well as Bank Holi-

days through until late November. As you will be opening your new diaries soon perhaps it is time to note that the museum will have its next Annual Open Day on Sunday September 6, 2020 but there are a number of other attractions planned for the year. That may also find their way into everyone's diary.

The long-term survival changes continue at the airfield with a range of new operations on the airfield each with 25-year leases [and that includes the museum].

Odd to realise that less than a decade ago we were embroiled in a bitter 'save the airfield' campaign. I do not think any of us had expected the successful outcome to look like this.

Now we have the National Police Air Service [NPAS], Essex and Herts Air Ambulance, several Warbird operators, aircraft maintenance operations, logistics companies and the ambulance suppliers to the emergency services to add to the long standing, if ailing, weekly markets.

The image right is taken from The Squadron looking south and shows the brand new NPAS hangar and offices facility. This viewpoint may not last long for there are plans to erect another hangar and office building for use by the Essex & Herts Air Ambulance. Work on that starts next year for completion late in the year or early 2021.



The Squadron club, licenced bar, café and restaurant facility as we knew it has gone. It is expected that the new organisation will be more exclusive and less easy to access, if rumours are to be believed they may take their product upmarket and make it more expensive and in keeping with their high priced flights in two seat Supermarine Spitfire's and other Warbirds. The operator is new to North Weald but they already have existing operations at Sywell, Northamptonshire and Headcorn, Kent. Both of those sites have grass runways and the attraction here in Essex is the all-weather runway. The downside of the developments at The Squadron is likely to be that rumoured exclusivity. Accessing may be very much harder but it may be the spring before we will know.



For the moment the refurbishment work in progress at the Squadron leaves the Wings Café as the primary eating facility – although there is still the double deck bus on the village/market/control tower side of the airfield. Wings is an operational part of Weald Aviation, a high quality engineering outfit that undertakes quality work for customers across the globe.

North Weald Airfield's



OPEN EVERY DAY - 930am to 5pm

Wings is publicly accessible every day and very popular with families and aircraft fans alike for its ability to allow visitors to watch the daily comings and goings on North Weald.



The Wakefield, West Yorkshire, based National Police Air Service moved their long standing operation from its so called London base at Lippitts Hill, Loughton in the middle of Epping Forest in to North Weald in early September 2019.

Lippitts Hill, the former military gun site, has a rich history stretching back to 1938 and was the base for London (Metropolitan Police) helicopters since the mid-1970s. It was an established air unit since November 1980, so over forty years in aviation. All it is now is a base for the police radio system and we can expect that sometime in the 2023-25 period it will be sold off for housing.

The modern North Weald has a very strong leaning towards heritage aviation, as seen in the operations of Peter Teichman, the Gnat Team, The Squadron and Weald Aviation. The latter are best known for some of the projects that have passed through their hands including the Hawker Sea Fury's for the Royal Navy Historical Flight and the spectacular Supermarine Seafire F.XVII SX366.

The Hawker Sea Fury is currently under cover at Weald Aviation having arrived at North Weald for a winter maintenance regime in late November.

Weald Aviation may be a major player in maintaining piston engine warbirds but they also support jets, including a MiG and a two seat Hawker Hunter and a fleet of Scout and Wasp helicopters. Most of the airworthy preserved examples in the UK are looked after by Weald and that is illustrated by the numbers that are overwintering in Hangar 4. Weald Aviation offer groups hangar tours of their workshops and storage facilities at less than £20 per person. These tours are subject to staff and airframe availability – the hangar is not always crammed full of airframes.



Westland Scout AH1 outside Weald Aviation

North Weald Bassett Parish Council is to receive £50,000 from the Government as part of the 'HGV Brexit checkpoint' being set up on part of North Weald Airfield regardless of whether the UK leaves the EU with or without a deal.

The cash windfall is destined for local projects but there currently no word on which part of the parish will be the recipient.

The former 'Showground' at the northern end of the airfield is being developed as a long-term heavy goods customs facility to take the pressure off the coastal seaports, each tens of miles away. Much of this is now in place with increased security fencing, temporary buildings and parking bays marked out in readiness for an as yet unproven need.



EPPING MARKET

Every Monday

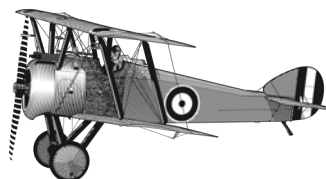
www.eppingmarket.co.uk

Please come along and see us!

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 web-site www.nwamuseum.co.uk



MUSEUM OPENING TIMES

The museum season is April until November and it is closed for the winter

When open entry is 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 £50 per group.

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CONTACT US

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!

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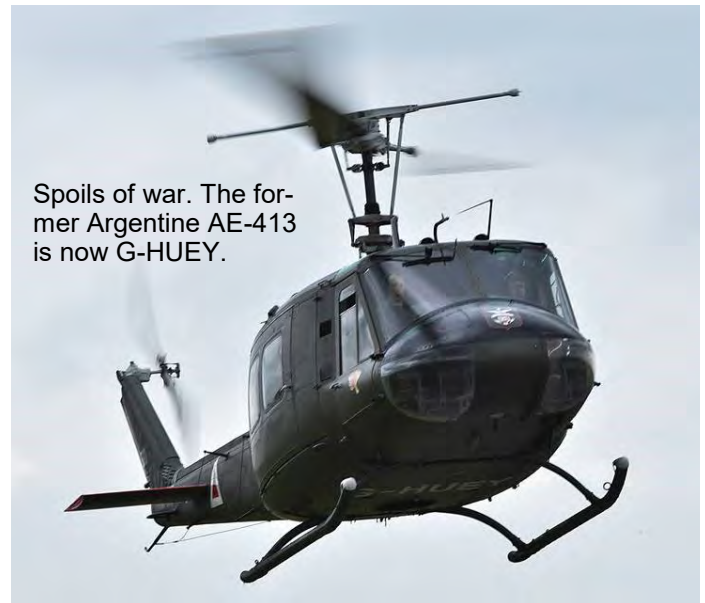
The Hurricane includes artwork produced for it by Ian J Commin of Insight Design of North Burnham, Slough SL1 6DS. In some cases it may not be possible to indicate the source of this material directly associated with the images used.

Just around the corner from the current air ambulance building and across from the newly erected police Hangar 10, is that of the Gnat display team. Tucked in with the sleek 1960s British designed Gnat airframes is a clunky helicopter from a different age and origins. The 1973 Bell UH-1 Huey was captured from the Argentinians during the 1982 Falklands War and has been in the UK ever since, operating under the marks G-HUEY.

In March 2019 the museum was contacted by Bill Fewtrell, an ex- navy helicopter pilot who flew Westland Sea King Commando's in that distant war. He said that his Squadron brought back several Argentine helicopters including the UH-1 which ultimately became G-HUEY. He had heard that it was at North Weald but did not know exactly where. He was trying to provide a link up between Lt Col Pancho Ramirez who, until the war went badly for the Argentines, flew G-HUEY as AE-413 in Port Stanley during the war. He was after reacquainting himself with his old aircraft again on a planned visit to the UK in the autumn of 2019.

To cut a long story short, the connection with, Mark, the current owner of G-HUEY was made and the visit to North Weald took place on October 10.

There is a historical police connection with the characters involved in that when he left the RN Bill Fewtrell became a commercial pilot and was part of the team that set up the Merseyside Police air support operation based at the then Speke Airport [now John Lennon] outside Liverpool in 1988. In addition he flew with the Metropolitan Police and with West Midlands.

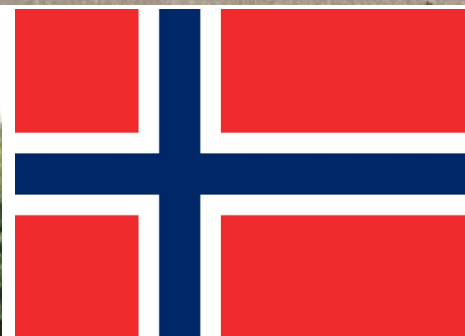


Spoils of war. The former Argentine AE-413 is now G-HUEY.

2019 marks the 75th Anniversary of the birth of the Royal Norwegian Air Force and in a small way the museum and memorial have marked that event. Senior RNoAF members have been to North Weald to lay wreaths and of course the Allies Room in the museum has a large Norwegian corner. The Norwegian displays are to be refurbished over the winter, adding to work that has already started. This work is already financed and has the support of the Royal Norwegian Air Force.

Below: April 1990 a visit by the RNoAF before the full Memorial wall was constructed.





In mid-July 2019 a party of the Royal Norwegian Air Force headed by Major General Tonje Skinnarland visited North Weald airfield and the Museum.

In 2016, she took over as chief of staff in the Air Force, the first woman and non-pilot to hold the post.

North Weald plays an important part in the post-war history of the Royal Norwegian Air Force and has hosted successive generations of new equipment flown by both 331 and 332 Squadrons since they returned to Norway in 1945.

These are their F-84 Thunderjets at North Weald in mid-March 1955.



Recently we have learned of a new air accident in West Essex that occurred to the east of Ongar in 1918. The pilot, and sole occupant of the aircraft, was an important character in the defence of Britain.

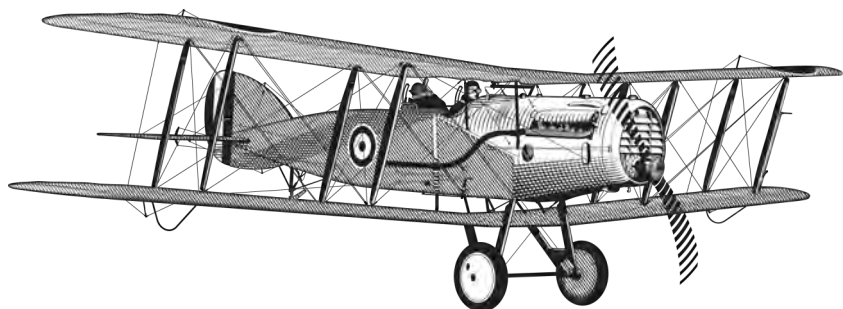


Colonel Bertram Hopkinson CMG FRS MIEE MICE (11 January 1874 – 26 August 1918) was a British patent lawyer and Professor of Mechanism and Applied Mechanics at Cambridge University. In this position he researched flames, explosions and metallurgy and became a pioneer designer of the internal combustion engine.

Hopkinson was born in Birmingham, in 1874. He read law at Trinity College Cambridge, he became a lawyer after his graduation. Following the death of his father, brother and two of his sisters in a mountaineering accident in 1898, Hopkinson switched to a career in engineering instead.

In 1903, Hopkinson was elected to the Cambridge chair in mechanism and applied mechanics, and in 1910 he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society and when war broke out he was commissioned into the Royal Engineers, and opened a research establishment at Orford Ness where he and his team researched weapons, sights, and ammunition. In 1915, Hopkinson discovered a similarity relation between the masses of explosive charges and their effects at a given distance. The same similarity relation was discovered independently in 1925 by Karl Julius Cranz in Germany.

He learnt to fly and died, aged 44, on 26 August 1918 when his Bristol F2B Fighter C4885 crashed near Paston, Ongar, Essex, en route from Martlesham Heath to London.



Despite Hopkinson being regularly in the news media of the time, there was very little coverage of his air accident until The Times of August 28 announced his military funeral to be held at Cambridge on the afternoon of August 30.

The Times announced that a train for would be mourners was laid on from Liverpool Street at 11.50 a.m. on the day to attend the funeral of Colonel Bertram Hopkinson, C.M.G., F.R.S., Professor of Mechanism, Cambridge University. It was also announced that the King [King George V] and Queen, through Lord Stamfordham, sent a letter of sympathy to the widow of Colonel Bertram Hopkinson, C.M.G., F.R.S., Professor of Mechanism and Applied Mechanics at Cambridge, stating that they are deeply grieved to hear of his death, and conveying their heartfelt sympathy for the family in the loss which the death of her distinguished husband had brought to her and the Royal Air Force.

The funeral was with military honours. The first part of the service in King's College Chapel, was conducted by the Rev. E. Milner-White. As the body was borne through the great court the "Dead March" was played by fifes and drums. After the service the choir sang the Nunc Dimittis at the west door, before the procession moved away to St Giles's Cemetery, Huntingdon Road. The congregation included his widow, mother and various other relatives but also attracted some of the great and good names of the time and 250 cadets.

He is buried near the chapel in the SS Giles and Peter Parish of the Ascension burial ground in Cambridge, with his wife Mariana, née Siemens; All Souls Lane, Huntingdon Road, Cambridge. They had seven daughters.

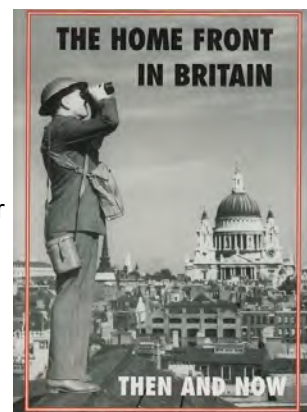
BOOK REVIEWS by Eric Probert

Home Front in Britain, Then and Now

This is the latest volume in the series published by After the Battle which has been compiled by the experienced Winston and Gail Ramsay. It comprises 200 A4 pages of high quality black & white and colour photographs on high quality paper with accompanying explanatory text.

Every aspect of the home front is covered. From the Home Guard, Air Raid Precautions, Land Girls, Munitions workers and a host of other organisations both official and voluntary, who played an important role in protecting civilians and their homes and contributing to the war effort. The authors offer a balanced view of events since Winston grew up in London and lived through the war as a child whereas Gail was born in Australia well after the cessation of hostilities. The contents are arranged in chapters by themes. So initially the prelude to and preparations for war are depicted before consideration is given to evacuation of children, air raid precautions and shelters, gas masks, the blackout, rationing and invasion leaflets. The damage caused by parachute mines is featured as are Churchill's heroines of the Auxiliary Fire, Territorial and Air Force Services and the Women's Land Army. Not to be forgotten are the ack-ack guns and rocket batteries and the inevitable blitz and war-time entertainment. The guide for the thousands of American "GI Joes" demands a chapter on its own and the book concludes with the Victory Parade and the Civilian Roll of Honour. Throughout the book the photographs and associated text are augmented by illustrations of contemporary posters, leaflets and newspaper reports. There is a comprehensive index and North weald Airfield is listed.

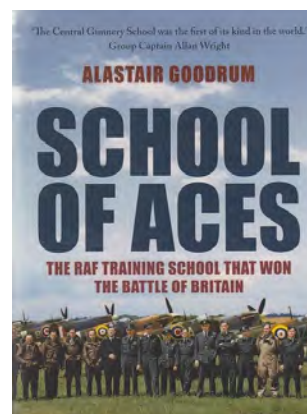
A real insight into life in wartime Britain during the years 1939 to 1945 with an opportunity to observe the changes that have taken place in the intervening 75 years with many scenes having photographs from the second world war and the present day. The illustrated stories vividly depict how everyone from young to old participated in this conflict. A valuable resource for family, social and military historians. Available at £29.95 from After the Battle, The Mews, Hobbs Cross House, Old Harlow, Essex, CM17 0NN Tel: 01279 41833, email: hq@afterthebattle.com, Web: www.afterthebattle.com



School of Aces – The RAF Training School that won the Battle of Britain

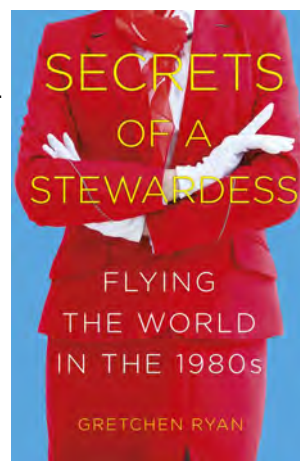
This is the story of Nos 6 and 56 Operational Training Units based at RAF Sutton Bridge, 7 miles North of Wisbech in Lincolnshire. Between 1926 and 1946 a scheme was introduced and developed which turned over 520 inexperienced pilots into expert marksmen with aircraft cannon and machine guns. It is told by Alastair Goodrum, author of several books and many articles and talks on military aviation topics who lives in the county in which RAF Sutton Bridge was located. The contents of the hardback book comprising of 288 pages and 35 photographs are arranged in roughly chronological order in nine chapters commencing in the 1920s with silver-winged biplanes, continuing into the 1930s. Next the training for the Battle of France and Battle of Britain with Hawker Hurricane's and Supermarine Spitfire's is described. Subsequently foreign fields and English skies are followed by the Hurricane Harvest, when there were over 30 aircraft of this type based at Sutton Bridge. The establishment of "Sailor" Malan's Pilot Gunnery Instructors Training Wing is discussed. There are Appendices listing Station and Unit commanders, postings of pilots between 6 March 1940 and 31 October 1940 which include pilots of 17,48, 56 and 151 squadrons based at North Weald. A list of pilot fatalities, plus a table of the numbers of pilot postings each month from April to October in 1940 and a list of American pilots arranged by the name of the ship they arrived on in Britain during 1940/41 with a note as to whether they flew with American Eagle squadrons. There is also a Bibliography, including National Archive documents consulted, useful web sites plus a helpful index divided into people, aircraft and places.

The book focuses on this previously overlooked aspect of the war effort which significantly contributed to the success of the conflict in the air over Europe. Witness drama, courage, not to mention pathos in this is an interesting read combined with a reference work. Published at £20 by Amberley Books, The Hill, Merrywalks, Stroud Gloucestershire GL5 4EP (Tel: 01453 847800, email: Web: <https://www.amberley-books.com>).



Secrets of a Stewardess Flying the World in the 1980s

Gretchen Ryan, the author of this 256-page illustrated paperback grew up in South Africa and after graduation joined South African Airways as an air stewardess for ten years. The author recounts amusing stories of her experiences which she says transformed her life in a period when flying was fun and sexy, and sexual harassment was not recognised and discrimination remained undiscovered. This when most passengers wore suits, and could visit the cockpit, cutlery was made of steel and even smoking was permitted in the cabin. So, fasten your seat belts, fly high and be and be treated to amusing incidents, tragedies both in the air and on the ground that occurred in travels from London to Hong Kong and New York to Mauritius. In 15 exhilarating chapters Gretchen recalls events including layovers or leg-overs and avoiding the wandering hands of lascivious pilots, happy landings. On the way Gretchen encounters a den of iniquity, suicide on the ski slopes before living it up in Lisbon. Finally, she experiences madness in Madrid and disaster in Heidelberg plus merriment in Mainz, Germany before visiting Perth and ending up in the "Big Bad Apple" of New York.



Follow the excitement and adventures of this hostess and, whilst being entertained with anecdotes and viewing the 26 photographs, you will gain a fascinating insight into the lives of cabin crew of a leading long-haul airline during the 1980s. Available at £9.99 and published by The History Press, 97 St George's Place, Cheltenham, GL50 3QB www.thehistorypress.co.uk.

Yesterday we were in America

This 285-page illustrated paperback, centenary edition, is written by Brendan Lynch. It is the story of Alcock and Brown becoming the first airmen to fly across the Atlantic non-stop one hundred years ago in 1919.

Charles Lindberg, the first to fly solo across the Atlantic, eight years later, was prompted to say "(they) showed me the way."

The author of several books, Brendan Lynch is a former racing cyclist and driver whose interest in this subject was kindled by Steve Fossett's re-enactment of this epic transatlantic event in 2005. This is an account of two Manchester men who braved the open cockpit of a modified four-engine Vickers Vimy bomber for seventeen hours to navigate through ice, snow and cloud without communication with the ground to make history.

Firstly, the author describes the apprenticeship of John Alcock and explains how the two met before describing the construction of their aircraft at St Johns, Newfoundland, Canada and the choice of this place as their starting off point. Considered too are the previous attempts to carry out the feat including the survival of Hawker and Crieve following a ditching. The final preparations are described in addition to the dramatic take off in a 40mph gale and the early loss of radio communication and the aircraft's exhaust which meant that the engine noise prevented the two men hearing each other. Survival from a stall is feature before the boggy crash landing at Cliften, Connemara, County Galway, Ireland coincidentally where the Marconi Company's large aerial array. The author concludes the story by describing the international acclaim afforded to the fliers, the homecoming and honours and the monuments and tribute flights as well as the untimely death of John Alcock aged only 27 in December 1919 when he crashed in fog near Rouen, France whilst piloting a Vickers Viking amphibious aircraft. There is a comprehensive bibliography, extensive index and 42 evocative black and white photographs covering all aspects of the feat.



A very readable, informative and engaging account of this memorable event which made history. It is available at £18.99 from The History Press, 97 St George's Place, Cheltenham GL50 3QB.

Waltham Abbey

MARKET

8am to 3pm

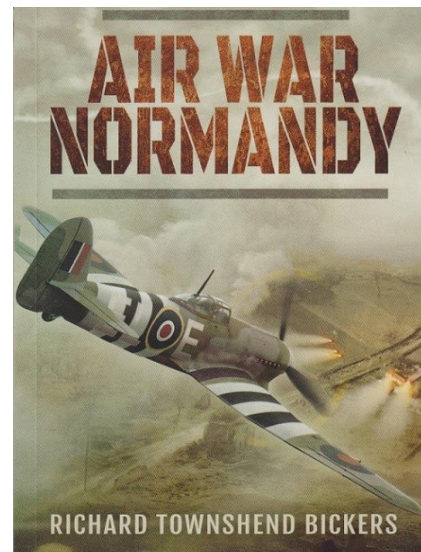
TUESDAY & SATURDAY



WALTHAM ABBEY

Air War Normandy

Originally published in 1994 this Pen & Sword imprint was released in 2015 as a 174-page paperback. It is the story of how allied air superiority over the Luftwaffe in the lead up to D-Day was crucial to the success of the landings. The author is Richard Townshend Bickers who served as an RAF Officer in World War 2 and after with Fighter and Coastal Commands and the Desert Air Force in North Africa. He also has written a biography of "Ginger" Lacy, the top-scoring Battle of Britain pilot, and many aviation related novels. The author sets out to describe how the lessons learnt on co-operation between air and land forces in North Africa and Italy were applied to Operation Overlord to win air superiority before, during and after the landings. Para troop drops and airlifting of supplies were essential but the use of over 1,000 Horsa and 80 Hamilcar gliders by the RAF and over 100 Waco gliders by the USAAF proved hazardous. Following an introduction, the author describes the preparations, deception employed including simulation of an invasion fleet by aircraft, the role of the French resistance organisation before concentrating on the invasion itself. He then recounts how several French and Belgian units escaped from Nazi-occupied Europe to fight on. The building and maintenance of airfields and servicing of aircraft under fire is also described as the allies advanced through France and the low countries. The experiences of the Luftwaffe are recorded including torpedo attacks on the invasion ships at a time when German fighter pilots were realising that defeat was a real possibility. The final chapters consider the Typhoon aircraft and associated rocket and bombing attack techniques as well as the doctrine of air superiority and the evolution of a system of close air support for ground forces.



A really interesting, informative and occasionally entertaining view of effective tactical support of the ground forces over Normandy in this the year of the 75th Anniversary. The book is particularly a tribute to the often-overlooked role of the gallant band of personnel, the unsung heroes, who constructed airfields and serviced aircraft to play a vital role in liberating Europe. Cost is £12.99 from Pen and Sword Books. Web: <https://www.pem-and-sword.co.uk>, but the book may be obtained at a significant discount (up to 30%) from online booksellers.

Not everyone can get to the museum so we place as much information about North Weald and its environs as we can on line. In addition we offer talks to outside groups and take displays and our shop to outside events on the airfield and to Copt Hall.



Our book reviewer, Eric Proberts, took images and text relating to the museum and its work to the Galleywood Heritage Centre in Chelmsford in mid-November.



After ten years out in the elements the 'plastic' Hawker Hurricane that normally graces the entrance to North Weald Airfield was taken down from its pole for maintenance.

In addition to checking the mountings for the iconic replica it is time for it to be repainted.

A change in colour scheme was considered but rejected.

The Hurricane will return next year still wearing the same US*F marks.

Several movie films have been made in and around North Weald. The most well-known is the 1969 Battle of Britain, some scenes of which were captured at North Weald, but there are other major films with significant footage taken locally.

You are unlikely to come across "The Password is Courage" on television these days, it is one of those black & white films and colour television does not exactly lap them up.

The story it tells is based on the life of Charles Joseph Coward (1905–1976), known as the "Count of Auschwitz", a British soldier captured during the Second World War who rescued Jews from Auschwitz and claimed he had smuggled himself into the camp and testifying about his experience at Nuremberg.

Coward joined the Army in 1937, was captured in May 1940 near Calais when serving as a Quartermaster Battery Sergeant Major. He managed to make two escape attempts before even reaching a prisoner of war camp, then made seven further escapes; on one memorable occasion managing to be awarded the Iron Cross while posing as a wounded soldier in a German Army field hospital.

In December 1943, he was transferred to the Auschwitz III labour camp five miles from the better-known extermination camp of Auschwitz II (Birkenau). As a German speaker Coward was appointed Red Cross liaison officer for the 1,200-1,400 British prisoners. In this trusted role he was allowed to move fairly freely throughout the camp and often to surrounding towns. He witnessed the arrival of trainloads of Jews to the extermination camp. Coward and other British prisoners smuggled food and other items to the Jewish inmates. He also exchanged coded messages with the British authorities via letters to the War Office in England, giving military information, notes on the conditions of POWs and the other prisoners in the camps, as well as information on the inmates in the extermination camp.

In 1954 John Castle wrote a book, *The Password is Courage*, describing Coward's wartime activities. It has been through ten editions and in 1962 was adapted into a film of the same title that was partially set in the abandoned military camp at Thornwood.

The star was Dirk Bogarde, one of the first Allied officers in April 1945 to reach the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp in Germany, an experience that had the most profound effect on him. As with most movies the script was not faithful to the true story but most of it did tell the real tale.

Thornwood Army Camp is now long gone. It used to be to the west side of the main road between Epping and Harlow.

As for the subject of the storyline, Coward, in 2003 he was commemorated with the mounting of a blue plaque at the home where he lived from 1945 until his death aged 69 years. The end of terrace chalet bungalow at 133, Chichester Road, Edmonton, London N9 still has the plaque. In addition the North Middlesex Hospital has a ward named "Charles Coward" in his honour.





THE MEMORIAL

In 2000 the Norwegian stone on the green outside the North Weald Airfield Museum was joined by a magnificent Portland stone wall that we now know as the Memorial.

It is now just 19 years since the wall was erected but it seems as if it had been here forever. Even the original Norwegian stone has only been there for a lifetime.

In the wake of their return to power in their own country after the Nazi regime was ejected the Norwegian Government sought permission to erect the stone in North Weald village as a symbol of thanks to villagers who had embraced the presence of the Royal Norwegian Air Force 331 and 332 squadrons in the war years. With all the formalities agreed, in June 1952 the stone was erected and a ceremony of opening involving, HRH the Crown Princess of Norway, Princess Astrid of Norway took place. It was an important edifice and much revered by the Norwegians and the villagers alike.

When the idea of adding the 'Memorial' element dedicated to those who lost their lives serving at the airfield from 1916 to closure came up there was a great deal of heart searching. The dark carved stone was effectively a private bond between Norway and the villagers. Many thought it inviolable and no-one treated the proposal lightly, not everyone expected the parties to agree to the proposal but they did.

Nominally the memorial was paid for by public subscription in practice the funding for the structure was sourced from a very narrow field with a public face of it being a Memorial Trust. The 'Trust' was responsible for the upkeep and future direction of the project for as long as the principals were fit and able. Another way of viewing that commitment level is 'as long as the principals saw fit' or were physically able.

In 2000, amid much celebration, the memorial was officially opened. The incorporation of the Debt of Honour in the Airfield Memorial at North Weald is a unique tribute to over 250 servicemen, servicewomen and civilians employed at the station, who lost their lives - in peace and war - during the airfield's 48-year operational existence, initially under the Royal Flying Corps and then the Royal Air Force. A paper document, compiled by research undertaken by After the Battle using a variety of official records beginning with the Station Operations Record Book and the registers of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, it continues to be added to as new deaths are found.

Altogether, over 50 squadrons saw service at North Weald and in the Debt of Honour no distinction has been made between those who lost their lives in the face of the enemy, and those that died by other means including accidents many miles away from the airfield.

For nineteen years it has served as the centre of all manner of remembrance. For many years After the Battle provided financial and practical support in ensuring the structure remained pristine, the printed Debt of Honour booklets recharged and even the flags changed regularly to reflect National Days.

Late in 2017 this all changed and the Trust was dissolved. The future of the Memorial and Debt of Honour now lies with the owners of the land it occupies – Epping Forest District Council.



NORTH WEALD IN YES-TERYEAR

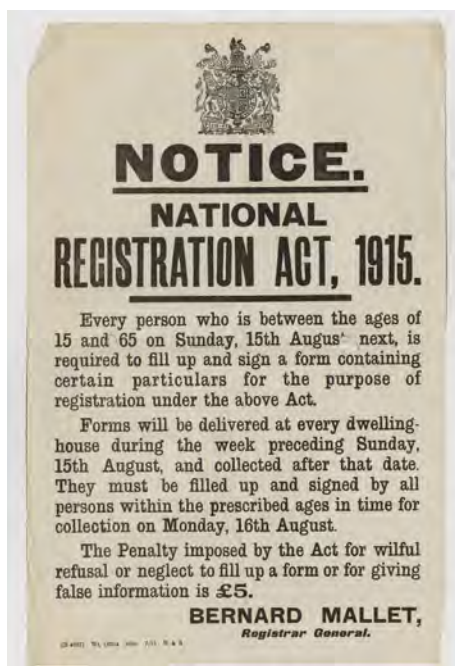
1937 Empire Air Day
Hawker Demon two seat fighter



Avro Anson at the 1937 Empire Air Day at North Weald.

PUNCH CARTOON

"No, sir, try it again. You've got to step out of the wreckage casually"





NORTH WEALD IN TODAY

2019 In addition to bringing two-seat Supermarine Spitfire aircraft to North Weald, the airfield now boasts a new Douglas C-47.

Images from airfield website.

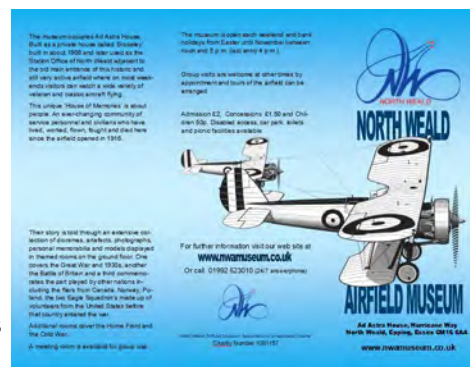
AGM

At the Annual General Meeting of the North Weald Airfield Museum Association held at the museum on Sunday December 1. The attendees received the annual reports on the Chairman and officers of the Trustees. Of the current members of the Trustees, only Eric Proberts was obliged to stand down through ill health but he continues to play an active part in the museum.

There were lively discussions on future funding including membership fees and entry charges to the museum. Each of the points of view was taken into consideration for taking forward to a future Trustees meeting. For the first time in a while membership of the museum increased slightly.

The numerous boxes of museum leaflets are now coming to an end and it is time to plan a new replacement document that still puts across our message in an effective manner. We also have to decide whether to print 5.000 or 10.000.

There will be some text and image changes from last time we had them printed. At that time the museum enjoyed sponsorship from the Grant Aid system of Epping Forest District Council but that has since ceased so the new leaflet will reflect that. There is time still to find a new sponsor for the cost of the new print run as less leaflets go out at this time of year.

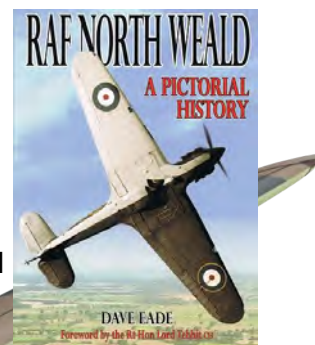


PROMOTION

With any leaflets, the old or the new, there is a need to get them to places where the public might want to pick them up. If you know of a suitable location you visit that they can be taken to next time you are there please ask for a batch you can take with you. We can send them by mail of course but that is costly and talking someone into delivering is a much more sensible alternative!

SELLING

Christmas is upon us so time enough to remind you that although the museum is closed for the dark season we can offer a mail order service on our shop stock accessible on-line. At this time of year the star buy continues to be the book "RAF North Weald — a pictorial history" by Dave Eade. The beautifully illustrated book is the most complete book on the subject still available and NWAMA is still the only source for it after the publishers went out of business a few years ago. At just £10 plus postage it will be the perfect stocking filler (all year long!)



Flt Lt Maurice Mounsdon in 1940

SPIRIT

There are other newsletters that serve to inform the people live, work and are just plain interested in North Weald, Thornwood and the airfield. The village has "Village Life" (<https://www.northwealdvillagelife.co.uk>) with stories concerning everyday life locally. To date the monthly magazine has produced over 150 issues which appear in hard copy around the village but can be bought as a download.

For the operational airfield look out for "The Spirit of North Weald" which recently reached issue 30 and features details and pictures from the latest aviation stories including images of the visit of Pancho Ramirez to G-HUEY. (see page 5 this issue).

TREVOR JAGO

The editor of The Spirit of North Weald is Trevor Jago. A former graphic artist he has produced some exciting images using a mix of camera and brush.

He retires from his current post as a Duty Officer with the Epping Forest District Council team in the Control Tower in December and moves to Cornwall.

At one time it was thought that the magazine was threatened by his change of life but he will continue to produce future issues for the foreseeable future using images and storylines sent to him by his former colleagues. We wish him well.



THAT BEAR



2018-19 a bear travels the air lanes.
Images from RAFA.

Regular readers may recall that the local branch of the Royal Air Forces Association were fund-raising with a special bear that they were hoping to get on as many different flights as possible.

The RAFA Branch [North Weald and Ongar] sent off Sergeant Hurri Cane, the bear to places across the globe to increase his value to collectors.

The fundraising task is now over and the bear now has a new owner thanks to a ticket draw undertaken at The Squadron Bar in October.

Since works started to upgrade The Squadron the members of RAFA are now in temporary accommodation for a while.



POOLEYS				Class/Type Expires		Medical Expires	
Date	Aircraft	Captain	Holder's Operating Capacity	Journey or Nature of Flight		Departs (GMT)	Arrives (GMT)
	Type	Reg.		From	To		
5/1/19	VAMPIRE G-VTH		PIC	BRUNTINGHORE	COVENTRY	15:20	15:35
9/1/19	B737-800 EL-EME		PIC	LUTON	MALTA	07:09	10:00
9/1/19	B737-800 EL-EME		"	MALTA	LUTON	10:45	14:15
12/1/19	B737-800 EL-FTH		PIC	LUTON	BOLAGNA	09:15	11:00
12/1/19	B737-800 EL-FTH		"	BOLAGNA	LUTON	12:06	14:14
18/1/19	B737-800 EL-EFH		"	LUTON	BOLAGNA	13:07	20:00
19/1/19	B737-800 EL-EFH		"	BOLAGNA	LUTON	18:55	21:17
19/1/19	B737-800 EL-FTH		PIC	LUTON	MALAGA	15:05	18:00
27/1/19	B737-800 EL-FTH		"	MALAGA	LUTON	15:25	21:15
27/1/19	B737-800 EL-FTH		"	LUTON	COPENHAGEN	09:00	10:45
27/1/19	B737-800 EL-FTH		"	COPENHAGEN	LUTON	11:15	13:10

POOLEYS									
Flying Times									
Total									
Min/Sec									
Brought Forward									
Day	Multi-Engine	Single-Engine	Multi-Engine	Single-Engine	Helicopter	Simulator	Other	Total	Remarks
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
1	2:55							1:15	FIN
2	3:30							1:15	FIN
3	1:53							1:15	FIN
4	2:17							1:15	FIN
5	2:55							1:15	FIN
6	2:42							1:15	FIN
7	2:55							1:15	FIN
8	2:40							1:15	FIN
9	1:45							1:15	FIN
10	1:55							1:15	FIN

Grand Total, excluding Passenger Flying: _____ hours _____ minutes/seconds

I certify that the entries in this log are true: _____ (Pilot's Signature)