



Editorial

The September lecture from W. David Woods provided an inspirational start to the season. I found David's book "How Apollo Flew to the Moon" difficult to put down. A copy has been obtained for the Branch Library and I thoroughly recommend it.

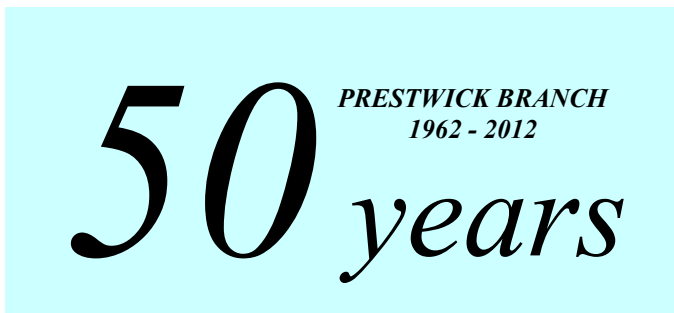
This month we welcome Ryan Green from Airbus UK at Filton to describe "Airbus A380 - Taking a 21st Century Flagship from Concept to Reality". This is a subject of significant local interest, with Spirit Aerosystems heavily involved in manufacturing sub-assemblies for the type. Welcome Ryan and welcome to visitors from Spirit - we hope this will not be your only visit to the Branch.

It has been my privilege to visit two Scottish centres of aeronautical training excellence during the last few weeks. On 6th September, Ian Adams and I met with Ayr College and on 28th September the Branch visited AST at Perth (see back page). Both have invested heavily in infrastructure and facilities and, I am certain, are inspirational places at which to learn aeronautical skills. I have a concern though. Around 1990, the established Scottish commercial aviation college (at Perth) was joined by a second (at Prestwick) and within a very few years there were none. I hope such destructive competition can be avoided.

Last month's editorial bemoaned the lack of a summer in 2012. Somebody must have been listening because Saturday, 22nd September proved to be one of the very few stunning days this year for the annual "Baird of Bute" day on the Isle of Bute. I was unable to attend myself, but I am sure someone in the membership is working on a report for inclusion in a future newsletter. (*That's a hint, by the way!* - Ed)

By the time you read this, our "Aviation & Family Fun Day" at Prestwick Airport (see below) will be less than three weeks away. The Committee have been working hard to ensure success, and the participants list continues to grow. Please help by volunteering to act as a steward, or by bringing plenty of guests along!

Dave



ROYAL AERONAUTICAL SOCIETY
Prestwick
Aviation & Family Fun Day
at Glasgow Prestwick Airport
on 27th October 2012 - 10am - 5pm
In celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the Prestwick Branch of the
Royal Aeronautical Society (1962 - 2012)
Come and see the Exhibits which include
Aviation Industries & Organisations
Airport Fire Tender
Airfield Operations Vehicle
Aircraft Engines
and lots, lots more....
Competitions, Face Painting,
Balloons & Flight Simulator
Something for all
Free Admission
CAR PARK £2.50
All attractions subject to change, alteration or cancellation.

The day will also feature the launch of our anniversary publication -

"A Celebration of a Total Aviation Place"



128pp, illustrated throughout, mostly in colour
Make sure of your copy!



Supermarine Spitfire PR MkIV, May 1943 © IWM ATP 12234C

An Operation Too Far (Continued from September)

Alex Anderson

I kept walking, heading towards Fevik. On the road to Fevik there were a lot of Germans going past in wagons and on motorbikes, but they took no notice of me. In Fevik I saw a military hospital and came across a number of Germans in blue suits who were obviously from there.

My co-ordination was getting worse and I was going to have to hole up somewhere, but where? I found the going pretty hard and by the afternoon I was pretty much all in. I was going out of Fevik up a hill when I crept into a hen house to rest. As it was getting near dusk, I reckoned I would have to find somewhere to lie down, even if it was the usual log store. I got back on the road and made my way up the hill. I picked an unfortunate time. I was no sooner on the road than a whole convoy of German vehicles came past. They were being directed down a side road by a German MP. Just as I approached the side road a small Norwegian boy came across the field and said something in Norwegian. Not knowing what he had said, I just snarled at him because the German MP was looking at us. The German just laughed and nodded. It struck me later that the boy might have been sent up by an adult to get me to go with him.

I kept going for a few miles and when it was getting dark I went down a side road towards a farm which had a barn with animals in it. Unfortunately it was locked and trying to break into it obviously caused too much noise because a dog started barking and the farmer came out with the dog and what I thought looked like a rifle but was probably a cudgel. He did not speak any English and was getting rather belligerent. He took me to a house a little further down the road and I assumed that he was taking me to someone who could speak English, but in retrospect it was obviously to phone for the police. At this stage I was too exhausted to put up any resistance. In the house was a boy of about 14 years old and his mother. The mother was scared when the boy said he would hide me and she protested vigorously. The farmer was an unknown quantity and that together with the mother's attitude and the fact that the boy was so young made me think of the danger I was putting them into and I said no. By this time the farmer had phoned the police and it was too late anyway. That boy was killed later in the war but his mother survived and I saw her in 1964.

The police arrived in a gas powered car and took me and the boy to the next town, Arendal, where they handed me over to the Germans. I was taken into a delightfully warm room and given a hot drink of some kind. The two German officers were very sympathetic and had just started to interrogate me when I apparently passed out. The next thing I knew was when I was wakened out of a deep sleep to be put on a train to Oslo. Apparently I had been taken to a convent hospital and had slept for a whole day and in spite of protests from the nuns who wanted to keep me longer I was taken away.

I arrived in Oslo and was put in a cell in the Gestapo HQ because all the cells at the Luftwaffe base were occupied by the crew of a Hampden which has been shot down earlier. The Gestapo had nothing to do with me and I had no contact with them. I had Luftwaffe guards who checked me and brought my meals. I only discovered it was the Gestapo HQ later when I told a Norwegian POW where I was in Oslo. I was taken to hospital most days to get my wounds dressed but much to my disgust was never offered a bath. The only washing facilities I had was a hand basin in an office full of cleaners who gasped when I took off my shirt which was rather a mess. The left sleeve was completely red. The cleaners were Norwegian and very sympathetic and were not supposed to talk to me, but some did.

I was interrogated by two Luftwaffe officers who soon got fed up with name, rank and number. They kept asking where the rest of my crew were in spite of the fact that the pilots who shot me down must have known it was a Spitfire. I said I hoped that they could tell me about the rest of my crew. One of the Luftwaffe officers claimed he had shot down some Spitfires during the earlier part of the war.

My cell was on the second floor and looked out onto a quadrangle. One day a lorry came in to deliver some goods, the cab of which was snow covered. The driver looked up at my window and saw me and drew a V in the snow. In the Gestapo HQ he was taking a big risk. To the right was a long staircase window. The caretaker's children, if they saw me from there, used to give me the V sign. One Saturday evening one of the guards brought his girlfriend up to see the prisoner through the peep hole in the door. Getting a bit fed up with this I had made a V sign out a bit of my paliasse and stuck it on the peephole. When she saw it she let out a screech and the guard rushed away to get the duty officer. By the time he came back I had removed the V and pleaded ignorance. He drew V's on a piece of paper but I said I didn't understand.

On another night during an air raid alarm I was taken down the to the air raid cellar. The duty officer and the caretaker were there. The caretaker had a bottle of something which he had been sharing with the officer. He then asked if he could give me some and I suppose the officer was in a rather benevolent mood and gave his permission. I went back to my cell a lot happier. When I was being taken to the hospital we just walked. I kept my eyes open for any chance to make a dash for it but they kept a close watch on me. After about ten days I was put aboard a bus to be taken to the docks.

On board the bus there were two other RAF types, the survivors of a Hampden that had crashed in the sea the day before I was sent out from Leuchars. We were not allowed to talk and were kept as far apart as possible. My guard was a Luftwaffe corporal who was obviously going home. When we arrived at the dock the corporal got his kit together which was quite considerable. He expected me to carry some of it and started arguing when I refused. A naval officer saw the argument and came up and asked if I was an officer. When I told him I was he gave the corporal quite a dressing down and obviously told him in no uncertain manner to get his kit on board himself.

The journey down to Denmark was done at night during which time we had at least two submarine alarms. My guard locked me in my cabin and told me I was lucky - I had 4 lifejackets. The guard went to action stations and left me to see if there was any way out of the cabin. No luck. On reaching Denmark we were put on a train still in separate compartments and left for Hamburg, which took almost a day. During this time I had nothing to drink or eat. Arriving at Hamburg I was put into a civilian prison. I was in a cell on the third floor. I had no idea where the pilot of the Hampden, a New Zealander called Jim, was. I kept yelling for water and eventually I was given very strong mint tea, so strong that it was almost impossible to drink. Having had nothing to drink for 23 hours I had to drink it. The night was disturbed by prisoners being beaten in the room across from my cell. Not pleasant.

The next day we were collected by our guards and taken to the station which was full of German army types. When they saw New Zealand on Jim's shoulder flash they began to get rather angry. The guards did their best to protect us but they were rather ineffectual. However the station staff came to their aid and managed to get the three of us into a room and locked the door. It could have been ugly. We were put on a train for Frankfurt in separate compartments as usual. The train was crowded but we each had a compartment to ourselves until the guards eventually allowed some railway staff in. I had a woman beside me who managed to convey to me that her husband was a POW in Canada and she hoped that we would be as well treated as he was. She tried to slip me a cigarette but I refused.

When we reached Frankfurt we went by tram to Dulag Luft, the aircrew interrogation centre. We had our photographs taken and at last I was allowed a shower and our clothes were taken away and washed. At this stage I unfortunately lost Harald's sheepskin jacket in spite of trying to claim it was my flying jacket. We were put in solitary confinement and eventually an interrogation officer came in with a sheet headed Red Cross asking questions which were ridiculous. Name, rank and number were all I filled in. Squadron number etc I just left blank. He came back every day and was given name, rank and number. He was getting very annoyed and threatened me with all sorts of things. "We can claim you are infectious and have to send you to a sanatorium" etc. He claimed he was not in the Luftwaffe and was a Red Cross official. At night time they would turn up the heat until you were so hot you threw off your blanket, then they would turn off the heat and you would freeze. He also did not like it when I refused to be called English, claiming I was Scottish. We had a daily battle of wills for over a fortnight during which time characters in the cells next to me came and went. When I heard them starting to answers questions I would shout at them to shut up, which did not make me very popular. I had been lucky, having got over the shock of being shot down in a more peaceful setting in Norway. These poor characters were still in shock.

After about three weeks and a daily visit from the interrogation officer he gave up and handed me over to a Luftwaffe major who was the complete opposite. He was visibly shaken by Stalingrad and kept on saying "You should be joining us to fight the Russians." He was very helpful and gave me 'A Christmas Carol' to read. I was very surprised that their questioning did not bring up the matter of PRU. It seemed obvious that they did not link me with PRU, although the pilots who shot me down must have reported shooting down a blue Spitfire. Even in Norway the Luftwaffe officers kept asking me what happened to the rest of my crew. Most characters were through interrogation in two to three days. After more than three weeks in solitary in Dulag Luft they eventually gave up and sent me into the transit camp, which was manned by RAF personnel.

To be continued

Visit to Air Service Training, Perth



Friday September 28th saw a party of seven Branch members visiting the Air Service Training (AST) facility at Perth (Scone) Airport. We were met on arrival by our hosts Peter Farrow (AST's Managing Director) and Mike Haufe. Peter provided us with an informative talk about the long and illustrious history of AST, before describing their current work. Although a commercial undertaking, they work in partnership with the University of the Highlands and Islands at Perth in the provision of training for engineers. They have also recently re-entered the pilot training business. After the talk Mike was our guide for a fascinating tour of the packed hangar. Our thanks to AST for hosting the visit and to Ray Draper for arranging it.

John Hopkins, Ian Adams, David Lacey, Stephen Kunz, Ray Draper, Kevin Beaumont and Tom Moffatt in front of Cessna 310, G-AYGB. 'GB is one of two airframes used to teach the "whole aircraft" concept and is not routinely taken apart and reassembled. It is the last of the once extensive AST flying training school fleet at Perth and is still capable of ground running.



Ian Adams teaches Tom Moffat all there is to know about the Jetstream!

Jetstream, G-NFLC is the other "whole aircraft" concept airframe. 'LC is extremely unusual in being an actual Handley-Page example, and was originally registered in 1970 as G-AXUI. It spent all of its active life with Cranfield University and flew into retirement at Perth in 2004 with only some 5000 hours on the clock.



General view across the AST hangar. In the right foreground is a BAe 146 undercarriage unit in a specially designed and manufactured demonstration rig. Behind the tool box to left is a Rolls-Royce Gnome engine, with an RB-211 behind that mounted on the green stand. Westland Whirlwind HAR9, XL875 can just be discerned to the left of the Jetstream's wing tip.

