



### ***Editorial***

I was unable to attend November's lecture when Alan Bond described the Skylon space-plane, but from all accounts it was very good. Joint hosting with the IMechE would certainly have helped attendance, but 148 is still a very respectable total for a Branch event. At Committee, the attendance was compared favourably with our previous 'best ever' attendance, Eric 'Winkle' Brown's McIntye lecture of 2011. The key in each case was an eye-catching subject of more general interest. It seems appropriate to paraphrase the 1989 film "Field of Dreams" - if we lay on appropriate events, "they will come".

As well as collaborating with the IMechE in the provision of our November lecture, the Branch is building a healthy relationship with the Scottish Branch of the Rolls-Royce Heritage Trust and is also pursuing collaborations with other local organisations. If you are able to contribute to this work, please speak to a Committee member.

My absence was due to a family visit to the south of England, and whilst there I attended the annual Branches Forum at 4 Hamilton Place. This event provides Branches with a rare face to face opportunity to interact with the Main Society, and also with representatives from other Branches. It is only a few hours, but I feel it is a very productive session. Amongst the topics discussed this year were:

- Professional Engineer Accreditation,
- Young Person's Committee,
- Updates to the Branches Handbook and
- RAeS's 150th Anniversary in 2016 - all subjects of relevance to this Branch.

Whilst on the subject of Young Persons (the new name for Young Members), the Branch Committee is doing its best to engage younger individuals whenever it can. It has a Young Members Secretary in Tom Moffat and is actively building on its relationship with Ayrshire College. It is a difficult but essential task, and the Committee would welcome assistance in profiling Branch activities towards a younger demographic. It is gratifying seeing an increasing number of younger people in our lecture audiences. If we could just persuade them to become involved in the running of the Branch. Now there's a challenge!

This month's newsletter has developed a bit of a Kirby Cadet theme for no other reason than I have little other material. The Kirby Cadet (pictured below) was once the mainstay of gliding in the air cadet organisation, but the story submitted shows that this was by no means its only application. I've also penned a piece on wartime "crash strips". No crossword this year, but I hope you enjoy the alternative cerebral challenge provided. Let me know if you would like the crossword back next year. Regular readers will know that when I have to start writing articles, there is a whinge to follow. No copy equals no newsletter! Perhaps the focus on the Kirby Cadet might trigger some stories. Please use the festive break to produce a contribution.

This month's lecture sees Gordon McConnell, Chief Engineer on the Airbus A350 and ex-employee of BAe Prestwick, describe his current 'baby'. Should be a good one.

Wishing you all a happy Christmas and a peaceful and prosperous 2014.

Dave



## ***It's a Kirby Cadet, Jim.....but not as we know it!***

### **A story from an anonymous Branch member - no wonder**

I wonder if you remember the old Air Cadet T31 glider, often known as the Kirby Cadet III? This one was converted to a powered glider - they sawed off the front cockpit and put an engine in its place. They would not let me near it until it was ready to fly and signed off. Then "off you go!" Another pilot had flown it once then disappeared. As I was the only private pilot and one of the syndicate, I was invited to just take her up for a flight.

I started with a really good pre-flight inspection during which I could not find the fuel tank vents. There were two tanks in the wings. I finally discovered that the vents were part of the fuel tank filler cap. Needless to say they were both rusted solid. We cleared them both out with a drill.

There was no windscreen so they gave me a pair of goggles. I got in and it then took 45 minutes to start using the old Armstrong Hucklow starting technique. When it came to the engine checks I discovered that not only was there a massive mag drop, but one mag, while fitted, was just not working! Well, they said, "that other pilot flew it on one mag". If he could do it, so could I, so I taxied off.

Not so much a taxi as a wallow. The next thing that happened was I taxied over a large cow pat which immediately blew back onto my face - I had thought you only needed the goggles when about to take off! Anyway, I managed to taxi down to the west end where I hoped the "other" mag would be working. No luck but, if that other pilot could do it, so could I.

I gave it full power and it was so slow to accelerate. It was slightly uphill as well. I was halfway up the runway before it got that certain buoyant feeling so I pressed on. Oh no! Now I was going too fast to stop. But if that other pilot could do it, so could I. How I got over the fence at the clubhouse is still a bit of a mystery but I did manage it. Accompanied by loud cheers from the syndicate, I'm told. I went around the trees rather than over them.

After half an hour gently circling the airfield I had struggled up to 1000 feet.

Once I had calmed down a bit I gently came in to land. On the T31 there is a thing like a toilet chain which is used to activate the spoilers and at about 20 feet up I unwisely decided to use them. I'd forgotten that for safety purposes on the T31, the nose dropped when you opened the spoilers, even just slightly. Sure enough, the nose dropped. I let the toilet chain go and ballooned followed by a drop in from about 6 feet. How the undercarriage stood it I'll never know but it did.

I wallowed back to the clubhouse, my face crimson with embarrassment and brown from caked on cow dung.

When I'd shut down I was surrounded by the usual crowd asking "how did it go then?", and "there's plenty of fuel left, why not take her up again?" My reply is best left unsaid but suffice it to say that I NEVER flew it again. Nor did that other pilot. I don't remember what happened to it."

#### **Editor's Note**

*There are currently six powered Kirby Cadet III (strictly Cadet III Motor Glider) on the UK civil register. Most are powered by Volkswagen engines. For illustrative purposes, here is an example with shares currently for sale via the Aircraft for Sale web-site (<http://www.afors.com/index.php?page=advview&adid=10674&imid=0>)*





# ***In Search of Carnaby***

**David Lacey**

From late 1942 until the end of the Second World War, over 1000 bomber aircraft (RAF and USAAF) were often launched against Nazi Germany from UK airfields in any 24 hour period. Of those that made it safely back to these shores, many were struggling to stay in the air, badly damaged and often with seriously injured crews. It made sound operational sense to do all that could be done to provide facilities to improve their chances of survival and to minimise the closure of operational bases due to barely controllable aircraft struggling to land.

To this end, emergency runways were constructed along the east coast of England. Three of them were built and their locations were Manston in Kent, Woodbridge in Suffolk and Carnaby in Yorkshire. These were no ordinary runways though. At 9000 feet, they were about twice the length of a standard 'bomber' runway and more remarkably, they were five times the width at 750 feet. Each had a 1500 feet grass overrun area at each end and were equipped with the fog dispersing FIDO system. Clearly they were impressive installations.

Their contribution to the war effort was not limited to providing a safe haven for damaged aircraft. The runway at Woodbridge is directly aligned with Berlin, and when the Germans detected its construction they surmised that it was most likely the base for some hitherto unknown secret weapon. The Allied deception services obviously did nothing to dispel this misunderstanding.

After the war, Woodbridge continued as a military airfield, latterly as a USAF base until closure in the 1990s. Its final residents were the A-10 Thunderbolt strike aircraft of the 81st Tactical Fighter Wing. Manston too continued as a military airfield and survives to this day as a civil airport. A drive along the perimeter fence there gives an indication of the vast expanse of the wartime strip. But what of Carnaby?

Being in the middle of the Yorkshire based, mainly Halifax equipped, 4 Group of Bomber Command, Carnaby had a busy war with over 1500 landings being recorded. After this, there are only snippets.

I was intrigued to find a minor Handley-Page connection to Carnaby. The HP88 "mini-Victor" made its initial flight from Carnaby on 21st June 1951. This ill-fated craft was intended to prove the crescent wing concept used in the Victor. Initially subcontracted by Handley-Page to GAL, this company was taken over by Blackburn at Brough who actually built it using Supermarine Attacker and subsequently Swift components. Perhaps unsurprisingly, given its tortured procurement, the aircraft made little contribution to the Victor, crashing at Stansted after only 14 hours and killing its pilot Duggie Broomfield.

Carnaby was used briefly during the Korean War as a Reserve Landing Ground for the Meteors of 203 Advanced Flying School from nearby Driffield, but they had gone by 1954 ending its use as an airfield. In 1958 it became the home of 150 Squadron, a Thor missile equipped unit. With the disbandment of the Thor force in 1963, Carnaby closed for the final time as a military establishment.

Earlier this year, during a visit to York, I travelled by train from there to Scarborough via Hull. Checking my 1890 Railway Atlas (doesn't every home have one?) there is a station shown at Carnaby on the line between Hull and Scarborough. I wondered if anything was visible of the old crash strip, although airfield relics apart from hangars and the like are not usually very obvious from ground level and, aside from a control tower, there was never much at Carnaby anyway. On nearing where I expected Carnaby to be, a few industrial buildings appeared a field or two away from the train. Then more and more and more.... it just went on and on. After a couple of miles of this we crossed a level crossing with "Carnaby" emblazoned on the adjacent signal box. Could it be that a crash strip shaped industrial estate was the legacy of the wartime use?

When I got home I checked it out on Google Maps...



***From "The Herald", 1st November 2013***

**From the Archives, 50 Years ago**

A simple ceremony attended by only a few dozen people marked at noon yesterday the demise of HMS Sanderling, the Royal Naval Air Station at Abbotsinch, and the inauguration of the new civil airport for Glasgow and the Clyde Valley. A bosun's pipe shrilled, eight bells rang out, and the White Ensign was hauled down from the mainmast of the station for the last time by a trio of Wrens.

# Christmas Prize Scottish Airfield Challenge

D A Lacey

No crossword this year - I thought I would try something different to keep the grey matter astir during the Festive season. The following clues define Scottish airfields past and present, large and small, well known and less so. Closing date is 31st January 2014. A prize to the correct solution drawn by the Editor. Answers and winner will be announced in February. Completed solutions to RAeS Prestwick Newsletter Editor, 68 Back o Hill, Crosslee, Renfrewshire, PA6 7LE. Good luck!

1.	Candle centre-piece (4)	_____
2.	As 1, but ironed we hear (9)	_____
3.	Cleric's measure (10)	_____
4.	Items found in a casino we hear (4)	_____
5.	Setter's initially angry (8)	_____
6.	Are C-97s safely harboured here? Hardly! (10)	_____
7.	Afraid of the north (5)	_____
8.	This one can be made from "licra"..... (5)	_____
9.	.....and this one from nuts! (4)	_____
10.	London airport	_____
11.	Surly crossword compiler (10)	_____
12.	What's it called? (11)	_____
13.	Sounds like Scots have a good time (8)	_____
14.	Uncultivated land beside cultivated land (10)	_____
15.	Tiny bird (we hear) departed after changing hands (7)	_____
16.	Flynn's place (5)	_____
17.	Home of T in the Park (6, 6)	_____
18.	Norse flag (anagram) (9)	_____
19.	Bonnets by the hundred (7)	_____
20.	Time before Greenock's James (5)	_____
21.	Mr Osmond (we hear), be upstanding! (11)	_____
22.	Total town with a Royal Charter (8)	_____
23.	Stop playing very loud (5)	_____
24.	Bank (9)	_____
25.	James T. and Isaac (10)	_____
26.	Scotland's longest runway (12)	_____
27.	Sunday after the full moon following the vernal equinox (6)	_____
28.	Defeat that is estuary (11)	_____
29.	Sounds like part of a foot (5)	_____
30.	Mislaying one's family (7)	_____