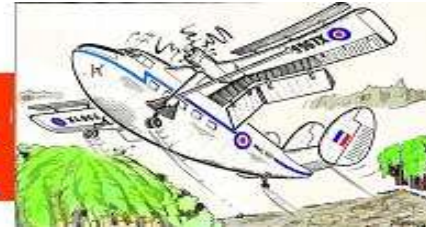


Scottish Aviation TWIN PIONEER



Newsletter Number Thirty One June 2009

In this Issue

- Australian Twin Pioneer to be restored
- Vic Dabin continues his story
- Plain or fluted – an intriguing mystery



Household chores are a necessity in Queensland

Rhondda Tannock

Meet Tony Hannam one of the owners of VH-AIS (Constructor's Number 540). Tony, a retired captain with one of the world's top airlines, is now turning his hand to restoring this classic aeroplane. Tony's motivation to save the Twin Pin from the crusher is because of his love of things Alvis. His father was an Alvis motor car lover, hence Tony's fascination. The Alvis still resides in Tony's garage. You may wonder at the implements carried by Tony in this shot—he is carrying out a domestic chore so necessary in Queensland—the clearing of poisonous spiders from the structure before starting work.

Tony, the readers of this Newsletter from around the world salute you!

Overleaf, you will see that The Editor's reunion with 'India Sierra' was special. A special thank you must go to Tony for his hospitality not forgetting Bob Morgan and David Kingshott. Tony has plans for 'India Sierra', it is difficult not to call her 'Papa Hotel', but more in the next Newsletter.

It is 54 years this month since Twin Pioneer first took to the air at Prestwick. Newsletter Number Twenty Nine June 2008 brought you Ian Adams' recollections of that day.

This Newsletter has no other purpose than to provide a bit of nostalgic fun for a few people who believe that the Twin Pioneer, in some way, had an involvement in their lives. It is published in a liberated way by Ron Tannock in New Zealand.

Contact him at r.tannock@xtra.co.nz

Spot the difference



Quentin Wilson



Simon Tannock

We have all frittered a bit of time away with those 'Spot the difference' teasers in the newspapers, magazines, in-flight magazines and the like. Here is one with a variation! 'Spot the similarities and the differences.' You don't have to wait for the next issue for the answer – here it is -

Similarities – The aeroplane is Scottish Aviation Twin Pioneer Constructor's Number 540 and the fellow sitting in the right hand seat is The Editor.

Differences – The left hand photograph shows the aeroplane in corporate livery at SBAC Farnborough in 1960 and the right hand photograph is taken some 16,522 kilometres (10,266 statute miles) away at an airfield near Brisbane in Queensland, Australia in its current sun, sea and sand livery as operated by the former 'twin Pion Air'. The left photograph was taken sometime between 5 to 8 September 1960 and the right photograph on 19 March 2009 giving a time difference of 48 years, 6 months and 11 days.

Another place, another time...



Ron Tannock

The SAL team at SBAC Farnborough 1960 – The Editor, unknown, Hugh McLaren and Hugh Clark



Simon Tannock

Queensland 2009 - David Kingshott, Tony Hannam, The Editor and Bob Morgan

Consolidation Period

Vic Dabin continues his fascinating story
of his time in the Far East

During our detachment the aircraft was looked after by our crew man who performed all the required inspections before and after flight. Refueling was never a problem at the airfields and larger strips as Johnny Shell was always the first to arrive at the aircraft as we shut down.

It was on the return leg over the sea to Singapore that I had the bad weather experience I related in one of my earlier pieces.

Back at Seletar, we all flew familiarisation sorties in TEP XL321 which had been fitted out with voice broadcast bells and transmitting kit inside the aircraft. We roamed around southern Malaysia broadcasting all manner of songs and dialogue. The intelligence and security people at Phoenix Park in Singapore were very interested in the capabilities of the equipment and we were told that in the event of civilian unrest we would be used to broadcast instructions for crowd control and the announcing of curfews.



Belaga Airstrip, Sarawak

Vic Dabin

After a relatively quiet month of continuation training for all the roles we performed, I was sent, with a navigator, to Borneo to bring Twin XL942 out of **Belaga** airstrip in Sarawak. The aircraft had developed a problem whilst on the strip which had now been rectified by a ground crew party flown in by Single Pioneer. We flew across to Kuching by Seletar Station Flight Pembroke and then into Belaga by Single. With the Twin on the strip there wasn't enough room for another Twin to land.

There was some urgency about retrieving the aircraft as Belaga strip was very close to the Rajang River and was susceptible to flash flooding. In fact, with the North East Monsoon in full spate the water level was such that the parking area off the strip was already flooded and the water had completely surrounded the strip leaving a centre corridor of laterite just wider than the track of a Twin's main wheels. We arrived from Kuching in the Single Pioneer and with very little delay took off from Belaga in hot pursuit of the Single which had left before us. We night stopped in Kuching and then crossed back to Seletar next day. As we left Kuching we were told that Belaga was now completely flooded. To this day, I do not know why the crew that took the aircraft into Belaga didn't stay to bring it out.

In mid 1962, the squadron deployed to Malacca Airfield for the big annual tri-services exercise called 'Trumpeter'. We lived under canvas and simulated a forward air supply base. The flying was not very thrilling, just ferrying boxes of sand, simulated ammunition, and some passengers between Malacca and Triang strip, about 60 miles north east of Malacca, three times a day for eight days. We had the odd variation though. I went to Temerloh on one occasion to pick up a casevac - the strip was right in the middle of the army camp in just about the centre of West Malaysia. Most army personnel just wandered across the strip without looking left or right and were rudely surprised when a Twin Pioneer bore down on them! It was whilst on this exercise that I was sent to Terendak to take the New Zealand High Commissioner from HQ Commonwealth Brigade to Singapore. The results of trying to start the Twin Pioneer's engines while they are hot was covered in a separate article I wrote some time ago.

Back at our home base of Seletar once again, rôle and continuation training continued. Although I had operated in a lot of the territory covered by FEAF, I had not been to North Malaysia. In rotation, crews visited the strips close to the Thai border working southwards to Taiping and Ipoh. When it was my turn my nav Jim and I planned, with another crew, to visit Kroh, Grik, Fort Kemar, Gua Musang, Tapong and Bahau night stopping at Ipoh. The idea was that each crew would perform a couple of landings and take offs at each strip for familiarisation. The weather behaved itself and we had a very pleasant couple of days.

Continued overleaf

The last strip we called at, Bahau, was owned by a planter and he invited us all in for afternoon tea.

I did two further sorties to Borneo. On the first, more time was spent in British North Borneo - now called Sabah - and on the way there we went into Bario, my first insertion, a strip just over 400 yds long at 3,500 ft in the central mountains. The strip was very slippery when wet so a landing was not attempted if there had been rain within the last eight hours or so. An HF link with the strip gave us the local weather conditions. However, our sortie was to casevac a local lady with respiratory problems to a hospital at the lower altitude of Lutong Miri, on the coast, so we took a chance. Happily, although the strip was a bit like a skating rink, all went well.

The second visit in August 1962 was to take part in Exercise 'Venus' It had two parts which ran concurrently. Firstly, we supported a party of Ghurkas. They were parachuted from a Beverley into a DZ near Simmangang and we re-supplied them by ADS during their trek out. We located them by spotting a balloon they flew above the jungle canopy at a prearranged map reference. Miraculously, we found them every time! Then we airlifted them from Simmangang to Sibu where they returned to the jungle, and we re-supplied them again. Talking to the Beverley captain later in Kuching, he related the probably apocryphal story that the Ghurkas seemed surprised when told that they would be dropped from 300 ft and that they would be provided with parachutes!

During an interval in these operations we flew Tom Harrison, an anthropologist and curator of the Kuching Museum, into Bario. He had parachuted into Japanese held Borneo during the war with the SOE and led the hill tribes to war. This time the weather was very unkind and it took three attempts to get him there.

The second part of our task was to fly Sir Nigel Poett, a Whitehall official with entourage, into various strips near administrative centres throughout Borneo where he met local government officials and tribal elders, apparently to convince them that transfer of power from UK to Malaysia was the best way forward.

This part of my story now ends as in October 1962 I went to Thailand, Laos and Cambodia in XP293, with Brian as my navigator, for a detachment of two and a half weeks flying the British Ambassador and his staff around those countries.



Short finals at Temerloh Vic Dabin

I covered that story in some detail in a previous article. Within a month of returning to Seletar everyone was over in Labuan and involved in the beginnings of Indonesian Confrontation.



XP293 C/n 571 Ces Crook

Continued overleaf

Previous contributions from Vic Dabin

Vic Dabin been a prolific contributor to this Newsletter since Number Thirteen in May 2005. Here is a list of Vic's contributions -

<u>Newsletter Number</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Title</u>
Eight	MAY05	<i>Big day out!</i>
Fourteen*	JUN05	<i>Konfrontasi</i>
Eighteen/ Nineteen/ Twenty	OCT05 NOV05 DEC05	<i>The big ferry - St Athan to Singapore</i>
Twenty five	MAY06	<i>On the road to Phôngsali!</i>
Thirty*	DEC08	<i>Consolidation</i>

* Illustrated with the author's paintings.

Epilogue

The whole of my tour, more or less, has been covered in the articles I have written for the Twin Pioneer Newsletter. This epilogue is not, of course, in chronological order, but it is at the end of what I have to write about.

No self aggrandisement was intended; I just enjoyed writing about those now far off days. I hope none of the articles contained anything approaching 'line shooting'. It certainly wasn't intended!

I am sure that there are many others that completed similar tours of duty who have probably more interesting tales to tell, but never got round to setting it down in writing.

Throughout, I have omitted the very pleasurable aspects of family life which were present living in Singapore. My wife and young family thrived on the climate, the life and the amenities available. To have included all the social and domestic aspects of RAF service life in that theatre would have required many thousands more words.

It was a supremely happy period of my life. I spent longer periods on other types of aircraft and other roles, but my long term memory is not stimulated to the degree occasioned by my tour with 209 Squadron and the Twin Pioneer.

Many of my squadron contemporaries have now passed on; to them, and the crew we lost at the beginning of Confrontation and to all those still around, I dedicate these writings.

I also dedicate them to the redoubtable Twin Pioneer. It was worthy of respect.



L. Garey

Left – The left fin, rudder and tab assembly on display at the RAF Sharjah, Al Mahatta Museum.

Right – Laurence Garey recording information from the stainless steel data and modification status plates.

Plain or fluted?

The great piece of artwork that graced the cover of Newsletter Number Thirty December 2008 was the result of the creativity and skill of Juanita Franzi. It involved no little research and I was pleased to assist in a small way. As reported, *Aeroplane* featured the Twin Pioneer in its January Database. One of the questions that Juanita asked was about the tabs on the outer rudders. During her research she had noticed that some were 'plain and some were ribbed'. That started off quite a bit of research. Ian Adams, formerly of the SAL Design Office, was approached and he provided sufficient information to meet Juanita's research requirements. Job done but not closed, as it turned out!

Some months later, in March this year, I visited the RAF Sharjah, Al Mahatta Museum web site and found a veritable gold mine of material for the aviation enthusiasts of a certain vintage. Navigate to -

<http://l.garey.googlepages.com/rafsharjah,almahattamuseum>

I was compelled to contact Laurence Garey, who produces the site, when one exhibit caught my attention - a photograph of the port fin of G-APLW. 'Lima Whisky' was Constructor's Number 532 and was operated by Borneo Airways and Malaysia-Singapore Airways as VR-OAG and 9M-ANO respectively. It crashed on landing at Limbang in Northern Sarawak, East Malaysia on 5 March, 1967 (see Newsletters Number Twenty Four April 2006 and Twenty Five May 2006). The question I asked Laurence was the obvious one – he replied that he had been trying for years to establish how a fin from an aeroplane that crashed in Sarawak in East Malaysia is now in a museum in Sharjah in the United Arab Emirates! The research so far has been inconclusive but the search is still on and the answer may lie in whether the tabs are plain or fluted.

Anorak is on to it so watch this space!



L. Garey



Trainspotter's
Corner
by
Anorak

National Cold War Exhibition

Those readers who live in or visit the UK are fortunate to be able to visit the National Cold War Exhibition at the Royal Air Force Museum at Cosford. Now there is an opportunity for those who have only seen photographs in magazines to see the construction of the building and the mounting of the exhibits in a video clip thanks to the Museum and YouTube. The clip is just over four minutes with the footage being presented in fast motion to give an amazing effect. You will see the Thor Guided Missile, Vulcan B.2, Lightning F.1, Dakota Mk.4, York Mk.1, Belfast C.1, Twin Pioneer CC.2 and the Jetstream T.1. The mounting of the Lightning is particularly impressive—in a vertical position climbing—bringing back poignant memories of SBAC Farnborough in the late 50s, early 60s when individually or severally, with reheat selected, RR Avons at full chat, the Lightning would rotate and accelerate up through the clouds leaving young engineers aghast at such power. *Rolls-Royce – the magic of a name.* However, all this nostalgia is aimed at giving you the opportunity to see the Twin Pioneer on video and the Jetstream, of course!

To see the YouTube video, navigate to -

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DTLaowRLX8Y>

Scots Magazine follow up

When Dr. D.N.M. Cuthbert kindly gave us permission to print his letter to Scots Magazine regarding the Casevac with the pregnant woman's husband lashed to the piano stool (Newsletter Number Twenty Nine 2008), he offered the following gem -

My other less fond memory is of flying out of Mukeiras in a Twin Pioneer. There the airstrip ended at a cliff with a drop of about three thousand feet. After take off we hit an air pocket and fell several hundred feet. Once my stomach had returned to place I found the rock strata fascinating as they passed. Finally we hit bottom and started to climb. At that point one of the crew came in to check all was well, he was white as a ghost. We then had a conversation which, I recall, went something like this -

Me 'That was fun but you look unwell.'

He 'You ignorant Pongo, do you know what an air pocket is?'

Me 'Sure an area of low pressure'.

He 'And of low oxygen, I suppose you didn't hear the engines cut out. We were bloody lucky they started again.'

Me 'But we could have glided for a bit.'

He 'This thing glides like a brick built shit house!'

I still enjoyed flying but less so in a Pioneer after that.



Constructor's Number 540 G-APPH (now VH-AIS) at SBAC Farnborough in 1960

Quentin Wilson