



Editorial

March is the month in which the Branch hosts its annual named event, the David Fowler McIntyre Memorial Dinner and Lecture. David (right) was the rock upon which much of the aviation activity around Prestwick was built, and it is a measure of his success that we celebrate his life more than 54 years after it tragically ended. A very warm welcome to all of our guests and visitors for the evening.



The Prestwick Branch was founded on 1st September 1962, so 2012 sees our 50th birthday, and some celebratory activities are being planned. The first of these to come to fruition is the publication of our Branch profile, prepared by John Hopkins, which will appear in either the March or April "Aerospace Professional" magazine. Keep an eye out for it. If you would like to assist in managing future anniversary related activities, please contact a member of the Committee.

Two forthcoming visits are publicised on page two of this newsletter. Having personally visited both locations during the last year, I heartily recommend them as worthwhile, informative and impressive. Places are limited, particularly for British Airways, so be quick!

This newsletter includes another personal offering from David Nicholas. Thanks for your continued support David. I've also included some feedback from David on my recent Dassault Mercure article. The inclusion of another home-spun piece will perhaps encourage more feedback.

As Len announced last month, we are delighted that Tom Moffat has agreed to join the Branch Committee. The Branch has long desired to make itself attractive to younger members so as to ensure its long-term future. I am certain that Tom's youth will help us make progress in this direction. Welcome Tom.

This month's lecture is very much in keeping with this theme, as Graham Roe, formerly Head of Strategic Projects with BAE Systems, Warton describes how he sees "Aerospace 2050". Welcome Graham.

So, 50 years on, the Prestwick Branch is celebrating its past, enjoying its present and preparing for its future. David McIntyre would surely have approved.

Dave

(Picture courtesy of Dougal McIntyre)

Spotting Days, circa 1960 (Part 1)

David Nicholas

A borrowed bike, propelled by willing legs, carried me to Jersey Airport practically every week once I started boarding. Sunday (after church) was a day free from the sport, cadets and study that tied up the remaining six days of the week. During the summer term particularly, I liked to get out to the airport by noon and spend 5 or 6 hours on the long open balcony that fronted the 1937 terminal building and just soak up the atmosphere watching the comings and goings on the apron and runway before me.

A hangar obstructed the view of the eastern half of the runway, but generally the location remained until recently one of the best anywhere for watching aircraft (unfortunately no longer as the building itself now awaits partial demolition as part of the terminal and control tower redevelopment. However, on a positive note, the local conservationists have achieved a small victory in securing protection for the original, two-storey building by largely removing the many extensions created by post war development. The restoration of the original parts of the building will enable future travellers to compare and contrast the art deco era arrivals terminal with the ultra modern departures building, the style of which is easily imagined just by looking at a modern supermarket or office block).

I did not, to begin with, record the aircraft that I simply saw. I didn't then, and don't now, quite share that instinct to collect registrations, but I do understand that to keep track of a particular airframe it is helpful to keep track of an aircraft's current registration. I did, however, start logging aircraft in which I flew and that has formed the basis of half a century of recollections on which this series is based. Nevertheless, the Ian Allan ABC Civil Aircraft Registrations book was an invaluable help to my spectating, and added interest to what I could see by naming the operator or owner, and the exact model of aircraft. Soon individual aircraft became familiar friends, appearing time after time, while others were as transient as mayflies.

I have previously recalled the virtual absence of security, and while this did not translate itself into free access to the apron area, it did allow me the virtual run of the terminal building. Just by asking politely, for example, I could visit the ATC tower, or the radar room beneath, and watch the comings and goings of aircraft from a different perspective. I learned about the boundaries of the Channel Islands Control Zone, which then, as now, adjoined that of London at latitude 50 degrees North, the usual entry and exit being via an imaginary point in the sea named ORTAC. Most ATC clearances out of the Jersey Zone to the North were via ORTAC.

The check-in area, with wide “bays”, each with a tall red Avery baggage weighing scale, extended along the side of the terminal opposite the public entrance door, and the tannoy announced both arrivals and departures – no computers or TV screens. Check-in would involve presenting your ticket at the appropriate desk, the weighing of baggage in mysterious “kilos” and being given a boarding card showing the flight number and date only. No seat allocation – it was all “free seating” in the sixties. Meanwhile, your bag would have a proper label attached with string and be placed on a roller-bed behind the desk from whence it would be transferred onto a flat-bed truck for conveyance to the waiting aircraft. After that, there was little to do except wait for the flight to be called to the gate adjacent to the departure lounge. No security search – all very relaxing.

One sleepy lunchtime, nothing was stirring on the almost empty apron. A Channel Airways Vickers Viking (G-APOO) stood in the middle distance, awaiting its passengers for the return flight to Southend.

BING-BONG! The tannoy crackled: “Channel Airways – would the stewardess of the aircraft Oscar Oscar contact the Channel Airways traffic office immediately?”

Moments later, hat tied firmly onto her head with the standard white scarf, said stewardess appeared on the apron below and, tight skirt and high heels notwithstanding, sprinted about 150 yards to the waiting aircraft. As she reached the door, her passengers started walking to the aircraft... To be continued.



Vickers Viking, G-APOO of Channel Airways seen at Manchester in 1964. (Not a particularly desirable registration, one would have thought! - Ed)

Courtesy of Dave Peel Collection, via the Air-Britain Photographic Images Collection

Branch Visits:

British Airways Engineering, Glasgow

When: Tuesday, 24th April
Assemble 16:00

Where: British Airways Engineering Hangar
Campsie Dr, Glasgow Airport
Paisley, PA3 2SD

Highlights: Boeing 737 and Airbus A320 series in-
depth maintenance

GE Caledonian, Prestwick

When: End of April 2012

Where: Prestwick International Airport
Prestwick, Ayrshire
KA9 2RX,

Highlights: Large turbo-fan engine maintenance
plus new GENx

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My Top 10 Scottish Aeroplanes

David Lacey



In the editorial of the February newsletter, I included a speculative paragraph on what constitutes a Scottish aeroplane. In order to stimulate debate I thought I would include a personal list of my particular favourites. It proved to be an interesting exercise. The most difficult aspect was what to leave out. Finding ten (or even fifty!) suitable candidates was easy. So, cue Alan Freeman and the music....

10. Avro Shackleton AEW2, WR960

Shackletons were Scottish based for almost all of their RAF service. I have chosen the AEW2 variant as it was the only one I ever saw fly - including one memorable day in 1986 while working at Wick when an example flew a session in the circuit. The AEW2 was an anachronism when it was conceived in the early 1970's and it went on to serve at Lossiemouth until the mid-1980's. WR960 can be found in Manchester's Museum of Science and Industry and is probably the most representative of the breed in the UK, other examples having reverted to their former MR2 guise.

9. de Havilland DH89 Dragon Rapide, G-ADAH "Pioneer"

The first of three pre-war civil aeroplanes that feature in my list, it too can be found in Manchester's Museum of Science and Industry. The Rapide is an iconic airliner in anyone's book, and this one is probably the most genuine. It served with Allied Airways (Gander-Dower) at Dyce whose colours it still wears. "Pioneer" was placed into storage until the mid-1960's following the post-war nationalisation of the carrier along with another of the breed and a Puss Moth, both of which are airworthy. Prior to the opening of the Manchester museum, it spent some time displayed at East Fortune.



8. BAe Jetstream 41, G-JAMC

Scottish Aviation Limited's involvement with the Jetstream began long before the 1971 demise of the types creator, Handley-Page, to whom they were major sub-contractors. The Jetstream went on to become a major success story as a product of the Prestwick plant. I have chosen a J41 variant because this was a Prestwick design through and through, and also because, courtesy of British Aerospace, I managed to get a ride in it in 1992. G-JAMC is displayed outside the Crowne-Plaza Hotel at the old Liverpool Airport.



7. Prestwick Pioneer, XL703

I have included a Prestwick Pioneer in my list, not only because it is the first design to come from the Prestwick site, but also because it is now so rare. XL703 can be found at the Royal Air Force Museum's Cosford outpost. You will need to travel to Malaysia to see another example.

6. Supermarine Attacker, WA473

Fast jets do not feature greatly in my list - this is as close as I get to one. This was a difficult decision, particularly for a self-confessed "Phantom-Phreak!" WA473 is the only surviving example of the type anywhere, and can be found at the Fleet Air Arm Museum at Yeovilton in Somerset. Its inclusion here recognises the significant naval aviation presence once found in Scotland, and in particular HMS Sanderling, now Glasgow Airport, where Attackers were maintained and this one was displayed up a pole at the main gate.

5. SAL Bulldog, G-ASAL

The third Prestwick product in my list. There are many Bulldogs around, including two in Scottish museums, but this one is a locally based flyer. I've managed to wangle a flight in it too! And the registration? It ticks all the right boxes.



4. **de Havilland DH112 Heron, G-ANXB**

Among the delights of being in Scotland are the air services to the islands, and any one of a number of types might have represented this aspect in my collection. I have chosen this one as it operated these services for 18 years from 1955 until 1973, as well as providing air ambulance duties with well known pilots such as Captain David Barclay at the helm. G-ANXB is lovingly looked after at the Newark Aviation Museum.



3. **de Havilland DH84 Dragon, G-ACIT "Aberdeen"**

This aircraft is quite possibly Scotland's first airliner. Owned initially by Captain E E "Ted" Fresson's Highland Airways, it operated the first, scheduled, internal airmail service between Inverness and Orkney on 7th May 1934. I first came across the aeroplane in the mid 1970's in the Historic Aircraft Museum at Southend-on-Sea wearing the colours of the Beagle Company, long before I appreciated its Scottish heritage. Today it has adopted its Highland Airways livery once more, but lives a rather reclusive life in the Science Museum's store at Wroughton in Wiltshire.

2. **SAL Twin Pioneer, G-APRS "Primrose"**

Just pipped for the top spot is that most iconic and distinctive Scottish product, the Twin Pioneer. There are a few in UK preservation but only this one, while not currently active, has any prospect of further flight. "Primrose" is well known for her Branch instigated homecoming in 2005.



1. **de Havilland DH60 Moth, G-AAWO "Ah-Wo"**

Top of my personal list must be this lovely old de Havilland Moth (see heading picture). Again, this one was owned by Captain Fresson, and he used it extensively when surveying the Scottish routes from April 1931. It is privately owned, still airworthy and based in the south of England.

So these are my personal choices - four de Havilland types (selected for their historical associations), four Prestwick products and a couple of military favourites. As I intimated at the start, the list is perhaps more noteworthy for its omissions. More importantly, what would appear in your list?

Feedback....

Dassault Mercure - January 2012

Dave,

An excellent Newsletter this month with interesting items on all pages.

It was good to read about the Mercure again (Air Britain "Aviation World" had an interesting article about this in their Summer 2008 issue which I expect you read). They certainly did make it to LHR (see <http://www.airteamimages.com/116858.html>) on occasions although as Air Inter were a domestic operator I think that perhaps they were occasionally sub-chartered by Air France.

I never flew on one, and they disappeared unlamented (certainly by the travelling public).

As for the question "did the Mercure influence the A320?" I have no doubt that in practice it did (partly perhaps as an example of what not to do, with the benefit of hindsight). It is feasible that when Dassault ceased production of the type that surplus staff from both design and production might have sought their fortunes "down the road" in Toulouse. For the time, it had an exemplary safety record (360,000hrs/440,000 flights without accident) and would certainly have been third generation technology (if you consider the Caravelle as "first/second" in its two iterations). Given the weather conditions in which Air Inter operated in winter we might have expected it to have had Autoland. Actually it didn't, but it was the first commercial aircraft in service with a Head Up Display (HUD). This was developed by Sextant Avionique for the Dassault Mercure in 1975, and then by Sundstrand for the MD80 series aircraft in the late 1970s, so it is probable that this was its most significant claim to fame.

Good stuff as usual.....

David Nicholas

Thank you for your kind words, David. The additional technical information about the old Mercure was particularly interesting.

Ed