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ICARUS NEWSLETTER Spring 2018
[Website http://www.icarusba.org.uk](http://www.icarusba.org.uk)

We send our condolences to the families of the following absent friends:

Phil Brentnall
David Martin

Remy Child
Tony Ogden
Stan Romaine

Bob Lasham
Chris Orlebar

People News/Nostalgia:

Oggie Swanson kindly sent me an illustrated account of his last flight under training to be a Fleet Air Arm fighter pilot. He writes: "I completed my training as a pilot in the Royal Navy on 31st October 1951.

This should have been the end of the story! However, returning to RNAS Culdrose in West Cornwall, downwind under low cloud from bombing practice in the north of the County, the engine of the Sea Fury stopped. As trained, I pulled up to gain height but went into cloud. Descending and turning back into wind, airspeed was now dangerously low with only very small fields ahead. I had to maintain safe airspeed by descending and aimed between two trees on the downwind bank of a field; there was no time to reflect on my previous twenty years of life before I crashed between the trees.

The next thing I remember is struggling out of a muddy ditch smelling strongly of petrol. The trees must have arrested the aircraft, after which the centre section of the wings and the cockpit with me in it, were catapulted a few yards to the ditch (good planning Oggie). The main fuel tank between the cockpit and the engine had given me a highly inflammable shower and the fact that the field was marshy, prevented any ignition. I remember being taken to a nearby farmhouse and lying on the floor near an unlit (more good-thinking) kitchen range and being stripped off. Truro Hospital found only cold burns from the petrol and a cut on my head.



Distance to ditch about 100 yds. Taken 47 years later.



Forced Landing at Wadebridge

Only the previous lunchtime I had received a passport to join my first squadron aboard HMS Glory in Sydney, for operations against North Korea. Despite what the Docs said, I was not going to miss that, so I was cleared for the flight to Australia – there were no rules stopping play for concussion in those days. Back at Culdrose I had the sad job of packing the belongings of my Australian course-mate Sub Lt Williams who, the day after my incident in similar weather, had turned starboard from the bombing range into cloud and crashed into the railway, on higher ground at Delabole.

Yes, I was very lucky and there was no truth in the rumour that I was practising wet dinghy-drill in a ditch! Forty-six years later I found the field again; there is only about 100 yards between the bank of trees and the ditch, but the ownership of the farm involved has changed. However, a chap who was a schoolboy at the time recalled an aircraft just missing his school, but the present fire service and local paper had no record of the event.

Glad you survived Oggie. You were fun to fly with on the Comet!

You will recall that **Dave Baker** has treated us in the last few editions of the newsletter to tales about his life after BA. This is the concluding chapter of his piece entitled Y55XBA:

Of all the companies I flew for after leaving BA, FlyGlobespan was my favourite. There was a pioneering spirit about the Company and everyone from office clerk to Chief Pilot wanted the airline to work – it was a ‘can do’ culture. Initially, we kicked off with a single 767 which had been acquired from Air New Zealand. With this, we flew scheduled holiday flights from Glasgow to Sandford, Florida (just North of Orlando), which was a regional airport. We did this on a regular basis from June until November 2006. Then, all change again.

Globespan had a very pro-active Business Manager who was always on the look out for new contracts, and quite rightly so. He managed to strike an ACMI (Aircraft/Crew/Maintenance/Insurance) deal with Air India whereby Globespan would provide two B767 aircraft to augment their Mumbai (Bombay) and Ahmadabad to London Heathrow services. Air India had under capacity on the route. Although this deal was very lucrative in the short term, it had serious consequences for Globespan later on.

All we needed now was another 767. Well, as luck would have it, Air New Zealand was looking to off-load some more 767s as they were being replaced by 777s. Enter Globespan; the timing couldn’t have been better. Now, it just so happened that my son had emigrated to New Zealand the year before and I saw an opportunity to get to see him. Using a bit of emotional leverage on the Chief Pilot (‘I haven’t seen my son since he emigrated etc.’); I was offered a place on the ferry flight from Auckland back to the UK. I had some leave to take, so I arranged to position out to NZ five days before I was needed (or so I thought!).

The plan was that I would meet up with the Training Manager just before our new, shiny aeroplane was ready for collection. That was the plan – however, after being with my boy and his fiancé for 2 weeks, I was beginning to outstay my welcome. The new aircraft had encountered a raft of technical issues (another story in itself) and the hand-over was seriously delayed. Eventually, the Training Manager (who I will call Jim), appeared in Auckland, so I went to join him there.

Eventually, the aircraft was ready to go and then it was a rush to get away. I was acting as copilot and wanted to plot our route, which was to be from Auckland, directly across the Pacific to Mexico and then over the Gulf of Mexico to Sanford (private flight, no ETOPs rules necessary), two crew and an engineer. When I checked our documents folder, the plotting chart was missing. There was no time to return to AN Briefing on the other side of the airport, so I bought a world map in the terminal building and used that to plot on – (I’ve still got it as a souvenir). Jim appeared with a crate of Red Bull cans (‘We’re gonna need these’ he said) and we boarded the aircraft. Fourteen hours and 45 minutes later, we landed at Sanford feeling, as you might imagine, somewhat jaded - the Red Bull had come in very handy!

With this aircraft on-line, we embarked on the Air India contract. We flew the aircraft in the ‘FlyGlobespan.com’ livery initially, but eventually the aircraft were painted up in the Air India livery and looked like a flying Taj Mahal (For those of you who were flying out of LHR early in 2007, you may have seen them operating out of Terminal 3). Again, I could tell so many stories about that period, but suffice it to say that although we had some fun, I was glad when it all came to an end. I was a Line Trainer by this time and I certainly had my work cut out for me.

Sadly, the Air India adventure dented Globespan's reputation at home. Their regular bread and butter route from Glasgow to Sanford had been sub-chartered to an Italian company who operated 767s. The predominantly Scottish passengers were not enamoured with cabin crew who could barely speak English and had no idea what a 'dram' or 'pint of Heavy' was.

However, things picked up and Globespan acquired a B757 which was used on the Florida route during the quieter times of the season. We normally had to tech stop at Bangor going Westbound but could normally make Sanford Glasgow direct. I did manage a Glasgow-Sanford direct once on the 75 – never to be repeated – don't ask!

The work pattern was enjoyable with a mixture of long and short haul and some very novel destinations:- In 2008, Globespan picked up the military air-bridge contract to fly military personnel from Brize Norton to the Falkland Islands via Ascension Island. That was very interesting. Ascension Island was the weirdest place that I have ever been to – a small island nine hundred miles from anywhere, with a tropical mountain on the Southern end and a volcanic moonscape to the North. The runway nestles in-between hills that literally come down to the runway; a miss-handled engine failure at V1?- ooh nasty!

The flight to the Falklands took eight hours, quite a bit of which, was offshore from Argentina – military flight – diversion? I don't think so! When approaching the Falklands, we were always intercepted by two Tornados that escorted us to the airfield at Mount Pleasant. Their departure from formation was spectacular – a vertical, full re-heat climb – wow! On the flight out we were again escorted by the Tornados, who peeled off at about 20,000'. Speaking later to some Tornado pilots we had on board, they explained that the 767 could out-climb them if they didn't use re-heat – I never knew that.

At about this time, Globespan picked up a Hajj contract (the mandatory religious trip to Mecca for Muslims) flying Hajjees from Borneo (Banjarmasin) to Jeddah. For this contract, we were based on the island of Batam, in the Strait of Singapore. With predominantly unfavourable winds, the flight Westbound was too long for the 767 to fly direct, so it routed via Batam. We still had to night stop in Banjarmasin and it was there that I incurred the worse food poisoning I have ever experienced (lukewarm rice was the culprit).

The next year, Globespan picked up another Hajj contract, this time based in Delhi and flying to the Holly City of Medina. The contract was for a Saudi company based in Jeddah. Now, Medina is the holiest of holy cities in Saudi Arabia and Infidels are not welcome there. We were allowed to stay at a hotel not far from the airport, which catered for Hajj crew.

However, we were not allowed to leave the hotel. Globespan had paid the hotel up-front for the duration of the contract – this was very fortunate – read on.....

On my fourth trip into Medina, we had just arrived at the hotel when I received a text from a pal of mine in the UK, which said that he had just heard that FlyGlobespan.com had gone into receivership. This was a bolt out of the blue to me because I thought the Company was on track to declare a profit that year. There were four Globespan crews per night staying in this hotel (28 people) during the course of the contract. I approached one of the other captains and discreetly told him about the text that I had received. We decided to call the Chief Pilot.

He came back confirming this catastrophic turn of events and told us to 'get the hell out of that place' as soon as possible. Later that evening, a representative of the Saudi charter company appeared at the hotel and told us that our aeroplane had been impounded. Having to tell the

crews this news was one of the most harrowing things I have had to endure. So now we were all stuck in Medina, not allowed to leave the hotel and there were no commercial flights into or out of the place – Hajj only.

That night in the Medina hotel, I got a call on my mobile phone at 3 o'clock from my pal who had sent me the text: - "sorry to hear about Globespan Dave" he said, "listen, I'm working for Jet2.com just now and I know just the fellow you need to speak to". He then gave me the contact details of the Jet2.com B757 Fleet Manager. By 03:45 Saudi time, I had sent my CV and covering letter to Jet2 and by the time I got back to the UK, I had an interview at Leeds set up. I cannot thank my friend enough for having the concern and foresight in doing that for me. Our escape from Medina is yet another story!

I arrived early for my interview at Low Fare Finder House, which was an assembly of Portacabins at Leeds Bradford Airport. There was nobody there, so I sat in the foyer area and waited. Eventually, a rather harassed looking gentlemen in a tweed jacket crashed through the swing doors carrying an armful of files. "Are you Dave Baker?" he said. I confirmed that indeed it was I. "Right" he said "we'll crack on. By the way, the HR person can't make it, eh, is that a problem for you?" he winked "well, no" I said, trying not to seem too obviously relieved! I got the job and started the Company Induction Course within a week and was on-line shortly after that. Being based at Manchester wasn't ideal, but I liked the 'feel' of the Company. This was borne out over time. The flying was straight-forward 'bucket and spade' destinations and, in fact, ideal for the more 'mature' pilot.

I did a year based in Manchester and then a Glasgow base was set up. I couldn't believe my good fortune. Now, at last, I was flying for a good company out of my local airport. I did a further two years based at Glasgow during which time I went back into Line Training which I thoroughly enjoyed. Then, the sands of time finally ran out and my ATPL turned into a pumpkin – another last flight, another sad farewell to those that I had so enjoyed flying with. I must say that my send off from Jet2.com was fantastic.

The Base Captain had (with the help of my wife) contacted some of my old BA pals who live nearby and quite a few Jet2 colleagues and friends. He invited them to meet me at Glasgow Airport to welcome me off my last flight from Tenerife South. When I came out from airside with my crew, we were confronted with a big banner declaring my retirement surrounded by many friends and colleagues and ... a Piper in full Scottish regalia! My crew and I were piped through the terminal with applauding passengers, to a waiting minibus that whisked us off to a pub in a village near to where I live. There, the party ensued. I was presented with retirement gifts and one of the cabin crew had made the most fantastic cake in the shape of a B757 in full Jet2 livery – just fantastic!

Well, that's it, ten years on 'the other side'. There were some bad, even traumatic experiences, but on the whole it was great fun and the people I met were fabulous with some real characters in their midst. One Globespan copilot turned up to get married in Las Vegas in a Fred Flintstone outfit without telling his bride! The future Mother-in-Law was not amused. He was one of many.

That's what I loved about flying – the characters, the camaraderie and the thrill of knowing that there was always more to learn, regardless of your experience – I miss that. But, a new chapter calls – onward and upward, or rather just onward!

Y55XBA?it wasn't the end of the world after all!

Addendum:-

I joined BEA, which became BA. Thereafter, I flew for Electra Airlines, Air Holland, Greece Airways (all under Air Scotland.com banner), Astraeus, FlyGlobespan.com and Jet2.com. However, when I was employed by BA, I also flew for Air Charter Scotland Ltd (air taxis) and Trinidad and Tobago Airlines, which were taken over by British West Indian Airlines during my secondment there. Technically, 11 operators – variety is the spice of life!

Flights to Remember(or forget!):

An accident occurred on 2 September 1958 when an Independent Air Travel Vickers Viking (registration G-AIJE), loaded with two Bristol Proteus turboprop engines as cargo and with three crew members aboard, attempted a flight from London Heathrow Airport to Tel Aviv via Nice, Brindisi and Athens. The aircraft took off from Heathrow at 05:54GMT but 15 minutes after take off the flight crew reported engine problems and requested a return to Blackbushe Airport. The crew was cleared by Air Traffic Control to descend to 3000 feet, but they could not maintain this altitude, and continued descending.



A Mayday call was made from the aircraft at 0632 GMT, shortly before it crashed into a row of houses on Kelvin Gardens, Southall. The aircraft burst into flames on impact killing all three crew and four people, a mother and three children, on the ground. Witnesses reported that they saw one of the crew waving outside of the aircraft just before the aircraft crashed. Surprisingly there had been a gross navigation error - the aircraft was flying towards Seaford, having already passed over Dunsfold when the engine failure occurred and yet, having obtained a clearance to return to Blackbushe rather than LHR, the aircraft was north east of Heathrow when the accident happened.

The subsequent Inquiry decided that the probable cause of the accident was that "the aircraft was allowed to lose height and flying speed with the result that the pilot was no longer able to exercise asymmetric control." While the reasons for the loss of power and the subsequent loss of height and speed were not known, the Public Inquiry investigating the accident found a number

of serious flaws in the running of Independent Air Travel and the maintenance of their aircraft. Maintenance had been carried out on one of the aircraft propellers at Heathrow on the night before the accident by personnel who were not qualified to carry out the work.

Also the aircraft was overloaded by 400 kgs and the pilot had not had adequate rest, having effectively been on duty for 31 hours 30 minutes compared with the 16 hours required by the regulations (This took advantage of a loophole in regulations that allowed crew to carry out flights during "rest" hours if no passengers or cargo was carried). Check flights, which should have tested the pilot's ability to handle the aircraft at high weights and with one engine out were "perfunctory" and did not adequately prove the pilot's ability to handle the aircraft with one engine failed.

The report stated that "it is quite clear that the policy of this company was to keep its aircraft in the air at all costs and without any real regard for the requirements of maintenance. It added "that it is not difficult for employers, who are not unduly concerned to observe the regulations, to drive their employees and to induce them to disregard the regulations designed to ensure their safety.

Prostate cancer, a warning! By **Ian King** (BA retired)

Ever since I retired I was fortunate to have a GP who agreed to me having an annual blood test, prevention is better than cure being his mantra. My annual "MOT" was always fine, thankfully, until last February when I had the results of my routine blood tests, and it showed a slightly elevated PSA level. It had risen to 3.8, from a series of previous readings of 2.0. This is still within the 'allowable' range for a 65 year old.

Just to be on the cautious side my GP felt it would be prudent to have another check in 3 months time, rather than wait for my annual check, he also said that before the test I should stay off my bike for a minimum of 7 days as this can affect the reading. So in May 2017 I had another blood test, only to find that my PSA was now 4.5, just outside the allowable range, but I still wasn't unduly concerned as I didn't have any symptoms. Rather than continuing to monitor this it was thought that a visit to a urologist was in order. Again, just to be safe, an MRI was considered to be a 'good idea'. That set in motion a series of checks and visits to medical professionals which resulted in me being diagnosed with aggressive prostate cancer!

Due to the aggressive nature of the cancer my options were reduced to two things (actually three if you take into account the third option of "doing nothing and ignoring it") The radiotherapy option didn't appeal to me as it would have been too long winded due to the aggressive nature of the disease. I therefore chose the surgery option. I had a radical prostatectomy at the beginning of August. My cancer was both aggressive and advanced and resulted in an operation which also saw the removal of seminal vessels and lymph nodes.

The post-op histology results were good. The cancer had been confined to the prostate and it appears that it was caught in time...just! My recovery has gone well, back in the gym after 4 weeks and on the bike again after 12.

The latest blood test shows a PSA of <0.1 (which is the lowest reading and what we hoped for) so now I'm in the usual monitoring program. I feel that I was lucky to have a diligent GP, and a wonderful consultant surgeon, and hope that by writing about my experience, it can possibly help others. As my consultant said, if women had a prostate there would be a national screening program. So I urge you all to be aware, this can be a silent killer. According to Prostate Cancer UK every 45 minutes a man dies from this, and it can be avoided! I found the Prostate Cancer UK website very informative and helpful. It helped because it offered support at what is a difficult time. The information from their website can also be alarming as it points out the fact that many GPs aren't very proactive in this area.

I had a relatively low PSA, no symptoms, but an aggressive cancer. I can only say that had my GP been less diligent, then mine would be a very different story!

Thanks Ian.

Important NOTAM: The committee, at the suggestion of **Jim Fomes**, have decided to arrange a lunch for the loyal members who support our six-monthly meetings. It is to be held at the RAF Club in Piccadilly, London on June 20th 2018 from midday onwards. With this in mind, the final details will be promulgated at the April 12th meeting at RAGC. Members intending to come to the lunch will be expected to confirm their attendance by pre-paying on the night at Ascot. That is to keep our costs down and we will try to keep the price at c£20 per person for the meal, a cash bar being available for the purchase of pre-lunch drinks and any wine required. The contacts at Ascot will be committee members **Jim Fomes** and **Keith Lakin** who have both spent time organizing the event. Please note that jackets and ties are the dress code at the RAF Club (no jeans!).

Josh Travis, who has given many years of valuable service on the Icarus committee, has decided to step down. He lives up north, having been Manchester-based whilst serving and has thus spent many happy hours on the M6 attending our meetings. We send our thanks and good wishes to Josh and hope that he will come to future meetings if he happens to be down south at the time.

We've had some recent joiners: **Cat Burton, Steve Cooper-Read, Moira Davenport, Al Dickson, Philip Farrands, Steve Lane, Peter Mooney, David Mountain, Adrian Pike.**

Welcome to you all!

The committee look forward to welcoming you all to the Spring Meeting at:

Royal Ascot Golf Club, SL5 7LJ, 01344 625175 on Thursday April 12th at 1930.

The Club is situated just off the A330 Winkfield Road, to the east of the Racecourse.

Should you not be able to attend this time, make a note in your diary that the next function will be an evening meeting on Thursday 11th October 2018.

Best Regards,

STEVE WAND on behalf of the Icarus committee.

Christopher Orlebar

It is with sadness that we report the passing of Christopher Orlebar author, Concorde pilot and good friend of FlightGlobal.

Christopher, who began flying with BOAC in 1969, was one of the Concorde "early adopters". He joined the British Airways fleet during the type's introductory year, 1976, as a pilot and instructor from another iconic BAC jet, the VC10. Ten years later he took up his command on the 737 fleet.

But Christopher is best remembered for his superb book, *The Concorde Story*, which was first published in 1986 and is now in its seventh edition. With his deep knowledge of Concorde, he was a leading authority and took part in many TV documentaries on the supersonic airliner, as well as being in demand on the lecture circuit.

Despite suffering a crippling illness in recent years, Christopher remained extremely active. We were delighted when he joined the FlightGlobal team during the 2012 Farnborough air show, where he provided an amusing and insightful commentary for our streamed coverage of the flying display.

He will be missed by a great many in the aviation community.



Wadworth