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ICARUS NEWSLETTER Spring 2020
Website <http://www.icarusba.org.uk>

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

Mike Austin	Derek Baker	Dave Bishop
John Chisholm	Doug Fawcett	John Holmes
Martyn Johnson	Jan Kuttelwascher	Nigel Ley
Art O'Leary	Dick Plackett	George Pollard
Clive Richardson	John Scullard	Jim Tate
		Graham Wright

People News:

David Hyde, a former BA Director, has been invited to join Icarus by **Clive Catherall** who is one of our committee members; David was presented with his tie at the Autumn meeting at Ascot and was asked to provide a biography for this newsletter. He supplied the following:

"After obtaining a Master's Degree in Aeronautical Engineering from Imperial College, I worked at The College of Aeronautics at Cranfield as a Flight Test Researcher. Later I developed the first postgraduate course in Air Transport Engineering, which led me to join BOAC in 1967 as Engineering Training Manager. After various jobs in Operations and Marketing - based in London, Glasgow and Madrid - I was appointed Director of Safety, Security and Environment for my last 13 years with British Airways and I retired in 2002.

I've held a PPL continuously for nearly 60 years having learned to fly on Austers at Cranfield and for 35 years, I ran an Auster syndicate, which included John Hutchinson and Hugh Dibley. I now fly the Club's Piper SuperCubs at White Waltham and have accumulated a modest 1250 hours, mainly on taildraggers."

In his own words "As an amateur flyer, I am proud to be invited to join the professionals at Icarus."

Now a nice (Nice!) story from **Jimmy Proctor**. Jim was one of the nicest and most helpful Captains on the Vanguard Fleet, when your compiler was a green young co-pilot, fresh out of Hamble. Jim is a sprightly 97 year old and our committee member **John Russell** keeps in touch.

Jim was Captain on a BEA Pioneer (DC-3) freighter on a flight from Heathrow to Nice one night. On the way down he noticed that the fuel consumption was horrendous such that, by the time they arrived over the Cote d'Azur, they had lost Rome as their alternate. Nice was totally clagged-in, and the only other available airfield was Pisa, which was a military field. So they duly headed east and tried to contact Pisa ATC. Their calls were ignored and not having much choice by this time they went ahead and landed. Once they had parked the trouble started. The Duty Officer had the two of them arrested and frogmarched up to the Tower at gunpoint! He informed them that Pisa was a Military Base and they must leave immediately. Jimmy said that there was nowhere to go. Even if they did depart they would end up coming back to Pisa. The crew were then taken to another room in the Tower and remained there under guard for several hours, interrupted by repeated demands that they leave.

By this time, they were both getting somewhat fed up being treated as prisoners. To break the impasse Jim said he would leave if they could get a weather forecast that was workable. They would also need some fuel.

After another hour the Senior Meteorological Officer, obviously roused from his bed, arrived in full dress uniform with medals and tassels. He produced an A5-sized piece of paper, which showed the weather situation for the whole of Europe. Having pored over this for some minutes, he pronounced that there would be a clearance at Nice between 0800 and 0815. Despite their disbelief of this remarkable interpretation of an out of date 'flimsy', Jim and his co-pilot thought they just had to get away. Fuel arrived and was loaded (but not paid for!), engines started and they were escorted out to the end of the runway to make sure they actually departed! They got the impression that the Duty Officer would do anything to avoid the paperwork and retribution that might descend on his head if the CO arrived on the base and found a civil aircraft in front of the Tower!

En route the weather reports were still awful, with cloud 'on the deck' at Nice. The weather further to the west was just as bad. They proceeded to the hold at Antibes, but were just about to set off back to "clink" in Pisa when Nice Tower called them up and said there had been a sudden dramatic improvement in the weather, and they could make an approach. The time was 0805! They landed safely and as they taxied to the parking area, the fog rolled back in and they were marooned there for another 24 hours!

Jim is still in awe of the incredible forecasting ability of this Italian Met. Man!!

Jim's Pisa story brought back memories for me (S.W.). I was flying in command on a Nairobi to Rome sector with a British Airtours B707, which was temporarily painted in Air Mauritius colours, but was a sub-charter for Kenya Airways, with a Kenya Airways flight number. It all went OK until, on descent into FCO, we heard ATC tell a preceding aircraft that the visibility had dropped to 500 metres. Below our minima.

We were not over-blessed with remaining fuel by then and had to make an immediate (and direct!) diversion to Pisa. I remember the co-pilot feeling the hairs rising on the back of his neck and saying that he wished he'd paid more attention to the SEP lectures! We landed at Pisa with just about reserve fuel and were very relieved to taxi in.

A very highly decorated Military Man met me at the bottom of the steps and took me under escort to his domain, where I was treated seriously until I explained that we were really "Airtours". His demeanour immediately changed (Airtours frequently operated to Pisa with inclusive tour pax) and I was then treated like a long-lost-friend and given every assistance in getting the aircraft refuelled and on our way back to FCO which, by then, was CAVOK.

All you need at the end of a long, tiring night!

From **Captain Viv Gunton**. This article describes part of Viv's "round the world" Concorde cruise in 1995. It was the first time Concorde landed at Beijing, which had taken many years to negotiate.

The crew for the first half was the late Capt. Dave Ross in command with Mark Watson in the right hand seat, Ian Smith as the S/E/O and myself as PR.

Plan A was to operate Sydney - Guam - Beijing but Dave did not like the Guam weather so we re-planned for Sydney - Denpasar - Hong Kong - Beijing. The arrival into Beijing on 9th October was without problems, until we came to disembark. Swarms of young Chinese soldiers with guns appeared, passengers were ordered to remain seated, passports were collected and then passengers were called forward to disembark individually when their passport was presented. Our well-heeled American passengers were not amused!

We then changed crew. I took command, John Graham was my co-pilot Dave Hoyle was the S/E/O and Capt. Roger Mills was PR. The next task on 11th October was to fly what we called a "round the bay": a short subsonic flight for a group of senior gentry: we had the Minister of Aviation, the Minister of Defence and the British Ambassador among many others, plus a few staff passengers. Briefing from London had been "fly the SID to CD, continue SW to NONIT, turn south to ISGOD then pick-up the inbound airway to VYK followed by flying the STAR. Easy peasy! We arrived at operations to be told "all airways closed: no radar".

(At this point I should explain that we were in a building that was about 100 metres long and we were barely allowed to cross the threshold. The big chief was at the far end and every sentence of conversation involved our interpreter walking to the big chief and back again). "So where can we go for this flight?" "There is a military training area here. Looks good. Can we have the coordinates for our INS?" "No, it is a secret military area". "So how do we get there?" "With radar". "But the radar is not available!" Before we got a response to this I noticed a fuel dumping area adjacent to the secret military area and based on a beacon (YV). It was then agreed that we would use this area for our flight.

As we filed out of the building I noticed Roger looking at a stock of handouts that were on open display. He grabbed one and hid it in his pocket and we thus found that we had the coordinates for the secret military area - so we opted to use it. The next problem was far eastern protocol - who could be last guest to board the aircraft and thus establish their importance! This alone made us half an hour late and was after we had off-loaded a tearful young lady from the local office. She had won the draw to come but, in spite of all the young men with guns, all seats were taken.

We decided to just get on with the flight, which involved two circuits of the military area and was otherwise uneventful. However, after landing there was a further problem. The follow-me van scorched off down the taxiway until it was a dot in the distance. We trundled up to him, flashing our lights as we got closer and he disappeared under the nose! After my sharp brake

application he again shot off into the middle distance. We tried to get a message through by ATC but the Tower's command of English clearly wasn't up to it. A further piece of excitement was that the nose wheel steering kept failing.

Then came the day of departure to Hong Kong, 12th October. They use the old terminal building for VIP departures. Pride of place in pole position on the apron was already taken by an American registered B727 and we had been relegated to a corner area. This did not concern our passengers, as by now, they just wanted to get out of China.

Part way through our checks a man appeared and explained that the 727 would shortly depart and we would be towed to pole position. We explained that this would not be possible as we already had passengers aboard and that we didn't have an APU and that the INS takes half an hour to stabilise. The man was concerned that we would blow down the adjacent fence when we left the apron. Dave considered that we were adequately clear of the fence and anyway we were on a downslope and could move using idle power. Shortly before starting a military man appeared on the flight deck in full dress uniform, dripping with gold braid and aiguillettes. I didn't notice a cutlass and spurs but I'm sure that he owned them. He was the Station Commander and I guessed he was a Major General.

His English was much better than my Chinese and he again explained that it was necessary for us to be towed forward. I repeated the reasons and emphatically said NO! We then had to wait to see what would happen – had we committed a major diplomatic incident and would we get start clearance? Subsequently clearance to start was given as normal. My guess is that we were saved by Oriental “face”. Most Chinese pilots have the rank of Corporal. The Major General must have gone straight to his office and remained locked in it until after we had departed. He couldn't let it be known that he had taken “NO” from a pilot and not had the man shot!

One other problem then arose – they had removed a beacon and replaced it with another in a different position. We could not receive either the old or the new. I queried it with the Tower. Then a radio call came – “Speedbird, Dragonair, company frequency.” The Dragonair pilot then advised that this was a normal shambles and advised us to fly to the old beacon's position, as it was not far away from the new site, “And anyway they won't notice!”

Did you see this by **Captain “Sully” Sullenberger**? His letter to the Editor of the New York Times Magazine, published in print on October 13 2019, was as follows:-

In “What Really Brought Down the Boeing 737 MAX?” William Langewiesche draws the conclusion that the pilots are primarily to blame for the fatal crashes of Lion Air 610 and Ethiopian 302. In resurrecting this age-old aviation canard, Langewiesche minimizes the fatal design flaws and certification failures that precipitated those tragedies, and still pose a threat to the flying public.

I have long stated, as he does note, that pilots must be capable of absolute mastery of the aircraft and the situation at all times, a concept pilots call airmanship. Inadequate pilot training and insufficient pilot experience are problems worldwide, but they do not excuse the fatally flawed design of the Manoeuvring Characteristics Augmentation System (MCAS) that was a death trap.

As one of the few pilots who have lived to tell about being in the left seat of an airliner when things went horribly wrong, with seconds to react, I know a thing or two about overcoming an unimagined crisis. I am also one of the few who have flown a Boeing 737 MAX Level D full motion simulator, replicating both accident flights multiple times. I know first-hand the

challenges the pilots on the doomed accident flights faced, and how wrong it is to blame them for not being able to compensate for such a pernicious and deadly design. These emergencies did not present as a classic runaway stabilizer problem, but initially as ambiguous unreliable airspeed and altitude situations, masking MCAS. The MCAS design should never have been approved, not by Boeing, and not by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).

The National Transportation Safety Board has found that Boeing made faulty assumptions both about the capability of the aircraft design to withstand damage or failure, and the level of human performance possible once the failures began to cascade. Where Boeing failed, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) should have stepped in to regulate but it failed to do so. Lessons from accidents are bought in blood and we must seek all the answers to prevent the next one.

We need to fix all the flaws in the current system — corporate governance, regulatory oversight, aircraft maintenance, and yes, pilot training and experience. Only then can we ensure the safety of everyone who flies. **Sully.**

A response from **Chris Knowles:**

A very perceptive view from a distance to get the right balance of the main factors involved. Boeing and the FAA have allowed arrogance and profit to pretty well destroy quality design, critical quality checks, and consideration of multiple failures on pilot ability to cope with them.

An example of this sort of thing takes me back to my experience of the Tristar, which was a second generation user of mass audible warnings, the A-300 being the first. From warnings of engine fire, gear not down, and configuration issues, the fads next were GPWS “pull up”. But the Tristar had 11 different audible warnings, none considered in situations when multiple variations could occur. I set up tests in the TV room close to the standby area in the Queens Building, to establish how many warnings pilots could readily cope with, and respond to instinctively. Though this new generation system introduced new sounds which pilots were not used to, the results showed that 5 was the then certain capability. And that didn’t include multiple sounds.

Noise destroys the brains ability to work effectively, one reason why the fire warning system on one aircraft was halved in decibels once the situation had been identified and responded to. A cacophony of mixed verbal and artificial noises is also in this mix, very damaging when trying to identify what’s going on, and what to do about it. This accompanied by having to shout to each other to communicate, answering ATC calls etc. etc. Just shouting introduces an element of fear, it’s how before speech, people used to warn each other of danger.

Anyway, we’ve allowed technology to subjugate human characteristics to the point where we now need to have simulator sessions to learn how to fly manually, rather than demonstrate and use the technical stuff.

Airbus design philosophy led to this to an extent, side sticks et al, but Boeing have in a different way contributed to it in a much more culpable way by junking many of the preventative systems learnt from many accidents over the years.

Finally, one of the pretty disgusting continuing human failures is the inability of civil aviation to treat lack of sleep and rest seriously. Long sector crews board aircraft all in the same sleep cycle as each other. Crews are allowed to live in France and fly out of the U.K. for example, arriving for work after flying from say Nice before reporting for duty. This happens all over the World and makes a mockery of flight time rules. As does the fact that on time off we have no idea how pilots abuse their bodies before flying. One classic case I experienced was in Emirates.

A Canadian on leave for 3 weeks in Vancouver, arrived back in Dubai at 0600, to fly the same day 2100 to Chennai arriving back at 0600 next morning, flying a VMC circuit, and in a turn at about 2500 ft., went to sleep. A 40 degree bank and a 2000 ft/min descent alerted the skipper who took over and landed. That incident triggered huge discussions about how multi nationality pilots should arrive back at base after leave in a suitable condition to work. It was never solved because pilots put pressure on the top brass to such an extent that it became too difficult to handle. My views were trampled on.

Best Regards, Chris.

My colleague from the Concorde Fleet, **Mike Riley**, a well-respected base training captain has written a book called "A Concorde in my Toy Box". Knowing his inimitable style, I'm sure that you would enjoy a good read. It is available from Amazon for £14.

Flights to Remember.....(or forget).



28th December 1962, Carvair G-ARSF, Southend to Rotterdam.

The Carvair was a DC-4 conversion carried out by ATL at Southend and Stansted, by replacing the forward fuselage and adding a taller fin. 21 were produced.

On the day in question, there were two pilots on the flight deck and a travelling ground engineer who was sat in the seat between the two pilots operating the throttles. Before take-off the flight was delayed for about one hour owing to changes in the loading and an inspection of the runway. The captain was the handling pilot. During cruise a defect arose in the cabin heating system and the heating was switched off, which resulted in a low temperature on the flight deck and in the passenger compartment. Conditions were uncomfortable but caused no difficulty to the crew.

At 1045 hrs. G-ARSF was passed the wx as wind 200°/5kts, QNH 1015.5 mb., visibility 1500 m. in snow, 2/8 at 180 m., 5/8 at 300 m.

Shortly before the aircraft contacted Rotterdam it received a call from another Carvair which had just left Rotterdam, a warning that the runway was slippery. Rotterdam cleared the aircraft to descend to 1500 ft. and on approach it was given clearance to descend further to 1000 ft. At this altitude the crew could see the ground with a horizontal visibility of 2 nautical miles. At 1055 hrs. the aircraft was told that the runway and taxiways were covered with 2 cm. of snow and that braking action was moderate. Following a procedural approach, the ILS glide path was intercepted and after passing the outer marker the crew had the runway lighting in sight. The approach was continued visually but at 600-700 ft. the aircraft was above the ILS glide path and power was reduced. At a distance of about half-a-mile from the airport full flap was applied. The aircraft then lost height rapidly in a horizontal attitude until it reached a dike, which forms the boundary of the airport. It hit the dike with its main wheels, bounced and flew on with the right

wing dropping and hitting the ground. The aircraft then hit the ground for a second time, the right-hand wing broke off and the fuselage came to rest upside down over the right-hand wing. The commander was killed, the co-pilot seriously injured, and the engineer and stewardess slightly injured. The 14 passengers were uninjured.

A message from **Captain Tim Byatt**. B744 LHR

Can you help answer fleet and/or base specific questions for the British Airways Heritage Centre LHR? On occasions we get quite specific questions about past aircraft types flown within BA/BEA/BOAC/Cambrian/Northeast/BCal and DanAir amongst others and sometimes of an operational nature, which the manuals we have, don't necessarily answer. We are even sent photographs of locations that we don't recognise. But you may be able to help!

If you would like to help us solve some of these questions on an occasional basis, we would love to hear from you.

A brief listing of the fleets and bases you operated from and approximate years you were on each fleet and base, ideally via a contact email address, would enable us to target any queries to those of you who were there at the time. We are looking to cover all bases/fleets no matter how small. If you would like to help us, please contact me at timothy.byatt@ba.com.

Many thanks. Tim



Shortly before his untimely passing, **Mike Austin** had organised yet another reunion for ex-Hamble retired pilots at RSYC, Hamble. Unfortunately at the time he was unable to attend, but the occasion was recorded for posterity by Patricia, his partner.

John Russell has kindly collated a list of attendees at our last members' meeting in October, so you might consider joining them at our next meeting, to create a bumper attendance. The staff at Royal Ascot G.C. always makes us very welcome:

Bill Archer, Bob Baylis, Dave Biltcliffe, Stan Bobrowski, Peter Boulding, Jim Bounden, Les Brodie, Roger Brown, Dave Chinn, Peter Clough, Ian Davies, Roger Dawe, Paul Douglas, John Droy, John Fairlie, Dave Farrow, Trevor Fisher, Vince Fitzgerald, Tony Graham, Gil Gray, Steve Gray, Mike Gush, Steve Habgood, Dennis Hall. John Hill, Ray Hill, Peter Hocking, Jon Holl, David Hyde, Dave Leah, Geoff Leask, Chris Lewington, Stuart Logan, Graham Medcalf, Phil Morris, Dave Mountain, Tony Pike, Phil Rees, John Sheffield, Tony Skuse, Stuart Slatter and committee members Clive Catherall, Nick Edgley, Peter Jenkinson, Keith Lakin, Steve Leniston, Tony Luscombe, Alan Marshall, John Russell and myself, Steve Wand.

Now an **IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT**

In the light of the Coronavirus outbreak, it has been decided that the meeting scheduled for April 2nd 2020 has been cancelled

The next Newsletter will be published in early September, by which time we hope the pandemic will be over and we can prepare for our Autumn Meeting

We've had some recent joiners and paid-up members.

Vince Fitzgerald, David Hyde, Shaun McQuoid and Stuart Robottom-Scott.

Welcome to you all!

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

Royal Ascot Golf Club, SL5 7LJ, 01344 625175

Thursday October 8th at 1930

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

Best Regards,

STEVE WAND

On behalf of the Icarus committee.