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

**Ron Bridge**  
**Peter Fotherby**  
**Ivan Lintner**  
**Jim Proctor**

**Stack Butterley**  
**Geoff Gray**  
**Jim MacDonald**  
**Charles Royds**

**Alan Marshall**  
**John Sheffield**

**Clive Compton**  
**Les Harlow**  
**John McWhirter**  
**Shaun Webb**

**Alan Marshall was an invaluable member of our Committee and will be greatly missed.**

Many of you will have met, or been aware of, **Ron Bridge AFC** who has died recently, aged 85. He was an RAF navigator of repute, the nav superintendent at British Airtours, MD of GB Airways and past Master of GAPAN 1997 – 98 (now Air Pilots). He was enrolled as an honorary member of Icarus some years ago. Whilst much of that is common knowledge, his early years are not well known and that part of his life is described below:



When Ronald Bridge started campaigning for compensation for British civilians interned by the Japanese during the Second World War, he was driven by memories of a “lost” childhood and the suffering he had seen as a boy. Living in the port of Tianjin in northeast China, where

his father ran an import-export business, Bridge had witnessed the arrival of the Japanese soldiers. It was December 8, 1941, 24 hours after the attack on Pearl Harbor in Hawaii. Bridge hid beneath his bed while his mother, Margot, looked after his two-month-old brother, Roger. His father, known as Leo, was taken for questioning. The family was put under house arrest. Later, they wore red armbands along with other British citizens when out in the city and lived under curfew. Ronald, then aged eight, was not considered a threat by the new occupiers and could go around without a police escort. "A chapter of my young life was over," he wrote years later, "and I had been propelled a long way, and fast, into early adulthood."

On March 30, 1943, the family gathered their belongings and were marched to the station. After many hours, travelling first by train, then truck, they stopped by a 16ft wall, topped with barbed wire and broken glass. As they moved towards a huge wooden gate, they saw a sign in Chinese. It read: "Courtyard of the Happy Way." The Bridges had arrived at the Japanese camp at Weih sien in Shandong province, along with about 2,000 western civilians, mainly British and American, most of them women and children.

Addressing the new arrivals, Captain Tsukiyama, the commandant, referred to the camp as a civilian assembly centre. "You do as I say and no trouble," he said. In testimony to British MPs many years later, Bridge said that references to an "assembly centre" were euphemistic; Weih sien was a "concentration camp". He was incarcerated there for two and a half years. In the beginning, internees were given adequate food; they lived in spartan rooms, but were allowed to wear their own clothes. He even managed to hang on to his toy soldiers. Occasionally, Red Cross parcels with extra rations reached the camp. The children were organised in groups for schooling. His first teacher was a nun who drew algebra equations in the sandy ground. When the commandant saw that the children were under some control, he gave orders for paper and pencils to be made available.

As Japan's military fortunes waned, however, conditions grew worse; life became a struggle for survival. Regulations became harsher, food more scarce, sanitation deteriorated and disease spread. One victim was the missionary Eric Liddell, the winner of the 400m gold medal at the Paris Olympics in 1924 whose story is told in the film *Chariots of Fire*. Liddell was one of the leaders of the internees and was a friend of the Bridges. He sometimes played football with Ronald. Malnourished and overworked, Liddell developed a brain tumour and died in February 1945.

In winter the inmates froze and in summer they struggled in the heat. There were other sources of anxiety, too. On one occasion, Bridge heard his grandparents discussing their fate. His grandfather said: "I heard from someone who speaks Japanese that they [their captors] have received orders that if the Allies set foot on Honshu or Kyushu, their home islands, we are all to be eliminated and the guards will then have to fall on their swords." His grandmother retorted: "Bert, not in front of Ronald, please." Then, turning to the boy, she said: "Don't worry, nothing like that will happen. When we win the war we will go back safe to home." Ronald was not sure whom to believe. In the end, his grandmother was right. The camp was liberated by American paratroopers on August 17, 1945.

From **Brian Smith**: The photograph at the heading of this article was taken on board the last flight of a British Airtours B707, G-AXXY, on January 2 1984 and shows Ron and I on the flight deck. I was privileged to be the captain of this particular flight. The plan was to complete it, followed by a "farewell to the 707" party in a hangar at our base at Gatwick. The "passengers" were all staff members. After take-off from Gatwick we headed towards Heathrow. We made a high-speed run at low level right along the full length of the runway, then pulled up and continued on to Newquay airport. There we carried out another low-level pass at high speed. We were starting our approach back at Gatwick when Ron, who was

clearly delighted with events so far, said, "What's next?" I looked at the flight plan. I said, "Ron, it says come straight in and land, no more beating up places!" "I'm not having that!" said Ron in his inimitable style. He called Air Traffic Control and asked if we could do just one last low-level pass before our final landing. Their reply was: "You have to!"

After landing, the original plan was to taxi the aircraft so that the nose was just inside the hangar. I understand our insurance company had something to say about this so we parked just outside. Then the party started — the engineers had transformed the inside of the hangar to make a mock-up of a pub. A bar stretched the full length of the wall, with a lean-to thatched roof complete with a pub sign, "The Glide Inn"

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Now for a story from a flight engineer friend of **Phil Hogge** from Britannia days:

### Why PanAm and not BOAC were in the Bond Films

In 1961, I remember one particular trip from New York to Jamaica was a charter originating from London for a film crew with unknown actors including Ursula Andress and Sean Connery who were making a James Bond film adapted from the book 'Dr No'. Our cabin crew was led by one of the notorious 'BOAC Queens' and the behaviour of the pax down to Kingston was rather unusual - as most of the very pretty young female passengers were wandering about the aircraft semi undressed! One of the cabin crew told us that the lead actor, Sean Connery, was spending his time in one of the first class bunks with his lead actress. Definitely not the normal behaviour expected of BOAC first class passengers in 1961!

When we arrived at Kingston for our night stop and checked into the usual crew hotel (Morgan's Harbour), we found to our dismay that the film crew were staying at 'our hotel' and were filming a fight scene with a character called 'Quarrel' in the bar. The director told us that the bar was shut. Needless to say this did not go down well with the tired hot and thirsty BOAC crew who protested rather noisily, making filming impossible. Eventually a happy compromise was reached - we got a crate of Red Stripe beers, a bottle of rum and a few cokes so an amicable peace was restored. The director then offered us £10 each if we would go out to the aircraft next day a bit early, so that we could act as a disembarking crew from the BOAC aircraft, which he could film as per the James Bond books.

The next morning we all turned up an hour early and the director, who was clearly on a tight budget, said that he couldn't afford to pay so many people, so the flight deck crew let the cabin crew have the job whilst we stood back to watch the proceedings. A lot of preparations went on - people with powder puffs, light meters, tape measures, clapper boards and a camera mounted on a tripod. After the cabin crew had been briefed and 'ACTION' had been ordered, our cabin crew came down the rear steps and proceeded across the tarmac. Unfortunately, our very gay chief steward adopted an exaggerated camp promenade, resulting in a loud shout of "CUT. Let's go back and do that again CHAPS." Needless to say, the second shot was almost identical and resulted in a further cut and wastage of expensive film. The director angrily addressed the chief "Can't you walk like a bloody man?" "Oh," he said, "You'll have to pay me extra for character parts." Everybody fell about laughing and the BOAC crew's services were dispensed with.

A few minutes later a PanAm 727 taxied into the next gate and the film crew filmed a clip of the American crew instead. The PanAm clip was included in the film - not the BOAC one as planned!

Here's a piece that I received from **John Morton**, who I flew with quite often on the Comet at LGW and was a fellow captain on the B707 and L1011 in the 1970s and 80s. We knew him as "Tours Morton" as he had a penchant for leading his crew on travel tours, wherever they happened to be night-stopping or standing over, so was credited with the cultural and historical education of those fortunate enough to be at Airtours, keeping them away from the pub for a while! John writes:

"Nine of my 36 flying years were spent with British Airtours at Gatwick and I retired from the Tristar in 1990. I now live in Gloucestershire and have written "*Whatever were you thinking of, Captain?, A Handbook for Airline Passengers*" and two biographies of famous 19<sup>th</sup>-century geologists, William Smith and Sir Roderick Murchison. I am presently Chairman of Cotswold Vale District Scouts, Chairman of their Appointments Advisory Committee (vetting new Leaders) and I edit a quarterly magazine for Scouts in Gloucestershire County." *Good to receive a catch-up from you John. We certainly enjoyed life at Gatwick in those times, both in the air and down route. Steve.*

The surprising and speedy removal of the B747-400 from the BA fleet brought to an end the Airline's 50-year tenure with the "Queen of the Skies", much to the chagrin of all those who served on arguably the most commercially-successful aircraft ever built. The dispatch of the last two aeroplanes from LHR (G-CIVB and G-CIVY) to Kemble and St Athan respectively, was observed by many ex BA staff at LHR, although the weather on the day was uncooperative with low cloud and rain. Several subscribers to the Hamsters' web chain and the Icarus chat room reported that they had watched the flights' progress on the on-line "Flight Radar" facility and subsequently waxed-lyrical about their time on the Classic and/or the -400. My own experience of Flight Engineers (on TriStars and the Concorde) is that they were the "salt of the earth", which seems to coincide with the views of the pilots who flew with the species on the B747 Classic. Some of their comments are listed here: -

Hi guys, happy days. Sadly -400s didn't have a flight engineer but I have wonderful memories from the Tristar days. SEO's would always find the best and cheapest curry and got me into a lot of trouble!!

Flight Engineers, a great bunch of guys. However, what they saved you on the cost of breakfast you spent getting your shoes resoled!

Flight Engineers. Don't you just love them! Having retired from BA one went out to Singapore to work for SIA on their B707s. Said gentlemen positioned back as a passenger to Singapore in their First Class. He was a little worse for wear upon arrival. As it was the old days, a small minibus was waiting for the First Class passengers and large coaches were there for the economy passengers. As he was about to board the First Class transport he decided a call of nature was required. Had a pee on the front wheel adjacent to the entry door.

48 hours later he was on a one-way ticket back to the UK. Very unfair if you ask me.

Was it Sam Mitten who became a milkman in Manchester? A freighter crew had just arrived in the hotel at 05:00 and they called the dairy where he worked. Sam was there and agreed to call in for a swift one, as he was not far away. Might have been OK, except it was summer and after 6 hours in the sun, the milk on the float had all gone off. Another Engineer who lost his job!

My lasting memory of the Hasty Tasty was calling in with the flight engineer who was much the worse for wear after a long session in the Mariners. He decided to wait outside while I got the fish and chips. I then had to try and distract the guys in the Hasty Tasty as I looked outside to see said engineer urinating on the window. Fortunately, I don't think they noticed and we managed to get back to the Park Hotel unscathed.

My first visit to Hong Kong was as a Px on the 747. The Flight Engineer offered to be my tour guide so we met at 10:00 in the Park Hotel lobby. Off we went and first stop was the Mariners Club for breakfast. After we had eaten he suggested a swift half in the bar. Twelve hours later we were still there. Walking back to the hotel at midnight we stopped at the 'Hasty Tasty' for fish and chips. It was a hole in the wall place, cooking done in one wok by an old lady. The next day I spent all of it in bed!

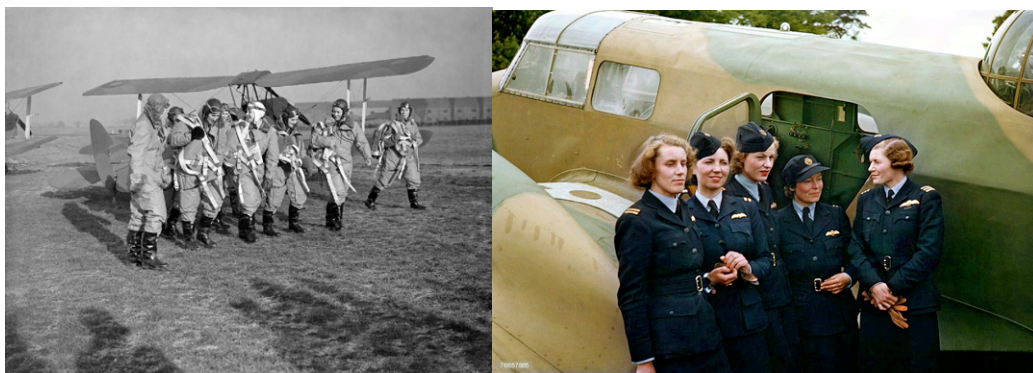
Thankfully four of BA's 747-400s have now been saved from the scrapyards with G-CIVW being flown to Dunsfold Aerodrome on 22<sup>nd</sup> October last as BA1978E, to be used as a film set and it may well be open to the public in the future. G-CIVW last flew a revenue service on 28<sup>th</sup> March 2020 BOS – LHR and had been stored at Bournemouth before arriving at Dunsfold after a spell at Cardiff Maintenance Base. Its total Airline service totalled 11424 flights, 90617 hours and >45million miles. The operating crew for flight BA1978E was Captain Mark McEvoy and Captain Mags Serafi and the aircraft will retain its BA Chatham Dockyard livery. This 747-400 joins ex BA 747-200 G-BDXJ, although the latter's external appearance has been much altered over time for filming purposes. It now has twin-podded engines akin the B52 and was modified for the making of "Casino Royale" in 2006.

"XJ" was flown to Dunsfold in 2005 by ex-BA Captain Peter Sinclair following its retirement from European Aviation/Air Atlanta service.

There is also a Super VC-10 at the airfield, which was the last of 54 to be built at Brooklands in the late 1960s. It served with East African (5H-MOG) until the Airline's demise in 1977. It was then stored at Nairobi and later Filton. The RAF then converted it to a tanker in 1984 and it flew in RAF service until finally flying from Brize Norton to Dunsfold in 2013.

The three other -400s to be preserved are G-BNLY in the Landor livery also at Dunsfold, G-CIVB in the Negus livery at Kemble and lastly BOAC-liveried G-BYGC, which is now parked at St Athan Business Park in South Wales. G-BYGC was flown from Cardiff to St Athan on 11<sup>th</sup> December last, taking 21 minutes for the short distance, awaiting a break in the wet and windy Welsh weather. The privilege of making the very last BA -400 landing fell to Captain Richard Allen-Williams assisted by Captain Di Wooldridge. Captains Al Bridger and Arun Sharma were also on the flight deck.

Now a piece of nostalgia from your compiler, Steve W.



I recently found these photographs in an old periodical. The picture on the left oozes nostalgia for me, as the pilot third from the right is Joan Hughes. She was my instructor (and CFI) at the West London Aero Club at White Waltham in August 1960 whilst I, like many of yourselves, was undertaking a "flying scholarship PPL course" thanks to the generosity of the Royal Air Force. Her exploits as an ATA ferry pilot during the war are legendary and there is

a fine picture of Joan in the Berkshire Aviation Museum, doing the pre-flight checks on a Lancaster prior to ferrying it to a front-line station. She was very brave as an instructor to have taken me under her wing (two wings actually, as the training was on Tiger Moths!) and her calm and decisive manner set me a fine example for later life in the air. Naturally my recollections of the 30 hours or so, airborne in Tiger Moths, are of a fulfilling and enjoyable time but a couple of incidents also stick in my mind.

Joan and I were airborne on 19<sup>th</sup> August that year in the oldest of WLACs Tigers (G-AHND), for a practice forced landings detail to the west of White Waltham, when the engine started making some very unusual noises. Coincidentally we happened to be near Handley Page's Woodley Airfield so Joan calmly took over control and did a real forced landing at Woodley. One of the Manufacturer's resident engineers came out and miraculously got the engine running normally again, so we took off and returned to home base.

On the other occasion, a fellow-trainee was taxiing back to dispersal following a solo detail in one of the Club's Tiger Moths (no brakes, just a tail skid) when he obviously over-cooked his taxiing speed, venturing onto the perimeter road and connected with the CFI's car, which was parked outside the clubhouse. Pieces of propellor splintered everywhere and the side windows of the car disintegrated, but more-importantly the CFI's cherished dog was asleep on the car's backseat and was last seen scampering across the airfield at a rate of knots! Joan seemed much more interested in retrieving the dog than worrying about the damaged prop.

The picture on the right reminds me of an occasion on the Concorde simulator at Filton. During my tenure as the Fleet's STC, I set up a scheme whereby customers of Goodwood Travel (our main charterer for SSC flights) were able to do a Concorde experience day at Bristol. Four people would partake of lunch at a hotel near Filton preceded by a briefing, given by the training captain conducting the duty. After proceeding to the simulator, each customer would enjoy half an hour handling the controls under the T/Cs guidance.

I was the rostered captain on one occasion and, as normal, asked each individual if they had any experience of flying an aeroplane. One of the participants was a mature lady who replied that she had flying experience and, when asked what the biggest aeroplane she had flown, she replied "a Lancaster". You can understand my humility! During the initial introductions at the hotel, her name had not registered but it transpired that she was Lettice Curtis, noted ATA ferry pilot, flight test engineer, air racer and sportswoman.

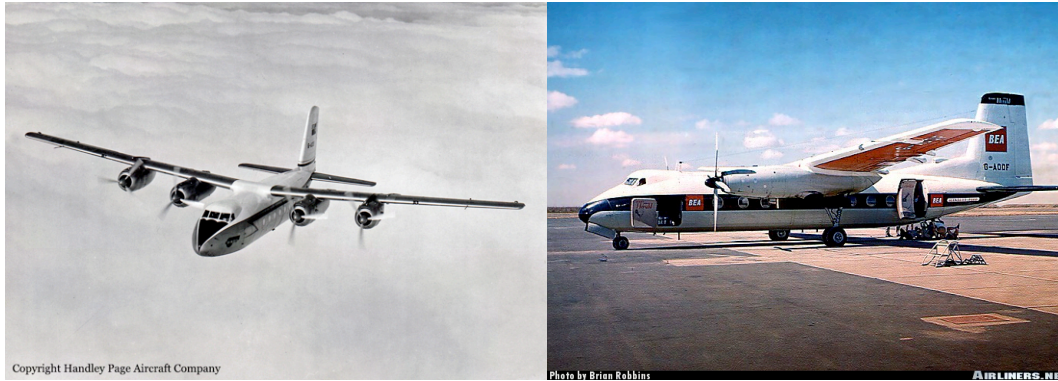
She is pictured above on the left of the group outside an Airspeed Oxford. It was an honour to share the flight deck with her and she flew the simulator beautifully, as you'd expect. I read that she died in 2014, aged 99, and had flown 90 types including helicopters. During the war, she was the first ATA female pilot to deliver Lancasters, in addition to 222 Halifaxes and 100 Stirlings, working 13 days on, 2 days off, for 62 consecutive months. *What a full life!*

### **Flights to Remember.....(or forget!):**

The Handley Page Herald was a British design in the mid 1950s, intended to become a potential DC-3 replacement. The two prototypes were built with 4 x piston engines and first flew in 1955 and 1956 respectively. They were subsequently redesigned and flown with two Dart turboprops replacing the original piston engines. BEA obtained the first production batch G-APWA to G-APWC in 1962, for use on Scottish Highland and Island services.

Sales were overshadowed by the more-successful Fokker Friendship and the Viscount, resulting in only 50 of the type being built with production ceasing in 1968, leading to the subsequent demise of Handley Page at Woodley and Radlett.

G-APWA is preserved at the Berkshire Air Museum, Woodley, near where it was built.



30/08/58 near Godalming, G-AODE,  
S/Ldr H. Hazelden and copilot, plus seven pax.

The modified twin-engined Herald had taken off from Woodley to take part in the Farnborough air display. Half an hour into the flight, the aircraft was above cloud at 6,000 feet, being photographed (in company with a Victor) by another plane, when there was a sudden bang. The starboard engine was seen to be on fire. The fire drill was put promptly into action; fuel turned off, propeller feathered, fire extinguishers turned on but to no avail.

Ex-bomber pilot Hazelden, holder of the D.F.C. and bar, who had been in seven previous crashes, reacted promptly. He pointed the nose down for an emergency landing, meanwhile doing all he could to minimise the threat of the flames and advising Farnborough ATC of his predicament. The passengers - Mrs. Hazelden, two other women and four engineers, braced themselves for a forced landing.

Through the windscreen, the pilot chose his landing area avoiding houses on a council estate and some hazardous trees but, as he brought the Herald lower, he saw stretched before him a line of 11,000 volt high tension cables, barely 40 feet from the ground. Wheels up, the aeroplane slid beneath the cables, skidding on its belly for some 200 yards in Eashing Park, west of Godalming, near what is now the A3 Milford junction.

A felled tree ripped a hole in the side of the fuselage and when the Herald came to a halt, all 9 on board managed to scramble clear through this fortunate gash in the aircraft side. A mere four minutes had elapsed since the engine caught fire and following the landing G-AODE was largely burnt out. The aircraft was destroyed in a smother of foam from fire-fighting appliances when they arrived on the scene (see image below).

The passengers, shaken but unhurt, were taken to Farnborough by helicopter and Squadron Leader Hazelden followed on later. A telegram was sent by the Mayor of Godalming, Councillor B. Grillo, praising the pilot for skilfully grounding the plane without loss of life.

The subsequent investigation determined that the fire, which had become uncontrollable, resulted from a major mechanical failure of the starboard engine and the disruption of the fuel system. The incident was very much akin to the uncontrollable engine fire that befell the prototype Bristol Britannia (G-ALRX) that was force landed on the banks of the River Severn in February 1954.



We've had some recent joiners:

**Gordon Black, Norton Hatfield and David Grace.**

Welcome to you all!

Before signing off, I must acknowledge the huge amount of work that the late **Alan Marshall** used to process, for the benefit of our Society and his passing has left a tremendous void in the committee's constitution. This has necessitated a lot of work to get the smooth running of Icarus back on track and I must publicise the efforts of committee members **Nick Edgley, John Russell** and **Steve Leniston** who have manfully resurrected the status quo. Nick has proved himself to be an IT-guru of the highest order whilst sorting out Alan's electronic protocols and John has given us the benefit of his wide knowledge of business procedures, for liaising with our bankers etc. Steve L has kindly agreed to take over the treasurer role previously performed by Alan, so rest assured that our finances remain in good hands. My thanks to you all.

Taking account of the P.M.s roadmap for Covid recovery, unsurprisingly we will be unable to hold our scheduled Spring Meeting at RAGC on Thursday April 8<sup>th</sup>. However, should the pandemic have receded by then, please make a note in your diary that the next scheduled function will be on **Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> October 2021**, which will be confirmed or otherwise in the next newsletter. Please also make a note that the Spring 2022 meeting will be on the third, rather than the second Thursday on April 21<sup>st</sup> 2022, to avoid a clash with the Easter weekend.

Best Regards,

STEVE WAND

On behalf of the Icarus committee.