



Compiled by Steve Wand
on behalf of the Icarus committee.
sdwand74@gmail.com

ICARUS NEWSLETTER Autumn 2024
Website <http://www.icarusba.org.uk>

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

Tony Allenby
Dr Peter Chapman
Dick Davies
Mike Grundy
Rob Jenkinson
Terry Rawlins

Douglas Baynes
John Coleman
Laurie Drury
Steve Habgood
Eric Moody
Andy Russell

Andy Butcher
Moira Davenport
Dick Green
Mike Jeffery
Cliff Phillips
Fred Smith

Following **Ian King's** description of his prostate health problems in a previous issue, **John Phillips** kindly sent in this piece, describing his own experiences:

My August 2023 blood test showed a sharp increase in my PSA reading to 6.7. A subsequent MRI scan confirmed Prostate Cancer on both sides of my prostate, and this was followed by a biopsy, both carried out at the Royal Surrey Hospital. I found both the Urology and Oncology departments excellent, however the Consultant could only offer me chemo/radiography treatment or a prostatectomy. A friend then suggested that I consider HIFU (high-intensity focussed ultrasound). After seeing a consultant in this field, I had two HIFU procedures, November 2023 and February 2024, each taking about 1.5 hours under a general anaesthetic followed by a couple of hours recovering. I then had a catheter for about five days, which was probably the most uncomfortable part of the whole treatment. Three months after the first procedure my PSA was 1.92 and three months after the second it was 0.41

HIFU is available on the NHS but, at the moment it is not widely available. My treatment was covered by BUPA, however because of a dispute between them and certain Health Groups, I had to travel 50 miles to the nearest suitable Hospital. Also, because of a dispute between them and a number of anaesthetists, the one that I had for my second procedure was not recognised by BUPA, so I had to pay him myself. However, after much argument, BUPA did refund this to me.

I hope that you find this helpful. There is a lot of information about Focal and HIFU treatment on the internet. John Phillips. A320 Flt.

Thanks John.

The **Blackburn Beverley** was the mainstay of RAF Transport Command during the 1950s and 1960s, carrying large loads and/or up to 100 troops. 49 examples were built at Brough, Yorkshire and the type continued in military service until August 1967. Nine aircraft were lost in accidents, mishaps or explosions, the worst crash being near Abingdon in what became known as the Sutton Wick Air Crash (see below). Four Beverleys avoided the cutters torch at the end of service – XH124 was displayed outside at the RAF Hendon Museum but succumbed to the weather and was scrapped in 1989, XL149 was dismantled at RAF Finningly in 1977 and XB261 was scrapped in 1989 at Southend, some years after the owning Museum there had closed, and the airframe had been weather-beaten and vandalized.

However, one example XB259 is still in existence, although in the process of being dismantled. It had a chequered career and was the first production aeroplane produced, after the initial two prototypes. Retained by the Blackburn Aircraft Company for testing and modifications, it was registered G-AOAI and did not see active RAF squadron service, although it was eventually transferred to RAE Farnborough as XB259. There it was used for braking trials, JATO research and the testing of braking parachutes for the Vulcan and Victor bombers. Its last flight was in March 1976 when it was flown to Paul Airfield near Hull.

Initially displayed at the Museum of Army Transport, it was then purchased by the owner of Fort Paull, a preserved coastal artillery fort, near where XB259 had made her last landing. The small museum at Fort Paull closed in 2020, again putting the Beverley's future in doubt. Eventually bought at auction for £21,000 by a private individual, the cost of removal became prohibitive which again jeopardized the aeroplane's future.

However, the Solway Aviation Museum based at Carlisle Airport has now come to the rescue, with determination to preserve this important piece of British heritage at their own museum based at Carlisle Airport, Cumbria. A £60,000 appeal was set up which has now been exceeded, which has allowed dismantling into truckable parts and transportation to Carlisle. A large crane was also hired to lift the parts over the Fort's high walls! Following reassembly in Cumbria, the intention is to remove the camouflage paint and to display the aircraft in its original squadron markings.



Flights to remember...or forget.

RAF Beverley, XH117, near Abingdon, 5th March 1957. The crash occurred after take off from Abingdon RAF Station on a flight to Akrotiri, Cyprus carrying cargo, a relief crew, eight RAF police dog handlers and eight police dogs. The weather was poor, with 300 metres visibility and 500 ft cloudbase.

Shortly after becoming airborne the number 1 engine developed a fuel leak, and the crew shut down the engine and feathered the propeller. An emergency was declared, and an instrument approach return requested. As the aircraft turned onto final approach the crew attempted to increase power on the remaining three engines, but number 2 engine failed to respond and speed and height began to be lost.

Knowing that he couldn't reach the airfield the captain tried to land in a field, but the aircraft became uncontrollable and struck a number of high-tension cables and some trees that tore the port wing from the aeroplane. Upon impact with the ground the aircraft struck a caravan and a prefab house before somersaulting and crashing upside down in the village of Sutton Wick. The flight had lasted 18 minutes and of the 17 passengers and 5 crew aboard all but 4 were killed, together with 2 people on the ground.

An investigation found that a non-return valve in the fuel system had been installed the wrong way round causing two of the engines to be starved of fuel. The technician found responsible for incorrectly fitting the valve was charged under the Air Force Act. Following the accident, the non-return valve was re-designed so that it could not be installed incorrectly.

The Boom Project.

The projected supersonic Mach 1.7 airliner, "Overture".





The XB-1 research aeroplane, designed to maintain Mach 2.2.

A few years ago, there were two American players in the market, hoping to design and build a passenger-carrying supersonic airliner, but Aerion went out of business in 2021, leaving Boom as the only serious contender. Their aim is to have an aeroplane in production by the end of the decade capable of 4250 nm range at M1.7, running on sustainable fuel. It would carry up to 80 pax, powered by four turbofan engines housed individually beneath the wings. The engine, called Symphony, will produce 35000lbs thrust without reheat, so take offs will be less spectacular than Concorde, although car alarms in the vicinity would probably be less likely to activate!

The big players in the engine market, RR PW and GE, have all declined to participate preferring to devote their resources to subsonic production, so Boom has decided to design and build their own powerplants. Whilst all this sounds rather fanciful, it remains to be seen whether the company can attract the massive amount of investment that will be necessary, not to mention the intense scrutiny that will be shown by the FAA. Boom also hope to be able to fly the aeroplane over land masses, which might well be a stumbling block, unless they can magic away the sonic boom! However, there is evidently plenty of ambition being shown as the company has already built an Overture assembly factory in North Carolina, with space for 4 airframes to be worked on simultaneously, so as to produce 35 aircraft per year.

Orders have so far been received from Japan Airlines, United Airlines and American. Boom have also designed and built a research aircraft, pictured above, powered by 3 GE J85 engines producing 4300lbs thrust and capable of M2.2. It was expected to begin flight testing in 2022, but delays pushed the first flight to March 22nd this year. As you will note, the engine configuration has the 3 powerplants arranged at the rear fuselage, which was the original intention for Overture, but there was a redesign in 2022 to Overture's current "4 engines underneath the wing" configuration so the XB-1 is not representative in that respect.

The first flight of XB-1 revealed that the aircraft was very twitchy in roll. An improved roll autostab system is being installed before the aeroplane flies again, but it is hoped that another 15 or so flights can be flown before >M.1 is attempted by the autumn. The first flight did however prove the viability of the augmented reality vision system which displays to the pilot an image of the runway due to the high incidence on approach and landing, which would obscure the pilot's vision in the absence of a droop nose.

The next generation Boeing long-haul offering: Prior to retirement I am sure that many of you will have flown the Boeing 777, many of which are approaching 25 years in service. The replacement will be the next generation B777X or more specifically the B777-9 of which British Airways have 18 on order, with options for 24 more. This is a much-delayed programme, having been first offered to the market at the Dubai Air Show in November 2013! The first test aircraft first flew in January 2020 and three more test models have since been manufactured, with the four aeroplanes having already flown more than 1200 times. Testing has obviously been beset with many development issues and is under increased scrutiny from the FAA following the 737 Max debacle. However progress is at last evident with Type Inspection Authorisation received by Boeing from the FAA, which allows certification flight testing to begin which commenced on 12th July. Production aircraft will be powered by GE9X engines with a composite wing complete with folding wingtips, to allow the aircraft to be parked within existing airport stand dimensions! It will be 2.9 metres longer than the -300ER, giving it a total length of 76.7 metres. This allows an extra 3 rows of seats with a typical pax load of 426, which should be good for staff-travel! BA currently expect deliveries to commence in 2025 and to continue throughout 2026. Boeing currently holds 501 orders for the type, including 55 for the freighter version.



Waterbird was the first aircraft in the UK to make a successful flight from water when she took off and landed on Lake Windermere on 25th November 1911. One of Britain's most important aviation pioneers, owner Captain Edward Wakefield had bought the aircraft from A.V. Roe & Co and converted it to a floatplane. Waterbird was sadly written off in March 1912, when her hangar collapsed during a storm but the canard, centre section, two stringers, engine, a tank, horizontal tail, rudder and main float all survived.

The Lakes Flying Company Limited – a registered charity – has now been set up to celebrate and to inform the public concerning the importance of the innovative contributions made to the development of naval and civil marine aeroplanes by Captain Edward Wakefield and by *Waterbird*. A replica Waterbird has now been built and flown from Lake Windermere. Waterbird is an *Avro Curtiss-type*, but Avro did not give it a designation. The replica was built by inspecting the original surviving parts and from photos of the original. The design of the replica is faithful to the original save that, instead of a Gnome 50 hp rotary engine, it has a Rotec R2800 110 hp radial engine.

Fortunately, there is an A. V. Roe & Co. plan in existence– the oldest surviving of any Avro aeroplane – but it only offers basic information especially since upon transfer to Brooklands for flight testing as a landplane there were significant alterations made by Avro. Incidentally a barge that was used to transport the original aeroplane around the Lake has recently been located on the bed of the Lake and explored by divers, with a view to photographing same and raising some pieces for safe keeping.



As advised in previous issues, the circulation of newsletters by mail has now ceased, so this and future newsletters will only be available via download from the Society’s website. This edition will be my last newsletter compilation for, after 20 years as your chairman, the time has come for me to retire the position and to hand over to a younger model in the shape of one of the current members of the Icarus committee (TBA). It has certainly been a privilege to lead the Society, and I am sure that my successor will find the role equally satisfying.

We welcome to Icarus –

Dick Charnley, Rick Craft, Geoff Roy, Ian Runnalls, Ary Singh and Ron Weidner.

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

Royal Ascot Golf Club

SL5 7LJ, 01344 625175

Thursday October 10th 2024 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 at Ascot on Thursday April 10th 2025.

Best Regards,

Steve Wand.

In case you suspect that you would not know anyone at Ascot, these are the attendees from the April meeting:

Martin Alder, Dick Atkinson, Jim Bounden, Les Brodie, Derek Buck, Christopher Burke, Clive Catherall, Peter Clough, Stephen Cooper-Reade, Rick Craft, Nick Edgley, Frank Epstein, Tref Fisher, Pete Foster, Gil Gray, Mike Gush, Chris Hebbard, Ray Hill, John Hill, Peter Hocking, Andrew Houghton, Peter Jenkinson, Ian King, Chris Knowles, Keith Lakin, Geoff Leask, Steve Leniston, Tony Luscombe, Graham Medcalf, Phil Morris, Chris Murray, Dick Noon, Richard Pascoe, Roger Price, Bill Pritchard, Jerry Ree, Ian Runnalls, John Russell, Bob Ryan, Robin Sherwin-Smith, Adrian Shrimpton, Tony Speakman, John Stevens, Stewart Stevenson, Brian Swift, Rupert Tickner, Ron Weidner, Gerry Wells, John Willats, Clive Yeoman.