

## ICARUS NEWSLETTER - NOVEMBER 2024

Ladies and Gentlemen,



My name is John Russell and my original Committee appointment was that of Secretary.

At our Committee Meeting prior to the October General Meeting, the Committee unanimously approved my appointment as Chairman, to replace Steve Wand.

Steve decided to stand down as Chairman after 20 years due to health problems that make driving to meetings no longer possible. He was involved at an early stage of the Society's history and has carried the flame on your behalf ever since.

Steve, along with his wife Pauline and daughter Louise, attended our Meeting in October. In recognition of his valuable service, he was presented with an engraved tankard and vouchers for the Chichester Festival Theatre, a favourite venue of his.



Geoff Mussett enlightened the audience on Steve's aviation background, and Steve Leniston described his experiences working with Steve as a Committee Member and latterly, in his rôle as Treasurer.

With regard to my history:

I served with BEA and BA on Tridents, 757 & 767 aircraft for thirty years. The paucity of aircraft types reflected my aversion to training courses!

For some reason, BEA made the mistake of giving me and a small group of my contemporaries a contract that allowed us to retire at the ripe old age of 50, which I did in 2001!

Since then, I have spent a lot of time messing about on water, not with boats, but floatplanes and flying boats. This has taken me from Alaska to Grenada, and around Europe, accruing more than 1100+ hours in seaplanes, to add to the 14,500 hours on more conventional aircraft.

Possessing a rather unusual aircraft type resulted in various assignments with film, TV and advertising companies that made 'retirement' more interesting.

Last year, I decided to hang up my headset after 57 years - not bad for someone who was told by his RAF Flying Scholarship CFI that in his opinion "You should never go near another aircraft again in your life"!

Of my 30 years in the airline, 26 consecutive years were occupied in various BALPA representative positions, so running a committee is not a new experience for me; although I will have to brush off some of the rust that has accumulated since 2001!

Steve Wand will be a hard act to follow, but I will do my best to maintain his high standards.

Keith Lakin has kindly agreed to replace me as Committee Secretary.

\*\*\*\*\*

Last year the Committee was informed that the cost of hiring our meeting room in the Royal Ascot Golf Club would go up dramatically such that, with our relatively limited financial resources, it would be unacceptable in the future.

After much discussion over alternative venues, Tony Luscombe suggested that the Puttenham Golf Club, near Guildford, had a room that could be used by Club Members (of which he was one) for free.

In parallel with this discussion, the Committee had been thinking of ways of providing easier access to our Meetings for the cluster of ex-LGW pilots that live in the Gatwick general catchment area. This seemed an opportunity to solve both problems at once.

In view of this we decided, as a trial, to hold the two 2025 Meetings at Puttenham. Full details of the location and timings of these meetings will be announced in the Newsletter that traditionally precedes each meeting.

For those of you whose location made the Ascot venue as 'a bridge too far', do come along in April and meet up with some old pals.

The Committee has had various representations about daytime meetings, to avoid driving home in the dark - a known problem for contact lens wearers and others with mobility problems.

We are currently in discussion with Puttenham to see whether this can be arranged without compromising their normal daytime activities. Hopefully we can organise this for the October meeting when sunset is around 1815.

Finally, if anyone would like to submit an aviation-related story and/or pictures for publication in the next Newsletter, I would be grateful to receive it via the Icarus website.

Regards,

John Russell.