



RUTLAND BRANCH

As I write this January is coming to an end, and the snow is falling. Perhaps we still have time for a proper winter. To date I still have no antidotes from members. As I have to fill these pages with something, I thought that I might put a story together about the Short Belfast. A story to be found in "A Fairy's View of The Royal Air Force".



The first time I came across this aircraft was during a detachment with 204 Squadron, at RAF Changi in Singapore during the mid 60's. 204 Squadron with their Shackleton Mk2 aircraft, were out in the Far East looking after 205 Squadrons commitments, while they were having a well earned break in Australia. The Squadrons dispersals were situated at the far side of the airfield, along with a detachment of New Zealand Air Force Bristol Freighters commonly known as Bristol Vibrators, anyone who has heard them will know why. There were also a number of tents housing the crews carrying out the Short Belfast Hot Weather trials.

Despite what we may have seen or read on the internet regarding these trials, I can assure you that they were taking place in Changi at the end of 1965. My involvement, if limited, started at the end of a morning shift, where I along with the rest of the squadron, not working that afternoon, was invited to have an afternoon flight in this new Belfast aircraft. The trials crew had put in the aircraft two decks of seating, and needed a large number of volunteers to fill them. This was to make up, what we know as the all up weight. I can't remember how many souls were involved but there were a lot and it didn't seem to matter who they were. You will recall, from other past reminiscences, that I spent time on the Transport Aircraft Servicing Flight (TASF) in Akrotiri. I can't remember ever seeing an aircraft in this configuration transit through, so I suppose one should ask what was the point of this.

The next encounter with the Belfast was some years later when I was serving with 100 Squadron at RAF West Raynham. The squadron operated Canberra TT18s which had a role of target towing for a number of different fighter squadrons, the Lightning among them. I along with a number of other squadron personnel was scheduled to fly down to Decimomannu Airport on Sardinia, to provide Target Towing facilities on the Italian ranges for a Lightning Squadron from Gutersloh. We were provided with a Belfast from RAF Brize Norton to carry aircraft support equipment from both squadrons it was to fly from West Raynham to Gutersloh and collect the Lightning equipment and fly to Sardinia. Just for the record the aircraft did have a small upper deck, but not the length of the aircraft I had enjoyed in Changi. We took off and had an uneventful flight to RAF Gutersloh. On approach, as is normal, the gear was selected down. This to those not used to this expression is "putting the wheels down". Unfortunately nothing happened. The pilot tried again with the same results. Following an aircrew conference, which covered topics like "I don't want to get stuck here", they agreed that the best course of action was to return to Brize Norton and blow the gear down there. It should be mentioned that the ground crew were travelling in their working cloths, which for Canberra engineers meant in the main greasy denims, On the approach to Brize the gear was selected down with the same results. On the second approach the undercarriage was blown down, and I assume locked as we landed OK. At the dispersal we deplaned and saw that the big wheel guards were still 90 degrees to the wheels, not where they should have been, had we been lucky?

We were bussed into the departure lounge, issued with the good old meal ticket and asked to wait for either a repair or another aircraft. We were met by the Movements Officer who was close to a heart attack when he saw the passengers, he had no sense of humour, and was not having these people coming into his lounge looking like that!!

I can't remember who was our Eng Officer but a row erupted and I can't remember how it was resolved only to say that the Aircraft was serviced and we continued on our journey to Decimomannu via Gutersloh without further incident.

Please send me your Service experiences if only to stop me producing mine. I'm afraid there are a lot from where this came from. Send me an Email with your views.
Peter



THE RUTLAND FLYING HORSESHOE

Bomber Command Memorial Project

Next year will see the opening of a Bomber Command memorial and interpretation centre in Lincoln. As part of this the Nottingham based heritage company Excavate has been asked to gather stories and memories from ex pilots who flew out of Lincolnshire.



Were you one of those stationed at one of the 27 Bomber Command Airfields? Maybe at Binbrook, or Wickenby, or Waddington, or one of the many other sites across the county? If so we would love to hear from you as we look to gather material that we can use and share with the visitors that will come to this wonderful new centre that explains the work of the pilots of Bomber Command to young and old alike. There is a fantastic amount of material that can be used for the centre but what we are missing, and what we need now, are personal stories. Those who can really explain what it was like, who can give a real insight into being part of Bomber Command in Lincolnshire.

If you were one of those, or if you know somebody who was, then we would be really interested in talking to you. We hope you can help us by sharing your memories so that they become part of this building that will finally mark the work and the sacrifice of so many.

To find out more, or to share your story and memories, please contact Andy Barrett in the following ways:

Email - andybombercommand@gmail.com

Telephone – 0115 8449612 / 07986 594395

Post – Andy Barrett, 143 Standhill Road, Carlton, Nottingham, NG4 1JT

February Speaker Alan Stevens

Our February Speaker was recently retired



Senior Forensic Investigator with (Leicestershire Constabulary), involved with Crime Scene Investigation.

His Police career started as a Clerical Officer at New Scotland Yard in 1974 and commenced his SCT training

at the Met Police College at Hendon. After serving a number of years in all parts of London he transferred to Hampshire. He was stationed in Portsmouth covering the City and eastern part of the county. He was involved in counter terrorist duties including search of the QEII prior to Her Majesty the Queen boarding in Southampton for the 150th Canard Anniversary. In 1991 he transferred to Norfolk where he was based in Great Yarmouth covering the east of the county. Some of the jobs involved travelling to off shore gas rigs. One involved investigating a rig support ship and helicopter crash. Latterly he under took duties including full scale exercise at Sandringham.

Finally in 2005 Alan moved to Leicestershire commanding the Western Area Scenes of Crime Office where he was responsible for eight members of staff and the forensic management of major crime scenes. He took early retirement/voluntary redundancy 2011.

His personal interests include reading and crosswords, whilst a more active pastime involves working with the local Air Cadets. He was a previous OC of the Squadron.

Following a talk about his life he answered a number of questions from the floor and a surprising number involved the CSI programmes popular on the television. Unfortunately Alan was unable to show us toys of his trade as they had been packed away in boxes for his imminent return to Norfolk.

Wings Appeal Organiser Retires

We are sorry to have to inform you all that David Craven our Wings Appeal Organiser has had to resign.

David has signed up again in the RAF Reserves and has been posted to RAF Brize Norton.

We wish him well in his new career and welcome him back to any of our meetings when he is able.

Peter

THE RUTLAND FLYING HORSESHOE



RAFALO Update—February 2014

The following have been taken from Ady Morris's paper.

A400M. The first A400M has been delivered to the French Air Force. This is the first of 50 ordered by France and of a total of 174 on order. The first of the 22 aircraft ordered by the UK is scheduled for delivery in 2014.



F-35B Lightning II has successfully employed a GBU-12 Paveway II laser-guided weapon from the internal weapons bay against a test target.



The 500-pound GBU-12 general purpose bomb carried a nose-mounted laser seeker and flight guidance fins for precision strike was released at 25,000 feet and the bomb fell for 35 seconds before hitting a tank on the Edwards Air Force Base test range. The aircraft used its Electro-Optical Targeting System (EOTS) to enable the pilot to identify, track, designate and accurately deliver the GBU-12 on target.

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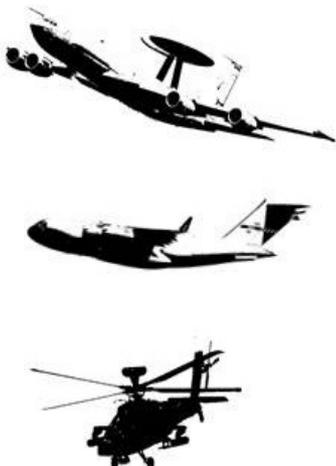


Voyager was given the green light to begin air-to-air refuelling operations

with Typhoon in a formal Release to Service on 15th Aug and since its first Typhoon towline on 11th Jun, has now completed more than 350 contacts. Six of the aircraft that make up the core nine-strong Voyager fleet have been delivered. The militarily Airbus A330-200 has a total fuel capacity of 111 tonnes. Air Tanker has also received its Extended Twin Engine Operations clearance which allows its civilian airline operation to take on long-range routes by allowing it to fly up to 180 minutes from the nearest suitable airport. This was a precursor to its role in support of the Falklands air bridge which Voyager began last month with a twice weekly schedule



The First Tranche 3 Typhoon — known as BS116 — has completed engine ground testing at BAE Systems' facility in Warton. Engine ground runs are the last stage of testing before the aircraft makes its first flight, scheduled this month..





The Gazette

Dates For Your Diary



5th March	AGM	
2nd April	Rob Abell	Will Planning Solutions to talk about lasting powers of attorney.
7th May	TBA	
4th June	Sandy Saunders	Being a member of the Guinea Pig Club

What's on Forthcoming Events

See 2014 List at the AGM

Membership Secretary

We welcome John Goff, who joined us in February. John lives in Market Overton.

Branch Meeting

Branch Meetings are First Wednesday every month
Venue: Cottesmore Sports & Social Club 7.00 for 7.30pm

Branch Committee Members

President: Air Marshal Sir John M D Sutton KCB (Retd)

Chairman: Duncan Manderson, Pickwell Grange, Whissendine, LE15 7ER, 01664 474274

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Resigned March 2014

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Christmas Dinner Organiser, Roger Hyde, Tel 01572 813547 email g3zdw@btinternet.com