



Newsletter - AGM Report

Welcome to this special edition of our newsletter, bringing you details of what happened at our Annual General Meeting, held on Saturday October 6th at the Imperial War Museum at Duxford.



Our report below follows the flow of the meeting, which started at 2pm. This had allowed members to wander the museum, although miserable weather did not encourage too much outside activity. Attendance at the AGM did mean free admission to the museum and our conference room overlooked the exhibits within the Air and Space Hangar. We were pleased to welcome representatives from both the Netherlands and French (BFAB) branches of Air-Britain, as well as a number of the UK branches.

We also had a small Sales Stand in attendance and were pleased to have copies of the Auster book available again, following delivery of the reprint order.

If you want to comment on any of the matters below, then please feel free to contact me [HERE](#) or post to the [AGM](#) thread on the Message Board

Malcolm Fillmore
Chairman

In order to give the tellers time to count the votes for the election of Directors to the Trust board, the first item was a report by the Chairman, Malcolm Fillmore, on the current position of Air-Britain.

Chairman's Report to AGM – October 6th 2018

Air-Britain is alive and well and 70 years old. Survival beyond the biblical three score years and ten means that we are having to recognise and respond to the changes in our membership and their requirements as we progress steadily through the 21st century and the ever-increasing impact of electronic media in all its forms.

As we are now a charitable trust, it is required that we have specific objects that we should achieve in order to retain this important status. Essentially, Air-Britain's focus is upon promoting aeronautical history, raising awareness of and knowledge of aviation, acquiring and maintaining an archive, publishing books & information on aviation and we are also able to provide financial assistance to students and writers. The Board monitors the charity's performance against these objects on a quarterly basis. We believe that we are achieving our charitable objects through a variety of activities including ABPIC, AB-IX, our annual Fly-In, the branch network, the gradual accrual of archive material and, of course, our publication programme.

Sadly, we have lost a number of our long-standing stalwarts during the last 12 months – Jim Halley, Mike Hooks, Tony Morris, Derek King and Tony Beales to name but a few and we have to recognise that we are all getting older and we need new blood both to help run the Association and also to provide the research and reporting activities which sustains our publications.

Thus far, I can advise you that we have just about continued to recruit and retain such assistance so as to maintain our position as the premier aviation enthusiast body in the world. However, we are not complacent and our Board and the various underlying committees continue to seek to respond to market changes and members' requirements. We will always need new people coming forward to help.

One significant change to our internal management structure this year is that Steve Mitchell, recently retired from a senior accountancy post in industry, agreed to take on a part-time role

happen on a day to day basis and the 'go-to' man when we want anything done. And, thus far, I am happy to report that this is what he is achieving!

One major change introduced this year was the consolidation of our three quarterly magazines into one larger Aviation World combined with spinning off the majority of the important listings material from Archive and Aeromilitaria into a digital format on the members section of our website. While this decision was perhaps a little controversial, it was in part driven by our analysis of the separate costs and revenues of maintaining the status quo, as well as listening to representations of subscribers who wanted more meaty articles as opposed to the increasing number of (albeit useful) listings. I am pleased to report that we have received many favourable comments and feedback from the changes.

We also took the opportunity of revamping our membership options so that those who simply wanted AB News could subscribe for that while still maintaining their other membership benefits. ABN, currently running at 210 pages per month is expertly managed by Sue Bushell and her team of 20 or so sub-editors and the vast number of contributors.

Aviation World, formerly our house magazine available to all but now including Archive and Aeromilitaria material, therefore became an option – either standalone or combined with ABN and expertly edited by Rod Simpson and running at 72 pages per quarter. However, Rod is anxious to recruit an assistant editor to ensure that the material published is of the highest quality. So, if you or someone you know would be interested, please step forward!

To supplement and indeed enhance communications to all members, we have introduced two new forms of electronic media. The first has been our online Message Board, which enables members both to communicate and share information with other members but also, as important, for them to discuss with Air-Britain management, issues of concern or interest and for us to announce new products and services etc.

The Message Board was designed, in part, to provide an opportunity for Members to post and exchange messages which did not meet the remit of our highly successful AB-IX or Air-Britain Information Exchange. Please remember that AB-IX was designed specifically as a forum for answering Members' aviation queries but unfortunately some postings tended to stray off subject and sometimes worse and on occasion regrettably caused upset to a number of members.

We are therefore a little disappointed that the Message Board uptake to date has been somewhat sparse with, so far, only about 400 of our members accessing it. There are multiple ways of obtaining easy access – and in particular you can receive automatic alerts as and when postings occur or simply have daily updates. If these alerts are not of interest, the posting can simply not be viewed – but at least you will have a feel for what is going on! I would urge all of you to join up so that we, the management of Air-Britain can readily tell you what's new and what is going on and seek your feedback and assistance.

Also, remember that while part of the Message Board is a publicly accessible forum, there is a member's only section – which is, of course, where some of the more interesting things are covered!

Secondly, we have now started to issue our e-Newsletter direct to your mailbox. Thus far two issues have been sent out and were received by just over 75% of our membership. If you haven't received it, that is probably because we don't have your email address – so please let us know what it is! We have a published privacy policy and you are always able to opt-out, so you need be in no fear in letting us have your address – we are not able to share it elsewhere – and indeed, it is restricted to only a few 'need to know' people within AB management.

About 60% of our members have thus far accessed the e-Newsletter, which is still very much in its formative stage but we are encouraged and enthusiastic that this is the way of keeping you regularly up to date with what is going on. For example, it is our intention to include in the e-Newsletter regular updates of matters considered and decisions made at our various Board and Executive Committee meetings.

Please also remember that if you are involved in running one of our Branches, both these electronic products are also tools that you can fully utilise to promote what you are doing. I would like particularly to thank Steve Mitchell for all the work that he has put into organising and editing these new communication tools and meeting the somewhat onerous recently introduced GDPR requirements.

While on the subject of electronic material, we also changed our eABN offering at the beginning of this year. eABN, the electronic version of Air-Britain News, continues to be available some two weeks prior to the printed version arriving on your doorstep. We have

considerable web footprint in the commercial marketplace which means that our product is more widely visible. While you have to buy direct from them – either annual subscriptions or individual copies - if you take the annual subscription, you can still obtain the full benefits of Air-Britain membership. In comparison with our previous supplier, where we had to pay them a substantial monthly fee, we are making significant savings using Pocketmags. This service continues to be ably managed by Sean Meagher, who (dare I say it), is one of the younger members of the Board and thus understands such things!

One of Air-Britain's traditional issues is that we seek to serve a wide range of members' interests. In sheer numerical terms, probably the largest bloc of members are from the spotting fraternity. To meet their proper needs and requirements, we continue to enhance our annual QRs and try to get them out as early as possible each year. Meeting the needs of this community was one of the drivers behind providing standalone ABN membership. It is important to recognise that, as well as servicing their legitimate interests – be they simple loggers or photographers, the material created from their interests forms the bedrock of future historical records and data.

Our second major sector is, of course, the historians/researchers and we are continuing to enhance our output and publishing of research material. Too often we are finding that so much published material within the commercial marketplace is based simply on trawling the internet and thus repeating errors. Yes, the internet is a great research tool but must be treated with care and hence we endeavour throughout our published material – both in paper and electronic format – to present both new information but also correct information.

We are intending to put more detailed research information – particularly registers and production lists - on our website and this will be getting more of our attention in the coming year. And we will keep the material indices accessible through the Message Board, e-Newsletter and website.

As regards the website, this has been fully overhauled, thanks primarily to the efforts of Ian Sparkes and with the assistance of Geoff Bogle of Resolution Computers. The website is now established as both the signpost for all our online activities as well as being the custodian site for our research archive. There are links to the secure Members area as well as links taking you into the Message Board and copies of the e-Newsletters. At present, some 750 Members have signed up to access the Members-only area but the contents that

area, the various research files presently held in AB-IX.

AB-IX itself continues to suffer from problems not of our making. Some members find it difficult to access on occasion (although Simon Wills and Chris Armstrong have been able to sort most of these issues out) but because it is hosted on Yahoo, there are endemic issues and there remains uncertainty as to Yahoo's future intentions. We do however, have a team actively looking at alternatives.

I would also like to mention the huge success that is AB-PIC and which is widely regarded as the best aviation photographic site on the internet and is particularly renowned for its ease of use and the accuracy of the captioning. Again, this has been substantially upgraded in the past year and profound thanks go to Simon Wills and his team of approvers for making it such a credit to Air-Britain.

In terms of book production, we have a longlist of titles under research and in the course of preparation. This year we have already published the late Derek King's history of the civil Lancaster to York as well as the first of two books on the Auster. The latter sold out quickly and well beyond our expectations such that we have now gone for a reprint, which was delivered two days ago. Hence copies are now available for sale here today. Produced primarily by Tom Wenham and Rod Simpson, the success of the Auster book, which followed on from the same authors' history of Beagle Aircraft, has encouraged the team to storm ahead with a book on the Scottish Aviation Bulldog in time for next year's 50th anniversary of the type.

Also in the frame for early publication is a detailed history of the Bristol Beaufighter and we are still hopeful of finally getting the Bristol Fighter into print, although the continuing acquisition of fresh information and changes among the research team has delayed matters a little. Equally delayed through the sudden acquisition of more material from the Miles family is Peter Amos's follow-up to the first three Miles histories. The new book will take us from the 1948 demise of Miles Aircraft, through the recovery of the activities of FG and George Miles and their innovative products and up to their sell-out to Beagle.

Other products in the course of preparation cover most of the other British manufacturing companies and/or their products – both pre and postwar. So watch this space.

World covering the Airbus and including the Bombardier CS take-over. He is now on stream with his team to produce the two further volumes on Boeing and everything else, the first of which we hope to publish next year and then continue to update the series on a regular cycle.

The Book Publishing Committee, under the control and management of Nigel Dingley, continues to encourage the finalisation of many long-standing projects including John Davis and his team on the Douglas DC-4 as well as John McCrickard's VC-10, both of which are now scheduled for publication next year.

Leaving aside our publishing programme, let me turn now to our other activities. Once again we held our successful Fly-In at North Weald, expertly organised as always by Phil Kemp and his team. However, for a number of reasons, we have decided that this year will be the last at North Weald and Phil is in discussions to find a new location for 2019. Assuming the present discussions are successful, we will be making an announcement in the near future – but for the moment, we have to be cautious about saying anything more.

Air-Britain Travel under the management of Dennis Clement again completed a successful programme of three trips this year – the major one was to Alaska and Seattle and we also did Aero Expo at Friedrichshafen which included visits to a range of fields and airports en route and then there was a four-day visit to Madrid, during which a break-out group visited the Cuatro Vientos museum as well as a few other local fields. I went on all three trips and the Alaskan trip was mind-blowing, particularly the visit to Anchorage and the adjacent Lake Hood. This will be written-up in a forthcoming issue of Aviation World but, to set the scene, I managed to take photos of just under 4,000 different aircraft including well over 400 floatplanes and including, for lovers of older light aircraft, no less than 250 Super Cubs! Non-aviation highlights of that trip included our organiser actually walking into Lake Hood and then having to go back in again to rescue his passport and then there was the casual remark on return to the hotel – did you see the bear that was prowling round the aircraft park.....! All will be revealed in due course – so long as you get Aviation World!

Regrettably, the low numbers actually taking up the Alaska trip meant that we did not cover the costs this time and I would therefore urge everyone to consider actively supporting Air-Britain Travel. You will have a great time on these trips and get access to airfields with ramp tours etc which are simply not available to independent travellers.

Our Sales and Distribution department continues to operate very successfully from Tonbridge under the management of John Henderson. Open regularly on Monday mornings and at other times by arrangement, it houses not only the new stocks but also our growing second-hand and back issues material, this latter under the control of Roger Birchall. We regrettably have to report that Terry Mitchell, a long-standing Air-Britain stalwart, has had to give up his role of managing back issues due to serious illness. We wish Terry a speedy recovery.

While we had difficulties this year in getting full co-ordination of the credit card system, all seems fine now. We are investigating the prospects of taking Paypal and also taking an Amazon Marketplace site but need to be assured that this will not adversely impact on selling prices by opening up a discount war! If you live in the Tonbridge area, John would appreciate some additional offers of help. We are also still looking for someone or ones to manage eBay sales.

On the issue of our growing stocks of pre-owned books and magazines, we are grateful to all those members who have downsized their collections and also offer thanks to those who have now passed-on and recognised Air-Britain in their will or through their relatives etc. Such collections are first filtered for adding to the archive collection (of which more in a moment) and then listed and made available at reasonable prices on our second-hand lists. Even surplus stocks are not wasted since we now have a mutual arrangement with Duxford Aviation Society to pass on such surpluses for sale in their shop. In exchange, they will recognise us should they acquire stuff useful for our archive.

Photographic donations are also, of course, welcomed and a team reporting to Rod Simpson are continually busy sorting and cataloguing such collections.

I would like to specifically mention the donations in their wills by the late David Birch, Peter Cook, Roy Hobbs and Mike Hansworth's father – all of which were safely gathered in this year. We also benefitted from a vast collection of various magazines donated from Holland courtesy of Coen van den Heuvel of Flash Aviation as well as clearing out much of the CAA library at Gatwick when they needed the space for something better (or so they said!).

This does move me on to the Archive project and I regret that we have not made very much progress, other than steadily increasing the collections. This is now being given some

should be made accessible to researchers and others. Various ideas have been suggested and we are open to more so if there are those who think they can help us to bring such plans into practical fruition, we would be delighted for such assistance and to join the steering group being set up under Phil Kemp. To put scale to what we have, there are presently about 9,000 plus books and perhaps 35,000 magazines, perhaps 30 or so archive storage boxes together with a lot of material not yet sorted and boxed and an uncounted collection of negatives, slides and prints. In addition we have the extensive Jack Meaden collection stored in the west country and under the control of Dave Partington. And we haven't yet put in place a formal policy for digital material – though these are also being accumulated.

We believe that one of our key charitable purposes is to retain and maintain a comprehensive and accessible archive so that we will become the go-to place for future research and historians. But it is a project that does need to be properly and carefully thought through and managed.

Finally, it is conventional at our AGM to announce what our next year's subscription rates will be. Howard Nash, our Membership Secretary has, as always, prepared a detailed analysis using various assumptions to support our decision-making. The major issue affecting subscriptions, as always, is the ever-rising cost of postage. Equally, the size of our publications is now right on the edge of a postal band, so giving us a risk of moving into the next and more expensive band. The decision is therefore that we will increase ABN and Aviation World membership by £1.00 per annum and, if you take both, by £2.00. UK membership of ABN and Aviation World will thus now be £41 and £31 respectively and combined will be £67.

Ladies and gentlemen, I believe that Air-Britain is in good shape to move forward – and with a nod to our French friends here today, no matter what happens with Brexit! I and the rest of your Board of Trustee Directors together with the management of the Association look forward to your continuing support.

Our second item was the formal business of the AGM, where the following resolution were voted on. The first three were voted by show of hands at the meeting.

To receive the audited accounts for the financial year ended 31 March 2018, and the Directors' and Auditors' reports thereon.

To reappoint Carter Nicholls Limited as auditors of the Company, to hold office until the conclusion of the next general meeting when the accounts are laid before the Company.

To authorise the directors to determine the remuneration of the auditors.

All three resolutions were passed by the meeting.

As there were six candidates for five positions as Directors of The Air-Britain Trust Ltd, paper and proxy votes were gathered for this election. As well as proxies sent to the Company Secretary prior to the meeting, members attending completed voting slips prior to the commencement of the meeting. As a result of those votes the following were elected to serve as Directors.

- **Neville David Welch**
- **Roderick Wykeham Simpson**
- **Sean Colin Meagher**
- **Anthony Charles Merton Jones**
- **Susan Jayne Bushell.**

The Chairman thanked Tony Jones, who was unsuccessful, for his many years of service to Air-Britain, in a number of roles, including a spell as Chairman and wished him well.

It is a traditional part of our AGM to give a number of awards relating to the prior year and this year's winners were -

Gwyther Cup for the best Archive article:

famous Bucker 133 Jungmeister acrobatic biplane

Best Aeromilitaria article:

Vic Flintham's comprehensive examination of the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis, including a breakdown of the many and varied units involved in the airborne operations

CW Cain Air Writer's Trophy for the best AvWorld contribution:

Phil Dunnington for his Bristol to Toronto article about the experiences of taking a Beech 18 and a hot-air balloon via Iceland and Greenland to Canada, which also featured the best cover photograph of any aviation magazine in 2017

Don Hannah Award for the best book published by Air-Britain in 2017:

Richard Church's highly-researched historical and operational treatise on the Avro 748, Andover and BAe ATP stable of twin-turboprop transport aircraft

AAHS Trophy for the best Air-Britain contribution to US aviation history:

Rod Simpson for his three-part series covering the pre-war formation of Aeronca Aircraft in 1928 right through to the range of American Champion Aircraft currently in production

Founder's Award for very significant contribution to Air-Britain's success over many years:

The Air-Britain News team of sub-editors, led by Sue Bushell, who now produce what is arguably the most wide-ranging and best-presented monthly enthusiast aviation magazine in



The James J Halley award, for outstanding work in the research and recording of military aviation activities:

Phil Butler for his life-long research and publication of many dozens of articles on British military aviation history and major contributions to several seminal books on a very wide range of subjects in this complex arena.

The Chairman's award for meritorious service to Air-Britain

Awarded to Steve Mitchell

Honorary Life Memberships:

For Sue Bushell, for the editorial skills which she has brought to Air-Britain News as well as to our book publishing programme.

The final section was to throw the meeting open to a Question and Answer session, where those attending could raise subjects of interest to them regarding the direction that Air-Britain is taking.

Subjects included -

- The balance of the use of the printed medium against electronic means. Air-Britain will continue to publish printed magazines and books, but there are certain items, particularly large listings, better suited to be shared via the Air-Britain website.
- The number of subscribers for eABN - the electronic version of Air-Britain News - it is difficult to confirm, as some people will buy a 12 month subscription, while others buy single issues from month to month, but thought to be in excess of 100. It was noted that pirate versions of eABN can be found on the web; while the eABN host, Pocketmags, will take action where they have legal clout some countries hosting these pirate websites do not respond.
- There was a discussion on the size of books, where we need to consider the printing and binding restrictions. Another discussion was around the possible use of "print-to-demand" publishing, but currently the economics mean that for any short-run they would cost more than traditional printing.
- Queries were raised regarding the possible publication of a new RAF Serials book (for ZA-ZZ) and the Crash Sites Listings previously in Aeromilitaria. Unfortunately with the passing of Jim Halley we no longer have anybody to further these items, but would welcome serious input if there is a new volunteer.
- A request to share details of the various management committees was made and, as mentioned in the Chairman's report, a summary of discussions will be included in future Newsletters.
- Details of the 2019 Travel Programme were requested - three trips are planned, including AERO Friedrichshafen and Johannesburg. Full details will be confirmed via our magazines and Newsletter as soon as they are firmed up.
- There are a number of publications on the Book Publishing Committee's long-list and they would welcome anybody who would be able to help with editing, proof-reading or other behind-the-scenes activities necessary to get a book to the high standard expected of our publications.
- There was recognition of the hard work by many members in running all the activities of our organisation.

One final item was a presentation to the Air-Britain archive by the Branche Francaise d'Air-Britain, who this year celebrated their own 50th anniversary.

On behalf of BFAB, Patrick Vinot Prefontaine presented a series of books covering World War 1 airfields in France, whether used by the French and their allies or German forces.



(thanks to Bill Fisher of the photo)

This newsletter is just one element of Air-Britain's presence on the web.

Most can be accessed from our [Main Website](#) which includes links to

- our secure [Sales site](#), where Air-Britain publications can be ordered
- [ABPIC](#) - Air-Britain's online photo gallery with well over 500,000 images. Open to members and non-members, all images are screened prior to acceptance. A great way of showing and sharing your images. You, the photographer, retain all ownership rights. Members are frequently asked to share their images with others.

- The [Air-Britain Message Board](#) where members can share on a range of subjects and where we will announce new publications and other news of the organisation, often in advance of the printed magazines. A guide on how to register can be found [HERE](#)
- Members Area - containing various files, including registers and listings previously published in Archive and Aeromilitaria only available to members. You can register to access these files [HERE](#).

In addition we have

- [AB-IX](#) - Open to members only, AB-IX is run as part of Yahoogroups. An online discussion forum for aviation research topics only. Members can set their own message preferences (single or daily digest) within Yahoogroups. For more details contact the group owner
- eABN - an electronic version of Air-Britain News, available days before the printed version. Available in single issue or on subscription via [Pocketmags](#).
- The [Air-Britain Facebook](#) page - where we share details of Air-Britain happenings, as well as other selected items related to aviation.