



## 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 12th at the RAF Museum at Hendon.



Our report below follows the flow of the meeting, which started at 2pm. This had allowed members to wander the museum, with considerable revamping of the exhibits over the last couple of years, as the RAF celebrated its centenary.

We also had a small Sales Stand in attendance and were pleased to have copies of two new books available; the second edition of Aircraft Museums and Collections of the Rest of the World and the second part of Jet Airliner Production - Boeing .

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

The meeting commenced with the formal business of the AGM, where the following resolutions were voted on. All were voted by show of hands at the meeting.

1

To receive the audited accounts for the financial year ended 31 March 2019, and the Director and Auditors' reports thereon.

- 2 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.
- 3 To authorise the directors to determine the remuneration of the auditors.

All three resolutions were passed by the meeting.

Directors of The Air-Britain Trust Ltd are required to stand for re-election on a rotating basis. There were four existing directors willing to stand for re-election and as they were the only candidates for the four vacancies, the election was by a show of hands. The following were therefore re-elected

- Nigel Albert Dingley
- Malcolm Peter Fillmore
- Stephen John Mitchell
- Simon Whitwell Wills

Following the formal part of the meeting, we were pleased to recognise a number of our members through the annual awards. In previous years, there were separate awards for each of our three quarterly magazines, Aviation World, Aeromilitaria and Archive. With the amalgamation of all three magazines into one magazine, Aviation World, there are now to be one award for the best civil-based article and one for the best military-based article, with the winner in each category being entitled to hold the trophy for six months. Articles with both civil and military content are judged on the basis of their majority content.

**The Charles W Cain Air Writer's Trophy**

Civil-based article, covering Early Rhodesian Aviation, in two parts, by **Dave Newnham**

Military-based article, on British Naval Airships, in three parts, by **Brian Turpin**

**The Don Hannah Award** for the best non-annual Air-Britain book published in 2018,

Lancaster to York, by the late **Derek King**

**The H B Gwyther Memorial Cup** for unstinting backroom work for Air-Britain,

**Simon Wills** (AB-IX and AB-PIC)

**The American Aviation Historical Society (AAHS) Trophy,**

for his work on the US civil register, **Barrie Towey**

**The James J Halley Award** for long-time skilful in-depth research of military aviation,  
to **Lee Howard** for his work connected with UK naval aviation

**The Founder's Award** for long-term outstanding service to Air-Britain in many roles,  
to **Nigel Dingley**, for his work as Company Secretary and Chairman of the Books Publishing  
Committee for over ten years

**Honorary Life Membership**

for his long-held Minute-taking roles for the Board and several Committees and for looking  
after Air-Britain's various insurances, to **Michael Coulson**

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

to **Phil Kemp** in recognition of his years of service in organising the Fly-In, in his role as  
chair of the Executive Committee and in his new role as chair of the Archive Committee –  
amongst many other services over an extended period for Air-Britain undertaken while he is  
also still in full-time employment.

### Chairman's Report to AGM – October 12th 2019

Progress in a not for profit volunteer organisation is rarely speedy but progress has clearly been made over the last year and we are on-stream to bring about developments which will benefit all members and ensure we not only continue to be 'fit for purpose' but attract new membership from amongst the significant numbers of aviation enthusiasts that one continues to see at airports and air shows etc.

In my Report last year, our 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, I outlined a considerable number of changes that we had introduced or had started to introduce. We continue to be the premier aviation enthusiast body in the world and our aim is to be recognised by all as the 'go to' source of reliable and accurate information, especially in these days where so much of what is easily available on the internet feels unsatisfactory.

Air-Britain broadly serves two compatible markets. It is probably true that the majority of our members, and indeed other enthusiasts, primarily want up to date and readily available accurate information on what they may have just seen or photographed, or simply be interested in. But there is a significant number of those whose interest and passion also lies in the detailed research into aviation and aircraft history.

Our charitable purposes are perhaps rightly (but not exclusively) focussed on this second sector – many of whom will, like me, have started out as a spotter but then got the research bug. And it is the researcher who will generate the material which then generates the new books and publications and extends our available knowledge.

We are therefore actively spending time and resources in ensuring that not only do we continue to publish top-class books but we are steadily revamping our digital presence so as to host an increasing amount of actively-managed databases. This is proving to be a greater challenge than perhaps anticipated but our vision is that our website will, in the foreseeable future, become increasingly populated with detailed histories, production lists and other research material, much of which will be accessible to all.

We clearly still have some way to go but progress is being made. Crucial to this element of our future is not only bringing on board the active participation of researchers and the like but ensuring that the information made available is kept up to date on a regular basis. Far too many online databases are woefully out of date – or simply disappear from view.

There can be little doubt that improving the online digital content of Air-Britain is essential in ensuring our future viability and vital for attracting new members.

That is our vision and we continue to work towards it.

So, let us have a quick run through what we have been doing over the past year and our specific plans for the coming year.

On the magazine front, Air-Britain News continues its renowned success with an average page count per issue of just under 200. With the ever increasing amount of information coming from our sterling band of contributors, keeping a control on size is becoming an issue. One problem in making it even bigger is the impact its increased weight would have on mailing costs. While this is a relatively small penalty on bulk mailing in the UK, there would be a material impact on overseas postage. There are internal discussions underway to look into the consequences and find a sensible solution.

It is invidious to select out any particular sections of ABN for comment over the last year but I think the amount of information published on the commercial airliner scene is now quite amazing and must be considerably more extensive than available within the professional aviation market. Our

thanks go to Sue Bushell for pulling this magazine together regularly and on time and I ask her to convey our huge thanks to the work done by the team and obviously by those who supply the underlying information.

Aviation World went through a change last year following the merger of our previous three quarterly magazines and has continued to be ably edited by Rod Simpson. But, having managed the change, Rod is now stepping back a little and the editorship of Aviation World is being transferred to Paul Jackson. We offer considerable thanks to Rod for all his supreme services over the years and know that he will continue to provide active input and advice well into the future.

Paul Jackson is, of course, well known for being editor of Jane's All the World's Aircraft until recent changes made by the owners of that product and indeed many years earlier was known for a number of important enthusiast titles with Midland Counties. Paul is a relatively recent appointee to our Board and is making a considerable and useful impact on our future progress and direction.

On the subject of magazines, we must not ignore eABN, the digital version of Air-Britain News, now available through PocketMags – either as single copies or by subscription. Purchase of a 12-month subscription entitles one to apply for full membership rights and can particularly be of interest to overseas members where postage costs can be expensive. It also means that each edition is available quite a few days earlier than the printed copy. Thanks particularly to Sean Meagher for overseeing this product.

On our book publishing front, we have this week published Bob Ogden's massive second edition of Museums and Collections of the Rest of the World (ie excluding Europe and North America) as well as the second volume of Jet Airliners of the World – Boeing to follow on from last year's successful Airbus book. The third volume covering all other manufacturers will follow in 2020 and it is our intention to update all these volumes on a regular three-year cycle. Thanks to Terry Smith and Tony Pither for their efforts in this series.

Our annuals – both the various QRs and the larger handbooks continue to be produced on a regular basis and on time and continue to sell well and be considered as best in market. As to our non-annuals, we brought out the Scottish Aviation Bulldog to celebrate its 50<sup>th</sup> birthday but it has to be admitted that others we had hoped to be available still remain in the late stages of preparation. It is the inevitable 80:20 problem of getting and processing the last vital bits of information and photos. But, I am confident that 2020 will be an excellent year for new one-offs. Thanks, as always, to Nigel Dingley and the Book Publishing Committee – Nigel I know will be putting increased pressure on the authors and editors to ensure that the maximum number of pending titles can be published by this

time next year, which will definitely include both the Bristol Fighter and the VC-10 and I am personally required to get the second Auster book out too!

This year, the annual Fly-In moved to Turweston and was a considerable success – we even got the good weather this year! Turweston is the home of the Light Aircraft Association and both they and the airfield's management were very happy with the arrangements overseen by Phil Kemp and have invited us back next year.

On the Travel front, once again, Dennis Clement has successfully managed three overseas trips. The regular trip to Friedrichshafen in April which included ten other airfield and airport visits was a considerable success, followed by a long weekend at Amsterdam and, earlier this month, a record party of 29 returned intact from Johannesburg where we were able to get unprecedented access to airfields in the locality. Next year, the major trip will see us return to Oshkosh.

Reverting to our digital presence, we must mention to growing success of AB-PIC, which is demonstrably one of the leading sources of aviation photos on the internet and undoubtedly the site which provides the most reliable and comprehensive accompanying data. This continues to expand at a tremendous rate and now has close to 600,000 images. We have to thank Simon Wills and his team for the huge amount of effort that is put in to this product.

We continue to investigate what to do with the highly successful Air-Britain Information Exchange or AB-IX given the ongoing problems with its Yahoo platform. This will have to change in the near future but we must ensure proper continuity and compatibility as and when we migrate to another platform. We have endeavoured to persuade members to use the Message Board as an alternative but take-up is still relatively poor for some reason. There is a lot of information and data now being put on the Message Board and it is a simple to use operation – one can programme it to send a short outline message whenever a new posting is made and then you decide whether to access it by a click of the mouse or screen or discard it. As a technophobe, if I can use it successfully, anyone can!

Also over the last year, we experimented with sending out e-newsletters to members. This task was undertaken by Steve Mitchell but we have now persuaded Sue Bushell to take this initiative on and she will now be producing a regular monthly newsletter alongside her editorship of ABN and many other obligations for AB. She is charged with pestering everyone for updates so that you can be kept regularly and reliably informed not only with what is going on within AB but also with links to whatever we have found on the net which might be of interest.

Finally, I want to say where we are with the archive project. We continue to acquire collections – one major one in the year was from the late Jenny Gradidge. Acquisitions can be divided into research materials, which we keep intact. Then there are the books and magazines with those not needed to our collection being made available for resale in our second-hand department. Surplus stocks are then passed to the Duxford Aviation Society for their shop. And finally photographs, where presently these are overseen by Rod Simpson who has a small team of indexers so as to make them accessible. In this context, we are actively looking for further volunteers, particularly in expanding our photo archives by cataloguing the increasing number of digital images.

Recent developments have required us to move what was the Jack Meaden donated collection from its unit in Stroud and new larger premises have been found in Lambourn near Swindon and which were also needed in any event to house the Gradidge collection. More of our research archival material will also shortly be moving there and, under the management of Dave Partington, it is hoped that it can be made more accessible to researchers.

This is very much an interim solution and, under Phil Kemp, an Archive Committee has been formed to agree our policies on our growing acquisitions and to develop a plan for their future preservation, identification and, importantly, accessibility.

Alongside this development, we can announce that we are actively involved in a new national body that is being formed under the working title of the Aerospace and Aviation Archives Initiative. This stemmed from a decision by Aviation Heritage UK (the former BAPC) that while they had most of their members' artefacts identified and catalogued, no-one really knew who held what paper and photographic archives.

Following an initial meeting late last year to seek to remedy this issue, a formal first meeting was held at Brooklands earlier this year at which stage it became under the active wing of The National Archives. Steve Mitchell and I are both on this group as Air-Britain is seen as representing the major potential users of archival records and other enthusiastic members include representatives of BAE Systems, Leonardo (ie Westland), the Royal Aeronautical Society, the RAF Museum as well as AHUK. We have been particularly encouraged by the attitude of BAE who have clearly now identified a good commercial rationale for recovering and preserving their internal records as part of the Heritage Industry and indeed we were recently shown over their extensive collection of archive boxes etc in what I believe were the former Black Sheds at Farnborough.

An initial conference, aimed at the archivists and similar at museums and local collections is being organised in Bristol for February, following which it is expected that the Initiative will be formally



announced and launched.

So, ladies and gentlemen, there is lots going on within Air-Britain and I hope this summary gives you some insight into where we are and what we are doing for you and for the wider interests of aviation history and enthusiasts.

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 -

- Whether Air-Britain would be charging for access to archive material. This is still being finalised, but it is hoped that access for bona-fide researchers would be free or, at most, at cost.
- It was confirmed that the 2020 Fly-In would be at Turweston again, on the third weekend of June.
- There was a discussion on future subjects for Air-Britain books, particularly type histories. The BAC 111 and Boeing 707 were both mentioned, but a key factor is for authors to come forward.
- A question was asked about Air-Britain's social media presence. There are currently no plans to change the Facebook set-up, while what we do does not fit with the Twitter profile. The future of AB-IX is being reviewed, while we also have a Message Board open to all members.
- Another discussion was around the publication of more CDs in the Magazines series. Sales of the later editions were slower, while newer machines tend not to have CD drives. A-B are looking at making some of this content available on-line.
- How do we attract new members, especially as the profile of our members are generally aging. There are discussions ongoing on what we can offer, both in printed and on-line formats. to attract more members.
- There are a number of Air-Britain members around the UK, as well as in France and the Netherlands, but when last surveyed only around 10% of branch members are also full Air-Britain members. This is an opportunity to attract more members.
- A question was asked about the use of eco-covers for magazine mailings. In fact Air-Britain had tested such covers a few months ago. No issues were found with the covers, but although not plastic they are still not easily recyclable. There is also an additional cost and

therefore Air-Britain are not moving over to these at this time.

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.