



AGM 2022 Report

Welcome to this report on the proceedings of our Annual General Meeting, held on Saturday October 8th at Oxford Airport.



Our report below follows the flow of the meeting, which started at 1:30pm. We are grateful to the Airport staff for their help in facilitating the meeting and for allowing us to conduct guided hangar tours ahead of the actual meeting.



53 members attended, as well as 4 following the meeting on Zoom. 41 proxies had also been received prior to the meeting, along with 6 formal apologies.

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 Air-Britain Trust

Chairman's Report to the Annual General Meeting – October 8th 2022

Ladies and Gentlemen – welcome to the Annual General Meeting of The Air-Britain Trust. I also hope that those of you who were able to get on the hangar tours, ably organised by Dennis Clement, will have found something there of interest – I know that I did!

As is usual, there are the formal parts of this meeting which I hope can be dealt with in a relatively straightforward manner. We also use this opportunity of announcing our annual awards and there is then the opportunity for you all to raise and respond to any matters relating to Air-Britain as appropriate – addressing either myself or through me to any others present who provide services to Air-Britain.

You will all have received (I trust) the Annual Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2022 accompanied by not only the statutory material required to be provided but also my Chairman's Report. I do not therefore propose to read that out afresh.

However, I think it is important that we focus this meeting on material issues affecting the future of Air-Britain. We have now been going for close on 75 years and have over those years steadily built up our financial reserves so as to enable us to produce what you, the membership, want. These reserves have enabled us to produce publications – both magazines and books – which are generally recognised as second to none.

But, in the last few years and increasingly in the year under review and the period since, our revenues from both membership subscriptions and from the profits made on books have simply not covered our costs. This situation cannot be allowed to continue since it will jeopardise the future of Air-Britain.

We are, like so many voluntary organisations suffering from a steady declining number of members as Anno Domini regrettably takes its toll and not enough younger enthusiasts take up membership to replace them. It seems to us that while there is still considerable, even growing, interest in aviation, many nowadays choose to have their requirements met simply by freely accessing the internet.

Equally, our costs are going up – dealing with physical things like books and magazines, the costs of printing, paper and particularly postage are outstripping inflation. And then we have to come to the issue of the costs we need to pay to those who provide the essential services. Regrettably, we are no longer able to run an organisation such as Air-Britain on the freely-provided goodwill of volunteers as we perhaps did twenty years ago.

And it is to this latter point that I want to address you all. Air-Britain is creaking at the edges. Leaving aside those activities where we now have no option but to pay for services rendered, we rely on a steadily decreasing number of volunteers actively helping to run Air-Britain and provide the things that you want.

And at this stage, it is with regret that I have to advise that several of our stalwarts are in the process of standing down. David Lee, one of our non-executive Trustees and who has brought a huge amount of knowledge and experience to the Board, has been forced to stand down for personal health reasons. We thank him for all that he has done for us and wish him all the best for the future.

Nigel Dingley, a long-standing member of the Board and chairman of our publishing committee, has also decided that it is time for him to hand over that chairman role and he has also decided to leave the Trust Board. He has put in much hard work over the years in getting our books finalised and into the market as well as endeavoured to maintain a more disciplined and professional approach to this vital function. He is not here today – regrettably he is currently suffering from Covid – but we sincerely thank him for all he has done and hope that he will continue to contribute as a member of the publishing team – and, of course wish him a full and speedy recovery.

Thirdly, Ian Sparkes, one of our team members who properly understands technology and has thus overseen that area for us as IT co-ordinator has also reluctantly decided that his other post-retirement activities are preventing him providing such services to the level he feels we need and is also standing down. Again, we thank him for all the help provided over recent years.

Finally, I have been your Chairman for more years than I can now remember and having reflected on the challenges that we face, I have decided that it is now the right time for me to hand over the baton to someone afresh.

So, simply, we need more membership input and assistance. Every one of you will inevitably have built up some skills and expertise in your life – and I would like you all to consider what you can do to help Air-Britain go forward for the next 75 – or even the next 25 years. We need management skills, we need IT skills, we need marketing skills, we need research skills, we need editing and proof reading skills, we need financial skills – and we need visionary skills so as to help us face up to and meet the challenges of the age and to help focus Air-Britain on the way forward. How we increase our membership. What product we provide and where and how to resource it. How we restore our financial position.

The Board of Trustees are currently engaged in blue sky thinking as to what we need to do not only to provide what you the membership want but also how we should respond to our charitable aims and objectives. We believe we are uniquely placed to maintain and enhance our place in the ‘heritage industry’ for the good of those to come. We need your help in assisting in these thoughts – and to offer your assistance in ensuring that we turn these thoughts into reality.

And with those thoughts hopefully fixed in your mind, may I now move on to the formal business, followed by the awards and then allow an open house for your thoughts and discussions.

Thank you.

The meeting continued with the formal business of the AGM, where the following resolutions were voted on. All were voted by show of hands at the meeting, plus 41 proxies received by the Company Secretary.

1. To receive the audited accounts for the financial year ended 31 March 2022, and the Directors' 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. Also, directors co-opted onto the Board since the last AGM are required to stand for election. As there were only four candidates for the four vacancies, the election was by a show of hands. The following were therefore elected and re-elected

- Peter Graham (elected)
- Malcolm Peter Fillmore (re-elected)
- Stephen John Mitchell (re-elected)
- Simon Whithall Wills (re-elected)

All four were elected to serve on the Trust Board.

ANNUAL AWARDS

Following the formal part of the meeting, we were pleased to recognise a number of our members through the annual awards.

The Awards Committee, consisting of three Air-Britain members chaired by Chris Chatfield, made the following recommendations for approval by the Trust Board, for awards to be made at the 2022 AGM, based on calendar year 2021 activities.

The Charles W Cain Air Writer's Trophy – best Civil-based article in *Aviation World* in 2021

For his article on Mr Willoughby and his Deltas in the Spring and Summer editions, the Air Writer's Trophy is awarded to **Peter Davis**

The James J Halley Trophy – best Military-based article in *Aviation World* in 2021

For the articles on Dick Beechener – RN Helicopter Pioneer in the Spring and Summer editions, the James J Halley Trophy goes to **Guy Warner**

The Don Hannah Award for the best non-annual Air-Britain book published in 2021

At the start of 2021, a book was published with four prestigious authors, Ray Sturtivant, Gordon Page, James J Halley and Philip Jarrett. In those days, you could print a 472-page hardback in full colour for a sale price below £40. Not any more!

Only one of those authors survive today, and that is the redoubtable Phil Jarrett. The subject of the book was *The Bristol Fighter* and the award goes to **the three posthumous authors and Phil Jarrett**

The H B Gwyther Memorial Trophy for unstinting backroom work for Air-Britain

Re-defining the description 'unstinting', for editing an average of around 2000 pages each year for very many years of our unrivalled monthly magazine *Air-Britain News* – and in what spare time is left, for originating several of our hard-cover non-annuals, and the benefits brought to the Publications Committee, this year's H B Gwyther Award goes to **Sue Bushell**

The American Aviation Historical Society (AAHS) Trophy for contributions to US aviation history

For articles in the Spring, Summer and Autumn editions of *Aviation World* entitled Fairchild's remarkable Model 24, the AAHS trophy this year goes to **Tony Broadhurst**

The Founder's Award for long-term outstanding service to Air-Britain in many roles

This year's Award goes to someone who previously received it in 1996. Since then, he has made invaluable contributions to Air-Britain for a further 25 years, in both Treasurer and Sales roles, as well as serving on the Publications Committee throughout, that person is **Mike Rice**

The Chairman's Award

For his outstanding efforts in charge of the Overseas Registers section of *Air-Britain News* ever since ABN came into existence 51 years ago and for his compilation of various 1970s European Overseas Register monographs the Chairman's Award goes to **Ian Burnett**

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.

One question had been submitted prior to the meeting

- Does Air-Britain have any plans to publish an updated version of BRITISH INDEPENDENT AIRLINES 1946 – 1976. Since the original, another 46 years have passed, and I think most of us would struggle to fill in the that huge gap? The original author, Tony Merton Jones, is a current Air-Britain trustee, but at present he does not have the resources needed to prepare a new edition. Air-Britain does not plan to produce a separate version but did issue a CD "*Airlines of the British Isles since 1919*" which is still available from the Sales department.

Further discussions from the floor included

- As deliveries of magazines are currently being delayed, mainly due to Royal Mail strikes, should we consider alternative methods, such as DPD? Generally, these would be more expensive, leading to even higher membership rates. Also our printer is also responsible for putting the magazines into a delivery medium and has an integrated process with Royal Mail.
- As *Air-Britain News* (ABN) currently takes seven working days to produce, are there quicker alternatives? We use litho printing, rather than digital printing, which ensures that the magazine stays in one piece. We have a good relationship with the current printers and believe this is an acceptable turn-round. For those who want a quicker delivery, they can subscribe to *eABN*, which is available up to two weeks earlier, when including postal times.
- With regard to the financial results, what steps are the Board taking to improve the situation? The Board devoted a major part of their last meeting to this topic and have already set in motion savings of around £10k, to be actioned over the coming months. In addition, part of the cause of the 2021/22 loss was a lack of new heavyweight books being published. The current year has already seen the *Bristol Beaufighter* and *General Aviation Handbook*, both of which are selling well.
- Would we consider putting up articles onto the Digital Archive, as well as the numerous listings? These indeed would be welcome and, in fact, there are already a series of articles around Southern Rhodesian aviation, in the archive. It might be the case that subjects that would not be commercially viable as a book could be added to the site.
- A question was raised about changing the printing schedule for *ABN* to ten issues a year, to save money and move some sections on-line only? This can be considered, although some sections, such as the UK Register, are based on monthly outputs from the CAA.
- Are there ways to improve Air-Britain's visibility digitally? If we had more visibility on social channels, such as Twitter or Instagram, then A-B would possibly attract more people, but these are very "instant" mediums and need significant resource to run properly. Another method would be to make the Air-Britain website a go-to resource, again requiring steady resource.

- Now that Howard Curtis is stepping down as editor of *Military Aircraft Markings*, is there an opportunity for Air-Britain to produce an equivalent publication? It is unclear whether the publisher will continue the title with a new editor, or whether A-B has a suitable editor to produce a book to the required quality.
- Do we know how similar hobbies, such as train or bus spotting, have fared in recent years? It would appear that the spotting side has diminished and the main interest in those areas is where actual hardware is involved, such as restoring a Routemaster or being involved in a Heritage Railway.
- Can we have a clue as to future titles from Air-Britain? There are always a lot of projects being worked on, including some that suffer from an author's desire to have every last piece of information included. One example is the DC-4 history, which has been in progress for at least 15 years. Closer to publication are books on the Hastings, VC-10, Miles volume 4, the Hawker 125 and Hermes.
- Are there any plans for Air-Britain Travel in 2023? At present there are still a number of factors around COVID, which differ from country to country as well as the risk if one member of the tour contracts COVID while on the tour. In addition our travellers are getting older, with the risks that this brings, alongside the price increases, especially in air fares. All of these means that we are not currently planning anything for 2023 but keeping our options open.
- What is the take-up for the on-line *eABN*? While the actual numbers are not available due to GDPR restrictions on the supplier PocketMags, we believe that there are around 150 subscribers. Some also have a printed copy through a regular membership and around 25 take up the Air-Britain membership option. One thing that holds *eABN* back is the lack of full searchability and we are looking at how this can be improved.
- With the closure of AJ Aviation Air-Britain has lost an outlet for our books. Are there any replacements? We expect that other retail outlets will be taking volumes to cover this. In the past Air-Britain used to take a Sales Stand to a number of air shows, but this is less viable now. As well as getting people who can run the stand, including getting the stock from Kent, the cost of pitches at shows is prohibitive.

Before the meeting closed a vote of thanks was offered to Malcolm Fillmore for his service as Chairman over many years.

The meeting was then closed at 15:30

MEMBERSHIP RATES 2023

As is customary at this time of year, we can announce the rates for membership of Air-Britain in 2023 which will be

	UK	Europe	Rest of the World
Category A	£50	£68	£83
Category B	£40	£47	£54
Category C	£90	£115	£137

We recognise the increased pressures on our money in the current economic climate, and Air-Britain is not immune to these pressures. The last year have seen above-inflation rises in printing and paper costs, as well as postage and overseas distribution costs, as well as power and other items. The Board have been looking at measures to reduce our cost base without impacting the quality of what we produce and will be implementing a number of measures in the coming months.

Membership of Air-Britain also includes, in addition to the magazines,

- Big discounts on Air-Britain publications
- Access to extensive photo archives, documentation & digital archives
- Leading subject specialists
- On-line research and discussion groups

Details of how to renew will be coming out with the November issue of *Air-Britain News* and the Winter edition of *Aviation World*. Renewals should then be made via our on-line process, as this reduces the workload on our membership secretary. If you do not have internet access, then please use the renewal form included with your magazine. All payments should be made with a debit or credit card as we no longer accept cheques or cash.

We look forward to having you as part of Air-Britain for another year and will continue to strive to provide the same high-quality magazines and other services that you have seen in the past.

As you will have seen from the Chairman's report, the life-blood of Air-Britain are the volunteers who help us to perform so many tasks, not only those visible to the members, but also many behind the scenes. We are grateful to all of these for their efforts, but we have roles that we also need to fill. If you are interested in finding out more, please contact the person shown against each role.

- Digital Image Archivist – contact [Rod Simpson](#)
- Second-Hand Sales Co-ordinator – contact [Malcolm Fillmore](#)
- Second-hand Sales on eBay – contact [Malcolm Fillmore](#)
- ABN Overseas Registers compilers – contact [Sue Bushell](#)
- ABPic Database Manager – contact [Simon Wills](#)
- ABPic Digital Image Screeners – contact [Simon Wills](#)
- Article contributors for *Aviation World* – contact [Paul Jackson](#)
- Awards Committee Chairman – contact [Chris Chatfield](#)
- Website Co-ordinator – contact [Steve Mitchell](#)

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 all our current Air-Britain publications and many third-party books can be ordered.
- Second-Hand Books and Magazines – we have an extensive range of second-hand books for sale. The current lists can be found [HERE](#) or send an e-mail to the [second-hand sales](#) team.
- [ABPic](#) – Air-Britain's online photo gallery with over 700,000 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](#)
- Digital Archive – containing various files, including registers and listings previously published in Archive and Aeromilitaria, many of which are 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 Groups.IO. It is an online discussion forum for aviation research topics only. Members can set their own message preferences (single or daily digest) within Groups.IO. 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.