

NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 79

SPRING 2009

BAE SYSTEMS, AIRBUS & DERIVED COMPANIES
RETIRED MANAGEMENT STAFF ASSOCIATION

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A Bristol Blenheim IV in flight about 1942, tail number L4859,
Many of this type were also built under licence in Canada and renamed Bolingbroke.
(Photo courtesy Rolls Royce Heritage)Trust).
See article on page 3 celebrating 100 years of aviation in the west of England.



Spring Day Out on Wed 08 April 2009

The museum collection includes commercial vehicles and buses, motorcycles, cycles, models etc. There is café and Coventry Cathedral is close by.

£18.00pp. incl. entrance fee and a conducted tour and gratuities. Closing booking date Fri. 13 Mar.

Coach pick-ups: Methodist Church Downend and BAWA Filton. *Please indicate your choice. Departure times TBA.*

Please reserveseat (s) @ £18.00 per seat.

Name(s)..... Tel.....

Address.....

Send SAE and cheque-payable to RMSA- for your total amount to:
 Dave Curtis,
 25 Welsford Avenue,
 Stapleton,
 Bristol BS16 1BW.



SWANAGE

Summer Day Out on Thur. 25 June 2009

Gateway to the Jurassic coast. With just a short walk to its award winning beach and open top bus tours, Swanage has something to offer everyone on a day out by the seaside. .

£15.00 pp. incl. gratuities. Closing booking date Fri. 29 May.

Coach pick-ups: Methodist Church Downend and BAWA Filton. *Please indicate your choice. Departure times TBA.*

Please reserveseat (s) @ £15.00 per seat.

Name(s)..... Tel.....

Address.....

Send SAE and cheque-payable to RMSA- for your total amount to:
 Dave Curtis,
 25 Welsford Avenue,
 Stapleton,
 Bristol BS16 1BW.



Mid-week Break to Warner Autumn LeisureHotel Alveston Hall Cheshire

£270.00 pp. approx. (Single supplement £50.00) for a four night stay from Mon Oct 05 to Fri Oct 09 2009.

The hotel situated in the Cheshire countryside is a short drive from Chester. The booking includes dinner, breakfast, evening entertainment and all the usual Warner facilities. The itinerary includes a day in Chester and coach trips to other local places of interest. Coach pick-up: BAWA Filton.

A deposit of **£50.00 pp** is required not later than **Tue. 31 Mar.** Holiday insurance is compulsory and if you do not have any, can be obtained through the RMSA for £8.30 pp. approx. Final details about this break will be put in the Summer Newsletter.

Please reserve the following accommodation:

Double/Single/Twin delete as appropriate

Names (s) Tel.....

Address.....

Send SAE and SEPARATE cheques-payable to RMSA, for your total deposit and insurance (if reqd.)
 to: Dave Curtis,
 25 Welsford Avenue,
 Stapleton,
 Bristol BS16 1BW.

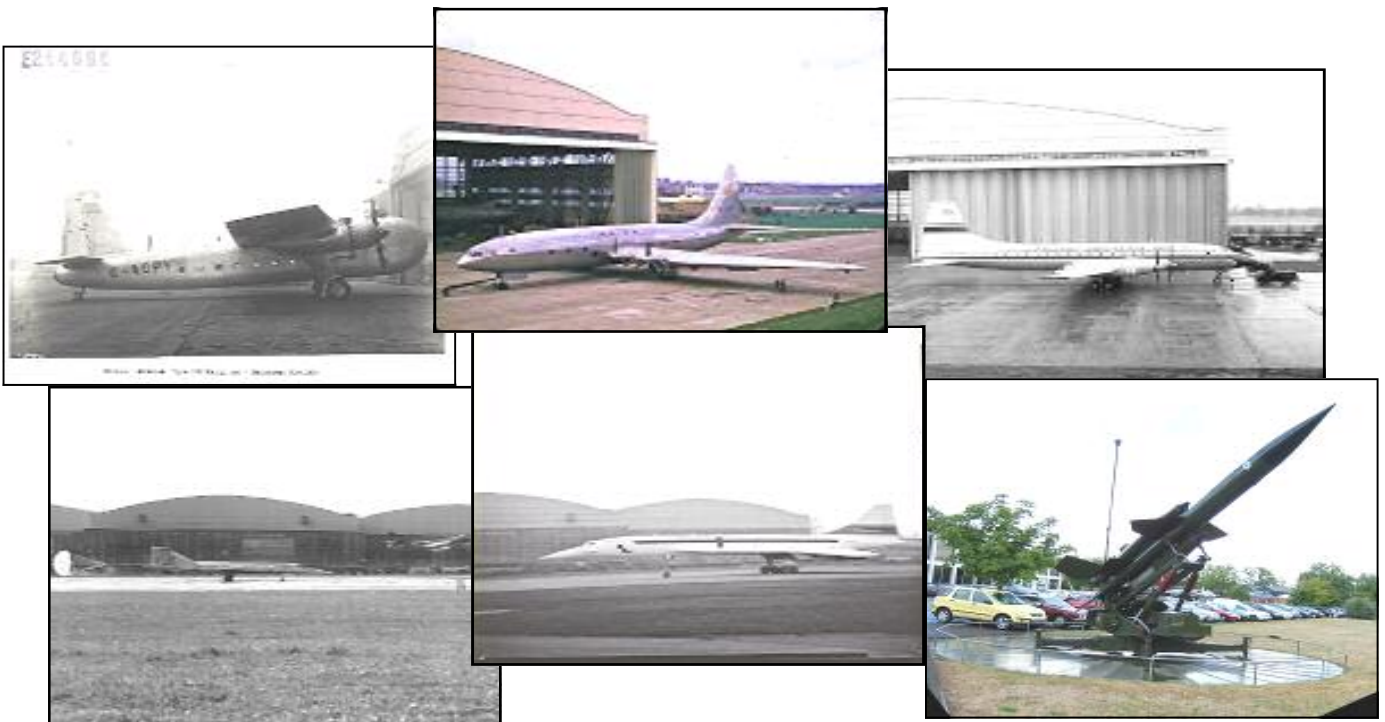
RMSA 2009 Days Out and Autumn Mid-Week Break.

Anyone is very welcome to join us for any of the good value events advertised on page 2. You do not have to be an RMSA member.

For further information please contact:

Dave Curtis Tel.01179 519700

Celebrating 100 years of Aviation in the West of England



It was in February 1910 that Sir George White with his son Stanley converted some tramway sheds at Filton into an aircraft factory and in so doing, took the first step on a path which was to make the whole of the West of England one of the most important centres for aerospace technology in the world

At our last Christmas lunch Katherine Bennett, Director of Communications and Government Affairs at Airbus, accepted our invitation to speak on what is being done to celebrate next years' hundredth anniversary of this founding of the Bristol Aeroplane Company or 'the BAC' as it still known with affection throughout our region and beyond.

Much has happened at the site to make and keep it successful, indeed to keep it surviving over those years. From the major expansion during the two world wars, to the mergers, rationalisation and closures since. All of our RMSA members will have played a part, one way or another in all of this.

Filton is now the only one left of the four original sites that started British aviation– the others being Brooklands, Farnborough and Hendon.

The celebration programme called 'BAC 100' means to recognise this history, to celebrate and promote all the West of England's aerospace technological achievements, especially as aerospace related work accounts for over 43,000 jobs at the three-quarters of the UKs largest aerospace firms that have facilities here.

Plans are in hand to promote arts projects, exhibitions and community based events with a BAC themed air-day, which will have static displays and a flypast.

We were told that with the wealth of experience among RMSA members any help or advice would be very much welcomed.

For further information please visit the excellent web site:

**www.bac2010.co.uk
or email bac100@btinternet.com**

R.M.S.A's ANNUAL SHORT BREAK 2008

Ken Tooze gives his view on what it was like....



Photo Ken Strange

We had good support again for this one. As I expect regular readers of this Newsletter will know, we went to the Warner Leisure Hotel at Sinar Warren on Hayling Island, near Portsmouth. It was in mid-October and was organised as usual in conjunction with Rover European Travel.

It was the first time we had done this sort of break and were pleased that 40+ RMSA members and friends had booked to join us. Many were regulars: we were very pleased though to see some new faces among us and left the BAWA Centre and Downend with our courier Carol and driver Terry, for a leisurely drive to our destination, stopping at Devizes for coffee and Romsey for lunch.

Warners' cater for adults only and it was immediately obvious on arrival that Sinar Warren Hotel is very popular with adults of 'a certain age' - like what we are. Definitely no screaming kids around.

There is a variety of things to do each day at these hotels, from watercolour painting to sequence dancing and entertainment each evening which included a John Denver Tribute Show and a 'Last Night of the Proms' evening. Again



Tourist Guide Photo

though, we were spoilt by Rover who had laid on coach trips for us every day.

On Tuesday we went on the first of these, to Portsmouth 'the waterfront city' as the tour guide says. We gave the Historic Dockyard a miss this time in favour of visiting the adjacent Gun Wharf Quays a shopping and leisure development overlooking what to me is still a spectacular harbour, even with the decline of the Royal Navy's presence, for a light lunch and look around. Gun Wharf Quays includes the 170 metres tall Spinnaker Tower (pictured below) the tallest publicly accessible structure in the UK. A number of our party went up to deck 2 - there are 3 decks -which at a 105 metres provided, we were told a wonderful panoramic view of Portsmouth and the surrounding countryside.

After lunch we went on a conducted cruise around the harbour. Then it was time to return to our Hotel for dinner and the second of the week's evening entertainments.

Next day we were taken on a tour of the Isle of Wight. The weather by now was beginning to deteriorate, we started from Fishbourne taking a leisurely tour round the Island stopping for lunch at The Old Smithy in the picturesque village of Godshill and on to the Needles Park at Alum Bay. It was very exposed there and not the sort of conditions for taking a long stroll. However, we did have a chairlift ride to view the Needles and Lighthouse. Back at the Hotel in the evening after dinner, those of us who were not too tired could enjoy the evenings' entertainment with a 'John Denver Tribute Show'

I thought the food and service was good with a varied and imaginative menu. It is a large hotel catering for some 500 guests and it was pretty

full. One criticism from many of our party was that their accommodation was too far way from the restaurant and entertainment area.

Thursday, and the weather had decided to buck up, it was our final full day at Warners' Carol and Terry had laid on a day's tour of the New Forest. We decided to give this one a miss and sample what there was by way daytime leisure at the hotel. There was quite a lot to see and do, listen to.

One thing I have found, having stayed at a few of their places, is that Warners' seem to always site their hotels some distance from other locally populated areas and 'Sinah Warren' is no exception because it takes it's name from the stretch of land on which it is built, This encloses Langstone Harbour a conservation area I believe and is easy walking territory. In the afternoon, as the weather seemed OK we went out for a stroll. It must be a birdwatchers' paradise. We came across a pleasant little shop too-still open at the end of the season, for afternoon tea and then it was back to the hotel to get ready for dinner and the evening's entertainment, where we were treated to Warners' entertainers' first 'Tinsel and Turkey' performance of the season and with a flag waving 'Last Night of the Sinah Warren Proms' a jolly good time was had by one and all.

And so next day it was back home via a stop for lunch at Winchester and the end of another RMSA Annual Short Break.

I make no apologies for again paying tribute to David and Janet whose last time organising the breaks and day trips this was. We intend with the support of our members and friends, continuing. David Curtis has kindly volunteered his services to organise them.

Lastly, many thanks to Carol and Terry of Rover European Travel, for their excellent service throughout the week .

Mombasa to Dubai by Frank and Esme Webb

Frank and Esme continue with an account of their holiday cruise

Tues 13th Feb. Mahe, Seychelles, 995nm from Mombasa, temp 100 degrees. *Black Watch* docked at 8am and at 9.45 left the port for a trip to Moyenne Island which was first inhabited in 1770 by 27 men and 1 woman, mainly French. It is now owned by a Mr Grimshaw who lives alone with his dogs. Quite happy for tourists to visit but as there are no hotels they do not stay very long. Saw giant tortoise which are only found in the Seychelles and the Galapagos Islands, they can live to 150 years and were obviously used to visitors. Some people went snorkelling but on return said it had changed dramatically since 1996 due to El Nino affecting the coral. We swam from the beach, the water was the coolest place to be. Back on board by 11.15 for a light lunch. Water in the pool much calmer today -very warm, all you needed was a bar of soap. Relaxed with a cocktail of the day called Deep Sea Cocktail -Beefeater Gin, Cherry Brandy, Orange Juice and Ginger Beer - very good and left Mahe to sail to Praslin Island at 11pm.

Wed. 14th Feb. 27 nm from Mahe. Anchored off Praslin Island at 8am. Praslin second largest island in the Seychelles was discovered in 1744 by Lizarare Picault, at that time it was a hideaway for pirates due to the high density of tropical Rain-forest which still remains helping to provide a habitat where flora and fauna thrive together. The sea is home to approx. 800 vibrant species of exotic fish. Off at 8,30am by tender to the ferry



GT high performance ox cart

to take us to La Dique and a very warm welcome from the local people. Very hot at 95 degrees. There are 2000 people living on La Dique and for its size is quite busy. We were taken by ox-cart to the beach but before we left we saw coconuts being ground into oil which seemed to be the cure for everything.

At the beach we spent about an hour in the very warm water with colourful fish swimming around us. The rock formations were fascinating reaching down to the sea. The ancient granite rocks were worn away by 'old father time'. Cars are restricted, so most people use bicycles. The island is a favourite place for film producers and photographers.

We walked back to where our ox-carts were waiting. At 1.20 the ferry arrived to take us to our tenders at Praslin jetty. It seemed strange that our tenders were not allowed to take us to La Dique but they must have their reasons, financial possibly. We were back on board by 2pm, just in time for lemonade and fruit for lunch, still very hot.

Black Watch set sail at 3.40 pm for Male in the Maldives, 1205nm. from Praslin. 'Sail away' party on deck for those with the energy - we passed on that one.

Thurs. 15th Feb. At sea. Lecture on the Maldives. Sun very hot, so we had a very quiet day.

Fri. 16th Feb. At sea. 11.15 'crossing the line' ceremony on deck everyone seemed to enjoy it but a bad mess was made of the pool which then had to be emptied and cleaned. It took two hours to empty and then every bit of the pool and both Jacuzzi were scrubbed. It was quite exhausting watching the crew work! Whilst cleaning was taking place, a large net was put over the pool, in case anyone fell in. Refilling then started which took another two hours. By then it was G&T and canapés time. Chinese meal tonight - very good.

Sat. 17th Feb. 8.45 am. First sight of the Maldivian Islands. 12 noon anchored off Male harbour as *Black Watch* is too large to enter. Male is only 2 km long and 1km wide with a population of about 65,000, which can rise to 100,000 with visitors and short term workers. The size of the island has more than doubled through land reclamation projects. Nearby islands are used for the airport and other purposes. There are plans to develop other islands to reduce the pressure on Male. Went to a lecture by Capt. Phil Giles of the Air Accident Investigation Branch. He had attended the Lockerbie crash Investigation and told how good the local people were to them, everyone wanted to feed them so they were in danger of putting on weight. Thinking back he said. how little heed was paid to Health and Safety: no hard hats or gloves when handling wreckage, which was not all aeroplane. Wreckage was spread over an eighty square mile area, but every piece was recovered and laid out for detailed inspection. The local ice rink was used as a mortuary. Not a very pleasant job, but necessary to get the right answers. 'Sail in' party on deck for the energetic but we preferred the pool. Magnificent sunset so the camera was put to good use

Sun. 18th Feb. In the Neptune Lounge at 8am and off at 8.15 by tender to the shore. We then had a 45 min. journey by boat to Bandos Island. This was listed as a full day

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'Sail away' party



The sand really is this colour

trip but we were told that a ferry would be going back to Male at 2pm and 5pm. The island was quite small with a hotel and many upmarket chalets just yards from the beach, ideal for children.

The sand was like white sugar and the sea was blue-green. We found ourselves two sun beds in the shade: too hot for sitting on the beach, the water slightly cooler than the Seychelles.

Once again we were surrounded by many small brightly coloured fish, so there was no need to snorkel.

After all this activity we decided to walk back to the jetty about 12 o'clock and wait for the

2 o'clock ferry. There was plenty of shade and a bar for cold drinks.

We sat on the jetty and were entertained by two Rays swimming together and jumping out of the water. It was so good to see urns of cold drinks, they know how to pamper you. We did not investigate the small town, but you could see it was wall to wall with people and motor bikes. It seemed to be a very busy shopping area with many 'Onassis type' yachts.

Back on board for a welcome cup of tea, moored near to us was a huge liner called *Seven Explorer*.

It looked like a block of flats-at least *Black Watch* looks like a boat. Still very hot, but a bit more cloud. Sail away poolside dancing tonight with limbo dancing and cabaret. We sail at 11pm but you can dance the night away and there is a BBQ at midnight. We now have three days at sea with 1473nm to Muscat, Oman.

Mon.19th Feb. At sea. Temp. 88 Degrees. Not a ship in sight only a few flying fish. Went to a boring lecture on Muscat, our next port of

call. Then to see Future Cruise Manager to confirm that our flight to Singapore in 2008 was scheduled and not charter: good news it will be a scheduled flight. We were given some interesting information on 2009 – food for thought! At 3.45 went to another lecture by Capt. Phil Giles, this time it was about life in the Gulf of Oman, he has lived there for six years, quite interesting.

Another swim before G&T time, a bit cooler now, at least you can walk on deck without shoes. Formal dress night at dinner tonight, so Frank will wear a tie – plus other clothes I hasten to add.

Tues.20th Feb. At sea. Temperature down to 81degrees-have to get the thermals out. Quite a good lecture on Qatar, seems to be very affluent average earnings \$30,000 p.a. This was followed by a quite interesting talk by Fred Olsen Snr. on pyramids all over the world, I didn't realise there were so many. Indian meal tonight, pity I left my sari at home.

Wed.21st Feb. At sea. Lecture on Abu Dhabi: nice bloke but a bit confusing but it passes a comfortable hour. Had a session walking the Decks, five times round Deck 7 is one mile. Many do this at all times of the day and also jog, but not allowed to jog before 8am as there are cabins on Deck 7. We were both a bit disappointed at this ruling (as if!)

Thurs.22nd Feb. Docked at 8.am with first sight of Muscat, Oman. As Oman is a Muslim country, we were asked to respect the local customs: no strappy sundresses, miniskirts, shorts or low necked dresses. It was recommended that all passengers going ashore cover their knees and shoulders. As it is the first time that *Black Watch* has entered Oman it took a little while for her to be cleared. Very official looking men in white robes all waiting for us to dock.

We had booked a tour called 'Wadi Adventure' (a wadi is a rocky watercourse, I have to confess I had to look this up). Very new Toyota Land Cruisers were lined up for us, diffi-



I wonder what they are up to!

cult to believe there will be much 'off road' driving. Only 4 to a car so plenty of room. We had been told that this tour was not recommended for those with back problems or pregnant ladies! Our driver was immaculate in his white robe and small cap but unfortunately he was of the silent type, but very polite.

The rock formations were a geologist's paradise. We were given plenty of time at each stop for photographs. On the way to the mountains we could see that Muscat was very up-market, without high rise hotels.

In the mountains we stopped at a village called Mazara which had a very large fort on a hill, no doubt needed for protection in the past. We drove along the coast, which looked like any other with shingle beaches. We then went inland along dust roads, not too bumpy but very attractive mountain scenery with occasional small tufts of greenery, you wonder how anything can possibly grow. It was all very peaceful you could hear the silence. There were so many different coloured seams in the rocks and the mountains looked like the Andes. As we got closer to Wadi Daygah the vegetation was more lush, and there was even some wild life, looked like hogs to me. It never fails to amaze how such little water can change the whole scene.

After a short drive we came to a wadi pool where we could swim. There were a few local families obviously enjoying the water but we did not fancy it as it was obvious that odd bits of rubbish were thrown into the pool. Off again to a much larger village called Hail Ghaf. Plenty of greenery here and an avenue of mango and palm trees which created a much needed cool

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Where shall we go next?

area. The water from the mountains is harnessed and channelled to irrigate the fields. The course of the water can be changed to suit irrigation needs. There was a deep stream about running alongside a main footpath, clothes, their “whites” put us to shame.

Then we went back to our cars to be taken back to the ship. The roads and roundabouts are edged with many flowers, no litter and no persons begging. Inside the dock area we passed through very ornate gates, all archways and stonework in pristine condition. No photography allowed, but I did manage to sneak one in. We had to wear our boarding cards at all times in the dock area and also carry a photocopy of our passports, which was given to us before we left the ship.

It was a very interesting tour, wish our driver had been more communicative but would not have missed it. Back on board at 3.15 for a cup of tea, what a good day: better than shopping. 11.00 pm and we set sail for Doha, Qatar 509 nm. distant.

Fri. 23rd Feb. At sea. Before 9am. we see container ships on the horizon, at least we were not alone. Went to a lecture by Phil Giles called ‘The Concorde Story’ Frank was not impressed. It makes a difference when you have ‘hands-on’ knowledge of the subject. Very peaceful day. Thai food this evening.

Sat. 24th Feb. Docked at Doha 8am. The tour we had chosen today was called ‘Inland Sea Desert Safari’ Left at 9 am. lot of delay as passports had to be issued and a bus ride to our cars, before getting away at 10.15am. on a journey of some forty-seven miles across the southern

Qatari desert. With over half the distance off-road, all tyres had had to be deflated before we reached the desert, this had given us plenty of time to chat to the camels. There was desert as far as the eye you could see. We drove up and down the sand dunes, quite exhilarating, but not too bumpy. Some of the dunes were forty metres high, we came down them sideways, one car at a time.

At the desert camp, we sat Bedouin style on cushions and carpets. Lunch was BBQ and very good.

The Inland Desert Sea is a shallow tidal lake connected to the Gulf. Some swam but said the water was very cold.

There is a channel connecting the sea to the Gulf, the cliffs of Saudi Arabia could be seen in the distance I took a picture of us waiting for lunch, typically English all in an orderly queue. Another ‘must have’ picture was of the toilets, two in number, small white tents they even had a flush: don’t ask how they managed that! There was a young man standing on guard a respectable distance away. All too soon we had to go back over those many dunes and then the tyres had to be re-inflated. We were able to watch quad bikes racing up and down the dunes which seems a local pastime.

Doha looked very clean with good roads and plenty of flowers. There seemed to be a lot of road work in progress as we passed the airport and oil refineries. Another very interesting day. We sailed at 5.15pm for Abu Dhabi 229 nm. away.

Sun. 25th Feb. Arrived Abu Dhabi at 8am. We decided on a city tour. It was unfortunate it was Sunday as most places of interest were closed, we thought the Agents in Abu Dhabi should have known this! Anyway it was an interesting place to see. We were taken to a fish market, can’t think why, it all looked so chaotic with nets and dhows being prepared for the next trip, then on to where where the dhows were built, there was not a bit of glass fibre in sight We were then shown their biggest hotel, built at a cost of 14 million Dollars- not impressed. Tried to visit the grounds of the largest Mosque but not allowed, so we set off once again, did a U turn and managed to



Let’s try here

park for a few minutes for a photo-stop- did not bother to take a picture. The biggest laugh was trying to find a comfort stop. Our guide then had a brilliant idea and we drove to a shopping precinct and we all went into an IKEA store-fantastic toilets! Next door was CARREFOUR , we could have been at home. Driving back I saw a Marks & Spencer and could not resist taking a picture of Abu Dhabi Cooperative Society.

Abu Dhabi is a very clean city with a good mixture of old and new buildings. Traffic was held up at one point as there was a demonstration against the number of road accidents This was made up of police, brass bands, soldiers and a good number of men, women and children all looking very smart in their Sunday best, but very serious. Plenty of flowers everywhere and once again no litter or begging. There is free medical care and education and no taxes – seems hard to believe. As we passed the airport, with a large expanse of grand buildings there was a very impressive notice saying ‘BAE Systems welcomes you’ - do you think someone told them we were on the coach?

Back in time for lunch, glad we saw Abu Dhabi.

Mon. 26th Feb. Arrived Dubai 8 am, looks like Abu Dhabi from the boat, same kind of docks with the ‘no walking and no photographs’ restriction. You have to get the shuttle bus or a taxi if you want to go into town independently. Spent the morning packing as our luggage, had to be outside our cabin by 10pm for transfer to Le Royal Meridien Beach Resort, our home for three days. Had a last swim, still very hot, 36 degrees with no breeze. Passports returned to

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The Co-op

us this evening. Thoroughly enjoyed our stay on board, hope the hotel in Dubai is as good. We have travelled 4529 nm.

Tues.27th Feb. Off the boat by 10am. Captain Waiter made an effort to find us and then big hugs all Round, including Frank he must have made a hit there. Or was it the gratuity? Already beginning to think Dubai is a bit OTT – even the terminal building on the docks is built like a ship. On the way by coach to the hotel there were many skyscrapers, but I think they were outnumbered by cranes. You could have been driving through a builders yard. In complete contrast, our hotel was absolute luxury, situated on Jumeirah Beach with four swimming pools, beautiful gardens and from the gardens you can walk on to the beach each with many sunbeds and um-brellas and attentive waiters. Each pool was constantly manned by at least two lifeguards, in radio contact with one another at all times. From the pool you could swim to the bar. When you arrived at the pool you collected two large bath sheets, which were immediately taken from you and you followed the waiter to the sunbed of your choice – sun or shade and facing the direction you preferred. One bath sheet was then placed on the sunbed with great precision, not a crease anywhere, the other was for drying. After all this preparation you were then left, but told to just raise your hand if there was anything you needed. This is obviously how the other half lives and we are going to make the most of it for the next three days.

Wed. 28th Feb. Full day with nothing to do, so pool had good use. In the evening we were taken on a Dhow cruise around the harbour.

Took us almost two hours by coach, can now understand why we had to leave the hotel at 6.00 for dinner on the dhow at 8.00 as the traffic was completely gridlocked, apparently this is normal in both mornings and evenings. We were told we'd have a quicker journey back later, and we did. A very good meal was served, all very well presented.

There were other dhows on the water all tastefully lit up. We think Dubai looks better at night as all the hotels and cranes are lit up.

Building goes on 24hrs a day. They are building the highest tower in the world and not saying how high in case someone else gets there first. Many Indians run stores, etc. but have no rights in Dubai. If they marry a local girl any children take on the father's nationality and are not citizens of Dubai.

Three islands are also being built, shaped like palm leaves. It is said one would cover an area the size of Paris. On one site some flats have already fallen into the sea. All are very expensive, there is a lot of outside investment in property. Only 6% of Dubai's wealth comes from oil.

Thurs. 1st March Another lazy morning. In the afternoon we took another safari tour in, once again new 4x4 Land Cruisers. The dunes were not quite as high as Abu Dhabi but just as enjoyable with nothing but desert as far as the eyes could see. We were followed by a Toyota truck carrying any necessary spares. One 4x4 did get stuck but we think on purpose just for the many cameras. We had adequate stops to stretch our legs and photograph the desert! We also stopped at a Camel Farm – all very well looked after, but not interested in visitors. Eventually we came to the camp where we were to have dinner. All well laid out with low tables and many rugs and cushions to sit on. You could indulge in camel riding or sand-boarding. We passed on both, but I did get my henna tattoo re-done, should last another three weeks. All tables had tablecloths and drapes, the food was piping hot and a good variety, with wine or soft drinks. When it was



Abu Dubai

dark (which happens very quickly) a beacon was lit for the start of the entertainment.. This comprised of a small band and a belly dancer. We were told the lady came from Russia, sounds romantic but more likely to be a computer operator from Dubai (OK so I was jealous!) .Poor girl did try to encourage people to join her, but did not have many takers. However, we all clapped and she seemed pleased. We thought she was a bit fat, but I suppose you have to have a belly in order to belly dance!

Fri.2nd March We had a free day. In the evening we were taken to the airport for our flight at 02.50am. Traffic chaos as usual. Dubai terminal left a lot to be desired. I had anticipated, as at Heathrow, we would be able to go into the departures lounge and wander around the shops for last minute purchases-no Chance. When we eventually found the departures lounge we were told it would not be open until 01.00am. Outside the lounge there was not enough seating so we ended up sitting on the floor. What a shambles! When we were finally allowed into the lounge were no toilets or facilities for a drink. In compensation though we had a good flight back in a A320, with plenty of leg room. People must have been comfortable as there was very little walking around.

Arrived at Gatwick 07.10 in the morning, met by our super driver Rachel and were home at 10.40. We had an excellent holiday. Hope you have not been too bored. I am sure there are many of our members who have an interesting tale to tell so come on, put pen to paper, or fingers to keyboard, and keep the smile on our Editor's face.

A STING IN THE TAIL by Stan Lock ***Or in this case twin stings in the 'tale'***

After the first flight of Concorde 001 from Toulouse, Andre Turcat was very critical about the seventy or so Korry warning lights which projected about eight mms. from the panel fascias on the flight engineer's station, because he claimed they partially obscured his view of the panels when looking back from the left hand pilot's seat. He requested urgent action to suppress them flush with the surface of the panels. Our Brian Trubshaw naturally insisted he required the same modification on Concorde 002 but BEFORE first flight.

At that time I had recently inherited the Concorde Flight Deck Office from Frank Verrier and I was summoned by Jimmy Street (the foreman on flight deck production) to the assembly hall for a confrontation with the 'big wheel' in those days, one Eric Hyde. Now those of us who knew Eric will remember he was a man of dubious temperament, in fact a man with a very short fuse. He insisted that Brian Trubshaw's requirement was not practical before first flight and that I should raise an alternative modification to swiing the flight engineer's panels forward on an aircraft ply

structure to give the first pilot a better view, and so avoid the need to suppress all those warning lights into the panels. The production team of Charles Andrews, Fred Price 'Ginger' Wadner and Jimmy Street were at the flight deck door, amused at my evident discomfort. Anyway, it was my firm view that the flight deck was so confined that the proposal from Eric would make the position for Brian Watts at his powered seat at the flight engineers station quite unacceptable. So I stated my position and said that if the production department would provide me with a drill, some rat-tail files a few sheets of brown paper to catch the swarf and I would be prepared personally to modify one panel each night in situ and complete the whole job in a week or so. Eric Hyde looked at me aghast, he was not used to having his requirements rejected. After a rather lengthy 'eye to eye' without a word, he shook my hand and turned to Charlie Andrews and the production team and said "you heard him, if he can do it so can you." In hindsight, I was very relieved he didn't accept my rash offer, but of course it could not have been allowed anyway and Concorde 002

was properly modified in time for its first flight.

So what were those twin stings you may ask?

Firstly Eric NEVER EVER spoke to me again until the Concorde flight test programme was complete and we had moved on to Tornado to help out our Warton colleagues. He was never in favour of us being involved anyway and try as I might, I could not get him and his opposite 'big wheel' at Warton to speak to one another. They could only make mutually disparaging remarks could not be printed here and secondly, that so important modification to suppress the warning lights for Andre Turcat on Concorde 001 in Toulouse was NEVER incorporated.

Perhaps, Andre Turcat learnt to trust his very able flight engineer Michael Retief and tolerated the situation for the whole of the flight test programme. However, we did replace all those offending lights with an improved flush version on pre-production and production aircraft.

THE BLIND PILOT by Ray Foot

The following is a true story, I can vouch for every word.

In 1952 I was employed as a Weight and Balance Engineer in the Aerodynamics Department of de Havilland Airspeed at Christchurch, working on Ambassador production and Vampire and Venom conversions.

I was friendly with a draughtsman who held a Private Pilots' Licence (PPL) who was a member of Christchurch Flying Club and regularly flew a hired Auster. He was, I remember he was a bit older than me and always wore a pair of thick pebbleshell spectacles and although I can't remember his name, I can still put a 'face' to him. I thought he must be having his health and eyesight regularly checked to hold a valid PPL. A favourite route of his was to fly out to the Needles, returning via Spithead and Portsmouth to Christchurch. Several of us used to take it in turns to go with him, there were always a number on his flying list so we had to wait our turn.

One Saturday two of us arranged to meet him for a flight to the Isle of Wight: we had to 'sign in' for this, it was regulatory as the flight was over water.

So we set off. It was a beautiful day with the visibility very good, we could even see the Needles from the airfield. I had no reason to doubt our friend's ability. However, on the way back near to the southern fringes of the New Forest and turning on 'finals' heading for the airfield at Christchurch, things started to go 'pear-shaped': we were on a low power approach and seemed to be 'undershooting' the runway, so our pilot increased engine power and raised the nose of the aircraft. Afterwards, we were told observers in the flying club could see there was a problem and had raised the alarm.

Seated in the back I didn't realise there was anything wrong. Then I looked out: we were over the experimental shop and didn't appear to be moving. I realised we were stalled with just sufficient air speed to avert a tip-stall. I looked down again, the shop was still there. We were struck dumb. Suddenly at about ten feet off the ground, the pilot closed the throttle, we just dropped out of the sky hitting the ground with a resounding crash, the undercarriage folded underneath us and the propellers went from a shining disk to two shattered stumps.

The approach lasted long enough for everyone in the club to be out on the airstrip, with the fire appliance thankfully in attendance, we could so easily have crashed into that experimental shop with disastrous consequences.

I don't think our friend ever flew again-as a pilot anyway, he certainly was no longer our 'flavour of the month'.

OBITUARIES

It is with sadness that we report former colleagues known to have passed away since our last Newsletter:

Mr G Belcher
Mr J H Brown
Mr H A Goldsmith
Mr B P Hayward
MR H S Liner
Mr M L Oxenham
Mr A R Tankins

Our sympathy is extended to their families and all next of kin



WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

Since our last Newsletter we have acquired new member: Mr K G M Scott

We extend a warm welcome to you, and hope you will participate in the Association's activities and meet up with old friends and colleagues

BAE & BAC RETIRED MANAGEMENT STAFF ASSOCIATION(RMSA)

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If you are an RMSA member and think you have a story to tell. Well, why not send it to the Editor and have it published in the Newsletter. Contact details above.