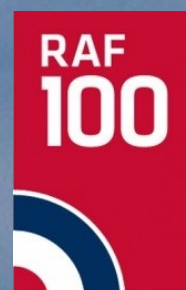




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Mr Kris Mercer**From the Editor:**

Another few months have passed and I am back at the computer looking for interesting things to tell you all! The Lysander on the cover, one of my favourite WWII aircraft that carried out sterling work for the SOE and saving downed airmen in the water. The other story I liked was the one on page ten, RAF Bridgnorth, a place quite a few people can relate to, I know I did when I read it, Brian, who wrote the article and posted it on the RAF mates – Where are they now Facebook page where I picked it up, was there the course after mine in October 1959. The winter has really set in here in Christchurch NZ, but I understand you are having a nice summer, so enjoy it, I know I will when it reaches us again at the bottom of the Globe. I see on the Calendar that I shall miss the Farnborough Air Show again this year, never mind, I might catch it on our News bulletin, so look forward to that, hope you folk have been able to visit some air shows over the summer, I did watched the F35's arrive via an ITV Link. Bryn

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Westland Lysander

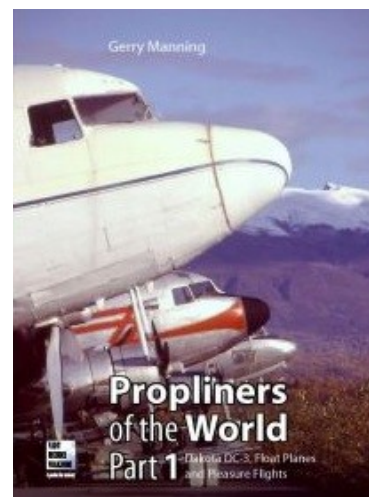
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September 2018 - A BIG Global Welcome to:

Valerie P Sparrowhawk
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Al Good

Book of the Month
**PROPLINERS OF THE WORLD
PART 1**

by Gerry Manning

Covers 75 years of the Douglas DC-3 and its turboprop conversions through de Havilland Canada's ageless pair of Beaver 18 and Twin Otter to classic aircraft such as the Douglas DC-7 and German-built Junkers Ju.52. A nostalgic, photographic look at some of the great classic propeller driven aircraft as they operate around the world.

ISBN: 9780955426841

Binding: Paperback

Dimensions: 268mm x 198mm

Pages: 112

Photos/Illus: Over 175 colour and b&w photographs

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Meet Your Committee - Steve Mullis, Chairman Extraordinaire



Well finally it gets round to the stage where I have been asked to fill you ladies & gentlemen in on the life story of Steve Mullis up to the current day. Well without boring you all too much, I was born in a hospital that backed onto RAF Biggin Hill, which must have kind of given me a massive kick in that direction because the only thing I ever wanted to do was join the RAF. After spending 3 years in the ATC I applied for a RAF apprenticeship as soon as I got my GCE results. Yup, you got it, they were not good enough to join as aircrew but I wanted in no matter what!!!

The first Monday in March 1971 saw 49 other wannabes, including 5 of who are now members of this branch, arrive at RAF Cosford & the School of Photography ready to take the Queen's shilling & whatever else the RAF could throw at us!!

The following 12 months was spent trying to turn me into a passable airman with a small knowledge of Air Photography. I must have just scraped through as I got posted for the first time to No1 AIDU at Northolt to do litho printing as an SAC. Yes, I know, it doesn't sound that close to Air Photography but there was a very minor link, trust me!!

Having survived about 18 months at this den of inequity it was decided, by those who must be obeyed, that conversion training to become a Photo G was required to get the best out of me, so back to Cosford I went to the now called Joint School of Photography. I lasted about half the course before it was decided that my eyesight wasn't up to scratch & there was no Specsavers in those days for me to quickly get a suitable pair of glasses, so back to Northolt I went. I stayed just 2 months before I was posted to Abingdon into what was exclusively a Photo G section within the Joint Air Transportation Establishment (JATE). There is never a way of understanding RAF planning & forward thinking!!

Even though I only spent just over a year at JATE it was in fact one of the most important years of my life as it was, whilst I was stationed here it was discovered, at RAF (Hospital) Wroughton, that I had the first symptoms of multiple sclerosis, something that was to eventually determine the way my RAF career was to pan out..

Without confirming their suspicions of this, I got posted to my first ever "active" station in Germany, Wildenrath. For the first time since I had joined over three years earlier I was actually doing what I had been initially trained for!!! I worked in the RIC (Reconnaissance Intelligence Centre), I know a contradiction of terms but hey ho!! We also did various deployments with Harriers of 3, 4 & 20 Squadrons out in the German countryside at Sennelager near Paderborn, where I generally worked as a solo member processing the film from the aircraft's giro gunsight recorders. I was also lucky enough to do a 3 month detachment to Gatow to fly with 7 flight AAC, flying the Berlin border daily, in their Sioux helicopters. On one such flight I was lucky enough to record the first ever flight of a Concorde to Berlin. Needless to say I thoroughly enjoyed this period of my time in the mob.

All good things must come to an end & I got posted back to the UK to..... Northolt again!! This was to be my final posting as within a year I had a relapse of my MS & the RAF decided that I was to be medically downgraded meaning no promotion & no postings for me in the future. Since I had only just converted my 3 years reserve to a straight 12 & was just being PV'd to return to Germany, my initial thoughts was "Stuff that" & I purchased my discharge from the RAF late in 1979 & marched into civvie street to work as a **LITHO PRINTER!!!!**



Episode 2: My life after the RAF & being hauled back into the RAF Family with RAFA!!

The RAF - Westland Lysander



Preserved Lysander flying in 2012

The Westland Lysander (nickname the "**Lizzie**") was a British army co-operation and liaison aircraft produced by Westland Aircraft used immediately before and during the Second World War. After becoming obsolete in the army co-operation role, the aircraft's exceptional short

-field performance enabled clandestine missions using small, improvised airstrips behind enemy lines to place or recover agents, particularly in occupied France with the help of the French Resistance. British Army air co-operation aircraft were named after mythical or historical military leaders; in this case the Spartan Admiral Lysander was chosen, Number built 1,786.

Design and development

In 1934 the Air Ministry issued Specification A.39/34 for an army co-operation aircraft to replace the Hawker Hector. Initially Hawker Aircraft, Avro and Bristol were invited to submit designs, but after some debate within the Ministry, a submission from Westland was invited as well. The Westland design, internally designated P.8, was the work of Arthur Davenport under the direction of "Teddy" Petter. It was Petter's second aircraft design and he spent considerable time interviewing Royal Air Force pilots to find out what they wanted from such an aircraft. Less clear was whether he or the pilots understood the army co-operation role and what the army wanted, which was tactical reconnaissance and artillery reconnaissance capability – photographic reconnaissance and observation of artillery fire in daylight – up to about 15,000 yards (14 km) behind the enemy front. The result of Petter's pilot enquiries suggested that field of view, low-speed handling characteristics and STOL performance were the most important requirements.

Davenport and Petter designed an aircraft to incorporate these features with unconventional results. The Lysander was powered by a Bristol Mercury air-cooled radial engine and had high wings and a fixed conventional landing gear mounted on an innovative inverted U square-section tube that supported wing struts at the apex, was in itself resilient, and contained (internal) springs for the faired wheels. The large streamlined spats also each contained a mounting for a Browning machine gun and for small, removable stub wings that could be used to carry light bombs or supply canisters. The wings had a reverse taper towards the root, which gave the impression of a bent gull wing from some angles, although the spars were straight. It had a girder type construction faired with a light wood stringers to give the aerodynamic shape. The forward fuselage was duralumin tube joined with brackets and plates, and the after part was welded stainless steel tubes. Plates and brackets were cut from channel extrusions rather than being formed from sheet steel. The front spar and lift struts were extrusions. The wing itself was fabric covered, and its thickness was maximized at the lift strut anchorage location, similar to that of later marks of the Stinson Reliant high-winged transport monoplane.

Despite its appearance, the Lysander was aerodynamically advanced; being equipped with fully automatic wing slots and slotted flaps and a variable incidence tailplane. These

refinements gave the Lysander a stalling speed of only 65 mph (104 km/h, 56.5 knots). It also featured the largest Elektron alloy extrusion made at the time: the one-piece frame already mentioned that supporting the wings and wheels. (This was a feature of British-built aircraft only, Canadian-built machines had a conventionally fabricated assembly due to the difficulties involved in manufacturing such a large extrusion). The Air Ministry requested two prototypes of the P.8 and the competing Bristol Type 148, quickly selecting the Westland aircraft for production and issuing a contract in September 1936.

Operational history

United Kingdom:

The first Lysanders entered service in June 1938, equipping squadrons for army co-operation and were initially used for message-dropping and artillery spotting. When war broke out in Europe, the earlier Mk Is had been largely replaced by Mk IIs, the older machines heading for the Middle East. Some of these aircraft, now designated type L.1, operated with the Chindits of the British Indian Army in the Burma Campaign of the Second World War. Four regular squadrons equipped with Lysanders accompanied the British Expeditionary Force to France in October 1939, and were joined by a further squadron early in 1940. Following the German invasion of France and the low countries on 10 May 1940, Lysanders were put into action as spotters and light bombers. In spite of occasional victories against German aircraft, they made very easy targets for the Luftwaffe even when escorted by Hurricanes. Withdrawn from France during the Dunkirk evacuation, they continued to fly supply-dropping missions to Allied forces from bases in England; on one mission to drop supplies to troops trapped at Calais, 14 of 16 Lysanders and Hawker Hectors that set out were lost. 118 Lysanders were lost in or over France and Belgium in May and June 1940, of a total of 175 deployed. With the fall of France, it was clear that the type was unsuitable for the coastal patrol and army co-operation role, being described by Air Marshal Arthur Barratt, commander-in-chief of the British Air Forces in France as "quite unsuited to the task; a faster, less vulnerable aircraft was required." The view of Army AOP pilots was that the Lysander was too fast for artillery spotting purposes, too slow and unmanoeuvrable to avoid fighters, too big to conceal quickly on a landing field, too heavy to use on soft ground and had been developed by the RAF without ever asking the Army what was needed. Nevertheless, throughout the remainder of 1940, Lysanders flew dawn and dusk patrols off the coast and in the event of an invasion of Britain, they were tasked with attacking the landing beaches with light bombs and machine guns. They were replaced in the home-based army co-operation role from 1941 by camera-equipped fighters such as the Curtiss Tomahawk and North American Mustang carrying out reconnaissance operations, while light aircraft such as the Taylorcraft Auster were used to direct



The RAF - Westland Lysander

artillery. Some UK-based Lysanders went to work operating air-sea rescue, dropping dinghies to downed RAF aircrew in the English Channel. Fourteen squadrons and flights were formed for this role in 1940 and 1941.

Special duties

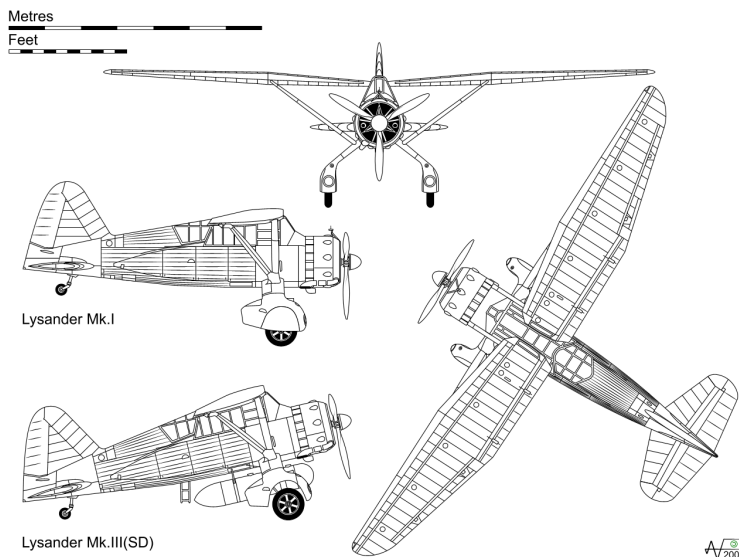
In August 1941 a new squadron, No. 138 (Special Duties), was formed to undertake missions for the Special Operations Executive to maintain clandestine contact with the French Resistance. Among its aircraft were Lysander Mk IIIs, which flew over and landed in occupied France. While general supply drops could be left to the rest of No. 138's aircraft, the Lysander could insert and remove agents from the continent or retrieve Allied aircrew who had been shot down over occupied territory and had evaded capture. For this role the Mk IIIs were fitted with a fixed ladder over the port side to hasten access to the rear cockpit and a large drop tank under the belly. In order to slip in unobtrusively Lysanders were painted matte black (some early examples had brown/green camouflaged upper surfaces and later examples had grey/green upper surfaces); operations almost always took place within a week of a full moon, as moonlight was essential for navigation. The aircraft undertook such duties until the liberation of France in 1944. Lysanders flew from secret airfields at Newmarket and later Tempsford, but used regular RAF stations to fuel-up for the actual crossing, particularly RAF Tangmere. Flying without any navigation equipment other than a map and compass, Lysanders would land on short strips of land, such as fields, marked out by four or five torches. Or to avoid having to land, the agent, wearing a special padded suit, stepped off at very low altitude and rolled to a stop on the field. They were originally designed to carry one passenger in the rear cockpit, but for SOE use the rear cockpit was modified to carry two passengers in extreme discomfort in case of urgent necessity. The pilots of No. 138 and from early 1942, No. 161 Squadron transported 101 agents to and recovered 128 agents from Nazi-occupied Europe. The Germans knew little about the British aircraft and wished to study one. Soldiers captured an intact Lysander in March 1942 when its pilot was unable to destroy it after a crash, but a train hit the truck carrying the Lysander, destroying the cargo.



Lysander painted for Target Towing

Lysanders also filled other less glamorous roles, such as service as target-towing and communication aircraft. Two aircraft (T1443 and T1739) were transferred to the British Overseas Airways Corporation (BOAC) for training and 18

were used by the Royal Navy's Fleet Air Arm. All British Lysanders were withdrawn from service in 1946.



General characteristics

- **Crew:** One, pilot
- **Capacity:** 1 passenger (or observer)
- **Length:** 30 ft 6 in (9.29 m)
- **Wingspan:** 50 ft 0 in (15.24 m)
- **Height:** 14 ft 6 in (4.42 m)
- **Wing area:** 260 ft² (24.2 m²)
- **Empty weight:** 4,365 lb (1,984 kg)

Max. takeoff weight: 6,330 lb (2,877 kg)

Powerplant: 1 × Bristol Mercury XX radial engine, 870 hp (649 kW)

Performance

Maximum speed: 212 mph (184 knots, 341 km/h) at 5,000 ft (1,520 m)

Range: 600 miles (522 nmi, 966 km)

Service ceiling: 21,500 ft (6,550 m)

- **Climb to 10,000 ft (3,050 m):** 8 min
- **Take-off run to 50 ft (15 m):** 305 yards (279 m)

Armament

Guns: Two forward-firing .303 in (7.7 mm) Browning machine guns in wheel fairings and two more for the observer

Bombs: Four 20 lb (9 kg) bombs under rear fuselage and 500 lb (227 kg) of bombs on stub wings if fitted



106 Miles for

RAF100

(With grateful thanks to the RAF Shawbury Magazine "Aries")

By SAC Pete Davidson

With RAF 100 celebrations taking place throughout the country, I'm sure every serviceman and woman has many stories to tell. With myself still reasonably new to the RAF, I have been left nothing short of staggered by the gathering of generations, all swapping stories of their own versions of the 'good old days'. However, with various parades and events still to take place, the celebrations aren't at an end, far from it in fact. In some cases, 106 miles are between you and your victory celebrations.

It comes as no surprise that all RAF units are taking part in events that acknowledge our 100th anniversary in ways other than cocktail parties. One of the most prestigious events taking place is the RAF 100 Baton Relay. This event is designed to carry a baton specially designed and made by RAF Apprentices and their instructors around the UK and abroad over a 100-day period. Starting on 1st April 2018 its journey will culminate in London on the day of the RAF Centenary Parade on 10th July 2018. During this 100-day period, it will be visiting numerous sites associated with the RAF100 and transported there in as many unusual ways as possible. Each baton carrier is given a start and end location, with plenty of planning working out the route themselves. The baton will be carried by RAF personnel, Cadets, Veterans and members of the many sporting associations that make up the RAF.

So, while some were socialising in our individual messes and raising a glass or two in a toast (or toasts) to the Queen, others were putting on running shoes, zipping up wetsuits and donning helmets. This can only mean one thing: you're taking part in a



triathlon. Prior to the RAF Triathlon team taking over the RAF 100 Baton, it had already gone through the elements, being transported by boat along the River Thames, power kites, horseback and even carried by the RAF Falcons as they parachuted from an aircraft. The RAF100 Triathlon Baton Relay team didn't want it to be a standard triathlon consisting of a 1.5 km pool or open water swim, followed by a challenging 40 km bike stage, depleting your body of all energy finishing with a 10 km run. To follow standard triathlon distances wouldn't make their stage of the baton relay unusual – to show off their prowess they wanted to do something different. The RAF Triathlon Association team, consisted of 6 willing male and female members of RAF Tri, from RAF Reservist to Wing Commander. The team's individual stretch was the latest in the 100-day relay which sees the commemorative RAF 100 Baton travel around the country visiting RAF stations and memorials on a mission to celebrate, commemorate and inspire the next generation. The team completed one of the longest stages of the relay by foot, pedal and even braving 8-degree Celsius waters in the English Channel covering a total of 106 miles in one day. On Sunday 15th April 2018 we started our leg at The Memorial to the few at

Folkestone. The evening before the Baton was delivered by Red10 in the special edition Red Arrows Aston Martin Vanquish S. The RAF Tri team set off to cover 106 miles of the South-East region of the UK. Carrying the baton along the route they passed through Hastings, Eastbourne and Brighton (not realising it was the infamous Brighton Marathon that day), completing their segment of the relay finishing at the RAF Benevolent Fund's Princes Marina House in Littlehampton; here they handed the Baton over to RAF Orienteering to carry out their leg of the route. You may not be aware that one of the RAF Shawbury personnel undertook this challenge; Flying Officer Hannah Dodwell, who works in ATC, is an experienced sportswoman in every right. The RAF100 Triathlon was the perfect chance for her to show her

commitment to the RAF, while implementing her skills as a Triathlete. With vast preparation required even for the most robust of personnel, it would be interesting to see just what sort of training would be required to undertake such a long route. Flying Officer Dodwell told me that despite being a competitive swimmer at a young age and throughout her teenage years, her competitive edge always wanted to test her further and complete a triathlon. She was a talented regional level swimmer and a natural runner but had never cycled competitively. However, in

July 2013, Flying Officer Dodwell's goal was achieved by competing in her first triathlon, The City of Birmingham Sprint. This served as the catalyst sparking her desire to become a competitive triathlete. Now years (and a few bikes) later, she commits several hours a week to training, which can be difficult trying to fit it around her work as a controller in the tower. When speaking to Fg/Off Dodwell after the event she said: "With the RAF 100 being such a commemorative celebration it was an honour to be able to contribute by participating in the RAF 100 Baton Relay; this was particularly special in a sport that I thoroughly enjoy. Despite being a strong swimmer, I was most nervous about the sea swim, knowing the temperature was not the same as your normal swimming pool, but a mere 8 degrees! Overall it was a very enjoyable day, albeit long; it was extremely rewarding rounding the final corner to a warm welcoming from staff at Princes Marina House, Veterans and other RAF personnel." Our congratulations go to Flying Officer Dodwell for completing this element of the baton relay, and we wish her good luck for future events. With the season just commencing she will be competing in many Triathlons and Aquathlons across the country. Culminating in her biggest achievement to date, qualifying to compete at the 2018 European Aquathlon Championships in Ibiza in October.



[~http://forcespublishing.co.uk/flipbooks/Aries/index.html](http://forcespublishing.co.uk/flipbooks/Aries/index.html) ~ With Thanks



Mazza Holland with Fund Raising for the Sky Dive



Mazza and Steve Holland are with Carol Ann and Dave Peachy and others at Riverside Festival Charlbury. 29 July at Chipping Norton, United Kingdom

All set up and ready for day two Fundraising for our Sky Dive.

Thatcham Family Fun Day helped us raise over £225 for the Wings Appeal via tickets sold in the Sgt Eddie Raffles raffle, sponsorship in the Dirty Dozen Parachute jump plus the normal wings appeal goodies. A raffle with our Central RAF Band Bear "Drum" also helped the cause on a blistering warm day!!!!

Well Done Mazza, Ed.



F/O J.R.G. Bathgate - Buzz Hope



'and in the morning...'

Westland Lysander Mk.IIIa V9673 was one of 500 aircraft built by Westland's at Yeovil under Contract No. B54504/39. Lysander V9673 and delivered to No.10 Group, transferring to the Anti-aircraft Command Co-operation Unit. The aircraft was later transferred to No.286 Squadron, with its final move to No.161 Squadron at Tangmere. The aircraft coded MA-J, flown by F/O J.R.G. Bathgate

DFC RNZAF took off from RAF Station Tangmere at 21:05 on the night of Friday 10th December 1943. On route to France to collect an agent during Operation Sten the aircraft crashed at la-Ville-aux-Bois-lès-Pontavert (Aisne) 22 km SE of Laon. France becoming the 25th aircraft of the Squadron to be struck off charge and 1,523rd aircraft from No.3 Group to be struck off charge.

F/O (403932) J.R.G. Bathgate DFC RNZAF, aged 23, the son of George Thomas Bathgate and of Eleanor Isabella Bathgate (nee Macnee), of Outram, Otago, New Zealand; husband of Dorothea Valentia Bathgate rests in Grave 3. B. 1A. in La Ville-aux-Bois British Cemetery France.

DFC Citation London Gazette 14/12/1943:5436

'Flying Officer Bathgate has taken part in a very large number of Sorties, many of them in the Middle East. He has displayed exceptional skill, keenness and determination, qualities which have earned him many successes. He is a very efficient captain and his example has proved inspiring.

Per Ardua Ad Astra (Extracts from 'and in the morning...' series and from 'and in the morning...' Data base

The Shuttleworth Collections Westland Lysander Mk. IIIA, Y1536, G-AZWT, which displays the colours and markings of Lysander V9367, flying at Old Warden Aerodrome during the Shuttleworth Season Premiere & RAF Centenary Air Show 2018.

Watch the video at:

<https://youtu.be/8vaZX6hng8Q>

'and in the morning...'



161 SQUADRON

Royal Air Force

BARRY HOPE



Photograph:
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HISTORY - RAF Biggin Hill

London Biggin Hill:

The airport was formerly a Royal Air Force station **RAF Biggin Hill**, and a small enclave on the airport still retains that designation.



An armorer adjusting machine guns on a Spitfire at Biggin Hill during the Second World War

Biggin Hill is best known for its role during the Battle of Britain in the Second World War, when it served as one of the principal fighter bases protecting London and South East England from attack by enemy bombers. Over the course of the war, fighters based at Biggin Hill claimed 1,400 enemy aircraft, at the cost of the lives of 453 Biggin Hill based aircrew.

History

The airfield was originally opened by the Royal Flying Corps (RFC) during the First World War. At first in 1916 Koonowla House was requisitioned by the War Office in 1916, for the RFC to conduct wireless experiments. Then on 13 Feb 1917 the RFC transferred there (from their long time HQ at RAF Joyce Green, Dartford), and established it as part of the London Air Defence Area, using the adjacent Cudham Lodge estate which contained a huge undivided field, ideal for aircraft. The station was responsible for defending the capital against attacks by Zeppelins and Gotha bombers. To this end, 141 Squadron of the RFC was based at Biggin Hill and equipped with Bristol Fighters.

Between the wars, the airfield was used by a number of experimental units, working on instrument design, ground-based anti-aircraft defences, and night flying. The base was closed between 1929 and 1932, during which period reconstruction work took place including the building of new hangars. During the Second World War the airfield was one of the commanding bases for the Battle of Britain, with both Spitfires and Hurricanes from a variety of squadrons being based there. The squadrons based at Biggin Hill claimed to have destroyed 1,400 enemy aircraft, at the cost of the lives of 453 Biggin Hill based aircrew. Because of its importance to the capital's defence, the airfield itself became a target. Between August 1940 and January 1941, the airfield was attacked twelve times, the worst of which wrecked workshops, stores, barracks, WAAF quarters and a hangar, killing 39 people on the ground.

After the war, Biggin Hill was briefly used by the RAF's Transport Command, and then became a base for both regular and reserve fighter squadrons, flying spitfires, Meteors and Hunters. A fatal incident involving the loss of three Meteors on 18 June 1951 (see incidents and accidents below) caused the station's continued use by the military to be called into question. However, in 1958 Biggin Hill ceased to be an operational RAF station, becoming the Officer and Aircrew Selection Centre for the RAF. Due to the impending closure of the nearby original London Airport at Croydon, from 1956 much of the civilian light aviation from Croydon relocated to Biggin and it became a joint civilian and military airport. Croydon closed completely in 1959, at which time Biggin Hill became a mainly civilian airport with only occasional military flying taking place.

The base was also used by the following RAF Regiment squadrons:

- No. 2705 Squadron RAF Regiment
- No. 2709 Squadron RAF Regiment
- No. 2745 Squadron RAF Regiment
- No. 2767 Squadron RAF Regiment
- No. 2803 Squadron RAF Regiment
- No. 2824 Squadron RAF Regiment
- No. 2847 Squadron RAF Regiment

Towards the end of 1963, the Orpington Urban District Council (within whose boundaries the airfield lay) was approached by the Board of Trade as to whether the Council would purchase (effectively from the RAF) Biggin Hill airfield. In 1964, on formation of the London Borough of Bromley, which absorbed Orpington, the offer to purchase was open to the new borough. Protracted negotiations were held with the Board of Trade and later the Department of Trade and Industry. At a special meeting on 15 June 1972 the Council decided to purchase the airport by a recorded vote of 41 to 9. The purchase was eventually completed in 1974.

In May 1992 the Department of Transport issued a direction to the Council under s.13 of the Airports Act 1986. The effect of this direction, which affected airports generating turnover of £1million or more (Biggin Hill just scraped into this limit), was to require the Council to set up a new company for the purpose of operating the airport as an independent commercial undertaking. To comply with the direction would have required the transfer of all the assets and liabilities to the company with a consequential loss of Council control over airport activities. In the circumstances, the Council decided that the granting of a 125-year lease would enable more control to be retained than an outright disposal of the freehold or by a transfer to a local authority company with an uncertain future. In May 1994, the airport was leased to Biggin Hill Airport Limited ("BHAL") for 125 years. BHAL is a subsidiary of Regional Airports Ltd. who previously owned London Southend Airport.

Meanwhile, the Officer and Aircrew Selection Centre moved to RAF Cranwell in 1992, marking the end of active RAF involvement.

In 2001, the London Borough of Bromley as freeholder of the airport succeeded in an action in the Court of Appeal. The court ruling prohibits the airport operators from allowing tickets to be sold for flights into and out of the airport, thus preventing its use for scheduled or holiday charter flights, but allowing business aviation and corporate shuttles.

HISTORY - RAF Biggin Hill

In May 2017 a runway (29/11) was permanently withdrawn from use.



Aerial view of the airport in 2011



St George's Chapel of Remembrance, with a replica Spitfire outside



Replicas of Hurricane and a Spitfire stand watch over the entrance to the chapel of the former RAF station.



Interior of St George's Chapel of Remembrance

Description

The airport is located on a hilltop, just to the east of the Bromley to Westerham road (A233) and about 1 mile (1.6 km) to the north of the town of Biggin Hill in the London Borough of Bromley. It is in a rural area to the south-east of Greater London, outside of the Greater London Built-up Area. The small village of Leaves Green lies adjacent to the north-western perimeter of the airport. The airport has one runway aligned roughly north-south. The runway (03/21) is

1,820 metres in length, making it usable by aircraft up to Boeing 737/Airbus A320 size, and it has an Instrument Landing System. Radar air traffic control (ATC) services are provided by Thames Radar at the London Terminal Control Centre, while procedural approach and VFR ATC services are provided by the airport itself.

Despite the ban on scheduled services, Biggin Hill is used by a large number of business flights by business jets and similar sized aircraft. The airport has a passenger terminal, located on the A233 road just south of Leaves Green, which provides facilities for such flights, including departure lounges, a licensed café bar, and customs and immigration facilities.

The current RAF Biggin Hill is a small enclave on the western boundary of the airport to the south of the passenger terminal, and contains the headquarters of 2427 Squadron of the Air Training Corps. Next to this is *St George's Chapel of Remembrance*. This brick built chapel was erected in 1951, to replace an earlier chapel destroyed by fire, and now serves as a memorial to all the aircrew who died flying from the Biggin Hill Sector. It is surrounded by a garden of remembrance and has gate guardians in the form of full-sized replicas of a Hurricane and a Spitfire, representing the aircraft that flew from the former airfield during the Battle of Britain. The replicas replaced genuine aircraft that formerly served as the guardians. Air Marshal Hugh Dowding laid the foundation stone. The chapel was taken out of the RAF's control in 2015, and is now run by Biggin Hill Airport.

Besides the passenger terminal and RAF enclave, other former RAF buildings still exist in the 'North Camp' to the west of the main runway, including the Sergeant's Mess of 1932, the Airmen's Institute of circa 1926, the former Station Headquarters building of 1931 and several barrack blocks. The buildings, which are Grade II listed, are in a redbrick neo-Georgian style typical of military airfields of the interwar period. They have been vacant since the Officer and Aircrew Selection Centre closed in 1992, and were added to English Heritage's list of buildings at risk in 2006.

The 'South Camp', situated to the south of runway 11/29, was transferred to civil usage in the 1950s and now consists of a utilitarian collection of hangars and sheds, together with a modern office park. It now contains many aviation related businesses, flying clubs and flying schools. Many private light aircraft are based on the airport.

Construction on a new state-of-the-art hangar alongside the Passenger Terminal commenced in October 2010. Excavations of the site uncovered underground war-time fuel tanks and associated pump rooms; these were re-covered during the same building works. Construction was planned to finish late in spring 2011.

Biggin Hill is the location of one of the four "stacks" for aircraft landing at Heathrow Airport, and is used by aircraft approaching from the south east. It uses a VOR navigational beacon with the identifier "BIG". Noise from aircraft using this stack is often wrongly attributed to aircraft using Biggin Hill Airport.

The airfield still retains its history by the continued restoration projects running at the Biggin Hill Heritage Hangar. "IntotheBlue" experience days, a UK company within the airfield allows members of the public to fly alongside an Mk9 Spitfire in a 1950s Harvard. Projects like this hold a timely reminder to how important the airport was during the Second World War.

With Thanks https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/London_Biggin_Hill_Airport

My first few hours at Bridgnorth - Brian Saunders



Years ago I wrote about my time in the RAF from 1959 to 64. My first few hours at Bridgnorth were memorable but for all the wrong reasons. May I share the memories of those first few hours of life in the RAF with you. It may bring back a few memories for many. "We arrived at Bridgnorth in the dark.

That was bad news. It only added to the horror and confusion of those first few hours at the camp. The moment we stepped out of the coach screaming bellowing dark shapes fell upon us.

'Move, move, move, come on you idle bastards, move yourselves.' We tumbled out of the coach and rushed along pathways, between wooden huts. Within minutes everyone had been reduced to cursing sweating heaps of humanity. Falling over each other we stumbled headlong to God knows where. Some were foolish enough to get lost, take wrong turnings, others fell over. Yours ears paid dearly for such simple human failings. A recruit in front of me went sprawling, that fiendish holdall on top of him.

'Wanting to have a rest already airman?' screamed a voice. At what must have been 100 decibels and three inches from his face, 'Get up you useless, stupid, idle airman. I'll teach you to lie down. Come on, get up, move... move... move' You quickly learnt that protest was not only futile, but positively dangerous. And so it went on.

Out of the darkness a voice bellowed, 'Follow that corporal.' An anxious voice whispered in my ear, 'What's a corporal mate?' Alas it wasn't said quiet enough. A snarling twisted shape thrust itself into the hapless recruit's face. 'What's a corporal, what's a corporal; I'll tell you what a corporal is.' He turned his arm to face the airmen, 'See these two stripes, that is what a corporal is and if you learn nothing else while you are here, you will learn what a corporal is.' As the unfortunate airman disappeared into the darkness followed by this screaming banshee I thought to myself, 'Oh the poor soul, he has much to learn.'

I was at an advantage to many recruits having been an army cadet at Elmore Green High School in Walsall. I knew most of the basics, drill and marching, looking after my uniform and of course, what a corporal was. These small bits of knowledge were to spare me the more excessive verbal abuse you were subjected to during basic training. Our destination was a large hall type building, which we later found out was an indoor drill hall used during inclement weather. There we were split up into groups of about twenty-four men.

The mad headlong rush started again. This time we knew where we were going, to our billets. Billets, they had beds,

rest and sleep perhaps. You've got to be kidding!

We piled in and everyone tried to bag a corner bed. A corporal, who by some demonic power had got to the billet ahead of us, found it very amusing.

'Corners won't help you; you can't hide in this place.' He then plunged in among us and allocated beds at random. He called for silence and introduced himself.

'My name is Corporal Pickett. It is my misfortune to be with you for the next eight weeks.' He droned on.

'I always have the best squad. My squad always shines out on passing out parade.' He then added menacingly, 'I hadn't better be disappointed this time.' I thought to myself, 'I bet every drill instructor makes a little speech like this to his new recruits. Pickett must say this every two months,' I had a feeling I wasn't going to like this bloke. He now became Mr. Nice Guy. 'Right lads, there is a lovely meal waiting for you in the cook house, so follow me.' Only about half the hut had any appetite, the remainder just flopped onto their beds. On returning from our meal, Corporal Pickett, with considerable glee in his voice said, 'Now don't hang about, get your beauty sleep and build up your strength, you are going to need it!' Sleep didn't come easy to men who had been humiliated, bullied and screamed at for three solid hours. We were shell-shocked. One or two of the more sensitive lads actually looked as if they were in a state of shock. Stories circulated later about one or two recruits going AWOL after that first terrifying evening. We never found out what happened to them. At six a.m. the next day the door at the end of the hut burst open, all the lights came on and Corporal Pickett, immaculately turned out, strutted down the centre of the billet bellowing as he walked down, 'Wake up you idle airmen, come on, rise and shine, up...up...up you lazy lot.' 'Oh my God, it's started again, how we are going to survive the next eight weeks.' But survive we did!"

By: Brian Saunders (Photo's from the Editors Collection)



A selection of Branch RAF100 Photo's for the History File Stolen from our FB Page



RIAT 2018



RAF 100 Flypast



Upcoming Events



UK AIRSHOWS 2018



September	Scottish International Air show KA7 2XA	The Low Green, Ayr, Scotland. There will be two days of flying along Ayr seafront
September 1st and 2nd	Airwaves: Northern Ireland International Air show Portrush, Coleraine, N.Ireland BT56 8AP	Biggest Airshow in Ireland, Free air and sea displays, ground shows, exhibitions in two areas: East Strand and Lansdowne
September 2nd	Shuttleworth Heritage Day Air show, Old Warden, Biggleswade, Bedfordshire SG18 9EP	The September show keeps its 2017 theme. Vintage aircraft, vintage motors, vintage agriculture and vintage bikes from the collection and from visitors.
September 7th-9th	Goodwood Revival, Goodwood, West Sussex, PO18 0PH	Step back in time to the halcyon days of motor racing at Goodwood. Come in period dress and be part of the festival with period car and motorcycle racing, flying and static displays of pre-1966 craft.
September 8th - 9th	Heroes at Highclere, Highclere Castle, Newbury RG20 9RN	A Charity weekend to mark 100 years since the end of WWI: to remember and celebrate those who served and those who saved in conflicts across the world.
September 13th	Jersey International Air Display, St Aubins Bay, Jersey Channel Islands	Wartime and modern military and civil aircraft. Expect an impressive line-up including a great deal of foreign participation not commonly seen on the mainland.
September 13th	Guernsey Air Display, St Peter Port. Guernsey, Channel Islands GU1	Slightly smaller than the Jersey show and on the same day, this show is centred to the east of St Peter Port harbour.
September 22nd - 23rd	Battle of Britain Air Show, Duxford, Cambridgeshire, CB22 4QR	Duxford's September Air Show will celebrate the Battle of Britain again in 2018. As well as flying there will be living history re-enactments, sounds of the era and
September 22nd - 23rd	Sywell Classic Pistons and Props, Sywell Aerodrome, Northants NN6 0BN	Classic Cars, bikes and planes, vintage lifestyle and family entertainment. Vintage and classic traders. Vintage funfair and music. Aviation museum and art deco buildings.
September 29th - 30th	Cotswold Airport Revival Festival, Cotswold Airport, Cirencester, Gloucestershire GL7 6BA	Fly-ins rather than a full air show. They are hoping to get 100 aircraft flying in to mark the centenary of the RAF and particularly encourage vintage and military-schemed aircraft which will have free landings and parking.
September	The LAA & Homebuilt Festival, Old Buckenham, Norfolk, NR17 1PU	Aircraft-related trade stands. 4583rd Bombardment Group Museum and the new 8th

THE ARMED FORCES TRUST OF CHIPPING NORTON PRESENTS

A SWINGING 40's NIGHT

with THE SWINGETTES
featuring our Legion sweetheart Lula May



**FRIDAY 14th SEPTEMBER AT THE
CROWN & CUSHION HOTEL,
CHIPPING NORTON**

from 7 pm to Midnight tickets £15
available from Carol Peachey 077857 70812 or
West Street Newsagents.

RAF 100
Finger buffet, raffle, 40's
dress welcome prizes for
best dressed couple
All proceeds to the Royal
Air Force Association and
other local charities



IWM IMPERIAL WAR MUSEUMS



**STILL
NOT
TOO
LATE
SO
BOOK
NOW!**

Ian T Kirk our Social Events Coordinator has organised a Branch trip to the RAF Duxford Imperial War Museum on Saturday 20th October. Prices are :

Adult £17.10, Over 59's £13.70,
Disabled £13.70 with free entry for carer.

BUT, if we have more than 10 paying adults the price will come down to just £12.95 per person (still with free entry for carer if accompanying a disabled person). So it will pay EVERYONE to let Ian know ASAP of your intention to attend. Admission money to be paid to Ian in advance as he has to book us as a group!! PM Ian for details. If you are staying on the Friday night, the hotel we are going to be staying at is the Holiday Inn Express Cambridge, which is less than 2 miles from Duxford & CURRENT rates via [Booking.com](https://www.booking.com) is from just £64 a couple including breakfast.

Contact Social Events Coordinator :
Mr Ian Kirk social.rafa.global.branch1370@gmail.com