

MINUTES OF MEETING-5 NOVEMBER 2009

Chairman's Welcome – Barry Beck welcomed everybody to the November meeting including a new member, Derek Fulton, indicating our Guest Speaker Gerald Honey would give his talk prior to normal business.

Guest Speaker – This was Gerald Honey's second talk to the Group on his RAF career and the focus on this occasion was with respect to his time as a Harrier Pilot. Gerald's flying career spans a total of 54 years, 33 of which were with the RAF and 11 of these as a Harrier Pilot. His introduction to the Harrier was in 1967 when he joined 1 Squadron at Wittering. The aspects of vertical take off and landing were only possible due to the ingenuity of Stanley Hooker of Rolls Royce who developed a two-spool axial-flow turbo fan adaptation for the Pegasus engine. The Harrier is not a large aircraft being some 46 feet long with and a 25 foot wingspan. Although the aircraft could carry a maximum of 3 tons of fuel and 4 tons of weaponry the limiting vertical lift-off weight was 6 tons requiring a short conventional take-off to be achieved when fully loaded. Gerald then recounted the early training days for a Harrier pilot as no twin seater version was at that time manufactured. To familiarise pilots with the requirements for vertical take-off and landing it was therefore necessary for them to initially undertake helicopter pilot training. Gerald then went on to show and describe the various roles to which the Harrier lends itself, from aircraft carrier based operations to operating from concealed hides in close proximity to the front lines. Gerald's flying career took a more relaxed mode in his later years with the RAF as for the last 20 years he has owned a Stearman biplane trainer of WWII vintage and operates a Stearman display team from Old Buckingham Airfield. Bill Purchase gave the vote of thanks on behalf of the Group and members were asked to show their appreciation.

Apologies – C.& M.Salisbury, C.Fox, D.Goddard, J. Mitchell, J.& K. Aldis, P.Cushing, L.Dench, J. & J.Morter, R.& M.Reynolds, B.& D.Goffin, S.Edwards, A.Goldspink, L.& A.Mann.

Minutes of Previous Meeting- October meeting minutes were read and accepted as a true record.

Secretary's Report- Ian McCallum read out a letter from Wing Commander Ken Wallis with reference to our recent visit prior to reminding members of the 2010 Guernsey Liberation Tour and that entry should not be delayed if members were considering attending. Ian also thanked David Goddard Jnr. for the excellent job of 'deputy Secretary' at the previous meeting.

Chairman's Report- Barry Beck indicated that the 2009 rally season had been another great success although both Barry and Doris unfortunately missed a number due to their Normandy incident. One aspect of the Rally scene is the newly introduced 'signing in system' which although working well does require individuals to print their names clearly in order fuel reimbursement can be paid correctly to all. Barry then had information with respect to the Christmas Dinner from Rodney Reynolds indicating some 60 tickets had now been sold and anyone with booking forms to please return them via the Chairman this evening. In addition tonight was the last opportunity to request a room at The Oakland's prior to the relinquishment of surplus rooms. Russell Herring indicated that in response to the request at the last meeting he had approximately 30 empty shoeboxes available at the back of the room for anyone wishing one for the 'Shoebox Appeal'. Barry finished his items indicating he had Group embroidered badges available at £5.00 each.

Treasurer's Report- June Cushing advised that Peter sends his regards and although progress on his condition is very slow the scooter supplied via Gerald Beckett has helped his mobility greatly. The funds currently stand at £4380.18 and it was a quiet month awaiting inputs from the last of the events attended prior to working out attendance allowances.

Membership Secretary's Report- Bill Purchase advised we have had 3 new members joining over the recent period.

MVT Liaison Officer's Report- Ian McCallum advised nothing to report since submission of the Winter Area Report for inclusion in Windscreen magazine.

Publicity Officer's Report- Charles Warren indicated he had received from John Morter a contact in Breckland Radio that he was yet to follow up on. Charles had also responded to a recent Radio Norfolk item on Poppy Day collections and would welcome information from members as to where they were collecting.

Rally Secretary's Report- Richard Edwards thanked the membership for the impressive display of vehicles at Mannington Hall where there were some 30 vehicles in attendance. Richard then thanked all of the membership for their support, help and cooperation during the season.

Newsletter Editor's Report- Sue Goddard wished all readers a good evening and made apologies on behalf of David who's medical condition currently means it is not possible to sit for the duration of our meetings. Sue indicated the deadline was with us for Christmas messages and that the next Newsletter would be available at the December Meeting.

Any Other Business-

Ian McCallum – In response to Charles 'Poppy' Ian indicated that Tom Blevins had been collecting in Norwich, Cyril & Marion Salisbury in Southwold and himself in Beccles.

Gerald Beckett – asked if it would be possible to arrange another visit to the Battle Area. The Chairman indicated that unfortunately we have lost our contact and that the area is currently being heavily utilised with the current requirement for pre-deployment training to Afghanistan. Barry however undertook to look into the possibility.

Barry Beck – advised that Rodney Reynolds had found a forgotten hoard of Group mugs in his loft so watch the top table at future meetings for stocking fillers and special offers. Barry also took the opportunity of asking our new member what he had thought of the content and format of the meeting.

Russell Herring – asked if the Committee had followed up on his suggestion for an alternative venue. The Chairman indicated this was actually an issue for discussion at the next formal Committee Meeting. Russell also took the opportunity for asking the membership to show their appreciation to Charles Warren for his excellent efforts at events and via the media in making the public aware of the Groups activities and fund raising.

Tom Blevins – asked if it was possible to purchase some new vehicle pennants. Ian McCallum advised this was a good idea, what with significant changes in our membership and that none had actually been available for a number of years. Ian undertook to explore the situation with our previous supplier.

Barry Beck – informed the membership that the December Meeting would be an open meeting, being no Guest speaker or video. In addition it was proposed we change the date of our AGM to April next year as a number of members will not be available for the May meeting as this clashes with the Guernsey Tour.

Being no other formal business the meeting closed at 2120