



## Books

**British Air Policy Between the Wars** by H. Montgomery Hyde (*William Heinemann Ltd, 15 Queen Street, Mayfair, London W1X 8BE; illustrated, £15 net*). Much has been written about the origins of the Royal Air Force in the First World War and about its achievements in that conflict. Its heroic contribution to the Second World War, when air power proved to be the key to victory, has likewise been exhaustively documented. But the 1919-39 period, when the RAF had to fight for survival and prove its worth as an independent air force, and when the foundations of its wartime greatness were laid, has received scant attention from military historians. There were no great battles to describe, for the conflicts were in Parliament or committee rooms or the Press; and although there were some splendid high-speed and long-distance achievements, front-line operations were often of an internecine character, one Service against another—"the inglorious arts of peace."

All those who have been involved in military or civil aviation during this period will therefore be indebted to Dr Montgomery Hyde for his monumental study, written as Leverhulme Research Fellow at the RAF Museum, of policies which shaped the RAF and BOAC up to the start of the Second World War and which affected everyone who served in them. In 500-odd pages he has "sought out and set in order" many things: the other Services' attempt to dismember the RAF after the First World War (personalised in the rivalry between Beatty and Trenchard, to whose memory the book is dedicated); RAF expansion plans in the face of Continental air power, first French, then German; the use of aircraft as an arm of policy in the Middle East; the airship era; the influence and personalities of successive Air Ministers—Churchill (continually buzzing in and out of these pages), Hoare, Thomson, Londonderry, Swinton and Kingsley Wood—and the effectiveness or otherwise of successive chiefs of the air

staff, notably Trenchard, John Salmond, Ellington and Newall.

Inevitably there are a few errors in a work of this size, regrettably some of these occurring in photographic captions for which the Museum was partly responsible. But the reader is left with two conclusions. The first is that Dr Hyde has handled a mass of documents in a masterly way, setting out the major lines of development and not seeking to justify opinions based on hindsight. Secondly, that his book (a well researched political cautionary tale, for the operational, logistic and technical history of the RAF 1919-39 still remains to be written) should be on the shelves of every air historian and defence college as a major contribution to the understanding of air power. H.W.

**The Royal Air Force—The Past 30 Years** by A. G. Trevenen James (*Macdonald and Jane's Publishers Ltd, Paulton House, 8 Shepherdess Walk, London N1 7LW; illustrated, £5.95p*). Although Wg Cdr James says in his prologue that his book is not "simply a chronology of events," it occasionally reads like one. Thus quite disparate facts rub shoulders in the text: on pages 56-57, for example, are recorded the Korean War armistice, anti-terrorist operations in Malaya, an African photographic survey, attacks on the Mau Mau, introduction of the Canberra and King

George VI's funeral. This effort to describe what the RAF did from year to year results in some lack of perspective, peaks of achievement being hemmed in by lower levels of activity. The author might more profitably have picked out the main themes of these years instead of striving to be such a faithful Froissart.

Wg Cdr James begins with the post-war need to cut the accident rate because the then Chief of Air Staff (Tedder) mentioned this in January 1946. But what really worried the Air Staff in the late 1940s and early 1950s was how the RAF, with its obsolescent equipment and diminished manpower, was going to cope if a new war started, as looked likely in those dark days.

But the author is not an official historian; his work has been inspired by devotion to the Service of which he was a member, and he has conscientiously described its actions during 1946-76. There are a few errors of fact or emphasis—the Thor IRBMs, for instance, were not so much part of the British missiles-versus-aircraft controversy as a temporary American addition to Western nuclear deterrent forces. And the Phantom, for all its power, could never fly from London to Singapore "in a few minutes over nine hours". But as Lord Elworthy says in his foreword, "the author faced a considerable challenge in aiming to cover, in fifteen chapters, half the life of the Royal Air Force". H.W.

## Books received

**Ground Attack Aircraft** by Christopher Shores (*Macdonald and Jane's Publishers Ltd, Paulton House, 8 Shepherdess Walk, London N1 7LW; £4.95*). A well-illustrated study of the ground-attack aircraft of all nations during the Second World War, with details of armament and operational histories.

**Guy Gibson's Flying Log Book** (*After The Battle, 3 New Plaistow Road, Stratford, London E15 3JA; facsimile, £4.95*). A faithful reproduction of Guy Gibson's second logbook, including the entry for the dams raid by 617 Sqn. The last entry was made three days before his death on September 19, 1944.

**The Helicopter** by H. F. Gregory (*Thomas Yoseloff Ltd, 136-148 Tooley Street, London SE1 2TT; £6.50*). A well illustrated history of the helicopter from Leonardo da Vinci's ideas to Sikorsky's advancing-blade concept.

**A House in Space** by Henry S. F. Cooper Jnr (*Angus & Robertson (UK) Ltd, 2 Fisher Street, London WC1R 4QA; £4.80*). Reconstruction of a typical working day in the US Skylab, explaining in simple language the

complicated workings and achievements of this space station.

**The de Havilland Mosquito** by M. J. Hardy (*David and Charles Ltd, Brunel House, Newton Abbott, Devon; £4.95*). Another history of the Mosquito from early development to the final days as a target tug and racing aircraft. A good selection of previously unpublished photographs.

**The Soviet Air Force since 1918** by Alexander Boyd (*Macdonald and Jane's Publishers Ltd, Paulton House, 8 Shepherdess Walk, London N1 7LW; £6.50*). A comprehensive study of Soviet air power, beginning with the birth of the air force in 1918 and going via the effects of the Stalin purges (revealed for the first time) and the Second World War to the efficient force of the 1970s.

**United States Navy Aircraft Since 1911** by Gordon Swanborough and Peter M. Bowers (*Putnam and Co Ltd, 9 Bow Street, London WC2E 7AL; £10.50*). The second edition of this invaluable work on the US Navy now includes the Grumman Prowler and Tomcat, Lockheed Viking and, in a section on foreign aircraft in US service, the Harrier.

allowed to take the exams when he is, say, within two or three hundred hours of the experience requirement.

The Icao Annex and the rules of practically every other country allow examinations at any time for higher licences which remain valid for a lengthy period. A Swiss pilot can take ATPL examinations at any time and still get a licence providing he meets the experience requirements within ten years.

Oxford Air Training JACK NICHOLL  
School, (Principal)  
Kidlington, Oxford OX5 1RA

#### Veteran pilots: like old wine?

SIR—Robert Taylor is obviously not a 55-year-old, compulsorily retired, fit, active, highly experienced pilot (Letters, April 9). If he was, he would not make such remarks about our upper echelons of professional pilots. As someone who examines a large number of such pilots and who flies around the world a great deal, I would prefer my pilot to be experienced as well as fit.

Icao rules that 60 is the magic age at which a pilot becomes useless. There is in fact plenty of evidence to support the theory that keeping pilots on until the age of 60 would improve the overall safety level. The main reason for retirement at 55 would seem to be company pensions schemes. But providing a pilot can pass his medical and flying checks, he could in theory go on for ever.

19 Cliveden Place, DR I. C. PERRY  
London SW1W 8HD

#### Airport security: trouble brewing

SIR—I note that one of the cost-cutting measures envisaged by the Government is the phasing out of payments for security screening at UK airports. As managing director of a consulting company which is frequently called upon to include the subject of security in ground-handling reviews, I would like to know whether the Government intends to continue to supply the service and presumably set the standard against payment by the airlines, or whether there will be a free-for-all with every carrier setting its own standards and introducing its own methods. It seems that either course is bound to lead to friction between the carriers and the BAA.

Aviation Loss Control A. R. STEPHENS  
Ltd,  
84 Gloucester Road,  
Hampton, Middx

#### Model conduct

SIR—Safety is one of the paramount responsibilities of the national governing body for model flying, the Society of Model Aeronautical Engineers, and we are naturally concerned about any possible conflict between model and man-carrying aircraft. This concern has been reinforced by the recent General Aviation Safety Bulletin report of two incidents in which models were flown possibly in breach of the

Air Navigation Order (*Flight*, April 2).

The Society is currently drafting a code of conduct for the sport, emphasising the need to separate model and man-carrying airspace as far as possible. As an interim measure, a reminder of the relevant section of the ANO will be included in the next issue of the regular bulletin sent to our 5,000 members.

We are also concerned that many model fliers lie outside the jurisdiction of the SMAE. Today the British Gliding Association and the Popular Flying Association, for instance, have mandatory powers in their areas of sporting aviation. Perhaps it is time that the Society of Model Aeronautical Engineers was given a similar role.

61 Riding House St, FRANK ALLANACH  
London W1

#### Britain: the only place to fly from

SIR—Troubleshooter for March 26 highlights a problem which affects all residents of non-sterling areas. How come a flight from Amsterdam to London costs £50, while a flight the other way is only £35? If you buy a round trip Amsterdam-London-Amsterdam you pay £100, but if you pay for a trip London-Amsterdam-London it is only £70. Same flights, same service, same airlines, but a 30 per cent discount for buying your ticket in London.

Are the airlines overcharging on the Continent? Or are we subsidising British air travel? And if British Airways and KLM agree on a London-Amsterdam shuttle, how will they handle this price difference? One can imagine the anger of British passengers who have bought single tickets on the flight when they discover a 30 per cent surcharge on the way back. Nor will it be much fun for the cabin staff, who will have to explain the details of Iata currency deals to passengers who have a right to feel robbed.

Postbus 581, WIM VERSTAPPEN  
Amsterdam,  
The Netherlands

#### Maritime minds . . .

SIR—In suggesting that his company's Defender is the cost-effective answer to the North Sea oil patrol requirement (Letters, April 2), Simon Thomson unfortunately ignores the one thing which the military have begun to take into account. This is the question of crew comfort—how are the occupants likely to feel after seven hours in an Islander over the North Sea in typically grotty weather? There is near-total agreement among maritime crews that this type of aircraft has got to be large enough to permit movement about the cabin area, and also that noise must be minimal.

The Islander is a successful short-range transport aircraft, but by no stretch of the imagination is it quiet internally, nor is its cabin big enough to allow an acceptable degree of crew movement. Nimrod is too big, Islander

seems to be too small, so the ideal must lie in between.

11 South Mount St, J. D. FERGUSON  
Aberdeen

#### . . . think alike

SIR—May I suggest that the most practical solution to the preservation of the territorial integrity of maritime nations lie between the small piston twin and the expensive and sophisticated large twin turboprops and jets.

The Shorts SD3-MR, developed with very few changes from the civil SD3-30, provides the best of both worlds. The Seeker, as it is known, can remain up to 9.4hr on station at the 200-mile limit (allowing 24hr coverage with a three-aircraft fleet) and has 360° radar and comfortable crew rest facilities. Fuel consumption of the PT6A-45A engines is as low as 600lb/hr, and a typical direct operating cost would be \$110/hr. Prices, varying from \$1.75 million to \$2.05 million (depending on equipment), are well below those of any comparable type.

Shorts, P. G. DUNNINGTON  
PO Box 241, Belfast BT3 9DZ

#### How to bag a doodlebug

SIR—Younger readers may not know that Wg Cdr Roland Beamont (Letters, April 9) was the man who invented the technique of disposing of V1s by turning them over on their backs. It was done not by physical contact, which might have detonated the bomb, but aerodynamically. The Tempest's wingtip was manoeuvred just underneath that of the V1 and the airflow disturbance caused a roll in the opposite direction. Precision formation flying of this order so close to a ton of sensitive high explosive demanded tremendous skill and courage.

Up to July 15, 1944, anti-aircraft and naval guns shot down 261 flying bombs compared with the RAF's 924, more than half of which were accounted for by Wg Cdr Beamont's two Tempest squadrons.

Harpenden, Herts P. M. HUGHES

#### RAF chronicles

SIR—The object of my book *The Royal Air Force—The Past 30 Years* (reviewed in *Flight*, April 2) was not simply to "pick out the main themes". It was to show in some detail all the more important activities of the RAF and to capture the spirit of the service during the 30 eventful years concerned.

The RAF has lived more than half its life since the end of the Second World War and no official post-war history has yet appeared. There was a crying need for some publication to fill this gap, during which we have seen the RAF engaged in over 90 operations around the world, the testing and introduction of nuclear weapons, and an increase in the annual budget from £250 million to £1,062 million.

It was not only in the late 1940s

# Letters

that the Air Staff was concerned with the RAF's fitness for major war: this has been their permanent concern over the past 30 years and never more so than today. One of the first aims of the Air Staff after the Second World War, however, was to reduce accidents and so conserve the smaller peacetime numbers of both aircraft and trained crews.

The flight time for a Phantom to Singapore is a misprint on page 189, but where the story of this flight is told on page 152 it appears correctly as 14hr 14min. Your reviewer also fails to mention the value of nine detailed appendices and 27 illustrations.

I am, however, flattered at being referred to as a "faithful Froissart." He moved in the company of Chaucer and Petrarch.

WG CDR A. G. TREVENEN JAMES  
125 Harley St,  
London W1N 1HE

## Third of the few

SIR—In addition to the Victors currently preserved at RAF Cosford and Duxford (Letters, April 2), RAF Marham has kept one of No 214 Sqn's Victor K.1s. This aircraft, XA932, will be kept alongside the already preserved Valiant B(K).1 as part of the station's collection of flight-refuelling equipment.

105 Elmore, Eldene, J. K. FLACK  
Swindon, Wilts

## Tomcat scraps it out in Canada

SIR—I noticed in *Flight* for March 26 that you seem to be under the impression that only Panavia and McDonnell Douglas are in competition for Canada's new fighter. In fact, Grumman's F-14 Tomcat, among others, are also in the competition.

You also say: "The Canadian Air Staff has so far favoured the McDonnell Douglas F-15." I have worked on the Canadian F-14 problem for several years, and I can assure you that you would be hard put to justify that statement if you enquired in Canada. The requirements state that the "predominant" need is for a long-range interceptor as well as some ground support, anti-shiping, and reconnaissance capability. We believe that these requirements fit the F-14 quite well and can assure you that we are in this competition for keeps.

You are quite right that offsets will be a major consideration, but you may not be aware of the fact that Grumman Aerospace Corporation has in the past also offered to invest substantial capital in a restructured Canadian aerospace industry as part of our offset.

Grumman Aerospace, FRED RAYMES  
Bethpage, New York

## Flying famine

SIR—Capt Hunt's letter (*Flight*, April 9) is typical of so many pilots in the UK today. He should realise, with all his experience, that the whole flying scene is one of frustration and divisiveness. In reply to him and to those Royal Air Force pilots thwarted by the surprise of "no British Airways open arms of welcome": you made your own beds and now you must lie on them.

At the moment the 707, 747 and VC10 fleets of British Airways are vastly overmanned. Until we have sorted out this problem it would be economic and safety madness to flood these fleets with even more pilots. Pilots already on these fleets are equally dissatisfied by the paucity of flying they do. I have been with BOAC/BA for six years now and have 59 Pl u/s sectors to my name (about average for my intake). My ex-European Division colleagues who are champing at the bit to "come over" are complaining to me about their lack of flying while averaging one Pl u/s sector per week.

So hold on to your hat captain—you have already judged an amalgamation of hardly two weeks standing. You have judged and failed British Airways "on the practical flight operations side" even though this has hardly been discussed, let alone tried. 55 Heathpark Drive, IAN GURNEY  
Windlesham, Surrey

## IN BRIEF

Ian Woodhouse (111 Lower Village Road, Sunninghill, Berks) needs information on the development history of the Grumman Gulfstream I for a book which he is writing.

The No 1 SFTS(1) Ambala 30th reunion is to be held in the Cellar Bar of the Comedy Restaurant, Panton Street, London SW1 on May 14. Old boys of the school are invited to contact Stan Booth (28 Dene Road, London N11; telephone 01-368 0254) for details.

Would you buy a new book by I. M. James (11 Berkeley Close, Charfield, Glos GL12 8TE)? Mr James is working on a history of Portsmouth, Southsea and Isle of Wight Aviation Ltd, and wants to sound out the market response before trying to get the book published. He would be glad to hear from you if you feel that such a book would be worth a few pounds of your money.

## WHAT'S ON

**Apr 24** Auster Pilot Club: fly-in; Old Warden Aerodrome, Biggleswade, Beds; telephone John Bird, 0234 741000.

**Apr 25-29** International Federation of Air Traffic Controllers' Associations: 16th Annual Conference; Nicosia, Cyprus; telephone (Cyprus) 021-49808.

**Apr 25-29** Von Karman Institute: lecture series, "Aerodynamic inputs for problems in aircraft dynamics"; Rhode-Saint-Genèse, Belgium.

**Apr 26, 27** Aviation Risk Management Con-

ference; Skyline Hotel, Heathrow Airport, Hounslow, Middx; telephone Caroline Atkinson, 01-623 5210, extension 27.

**Apr 26-28** Institute of Environmental Sciences/AIAA/American Society for Testing and Materials/Nasa: Ninth Space Simulation Conference; Los Angeles, Calif, USA; telephone AIAA, (212) 581-4300.

**Apr 26-28** Society of Aerospace Material and Process Engineers: 22nd National Symposium and Exhibition; Town & Country Hotel, San Diego, Calif, USA; telephone (213) 334-1810.

**Apr 27** RAeS Graduates' and Students' Section: "Tandem-wing aircraft," by J. Bottomley (A&AEE); 7.30 p.m., 4 Hamilton Place, London W1V 0BQ; telephone 01-499 3515-9.

**Apr 28** RAeS: Second European Pioneers' Day, "Computers and wind tunnels: complementary aids to aircraft design," by A. B. Haines (ARA); Bonn-Bad Godesberg, West Germany.

**Apr 28-May 1** Society of Experimental Test Pilots, European Section: Ninth Symposium; Zurich and Lucerne, Switzerland; telephone SETP, (805) 942-9574.

**Apr 29** Society of Experimental Test Pilots, East Coast Section: Second Annual Minisymposium, "Accent on V/Stol"; 9.30 a.m., Cedar Point Officers' Club, NAS Patuxent River, Maryland, USA; contact Cdr Robert A. Johnson, SETP East Coast Section, PO Box 277, Patuxent River, Md 20670, USA.

**Apr 29-May 1** 23rd Jersey International Air Rally; telephone L. R. Goodchild, Channel Islands Aero Club, 0534 42706.

**Apr 30-May 1** British Aerobatic Association: McAully Aerobatic Trophy; Little Snoring, Norfolk; telephone Mike Riley, 0865 891120.

**May 1** Popular Flying Association: fly-in; Stapleford Tawney Airfield, Abridge, Essex; telephone 0279 51823 or 01-508 8899.

**May 1** Prestwick Flying Group: Prestwick Air Rally; contact Peter Berry, 9 Carluie Crescent, Prestwick, Ayr KA7 4SP.

**May 1-4** American Association of Airport Executives: Airport Equipment Display; Atlanta Hilton Hotel, Atlanta, Ga, USA.

**May 1-5** Instrument Society of America: 23rd International Instrumentation Symposium; Dunes Hotel, Las Vegas, Nev, USA; telephone ISA, (412) 281-3171.

**May 2** Guild of Aviation Artists: selection for travelling exhibition; telephone Yvonne Bonham, 069 3033.

**May 2** Transport Trust: film, "Air action and air highlights," by John Huntley; 7.30 p.m., Fairfield Halls, Croydon, Surrey; telephone Jude Garvey, 01-734 3590, or Robert Hall, 01-686 2599.

**May 4** RAeS Southampton Branch: "Testing people and things—the work of the Civil Aviation Flying Unit," by Capt C. B. Sercombe; 7 p.m., College of Air Training Cinema, Satchell Lane, Hamble, Hants.

**May 5** RAeS: 20th Lanchester Memorial Lecture, "Development in mathematical models of human pilot behaviour," by Prof O. H. Gerlach (University of Delft); 6 p.m., 4 Hamilton Place.

**May 6-8** P-47 Thunderbolt Pilots Association: 16th Reunion; St Moritz on the Park Hotel, New York City, USA; telephone Herbert O. Fisher, (201) 838-2040.

**May 7** RAeS: Branches Spring Conference; RAF College, Cranwell, Lincs.

**May 7, 8** Fenland Flower Parade Fly-in; Fenland Airfield, South Lincs; telephone 0945 2891.

**May 8** Skyfame Aircraft Museum/RAF Innsworth: Gloucestershire Air Display; 9.30 a.m., Staverton Airport, Cheltenham, Glos; telephone Peter Thomas, 0452 713109.

**May 8** Skegness Aero Club: fly-in; Ingoldmells, Skegness, North Lincs.

**May 8** Rhosue Air Show; Glamorgan Airport, South Glamorgan; telephone 0446 710296.

**May 9-11** American Helicopter Society: 33rd Annual National Forum; Sheraton-Park Hotel, Washington DC, USA; telephone AHS, (212) 697-5168.

**May 9-12** Society of Allied Weight Engineers: 36th Annual Conference on Mass Properties Engineering; Sheraton Harbor Island Hotel, San Diego, California. Contact SAWE, PO Box 60024, Terminal Annex Los Angeles, Calif 90060, USA.

**May 12** RAeS: Annual General Meeting; 6 p.m., 4 Hamilton Place.

**May 12** Institution of Electrical Engineers: colloquium, "Turbulence detection"; 2 p.m.; telephone Annemarie Cunningham-Swendell, IEE, 01-240 1871, extension 272 or 280.