

# fabric

**Peter Wright** (address on p.1) provides the following : In Vol 34/1 (2003), my article on the four Bettington brothers, *Sons of the Air*, covered the service careers of Claude, Vere, Egerton and Aylmer. An interesting snippet of extra information has surfaced, found by Eddie Washington: a plaque on a wall in St John's Church, Digswell, Welwyn Garden City, Herts. The plaque was presented and placed there by Egerton, to commemorate his four brothers, Claude (RFC) who lost his life pre-WWI in the Coanda crash near Port Meadow; Vere (RFC) who survived the war; Rowland (Army) who died of injuries post-war and Aylmer (RNAS) killed in the loss of an Avro 504B near Eastchurch in September 1917.



The RAF flag was also provided by Egerton and today is placed alongside the plaque, every Remembrance Sunday. The Australian flag accompanies a further plaque in the church, commemorating men of the Australian Imperial Force and General Birdwood their Commander.



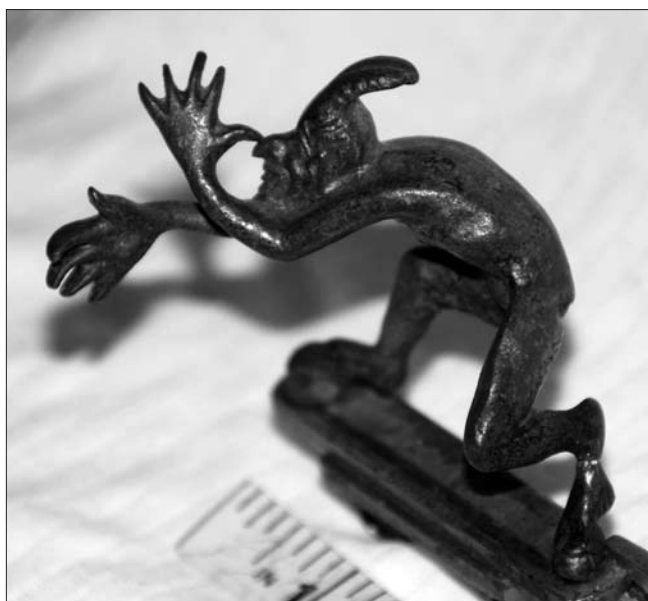
*Peter also has a request:* Taken from the company build-sheets at Rolls-Royce, a 1915 RR Silver Ghost chassis was ordered by the Admiralty. This was to comprise the front end of the vehicle, complete with engine, which could be mounted on the back of another vehicle and used as a balloon winch for the London Balloon Barrage during the Great War. Does any reader have information on such a project or possibly a photograph of either the assembly or the complete winch vehicle? The chassis was built up as a motor car proper after WWI and has a current owner who would be delighted to learn more about its early history.

**Trevor Henshaw** points out that the DH5 B338, shown on p.252 of the last issue saw operational service with 32 Sqn and crashed when its undercarriage collapsed on landing after a ground patrol on 19 August 1917. Obviously, that wasn't the incident shown in the photograph.

## Queries and Feedback compiled by Mick Davis

The publication of information about RFC car badges in 39/4 and recollection of Andy Kemp's 'Little Red Devil' article in Vol 31/3 has prompted **Ken Fergusson** of 34 Carpenter Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham B15 2JH [ken@fergusson52.freemove.co.uk] to provide the following about items in his collection :

The 'Little Red Devil' car badge design, I believe, was in vogue around 1912 and was given a generic term of 'cocking a snook' (the devil's hands are posed in an unflattering gesture 'poking fun' at the onlooker!).



*Little Red Devil and [below] Brooklands School of Flying mascots.*

Intrigued by Andy's article, I searched on ebay and within a short time a badge turned up! It was blackened with age but on cleaning I found that it had, at some stage in its career, been painted red, but most had worn away and been painted over with gilt paint which I have tried to remove, with limited success.

The badge is cast in brass but is missing its tail and there is a small crack at the ankle of one leg. I am left wondering whatever happened to the mascots which were carried by Barker's aeroplanes?

The second car mascot or badge which I bought recently is one issued by the Brooklands Flying Club and clearly from its presentation has to be of 1930s vintage or perhaps earlier. Looking at the photographs, an enthusiast may be able to identify the period of issue.





A rear view of Airco DH9 D1710 of 14 TDS was given in Vol 38/4 but the photograph left gives a clearer view of its colours and station marking.  
:CCI Archive

More photographs have surfaced to show **Salisbury Plain markings**, as described in Vol. 38/4. All show machines from Lake Down and the unidentified DH9 is of particular interest because it shows the application of the station marking to the lower surfaces of the mainplanes, facing outward on both sides. The machine itself must have been the 'personal'

aeroplane of a senior officer, possibly the Wing Examining Officer, because of its narrow (probably light blue, red, blue – the RAF colours) bands aft of the roundel and the application of the label 33rd Wing behind these. The Wing HQ was in a house called Druid's Lodge, adjacent to Lake Down aerodrome.



The DH9 below shows the under-wing application of the station marking on another machine. Frustratingly, the serial number is not visible, nor is it on the view above, in which it appears in the background of a photograph of BAT Bantam B9945. The distant view does, however, show that it also carried the marking on its rudder, as well as its fuselage bands and the label proclaiming its ownership.  
:CCI Archive



Airco DH4 B5510 had the 230hp Puma engine and was photographed on one of the permanent aerodromes on Salisbury Plain, probably its home base at Lake Down. Built by Vulcan, it came from the batch B5451-B5550 which was delivered during February and March 1918, too late for it to have been a 2 TDS machine. In addition to its station marking, it had a coloured fin, probably white and blue.  
:via M Davis



**Mark Turner**, 4 Pioneer Road, Sprowston, Norwich NR6 7PA has provided further information on one of the men commemorated on the Deseronto monument, shown in Vol 39/4, p.276, based on an article in the *Eastern Daily Press* of 2 October 1918 and supported by information in Chris Hobson's *Airmen Died in the Great War*.

**Lt Colin Goss Coleridge MBE** was killed, aged 29, in an aeroplane accident on 23 July 1918, while serving as an instructor at Deseronto. After his death, his father, John

Coleridge of Snettisham, Norfolk, was presented with the insignia of The Member of the Order of the British Empire that his son did not live to receive. The MBE was awarded for 'saving life, at great risk to his own and while in great personal suffering'. While stationed at Fort Worth, Texas, Coleridge had taken off on a training flight and his cadet pupil crashed the JN4 (Can) C226. Coleridge suffered severe burns, a bad cut to his head and four broken ribs but gave attention to the cadet and rescued him from death.



# A Question Answered



Mrs Rosemary Stanley of 28 Milvil Road, Lee-on-Solent, Hants PO13 9LX has forwarded a request for help in identifying a WWI pilot, who is thought to have died during that war. The photograph shows the fiancée of Rosemary's aunt, Gwen Hogbin (1891-1941) who was brought up in Tunbridge Wells and underwent teacher training at Brighton Training College, before starting work at Pennington C.E. School, near Lymington, Hants, in 1912. She moved on to work at Otford C.E. School, near Sevenoaks, from 1914 to 1926. It would seem likely that the pilot had associations with one of these places. Can any member be of assistance?



Gwen Hogbin

The answer was an immediate 'yes'. When the Editor sent this letter to the Design Team, we recognised the pilot's photo from a recent contribution by Mike O'Connor to the Royal Aero Club 'Missing Album' project co-ordinated by Peter Wright.

Miss Hogbin's fiancée was 2Lt Alan Victor Hobbs, and the portrait submitted to the project was taken from a copy of the photograph shown here.

Alan Victor Hobbs was the eldest son of A.E. Hobbs of Tunbridge Wells. He was educated at Skinner's School and St John's College, Cambridge. He joined the Royal West Kent Regiment in October 1914 and was gazetted Second Lieutenant in the 10th Sussex Regiment, but soon transferred to the RFC and after flying training gained his RAeC Certificate, No 1155, on 2 April 1915. After further training he was posted to France by July of the same year.

In October, when 3 Squadron, to which he had been assigned, was being equipped with Morane Type LA parasol two-seaters, he ferried a number of these machines from Paris

to 1AD at St-Omer and then on to the squadron.

Through October/November 1915 he was flying patrols in Morane 5087 with his observer 2Lt Charles Edward Tudor-Jones, until, on the morning of 15 December, (seven days after Hobbs' 21st birthday) they encountered leading ace Oblt Max Immelman, whose accurate shooting first disabled the observer's gun and almost immediately afterwards killed both crew in the air. The Morane crashed into the wall of a house at Raismes, close to Valenciennes, and the two men were buried near there by German soldiers. This was Immelman's seventh victory, described at some length in a letter to his brother Franz published in *The Eagle of Lille*. Details of this and Immelman's other victories appeared, with a photograph of the wreckage of 5087, in 'Max Immelman's Victories' by Norman Franks, C&C GB, Vol 11/1, 1980.

Curiously, Hobbs' name does not appear in de Ruvigny's *Roll of Honour 1914-1918*, but Tudor-Jones' biography is given, with no photograph, under letter 'J'.

He was born on 23 June, 1895, at Swindon, the second son of a solicitor, a profession he had already taken up by the outbreak of war. He went to Sandhurst in May 1915, was gazetted 2Lt RFC by September and went to France as an Observation Officer attached to the 3rd East Lancs Regiment.

Gwen (Violet Gwendoline) Hogbin went to Uganda in 1927 as headmistress of a girls' boarding school at Mbarara run by the Church Missionary Society. She devoted the rest of her life to this work and died in Kampala, where a plaque was placed in the cathedral in her memory.

Mrs Stanley kindly supplied the portrait of her aunt, contemporary with that of 2Lt Hobbs.



2Lt Alan Victor Hobbs

The wreck of Morane LA 5087, which Immelman went to see soon after he shot it down. He learned that the observer, and his gun, had fallen from the machine. Once he had got some soldiers to find the gun, he realised that two of his bullets had actually gone through it. The description he was given of the bullet wounds received by the two RFC men, combined with the way he had seen the machine move in the air, showed that they must have died almost instantly, long before the crash.

