



Editorial

It looks as though 2012, the centenary of the RFC's formation, is going to be a bumper one for anyone interested in WWI aeroplanes, with a goodly number of reconstructions and accurate replicas appearing.

The unveiling of the Sopwith Dolphin at the RAF Museum on 18 March was a great occasion to celebrate its prolonged assembly and I'm sure that those who saw it while attending the AGM will have been as impressed as I was with its presence in the Grahame White hangar. One thing that immediately struck me was how small the machine is. For whatever reason, I'd imagined that it would appear a lot larger than the Pup and Triplane, but it didn't.

The Dolphin won't be the last WWI type to appear at Hendon. There's the exciting prospect of an RE8, an Albatros D.Va and a Sopwith Snipe arriving in the near future, although the latter will be in the aluminium doped finish of the inter-war era.

Elsewhere in Europe, there's been the first flight of the Albatros D.III (Oeffag) replica and the craftsmanship that's gone into that project is evident in the photographs on p.134.

Equally exciting is the news of the remains of a crashed Sopwith Camel being discovered on a mountain on Thasos. There was some initial confusion over the identification of



the wreckage, but there's now no doubt about the type, as the accompanying photograph of the front engine mounting plate shows. The burning question is which machine was it? The Camel must have been a 2 Wing/62 Wing machine, or one passed from that formation to the Royal Hellenic Naval Air Service. If it was in British service, there's no fatality that it can be linked to.

This Issue

There's quite a Sopwith theme to CCI 43/2, with Robin Platt's feature on Herbert Smith taking centre stage. Smith was a key member of a fantastic design team who, until now, seems to have received less recognition than he deserved; possibly a consequence of his disappearance from the British aviation scene after his return from Japan. Something that struck me, however, is the fact that he is the central figure in the photographs taken at the 1965 Sopwith/Hawker reunion, a fact that suggests that he must have been quite important in the Sopwith hierarchy.

The Sopwith theme is continued in Stewart Taylor's take on J.A. Glen, which provides the vehicle for most of the colour illustrations in this issue. I thought it would be interesting to record the markings applied to 3 Wing's Sopwith 1½ Strutters and Kelcey has done us proud, with his magnificent profiles and plan views.

Few people are more clued up on the earliest days of British military aviation than Michael Dunn who, despite lengthy illness, has produced the detailed biography of, arguably, the man who started it all, James Templer. This and Michael's previous contributions will provide our membership with just about everything we need to know about the fore-runners of the RFC.

The ongoing Gazetteer, Seaplane Atlas and Bristol Scout listings make up the remainder of this issue. Trevor Henshaw has provided a comprehensive study of the RFC's operational use of Scouts with the BEF and that will appear once the serial listing is completed. While on the subject of Scouts, I'd like to take the opportunity to thank Liam O'Malley for the photographs he provided of A1788 – they will appear at the appropriate point in the listings.



Future Issues

The major article in 43/3 will be a story with real human interest; Dieter Gröschel traces the relationship between two pilots, one French and one German, who met in combat, resumed contact after the war and then kept in touch throughout the hardships of the 1920s and 1930s.

That issue will also see Peter Wright's history of X Flight, written to dispel some of the myths that appeared in *Lawrence's Secret Air Force*.

Further ahead, there will be a biography of another RNAS pilot who served in the Aegean, H.S. Fowler and there's the prospect of an article covering the activities of the Royal Hellenic Naval Air Service, an air force that, hitherto, has received minimal coverage.

In Closing

Colonel John A. de Vries, author of *Taube, Dove of War*, passed away last December. It took Stuart Tucker some time to acquire all the information necessary for a fitting obituary, which meant that this issue had been set up before it arrived. That obituary will appear in the next issue. *Mick Davis*

Front cover: 'Cover for the bombers': Sopwith 1½ Strutters of 3 Wing RNAS; by Ken Farmer GAVa (www.kenventure.co.uk).

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