Our 44th AGM took place at the RAF Museum, Hendon, on 20 April. Attendance, disappointingly, was lower than on previous occasions. As ever, it was an enjoyable event with an interesting Leaman Lecture by Francis Hanford about the earliest use of Halton by service machines. Francis has already published his research in booklet form and so it will not be reproduced in this journal. The booklet is, however, very modestly priced and anyone interested in the pre-war activities of the RFC can obtain a copy from Francis at the Trenchard Museum. Email francishanford@lineone.net.

Few issues were raised at the AGM itself and the minutes, as well as the Society’s financial balance sheet, are included as an insert with this issue.

Society Matters

This year, CCI is continuing the part-funding of Julian Hale’s salary as a curator at the RAF Museum and Julian is working his way through the Jack Bruce Photo Collection. We are also making a small financial contribution toward a major RAFM project – the conservation and digitisation of the WW1 Casualty Forms. I understand that these will then become available on-line, something that will make the task of any researcher much easier than it is at the moment.

We were all saddened by the recent loss of Mike O’Connor. Mike was a staunch supporter of our Society’s activities and willed his collection of research information and photographs to CCI. Trevor Henshaw is liaising with Mike’s widow, Polly, over the transfer of the vast amount of material, which will help to make future CCI articles accurate and well illustrated.

Mike Meech is working hard on the organisation of the 2014 CCI Seminar and is currently investigating the availability and costing of various possible venues. At the moment, a Bedfordshire location seems likely, with a visit to the Shuttleworth Collection part of the weekend’s activities.

Bob Jones continues with his work on the photographic copying of logbooks and these are proving invaluable in providing information, as some of the snippets of FE2s that appear in Fabric go to prove. In addition to those held at the RAF Museum, Bob has also gained access to the logbooks held at Old Warden.

Stuart Leslie is another staunch CCI member, who must have helped hundreds of researchers over the years. Readers may be pleased to learn that Stuart recently celebrated his 90th birthday and join with me in wishing him well and hoping that he receives a telegram from HM in 2023. The photograph shows Stuart, looking as sharp as ever, with Paul Leaman during his birthday celebrations.

This Issue

We lead with a substantial article, by Ian Burns, about a pilot serving with the East Indies & Egypt Seaplane Squadron, whose posting was a consequence of earlier involvement with the security services. It’s a great story but the length of the manuscript and large number of illustrations has forced me to spread it over this and the next issue.

Articles such as Aerial Crusader tell a complete story while Colin Owens’ contribution is one that can serve as a jumping-off point for researchers. It is a reproduction of an RNAS report on anti-submarine activities that could provide the basis for detailed investigation into a particular incident or operations in a particular region.

Our journal is, understandably, biased toward the British side of things and so it’s refreshing when an article like David Méchin’s becomes available. Most will be familiar with the fact that the Munich raid took place, but this is the first full account that I’ve seen.

Stewart Taylor’s immense number of contributions have been raided to provide the Watkins article, which gives further understanding of life and work on a squadron flying BE2s as well as a poignant reminder that serving flyers, as well as families at home, could be affected by the loss of a family member in wartime.

Paul Leaman’s seaplane series continues with a look at the Albatros designs and Peter Wright’s contribution describes yet another family tragedy.

Future Issues

There is a good stock of material to hand but more, as ever, is welcome. As well as the concluding part of Aerial Crusader, 44/3 will include the life story of Lawrence Cecil Carr who trained as a RAF pilot, served with the army in North Russia and emigrated to Canada to join the police. Paul Hare has submitted several articles recently and the first to be published will be his look at the life of workers in the Royal Aircraft Factory.

Mike Kelsey has submitted a brilliant article on the operational use of the Armstrong Whitworth FK3 by 47 Sqn in Macedonia, with particular reference to the Beardsmore and RAF4a powered sub-variants of the type. There were a lot more of the latter than had hitherto been thought and, so, such new information takes priority.

Continuing the Eastern theme, there is Boris Cigili’s well-illustrated item on Premier Serbian Fighters, plus a short piece by Jeff Jefford, showing that mis-interpreted information can gain unwarranted credence with later researchers.

Hopefully, 44/3 will also see the first set of location maps issued, to illustrate the Gazetteer of Flying Sites. The relevant contemporary OS maps have been obtained and Barbara is scanning and reducing them. The Ordnance Survey has no problem with the project and so the idea is to publish four A3 maps at a time on an A2 insert. The series will begin with the maps for England and Wales.

Mick Davis

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