



Editorial

Our 50th Annual general Meeting was held at Hendon on 13 April and, after a couple of years when family matters had precluded my attendance, it was good to meet up with old acquaintances and meet others with whom I'd only had correspondence.

The meeting itself went smoothly, as ever, but attendance was quite low. I suppose that the age profile of our membership had a lot to do with that. The minutes, as well as a copy of the 2018 accounts, are included as an insert with this issue.

My plea, in the last issue, for volunteers to help put the journal together, did not fall on deaf ears. There has been a very positive response and the following have offered their services: David Fuller, Bernard de Broglio, Gregory Smith, Ian Morris, Dennis Bancroft, Brian Petchey, Marty Fenelon, Brian Slater and Paul Hare. I've already taken some of them up on their offers and significant contributions have been made. It's a learning curve for me, after 11 years of retirement, but we will hopefully get into the swing of things over future issues.

It may sound invidious to pick out one person, but I feel that I do have to mention David Fuller, a Canadian member. I'd said that location wasn't a problem in this age of electronic communication and that has proved to be very much the case. Since Barbara's untimely passing, the pre-press work of turning my layouts into print-ready format has been undertaken by our printers, who have made a superb job of it. The rub, however, is that it then costs the Society money. David has all of the necessary skills and volunteered his services. He has put this issue together, working with Colin Huston to ensure the continuity of presentation, and the result is here for all to see. There has been no drop-off in standard and David has turned the material around in a very short space of time.

This Issue

We tend to associate war poets with the army and the likes of Owen and Sassoon but Ian Burns' feature on M.J.G. Day shows that the flying services had their share. The biography of this distinguished pilot includes detail of the experimental work that he was involved in, as well as his operational career and untimely death in action. The front cover photograph of Day flying a Bristol Scout may be well-known, but it is such a lovely image that I couldn't resist using it to introduce this issue.

Colin Owers has already given us detailed accounts of British flying boats and he continues in this issue with the histories of those produced to specifications for Types N.3 and N.4 – the Short Cromarty, Vickers Valentia, Fairey Atalanta and Titania. These designs, intended to provide the 1919 replacements for the Felixstowe boats, illustrate the massive strides that had been made in the development of flying boats during the war and, as ever, Colin has provided numerous quality illustrations to show the construction and appearance of these enormous machines.

Thanks to a lot of hard work by Colin Huston in sorting out the necessary photographs, we now have Part 1 of the WWI history of 26 Squadron by Ray Vann and the late Mike O'Connor. Part 2 will appear in the next issue and the appendices, covering personnel listing and details of the individual machines flown, in the Christmas edition. Mike managed to unearth a lot of rare photographs and these accompany the

article which, combined with Peter Dye's earlier coverage of RNAS operations, helps provide a good coverage of air operations in a largely ignored theatre of war.

David Méchin is becoming a regular contributor and this time round he looks at the re-organisation of the French air service by Maurice Duval; a move which turned it into an effective force for the battles of 1918. David has again provided colour artwork, and this graces the rear covers. I had hoped to complement this article with another, which details the operational history of the Voisin-equipped Groupe de Bombardement GB8 but could not obtain the necessary photographs in time, so it's one for the future.

We have yet another short Paul Hare contribution, this time the history of a single BE2a, 228 – the dual control machine. Its full story is related, accompanied by a good selection of photos. Paul has already provided further such articles on other individual BE2s and these will appear over future issues.

Arnold Harvey turns up some gems from the National Archive and his feature on the capture of G.S.M. Insall is bound to interest readers.

This issue brings Barry Gray's series about German hangars and aeroplane sheds to its conclusion. There were further photocopied sheets from TNA provided but all except one was of too poor a quality for use. The exception was a drawing of a German machine gun post for aerodrome defence and this will appear as next issue's Logbook feature.

Next Issues

In addition to Part 2 of the 26 Squadron article and, hopefully, that on GB8, there will be a short biography of the noted 'ace' A.T. Whealy by Norman Franks, a feature on the early marketing of aviation by Lorne Borne and a personal account of life as a mechanic with 5 Squadron during 1914-1915, submitted by Andy Thomas.

There is a good stock of material for the future, including some great articles from Stewart Taylor that include a look at 7 Squadron's experience of flying the RE7 in combat as well as biographies of pilots who flew later, possibly more glamorous, scouts.

Editor's Choice

Taken from an album that John Grech provided for our archive, this image of a WRAF motorcyclist at Gullane epitomises the aid to emancipation brought about by WWI.



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