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# Wind in the Wires

Welcome to the twenty-eighth quarterly newsletter from **Cross & Cockade International** - bringing you all that's new and interesting in the world of WW1 aviation.





Strafing in Late 1918

The 'Bohemian' Florgerkompagnie - on the Romanian Front 1956-1918

Some Experiences of a 4 Squadron Observer

Jack of all Trades: The BE12 in Macodonia, Part 2

German Hungars and Aeroplane Sheds. Part 4

As you subscribe to **Wind in the Wires**, you must be interested in **WW1 aviation**. Have you thought about subscribing to the society and receive our beautiful journal? Click <a href="here">here</a> to join us for 2018. <a href="2019">2019</a> subscriptions are also available!

We're now in our **50th** year! Volume 50 issue 1 (Spring 2019) is at the printers, so will be with members soon. Will you be receiving one? If you feel the urge to catch up on past issues, ALL are available at our <u>web shop</u> either in print, or as PDF downloads.

If I've not managed to convince you to subscribe, click <a href="here">here</a> to receive a single copy of a recent journal - FREE. All we ask is a contribution towards the cost of

postage. An inexpensive way of seeing what you're missing ...

Also don't forget our **AGM** on **13th April** at the **RAF Museum, Hendon**. Apart from a chance to hear our President, AVM Peter Dye, talk on the subject of "**RFC/RAF HQ 1914-18**" - you can influence the running of our society!

And now a word from our Journal Editor, Mick Davis:

This society is, to my mind, all about the journal. Yes, there are some local meetings and we do operate as a charity that supports matters relating to WWI aviation but to do that, we

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need members and the majority, if not all, join for access to the journal. If there was no journal, there would be no CCI.

Although things seem to be running smoothly, journal production is essentially by a two-man band; Colin Huston and myself with the modelling input from Joe Moran. Paul Hare has done some editing of text and Marc McKiernan and Graham Mottram are prepared to help with photo enhancing but I think that we all need to think seriously about the future and the structure of the journal production team.

None of the tasks undertaken during production requires any formal training. I have no journalistic background, no IT training and no artistic qualifications except O Level Art, so think that anyone could do this job.

However, it would be far better if we, as a society, could create an editorial team in which those involved can develop the necessary skills and possibly rotate the production of individual journals. That's what happened with me; I used to alternate issues with Paul Leaman when I was his deputy. In these days of electronic communication, using e-mail and Skype, it is easy to share material and ideas, with the location being no problem.

In my ideal scenario, such a team would comprise:

- Managing Editor
- Deputy Editor(s) prepared to undertake article layout work as well as preparation /checking of text and, later, become Managing Editor
- Proof Reader(s)
- Photograph/Illustration enhancer(s)
- Archivist(s) with knowledge of the available CCI images
- Modelling Contributor(s)
- Bookshelf Reviewer(s)
- Draftsperson(s) to create line-work as and when needed

Some of those roles could be combined but a 6-8-person team would not be unmanageable. Hopefully, all eventualities would then be covered. Neither Colin, Joe nor I is irreplaceable but what I'd like to try and avoid is any short-term interruption to journal production in the event of something untoward happening. Please, do think seriously about this and if you feel that you could make a contribution, contact me (editor@crossandcockade.com) or any other member of the committee.

# Cross & Cockade International The First World War Aviation Historical Society



Yet again Roger has pulled a rabbit out of the hat - encouraging twelve of the top aviation artists to donate one of their best paintings for use in our **2019 Calendar**.

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We've still got a few left, at the same price as for the past five years. How's that for good value for money? <u>Click here</u>.

We're also building our social networking presence. Join us on <u>Facebook</u> to see what Adrian's up to. There's been plenty of interest lately. You could also follow us on <u>Twitter</u>-where we've recently passed the 400 followers mark! Last but not least, especially if you have a question to ask our experts, or books to dispose of, check out our <u>Forum!</u>



Air Power On the Western Front in 1918

I would highly recommend a lengthy article, which was first published as Chapter 17 of the Army Staff Ride 18 Reader in July 2018, and posted on the *Medium.com* website on 18 February 2019. Written by John Alexander of the Air Historical Branch, it has a recommended reading time of 24 minutes.

Briefly, the article takes us deep into the three-dimensional battlefield of 1918, which had been transformed since 1914 following a substantial investment by all combatants. The unifying themes of the article are coalition warfare, innovation and adaptation, command, leadership and morale, and conflict resolution. The



Village People

A village hall in Northumberland has launched a £100,000 appeal for improvements and refurbishment of the stone-built Slaley Commemoration Hall, reported the North East's Chronicle Live on 17 January 2019. The hall was built as a gift to the village by Charles Samuel and Agnes Mona Hunting of Slaley Hall in gratitude for the safe return of their children from the First World War and opened its doors in 1922. Gerald Lindsay Hunting and Percy Hunting both served with the 4th Territorial Battalion of the Northumberland Fusiliers before both brothers were seconded to the Royal Flying Corps.

Percy served in Mesopotamia and had a distinguished military career, being twice mentioned in despatches and reports for Wind in the Wires 28 Page 4 of 15

sections on ground-strafing and day and night bombing are instructive, as is the closing section of the post-war lessons of the use of air-power.

It is full of fascinating statistics - of the total of 4,733 British aircrew killed on the Western Front, 2,051 were killed after 1 April 1918, substantially more than the RAF's front-line strength of 1,600 on 1 August 1918. How about the fact that in 1918, the RFC/RAF took over 5.2m oblique or overhead photographs and 827,500 in August alone?

https://bit.ly/2UafbHR



#### **Arrows of Death**

US Military Media website, *We Are the Mighty*, posted an interesting article on the development and use of flechette darts in the First World War. The 17 January 2019 piece, describes these

distinguished services rendered. [Don't forget that Society's book 'Wings Over Mesopotamia, Air War in Iraq 1914-18' is still available]. A little further digging reveals that at the end of the war, when the brothers returned home, they found that the family shipping business had suffered from enemy action and only two of their ships were still afloat. After their father died in 1921, they decided to expand their interests into aviation as a means of prospecting for and investigating the world's natural resources.

The web page www.slaley.org.uk is being revamped especially for the new fundraising campaign.

https://bit.ly/2Svzbmu



Wight Flyers Remembered

In WitW 27, I mentioned the efforts of the Wight Aviation Museum to commemorate that island's airmen lost during the First World War. In an interesting article in the

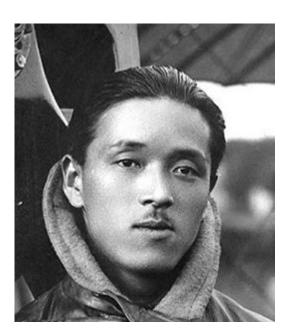
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objects as "something out of a freakin' horror movie".

The darts were roughly five inches long, weighed just over a pound, and were made of sharpened steel. When they were dropped from hundreds of feet above the ground, they would strike the ground with enough force to pierce helmets and even vehicles. By filing grooves into the top or adding a feather to the dull end, the dart would always land point-side down. A single pilot could release a canister filled with around 250 of these darts at a time.

The article goes on to explain that the darts were also extremely cheap to make and implement and, although the Royal Flying Corps felt they were "unsportsmanlike" the Germans, were rather keen on using the darts on the French. In fact, they had them specially imprinted with the text, "invention Française, fabrication Allemande": A French invention, German made.

https://bit.ly/2Ezx3GB



Isle of Wight County Press on 5 December 2018, the Museum was given the opportunity to tell the stories of some of those casualties coming from all Island communities.

Stanley Winther Caws was the very first Island aviator to lose his life in the conflict being shot down by German ace Max Immelmann on 21 September 1915. Boer War veteran Caws transferred to the Royal Flying Corps in February 1915 and, on training as a combat pilot at the unusually old age of 36, was posted to 10 Squadron RFC.

Other airmen mentioned in the article include 18 victory ace Captain James Dacre Belgrave MC and the Red Baron's 39th victim, 2nd Lt Keith Ingleby MacKenzie (pictured).

https://bit.ly/2Sr3M4F



A Novel Experience for Malik

Biggin Hill artist and illustrator, Christopher Rawlins, was the subject of an article in the *Bromley Borough News* on 29 November 2018. Christopher has spent the last five

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# Japanese Boy

In the distant past (*Wind in the Wires 5* to be exact), I briefly mentioned Sergeant Harry Fusao O. Ha'Ra, a Japanese born fighter pilot. The RAF Museum provided the backdrop for one of the National Lottery's shows in January 2019 and it posted an article on this interesting character in collaboration with Project RAF100.

Harry fought with Sikh and Ghurkha regiments on the Western Front before transferring to the Middlesex Regiment. He was wounded six times and was awarded the DCM and MM for his bravery. In March 1917, he transferred to the Royal Flying Corps as an Air Mechanic but volunteered for flight training. Harry qualified as a pilot on 21 July 1917 at the London and Provincial flying school in Edgeware, and was immediately promoted to Sergeant by the RFC, posted to 1 Squadron to fly the SE5a.

On 1 June 1918, O'Hara was again wounded and sent to hospital. This time he suffered a gun-shot wound in his jaw and was evacuated to Queen's Hospital in Sidcup, which specialised in facial reconstructive surgery. He was discharged officially from the RAF in 1919.

https://bit.ly/2EyMrTQ
See also https://bit.ly/2VkQ5pL

years working on drawings for a graphic novel 'Duty Honour and Izzat - From Golden Fields to Crimson'

The book, which details the Indian Army's involvement in the First World War, follows the first Indian fighter pilot of the Royal Flying Corps, Hardit Singh Malik (see WitW 11), who flew Sopwith Camels in France and Italy with 28 Sqn and later Bristol Fighters with 141 Squadron RAF at Biggin Hill. This volume is part of a much larger book that Christopher is illustrating titled 'Warpath', which delves much further back into the Indian Army's relationship with the British.

As an observant Sikh, Malik wore a turban instead of a helmet, and later wore a specially designed flying helmet that fitted over his turban. As a result of his unusual helmet, he was nicknamed the "Flying Hobgoblin".

#### https://bit.ly/2BQou8v

For further details of the graphic novel see <a href="http://www.renegadeartsentertainment.com">http://www.renegadeartsentertainment.com</a>



**Burke's Sheds Acquired** 

Good news from our friends at the **Montrose Air Station Heritage Centre** (MASHC). 'Major Burke's Sheds' is the name given to the three A-listed buildings

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### Rebecca and the Boxkite

There was a lovely *ITV News* Anglia Report posted on 25 January 2019. Author Rebecca Mascull's research for her novel about early aviation 'The Wild Air', took her to the Shuttleworth Collection in Bedfordshire where she met pilot Rob Millinship, who helped take her writing "to new heights".

Rob is one of the few pilots flying Edwardian aeroplanes and he was adamant that Rebecca shouldn't be writing a book about aviation unless she had experienced it herself. The first step was climbing into a Bristol Boxkite, the same aircraft her main character Della Dobbs learns to fly in 1913.

Rebecca was sent off to the flight simulator for a single seat aeroplane and Rob persuaded her to take flight for real in a Cessna light aircraft. She said: "As soon as I got home I re-wrote all my flying chapters because I knew they were wrong. It was really important to me that everything that happened in the plot could have happened in real life."

https://bit.ly/2FXgqG5



adjacent to the heritage centre acquired by MASHC, which are likely to be the best surviving examples of early aircraft hangars in the country and, possibly, the world.

The report carried in *The Courier* on 16 January 2018, explains how MASHC was able to secure the future of the sheds from Angus Council. The acquisition will initially allow the MASHC to start the restoration of some of its larger aircraft projects, such as the Avro Anson.

The airfield, first opened in 1913 when aircraft of 2 Sqn Royal Flying Corps arrived under the command of Major Burke, who had three of the aircraft sheds built in the form a crescent. The buildings, which were designed by the Royal Engineers of the War Office's Directorate of Fortifications and Works, were pre-fabricated at Glasgow before being transported to Montrose and erected in December 1913. Historic Environment Scotland commented that these exceptionally rare hangars are of international importance.

#### https://bit.ly/2IG2mUx



**Prison Break** 

As you've come to expect, here at WitW we find relevant articles in the strangest of

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# The crash that saved my life

Have you discovered the stunning archive of Arthur George Simmons donated to the New Forest Centre by his grandson, Paul? I found this via *Twitter* recently and thought readers would be interested in the fully digitised archive, which illustrates Arthur's time in the RFC and RAF. The collection comprises of two photograph albums, loose paperwork (relating to his training), his book of 'Technical Notes – Royal Flying Corps', his Aviator's Certificate and his two medals.

Aged 19, Sgt Simmons joined the Royal Flying Corps in 1917 and he was posted to RFC (later RAF) Beaulieu, a Training Airfield, at East Boldre, Hampshire. Arthur had already survived an earlier crash, but on 13 April 1918, while flying an Avro 504A (A8600), he lost flying speed whilst turning to the left. Owing to a lack of height, he was unable to extricate his machine from the resultant spin. Paul recalls his grandfather commenting "That crash saved my life!"

https://bit.ly/2EfTkrJ



**Aussie Memorial Updated** 

places. How about the National Newspaper for Prisoners and Detainees, *Inside Times*? An article on 30 January 2019, posed the question - which prison houses an aeronautical museum? The answer is HMP Standford Hill, close to the village of Eastchurch on the Isle of Sheppey.

The Eastchurch Aviation Museum is set in wooden huts and is part of Old Mill Village, which acts as a rehabilitative bridge for men nearing the end of, often, long sentences. The museum celebrates the aeronautical history of the Isle of Sheppey, and the accomplishments of the pioneering Short Brothers.

During the winter of 1909-10 it was decided that the original 'flying ground' was too low-lying for all-year-round use and a large tract of ground on the south side of Standford Hill was purchased. Soon afterwards the Short Brothers moved their factory to the new site.

From around 1911, Eastchurch was the centre for navy flying and it is believed the first bomb dropping experiments and machine guns firing from aircraft were carried out here. The first wireless communication experiments were also carried out at Eastchurch during the First World War. After the Second World War the site was not required and turned into a prison, taking its first prisoners in 1950.

https://bit.ly/2EiqZkv

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The Adelaide Advertiser's article of 22 November 2018 featured the story of Alan D'Arcy Sutherland, one of 12 South Australian First World War airmen whose names are being added as part of a rare addition to the historic SA National War Memorial.

Following his discharge from the Australian Imperial Forces, Sutherland was commissioned in the RFC and was posted to the Central Flying School at Oxford in late October 1916. He spent the next four months in training and was just days away from getting his wings when tragedy struck. The 27 year-old died on 28 February 1917 in a training accident at CFS Upavon, Wiltshire. According to the official inquiry, he attempted to come out of a dive too quickly, ruining the structural integrity of Sopwith 1 1/2 Strutter 7810. Back in his home town Minlaton, Elsie Sutherland, a young mother in her early 20s, was left a widow with two infant sons.

The 12 names (listed in the article) were unveiled at an official ceremony, after being uncovered during research by the South Australian Aviation Museum's History Group for their book 'South Australian Airmen of the Great War'.

#### https://bit.ly/2ID0604

The Virtual War Memorial Australia <a href="https://bit.ly/2GPhexP">https://bit.ly/2GPhexP</a> has further information on Sutherland.





**Meet the Fokkers** 

Staying 'down under', please take a look at the *Aces Flying High* blog, which recounts an Aussie's travels to air shows, aviation museums and more around the world. The posting on 12 January 2019 showcases The Australian Vintage Aviation Society (TAVAS) Museum, which has a fantastic collection of flying reproduction and replica First World War and early pioneering aircraft.

A major part of the collection comprises replicas and reproductions of Fokker scout fighter aircraft as flown by the German Imperial Air Service during the 1915-1918 period. The blog is a profusely illustrated study of these iconic aircraft, which includes a Fokker E.III Eindecker with its reverse engineered 100 hp Oberursel U.I 9 cylinder rotary engine.

A pair of Fokker Dr.I replica scout fighters built as per the originals are show-stoppers with Dr.I 425/17 sporting the bright red of Manfred von Richthofen, whilst 450/17 being painted glossy black as per the original. It sports the unique fire-breathing, horned and bearded devil markings of leading ace, Josef Jacobs.

Other aircraft include a Fokker D.VIII parasol wing scout fighter reproduction and the "Flying Razor" D.VIII armed with 2

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## **Whiskey Galore**

To celebrate this year's Valentine's Day, Scotch *Whiskey.com* reported on a heartwarming tale of romance with a Royal Flying Corps twist.

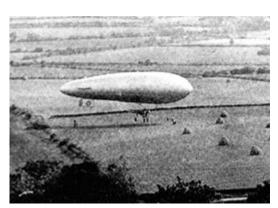
Gordon Lennox Smart was born in Dufftown in 1895. As a boy, he moved north with his family, where he eventually worked alongside his father at Glenmorangie distillery. He was just 21 years old when he volunteered to serve in the Royal Flying Corps in 1916. While stationed at Waddingham in Lincolnshire, which operated as a flight training station, Smart was severely injured in a plane crash in 1917, breaking several bones.

While recuperating in hospital in Glasgow, Gordon met a nurse named Margaret Wooley. By coincidence her parents, it transpired, owned the local hotel not more than a mile from Glenmorangie distillery where his father was manager. Margaret nursed the injured pilot back to health, and they fell deeply in love. The couple married in 1922.

https://bit.ly/2N6Gu2Z

x 7.92mm MG08 machines guns.

#### https://bit.ly/2tEcylX



"Eire"ships

The Belfast Telegraph's digital edition of 3 January 2019 highlighted a book by local author Guy Warner, which reveals how airships, together with all manner of seafaring vessels, combined to defeat the U-boat menace in the First World War from their Irish bases.

Of interest to readers is the second half of the article, which explains how the Royal Navy developed a fleet of submarinesearching airships. Patrolling for hours on end and using wireless telegraphy to communicate with their bases, these airships could direct warships towards a potential U-boat target. The article quotes one of the brave airship pilots, 19 year old Flight Sub-Lieutenant Thomas Elmhirst, who later wrote: "It should be noted that conditions were cramped and confined on board, exposed to the cold and at the mercy of the elements. This would not be a pleasant experience when returning from a long patrol - tired, hungry and cold."

Whilst on the subject of airships, the Opusculum blog on 3 December 2018 reflected on the life and times of Dorset Wind in the Wires 28 Page 11 of 15



# **Balloon Busting with Wehner** and Luke

The Belleville News-Democrat (Illinois) posted a fascinating article on 20 January 2019 about 1st Lt. Joseph Frank "Fritz" Wehner, who received his initial flight training at the local Scott Field Flying School in 1917-18 between September and December 1917.

Wehner was born in Massachusetts, son of a German immigrant, and was working in Germany before the US entered the war. After receiving his commission, Wehner became a victim of anti-German hysteria and was even arrested on suspicion of treason!

Finally cleared for combat on the Western Front, Wehner was assigned to the 27th Aero Squadron in July 1918, where he became wingman to another child of a German immigrant, the mercurial 2nd Lt. Frank Luke, Jr (see WitW 18). Together, they became notorious 'balloon-busters'. Wehner was credited with bringing down five observation balloons in just three days in September 1918, but the duo's luck ran out, with Wehner's SPAD XIII being shot down by Jasta 15 ace Leutnant Georg von Hantelmann as he protected Luke from attack. Wehner was the third of three opposing aces shot down by Hantelmann in the same week. Luke was distraught at the loss of his

born Sergeant Charles William Walter Speck on the centenary of his death from pneumonia. An RNAS/RAF mechanic, Speck served locally at Upton, Polegate and Calshot.

https://bit.ly/2GPigKd https://bit.ly/2VnLOSI



**Branch Meetings** 

#### Cleethorpes

CCI member and well-respected author Paul Hare has started a irregular meeting at his home in Cleethorpes. Two meetings have been held and more are planned - email Paul on if you'd like to reserve a chair and a teacup, and chat about old aeroplanes ...

#### York

The February meeting has already been enjoyed by a select band. Further dates for 2019 are below - make a note in your diary:

- June 8th
- September 7th
- November 16th

As ever, all comers are welcome! Full details here.

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close friend and wingman.

Recommended! Read more here: https://bit.ly/2H5OMag



#### Medals of Honour

The big Dix Noonan Webb Orders, Decorations, Medals and Militaria sale was taking place on 27/28 February 2019 as this issue of WitW was being finalised. Two groups might be of interest to readers, both with £4,000 to £5,000 estimates.

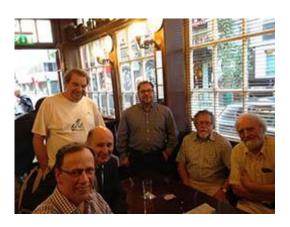
The first (pictured) is a fine group of nine awarded to Air Commodore Duncan Le Geyt Pitcher, 4 Squadron RFC. Pitcher was one of the pioneers of flying in India. He shared the RFC's first reconnaissance in the field and recorded what may have been the first aerial engagement with an enemy aircraft. On 31 October 1914, he made what is believed to be the first attack by an aeroplane on ground targets.

The second is an impressive 'Old Contemptibles' group of ten awarded to Air Vice-Marshal Cuthbert Trelawder Maclean, who was credited with at least one enemy aircraft destroyed whilst There's no formal presentations or speakers; just excellent beer and a group of like-minded folk sharing WW1 aviation photos and knowledge.

#### **Essex**

Our longest running branch is regularly hosted by founder member John Barfoot in his basement - **The Dugout**. 15:00 on the last Friday of each month is the date for your diary; let <u>John</u> know if you're planning to attend, so he can warn the caterers!

#### London



The normal meeting place is My Old Dutch, 132 High Holborn. Aviation chat, beer and pancakes - what's not to love? Contact David Marks or watch the web site for more dates and details.



Whose Baby?

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serving with 25 Squadron RFC and went onto command 11 Squadron. New Zealander Maclean also held overall command of the Tenth (Army) Wing during the German Spring Offensive of 1918.

https://bit.ly/2T5p0KK https://bit.ly/2BUfjEn

## Pen Pal Required

We have had a request from Paul Sheppard on behalf of his father, Victor. Are there any *CCI* members or, indeed *WitW* subscribers, who would be willing to be a pen friend (by email) to Victor? He's been a member since the beginning of the Society, but has lost touch with his long-standing contact John Barfoot, and now has no contacts to discuss WW1 aviation matters. If you are interested, please email <a href="wires@crossandcockade.com">wires@crossandcockade.com</a> and we'll

The Western Telegraph of 14 February 2019 reported on the latest model aircraft on display at Pembroke Dock Heritage Centre made by Peter Mitchell. There is a special, and tragic, local connection with one of the models, a Sopwith Baby seaplane, serial number N1033.

The actual RNAS aircraft crashed at Fishguard Harbour in April 1917 after hitting power cables when taking off. The pilot, Flight Lieutenant Richard Eldon Bush, was rescued but sadly died two days later. Peter made the model by converting a 1:28 scale kit of a Sopwith Camel, creating the twin floats, engine cowling and other parts from scratch. Modelling fans should check out Joe Moran's regular kit reviews in the Journal. The exhibition remains on display until the end of April 2019.

https://bit.ly/2NxtjZ0

# **Snippets**

pass details on to Paul.

Military History Now's article on 6
November 2018 in its Weapons and
Technology series is also worth a look. It
explains how the nascent Royal Flying
Corps was as ready as it could be for the
start of hostilities and highlights the
groundwork carried out by Mervyn
O'Gorman at the Royal Aircraft Factory
and the development of photoreconnaissance. Individual squadrons
also took up the challenge to refine



Save the Date(s)!

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weapons and equipment.

#### https://bit.ly/2Xthqbs

WitW has covered the topic of the acoustic mirrors that were developed to detect the sound of approaching Zeppelins before. On 7 January 2019, the BBC News website posted a rather nice 'in pictures' feature on the surviving mirrors around the country.

#### https://bbc.in/2FfXMcc

Reported in the Shropshire Star on 10 October 2018 was that a bomb disposal squad was called after a 100-year-old device was found at the RAF College's Cranwell Airfield in Lincolnshire. The 16lb bomb was believed to date from around 1916 and personnel working nearby were evacuated as a precaution.

#### https://bit.ly/2NvwrEU

#### **CCI AGM**

Adate for the diary is our AGM, once again at the RAF Museum, Hendon. The date is **Saturday 13 April 2019** - a little earlier in the year than usual - with doors opening at 10:00. The schedule is as follows:

#### 11.00 **AGM**

- 1. President's Address
- 2. Apologies for absence.
- 3. Minutes of the AGM held on 21 April 2018.
- 4. Matters Arising.
- 5. Officer's Reports:
- 6. Election of Officers for 2019-2020
- 7. Subscriptions for 2020
- 8. Appointment of Independent Examiners
- 9. Any Other Business
- 10. Date of next AGM

12.00 The Leaman Lecture
Speaker Peter Dye: 'Headquarters Royal
Flying Corps 1914-1918'

#### **CCI / Stow Maries Seminar**

Another note for your diaries (electronic or manual) is for **Saturday 11 May 2019** at the iconic Stow Maries Great War Aerodrome in Essex. This marks the inaugural event in conjunction with our good friends at Stow; a half-day Seminar. Speakers are our very own President, AVM Peter Dye and leading 'First Blitz' historian Ian Castle - with an intro from Stow Maries trustee Air Cdre Barry Dickens.

Kick off is 14:00 and tickets at £15.00 each (£12.50 for CCI members) are available

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through the Stown Maries web site.

There's free cake too ...



Written by David Marks, edited by Andy Kemp forward to a friend

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