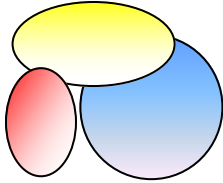




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Bristol Wings



Newsletter of the LAA Bristol Wing

October 2012

NEXT MEETING—Sun & Fun

Our long-standing member and National Council Representative—Dave Hall - will be giving us an enlightened account of his visit to Florida this year for the Annual Sun and Fun at Lakeland. We look forward to seeing many photos of aircraft in the wonderful sunshine—so sorely missed in Britain this year.

This will take place from around 7.30/8pm on **Wednesday 3rd October** in Room 7 at BAWA. All visitors are very welcome and details of how to get there are on our website on the [profile page](#) or further information about us and what we do on the home page.



LAST MEETING— AGM

On Thursday 13th September we returned to our old rooms 5/6 for our Annual General Meeting.

Steve Neale had already tendered his resignation as Co-ordinator and as he had a prior engagement, he asked Alan George to step in to chair the meeting.

When it came to the election of officers we were all very pleased when Trevor Wilcock offered to become the Wing Co-ordinator. Trevor was the subject of our 3rd Who are We article in the July/August 2011 issue of the newsletter and this can be found on line at our website: www.bristol-wing.co.uk

Many thanks were extended to Steve for the great work he has done as Co-ordinator over the past six years.

Gordon Pritt, our Treasurer gave a very detailed explanation of our accounts, which show a drop in the balance over the last year, mainly due to increases in the cost of room hire and postal expenses for membership renewal.

A full record of the minutes of the meeting is attached for members to read.

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Where to go...

Free landing vouchers for **October 2012**

Flyer: Bodmin, Chiltern Park, Elmet, Netherthorpe, Strathaven, Tibenham

Pilot: .Chiltern Park, Headcorn, Longside, Perth (Scone)

Future Wing meetings

November: Graham Clark — AZ Injun Country, Splash with Crocs in FLA

December: Annual Quiz

Hydroplane:

An aeroplane designed to land on a wet runway, 20,000 feet long

CAA News

The CAA frequently issue documents affecting us. Below are links to some which may be relevant to some of our members/readers:

The link to the **online GASIL** Safety Leaflet as a PDF is available from the website by clicking [here](#).

Air Navigation Order Schedule 5 'Radio Communication and Radio Navigation Equipment to be carried in Aircraft, Gliders & Self-Launched Motor Gliders (SLMG)' can be viewed by clicking on [this link](#)

Picture Quiz

Last month's picture quiz submitted by Trevor was very well received by our members who mostly agreed that it is a:

Mitchel-Procter Kittiwake

Correct entries by:

Graham Clark,

Phil Mathews—with the only fully correct answer

Pete White

Ron Perry who says: *We borrowed one at the Mendip gliding Club many years and I did my first ever solo aero-tow with her - only one seat! The one I flew had a 135hp engine. A delight to fly with excellent handling. A bit horsepower challenged when in came to towing a heavy Puchatz with two people on board. I logged about 5 hours*

Alan George who says: *This was a homebuild design that originated in the early 1960's when Rollason's held a design competition for a Formula 1 race plane. The winner became the Rollason Beta and the Kittiwake was one of the other entrants.*

And we also received one incorrect suggestion of: Trago Mills SAH1, probably G-SAH1 – but won't say who sent that in.....



Here's this month's Picture Quiz sent in by Graham....

His clue: *A bee, perhaps?*

BRISTOL WING BOOK LIBRARY

The books in the following list are available on request. Just call/text Alan George on 07968 347831 or email him at alan.george@trussler.co.uk and he will bring your requested book to the next Wing meeting.

BOOK TITLE	AUTHOR
A Book of Air Journeys.....	Ludovic Kennedy
AcroSport brochure.....	AcroSport
Airborne for Pleasure	Albert Morgan
Amazing Air.....	Science Club
Aviator's Guide to GPS	Bill Clarke
Avionics.....	Bill Gunston
Biplanes	Michael F Jerram
Birth of a Spitfire.....	Clive Du Cros
Bristol Aerospace since 1910.....	Geoff Green
Carlisle Airport.....	Compiled by Paul Wiggins
Cessna 172 Around Britain	Dick Flute
Checklist – Grumman American AA-5.....	Airtour
Checklist – Piper Tomahawk (PA 38).....	Airtour
Chevron brochure.....	AMF
Christavia brochure	Christavia
Chronicle of Aviation	J L International
Country Flying.....	Geoff Farr
Flight Briefing for Pilots - Volume 4	Birch & Bramson
Flying Fleas.....	Ellis and Jones
Flying Flight Simulators.....	Charles Gulick
Flying - The Golden years.....	Rupert Prior
Flying Tigers.....	Paul Szuszkiewicz
Freedom of the Skies	Margi Moss
Gliding: A Handbook On Soaring Flight	Derek Piggott
Grumman X-29.....	Bill Gunston
Guinness Book of Aircraft Facts and Feats	Taylor & Monday
If you read me - Rock the tower!!	Bob Stevens
International Air Traffic Control.....	Arnold Field
Jets at Sea	Leo Marriott
Kitfox brochure	Kitfox
KR-2 brochure.....	Rand Robinson
Military Helicopters.....	Hugh W Cowin
More Tails of the 50's.....	Peter Campbell
Morse Code for Airmen	Airtour
New Soaring Pilot.....	Welch and Irving
Pilot Officer Prune	Tim Hamilton
Pulsar brochure.....	Pulsar
Radio Telephony Manual	CAA
Reaching for the Skies	Ivan Rendall
Revolution in the Sky	Richard Saunders Allen
RV Kitplanes brochure	Vans
Sagittarius Rising	Cecil Lewis
Science and Technology of Low Speed and Motorless Flight	NASA
Spitfire, a Complete Fighting History.....	Alfred Price
Tails of the Fifties	Various
Tales from the Crewroom.....	David Berry
The Air Pilot's Weather Guide	Ingrid Holford

Continued on next page

BRISTOL STRUT BOOK LIBRARY continued

The British Civil Aircraft Register G-APAA to G-APZZ	Air Britain
The Dambusters Squadron	Alan Cooper
The DEC Schneider Trophy Race	D Baldry & M Jerram
The Helicopter	John Fay
The KnowHow Book of Flying Models	Mary Jae McNeil
The Pilot's R/T Handbook.....	Chris O'Malley
The Spider Web	T D Hallam
The World's Strangest Aircraft	Michael Taylor
They Called It Pilot Error	Robert L. Cohn
Thruster T.300 brochure.....	Thruster
UK Airspace, Is it Safe?	David Ogilvy
Ultralight and Microlight.....	Berger-Burr
Unfit To Fly – A civil pilot's lucky career	Hugh Thompson
Whitchurch Airport.....	Gerald Hart
Whittle - The True Story	J Golley
Winging it	Jack Jefford
Yeager.....	Chuck Yeager

"Unfit to Fly?" A book review by our Librarian Alan George

The new book that I am putting in the library is "Unfit to Fly?" by Hugh Thompson. From the off I have to say it is a specialist autobiography but is of interest as someone who made a living starting as a private pilot not from the usual commercial or military background. It also has local interest as he was based at airfields like Shobdon, Staverton and Cardiff, places we have flown to. There is also a struggle against adversity in keeping his medical as he suffered from poor hearing since a child.

From being an instructor at Shobdon the first step was becoming a parachute pilot for the Army including flying a DHC Beaver in Cyprus - what an amazing break. This unusual work continued when he became a survey pilot flying Scottish Aviation Twin Pioneers, another unusual type to have flown and it must now be very rare to have such experience of radial engines. This led to a more normal job flying Twin Otters for companies including Brymon on mail and passenger flights around the UK and Europe. Eventually the same sort of work was done with the

Shorts SD360 until his commercial flying ended in 2009.

What we probably know Hugh Thompson for is that he created Milsom airstrip on the small farm he lived on to the West of the Malverns. This and his instructing at Shobdon meant he has flown many LAA types especially the Kitfox and Europa. There are many cautionary tales about neighbours objecting to airfields close by even though the noise nuisance was minimal compared to traffic on nearby main roads. Although no longer the owner of Milsom he is still active as a flying instructor and as an LAA coach.

As a self-published book it would benefit from an independent proof reading. Maybe also some editing to make the story flow and aid comprehension but this would detract from the style of a first hand account of the author's experiences. It is an interesting story and an enjoyable read on those un-flyable days as Winter draws in.

WHO ARE WE?

A column dedicated to finding out more about who belongs to the Bristol Wing.

This month we talk to : Pat Harrison

Current Day Job/Past Career

I spent most of my life milking 100 cows, I am now semi retired but doing property maintenance to keep busy.

Why Aviation?

My interest in aviation was sparked by watching the Brabazon test flying over the farm and visiting Upavon for the 50th anniversary of the RFC in 1962

First Flight – in What, Where and When?

It was in a Cessna 152 from Bristol & Wessex when the club was on the north side of the airfield in the early 90s. Unfortunately I was not in a position to carry on flying at the time.

How long in the Bristol Strut/Wing? :

I have been a member for about 4 years. I don't get to as many meetings as I would like because of family commitments.

Total Number of Aircraft and Hours Flown :

I am still training. I started in 1999 and flew my first solo in June of that year. I restarted training again this year and hope to qualify as a pilot before the end of the year (weather permitting!) I have 45 hours in my logbook. Most of my time has been in PA 28- 140 and 161. I also glide with Devon & Somerset Gliding Club at North Hill- I haven't got my gliding licence either.

Favourite and Worse Type Flown :

The worst was the Cessna 152, the best was a Piper Lance on a trip to Caen and the D Day beaches. I enjoy the Fournier RF5 which I fly with my brother- cheap flying if rather slow.

Current Aeroplane(s) :

None yet, but once I have my licence I might look for a Jodel, Aeronca or even a Cub that I could base at the farm.

Best Aviation Moment and Flight :

My first solo away flight from Compton Abbas and finally flying into the LAA Rally at Sywell this year after many weather cancellations over the years even, if we had to weather divert to Gloucester on the return flight

Any Aviation Heroes - if so who and why?

It must be Alex Henshaw for his skill in navigation, Eric "Winkle" Brown who has flown more types than anyone else and made the first carrier landing in a jet, and John Gillespie Magee who wrote "High Flight" which describes the thrill of flying better than I ever could

Any 'Hairy' Aviation Moments - if so – any lessons learnt? :

While practising Touch and Goes at Dunkeswell I had called finals and was less than a mile from touchdown when something made me look below and I saw another aircraft overtaking me. I later found out that he had radio trouble but it didn't help my heart rate at the time!

Aircraft Wish List – to fly or own

Like many others I would love to fly a Spitfire. Other aircraft I should like to try- Tiger Moth, Stampe SV4 and a Nimbus 3 glider. I have often thought I would like to build a Vans 8 or 9 but realistically I have left it too late to start now.

Any Advice for All Pilots

I have always subscribed to two sayings:- "Try to make the number of take offs and landings equal" and "it's better to be on the ground wishing you were up there than up there wishing you were on the ground"

Ambition:

To fly my own aircraft from my own strip before I am too old!



IMC Training—the next stage.....

Steve Neale

This is the second part of how it "felt" to do an IMC rating. A few months have passed between the RV sale and a new syndicate forming around our TB20. This aircraft was to see me through the rest of my IMC training. Once signed off on complex my next lesson under the hood showed G-CORB to be a lot more placid than the RV. I understand what pilots mean when they say an aircraft is a good instrument platform. Once trimmed she is less likely to get knocked off course and penetrates turbulence far better than the RV did. I could say sluggish but a spin off is she is actually more comfortable to fly fast than the RV. The biggest task is learning to operate the additional knobs and buttons CORB presents me with.

With all the required instrumentation and avionics now to hand, VOR tracking is a joy and ILS approaches are soon also polished off. I become impressed with the concise format of instrument approach plates. Initially confusing looking things, all the information one needs is there and it's on one page.

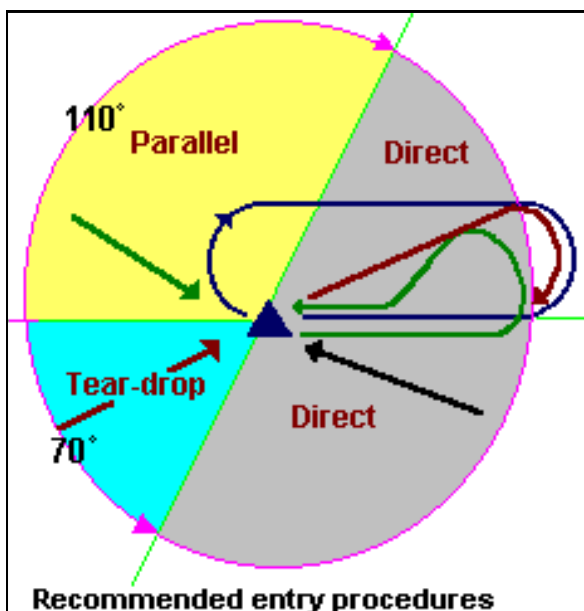
Then just as I'm feeling a bit smug Phil moves on to NDBs and I hit a mental wall. Where the VOR is accurate, reliable and gives you useful information like the beacon radial you are on, a NDB gives you nothing but an approximate direction to it and that may be to a reflection from an adjacent hill rather than the beacon itself. This means you may or may not have a bearing to the beacon and there is no way of checking. My mind seems to reject a technology with so many shortcomings and I waste valuable flying time getting my head around the fact that I have to learn to use it to get the rating no matter how useless it is. This is not helped by some aircraft compounding the NDB's inherent errors with apparently random sensitivity to signal reflections, and CORB is no exception.

Gloucester has known NDB reflection issues because of adjacent high ground and my RMI decides it prefers to point at a hill rather than the airfield on approach to runway 27. Then at 2 miles from touchdown the airfield signal gets stronger than the reflection and the needle swings abruptly 30 degrees right. Try flying an accurate approach in IMC when that happens! Oh! and

don't try flying to a NDB if you will cross a coast line or if it's dawn or dusk as that won't work properly either. You may as well use an ADF receiver to tune to Radio 4 and get something useful like the cricket score.

This brings me to holds. Holding patterns are where ATC put you if things get too busy for you to land. In theory a typical hold is simple to understand. You fly over the beacon then turn for one minute, fly out for 1 minute, turn for another minute then fly back in the opposite direction arriving back over the beacon having delayed for 4 minutes total. Unfortunately that simplicity ignores wind because add that and it all goes to pot. Any wind means you have to allow for it or you won't be arriving back over the beacon. As you are flying in different directions, mental gymnastics are needed to adjust for drift. Also with drift a bearing to the beacon needs to be calculated to start the second turn.

I'd just like to know what sadist thought that one up. I found in my case this had to be prepared on the ground or my brain melted. Some at the club probably thought my mumbling to myself was the onset of dementia. That same sadist must have wanted to twist the knife further as they compounded all this with 3 different sectors for entering the hold. Each gives you a different procedure to fly depending on the direction you come from. All this and don't forget to maintain the scan. Remember I'm not using the autopilot as most instrument pilots do as



I'm training.

Anyway enough of my whining because the positive side of all this is that flying on instruments has become routine and entry into cloud no longer causes the adrenaline rush it used to. One simply changes focus from outside to the instrument scan. Slowly the free spirited VFR pilot in my head is being tamed and a cold acceptance that IFR procedures keep you alive takes its place.

Next time: CORB gets new avionics and I discover the simple elegance of the GPS RNAV approach.



NOT THE GHOST OF A CHANCE

Figment

A story (or is it?) sent in by Frank Bond

As I sit enjoying an unexpected Indian Summer on the bright warm flight-deck of my new Boeing 737-300, factory fresh from Seattle, I think how very different it was back at the other end of my career. The Aeroplanes in which I was taught to fly all came with a provenance, each one a hand me down from the World War of my childhood. When my nervous grasp pushed forward on the stick, lifting the tail of the old Tiger Moth to send it bounding across the Wessex turf, mine was just one more in a long line of clammy hands to learn their trade from this little wire strung steed. Many before me had taken the skills so painstakingly learnt on to other aircraft, in which they fought and often died high in the skies over Europe.

The Airliners in which I first earned a crust were also embarking on a second career, having already won their spurs over the Battlefields of France and the Low Countries. Beneath the smart maroon and white airline livery with its rampant dragon lurked an old war-horse. Pushing through the narrow flight deck door on my first base training detail I noticed a small brass plaque on the cockpit wall, it read "this airplane was accepted into the US Army Airforce November 12 1942".

So it was that as a fresh faced young second officer I was called from standby on Christmas Eve 1966 to position by taxi to Wymswold. There I was to meet Roy Marsden, a Senior Captain of vast experience, and together we were to collect a Dakota from Meadows Aviation and position it to Cardiff. The aeroplane had been in for its annual check 4, and a complete cabin refurbishment. The taxi driver had great difficulty in finding the aerodrome, one of dozens built in the early years of the war and lost in a labyrinth of country lanes. It was late into the afternoon before we pulled up beside the old blister hanger that housed the Maintenance Company. Zulu Golf was sitting on the perimeter track under a leaden sky, raindrops beaded on the fresh paintwork, she looked like a new aeroplane again. Roy sent me to the tower to file a flight plan while he checked all the paperwork with the engineers.

The light was beginning to fade as we climbed through the freshly upholstered cabin and into the flight-deck. Starting the twin wasp was as always a team effort, Roy worked away at the wobble pump beside his seat, while I squeezed the energise switch. The soft whirr of the flywheel built to a high pitched whine before, with a clunk, the engage switch started the blades of the big Hamilton Propeller marching steadily past the side window. A cough, a rattle, and in a cloud of blue smoke the big sixteen pot radial roared into life. Roy opened the crossfeed and started the other engine; I chanted the liturgy of the checklist as in the failing light the old Dakota trundled down the patched and potholed taxiway. The aeroplane swung into the driving sleet, and as I held the control wheel hard back, Roy checked the mags and exercised the propellers. We lined up on 6000 feet of slick wet tarmac and Roy dropped in the tail lock, there was a laconic "Zulu Golf cleared for take off, goodnight" from the tower and we were off.

The cockpit filled with noise as Roy pushed the throttles forward and the tail came up. At forty-one inches of boost I tapped the back of his hand and inched the levers the rest of the way to forty-eight inches, taking care not to over boost engines that were even then well past middle age. The grand old lady lumbered into the thick wet night air. Roy called for the gear up; I groped across the cockpit floor for the latch lever and then pulled up on the gear lever. With a gurgling hiss from the hydraulics behind my seat the bulbous black tyres tucked

themselves away into the engine nacelles. Power one, power two, in stages we reduced the boost and pitch and the deafening cacophony of sound in the cockpit fell to a steady roar. We turned on course and climbed into the dark enveloping cloak of the low overcast. Levelling off at six thousand feet I set cruise power, selected the aux. fuel tanks and moved the mixture levers to autolean. Roy synchronised his DI and then reached under the throttle quadrant to engage the autopilot. The nose of the DC3 began to yaw back and forth. Roy cursed, "put you feet on the rudders" he said. I felt the rudder pedals pumping left right left right. "Bloody airlock" he muttered as he disconnected the autopilot again. We flew on for twenty minutes or so, each in our own private world, enveloped in this dark cocoon of noise. The intercom abruptly brought me out of my daydream, "I need a piss John, will you be alright for five minutes?" "Of course" I said, my fingers curling round the cold control wheel. Roy climbed awkwardly out of his seat and disappeared over my shoulder. The Dakota was a delight to hand fly on instruments, and this was the first time that I had flown one solo, so to speak, that is without the security blanket of a hugely experienced geriatric watching benignly from the other seat.

The cockpit was snug, lit by the eerie green glow from the fluorescing figures painted on the dials scattered across the instrument panel in front of me. The Radio Compass needle pointing behind me began to wander, time to tune in the next beacon. I reached overhead to the old coffee grinder ADF, craning my neck to see the tuning scale, and straining my ears for the faint signal above the engine noise and the static. That

The explosion when it came stunned me completely

was when we started running into the turbulence. The DC3 began to wallow and the heavy controls required both hands to maintain a steady height and heading, the ADF would have to wait, anyway the Decca navigator showed we were on track. Then I noticed the ice building up around the windscreen, and the needle of the ASI began to creep back 140kts, 135kts, 130kts... shit! I turned on the air to the de-icing boots and pulled on the carb-heat. The speed stabilised for a bit, then started to trickle back again. I pushed up the pitch and increased the boost, the propellers went out of sync with a wow wow wow, "That should fetch Roy back from the Bog" I thought. The speed slowly recovered to 130kts but by now the windscreen was completely opaque with a thick layer of ice, I thought that the propellers would probably be iced up too. I fumbled for the pump switch to spray neat alcohol from the prop hubs. Two minutes later an enormous crack not eighteen inches from my right ear sat me bolt upright in my seat as ice shrapnel shed from the blades of the propeller cannoned into the fuselage side. The pen on the Decca Navigator crawled away into the corner of the chart to twitch and sulk, where the hell was Roy? Then the flickering began, faintly at first, then brighter as tendrils of cobalt blue light began dancing around the ice encrusted windscreen. In my ears the crackle of static rose in pitch until it became a screaming in my headset blocking out even the roar of the engines...Where the hell was Roy? The explosion when it came stunned me completely. The deafening crack and blinding flash as the lightening bolt found its temporary earth on the nose of the aircraft neutralised all of my

senses. My night vision destroyed, brightly coloured lights swam before me, of the instruments I could see nothing, I was going to die, I let go of the controls.

Then, quite suddenly the turbulence stopped, the engines resumed their steady beat, the static in my headset faded and slowly, oh so slowly my eyesight returned. Dimly the instruments reappeared, wings level, VSI zero. The frosted windscreen filled with a pale white light. I gingerly reached for the control wheel, then a hand grasped my shoulder and for the third time in less than 3 minutes my heart stopped. I shot a glance back to see Roy standing between the seats as white as a sheet in the moonlight, his eyes wide and with a haunted look such as I never saw before or since that night. He didn't say a word, but climbed back into his seat and sat there silently staring straight ahead. I asked if he was all right, he shot me an anxious glance... "Did you see them?" he whispered into his mike. "See who?" I asked; he looked nervously over his shoulder. I said, "You have control". "No" he muttered, "you keep it", and sat bolt upright in his seat still staring ahead.

The rest of the flight was, as they say uneventful, except that Roy didn't speak another word. He tuned the radio aids and worked the controls on cue. like an automaton. We dropped through the bottom of the cloud onto a right base for runway 31 at Rhoose, the Christmas lights on Barry Island twinkled and danced, reflecting in the black waters of the Bristol Channel. I felt that glow of satisfaction as with a little double squeal the big balloon tyres found the greasy black tarmac. The Dakota lumbered around the perimeter track and with a squeaking of brakes turned onto the apron and stopped. I pulled the mixture controls to cut off and the Pratt and Whitneys clattered to a halt... total silence. I looked across at Roy, waiting for him to say something. For a while he didn't move, then he slowly reached behind his seat pulled out the Tec Log and began to write. I completed the shut down checks, and put away my headset and clipboard. Unstrapping myself I said "after you Roy". "No No " he blurted and then more softly as though startled by the loudness of his own voice "After you, and leave the door open". He followed me closely through the cabin and out into the cold night air, the only sound the tic tic tic of cooling metal.

The wooden hut that housed operations was in darkness, but the lights in the flying club next door were burning brightly. "I don't know about you" I said, "but I could do with a drink". Roy nodded, "Yes" he said, "but not in there, not tonight, how about the Blue Anchor?" I said "OK" and we turned towards the car park. The saloon bar of the old thatched pub was loud with chatter and laughter. Roy ordered two pints and two double whiskeys on a tray, which he carried through to the deserted lounge bar. There he set it down on a table in front of the log fire. Settling into an armchair he picked up one of the scotches and downed it in one. "Are you sure you are alright?" I asked. Roy looked over his shoulder then leaned forward in his seat and said, "So you never saw them?" I just looked at him blankly. He pulled his chair closer to mine "For Christ sake promise me you won't tell a soul" he said. I listened spellbound to his story.

When Roy left the flight deck that night he entered the bright empty passenger cabin, fresh with the smell of new upholstery. He strode down the smart red carpet between the rows of seats and into the clean laminate clad toilet in the tail cone. He was just pressing the lever to fill the small steel sink with water when

the light in the toilet dimmed. He noticed a sudden chill and his breath began to condense on the mirror, then the light spluttered and went out. In the numbing cold and blackness he fumbled for the door bolt which through force of habit he had closed when he entered the cubicle. After what seemed an eternity he found the lock and pushed open the narrow door. To his dismay he found the cabin also to be in total blackness. Assuming that we had suffered a total electrical failure he knew that he had to get back to the flight deck pronto. His torch was still in his flight bag in the cockpit so he determined to feel his way through the cabin working from seat back to seat back. Holding onto the doorframe, he reached out for the back of the rear row of seats. His hand grasped thin air. Puzzled he began groping further and further, where the hell was the seat. Then the turbulence started and he had to hang on to the doorframe with both hands. It was then that he first noticed the strange smell, gone was the odour of fresh paint, instead his nostrils filled a pungent reek of oil and sweat. In the buffeting blackness he was rapidly becoming disoriented, all he could do was hang on tight to the doorframe and it was cold, oh so bloody cold. At first he thought that his eyes were playing tricks on him, he could just make out the outline of some of the cabin windows in a faint electric blue glow which silhouetted strange shapes against the cabin walls. As his eyes adjusted to the faint fluorescent glow he was able to make out more detail. To his utter astonishment he saw that all

I was going to die, I let go of the controls.

of the cabin seats had vanished, in their place, piled up in the centre of the cabin floor, was a mound of irregular bundles and angular shapes. Then he saw the eyes, all those eyes, just staring at him! Hunched on benches down both sides

of the cabin sat what appeared to be bulky figures in steel helmets. He was just on the point of convincing himself that this was some awful nightmare from which he must soon awake when there was a deafening explosion and a blinding flash. The cabin was lit up as if by an arc light, everything thrown into sharp crisp detail, the sten guns, the kit bags, the rows of gaunt cork smudged faces with their anxious staring eyes. Then total blackness again. When moonlight began filtering through the cabin windows everything was returned to normal. "But I saw them John, I saw them, it's God's honest truth" he said.

Roy made me promise to keep his secret and neither of us ever mentioned that night again. We flew often together during the following year, mostly back and forth to Jersey, turning low over Dorset to show some giggling stewardess the Old Man of Cern Abbas, or taking it in turns to chase around the tops of fluffy cumulus clouds over Lyme Bay. Then one day Roy was dead, killed on a European motoring holiday. His car left the road and hit a tree in a field outside of the little Dutch town of Oosterbeek just west of Arnhem. It happened on the 17th of September.