



The Air League Newsletter

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THE PRESIDENT WRITES

Publication of the defence equipment programme – A Curate's egg!

For the Defence Industry, the Government's view of its future equipment and support requirements is a compelling factor in assessing investment decisions and, ultimately, in determining the sustainability of the sector in the UK. The role of the domestic customer as an 'early adopter' is also key to export sales. Hence, January's long awaited publication of the NAO-audited Equipment Plan was eagerly anticipated. So what does it and the related NAO commentary tell us?

First, it records that, pre-SDSR, the Coalition Government faced a £74 billion deficit in the 10-year defence budget as a whole, of which a significant proportion lay in the Equipment Programme. Secondly, it confirms that, over 10 years, the MOD expects to spend £159 billion on equipment and its support. Within this, some £13 billion is held as risk contingency and £8 billion is unallocated headroom. This approach is aimed at eradicating permanently the over-heated programme aspirations of the past. Thirdly, £86 billion (54%) is allocated to support costs across the 10-year period, underlining the complexity of modern military platforms and re-emphasising the importance of through-life costs. The sticker price to support cost ratio for a fast-jet aircraft is now approaching 1:4. Fourthly, it reveals that the cost of the nuclear deterrent and its successor plus the Astute attack submarines is £35.8 billion (22%). Between the environments, including the cost of support, the budget for surface ships is £17.4 billion (11%), £12.3 billion on armoured fighting vehicles (8%), aircraft and helicopters £44.5 billion (28%) and weapons £11.4 billion (7%). ISTAR and information networks absorb the rest. Taken together, the programme is intended to deliver the force structure described as Future Force 2020 in the SDSR.

So, does this attempt at increased transparency answer industry's questions? As ever, yes and no! It does give a broad understanding of the sector-by-sector relationship between the tail-off of existing procurement projects

and the timescales for the introduction of new capability. Equally, it provides a stark reminder of the significance of support solutions and the need to continue the forensic search for economies. But, the document does not provide specific guidance. To take one example very close to the sleigh: how will the UK maintain its medium-altitude, long-endurance UAV into the future? The current Reaper force was procured as an Urgent Operational Requirement for Afghanistan. So, will Reaper be funded for inclusion in the core programme or will there be a new platform? In the latter case, will this be procured off-the-shelf, through an Anglo-French arrangement or as an indigenously developed UK platform? There is nothing in the document to help industry assess its investment options.

Finally, what does the NAO think? First, they believe that the true cost of the programme is understated by some £12.5 billion (15.7%) and, secondly, that systemic optimism remains in the MOD's assessment of risk. But the related assessment tools are themselves immature and only time will tell who is right.

GOING ELECTRONIC

In future, The Air League Newsletter will appear in electronic format only. This will allow more content flexibility and topicality beyond the limits of the current printed format and will reduce significantly production and distribution costs. See Page 8 for details.

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An Independent Perspective on

As submitted to the House of Commons Tra

The Aviation Industry

The UK air transport industry contributes over £50bn to GDP and £8bn to the Exchequer. It facilitates vital international connectivity to encourage exports and attract investment into the UK. It carries two-thirds of the tourists who visit the UK. It handles some 220 million passengers a year, thereby supporting 1 million jobs directly. It operates without Government subsidy whilst paying its full Carbon Cost. The UK air transport industry meets all its own capital and debt service costs for the development of airports and the acquisition of aircraft, whilst also contributing to local and national social programmes; unlike the rail network which received a subsidy of £3.9bn in 2011-12

The Key Challenges

The Aviation Strategy faces five key challenges:

1. Lack of runway capacity in the South East, particularly at the Heathrow hub.
2. Level of Air Passenger Duty.
3. Lack of comprehensive air links from the UK regions to the Heathrow hub.
4. Lack of clarity and logical thinking on environmental emissions.
5. Lack of strategic understanding of the importance of aviation to young people and the community.

Lack of Runway Capacity

London is served by six airports but Heathrow is by far and away the most important as the UK national hub. Heathrow is the UK's No 1 port by value but it is already running at 99% of capacity. London Gatwick is running at some 95% of its single runway capacity, already the most heavily used single runway in the world.

The capacity situation is such that Heathrow now offers some 166 destinations compared with 244 at Paris Charles de Gaulle, 264 at Frankfurt and 252 at Amsterdam Schiphol. Paris Charles de Gaulle now has four runways, Frankfurt has three and Schiphol has five. Even Munich, Germany's second hub, has announced the construction of a third runway.

China is planning 70 new airports by 2015 and annual growth for Beijing airport is projected at 13%, together with 19% for Djakarta, 15% for Dubai and 11% for Hong Kong. We need those entrepreneurs and travellers to come to the UK but the Heathrow hub has a projected decline in annual growth. London drives the UK economy especially during the economic downturn – it is an hour closer to the US. The richer that emerging countries get, the more important this will become.

Overstretch at the UK hub also impacts on UK regions. A Far Eastern entrepreneur doing business in Europe measures travel time from his home to the hotel door. Since the air link from Plymouth to London was removed, it now takes longer to get from London to Plymouth than Concorde took to fly from New York. Over 70% of British Airways flights are short haul and BA brings 2.5 million passengers down to London every year, half of whom transfer to a long haul flight. They do not want to land at one London airport, collect bags, catch a train and check in at another. Five years ago there were 124 flights a week from Edinburgh to Heathrow, 115 from Glasgow and 54 from Belfast - now there are 109, 60 and 42. Amsterdam Schiphol Airport has 22 links to UK regional airports and KLM advertises itself as Scotland's favourite airline. Heathrow by comparison has 6 links to UK regional airports. The UK regions are increasingly disconnected from their capital through the lack of seamless, interconnecting flights. Rail investment alone does not provide a solution.

UK Air Passenger Duty (APD)

APD was originally introduced in lieu of tax on aviation fuel to offset its environmental impact. It has also proved a useful source of revenue to the Exchequer.

This indirect tax had risen by 225% on some routes in just seven years and UK APD is now the highest air passenger tax anywhere in the world. It is almost 4 times the rate of France for UK domestic and European services. For long haul travel, the comparisons are much worse with UK rates being almost £90 more than the rate charged in Eire. It can be cheaper to travel from Belfast to embark at Dublin Airport rather than fly out of either of Belfast's two Airports.

Consequently, not only does the rate of APD serve to reduce the rate of growth of air travel (plus associated income, economic activity and jobs) but also it encourages UK long-haul travellers to change their itinerary. For UK passengers flying onwards from Amsterdam (where APD has been removed), they can save up to £80 on the long haul APD; for a family of four, that would be a saving of £320. The high level of APD is damaging the UK's international competitiveness - reducing the rates to those of, say, Germany would help claw-back and stimulate traffic

UK Regional Links

Continued growth of traffic at Heathrow and Gatwick has only been achieved at the expense of links to the UK regions, with service to 17 points being lost to Heathrow in the last 20 years. The closure of Plymouth Airport can be directly attributed to the lack of slots at both Heathrow and Gatwick. The residents of Inverness, Liverpool, Humberside, Teesside, Newquay or the Isle of Man lack direct access to the UK's only viable hub, London Heathrow.

the Government's Aviation Strategy

Transport Select Committee Inquiry – February 2013

The Government has consistently refused the regions' air services protection via Public Service Obligations (PSO), which are used very successfully to protect air services in France and other European countries. This has led to the sale of slots by some regional and short haul airlines to intercontinental operators with larger aircraft who benefit from the economy of scale. Yet these self-same intercontinental airlines need the feed from a wide range of domestic routes to fill their aircraft and maintain frequency and connectivity.

Aviation and the Environment

Technological advances have drastically reduced aviation noise and pollution to levels hardly imaginable a few years ago. Aviation is responsible for less than 3% of world CO2 emissions, below that for shipping (for which no equivalent of Air Passenger Duty is charged on cruise or ferry passengers) and significantly less than from commerce, roads or domestic sources. Furthermore, its noise impact has reduced by 70% over the last 30 years. The aviation industry has a programme in hand to ensure that by 2050 it will not be generating any more CO2 than it did in 2005, despite a quadrupling of aircraft movements between those dates. Changes in engine and aircraft technology, improved operating procedures, greater and better use of satellite navigation systems, improved Air Traffic Management, descent profiles and track-keeping will continue to improve and minimise the environmental impacts from aviation, yet Government avoids defining acceptable noise and CO2 levels that are necessary to sustain the future prosperity of the UK and the status of UK as a world aviation leader. Assumptions made as recently as 2010 concerning aircraft noise and associated environmental impact around Heathrow are already out of date. For instance, the Boeing 787 noise footprint is 60% smaller than the aircraft it will replace and the noise footprint now stays well within the airport boundary.

Importance of Aviation and Education to Young People and the Community

Aviation is one of the UK's greatest success stories. It provides more skilled jobs and contribution to the country's GDP than any other apart from the pharmaceutical industry. The future of aviation in the UK depends on stimulating and encouraging the brightest of the next generation to get involved. The Government is to be congratulated on developing apprenticeships but the background mood music is still that aviation is a rich person's pastime. This must be corrected. Some 205,000 people depend on Heathrow for their livelihood. Around 20,000 pilots belong to the General Aviation community while 44,000 youngsters join the Air Cadets to fly. Yet there is no national strategy as to which airfields should remain and which should be allowed to disappear. Plymouth and Filton have closed in the last two years with others threatened by housing development and excessive, sometimes inconsistent, regulation. Moreover, UK professional flight training is subject to VAT which, when coupled with the high costs of aviation generally and the heavy tax on AVGAS used by the majority of training aircraft, will only further the trend of driving delivery of the training off-shore, with the loss of opportunity, skills, employment and standards oversight that goes with it.



ABOVE – Heathrow T4 is destined to become the oldest terminal at London's hub airport once the central area has been regenerated. (editor's photo)

Conclusion

Government policy and action should encourage all concerned to think in terms of "where does aviation fit in the overall transport strategy and its role in the national economy". Given the piecemeal approach to national aviation issues ranging from APD through environment and education to runway provision, the Air League believes that the Government's aviation strategy should be much more integrated and focused than it is at present. Aviation contributes significantly to the economic and social wellbeing of the UK. With the right forward looking policy, that contribution could be significantly improved.

The UK has led the world in air transport service, innovation, technical excellence and standards. It is currently, just, the leading market in Europe. Without Government recognition of its crucial contribution and pro-active policies to facilitate its continued existence and incremental development, that position will be prejudiced.

Once the UK's position as a global aviation leader is lost, it will be next to impossible to recover.

THE ROYAL AIR FORCE IN

By Air Chief Marshal Sir Michael

Former Chief of Air Staff and current Air League Co



ABOVE - The Eurofighter Typhoon is becoming more multi-role capable, but promised upgrades are over-due and in-service aircraft still await advanced AESA radar, Meteor AAMs, Storm Shadow and Brimstone missiles and Paveway IV precision bombs. (Editor's photo)

The Royal Air Force today is close to one third the size it was 20 years ago. In manpower terms, this has meant a reduction in uniformed strength from over 90,000 to an anticipated 31,000. Squadrons of fast jets, the weapon carrying element of the service have reduced from some 30 Squadrons to 11.

Whole capabilities are absent today such as Maritime Patrol and Long Range Electronic Reconnaissance, whilst the loss of the Harrier GR9 fleet has left the nation with no sea-borne offensive air support in addition to a serious reduction in numbers of close air support aircraft so vital in operations such as Libya or Afghanistan.

Air Transport and Air-to-Air (AAR) Refuelling is reliant on aircraft

some almost 50 years old, and the difficulties and costs of maintaining such venerable machines has resulted in numbers being cut.

Making better reading, the helicopter fleet has some very capable aircraft although numbers are still less than the task requires. Moreover, the weapons and reconnaissance suites available to the Tornado GR4 are world class and will be available to Typhoon in due course which will make this aircraft truly multi-role. The F-35B Joint Strike Fighter will, it is hoped, enter service with the RN and RAF later in this decade; numbers are still uncertain and the UK has opted for the least capable version in terms of range and payload. RAF ISTAR contributes comprehensively to joint operation needs through the

UK network enabled capability and is an increasingly important aspect of warfare.

In this context, the Reaper RPAS (Remotely Piloted Air System) is providing a superb range of information to military commanders and intelligence analysts. The Sentinel has provided excellent service and been used extensively on operations. Its future, despite its important and presently unique capability is uncertain. So, too, the Sentry E3-A AWACS aircraft unless it receives the planned upgrade to its systems needed to enable it to operate seamlessly alongside the NATO, French and US fleets. Long Range Electronic Reconnaissance is planned to be re-provided within three years by Rivet Joint, an American aircraft and system. No replacement for Maritime Patrol is funded as yet.

The Voyager (A330-200), transport and AAR, aircraft is entering service in the transport role and when cleared for AAR will provide a modern and very capable aircraft for this role, allowing the VC-10s and Tristars to be retired. The numbers of tanker platforms are less than originally envisaged and it remains to be seen whether this number and the reduced offensive air support capability will be sufficient in a future conflict. The relatively small



ABOVE - Former RAF and RN Harrier T10 and GR7s and 9s languish in the Arizona sun. The first new Queen Elizabeth Class carrier will arrive before the F-35B fighters to go on them.

2013

Michael Graydon
Council Member



number of C-17 aircraft have a vital role in strategic AT, and the A400M, which will replace the Hercules tactical transport aircraft later this decade is under development in Spain. Although likely to be a capable aircraft, it is not replacing the C-130J on a 1:1 basis.

In space and cyber warfare, the RAF has a vital role to play. It is the lead service in space operations and a key player in anti-cyber attack. In training, the redundancy programme has involved a major reduction in recruiting, with training virtually on hold. This will pick up in 2013. Solutions for future pilot basic flying training are still being evaluated.

During the Libya operation, a shortage of crews resulted in training crews having to be used on the front line, with a concomitant reduction in operational training.

Against this background of cuts and uncertainty, the RAF has been on continuous operations since 1991. It has performed outstandingly over this period and its reputation amongst knowledgeable interests remains very high. Nevertheless, there have been problems with support of the other Services which has frustrated all concerned. These have arisen almost exclusively from lack of numbers, the unserviceability



ABOVE: The future of many current RAF ISTAR assets, such as the Shadow R1, which have been in continuous use in Afghanistan face an uncertain, currently unfunded future, even though they are amongst the newest and most essential aircraft in service. (Raytheon photo)

of ancient equipment and inadequate spares provision. It is the matter of numbers which is the greatest challenge in the years ahead.

Mass matters, and all the armed forces, the Royal Navy and RAF in particular, will have to find a better balance between the demands of high tech warfare and the simple fact that quantity has a quality of its own; it will require an honest recognition that without the United States we are severely restricted in what we can actually achieve. The Libyan campaign against a small, quickly defeated, air force still required 70% of the support flights to be flown by the US. Europe has a

long way to go to be able to operate effectively on its own and further reductions in defence spending unless accompanied by much better value for money will put at risk the ability to operate alongside the USAF in other than a token capacity.

This report was issued in January by the UK National Defence Association and was part of a longer critique of current post SDSR policy prepared by three very experienced and high-ranking retired senior officers- ACM Sir Michael Graydon, Admiral The Lord West of Spithead and General Sir Michael Rose. The reports can be read in full on: www.uknda.org

SAR - Short of Aircraft and Resources

The nation's much respected and heavily utilized Search And Rescue (SAR) helicopter coverage is hardly ever out of the news headlines, but is destined to be replaced in a few years with a new contracted civilian service. The current SAR organization has a world renowned reputation using Royal Air Force and Royal Navy helicopters working closely alongside HM Coastguard assets within an integrated joint military/civil framework, covering the whole of the UK and surrounding coastal waters. Attempts at privatization over recent years have a troublesome history, which has included contract bidders withdrawing and government implementation being postponed. However, with the decision to press on with this policy in the face of the withdrawal of military Sea King helicopters from 2016, the outcome is still unclear.

The Sea King SAR fleet has been in service with the RN since the early 1970s, and almost as long with the RAF, though regular refurbishment and high standards of maintenance have kept their availability at an acceptable level. So if money is short, why not just carry on flying today's fleet with an avionics update? The answer lies partly in the fact that keeping such old aircraft flying is becoming more expensive, but the main reason the service is being privatized is because the government wants to off-load the cost of running SAR through a PFI deal, with the operator buying the helicopters and delivering the service and support, and then billing the government as it goes. Service Chiefs share the view that scarce resources should be spent on other military priorities, especially as a majority of SAR call-outs are for civil incidents. It is easy to appreciate why they don't want to buy a large fleet of replacement SAR helicopters, even though a major benefit would have been that these would last decades into the future and retain a significant extra military rotary wing resource to call on in an emergency. Long term, taxpayers pay far more for PFI deals, but the way Treasury defence funding works the concept of "spend now to save later" seems beyond the favoured short-medium term horizon, and fails to fully take into account procurement spending in the UK being re-distributed and returned in tax within the economy. RN and RAF orders for Sea Kings led to multi-million pound export sales around the world, which helped off-set the cost of the UK's fleet. Buying from ourselves boosts exports whereas buying from our competitors weakens us and strengthens them. It shouldn't be a difficult concept to understand! The good news for UK industry could be orders for new generation UK-built SAR helicopters when the chosen service provider announces the winning package. The aircraft will have to meet key

requirements, but if foreign-built helicopters are eventually chosen it would shoot holes through the government's own aerospace industrial strategy.

But this new SAR policy begs new questions. Have future crew training costs been fully considered once ex-service SAR personnel retire or move on? And what about the lost SAR experience and reduced career development opportunities for RN and RAF aircrews who serve in the remaining operational helicopter squadrons? Previously RN SAR winchmen were also qualified divers and could enter overturned vessels to rescue trapped victims. Now they share RAF winchmen who are not all qualified in these extra skills. Can a commercial SAR provider afford to give such specialist training for a task unlikely to be used very often? The changes also raise concerns over added operational risk as the proposed new service will have fewer bases and fewer aircraft than today. Will the service still be able to cope with a wide-spread large-scale emergency, or simultaneous multiple emergencies? Can any commercial SAR service afford to build in emergency surge capability as would a military organization? On 12 February, at Aviemore, a cable-car accident trapped 30 people, some at the summit of the mountain. The only SAR helicopter available to help was a Royal Navy Sea King which had to fly across practically the whole of Scotland in severe wintry conditions from Prestwick on the west coast. There is always a trade off between cost, capability and risk, but taking too long to get to the scene might cost lives, as could having inadequate helicopter range and cabin capacity in a major maritime emergency. But as the UK no longer has any long-range maritime air capability, and will have no AEW radar at sea after 2016, is anyone in Westminster or Whitehall too bothered about future capability gaps in SAR?

Brooklands Museum secures Heritage Lottery Fund support



Brooklands Museum in Weybridge, Surrey, has received a first-round pass for a £4.85million bid from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for the Brooklands Aircraft Factory & Race Track Revival Project, it was announced in February. The project aims to relocate, restore and reinterpret the Museum's Grade 2-listed Wellington Hangar as The Brooklands Aircraft Factory, with a new annexe to house more of the Museum's outstanding collection of historic aircraft, and restore the section of original race track on which the Hangar currently stands. Included in the project, which aims to inspire current and future generations to embrace science, technology and engineering, will be enhanced learning opportunities, a training scheme in historic aircraft restoration and a raft of new activities on the Race Track. The initial funding allocated by the HLF for this project is £286,500, to which the Museum will add further cash and volunteer input to allow development work to a total value of almost £410,000 to be undertaken, helping Brooklands Museum progress its plans to apply for the remainder of the full grant in 2015. Under the HLF-funded project, the Hangar will be completely restored on a new site adjacent to its current one, allowing the Finishing Straight of the Race Track to be brought back into use for both motoring and aviation activities. The Hangar itself will be presented as an aircraft factory, its displays showing how aircraft from the earliest pioneers to Concorde were designed, built and developed at Brooklands over an 80-year period. The "Factory" will be an interactive learning centre, in which visitors will be able to immerse themselves in the atmosphere of an aircraft manufacturing plant and try for themselves many of the crafts and skills used by thousands of workers in Brooklands' manufacturing heyday. In a new adjoining "Flight Shed", the Museum's active aircraft will be kept ready to roll out onto the refurbished Race Track for static and taxiing demonstrations, while in new workshops underneath that building Museum volunteers will learn and practice aircraft restoration skills.

LEADING EDGE *events in 2013*

Leading Edge Panel Members have been busy planning a range of events for the next few months and remainder of the year. Forthcoming events include a trip to the Airbus assembly plant in Toulouse, a trip to British Airways Maintenance at Cardiff Airport, a visit to Hunter Aviation at RAF St. Athan, a visit to RAF Brize Norton and we're investigating the possibility of a visit to RAF Mt Pleasant on the Falklands! Our usual highlight – the Flying Day – will take place on 4th May and this year the event will be open to Guild Young Members, Aerobility, BGA and the Air Cadets, bringing together friends from the Youth in Aviation Parliamentary Reception which takes place on 17th April. Stay tuned by checking the website and by liking us on Facebook and following us on Twitter!

CODY STATUE PROJECT



The Cody Statue project took a major step forward on Wednesday 6 February when Trustees of the Farnborough Air Sciences Trust (FAST) visited the Andover studio of renowned sculptor Vivien Mallock to view the maquette and gave the go-ahead for the full size sculpture. Work is now underway on the 7ft high statue of Samuel Franklin Cody, the first successful aviator to make a sustained, controlled, powered flight in the UK. Fundraising continues and one method, the purchase of Paver Bricks engraved to commemorate a name, is proving popular with those who have an association with Farnborough. They will be incorporated in the statue site on Farnborough Road in front of the FAST Museum. Donations are being received from individuals from all over the world and companies large and small. The Trust is continuing to seek both corporate and private sponsors and amongst those already committed are QinetiQ and AgustaWestland. A fund-raising dinner and special museum event at Farnborough is planned for Wednesday 1 May and tickets will be on sale shortly. This will feature the world famous former RAE and Royal Navy Test Pilot Captain Eric "Winkle" Brown. The unveiling of the statue is planned to take place on Wednesday 7 August 2013, which marks the centenary of Cody's death in a flying accident at Farnborough. Further information on the Cody Statue project can be found on www.codystatue.org.uk or www.airsciences.org.uk

MEMBERS' NEWS

GOING ELECTRONIC

Rising production and postage costs have made it prohibitive to send the Air League Newsletter in printed form to all our members by mail. As soon as is practicably possible, we will therefore cease to despatch hard copies and members will receive their Newsletters electronically. For those who do not have email, the Newsletter will be available on The Air League website. We apologise for any inconvenience this may cause but this change will save The Air League around £10,000 and will allow more content flexibility as well as the inclusion of topical items right up to the distribution deadline. If we don't have your email address, please send it to: emma.mistry@airleague.co.uk

Wing Commander Jim Beldon

Since I met the Newsletter editor (wearing his Air League tie) at the Avalon airshow in Australia in 2007, where I led a detachment of personal and our E-3D, I have commanded the Nimrod R1 Detachment in connection with Operation HERRICK and completed the Advanced Command and Staff Course at Shrivenham. Last year I completed



a Master of Philosophy degree in International Relations at the University of Cambridge before being selected to command No 8 Sqn at RAF Waddington, an appointment I assumed last October. I was awarded the Commander Sam Macdonald-Hall Flying Scholarship by the Air League in 1993, enabling me to complete my PPL which I had begun under the auspices of the RAF's Flying Scholarship Scheme the previous year. The role of the Air League in helping establish my career as a professional aviator was profound, and I remain extremely grateful for the chance the Air League gave me. I remain utterly inspired by the similar help it continues to give to young men and women today, whose stories of success are tremendously uplifting.

Chris Hindle: I wanted to let members know that I have been offered a place in the Royal Navy as a pilot. Needless to say I snapped up the opportunity to start my Officer Training at BRNC Dartmouth. I would like to say a huge thank you to

the Air League Trust and everyone I have had the privilege of meeting for all of your help and guidance since I began chasing the flying dream at the age of 14. Joining the military was my number one career aspiration but after the defence cuts of late and pilots being made redundant, I was coming to terms with the fact that I was probably at the wrong place at the wrong time. In my attempts to join I sat the gruelling flying aptitude tests three times in three years, failed one visit to the RAF's OASC and passed two visits to the RN's AIB selections. During my training I have been awarded three flying bursaries, each of which was a big help towards my professional licence. Having only just been awarded my ATPL, getting a call from the military was unlikely and unexpected but very welcome nonetheless. This has just proved to me that if you work hard, don't give up and most of all be patient good things will happen eventually. The Air League has been instrumental in keeping up my morale and offering encouragement. I would say without it and the generous support from my sponsors this dream would have been twice as difficult to achieve.

Jessie Leong, Breitling Hot Air Balloon Private Pilot's Licence Scholarship 2012:

Having held an interest in aviation from attending Air Training Corps for six years, it was refreshing and exciting to be offered a unique experience which gave a new meaning to flight. I was very lucky to have the personal tutoring of Brian Jones OBE for my Private Pilot's Licence. This could not have been possible without the generous funding by Breitling which allowed me to undertake my studies abroad in Switzerland. The course was an intensive twelve days, which covered some beautiful and challenging terrain. It also involved taking five examinations towards my Private Pilot's Licence.

I would like to thank Brian and his wife Jo for "showing me the ropes" and making sure I was studying hard. Also, many thanks to Eugen and Clarissa at Nussbaumer Balloons in Switzerland for helping facilitate a well-organized course that allowed me to progress far into the flying program. I am looking forward to completing a few more hours in flying time, in order to prepare for my practical flight check and continue to further my interests in hot air ballooning.

New Members

Full Members: Luke Dale, Allen Foster, Finlay Hunter, Gary Hutchinson, Brain Kyles, Gordon Macphie, Andrew Munro, Anita Neale, Michelle Nuttall, Mark Rogers, Faye Rolfe, Karen Simpson

Student Members: Ovais Ahmed, Sajid Ali, Brigette Atkins, Andrew Bankole, Jonathan Barlow, Nicholas Bass, Joe Bayley, Thomas Boulton, Christopher Bransbury, Eilidh Bryers, Robyn Buisson, Alexander Cescon, Martin Cockle, Tommaso Cruciani, Benjamin Dowler, Michael Edgley, Matthew Edwards, Stephen Evans, Daniel Fickling, Ryan Formby, William Foster, Luke Gaffney, William Gastrell, Jordon Giles, Gideon Goldsmith Lister, Ben Grimau, Ben Gundry, Peter Harb, William Hardy, Jack Hargreaves, Ashleigh Harvey, Regan Hawthorn, Finlay Hunter, Daniel Irvine, Gregor Jamieson, Nathan Jamison, Claire Jenkins, Peter Login, James Longman, Duncan Macleod, David MacQuarrie, Thomas Mahoney, Phoebe Marks, Edward Martin, Harris Maudsley, Robbie McLellan, Daniel Meadows, Christopher Morris, Pascal Munster, Nicholas Murray, Toby Nash, Michael Osborne, Ahmed Pandor, Elliott Parsons, Daniel Pendlebury, Benjamin Pilgrim, Oliver Pinchin, James Pottage, Nicola Powis, Cameron Prendergast, Bradley Ramsey, Callum Roberts, Joseph Robson, Lucy Rosa, Haydn Rowlands, Edward Sanderson, Joshua Scriven, Russell Sheriff, Thomas Southwell, Lauren Stammers, Tristan Taylor, Lewis Valori, David Voller, Oscar Waldron, Jovan Watty, James Weaver, Oliver Webb, Kirsty Wells, Tobias Williams, Alex Wood

Diary Reminders

- 5 March: British Airways SIM visit
- 17 April: Youth in Aviation, House of Lords
- 28 April: Air League Leading Edge presenting at Brooklands Museum open day
- 4 May: Bicester Flying Day
- 14 May: Annual Reception, St James Palace, London
- 13 June: AGM, RAF Club, London

For up-to-date information on all our activities please visit our website at www.airleague.co.uk where you can register for changes to be sent to you by email as they are announced.



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