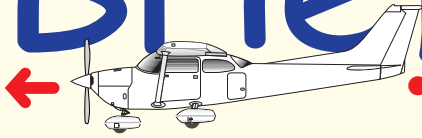


# Briefings



scheduled services – to the Channel Islands at weekends, to France in the summer – but it has excellent facilities for general aviation. Three runways, one of them a whacking great concrete thing, the other two grass, ILS on 23, a radar service to put you onto it, Marshall's works canteen to eat in (during the week). They do fuel, they have helicopters, and it's one of the few places where you can learn to fly on a Tiger Moth. But at the airport they're conscious of the fact that they have the delights of Cambridge town on their doorstep, and by arranging some restaurant discounts and cheaper car hire they seek to make themselves more attractive. They're also working on getting cheap bicycle hire, which would be good. Student pilots flying in will have the opportunity to nominate their flying school for free landings each month.

Will it work? No reason why not. Luke says: "Overall, the scheme is very much a 'work in progress' as we navigate our way through these early start-up days. We are very excited to see things gathering momentum as more and more people join up. Much of what the CAFC does and what it looks like will ultimately be influenced by what its members want. So, early membership offers an exciting opportunity for all users of the airport to have a real say in how the community scheme develops."

I suspect one of the main attractions for GA pilots will be the fact that here is an airport that demonstrably wants your business and won't treat you like something that got stuck to their shoe. Details on [www.flyingcambridge.com](http://www.flyingcambridge.com) ■

## The Cambridge Club

Ross Younger



Cambridge Airport has started a new experiment in encouraging general aviation to visit – a free-to-join club which entitles you to discounts on landing fees and services on the airfield and beyond. Membership of the Cambridge Airport Flying Community (CAFC) is open to all pilots – including student pilots – and licensed engineers and cuts landing fees by 25 percent through the week, 50 percent at weekends. There are also discounts on car hire and even on meals at restaurants in Cambridge itself. The idea is to make Cambridge a multi-faceted destination for GA, showcasing everything on the airfield as well as the attractions of the town to drive new traffic.

The initiative is the brainchild of airport director Archie Garden and the Head of General Aviation and CFI of Cambridge Aero Club, Luke Hall. Luke, who last year won AOPA's 'Instructor of the Year' award, says: "Our belief is that by presenting the full range of activities and services through a central focal point, we are better articulating what we have to offer, and therefore hope to attract more GA visitors. In doing so, we hope to build the kind of vibrant community that GA so badly needs, particularly at larger airports and aerodromes."

Or to put it another way, when you're deciding where to fly to, they want to give you a reason to choose Cambridge. Perhaps this could be the start of something – the idea of having airfields fight it out for your custom is pretty exciting.

The idea of encouraging more GA at Cambridge has its genesis in a reappraisal of the business case for the airport, which

up to now has been treated as an overhead by the owners, Marshall, for their engineering business. Aircraft up to the A320 and 757 come from all over the world for deep maintenance and modification at Marshall, and they need somewhere to land. But these being recessionary times, it's been decided that the airport should be a business in its own right. Cambridge has a couple of sporadic

## Beech fly-in

Hawker Beechcraft's held a piston fly-in day at Hawarden to mark the company's 80th anniversary. The event, the first of its kind hosted in the UK by Hawker

Beechcraft, brought together aircraft owners from across Europe, allowing them to meet and share experiences and discuss the market.

The company's servicing facility at Hawarden is the manufacturer's biggest facility outside of the USA. It recently recruited nine apprentices following the successful completion of their engineering apprenticeship programmes which had combined academic training through Deeside College with on-the-job vocational experience at the Hawarden. All nine qualified in their respective areas and have been offered full-time positions at Hawker Beechcraft, with five becoming airframe technicians, two quality engineers, one a design engineer and one an interiors technician. Since launching its apprenticeship programme in 2003, Hawker Beechcraft has employed 21 full-time apprentices. Two thirds of all Hawker Beechcraft aircraft made are still said to be in operation today.

Photo shows a line-up of Hawker Beechcraft aircraft at the Hawarden fly-in



# GA pays for business



A study by Oxford Economics, the leading economic forecasting consultancy which produces macroeconomic and industry forecasts, analysis and data on 190 countries worldwide, shown that general aviation is playing a vital role in connecting the UK with emerging and developing countries, many of which remain poorly served by scheduled carriers.

The research found that 49,000 business aviation flights were taken between Europe and developing countries in 2011, a 32 per cent increase over 2006, while business aviation flights between Europe and developing countries in Asia have more than doubled over the same period. 69 per cent of executives

questioned in a 2011 survey reported that they used business aviation because it provided connections to destinations not served by scheduled carriers.

Business aviation also provides vital links between European destinations, according to the report. In 2011, business aviation connected 88,800 city pairs, 96 per cent of which were not served by a scheduled daily service.

Further, Oxford Economics calculated that each passenger on a business aviation flight generates the same GDP contribution as nine business-class passengers on a scheduled flight.

The study also considered the economic impact of business aviation airports and the employment they provide. It found that

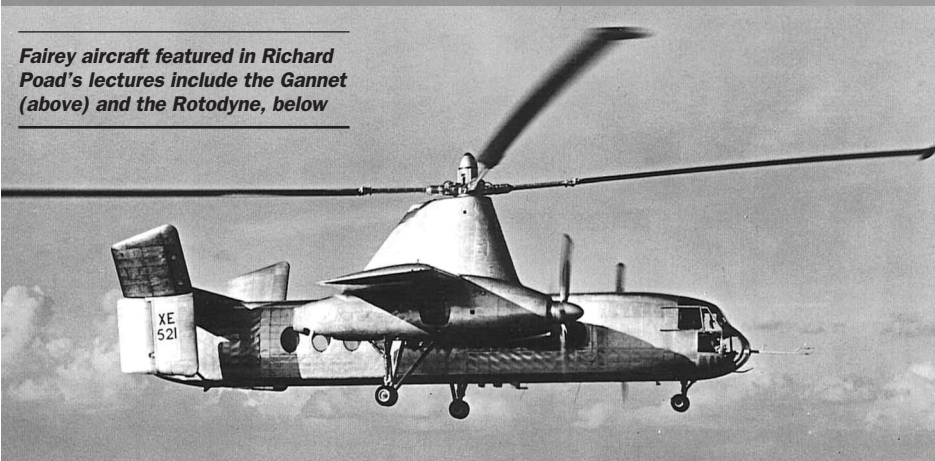
the sector invests more in training its workers than firms in other similar sectors, or in the economy as a whole: business aviation firms typically invest upwards of £2,800 worth of training per year in each employee, while firms in the UK financial sector invest just £800 per employee per year.

Andrew Walters, chairman of Biggin Hill Airport, said: "This study shows clearly how crucial business aviation is to the UK and to our economic recovery. Business aviation is stepping up to provide a vital link between UK businesses and emerging markets. At a time of uncertainty in the eurozone, business aviation is helping to facilitate the conversations which will bring back growth." ■

## Aviation history at White Waltham



Fairey aircraft featured in Richard Poad's lectures include the Gannet (above) and the Rotodyne, below



Maidenhead Heritage Centre is running a series of weekly lectures at White Waltham this winter covering local aviation history from the 19th century to the present day. Using archive photographs, newsreel and films Richard Poad, the Heritage Centre's Chairman, will trace over 100 years of local aviation history starting around 1900 in the pioneering days of G. O. L. Davidson, Johnny Benton and Donald Stevenson, who opened the first local aerodrome at Bray in 1929. From the second week, he will follow the development of White Waltham from 1935 up to the present, covering Fairey Aviation and the Gannet, Gyrodyne, Rotodyne and Ultra Light, Fairey Air Surveys, ML Aviation and other companies, and of course the Air Transport Auxiliary which was headquartered there. The six evening lectures will be followed in the seventh week by a daytime visit to West London Aero Club to see aircraft in the hangars. The first in the series is on Tuesday January 15th – for information and bookings call 01628 780555 or email [info@maidenheadheritage.org.uk](mailto:info@maidenheadheritage.org.uk)

# Half a century of the VC10

By *Nick Wilcock* –  
20 years on the  
VC10, 5,000 hrs,  
of which 4,000  
were as Captain  
and 2,500 as  
instructor and  
examiner



On August 28th, No.101 Squadron, the RAF's premier air-to-air refuelling and air transport squadron, flew a three-ship formation of VC10 aircraft to commemorate the 50th anniversary year of the Vickers VC10, which first flew on 29th June 1962 when Jock Bryce flew G-ARTA from Brooklands to Wisley. 2012 is also the 95th anniversary of the squadron, which first formed on the FE2b at Farnborough in 1917 and which has operated the VC10K tanker since its reformation in May 1984.

Originally it had been planned to fly one aircraft of each version currently operated by the squadron in the formation; however on the day ZD241, the last surviving VC10K4 was unavailable, so the honour fell to ex-10 Sqn VC10CIK tanker-transporters XR108 and XR808 plus ZA147, a VC10K3 three-point tanker which has been in service with 101 since September 1985. XR808, affectionately known as 'Bob', flew 10 Sqn's first scheduled flight to Hong Kong in April 1967 and is now the longest serving RAF VC10.

These stunning photographs were taken from a Hawk chase aircraft during the mission, which was a normal air-to-air refuelling sortie supporting operational training for Tornado GR4 aircraft over the North Sea. In addition to their role as tankers, all VC10 variants are also capable of receiving fuel in flight, but only the VC10K has a centreline hose. So, after dealing with the Tornados, the opportunity was also available for some VC10/VC10K 'jousting' – known to all of those who've

ever tried it as the sport of kings! Surprisingly, it isn't actually that difficult, once the pilot has become accustomed to the intimidating presence of the 146-foot wingspan and four large Rolls-Royce Conways of the tanker a few yards ahead. It's simply a question of moving into line astern, then stabilising behind the drogue in the pre-contact position and trimming, before adding a little more thrust to approach the drogue at a fast walking pace when cleared. Once in contact, as fuel is transferred a little more thrust and trim is needed, but the tanker's hose acts like a giant yaw damper and helps to contain lateral movement. Control loads are quite high though, which can lead to overcontrolling before the pilot learns to relax and allow the aircraft to do most of the work, with just the odd nudge needed to maintain the formation references.

After completion of the AAR part of their sortie, the 3-ship visited the RAF



aerodromes at Lossiemouth, Leuchars, Waddington, Cranwell, Coningsby and Marham, also overflying Boulmer and Linton-on-Ouse before returning to Brize Norton, concluding with a visual run in and break to land from an impressively tight close echelon formation.

"Since 1984 the VC10 has proved itself as one of the best tankers around," said Wg Cdr Kevin Brookes, OC 101 Sqn. But that isn't simply a justifiably proud boast, it echoes comments made by many of the squadron's 'customers', including the highly demanding fast-jet crews of the US Navy, whose enthusiastic praise for the squadron's support during Gulf War One is a proud part of 101's recent history, which includes 22 years of continuous operations in the Middle East since 1990. Although AAR operations in support of the Afghanistan campaign were recently handed over to the TriStars of No. 216 Sqn, 101 continues to hold Quick Reaction Alert air defence duties in both the UK and the South Atlantic.

But all good things must eventually come to an end and the drawdown of the RAF's classic VC10 fleet has been under way for a while now. However, delays to the introduction of the Airbus A330 MRTT Voyager, the RAF's new tanker-transport, could perhaps see these fine old aircraft continuing for a few months longer than anticipated. "Don't be in too much of a hurry to book a place for the VC10 disbandment dinner", is the (as yet unofficial) word on the streets of British West Oxfordshire, "the 'roar of the four' may well be heard awhile longer!" ■