

BOOK Reviews

ENGLISH ELECTRIC CANBERRA

by Bruce Barrymore Halpenny
ISBN: 1 84415 242 1 Price £25

General aviation it is not, but the historical record of the Canberra must be of interest to all who care about significant aeroplanes. Flying for the first time in 1949, entering RAF squadron service in 1951 and still flying today 54 years later, it has remained operational for longer than any front-line type in the history of the RAF. This is an appropriate time to examine the Canberra's past, for the final four, serving on photo-reconnaissance duties with No. 39 squadron (currently busily engaged in mapping of Afghanistan) are due to retire at the end of 2006.

Unknown to many, the Canberra went through some difficult phases in its introduction to service, when several mainly armament-related problems led to a number of fatal accidents. However, once solved, the type lived to earn an almost unrivalled reputation in at least nine separate service roles. Its success was such that it was built under licence in the USA as the Martin B-57, while the home-built versions were exported to fifteen countries. In some cases the Canberra replaced heavy bombers such as the Avro Lincoln, while in other tasks it became the logical successor to the de Havilland Mosquito – a true Jack of many trades and master of them all.

The book contains numerous technical and historical details, including a thorough explanation of the Rolls-Royce Avon turbojet, which was used and developed throughout the Canberra's working life, progressing from 6,500lbs thrust to 11,250lbs in the remaining high-altitude Canberra PR9s. Also there are explanations of the many conversions, mainly from bomber B2s to target tugs and specialist trainers for the RAF and the Royal Navy.

Although production started at Warton (still BAe Systems' main flight test centre), many Canberras were built at Belfast by Short Brothers, where subsequent modifications were carried out. These included the U10, an unmanned target aircraft that was flown under automatic control at heights of more than 50,000 feet. Work was conducted also by

Marshalls of Cambridge, mainly in the design and trial installations of radio/radar fits and supporting technical publications.

All this – and much more – together with a wide coverage of interesting photographs, is to be found in this 216-page volume. I am not a jet lover, but the Canberra is one turbine-powered aeroplane that attracts my attention and I found difficulty in putting aside this intriguing package. I intend to acquire the review copy for my own home-based collection. Need I say more? – *David Ogilvy*

AIRPORT MARKETING

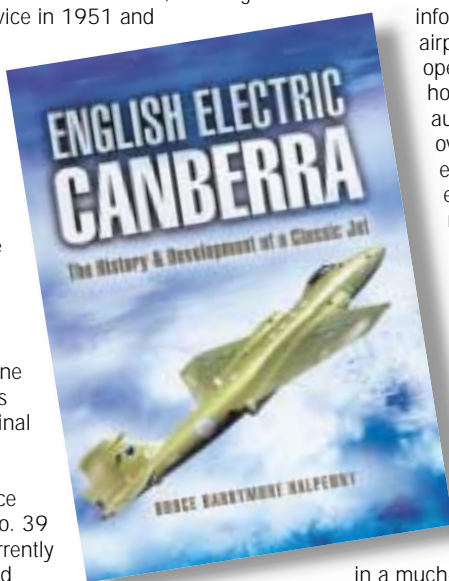
By David Jarach
Ashgate Publishing ISBN 10 7546 4085 X
160 pages hardback £45

In this rather overpriced publication there is an extensive package

of valuable information for airport operators; however, the author has overlooked even the

existence of general aviation, which may not be the biggest profit earner but which in the pilot training role is the seed-corn for the entire aviation industry. Already many regional airports are discouraging GA and its total absence from the text could do more damage both to GA itself and to the future of commercial air transport. This is a most unfortunate omission from a book that, otherwise, has been carefully researched, with some useful statistics and guidelines for those planning ahead in a much-changed airport environment. – *David Ogilvy*

'The author has overlooked even the existence of general aviation'



Aviation Photography

By T. Malcolm English
Published by Photographers' Institute
Press/GMC Publications Ltd.
ISBN 1 86108 344 0
175 pages, copiously illustrated

Written by T. Malcolm English, editor of AIR International and a chap with 45 years of photography experience, Aviation Photography is clearly laid out and easy to read. Starting with the basics of describing various types of photographic equipment and film, there is a brief section on digital cameras before it moves on to technique – exposure, composition and so on.

Fully two thirds of the book have gone before we really get to the 'aviation' section. Sadly this part, while mostly soundly written with

some excellent content, suffers somewhat from occasionally questionable advice as well as missing many opportunities to educate the reader further. Reproduction of photos throughout the book is generally excellent. However, a few of the choices confuse, exhibiting as they do some of the characteristics the author warns people against such as tilted horizons, overexposure, unbalanced compositions and 'frozen' propellers. A few photos are also printed more than once, indicating perhaps a hurry to compile the selection used.

The book also stumbles slightly when talking about getting photos published. The author's own preferences as an editor colour his advice and recommendations too much and the reader should be wary of believing this section blindly. For instance he states that most publishers prefer to receive shots on slide

film, but the immediacy of digital photography will put a slide shooter at a serious disadvantage – deadlines do not wait for processing. Statements like these also indicate that this is a 13-year-old book slightly revamped for today's market. The list of

magazines in the 'useful contacts' section is predictably limited to those in the same publishing house as the author – as they say, 'Other aviation magazines are available!'

While no doubt a fine present for a teenager interested in capturing aircraft on film or flash card, there are more detailed and more helpful publications on basic photography and the opportunity to concentrate more heavily on the actual aviation side of things has been largely missed. – *Damien Burke*

Beyond the PPL – Putting the fun and skill into flying

By Nigel Everett
Published by Airplan Flight Equipment Ltd (AFE) at £15.95. ISBN 1 874783 29 2.
Softback, 168 pages, illustrated with black and white photographs and diagrams.

This book does exactly what it says on the front cover, or rather that is the intention. Every newly qualified PPL is faced with the same problem: 'Now I've got my licence, what shall I do with it?' Without the cosy oversight of the instructors at the flying club, the freedom to exercise the privileges of the

licence appears so unconstrained that the prospect actually seems quite daunting. The author is extremely sensitive to the general problem, and he identifies the various areas of difficulty, or where experience can usefully be gained, by dealing with each topic in separate chapters. This new and updated edition underlines just how valuable it can be for a newly qualified pilot to go out and gain experience in a widely varying and yet constructive way, rather than spend more hard-earned dosh on immediately adding ratings to the licence, useful though these can be later in one's flying life.

The book is highly readable, and the natural



wit and humour of the author permeates throughout in pleasing fashion. I was reminded of my own personal bugbear in the chapter 'Coping with the fat controller' where the author says:

"Talking to any strange controller tends to set this [low-hour] pilot's pulse racing in anticipation of being made to look foolish in front of everyone else listening out on the frequency," when, having originally learnt to fly non-radio, many years later I had to overcome a mental block of communicating by radio. The author somehow manages sympathetically to guide the reader through the problem, if indeed it is one, and this is typical of every area that he deals with.

It is a pity the photographs are not of higher quality, and the print a little larger, but this is a book that every fresh PPL or NPPL should acquire within a few flying hours of gaining his or her licence, there is so much that is of value within. More experienced pilots may also gain something from it too, especially when complacency has been allowed to set in unawares and dull the senses. – *George Done*



Each volume, including this one, which covers Northern England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, contains an introductory section on the evolution of the British aircraft industry. It shows the relentless progress of integration from the multitude of large and small companies that existed in the early 1900s through to the present day in which BAe Systems represents the only large scale fixed wing aircraft designer and manufacturer in the UK, contributing as it does to projects that are truly European.

The content of the main part of the book is arranged in order of location of the activity, regardless of the year of operation. As one who left school to go into the aircraft industry as an apprentice, and a Londoner, it was easy to gain the impression back in the 1950s that everything aeronautical of any importance happened in the south-east. This book amply shows otherwise. The amount of design and manufacturing activity that went on in the wider Manchester area, and not solely due to Avro either, was impressive, and the contribution of aircraft factories in Lancashire was equally significant. It is not surprising that the bulk of the UK military and commercial airframe business remains firmly entrenched in this general region, which reasonably includes the Broughton Airbus wing

manufactory at the north-east tip of Wales. There were other large centres of manufacture such as Belfast, Brough and Prestwick but these were relatively

concentrated. The volume reminds us that Leeds-Bradford Airport (ex-Yeadon) and Blackpool were also places where aircraft were constructed; the former housed the largest of all the A.V. Roe & Co factories, and the latter was producing Hunters until 1957.

Just as much as the main substance, the tit-bits equally contribute to the reader's delight. I enjoyed discovering, for instance, that a Professor of Electrical Engineering in the University of Wales, one William Ellis Williams, designed, built and flew a JAP-powered aeroplane on the beach at Red Wharf Bay on Anglesey in 1911, and that there is a monument to the learned Professor in the adjacent car park inscribed in Welsh, recording his efforts. As Ron Smith himself says "...here at least, a piece of national aviation heritage is preserved for future generations." Wonderful!

For anyone the slightest bit interested in aviation history in the UK, this volume, and indeed the whole set, is an essential item on the bookshelf. – *George Done*

SHADOWS OF THE FIFTIES

compiled & edited by Peter Campbell
ISBN 1 902807 21 9. Cirrus Associates.
252 pages paperback £13.95

Subtitled 'another anthology of true aviation stories', this interesting production contains a wide range of experiences recorded by no fewer than 21 people. The general theme follows the pattern of Peter Campbell's three earlier 50's-era reminiscences, with a generally enthusiastic rather than commercial approach to aviation.

Readers who have been flying for a number of years may be able to relate to some of the writers, to the aeroplanes and to the activities in which they were involved. As one who falls into that category, I was entertained by many of the tales and I recommend the book to others whose minds may work on similar lines. Christmas may be a good time to read this not-too-serious selection of anecdotes. – *David Ogilvy* ■



British Built Aircraft – Volume 5, Northern England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland

By Ron Smith

Published by Tempus Publishing Ltd at £19.99. ISBN 0 7524 3487 X. Softback, 256 pages, amply illustrated with black-and-white photographs and reproductions.

This is the fifth and final volume of a set written by Ron Smith that contains detailed and valuable records of the aircraft manufacturing and supporting industry within the whole of the UK.



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