

**William S Bowker MRAeS****1932-2012**

**B**ill Bowker died at his home on 25 April, aged 79. Well known in general aviation circles, he had a life that relied largely on his own drive, determination and often very long hours of work.

Following graduation from the well-respected de Havilland Aeronautical Technical School and four years service as a pilot in the Royal Navy – in which he flew Seahawks – Bill went into business under the name Bowker Air Services. He specialised in crop spraying, initially with modified Tiger Moths and later with other types including the Grumman Agcat and the Piper Pawnee; he operated throughout daylight hours over a substantial swathe of southern England. His base was his own private airstrip at Rush Green, near Hitchin.

When aerial application moved into decline, in 1988 Bill became a Flight Standards Officer in the Civil Aviation Authority, but throughout six years in that capacity he retained his airstrip and devoted much time to its welfare. With no further need to accommodate Bill's own fleet, the hangar became available for other fortunate aircraft owners, with several interesting machines based at the attractive rural site.

Bill had a considerable spread of interests and abilities; he was a very experienced light aircraft pilot and a practical engineer. From 1994-98 he was secretary of the General Aviation Awareness Council, in the days when it was administered from the AOPA offices. He was selected to fly and display historic aeroplanes of the Shuttleworth Collection at Old Warden and he indulged in elderly vehicle restoration; in the loft of his home he created an elaborate model railway system. He had a caring side and many times he took a disabled man to watch cricket matches at Lord's.

Bill leaves his wife, Wendy, and a close family, who joined forces to look after his needs during his later days; we send our condolences to them all. He was a good man and he will be missed by many people. – *David Ogilvy*

**Jock Maitland MBE****1925-2012**

**S**quadron Leader John Ramsay Maitland, known to family, friends and colleagues as Jock, has died at the age of 87.

Jock, the only British pilot to have shot down two MiGs, was the man behind the Biggin Hill Air Fair and spent a lifetime in aviation. He joined the RAF in 1942, and during a 15-year military career flew F-86 Sabres in action during the Korean War while on an exchange posting with the USAF. He flew 77 combat missions, shot down two MiG-15s and was awarded the American equivalent of the Distinguished Flying Cross for skill and bravery in the air. Later he commanded 249 Squadron RAF and saw action in several theatres of war in the Middle East in the 1950s, including the Suez campaign, flying DH Vampire and Venom jet fighters.

In 1959, soon after leaving the RAF, he took over the management of Biggin Hill as a civilian airport, co-ordinating the transfer of the very substantial non-airline interests from Croydon Airport and ensuring a successful transition for a wide range of flying clubs and aviation users.

He introduced the first in the series of Biggin Hill International Air Fairs in 1963. In 2003 he was awarded the Jeffrey Quill Medal by the Air League in recognition of his lifetime's work promoting air-mindedness in young people, one of his key objectives in promoting the Air Fair. He also sustained the RAF's 'Battle of



Britain Air Days' at the airfield for many years.

In 2007 Jock was recognised in the Queen's Birthday Honours with an MBE for services to aviation. He was delighted and honoured to receive the MBE. "The inspirational effect on young people of seeing aircraft of all types flown well, often to their limits, will continue to encourage aviation careers and air-mindedness," he said. "I am thrilled that the effect of this in the past has been recognised in this award."

Describing the dogfights which led to his unique feat of shooting down two MiG-15s Jock said: "You could always tell when you were up against a Russian because their flying skills were an order of magnitude better than those of the North Koreans. The MiGs had the edge on our Sabres because they could fly higher, and often we were reduced to raising the nose and taking the odd pot shot. The first one I got, I think he must have been a Korean because I got on his tail and he took no avoiding action. He didn't show any indication of being aware I was there. The second one came down vertically in front of me. I pushed the button as an instinctive reaction, and was rather surprised to have hit him."

**Rex Smith OBE FRAeS****1922-2012**

**A**fter a fairly lengthy illness, Rex Smith died peacefully on 14th April – in his 90th year. In his younger days, he was probably the most active person in the entire world of general aviation. With participation in almost every relevant organisation, he was able to have a balanced overview of the total scene and he realised the need for GA to maintain a range of individual identities; I can think of only two major bodies in which he was not involved.

Rex had not spent his entire life in aviation; following six years flying in the wartime RAF, from 1946 until 1956 he was a farmer. After that, though, he devoted his whole life to the cause, starting modestly as CFI of Oxford Aeroplane Club, but soon becoming Principal of the fast-expanding and world-renowned Oxford Air Training School, operated by CSE Aviation, of which he was a Director for 25 years.

I will not list all his other connections, but among those to which he contributed solid inputs were the then General Aviation Manufacturers and Traders Association, British Air Transport Association, Guild of Air Pilots and Air Navigators and the Business Aircraft Users' Association. He added to the much-needed balance through membership of various elements of the Civil Aviation Authority, including the Airworthiness Requirements Board and the Operations Advisory Committee, representing GA's interests on the Board of the CAA from 1987 to 1993. He remained involved in a consultancy capacity under the name Aviation Advice until a year or so before he died.

Rex had a full involvement with AOPA and, before that, with both the Association of British Aero Clubs and Centres (of which he was Chairman 1963-1966) and the Royal Aero Club on which he was a committee member. So, when the amalgamation of these two bodies took place, leading to the formation of the British Light Aviation Centre he was, I believe, the only person who had been actively involved on both sides. Therefore, when AOPA UK was formed in 1967 he was well equipped to become the first Chairman. After several years of very effective service, in 1974 he became a Vice-President.

Rex Smith was a strong and direct person who said precisely what he meant – and people listened. This has proved to be greatly beneficial to GA, often in situations in which its significance was neither appreciated nor understood. Despite his positive approach, Rex avoided self-promotion and this modesty is reflected in his insistence that there should be no memorial service. I was fortunate to work with him on several issues and always I have held him in high regard. Today's GA owes much to his past endeavours and achievements. – *David Ogilvy*