



ROYAL AIR FORCE OFFICERS' CLUB

Johannesburg

P.O. Box 69726

BRYANSTON 2021

info@rafoc.org

www.rafoc.org

President:	David MacKinnon-Little	
Vice Presidents:	Basil Hersov, Colin Francis, Geoff Quick, David Lake	
Chairman:	Bruce Harrison	bruce@jbharrison.co.za Tel: 011 673 0291 Cell: 083 325 0025
Vice Chairman:	Jon Adams	vice-chairman@rafoc.org Tel: 011 678 7702 Cell: 082 450 0616
Hon. Secretary:	Colin Ackroyd	Tel: 012 942 1111 Cell: 082 800 5845
Hon. Treasurer:	Jeff Earle	Tel: 011 616 3189 Cell: 083 652 1002
Committee Members:	Russell Swanborough	Tel: 011 884 2611 Cell: 083 263 2740
	Karl Jensen	Tel: 011 234 0598 Cell: 082 331 4652
	Jean-Michel Girard	Cell: 083 659 1067
	Geoff Fish	Tel: 012 667 2759 Cell: 083 660 9697
Bank Account:	Nedbank - Melrose Arch	Br: 19 66 05 Account 19 66 278 063

NEWSLETTER – MARCH 2019

MARCH LUNCH AND AGM:

On another glorious Highveld early Autumn day, 30 members gathered for lunch in the Gala Room. Proceedings opened with Grace said by Club President, David MacKinnon-Little. Silvasale provided a delectable meal for the occasion of a Capresi Salad starter followed by Chicken Schnitzel, Mushroom Sauce and Vegetable Medley, accompanied by Frisky Zebra Sauvignon Blanc and Zandvliet and Goudini Red Blends. Lunch over, the Members observed a Minute's Silence in memory of Member Terry Dempsey, tragically killed on a freak accident in February.

The Chairman welcomed all present to the 2018 AGM, noting that Notice of the AGM had been duly given, and that the 16 Ordinary members present constituted a quorum, declared the AGM open. Apologies were recorded from some 38 members and greetings and good wishes from many of those abroad or unable to be present. The Minutes of the 2017 AGM were approved. The Chairman then delivered his Report, and the Hon. Treasurer his Report and the Annual Financial Statements, both of which were duly proposed and seconded. These reports reflected that the year under review, 2018, the Centenary of the Royal Air Force and the 55th Anniversary of the Club, had been another in a succession of very good years for the Club. Membership numbers have been sustained, attendance at monthly lunches has continued at high levels, with 855 members and guests attending through the year. We have again enjoyed some excellent speakers, presentations and audiovisuals on aviation and other topics, while continuing to celebrate and enjoy the traditions, spirit and ethos of our parent organization, the Royal Air Force. The Club continues, happily, in good financial health. We have spent some of our accumulated funds on a quality sound system instruments, to improve member experience at our major functions.

Colin Francis had stepped down on health grounds and Colin Ackroyd had been co-opted to act as Hon Sec. He and Jeff Earle made themselves available, and there being no other nominations, were duly re-elected Hon. Secretary and Hon Treasurer respectively. All other existing Committee Members, being available, were re-elected unanimously "en bloc", with Bruce Harrison and Jon Adams re-elected Chairman and Vice-Chairman respectively by the incoming Committee.

A YEAR TO REMEMBER: RAF CLUB CENTENARY:

The Club was privileged to welcome their Royal Patron, Her Majesty The Queen to the Club on 17th October 2018 to celebrate the Club's Centenary year. During the visit, Her Majesty officially opened the new Centenary extension and unveiled a series of newly-commissioned artworks. Alongside the Club's President Sir David Walker and Club CEO and Secretary Miles Pooley, The Queen toured and formally opened the newly added wing, which houses a fitness suite and business centre, before she met long-serving RAF Club staff, and then unveiled a new stained-glass window in the Club, designed to commemorate women in the Royal Air Force. The

artwork, created by artist and designer, Helen Whittaker, highlights female roles in the RAF over its 100 years. Finally, The Queen moved into the newly renamed "Sovereigns' Room" and unveiled a portrait depicting Her Majesty earlier this year, painted by BP Portrait Award 2017 winner, Benjamin Sullivan. The portrait was commissioned to celebrate 100 years of the RAF Club. The RAF Club was founded on 30th October 1918, the first Lord Cowdray made a gift to provide a permanent building to house the Royal Air Force Club; and by the middle of 1919 the buildings, which make up the present Club, were acquired. The Piccadilly frontage was originally the Ladies' Lyceum Club and was built in the 1800s, whilst the rear half, facing Old Park Lane, was stables. Between 1919 and 1921 extensive reconstruction took place, largely financed by Lord Cowdray, and formally opened its doors when on 12th March 1922, the Club was visited by Their Majesties King George V and Queen Mary. The Queen has been Patron of the Club since 1952 and last visited in 2012. ("**128**" RAF Club Magazine Centenary Edition)

GENERAL SMUTS PORTRAIT:

There will shortly be another portrait on display in the RAF Club, that of a famous South African, the "Oubaas" General Smuts. Donated by the General Smuts Foundation, the portrait was delivered to Vice-Chairman Rick Peacock-Edwards by Captain "Dutch" Holland of BA (Formerly Sqn Ldr Holland RAF – see below) after a Joint-Service operation initiated by Cookie Cookson and Philip Weyers.

CONCORDE 50 !

Fifty years ago, at 3.38pm on 2 March 1969, the first page in the history of supersonic commercial aviation was written. As Concorde's four Olympus 593 turbines carried the aircraft into the distance the joy of the technicians, engineers, employees and onlookers witnessing the moment was plain to see. Six hundred journalists from around the world were at hand to report how 'old Europe' had met the challenge of melding speed and technology in service of passenger transport. "*She flies, she flies.*" Millions of television viewers in Britain heard commentator Raymond Baxter's excited shout. It was the culmination of years of political, technical and engineering collaboration between Britain and France. The cooperation programme had been signed by French ambassador Geoffroy de Courcel and British aviation minister Julian Amery on 29 November 1962. It confirmed the industrial agreement between Sud-Aviation and the British Aircraft Corporation outlined a month earlier. It took seven years to arrive at the first flight that March afternoon. Many innovations resulted, from electronic flight controls and the first cockpit sidestick to anti-skid braking systems and the movement of fuel around the aircraft in flight to adjust its centre of gravity. (Some of those were on the Vulcan first!) The experience the French and British gained during Concorde's development meant some pitfalls were avoided when Airbus was created – such as the politically-motivated dual assembly lines, one in each country. A further seven years were necessary before Concorde entered commercial service in 1976. In all, 16 production aircraft were built (plus the 4 prototypes) and they were operated by British Airways and Air France alone. The type's only crash, tragically, near Paris in 2000, together with the downturn of business flights after the events of 9/11 marked the end of Concorde operations 2003. (*Vulcan to the Sky, Special Edition*)

OBITUARY:

JOAN (MOXON) FANSHAWE, one of the last of the Battle of Britain WAAF plotters, who has died aged 98, was present when Churchill visited RAF Uxbridge on 15 September 1940. Joan was one of the 10 WAAFs who surrounded the plotting table in the underground operations room when the Luftwaffe raids began. The Air Officer Commanding No 11 Group, Air Vice-Marshal Keith Park, soon had 250 fighters in the air but they were still outnumbered two to one. Churchill asked Park what reserves were available and Park gave his now famous reply – "None" - that all his squadrons were airborne. Nevertheless, the day turned out to be a clear victory for the RAF and has since been commemorated as "Battle of Britain" Day. Joan remembered the day as special but noted in her diary that she was "rather annoyed" that Churchill's visit had extended

her shift by an hour! Joan spent the rest of the war serving on fighter stations, married a naval officer and then began a long life as a naval officer's wife in Italy, Bahrain and South Africa. She gave a reading at the Westminster Abbey Battle of Britain Day service in 2015 and was an honoured guest at the RAF's Centenary celebrations in 2018. To celebrate her 97th Birthday, she flew in an aerobatic aircraft from Goodwood. She made regular trips to New Zealand to visit her two daughters and it was there that she fell ill, while helping to bake a Christmas cake in December 2018.

RAF CASTLE ARCHDALE:

RAF Castle Archdale was located on the eastern shore of Lower Lough Erne, near the village of Lisnarrick. It was used during the Second World War by flying boats of No. 209 Squadron RAF. From Castle Archdale, Consolidated Catalinas and Short Sunderlands could patrol the North Atlantic for German U-boats. A secret agreement with the government of Ireland allowed aircraft to fly from Lough Erne to the Atlantic along the "Donegal Corridor" a 4-mile (6.4 km) stretch of neutral territory from Belleek in County Fermanagh to Ballyshannon in County Donegal and thereby gain access to the Atlantic Ocean. The flying time and distance saved enabled the aircraft to cover the mid-Atlantic area known as "the Black Gap" where the U-boats could create havoc unhindered. The Battle of the Atlantic was one campaign in the war that lasted from the first to the last day. The whole course of World War II depended on its outcome. By May 1945, the continual air and sea patrols including the routine patrols from Castle Archdale over those extra 100 miles, had paid off. The U-Boat threat was eliminated, and the sea lanes were once again safe. The cost of the battle in terms of human loss and equipment was great, and the exhibition at Castle Archdale is a lasting tribute to those airmen and seamen who gave their lives. RAF Castle Archdale is probably best remembered for the part it took in the sinking of the German Battleship Bismarck. In May 1941 the Bismarck left her base in Norway, destination the Atlantic. The Allies were well aware of the magnitude of the threat and a veritable armada was sent to intercept the German raider. Contact was made with the horrific destruction of HMS Hood. In the ensuing melee the Bismarck was damaged and diverted to Brest for repairs. The allied forces lost contact, until the signal came from Catalina Z of 209 squadron that she had sighted the battleship, enabling surface vessels to close in for the final battle.

DRONE EXCLUSION ZONE:

Britain will impose a 5-kilometer (3.1 mile) drone exclusion zone around its runways as the government responds to illegal incursions that closed London Gatwick airport for 36 hours in December, disrupting travel for more than 120,000 people. The measures, effective March 13, extend the current 1-kilometer no-fly zone for unmanned and model aircraft, the Department for Transport said in a statement Wednesday. Police will also gain new stop-and-search powers to help clamp down on violations. "The law is clear that flying a drone near an airport is a serious criminal act," Transport Secretary Chris Grayling said in the release. "We're now going even further and extending the no-fly zone to help keep our airports secure." Recklessly endangering an aircraft can mean a five-year prison term, rising to a potential life sentence for intentional acts of violence. The government is drawing up a Drones Bill to grant police additional powers, such as the right to access electronic data stored on a drone without the need for a search warrant. Operators of drones weighing more than 20 kilograms (44 pounds) must register as of Nov. 30 and take an online competency test. The Home Office, meanwhile, is reviewing its approach to countering the malicious use of drones to protect critical infrastructure, including testing technology to disrupt their operation.

SQUADRON LEADER ANDY HOLLAND RAF (RETD):

We made the happy acquaintance of “Dutch” Holland in delivering to him the portrait of General Smuts for the RAF Club in London and look forward to having him as our guest and speaker at future RAFOC functions when his rostering permits. He is now a British Airways Training Captain, responsible for the safety of 469 passengers each time he is at the controls of the giant double-decker long-haul Airbus A380. But when he is not doing this the 48-year-old father-of-four is teaching people how to fly drones. This is a role he and colleagues at Flyby Technology take very seriously. (<https://www.flybydronetraining.co.uk>) The company’s instructors have 600 years flying experience between them and are all former RAF or Royal Navy pilots and instructors or else highly qualified civilian flying instructors. Andy saw action flying Tornados with 1X (B) Squadron in the Second Gulf War in 2003; describing his role as ‘neutralising’ threats so our ground forces could move towards Baghdad.’ In short, that involved bombing and strafing missions and he went through the trauma of losing two of his flying colleagues during that conflict. Andy went on to become one of the RAF’s top instructors during his time in the service from 1990 to 2008. This involved teaching new pilots flying, weapons and tactics. He has taken this ethos into his instructing with Flyby, amazed that people would think to try to fly drones without any training. “You wouldn’t get into a car and start driving without any instruction or taking a test,” he says. “So why would you buy a drone and start flying it without doing the same?” I would argue the consequences could be catastrophic if a drone came into conflict with an aircraft cruising at speeds over 150mph. “The basic mistakes made by people who buy drones and have no flying experience are that they don’t fully understand the controls or the capabilities of their drones. They are small but very complicated pieces of kit. Untrained drone pilots also think they can fly their aircraft without being able to see it which is a big no-no. The golden rule is that you must always be able to see your drone.” <https://www.africanpilot.co.za/apanews/number-08-25-February-2019>

OIL!

South Africa’s long wait for a meaningful oil and gas discovery ended on Thursday 7 February, when an exploration consortium headed by French group Total announced a gas find of about a billion barrels of oil equivalent in the offshore Southern Outeniqua Basin which runs parallel to the Southern Cape coast. The find is enough to cover South Africa’s imported fuel requirements for the next four years. The strike is 175km offshore in the imaginatively named Brulpadda Prospect which is part of the Paddavissie Fairway – part of an 18,000 square kilometer block which Total has been prospecting for some years. Exploration stalled in 2014 due to difficulties experienced in the harsh deepwater environment. It was only restarted in December by drawing on experience gained in similar environments elsewhere. There is hope for still more discoveries as four additional prospects have been identified within the Paddavissie Fairway, all exhibiting the same kind of geological results from 2D seismic and electromagnetic surveys. For context, a similarly sized discovery in the Mexican Gulf last month by BP made international headlines. – Alec Hogg, BizNews

THE END OF THE LINE (UNION CASTLE):

This 98-minute video covers the history of the Union Castle Line from the 1850s to 1977 when the departure of the Windsor Castle from Table Bay closed this chapter of maritime history. Commentary is provided by Laurens van der Post, interspersed with interviews with George Young (Cape Times Shipping Correspondent) Sir Nicholas Cayzer (last Director of Cayzer Irvine), and numerous ships’ Captains and Pursers. The film is a must see for those who travelled by sea in those times. We hope to screen it this year.

NEXT FUNCTION: RAFOC ANNUAL DINNER: LADIES DINING-IN NIGHT:

This will be on the first **Friday 5 April 2019, 19h30 for 20h00**

This will be a Ladies Dining-In Night, as last year, again at Wanderers Club. Please plan to be there – and book - to celebrate RAFOC’s 56th Anniversary.

Cost: R250 pp. We ask you to pay by EFT as this ensures that we account correctly before the function. Please use your "Name + Annual Dinner" as the "reference" to our account - NEDBANK Melrose Arch, Branch 19 66 05 Account 19 66 278 063

All bookings please to bookings@rafoc.org or if you do not have access to e-mail:

Colin Ackroyd Tel: 012 942 1111 Cell: 082 800 5845

colin@ackroyd.co.za

Jon Adams Tel: 011 678 7702 Cell: 082 45 00 616

vice-chairman@rafoc.org

Look forward to seeing you there!

Bruce.