



# The Air League Newsletter

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## RAF F-35B TEST FLYING BEGINS



*ABOVE - BK1 is the first British F-35B Lightning II aircraft to be flown on operational testing duties at Edwards Air Force Base in the USA (MOD/RAF Crown Copyright photo)*

**O**n 9 February, No 17 (Reserve) Squadron, RAF, began operational testing and evaluation of the UK's first F-35B Lightning II combat aircraft at Edwards Air Force Base in California. The parade and flypast was a memorable occasion as it marked the squadron's centenary as well as being the first British flying unit to fly the new aircraft. It was also the first US basing for the test and evaluation squadron that enjoyed in its operational history many years of foreign service operating in Egypt, Burma, Japan and Germany.

The first F-35B, BK-1, will be operated under UK regulations and RAF and Royal Navy personnel include pilots and engineers who will fly and maintain the aircraft independently from their US colleagues, which is regarded as an important step towards the UK developing its own F-35 capability. UK personnel have been embedded in US flying units for some time as the lengthy training and trials programme has evolved, including playing an important test pilot role in flight trials for the STOVL F-35B model which the UK is buying for joint RAF/RN use. The establishment of the new unit at Edwards is a significant step towards building up stand-alone operating experience before more aircraft become available. The Commanding Officer of 17 (R) Squadron, Wing Commander James Beck, said, "For a pilot, it's a dream come true to fly from Edwards Air Force Base. It's where Chuck Yeager flew from and now we're the first nation outside America to fly the F-35 independently under our own regulations." Petty Officer Gary Lister has served for 28 years in the Royal Navy and is responsible for maintaining the ejection seats and crew system

as well as managing the weapons. He is equally enthusiastic. "The F-35 has a myriad of sensors and technologies which means every aspect of the aircraft is constantly being tested." He said, "This means that when snags are found, they aren't just fixed, but analysed and scrutinised to help future fault diagnosis and streamline the maintenance effort. It's a hugely complex aircraft which will give the RN and RAF a superb capability." Some two thousand miles to the East, more UK personnel are based with the US Marine Corps at Eglin in Florida and at Beaufort, South Carolina, where aircraft BK-3 has arrived and will eventually be used operationally in No 617 Squadron, to be based at RAF Marham. The UK has three F-35Bs so far, with a fourth due next year, with another four production aircraft on order. The UK's Future Combat Aircraft programme envisaged orders for 150 JSF aircraft, later revised to 138, to replace RAF Harriers and RN Sea Harriers. Later still, order expectations reduced to 48, but now the aim is to deliver 14 for service entry between 2018-2020. Further follow-on orders will depend on decisions resulting from the next defence review, SDSR 2015.

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# PRESIDENTIAL HANDOVER

**A**s we start a new year in the Air League, we are delighted to be welcoming our new President, Sir Roger Bone, who picked up the reins on 1st January from his predecessor, Sir Brian Burridge who stands down after more than 5 years in post.

Air Chief Marshal Sir Brian Burridge KCB CBE ADC has been an outstanding advocate of the Air League for many years. He joined the Council in 2007 after a highly successful career in the Royal Air Force finishing as Commander-in-Chief RAF Strike Command. He became chairman of the Council a year later, a post he held until he took up the position of President in 2009.

Sir Brian has always been a strong proponent of Air Power. He has a highly academic mind and all of us who have heard him speak are well used to listening to carefully researched and considered arguments delivered with great precision and style. As a result, he is highly regarded and well respected spokesman on defence and the aerospace industry, being a powerful advocate for multi-national opportunities. Throughout his time in office at the Air League, Sir Brian has been a tremendous ambassador for the Air League and we all hope very much that he will continue to be an active supporter as a Past President. The Trustees and Council of the Air League are hugely grateful to Sir Brian for all he has done for the Air League over so many years and especially over the last 7 years and more during which time he has helped steer the Air League through some significant changes in our governance, strengthening the Trust for the future.

Our new President, Sir Roger Bone KCMG, is no stranger to the Air League, having been a member of the Council for many years while he

was President of Boeing UK, following a long and distinguished career in the diplomatic service. During his time at Boeing, Sir Roger and his team helped the Air League tremendously, especially through their very active support for our varied scholarship programmes, including the Air League's pioneering gliding scholarship programme targeted at young students from schools in some of Britain's most deprived inner city areas.

Sir Roger is a keen supporter of the Air League's work to inspire young people to develop an interest in aviation and explore ways of building careers in the industry. He also attaches importance to using his experience to help develop an even stronger public voice for the Air League when we speak on key aviation issues of the day.

As President of the Air League Sir Roger will chair the Council meetings which will increasingly look to identify topics with which we should engage, particularly where we can draw on the extensive experience and knowledge of our many members, as we have done so powerfully in the last year, through the substantial contribution of Laurie Price, to help educate and inform the Davies Commission on runway capacity in the South East.

I am sure all members of the Air League would wish to join me in thanking Sir Brian for all that he has done for the Air League and will also welcome Sir Roger as our new President.

*Christopher Walkinshaw, Chairman*



ABOVE - Sir Brian Burridge making an award at the 2011 Annual Reception



ABOVE - Sir Roger Bone with school students taking advantage of the Air League's Boeing sponsored gliding scholarship programme.

## PREDICTING THE UNPREDICTABLE

**L**ead times for developing new programmes are now so lengthy, providing suitable products and services for future market needs and military requirements is more risk-strewn than ever before. In past eras new technologies and performance capabilities opened up their own markets. There was no passenger jet travel until the DH Comet and Boeing 707 created it. The 747 introduced mass global air transport and other wide-body aircraft followed. The Caravelle and BAC 1-11 introduced jet speed and comfort to short haul operations and then Concorde halved travel times over the Atlantic for the lucky few who could use it. But the combination of rising fuel prices, environmental legislation and limitations on powerplant technology meant that supersonic air travel was just a magnificent, but fleeting, dream. Who could have predicted in the 1970s that thirty years later the only supersonic airliners in the world would all be in museums?

As the civil jetliner market expanded and matured, their increased capacity, range and reliability permitted previously unheard-of non-stop schedules spanning continents and oceans, but it didn't happen as many predicted. How many envisaged that even new hi-tech aircraft such as the four-engined Airbus A340, marketed as the ultimate subsonic trans-oceanic airliner, would be ousted on these routes by aircraft powered by just two engines? As airports and air lanes in North America and Europe began to fill up, the highly profitable 747 continued to dominate the busiest international trunk routes, so Airbus took the huge risk of entering this market segment with its even bigger A380. This was designed to offer up to 200 more seats compared to a 747 but with a potential capacity stretch to 1,000 seats, if customers wanted to absorb traffic growth without increasing the numbers of aircraft flying the busiest routes. It didn't work out like that however as more direct point-to-point routes developed, along with increased frequencies on trunk routes, but who in the early 1990s would have predicted that most of the world's 747 fleets would be replaced by the smaller Boeing 777 family? Digital and powerplant technologies have continued to evolve in the 21st Century, bringing significant gains in commercial aircraft performance and efficiency, but this has been evolutionary rather than revolutionary, and it is no quicker to fly the Atlantic today than it was in the 1960s.

The skies are nevertheless filling up quicker than ever with new civil aircraft on order, as manufacturers and their supply chains struggle to keep up with demand. Who would have predicted when the Boeing 737 was launched to compete with the Douglas DC-9 and BAC 1-11, that new 737s, powered by a third generation of engines, would still be in production more than 50 years later? The current combined Airbus/Boeing backlog of orders has reached

11,000+, and production lines are running at full capacity, with new models, including the 787 and A350, sold out for the rest of this decade. Those who predicted pessimistically that the civil airliner market was too risky to sustain new investment can only look on from the sidelines at the success of those new-entry companies, like Embraer in Brazil, who had the vision, backed by government support, to create their own markets, which are now booming. Another example is the European ATR consortium which held on to its production line of turboprop regional aircraft at a time when its backlog had shrunk to just 15 aircraft. This risky commitment paid off handsomely as it has had to increase its production rate for the past three years and now has around 300 orders in its backlog. In the military aerospace market the impact of decisions taken years earlier has a considerable effect on future capabilities and national defence, and is far more difficult to reverse or change. While commercial aircraft fleets can be disposed of or replaced more frequently as demands change, adding or shedding skilled personnel is also far easier where there is great airline competition for experienced pilots and maintenance personnel. Specialist military skills once lost are more difficult to revive.

The UK aerospace sector represents one of the most valuable national assets we have for regenerating prosperity and providing security for us all. It is a win/win sector with enormous capacity for exploiting innovation to achieve sales success. Civil aerospace is enjoying a new golden era but the UK's military manufacturing sector is declining, with a domestic market now too small to support the launch of new programmes and consequently more and more equipment is bought off-the-shelf from abroad, taking jobs and export prospects with it. In this case it is only too easy to predict the likely outcome.

## 2015 SDSR -THE LAST CHANCE

**O**n 24 February, Howard Wheeldon FRAeS, presented the Sir John Slessor Memorial Lecture in the House of Commons, before an audience of Members of both Houses, members of the Air League and guests. In recalling the great and diverse contributions of the former Marshal of the Royal Air Force, he reminded those present of the ongoing relevance of his legacy to the UK's air power today – one hundred years after John Slessor began his RAF career. This is an edited version of the lecture. The full version can be read on the Air League website.

Quoting from Sir John's "Air Power and Armies" which he had re-read recently. Howard Wheeldon suggested why this important work remains the most relevant of his writings. "An air force", Sir John wrote, "is not committed to any one course of action. An air force can switch, literally, almost at a moment's notice, from one objective to another several hundred miles away from the same base ". He also commented, "If there is one attitude more dangerous than to assume that a future war will be just like the last one, it is to imagine that it will be so utterly different we can afford to ignore all the lessons of the last one". And it was he who questioned and then properly defined what air superiority should be – a state of moral, physical, and material superiority which enables its possessor to conduct operations against an enemy and at the same time, deprive the enemy of the ability to interfere effectively by the use of his own air forces – in more simple words, the capacity to achieve our own object in the air and to stop the enemy from achieving his. Today the air power construct is just as much about what Slessor in his day would have called reconnaissance and observation and what we call Intelligence, Surveillance, Target Acquisition and Reconnaissance – ISTAR or in the more relevant architecture - Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance - C4ISR.

I have called this lecture '2015 SDSR – The Last Chance for UK Defence' and I did not choose these words lightly. This suggests that we have good reason to be very concerned about the future of the defence construct in the UK and I will not shy away from that thought. In raising concern I equally well recognise that despite the devastation that we have been forced to witness since 1997, and particularly as a direct result of SDSR 2010, the irony is that the Royal Air Force and the Royal Navy have or will soon have some of the most modern defence capability available in the world. The bottom line is that the Royal Air Force lacks necessary resilience and in terms of both air and maritime capabilities, we no longer have critical mass. Indeed, we can no longer punch our weight let alone punch above it. The United Kingdom loves to be heard on the world stage but it is no longer prepared to invest in the muscle behind the brave talk. The increased level of UK armed forces engagement in recent years is a timely reminder that there is in geo-politics no room for complacency. It is now surely a fact that although some may choose to believe that the cold-war ended,



ABOVE - A Typhoon FGR4 of No 6 Squadron taking off

that may not be what those who oppose our views and that are to be considered potential enemies believe.

Let me first observe on recent history of both the Royal Air Force and Royal Navy in terms of capability dismissal over the past ten years. In 2007 we took out the remaining worked-up wing of Jaguar fast jet aircraft capability and worse, we did this on the promise and belief of a one for one basis of fast jet aircraft replacement and on the promise of better things to come. Well, it did not get any better – it got worse. After the cold-war ended we chose to reduce numbers of Tornado F3 ADV aircraft in service to the extent that by 2011 they had all been withdrawn. We then chose to get rid of Harrier GR9 capability in favour of retaining Tornado GR4 for the multi role capability mission. In doing so we left ourselves with not one single aircraft that could land on a carrier until the F-35 is commissioned into service. We scrapped Nimrod in both original and developing form, removing at a stroke the ability to detect the submarine threat posed by our would-be aggressors. We also removed any remaining wide area search and rescue capability that we had and, not even withstanding managing through a gap process, we chose to put nothing in its place. We had already cut the number of E-3D Sentry AWACS aircraft by one and then we compounded the problem by failing to invest in capability modernisation. And we also decided that Sentinel capability would be scrapped following the end of our involvement in



ing off at Nellis Air Force Base in Nevada during this year's Exercise Red Flag.  
(MOD/RAF Crown Copyright 2015 photo)

Afghanistan, and although this was later extended out to 2018 we chose to cut the number of highly specialist crews available to man the aircraft and to reduce the already small number of aircraft by one. Yes, we have placed the first of three planned Rivet Joint aircraft in service with 51 Squadron and how pleasing it is to be able to say that this has been a resounding success.

But if you think what has occurred has been bad for the Royal Air Force take note that it has been even worse for the Royal Navy. With HMS Invincible already gone, in 2010 we made the crass decision to scrap the only other member of the class capable of carrying fast jet capability, HMS Ark Royal, and mothballed other capability without changing any part of the overall mission. At the same time we chose to get rid of all four of the excellent Type 22 Frigates well before their time and the remaining Harrier GR9 VSTOL aircraft. These aircraft alone delivered the full effect of three squadrons in front line service. By April 2012 the actual numbers of Tornado GR4 aircraft had fallen from 117 to 94 and today I would estimate that Tornado GR4 capability stands at something above 70 aircraft. Yes, during that time we completed Type 45 Destroyer commissioning and have seen the new aircraft carrier programme move to a position of new strength.

We have moved ahead with a strategy based on the Royal Air Force eventually disposing of Tranche 1 Typhoon aircraft and working up to retaining 107

Tranche 2 and 3 multi-role variants of the aircraft in service by 2018 with an out of service date of 2030. Something is very wrong with this, particularly given that Typhoon capability is unlikely to be fully mature before 2022/3. And something else has been forgotten by our politicians too. In this anniversary year of the Battle of Britain they appear to have forgotten that should any large conflict occur, we can't generate Typhoon aircraft in a month, or train new pilots in a year as they did with the aircraft and pilots that fought in that great conflict. The lead time for building Typhoon is five years and the pilots take around 4 years to become fully conversant with the capability from their initial joining. The point is that if we become even smaller we will remain small, regardless of whatever external threats that we might face. We have of course made great inroads in training and I can vouch for the great success of 1V Squadron at RAF Valley and that part of the MFTS concept. And so far, apart from four F-35 test aircraft either delivered or on order, we have only just chosen to order the first four of what is supposed to be an eventual total of forty-eight squadron based aircraft. I fear trouble and great dangers in terms of air power capability ahead.



ABOVE - A Tornado GR4 of the reformed No 12 Squadron at RAF Marham which took over the aircraft from No 2 (AC) Squadron, which became the fifth operational Typhoon squadron on the same day, 9 January. No 12 Sqn is currently planned to remain as the third Tornado squadron for only one year. (Editor's photo)

Far worse I suppose is that as I look at UK defence today I am aware that our politicians, no matter what political party they represent, have no desire to push defence up the agenda or priority list. There can in my view be no holiday from history in terms of defence and I am bound to wonder why it is that they believe history can be so blatantly ignored. Having watched military capability being drastically reduced since 1997, and as I watch the flow of defence politics driven hard in a negative direction, I am bound to fear that in the SDSR 2015 White Paper, due for delivery towards the end of this year or early next, we will see a further weakening of defence capability. Whitehall chatter is for another £1bn to £1.5bn to be taken out of the annual defence budget. To do that would place the UK in a

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highly vulnerable position in terms of meeting current commitments to NATO and worse, it would further adversely impact the overall trajectory for UK defence diplomacy. Nevertheless, the world is constantly changing and a vital lesson in defence is that we have to plan for tomorrow's wars rather than today's. That is part of the reason why greater use of unmanned aerial vehicles is planned. I have nothing against this, believing that technology will win or lose the next war that we engage in and, even in the short time since the last round of defence devastation was thrust on us, we have to recognise that much has changed since SDSR 2010. Thus I am of the belief that the whole concept of Future Force 2020 should be re-examined.

Our industry is doing its bit and yet sadly it gets little if any praise for so doing. Defence procurement is being sorted and while there is still a long way to go the relationship between all parties involved with DE&S is improving. Can the same be said of the Ministry of Defence? To achieve change we need strategy and policy. That means we first need to know from government what it is and where it is that Britain wants to be in the world and why. Many of us in this room recognise that Defence has gone far too far down the political agenda and that this requires that all of us MUST work harder to raise it in terms of political priority. And that means raising the need for strong defence in the eyes of the public.



*ABOVE - The five-strong Sentinel R1s flown by No 5 Squadron have seen continuous operational tasking from even before they were fully worked up and are one of the most effective ISTAR assets in the Western world. To save money the number of crews has been cut and the fleet has been reduced to four aircraft.*

*(MOD/RAF Crown Copyright 2015 photo)*

Some of us in this room will remember observing the bizarre final days in October 2010 that led to what we have been forced to call a 'strategic' review of defence and security, SDSR 2010, but what in fact boiled down to the service chiefs being forced to bargain to retain capability. The bottom line was a cut in the defence budget around 8% between 2010 and 2015, the planned loss of around 30,000 armed forces personnel and slashing of capability. We must never allow such a bizarre set of circumstances to occur again. The Prime Minister pledged in the White Paper that defence equipment spend would rise by 1% in real terms annually from 2015/16 - or was it 2016/17 - in each of the five years that followed. Britain worked hard in Wales to push all NATO members to commit to working toward spending 2% of GDP on defence. Of course, it has been a matter of debate for some time now whether we actually spend more than 1.7% of

GDP on defence currently.

The result of SDSR 2010 is that air power finds itself lacking resilience. Maritime lacks resilience too. But is it too late to halt what appears to be the seemingly relentless downward spiral of UK defence capability? One of the problems is that the military is always somehow able to say "Yes". For how much longer can it do that? I have no answer to that but lacking resilience and trajectory that will further limit our ability to play a more significant role in future conflict is such that I may conclude that our ability to support NATO has never been weaker. We do still have credible military capability in the UK of course but just not enough of it. The first duty of Government to its people is National security. As a rich nation, the seventh largest economy in the world, we also have a responsibility to use our expertise assisting in humanitarian and disaster relief.

Air power and control of the air remains as important today as it did in Slessor's day. Be in no doubt that the Royal Air Force today is but a shadow of the size that it was when Lord Robertson's Strategic Defence Review was published in 1998. For 36 front line squadrons then, read just 8 now. The direct result of 'Options for Change' meant that numbers of Royal Air Force personnel that in 1990 stood at 90,000 had by 1994 fallen to 76,000. There was much worse to come as the Defence Costs Study decided that numbers should be further reduced to 52,500 by 1999. That meant that within ten years Royal Air Force personnel numbers had shrunk by 40%. By the time that Future Force 2020 is fully implemented numbers will be down to just 31,800 regulars. Yes, we must accept that warfare methods have changed and that the need to retain the numbers of front line aircraft that we had back then is neither viable nor required. Multi-role combat jet capability today is currently provided by three squadrons of Tornado GR4 aircraft and five squadrons of Typhoon aircraft provide the remainder of our front line fast jet capability. I like it no more than any of you but I am realistic enough to know that in the political climate that we live in today and in having allowed defence to go so far down the agenda our situation will only change when the enemy is finally at the door. Have we learned nothing from the past?

Importantly, we must be able to demonstrate that if we secure the ability to reduce costs and grow efficiency in terms of programme development that these saving should be allowed to flow back into capital enhancement of new programmes. How appalling it is that several billions of savings made in the defence budget in 2011/12, 2012/13, 2013/14 have not been allowed to be rolled over but have instead passed back to the Treasury despite a promise to the contrary.

In the battle ahead of SDSR 2010 the Royal Air Force pushed for twelve front line squadrons but in the event SDSR 2010 planned for just seven. Sustaining combat air capability in Afghanistan proved that five front line squadrons were required in order to provide proper levels of relief and through life aircraft maintenance. We need to remember that there is also a requirement for combat air assets to support Defence Operational Training. I am in no doubt that given the challenging geo-political environment and a strong belief that the enduring task and burden that the Royal Air Force carries requires that twelve squadrons of front line capability to ensure resilience. For boots on the ground we have to start talking 'boots in the air'.

## IN THE AIR - News

**T**he Ministry of Defence has signed a £420 million contract with Boeing for the in-service support of the Chinook helicopter, saving the taxpayer over £150 million. Having played a vital role in operations in Afghanistan, the contract will be for five years and the fleet will be maintained in Fleetlands, Gosport, and other technical support provided from RAF Odiham and sites across the UK.

David Pitchforth, Managing Director, Boeing Defence UK said: "Having started my career as an apprentice, I value Boeing UK's continued investment in developing jobs, skills and opportunities in the UK's defence and security sector."

Chinook is the UK's only military heavy lift helicopter, able to transport up to 54 troops or 10 tonnes of supplies. The contract will support the RAF's fleet, which will be 60 strong by early 2017 and includes the new Mark 6 helicopters.



*ABOVE - Dassault Aviation announced on February 16 at the 2015 Aero India air show that it had signed a contract with Egypt for 24 Rafale multi-role fighters, as seen here flying over the pyramids. These will be the latest model equipped with advanced AESA radar and the Spectra electronic warfare system. In the meantime, discussions still continue over the plans for licenced production in India of the majority of up to 126 Rafales destined for the Indian Air Force.*

**G**atwick Airport in January saw the 23rd successive month of growth, with more than 2.3 million passengers flying through the airport. This was an increase of 5.5% on the 2014 figures. In 2014 long haul traffic increased by 11.4% with travel to Dubai up 12.3% and traffic to Turkey up 19.8%. This is attributed to the use of newer and bigger aircraft, including the A380. Nick Dunn, Chief Financial Officer at Gatwick, commented, "As the world's busiest single runway airport we are achieving great things and our continued investment (£2.2 billion) is optimizing every aspect of both the passenger experience and the operation of the airport continues to pay off. The pattern of growth is set to continue but we will struggle to meet demand in future years."



*ABOVE - Russian air activity in the North Atlantic and around the UK's territorial waters is at its highest level in decades. This has included a dash by a Bear long-range patrol aircraft over the English Channel, between England and France, and which resulted in an official complaint being lodged as although the flight was tracked throughout by radar, it was unannounced and failed to communicate. This action was described by the UK government as creating a potential danger to civilian aircraft in one of Europe's busiest air traffic zones. The Bear was accompanied by RAF Typhoon fighters which had been scrambled from RAF Lossiemouth.*

*MOD/RAF Crown Copyright 2015 photo*

Heathrow CEO John Holland-Kaye publicly thanked Chambers of Commerce throughout the UK for their support for expansion at the BCC (British Chambers of Commerce) conference. Addressing an audience of senior business leaders and politicians, he announced that 32 Chambers of Commerce representing firms from across the UK have now pledged their support for Heathrow expansion. Over the last six months, Heathrow has met with most Chambers of Commerce to understand how it can help members do business with the world, and found a huge appetite to export up and down the country from businesses of all sizes. Yet with the UK's only hub airport running at full capacity and increasingly unable to add flights to emerging markets, there are many overseas markets that businesses will never be able to get to directly without expansion. Growth at Heathrow would help those businesses by delivering:

- Up to 40 more long-haul destinations
- More freight exports
- More connections to every part of Britain, helping to rebalance the economy
- More competition and choice, leading to better value for passengers

# Members News

**Jack King, The MacRobert Trust Flying Scholarship 2014**, I wanted to thank The Air League Trust for awarding me with a flying scholarship. It has definitely enhanced my ability and increased my confidence in the air, while also introducing me to the various navigational techniques used by aviators. As stated in my application form last year my career ambition is that of RAF pilot, so this opportunity has hopefully increased my chances. Evidence for this may be seen in my recent acceptance into the University of Glasgow and Strathclyde Air Squadron for which I talked in depth, at my interview, about my time at Tayside Aviation. I will now be able to continue my flying training under the command of RAF officers. A stepping stone on my career path, but a very important one so I would like to once again thank the Trust for the opportunity.

**Henry Newman, Sir Michael Cobham Flying Bursary 2014**, Thank you for your kind generosity in donating flying scholarships and bursaries to young pilots through The Air League. I was fortunate to be awarded a bursary, which I flew just before Christmas allowing me to complete a night rating.



Daylight saving time along with the Great British weather meant that many excited weeks were spent with either too much sunlight or too much rain! Eventually I flew five hours over Cornwall, across two nights; they were amongst the most magical experiences of all my life. The first was on bonfire night. There were beautiful clear skies and a

full moon. Fireworks lit up the villages below in stunning reds and yellows whilst I learnt to navigate safely in the darkness two thousand feet above.

I originally obtained my pilot licence from South Warwickshire Flying School while studying engineering at Cardiff University, so having lived in Cornwall for thirteen years, only now have I seen how beautiful it is from above. Since building a rapport with the instructors at the old Spitfire base in Perranporth on Cornwall's North coast, I have flown to the Isles of Scilly with a beautiful young lady. Neither of us had ever been to the islands before so it was a wonderful privilege to be able to fly there myself into the sunset. I had thought that things like that only happen in films!

I hope that you will join us at the Air League's Annual Reception so that I might thank Lady Cobham in person for enabling my achievement of this valuable qualification, and indeed for supporting the ongoing validity of my license. I hope to complete an instructing course in the coming years so that I can share some of the skills and joyful experiences that flying has given me, with a new generation of budding pilots.

## New Members

**Individual Members:** Darendra Appanah, Rianne Anderson, SafiaBallout, Sam Bancroft, Charles Barclay-Hudson, Christopher Bennett, Murray Bullions, Jake Campbell, Hugh Cherkas, Edward Church, George Coe, Aaron Collaco, Hannah Crompton, Jake Embling, Tristan Fancourt, David Folder, Alex Foster, Jack Gray, Austen Grigoleit, Ahsley Guest, Charlotte Hayton, Maria de Sol Hernandez-Barrio, Alun Holleyman, Colin Holmes, George Hunter, Suleman Hussain, Jodie Janes, Ben Jones, Robert Kameny, Simon Keeler, Christopher Knight, Jessica Kwong, Mairi Lewis, James Macfarlane, Aidan Macisaac, Jamie Maclean, Shaun McBride, James Mockridge, Jacob Morewood, Alan Mortimer, Demetrio Muse, Tom Newell, Stephanie Nixon, Louis Norman, Thomas Nunn, Adam Pearson, Stephen Pearson, Tom Perry, Nathanael Pettit, Michael Pye, Jonathan Read, Jajo Roberts-Coyne, James Sermon, Ross Smillie, VikeshSuthar, Rob Taylor, Sam Todd, Freddie Turner, James Verburg, Charles Walker, Oliver Webster, Ryan Willson, Samuel Wyss.

## 2014 AIR LEAGUE SCHOLARSHIPS

In 2014 the Air League Trust funded 117 awards comprising 39 flying scholarships (including The Prince Philip Flying Scholarship, four Bristow and one TAG NPPL Scholarships), 18 flying bursaries, 11 gliding scholarships and 9 engineering scholarships. In addition, the Trust provided 14 flying scholarships for disabled veterans/serving personnel together with 26 gliding scholarships for inner city youth. The fact that we are now funding many more scholarships across a far wider cross-section of society than ever before is in no small measure to the hard work and dedication of the scholarship team.

## Diary Reminders

5 May 2015: Annual Reception

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

## Discount at Foyles Bookstores

We have an arrangement/concession at Foyles whereby all Air League members are entitled to a 10% discount. On production of your Air League membership card you will be entitled to a 10% discount at Foyles.



## THE AIR LEAGUE

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