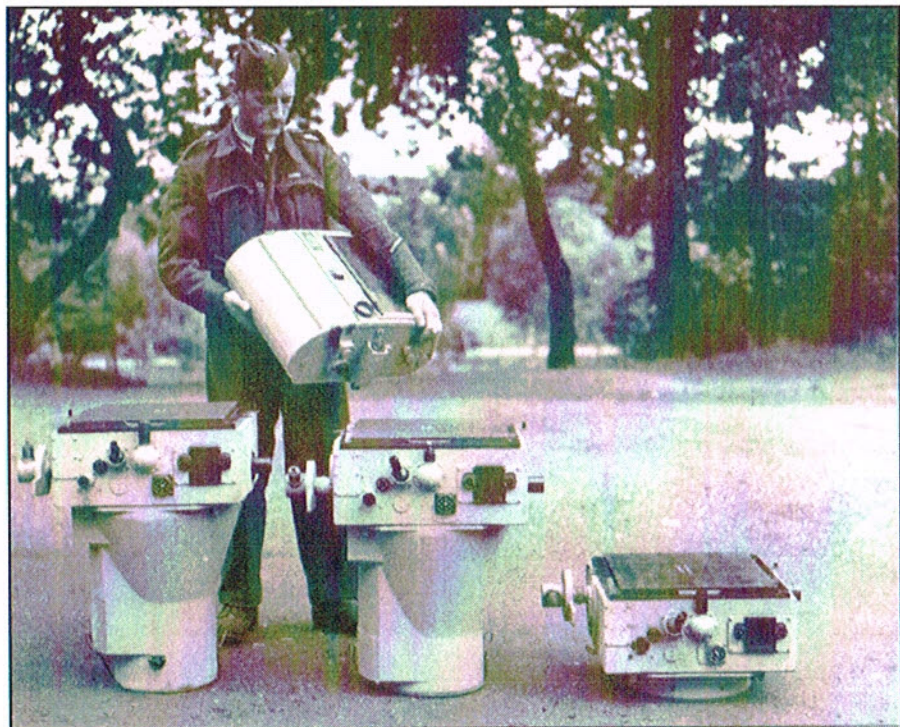




FLASHBACK

Edition 4
Autumn 2000



*Test your research skills with this photo
- See inside!*

Flashback is the quarterly journal of the Royal Air Force Boy Entrant Photographers Association, serving all former members of the RAF Boy Entrant and Craft Apprentice photographic training schemes



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Front Cover

An interesting picture of three air cameras, photographed in 1945. You might like to test your skills, do a bit of research and let me know what types they are, who might have used them, what the focal lengths might have been and also the film width. If you can identify the airman holding the magazine, that would be a real bonus. Your answers to the Editor please!

Sec's Saga

It's my sad duty to inform members of the sudden death on 29th September, of our Chairman Harry Cottrell.

Harry had been involved in the creation of the original BEPA and was it's Chairman for ten years. It was the privilege of the newly formed RAFBEPA to have had Harry as our Chairman too, albeit for far too short a time. Later in this edition George Webb pays tribute to an old friend and colleague and tells of his winning personality and his "can do" approach to life.

A small floral tribute and a card was despatched on behalf of all members of the Association, and Stuart Usher and myself represented the post war Boys at his funeral at All Saints Church in Stamford on Monday 9th October.

We extend our sympathy to Harry's wife Joan and all family members, particularly daughters Patricia, Barbara, Susan and Ann.

Some of you may be wondering why there has been so little news of the Reunion which was planned for the weekend of 27th/29th October. Unfortunately, the number of responses was insufficient to make the weekend financially viable and

therefore, reluctantly, we had to cancel. With hindsight, the venue was perhaps too far away for the majority of members to attend, and it also appears to have been a little too expensive. Clearly, a venue more centrally placed in the Midlands, similar to last year, would have been a better choice. With this in mind, I plan to organise another reunion for March 2001, probably in the Midlands area which will give a far greater cross-section of the membership the opportunity to attend. Details and booking forms will be issued with the next edition of "Flashback" early in the New Year.

Please give me your support lads for this event when it's announced and if you can't make it for all of the weekend, do try to attend the dinner - you won't be disappointed.

Since the publication date of the last edition of "Flashback" I am delighted to tell you that we have added a further four new members to our list. Their names are mentioned elsewhere in the magazine, but welcome to the Association lads, and we look forward to hearing from you and to meeting up in March.

Dave Derrick



Harry Cottrell

*George Webb pays tribute to our Chairman
Harry Cottrell who sadly died on
29th September*

It is my very sad task to inform you that our Chairman Harry Cottrell died on Friday 29 September. As many of you will be aware, Harry was not only chairman of the recently reformed RAFBEPa but also served the original BEPA in the same capacity from 1986 to 1997. It would be true to say that the embryonic organisation would have been struggling to survive those early days without Harry's 'can do' approach to the problems that arose. His businesslike handling of meetings succeeded in cutting out much of the time-wasting waffle usually attendant in such gatherings, concentrating everyone's attention on the matters in hand. His impressive personality was invaluable when negotiating with hotels for reunion venues at advantageous terms, his charismatic personality always winning any difference of opinion!

A member of No.8 Entry SOP at Farnborough, the last pre-war entry, Harry's service career took him to many parts of the world including Canada, and after the war, he spent much time in South Africa. Post war, he was employed in a civilian capacity with a mining company as photographer on their geological survey project in what was then Rhodesia. He subsequently joined the Stamford Mercury newspaper where he was chief photographer for 24 years before retiring in 1983.

Harry had a range of hobbies and interests, a main one being his work in his local Freemasonry lodge where he attained high office. Another interest was bee-keeping where he was acknowledged as something of an authority, and gave talks to schools and various organisations. He would sort out desirable locations for his swarms, such as the Bolton Abbey estate, and transport them up in his trailer. He and Joan had quite a thriving little cottage industry in converting the golden nectar into honey and bottling it. We used to joke that his sales at reunions was his main source of income.

He was a keen and accomplished gardener, winning many trophies for his vegetable and flower exhibits. He and Joan had a sumptuous summer house on the nearby Burghley House estate, where they tended their large allotment. They would sometimes sleep in it over the weekend and regard it almost as a holiday!

Harry's widow, Joan, also a staunch supporter of BEPA, lives at: 1 Waverley Place, Stamford, Lincs PE9 1BJ. Tel: (01780) 54373.

I'm sure anyone who knew Harry would like to extend their sympathies.

Harry was a good mate, a splendid individual and I and many others will greatly miss him.

George Webb

Letters to the Editor

Bob Dixon
23 Wharf Street
Woody Point
Queensland 4019
Australia

Hi Stuart

Just a short note to follow up on the Cosford side of things photo-wise, which I think I mentioned in my last email. I thought these three might be good for a start. The first shows ten of the No.1 Squadron 31st Entry lot about mid-way through our time at Cosford, judging by the two stripes signifying the supporting entry. This photo is only about half of the entry and I regret I cannot remember many of the others except a chap called Tony Walker who I know was posted to Aden, as we met up once or twice whilst I was passing through. (That must be you Tony, is it? - *Editor*)

Following Cosford we all ended up at either Wyton or Brampton, and both Tony Dennis and Tony Whittaker came with me to Wyton. As far as the others are concerned, I can't remember who went where in the end - some may have gone to Cyprus, but I can't recall.

My stay at Wyton prior to being posted to Cyprus and 13 Sqdn, included a detachment to RAF Eastleigh in Kenya with 58 Sqdn. I went with two other photogs who were from the 32nd entry. Jim Mulchay (spelling ?) and one other, whose name escapes me.

I'm not sure what happened to the others on their first overseas postings except for Tony Whittaker, who was posted to Germany, and Tony Dennis who went to Hong Kong. Following this we all ended up back in the UK at good old RAF Brampton. Tony Whittaker I know then went on to re-muster to AQM.

It was from Brampton in 1964 that I departed the RAF by way of purchase, and since that time I have only spoken to Tony Whittaker on the phone a year or so ago.



The group consists of Rear row Left to Right - Bas Wigley, P. Kirby, Terry Pepper, Tony Whittaker and Tony Dennis. Front row Left to Right - B. Barnfield, myself, Nicky Burke, R. Warner and the last one whose name I'm afraid I've forgotten.



*17. From the "Passing Out" Dinner, 31st Entry
Photographers, Cooks, & Telegraphists
26. 1958*

12-10-99

The large group shot is the complete "Passing Out" photograph of 1 Squadron, 31st Entry Photographers, Cooks and Telegraphists. Unfortunately with the passing of time the original has deteriorated a little, but with a little help from the computer I've managed to make it half-presentable, I think.



The above picture was taken at the "Passing Out" Dinner in the Fulton Block Mess, and it shows from left to right - Tony Walker, a chap whose name I've now forgotten, but should know because we were at Brampton together (that's Alan Polley - Ed), then a chap called Kirby and finally myself.

OK Stuart I think that's it for the moment. I trust you can make use of some of these photographs in due course, and if any of the membership knows what happened to any of the blokes depicted thereon, perhaps they could drop me or the magazine a line.

All the very best.

Bob Dixon

Nice to hear from you Bob, and we'll look forward to seeing you next time you're in the UK
Editor

Letters to the Editor Continued....

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Dear Mr Derrick,

Your address was recently passed on to me by Peter Elliot of the Department of Research and Information Services at the Royal Air Force Museum at Hendon I had contacted him with an enquiry stemming from my historical research and he suggested that I contact you. I ought perhaps to explain a little at first about what it is I'm up to and why I would be very interested to hear from you and other members of the Association.

I am a research student at the Centre for the History of Science, Technology and Medicine, Imperial College, and my work is about photography and science in the Twentieth Century. While many historical studies have pointed to the importance of photography as a scientific tool, seldom is any reference made to the skill and labour of photographers working in scientific institutions, nor to how and where they acquired their skills. I am keen to use my work to attempt to redress this imbalance and tell, as it were, the hidden history of the photographers of science. I believe that this is particularly important now as, with the increasing use of digital technology, a great many of their skills, and also ultimately their story, will be lost.

The more routine work of photographers (as well as the photographic efforts of scientists) is largely undocumented. Because of this I have had to rely to a large extent on what I can learn by talking to individuals. To this end I have begun to make contact with photographers, along with scientists, technicians and other workers who have employed photographic skills in various settings. The setting up and running of photographic departments within scientific and medical establishments is obviously of fundamental concern for my project. This is closely connected with perhaps the most

important question of all - that of the training of photographers and photographic technicians. I am trying to build a historical picture of the scientific photographer from roughly 1900 when, by and large, scientists and technicians generally employed their own photographic skills (usually acquired in amateur pursuits), as and when they were needed in their work - through to the systematic training of staff and the setting up of dedicated photographic facilities.

In the course of my enquiries so far I have been struck by the fact that a significant number of the photographers who were recruited to work for scientific and medical photographic facilities (most of which were set up within a few years of the end of the war) had served in the forces. Many had received their training at Royal Air Force photographic schools and worked in photo-reconnaissance. I would be extremely interested to expand what precious little know about the organisation of these schools, the kind of training that was given, and indeed anything relating to the experiences of wartime photographers, especially those who later worked in the kinds of establishment of which I speak.

I hope this gives some idea of the kind of material I am looking for. If you think that there may be members of the Association who would be willing to help with my enquiries by telling me of their own experiences then I would be extremely grateful for the opportunity to make contact with them.

Clinton Chaloner

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Letters from the membership will always be welcome, so if you have any strong views on any particular subject or simply want to put forward a suggestion, let's hear from you.

The Editor
RAFBEPA Newsletter
34 Marsh Lane
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Cambridgeshire PE28 9EN

Apologies to Tony "Taff" Barrell – Your letter will be published in the next edition.

Mystery Photo

On page 19 of last quarter's edition of Flashback, I asked if anyone could guess the identity of the young lad wearing flying kit and carrying a movie camera. If any of you attended the last Brompton Bash, you may recall seeing a copy of this photo amongst the dozens of other photog pictures on display that evening, but this photo carried no caption to identify the subject. By coincidence, I had access to a copy of the self same photo, so decided to pop into the mag to see if any of you knew the answer.

Harry Kirk had no trouble, and correctly identifies it as none other than Frank Muir, that prolific comedy writer of BBC radio fame.

Harry writes:

"With regard to your question about the identity of the person in the photo, it is of course Frank Muir. He was a photographer, and when the picture was taken he was stationed at Ringway, the then Parachute Training School. I actually knew him at Catterick, and even then, if there was nothing to do, Frank could always be found in a quiet corner, writing away!"

The photo appears in Frank Muir's autobiography "A Kentish Lad", published by Bantam Press (ISBN No: 0593 03452X). It's well worth a read!

Editor



British Photographic Museum

Erica and I recently enjoyed a week's holiday in Devon, staying in a farmhouse near Totnes. Whilst doing the tourist bit, we stumbled on a stately home known as Bowden House, which dates back to the 9th century. Included in the numerous attractions is a superb photographic museum, and I strongly recommend that if you're ever down that way, you really do make a point of visiting it. Whilst the title "British Photographic Museum" may be a little presumptuous, the collection of cameras particularly, is really quite remarkable, and you'll find lots there to see you well on your way down Memory Lane!

Stuart Usher

Did you know.....?

Abraham Lincoln was elected to Congress in 1846

John F.Kennedy was elected to Congress in 1946

Abraham Lincoln was elected President in 1860

John F.Kennedy was elected President in 1960

The names of Lincoln and Kennedy each contain 7 letters

Both were particularly concerned with civil rights

Both their wives lost a child whilst living in the White House

Both Presidents were shot on a Friday

Both Presidents were shot in the head

Lincoln's secretary was named Kennedy

Kennedy's secretary was named Lincoln

Both were assassinated by Southerners

Both were succeeded by Sotherners

Both successors were named Johnson

Andrew Johnson, who succeeded Lincoln, was born in 1806

Lyndon Johnson, who succeeded Kennedy, was born in 1906

John Wilkes Booth, who assassinated Lincoln, was born in 1839

Lee Harvey Oswald, who assassinated Kennedy, was born in 1939

Both assassins were known by their three names

Both names comprised of fifteen letters

Booth ran from a theatre and was caught in a warehouse

Oswald ran from a warehouse and was caught in a theatre

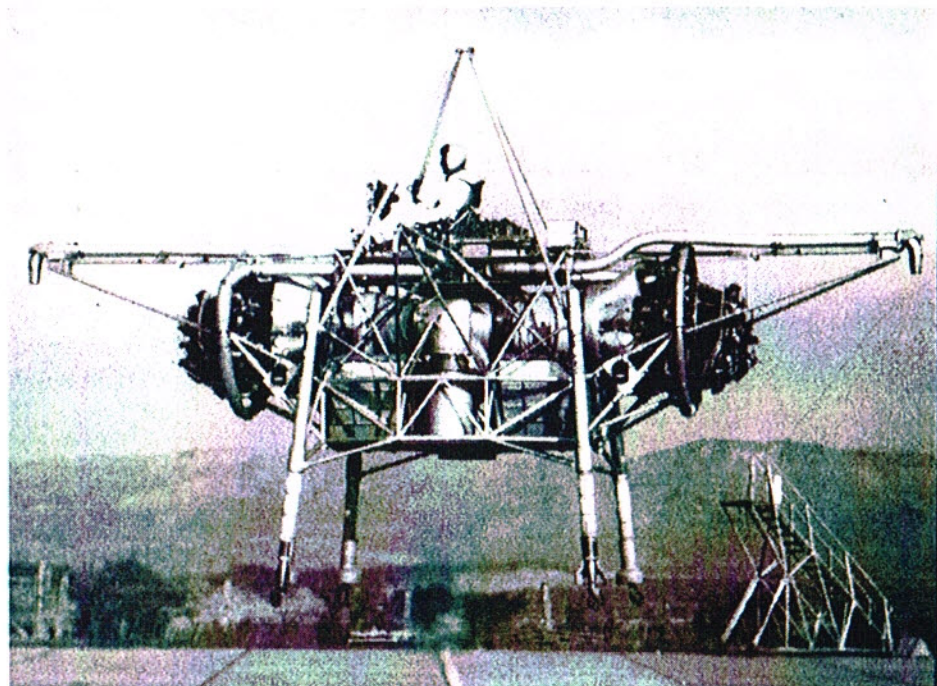
And here's the punch line.....

A week before Lincoln was shot, he was in Monroe, Maryland

A week before Kennedy was shot, he was with Marilyn Monroe!

(Reprinted from an earlier edition of the RAFBEPANewsletter)

The Flying Bedstead



In 1952 a proposal by Rolls-Royce's Dr A. A. Griffiths resulted in a MOS (Ministry of Supply) contract to investigate problems of control and stability of vertical take-off and landing (VTOL). J S Bart, R-R Chief Installation Designer at Hucknall would be responsible for design. The official name for the experimental machine was Thrust Measuring Rig (TMR), but when its outlandish appearance was unveiled, the flying testbed soon became known (to R-R's horror) as The Flying Bedstead.

The main purpose of the project was to determine if an aircraft could be controlled solely by jet efflux and not by normal forms of control. Several basic requirements were laid down:

- a. The whole weight of the machine must be supported by jet thrust.
- b. The maximum thrust/weight ratio to be 1.25, ie total thrust must be more than the total weight of the machine
- c. Fuel should last for 15 minutes.
- d. The pilot to have complete freedom of movement within 100ft

x 100ft up to a height of 50ft.

e. It must take-off and hover just above the ground for 5 minutes without getting excessively hot.

f. The pilot must be safeguarded in the event of engine or control failure.

The best layout was decided using twin R-R Nene 101 Mk 4 engines, facing in opposite directions to overcome gyroscopic effects, with 10% of the air bled off for the flight control and stabilising systems (supplied by the RAE.)

Restriction of pitching and rolling moments was achieved by having a central jetpipe from one engine and a bifurcated pipe from the other. Control required two longitudinal (pitch) nozzles and two lateral (roll) nozzles, using compressed air.

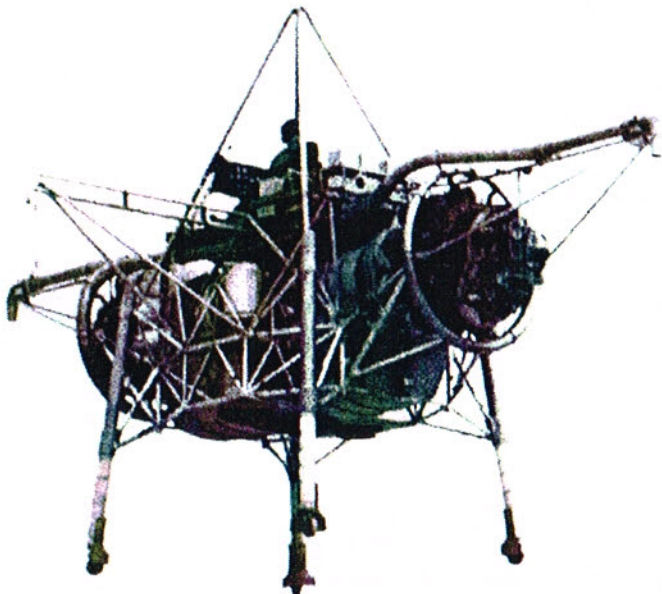
The assembled machine was rolled out on 3rd July 1953. Manned tests began with the machine suspended from within a large gantry with an endless cable, the rate of descent being controlled by synchronous motors. There was freedom of movement up to 45ft high and 60ft between verticals. The base was concrete covered with heat resisting blue engineering bricks topped with 1/2 inch boiler plate, but after several tests this was replaced with 2ft x 1ft blocks of lime concrete set in heat resisting cement.

The final weight of the rig, including pilot and fuel, crept up to 7,196lbs with a total lifting thrust of 8,350lbs; this brought the thrust/weight ratio down to 1.16 but of course this ratio increased as fuel was burnt off; after 7 minutes this would increase to 1.34.

The "undercarriage" consisted of four Dowty dashpot air cushioned struts with dural wheels and solid rubber tyres.

Many varied and difficult problems were encountered and overcome in the testing phase, and on 3rd August 1954, Capt. R .T. Shepherd, ex-RR Chief Test Pilot, who had come out of retirement to assist in the test programme, sat in the pilot's seat for the world's first free flight vertical take-off.

It was a very exciting day (I was involved in the filming) with the unique event witnessed by several of the great and the good of the engineering and political worlds. A complete circuit of the area was made, involving simultaneous use of all controls: pitch, roll, yaw and throttle. Vertical, sideways and backwards moves were demonstrated, followed by a perfect landing back on the square. A terrific success. The wind for the day was 0.5 knots SSW.



My old boss, R-R's chief photographer, poised for retirement, had the perfect send-off by being despatched to Downing Street to show the film to the PM Winston Churchill.

The rest as they say, is history. Aircraft No. XJ314 was eventually sent to Farnborough and a second model indexed XJ426 was rolled out in August 1955. This aircraft had a somewhat chequered career. On 28th November 1957, whilst being flown in the gantry for the last time before being handed over to RAE Bedford, a fatal crash occurred, and so that chapter of VTOL was ended -

neither of the Bedsteads were flown again.

XJ314 was rebuilt as an exhibit for the Science Museum and was also displayed at the Yeovilton Museum. It currently rests in the Science Museum's collection at Wroughton, Wilts. Sadly XJ426 is no more. Today it is more or less a source of cannibalisation for spares.

Subsequent VTOL development has progressed both here and in other countries, through the experimental multi-engined Short SC1 and many other configurations to the superb swivel nozzle Harriers of today.

George Webb

NEWSFLASH!

The following communication has been received from Nottingham's star hack, **Frank Browett**

New Research into Halfcrown Lill's Family Tree!

Following intensive historical research, Halfcrown Lill's family tree has been reliably traced back 1,954 years to Two Dinari Lillium from Rome. She is believed to have been the daughter of One Dinari Lillium and a number of gladiators. This connection cannot be guaranteed of course, as most gladiators, when given the choice of facing the lions or Lillium, invariably chose the lions!

Now Two Dinari Lillium had a daughter, Four Dinari Lillium, whose father was stated to have been the 17th Legion, then stationed near Tewksbury. Four Dinari Lillium eventually became a Briton and clearly took to the British culture in a big way, giving her daughter a good old British name, Three Turnips Lil. Her father is said to have been Newham the Uglier, a charcoal burner in Tewksbury who refurbished stolen donkey carts in his spare time. What he did with the donkeys is still a state secret!

Three Turnips Lil took up her father's profession, and at one stage was unfortunate enough to get herself arrested by the Gloucestershire Bow-Legged Runners, who interrogated her with great penetration. (I think he means "in-depth" *Ed*).

Anyway, her daughter, Truncheon Lil, worked for the Gloucestershire "Couldn't Stop a Pig in an Alley" Runners, in the rubber truncheon room, where she beat out confessions from suspected criminals and from the local Abbot who actually only went there for fun. She also had a part-time job where she was known as Lill the Horizontal, but I've not been able to fully ascertain the nature of this employment.

Records then get a bit vague until Half a Groat Lill comes on the scene. She worked in a circus as an exotic dancer and contortionist. She married the India Rubber Man and had, with great difficulty and much amusement, a daughter by him. When she was pregnant she was asked whether she wanted

a boy or a girl, but said that it didn't matter, so long as the child would fit into the cannon and circumcise the tent!

Blessed with a daughter, she named her Ten Pence Lill. Her grand-daughter was Eighteen Pence Lil and her great grand-daughter, Two Pence Lill. The latter got together with some soldiers in 1940 and the result was Halfcrown Lill, whom we all "loved" so much. (At least those with Half a Crown to spare did!)

Now we get a throw-back to an earlier name, because Halfcrown Lill eventually married Newham the Even Uglier, in Number 4 Water Tower, "D" Lines, RAF Cosford in 1958 (after the smoke had cleared). Yes, you all remember it as the only reasonably safe place to chuff away on ones' illicit Woodbines.

I have heard mention of a certain Five Bob Lill, presumably from a member of one of the later entries, but I can assure you she was no relation at all. She was merely an upstart trying to make a living on Halfcrown Lill's name!

Frankenscribe Browett



New members - Welcome!

It's our pleasure to welcome the following new members who have joined us since the publication of the last editon of "Flashback"

Derek Gare	28th Entry
Bob Kendall	301st Entry
Stewart Ross	306th Entry
Tony Brewster	325th Entry

