



This Newsletter is dedicated to the
memory of
Dave Stock



AALO Newsletter 14 – December 2009

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There is only one fitting way to open this newsletter and that is to echo the great shock and sadness of the entire engineering and restoration team at the events that unfolded on the 14th November at Overberg, South Africa. Tragically by the end of the day it was apparent that not only had Thunder City lost one of their Lightnings to a catastrophic crash but the pilot, Dave Stock had also lost his life. Dave was a highly respected pilot and known to many of the AALO team and he will be greatly missed.

In the weeks following the crash we have carried messages of tribute on our website, twitter account and Facebook Group, as well as the personal messages left on Dave's tribute page on Facebook. I would like to take this additional opportunity to offer our deepest sympathies and condolences to Dave's close family on behalf of everyone involved in the restoration of XS422.

A reflection on Dave's career appears towards the end of this newsletter.

Nostalgia ...

When tragedy strikes all the doubters come to the fore with opinions on the restoration and flight of historic aircraft and all the reasons why it shouldn't be permitted.

Dave Stock loved flying and clearly loved the Lightning and he wanted as many people as possible to experience the thrill of seeing a classic jet take to the skies, hence his presence at the Overberg air show

I received the following in an email this week and the timing couldn't have been better.

Though not a pilot, Roger Siswick, shares his personal recollections of working with Lightnings and reminds us all why we're doing what we're doing.

*"From January 1974 until October 1998 I was engaged in maintaining RAF Lightning aircraft on No 23 Squadron at RAF Leuchars and No 5 Squadron and also the LTF at RAF Binbrook. From fitter to sergeant I worked at all levels of aircraft maintenance. I was sent on the BAC Lightning Manufacturer's structure and systems course at Warton in March 1974. I'm sure there are plenty of people who know just what a son of a b**** this aircraft was to maintain and as a result a number of engineering short cuts were developed on the shop floor to avoid the frequent necessity to drop an engine or the weapons pack, etc; designers don't know everything and there was a huge wealth of inherited pass-me-down knowledge on the maintenance squadrons. Of all the aircraft I have maintained, in my working life this is the aircraft I am the most proud to have an association with. I dreaded some of the maintenance tasks I had to undertake but developed a real feel for the aircraft and its systems, I knew the aircraft inside out. I made plenty of mistakes but developed my true enthusiasm for my profession from this experience on this aircraft. I have often bored people talking about the idiosyncrasies of this magnificent bird. I flew in the T5 twice and it was an experience I shall never forget. Most of the pilots have passed into history and there are only a few maintainers left who will remember the QRA, the unintentional wheels up landing of OC 5 Squadron, the 52 Air-to-Air firing sorties in one day with 8 aircraft at RAF Luqa; as you can see I am proud to be able to say I am a WIWOL (when I was on Lightning). Anyway, I am far too nostalgic for my own good. I am so pleased that this aircraft is being restored."*

Bruntingthorpe 26th July ...

A short note on this as there is not too much to report. As always the LPG put on a great day & we were very pleased to catch up with all our old friends. We were able to part with a bit more wonderful AALO merchandise and raise a few more dollars for the cause.

Michael & Linda Cartwright were good enough to use the occasion to present us with a cheque for £50 so a big thanks to them.

Shoreham RAFA Air show 22nd 23rd August ...

For the first time we attended the RAFA air show at Shoreham this year. A thoroughly different experience for Phil Kingsbury and myself as the audience is very much a 'prop' crowd and as an event to attend it really was a great experience. The layout of the airfield, the 1930's tower, and the way the event is laid out all contribute.

While there was certainly a lot of interest in what we were doing, and not a little astonishment in some quarters, financially it could have been better. That said the £1 donation pot did well over the weekend.

Dave Hurst was kind enough to consider us again as a home for his collection of Lightning memorabilia and we were able to raffle one of his pictures on the Sunday, as well as having a couple of other donations which will see the light of day in 2010.

Charles and Phil's wife, Pat, gave of their time on Sunday so thank you to them for their help.

October Electrical Trip to Stennis ...

It's widely accepted within the project that the electrical work on the aircraft had been lagging a little behind the mechanical progress through no fault of our electrical team. The enormity of their early-years task in identifying the cables through the transport joint and marrying them back up was a real time thief.

I'm happy to report now that Rod, John & Bo, ably assisted by Nick Woodhouse, had a cracking October at Stennis and at worst the electrical status is now level pegging with the mechanical progress.

Rod's tenure at Stennis must have seemed like a lifetime as he kindly agreed to give the project nearly 5 weeks of his time and became

an honorary Mississippi resident. His sanity was preserved with some great musical evenings at the Mockingbird Cafe and an occasional Southern Pecan beer from our friends at the Lazy Magnolia Brewery.



While Rod was on-site early October through to November, he was joined for the first 10 days by John Sherry & Bo Brocklesby, as well as myself and my video camera.

The primary goal was to prove the AC & DC systems about the aircraft and John & Bo set about this with great enthusiasm on arrival. With nearly 300 fuses and their relevant systems the guys worked tenaciously to climb this mountain, applying 28 volts to the service side of the fuses and then testing out the business end of the circuits for integrity. Just a few of the circuits were a simple run, quickly approved, but many take a varied route through the aircraft, in some cases through LRUs or consumer units not yet in

place. These had to be 'dummied' into the circuits. With just 1 exception, all the circuits were drawing what was typically expected and well below their fuse ratings.

Additionally, with all the fuses removed, each fuse holder was tested for conductivity.

John & Bo finished their tenure having proved the AC & DC systems for Number 1 Engine start

and control.



Following their departure Rod was joined, a week later, by Nick Woodhouse & Andrew Brodie. In the interim Rod continued working up a detailed electrical survey of XS422, front to back, which will form the basis of electrical work on the aircraft from here on in. This highlights missing items or unfinished areas of work, plus any snags.

Like the rest of Rod's documentation, this is all now being recorded electronically, allowing it to be shared with team members around the UK and available to teams on site at Stennis. It also means it can be quickly and easily converted to a report if needed.

With Nick's arrival Rod was able to pick up where John & Bo had left off and set about the number 2 engine circuitry, which they duly completed testing on. This milestone now means that engine start and reheat control for both engines is electrically all checked and functional.

Rod and Nick also carried out insulation checks on the AC systems by checking for earth leakage from start to finish on the AC power lines.

While all this was in progress Andrew was busy fitting the Number 1 bay heat shields as well as carrying out his important PR duties.

To summarise the progress made, the AC & DC systems have now been proved throughout the whole aircraft.

With just 6 fuses removed (systems requiring further investigation) and all other fuses in, DC power can safely be applied to the aircraft.

AC wise all wiring has been tested functional and it's a case of filling the gaps with the consumer units and LRUs, being made serviceable separately.



An overall system check has revealed a remarkable degree of system integrity. This is an enormous endorsement of the quality of the reconnection work carried out over the years by all the electrical team. A great variety of electricians have visited over the years so this has been the first opportunity to benchmark their work.

Rod is currently working on electrical plans for the next visit early in 2010 and together with Phil Wallis we should see another rolling trip coming together soon.





some post trip thank you's ...

Bill Gibson & his Thrifty Car Hire business, Gulfport, MS. Bill was once again hugely generous in the rate he was able to offer us during our stay. A huge help very much appreciated. Thank you Bill.

Wendy & Jim Bell & Joe. For continuing to be such wonderful friends to the project and to all the guys in our team. Thank you for taking us out and thank you for your continued project help.

Colby Blackwell. Colby has long been our accommodation angel in Gulfport and again was able to source us the rooms we needed for the team. Thanks as always.

Adam Graff. We have improved the efficiency of our US accommodations now by putting the larger teams into houses. This trip we've found one house that fits us all, and owner Adam Graff was generous in his rate for our stay. Thanks Adam, and we will most definitely be visiting with you again.

And finally ... to the anonymous gentleman in Bay St Louis who was kind enough to donate the team 3 cases of beer to welcome us back and to enjoy in our downtime.

AALO on the US TV News ...

Those of you with email and access to the website will already be aware of this news item but for those who missed it we managed on the recent trip to Stennis to get the project onto the local ABC news.

Thanks in no small part to Ashley and Michelle Lady, great friends of the project in the United States, we were able to welcome WLOX news anchor, Dave Elliott, to the hangar. Dave and his cameraman did us proud with a great piece that went out on 3 main news bulletins, across southern Mississippi, and into the fringes of coastal Alabama and Louisiana.

I'm still getting occasional messages from friends of the project in the States to say they just saw the clip, still available online.

<http://www.wlox.com/global/story.asp?s=11354704>

Blackhawk ...

One of the shining lights in our October trip to Stennis was an introduction from two of our best friends, Wendy Bell & Bill Cotter, to Mr Bill 'BJ' Perrett and his Blackhawk Foundation. A Charitable Foundation looking to make their home at Stennis in the future, Blackhawk's goal is to promote the education of young Americans into aviation and aeronautical careers. This will be achieved through offering scholarships but in the long term through the creation of a study facility & working museum at Stennis.

Bill and his executive team have a huge amount of enthusiasm for what they are trying to achieve and have given much over the past few years in terms of money and time, something that we as a group naturally feel a great empathy with.

After much discussion and opportunities for BJ to meet with Andrew, Charles, Rod and myself, as representatives of AALO, it seemed a very natural step for the two groups to form some sort of association.

The profile that Blackhawk are building in Mississippi and the contacts they have are a huge asset to what we're doing. In return, for Blackhawk to use XS422 in their fund raising adds some serious clout to what they are trying to achieve.

Bill and his team's goal for a facility at Stennis will, in time, afford us an opportunity to move down the airfield into a larger hangar with the back-up in equipment and manpower terms of a much bigger organisation operating other classic jets.

In the meantime we predict much collaboration and friendship and are happy to be ambassadors for the Blackhawk Foundation.



One of the ways that Blackhawk will fund raise is to hold Classic Jet fly-ins at Stennis, as well as other locations around the United States, the first of which was held during our recent visit.

Supporting Blackhawk in a similar way to ourselves are a growing number of L-39 owner pilots, 5 of whom were able to bring their aircraft to Stennis for a display as well as offering 2nd seat rides to raise donations.

The day brought in a great variety of visitors and interested parties, including local State Senator, David Baria, who is throwing his political weight behind the foundation.

At the conclusion of the day Rod and I were able to show all the pilots and their families around XS422. A late night at the hangar but well worth it for the enthusiasm shown.

Many of the pilots have 'day jobs' and we have generously been offered all kinds of assistance, from discounted instrumentation to help with FAA certification.

The next fly-in will be at the end of April 2010 and while it may not coincide with our spring trip we are working on having some sort of presence and supporting Bill and his team on the day.

The picture shows 3 of the L-39s lined up on the day

Digital AALO ...

As I alluded to earlier, AALO now has it's best ever virtual presence, something I hope will increase our international profile particularly. With thanks to Graham Bird, a little bit of Yorkshire in San Francisco, we now have a twitter account and with the other ways you can find out about the project it's listed below.

Our Website www.lightning422supporters.co.uk

Our FaceBook <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=277490860007&ref=nf>

Our Twitter <http://twitter.com/EELighting>

We so far have 179 followers on Twitter & 53 members on Facebook. Please tell as many people as possible to help spread the word.

New Team Member ...

Showing that even this far into the restoration it's not too late to sign up to the cause, we're delighted to welcome on board Mel Hawes to the engineering team.

Mel is an instrument tradesman, who did two tours on Lightnings with the RAF, 56 & 29 Squadrons. He then served several years on the Saudi Lightnings. He worked for Britannia Airways for many years and Airbus Industries at Toulouse. He now works at Kiddlington , fitting out Police and military helicopters with the special equipment.

We look forward to working with Mel on future trips to Stennis and on the preparation of the cockpit instrumentation here in the UK.

Donations ...

Donating to AALO just got easier as the supporters group now has a paypal account. For one off donations or your annual subs, it will hopefully save a stamp and those old fashion cheques .. The email address to make your Paypal payments to is aalo.xs422@gmail.com

Leading by example, Andrew has recently put another £2k into the project which should help substantially toward the spring trip. Naturally the more we can raise towards the trip the more engineers we can afford to put on the ground in America.

Big thanks also go to Michael & Linda Cartwright who presented us with a cheque at Bruntingthorpe for £50. This is in addition to their continuing membership of the SG.

John Horrod has also kindly made another gift of £250. Many thanks John for your generous support.

Oshkosh 2010 ...



As you may recall from earlier newsletters we will be taking AALO to Oshkosh in 2010, our first visit.

For the uninitiated, Oshkosh, in Wisconsin, is the home of the EAA (Experimental Aircraft Association). Each year towards the end of July they hold "AirVenture", a massive fly-in with workshops, forums, air displays and sales.

We have identified AirVenture as our best realistic opportunity to find a major sponsor or investor to finish the restoration of XS422. The sheer volume of aviation enthusiasts and the calibre of some of those attending should give us some much needed exposure to the American aviation market.

Most likely we will take a small team of 3 or 4 representatives with us, in addition to which Jon Roth and his family will be attending, as they do each year.

We will have a stand in one of the hangars to which we can welcome prospective investors and it will be furnished with photographs, printed literature and information packs.

We will of course be reporting back in the autumn of 2010 with our progress at the event.

If you feel you may be able to assist our attendance at AirVenture, either financially, or in terms of goods & services that may be of use to us for the event then please get in touch.

We will have airfares and hotel accommodation to find, over and above the usual trips to Stennis, however this investment will be worth it if we come away from the event with a serious sponsor.

Baby Boom ...

By some strange coincidence we have had a major AALO baby boom recently and all born to our Johns ... and Jon! Not strictly aviation related but definitely project news, congratulations go to;

John & Claire Watson, on the arrival of Milly

John & Evie Sherry, on the arrival of Savannah

Jon & Marie Roth, on the arrival of Jonathan

Gone to the Blue Sky ...

Dave Stock

Dave Stock was a brilliant pilot, who had a highly accomplished record of flying many classes of aircraft. After serving with distinction on a Cheetah Squadron with the SAAF, Dave joined SAA and flew 737s and 747s, finally leaving the airline very recently with the rank of Captain to pursue other aviation interests.

Dave Stock first flew one of Thunder City's iconic English Electric Lightnings in 1999, a year after the base was established at Cape Town International Airport. He was also certified to fly the Hawker Hunters and BAe Strikemaster at the base.

In 2005 Dave set an All Africa time-to-altitude record in a Thunder City English Electric Lightning T5 at the SAAF Ysterplaat Air Show, taking 102 seconds to reach 9 000 metres (30000 ft) from a standing start. He was an exceptional pilot and was more recently involved at the SAAF's TFDC base Overberg, as the chief test pilot on the BAE Systems Hawk Mk120 lead-in fighter programme.

Over the past decade he had performed in hundreds of airshows all over South Africa, to the delight of thousands of spectators, who watched him perform breathtaking displays with consummate skill. As an integral part of Thunder City he had also piloted many aviation enthusiasts from around the world on their 'second seat ride'.

Those who knew him well cite, among his other qualities, his dry sense of humour, camaraderie, his extraordinary knowledge of flying, his mild manner, confidence, and high skill as a pilot.

Dave was unquestionably a true gentleman of the skies

Alec Field Atkin CBE

At the beginning of July the death was announced of Alec Atkin CBE. Not a name that will be familiar to too many people but as you read on you'll quickly realise the huge part he played in British aviation history and his significance for Lightnings.

Having left school at 15 and completed an apprenticeship with Blackburn Aircraft, in 1943 he won scholarships from Blackburn Aircraft and from Hull Corporation for 2 years study at Hull University to read aeronautical engineering.

Subject to a wartime emergency works order he joined the English Electric Company in 1945 working as part of their design team at Preston as a technical assistant on aerodynamics. Following a return to University he rejoined English Electric in the summer of 1950 as an aerodynamicist. Later that year he was placed in charge of the new Flight Test Department, then dealing with the Canberra programme and then in 1954 with flight testing the P1, the first UK (and European) truly supersonic aeroplane, a missile-armed fighter capable of exceeding twice the speed of sound, later named the Lightning.

At the end of 1954 he was promoted to Deputy Chief Aerodynamicist and in 1957 Head of Experimental Aerodynamics, supervising wind tunnel activities in addition to flight testing activities. With further progress in the development of the Lightning and the coming into production of the early marks of aircraft, he was appointed Assistant Chief Engineer, Lightning in 1959. Later that year with ultimately 5 marks of Lightning progressively being developed and coming into production he was appointed Project Manager Lightning, responsible for all aspects of bringing these aircraft into operational service in the RAF. With these responsibilities he then took a leading role in successfully promoting exports of the Lightning to Saudi Arabia and to Kuwait. During this period there were progressive amalgamations of the UK aerospace companies, English Electric Aviation becoming a major part of British Aircraft Corporation. In an impressive career with what was to become British Aerospace Alec worked his way up the company finally being promoted to Managing Director (Military) of British Aerospace and Chairman of each of the Warton, Kingston-Brough and Manchester Divisions. He was appointed Managing Director, Marketing, British Aerospace in 1981 and retired from the company in 1982.



His career was crowned with an OBE in 1969 and then the CBE in 1978.

Foot note ...

Peter & Margaret Thompson were good enough to supply me with a photograph of the fated ZU-BEX (formally XS451) to use in this newsletter as they had fond memories of visiting Thunder City in 2004. As I have dedicated this newsletter to Dave Stock, I thought it more appropriate to outline 451's history in the next newsletter. Thank you for sending it and I will use it.

For membership enquiries ... just £20 per year ... please email nholman@globalnet.co.uk

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