Aviation group Events

Next Meeting Wednesday 27th May

Start 10-30 at The Tythings

Terry's video show

June 24th
The prone Meteor - a talk by a former RAE Scientist

In Snipits this month

(Where applicable links are left in place)

Local events/Meetings

British Airliner Collection – Part 2

RAF Boulmer : Air C2 Force that controls the skies

Blackbushe Heritage Trust April update

Aircraft Clean at RAF Museum Midlands

Design contract for next-generation British fighter jet

A modified de Havilland DH-114 Heron for sale

Restoration and Relocation A Busy Period for Newark Air Museum

Shuttleworth Aircraft Collection Part 3

If you have stories, pictures or information you think may be of interest to Aviation Group Members

Please contact our leader Paul Cutting

The contents of our extensive library can be accessed on our webpage. We also have a number of aviation related DVDs for loan

There is also information how to borrow a book.
http://www.yateleyu3a.org.uk/cgi-bin/u3agroups.cgi?name=Aviation

What's on See websites for more information

FAST at the Simon Jarvis Lecture Theatre, Farnborough 6th Form College

Tuesday 23 June 2026, 7.30pm

Barracks to Balloons: The Sappers in Aldershot and Farnborough
Presented by Martin Stoneham Hon FInstRE

Admission to this popular talk will be by ADVANCE BOOKING ONLY
Please email distribution@airsciences.org.uk or phone 01252 679898 / 07746 957498

Tuesday 22nd September

Mitchell – Father of the Spitfire Presented by Paul Beaver FRAeS VR

Blackbushe Heritage Trust **Thursday 21 May 2026 19:00 21:30**

"The British Airways Story", with Jim Davies

Jim comes to us from BA's own Heritage Centre, which is located within their "Waterside" Headquarters Building, near to Heathrow's Terminal 5, where he also delivers talks covering the history of the airline, as well as hosting visitors.
You can secure your place/s in advance **here**, or pay on the door on the night. Thanks for your support!

Boscombe Down Aviation Collection On- site Wednesday 13th May 19:00 start

Waterbird A talk by Andrew Cranfield

Waterbird was the first aircraft in the UK to make a successful flight from water when she took off and landed on Lake Windermere on 25 November 1911. Andrew, a renowned aviation specialist and an innovator of human powered flight, was involved in the trials and tribulations of getting the Waterbird replica to achieve flight on Lake Windermere on 13 June 1922.

Tuesday June 9th Aerial Surveillance Part 2 by Phil Nelson

Army Flying Museum Online Lectures | The Army Flying Museum

There is an archive of talks you can watch Online for a fee.

Their popular annual fundraising event, Wallop Wheels and Wings, will take place on both the Museum site and the historic adjacent airfield on Saturday 11 July.

RAeS Farnborough Branch: Winkle and flying German jets

Farnborough College of Technology Tuesday 12 May 19:00 to 21:00

Eric (Winkle) Brown was privileged to fly almost every jet aeroplane for Germany, Britain and the US in the immediate post-war period. The story goes much deeper with his chance witnessing of the first British jet flight in 1941. Paul Beaver, his biographer, gives some important background on Britain's Greatest Pilot's experiences.

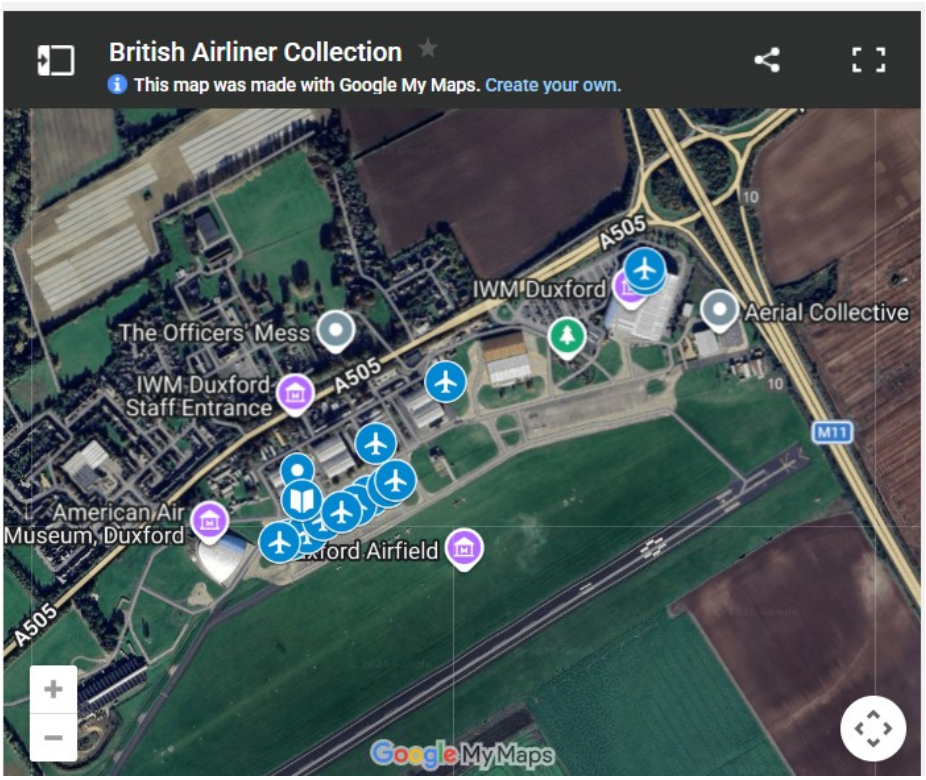
Source: [The British Airliner Collection Website]

The British Airliner Collection

The Blackbushe Heritage Trust throughout the year runs a series of talks which take place in the Pathfinder Cafe on the third Thursday of the month.

The talk in March was given by David Norman from the Civil Aircraft Section of The Duxford Aviation Society. The Airliner Collection has expanded from a single aircraft in 1974 to 13 today. The following is extracted from the collection's website.

Our airliners have been assembled over the past 50 years and represent the most complete collection of British airliners in the world.
The map below shows the location of the aircraft in the collection.



Part 2

Bristol Britannia 312 (1958)
Vickers Super VC10 (1958)
Hawker Siddeley Trident 2E (1967)
BAC One-Eleven 510 ED (1969)
BAC/Aerospatiale Concorde 101 (1971)
Britten-Norman Trislander (1977)
British- Aerpspace BAe 146 Statesman (1985)

Bristol Britannia 312 (1958)

Bristol Britannia 312 (1958)

With BOAC, this aircraft inaugurated the first round-the-world service in 1959
This aircraft flew the last passenger service, by a Britannia, in Europe on 14 October 1974
Called the ‘Whispering Giant’ because of its very quiet engines
Used by the RAF as a transport and trooping Aircraft
One of the few Western aircraft used by Cuba after the revolution

Vickers Super VC10 (1965)

- The VC10 was the biggest jet airliner built in Britain
- This aircraft crossed the Atlantic in five hours one minute, a record that stood for 41 years
- Its Rolls Royce Conway was the first bypass (turbofan) engine to enter service
- Its smooth ride and quiet cabin made it very popular with passengers
- VC10s served for 48 years with the RAF as tankers and transports

Hawker Siddeley Trident 2E (1967)

- Could land in all weather conditions, including fog
- Made the first ‘blind’ landing, with passengers, on 4 November 1966
- One of the fastest subsonic airliners, cruising at over 610 mph (980 km/h)
- Trident 1s could use reverse thrust in mid-air to slow down
- Sold by BEA to Cyprus airways, this aircraft was damaged by gunfire during the Turkish invasion

BAC One-Eleven 510ED (1969)

- The last all-British airliner to be built
- The most successful British jet airliner of its day, with 244 built
- A rare British success in America; 69 were sold to US airlines
- Flew over a million hours with BEA/BA, with no passenger fatalities
- Led the way with a two-crew flight deck

BAC/Aerospatiale Concorde 101 (1971)

- Concorde 101 was the second British-built Concorde
- It was the fastest ever Concorde, at Mach 2.23 (1,450 mph, 2330 kph)
- On 7 November 1974, it set a new record by crossing the Atlantic in 2 hours 56 minutes
- It was used only for testing and never carried passengers
- Unlike passenger Concordes, it had escape hatches for the crew

Britten-Norman Trislander (1977)

- The world's smallest three-engined airliner
- Carried passengers and used as an air ambulance
- Fully loaded, can take off in only 460 metres
- Developed from the Islander, Britain's bestselling airliner
- Won the Queen's Award to Industry for technological innovation

British Aerospace BAe 146 Statesman (1985)

- This aircraft served with 32 (The Royal) Squadron, successor to the Queen's Flight
- It has a bespoke luxury interior for only 19 passengers
- The most successful British jet airliner, with 387 built
- Very quiet, the 146 was the first jet airliner to use London City Airport
- The last jet airliners built in Britain

Source: Britsh Forces News

From RAF Boulmer to the Middle East: Air C2 Force that controls the skies explained

Air C2 Force personnel help build the recognised air picture from RAF Boulmer and Swanwick, supporting UK air defence around the clock (Picture: RAF)

The Air Command and Control Force, usually shortened to Air C2 Force, is one of the RAF's least visible formations, but one of its most important.
It conducts 24/7 air command and control of the UK, assigned Nato airspace and overseas locations, while also providing tactical air command and control, air traffic and airspace management for air assets in the UK and abroad.

It is based at RAF Boulmer in Northumberland and at NATS Swanwick in Hampshire.

What's the role of the Air C2 Force?

This is the force that helps turn radar feeds, radio traffic and surveillance data into a usable picture of what is happening in the sky.

Its operators monitor aircraft, identify unknown tracks, support Quick Reaction Alert tasks and help direct military air activity safely through crowded airspace.

19 Squadron, the frontline tactical Air C2 unit at Boulmer, provides persistent air surveillance and tactical air command and control for Nato and UK air defence tasks as well as deployed operations worldwide.

Meanwhile, 20 Squadron trains personnel for tactical Air C2 roles, and 144 Signals Unit maintains and deploys the engineering backbone that supports the system across the UK.

At Swanwick, 78 Squadron provides air traffic control, airspace management, air defence resilience and other enabling functions from inside the London Area Control Centre run by NATS

What is the history of the force?

The work has roots in Britain's wartime air defence network, where radar and fighter control were used to detect threats and direct aircraft.

RAF Boulmer has had an RAF presence since 1940 and was selected in 1953 for a new air defence control centre during the Cold War, later developing into both a Sector Operations Centre and a Control and Reporting Centre.

The technology has changed, but the job has not. The RAF's Guardian system at Boulmer combines radar and radio data into a real-time map to help protect the UK from aerial threats, while the force's role now stretches beyond home defence.

Currently, deployed Air C2 Force personnel are supporting coalition air defence in the Middle East, helping coordinate activity in congested regional airspace.

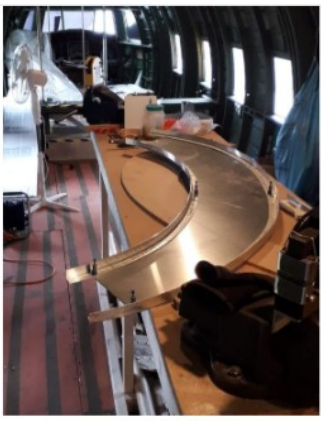
Source: Blackbushe Heritage Trust April 2026

“Vagabond’s” restoration, Part 4….into 2026

___8th April update

With apologies for the break of around 6 weeks since the last update, we’re back in early April with a comprehensive update on the parts of “Vagabond” that have been the focus of work in the weeks since the end of February.
They have been as detailed below….
The rebuild of the rear of the fuselage, the fin and the horizontal stabilisers (tailplanes) was, as previous updates show, intended to be one of the main work areas of work during 2026, and that work has continued. The pictures below show the fabrication of various parts of the rear structure, as follows

Fabrication and trial fitment of rear fuselage repair pieces

The stubs of the horizontal stabilisers (also part of the tail section of the aircraft) continued to see more work….

-

Work also continued on building and then trial-fitting a jig on which to mount the fin. The first picture below shows the fuselage damage that needs to be repaired prior to final mounting of the fin jig. The following pictures show the fin jig itself, a bracket that will be used as part of attaching it on top of the fuselage, and a trial fit to where it will finally be located (the bracket from picture 3 can be seen in place in picture 5)….

Another area of continuing work has been the ailerons, which have seen more work on fabricating new pieces to replace damaged parts. Some of this work is shown below, with newly-fabricated parts that can be seen in the 3rd and 4th pictures below

A new area of work within the interior was a front bulkhead (behind the cockpit) that has started to take shape….

….but probably the biggest achievement of the last month has been the final re-mounting of the port engine nacelle. Spar bolts were trial fitted….

….and then, after various trials (and tribulations), it was up….and on!



Finally for this update, the first of the propellers that we had to saw off in order to transport the engines back from Bad Voslau has been pinned (or “dowelled”) together, ready for welding in a local workshop. You can see that it all looks to be in one piece (although the work on it is not yet complete) near to the bottom of the propeller in the picture below:

Source: Vintage Aviation News 8 April 2026

Daring ‘Dustbusters’ Take on 100ft Aircraft Clean at RAF Museum Midlands

A team of specialist rope-access cleaners is taking on a high-flying mission at RAF Museum Midlands—abseiling up to 100 feet to dust and inspect suspended historic aircraft. From a Vulcan bomber to Cold War jets, the daring annual clean helps preserve these aviation icons for future generations while giving visitors a rare behind-the-scenes view.

Photo © RAF Museum (Image credit: Photo © RAF Museum)

A specialist team of “Dustbusters” with a head for heights is undertaking the annual suspended aircraft spring clean at the RAF Museum Midlands. Working up to 100 feet in the air, the team will carefully clean eight iconic aircraft this week, including the Vulcan bomber. Other aircraft receiving attention include the Canberra, Meteor, Sabre, Hunter, Lightning, Dakota and Javelin—each displayed in the Museum’s National Cold War Exhibition.

Photo © RAF Museum (Image credit: Photo © RAF Museum)

Strapped into harnesses and demonstrating nerves of steel, the specialist cleaning crew climbs into the rafters before abseiling down to access the aircraft. Using large, soft-fibre mops, the team gently removes dust without the use of cleaning solutions to preserve the historic surfaces. Alongside cleaning, they are also carrying out safety inspections of the suspension cables that hold the aircraft in their dramatic flying positions. As part of this year's spring clean, additional aircraft across the Museum's other hangars have also been carefully dusted. These include a WWII Wellington bomber, as well as more difficult-to-access aircraft such as the Lincoln, TSR2, JU88, Bristol M.1c and Hart.

—— Photo © RAF Museum (Image credit: Photo © RAF Museum)

Tom Hopkins, Curator at RAF Museum Midlands, said: "Each aircraft in our collection has its own story, and maintaining them properly is essential to ensuring those stories can continue to be shared with future generations. The suspended displays are among the most striking in the Museum, but they also require a highly specialised approach to care. It's fantastic to work with a team that can safely access these aircraft and carry out such work with precision, helping us keep them in excellent condition for all who visit." The Museum remains open throughout the cleaning process, giving visitors a unique opportunity to watch the high-flying team from Totally Wild Access—industrial rope access specialists—in action. The RAF Museum Midlands is open daily from 10:00 a.m., with free admission. Visit rafmuseum.org/midlands to plan your visit.

For more information about the RAF Museum Midlands, visit www.rafmuseum.org.uk/midlands/

Source: UK Defence Journal 2 April 2026

Design contract for next-generation British fighter jet

The Global Combat Air Programme (GCAP) has awarded its first joint international contract as an integrated trilateral programme.

The £686 million contract has been placed with Edgewing, the joint venture formed by BAE Systems, Leonardo and Japan Aircraft Industrial Enhancement Co. Ltd., to lead the design and development of the next-generation combat aircraft, according to the programme.

The award covers key design and engineering work and is intended to accelerate delivery as the UK, Italy and Japan deepen cooperation under GCAP, which aims to field a future stealth fighter.

Masami Oka, Chief Executive of the GCAP Agency, said: *“This contract is an important moment for GCAP, as activities previously conducted under three nations’ contracts will now be carried out as part of a fully-fledged international programme.”*

The contract, awarded on 1 April, runs until 30 June 2026 and reflects the growing role of the GCAP Agency, established to manage and coordinate the programme on behalf of the three partner nations.

Edgewing, headquartered in the UK, will act as the design authority for the aircraft, overseeing engineering, airworthiness and certification across all phases of development.

GCAP, launched in 2022, is intended to deliver a next-generation combat air system to replace current fast jet fleets and sustain sovereign industrial capability across the partner nations.

Source: Vintage Aviation News

A Modified1954 de Havilland DH-114 Heron for Sale

A 1954 de Havilland DH-114 Heron has been listed for sale, offering a rare chance to acquire a classic four-engine regional airliner. Upgraded with Lycoming engines and maintained for continued airworthiness, the aircraft remains a unique survivor of its type.

1954 de Havilland DH-114-2X Heron. (Image credit: Platinum Fighter Sales)

A 1954 de Havilland DH-114 Heron has been listed for sale by Platinum Fighter Sales, bringing another example of the postwar British airliner onto the market. The Heron first flew in 1950 and was developed from the smaller de Havilland Dove, but with a longer fuselage and four engines instead of two. It was designed as a simple, durable aircraft for short regional routes, with a low-wing layout and tricycle landing gear. Production ran into the early 1950s, with 149 aircraft built, many of which were exported and operated across different parts of the world.

The aircraft currently on offer, registered as N415SA, has accumulated approximately 21,000 hours total time on the airframe. It is powered by four Lycoming IO-540 engines as part of a later conversion from the original Gipsy engines, a modification that improved both performance and reliability. The engines have 896, 1,140, 1,654, and 864 hours since major overhaul, respectively, with compressions reported at 70 or better. All four propellers have 365 hours since overhaul. This aircraft has been converted to the DH-114-2X standard, replacing the original engines with American-built Lycoming units and three-blade, full-feathering Hartzell propellers. The change improves both performance and day-to-day reliability. The avionics fit is fairly straightforward, with a Trig VHF radio, ADS-B transponder, and a localizer with glideslope. In service, the aircraft cruises at around 170 knots and typically burns between 50 and 60 gallons of fuel per hour.

Early DH-114 Herons were originally limited to 15,000 hours on the wing spars, after which many were taken out of service. That changed in the 1970s when U.S. operator Swift Aire Lines introduced an FAA-approved life extension modification, known as a spar strap, developed by Winters Engineering. The modification was installed across its fleet, including N415SA, and increased the allowable airframe life to 30,000 hours. It remains recognized by the FAA, as well as the UK CAA and EASA, allowing the aircraft to continue operating within those limits. N415SA currently sits at around 20,000 hours total time.

—— 1954 de Havilland DH-114-2X Heron. (Image credit: Platinum Fighter Sales)

The aircraft is configured to carry up to 15 passengers, along with a flight attendant and two pilots, and features large cabin windows. It is certificated at 11,499 pounds and can be operated by a single pilot without the need for a type rating. The aircraft is currently based in Sweden, where it is stored in a heated hangar and has undergone recent inspection and repair work. According to Platinum Fighter Sales, this particular Heron is believed to be the last flying example of the type. Originally delivered to Turkish Airlines in the 1950s, the aircraft later operated with regional carriers in the United States and Hawaii. Over its lifetime, it has crossed both the Atlantic and Pacific oceans twice.

In recent years, while based in Sweden, the aircraft has undergone a detailed inspection and repair program aimed at returning it to flight-ready condition. The work included bringing the airframe and engines into compliance with all applicable airworthiness directives and modifications. The aircraft has remained active since its construction in the United Kingdom in 1954. The aircraft is currently available through Platinum Fighter Sales for $269,000. **For more information on this aircraft, click HER**

From Wikipedia De Havilland Heron 2D

General characteristics

Crew: Two. **Capacity:** 14 passengers
Length: 48 ft 6 in (14.78 m) **Wingspan:** 71 ft 6 in (21.79 m)
Height: 15 ft 7 in (4.75 m) **Wing area:** 499 sq ft (46.4 m2)
Empty weight: 8,150 lb (3,697 kg) **Max takeoff weight:** 13,500 lb (6,123 kg)
Fuel capacity: 412 imp gal (495 US gal; 1,870 L)[27]
Powerplant: 4 × de Havilland Gipsy Queen 30 Mk.2 6-cylinder inverted inline air-cooled piston engine, 250 hp (190 kW) each
Propellers: 2-bladed D.H. 2/1000/2 constant-speed propellers, 7 ft 0 in (2.13 m) diameter [27]

Performance

- **Cruise speed:** 183 mph (295 km/h, 159 kn) **Range:** 915 mi (1,473 km, 795 nmi)
- **Service ceiling:** 18,500 ft (5,600 m) **Rate of climb:** 1,140 ft/min (5.8 m/s)
- **Takeoff distance to 50 ft (15 m):** 2,425 ft (739 m)[27**Landing distance from 50 ft (15 m):** 2,065 ft (629 m)[27]Source: Vintage Aviation News 18 April 2026

Restoration Progress and Relocation Mark Busy Period for Newark Air Museum

Newark Air Museum reports progress on the restoration of Lightning T.5 XS417, now featuring its distinctive 56 Squadron “Firebird” tail markings. Meanwhile, the on-loan cockpit of Lightning F.6 XR757 has left the museum after more than a decade on display, relocating to a new home in North East Lincolnshire.

Lightning XS417. Photo via Newark Air Museum (Image credit: Newark Air Museum)

The Newark Air Museum (NAM) continues to make steady progress on two significant English Electric Lightning-related developments, highlighting both restoration achievements and collection changes at the Lincolnshire site. Work has advanced on the ongoing restoration of Lightning T.5 XS417, with museum volunteers taking advantage of recent warmer weather to apply the distinctive 56 Squadron “Firebird” markings to the aircraft’s tail fin. This latest milestone brings the long-running project closer to completion, enhancing the aircraft’s historical accuracy and visual impact. The application of these iconic markings represents a key stage in the restoration, reflecting the museum’s commitment to preserving the legacy of one of Britain’s most celebrated Cold War interceptors.

Photo via Newark Air Museum

In a separate development, the on-loan cockpit section of Lightning F.6 XR757 departed the museum on Thursday, March 26, 2026, to begin a new chapter at a location in North East Lincolnshire. The cockpit had been part of the Newark Air Museum collection since the summer of 2015, when it was relocated following the closure of its previous display site at RAF Scampton.

While on display at NAM, the cockpit provided visitors with a rare opportunity—albeit limited—to view the interior of the Lightning's highly compact and complex flight deck, offering a unique insight into the aircraft's operational environment. The relocation brings the cockpit closer to its owner's home and ensures its continued preservation and display in a new setting. Meanwhile, restoration efforts on XS417 continue to underscore NAM's active role in safeguarding the heritage of the English Electric Lightning.

Further updates on both projects are expected as work progresses. For more information about Newark Air Museum and its collection, readers can explore previous coverage on Vintage Aviation News.

For more information about Newark Air Museum, visit www.newarkairmuseum.org.

—— Aerial view of the Newark Air Museum (Image credit: Newark Air Museum)

Source: Shuttleworth Collection

_The Shuttleworth Collection

PART 3

Established by our founder, Richard Ormonde Shuttleworth and now maintained and cared for by the Shuttleworth Trust, the Shuttleworth Collection is a treasure trove of airworthy vintage aircraft from 1909-1950, as well as historical agricultural and steam exhibits, veteran cars, classic motorcycles, bicycles, vintage buses and carriages.

Visiting on a Friday or Sunday? From 1 March - 2 October* why not enjoy a guided tour of our Collection hangars? Available to book with your Daily Admission ticket.

Museums have curators, we have engineers

Unlike a static museum, almost all of our Collection aircraft fly (including Edwardian aircraft, like the 1909 Blériot) and our vehicles, motorbikes, buses and steam exhibits run. Our interactive airfield defence Bofors gun can also be operated by those aged 3 to 93.

Maintaining a working Collection doesn't happen without a dedicated team of knowledgeable and passionate engineers who work tirelessly throughout the year to restore and preserve these incredible machines so that they can be enjoyed by future generations.

Visitors can see the team at work in our Engineering Workshop, as well as experiencing these machines on the ground and in the air at many Shuttleworth events.

Fauvel AV-36

Gloster Gladiator I

Hawker Cygnet (replica)

Hawker Hind

Hawker Hurricane XIIa

Hawker Sea Hurricane Ib

Hawker Tomtit

Mignet HM14 'Pou-du-Ciel' (Flying Flea)

Miles Hawk Speed Six

Miles M14 Hawk Trainer 3

Miles M14A Magister

Otto Lilienthal - Kleiner Doppeldecker (replica)