



The Fly Navy Heritage Trust

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FNHT Supporters Newsletter

November 2009

*Welcome to the new look Supporters Newsletter. We have tried to make it more interesting by including photographs from our events and from the Flight. We hope you will enjoy this new format: Nick Foster.*

Introduction  
Covington CBE

7 Vby the Chairman of the Fundraising Committee Commodore Bill



In June myself to look at a vision and way forward to generate significantly greater funds for the Trust (ergo the Historic Flight) in order to make the Flight the First-In-Class Naval Historic Flight throughout the world. With the added participation of a small group of supportive High Net Worth individuals, this group, ca is identifying the steps in what would need to be done to achieve this vision. In brief, with the help of significant endowments, the Flight would operate several more aircraft types in addition to the current

holdings. These may include piston and jet aircraft plus helicopters such as Sea Vixen, Seafire, Corsair, Wasp amongst others, but with an aspiration to ultimately include an airworthy Sea Harrier. These types of aircraft are either on the market now or could be acquired at some time in the future. They may not necessarily be owned by the Flight (MoD), but might be more efficiently operated if owned by the FNHT (CAA registered and maintained), but flown by the Flight and other federated pilots. Other privately owned naval aircraft (eg Walrus, Gannet) may also be included to

not attempt to operate all types each season, but have a lead of say four or five aircraft each year and rotate through the types over a longer period.

The FNHT Trustees received a full brief and presentation from the Swordfish Committee on 29 September and approved the next step to engage with naval and other agencies in order to produce a campaign plan to secure the vision's funding, support structure and milestones. It would

ative early next year in the post FN100 era, but the FNHT Trustees would like the Supporters Group to be made aware at this stage of the work.



The Royal Navy Historic Flight gets a new CO



John Beattie has now retired and has been replaced by a fulltime serving officer as the Commanding Officer Royal Navy Historic Flight.

Many of you will know Lieutenant Commander Mike Abbey MBE RN who has previously been a Swordfish display pilot with the Flight.

Mike was born in Norwich in 1956 but brought up and educated in Bicester, Oxfordshire. The gliding bug bit early as a result of many happy hours helping his father build and repair gliders and small aeroplanes. He began flying at the age of 12, soloing on his 16th birthday. Mike joined the Royal Navy in 1975 and trained on the Bulldog and Gazelle before qualifying as a Commando helicopter pilot with 845 NAS flying the Wessex HU.5.

In 1979 he converted to the Westland Wasp as Frigate Flight Commander in HMS Bacchante, serving in the Mediterranean, Indian Ocean and Africa. After completing the QHI course in 1981 he moved to 705 NAS at RNAS Culdrose teaching ab-initio helicopter pilots the intricacies of the Gazelle - a most satisfying task. A return to 845 NAS Wessex beckoned with tours in Norway, Northern Ireland and the West Indies embarked in HMS Fearless.

In 1986 Mike converted to the Lynx helicopter as Flight Commander in HMS Boxer, deploying to the Baltic and defending the Iceland/Faroes Gap, later moving to 829 NAS HQ Flt as the Training Officer. Promoted Lieutenant Commander in 1988 he joined the Naval Flying Standards Flight (Rotary Wing), flying and examining on the Sea King, Lynx and Gazelle. A return to the Commando world as Senior Pilot of 707 NAS on the Sea King HC.4 followed, later rejoining 845 NAS again but this time as the Commanding Officer with deployments to Brunei, Malaysia and the East Coast of America and tours in Bosnia working under the UN and IFOR.

Mike's first non-flying job in twenty five years came in 1998 when he became Deputy Commanding Officer of the RN Commando Helicopter Force. Appointed an MBE in 1999 he was keen to return to flying duties and in 2001 migrated across to the fixed wing fraternity and the Jetstream T.3s of 750 NAS Heron Flt. In 2002 he began displaying the Swordfish with RNHF and later became Flight Commander, a post he relinquished in 2005 on his appointment as an Air Accident Investigation Advisor. He moved job in October 2007 to become Lt Cdr (Flying) at Yeovilton, in effect operating as the airfield manager. In September 2009 he took over from John Beattie and superseded Lt Cdr Phil Thornton as the RNHF Commanding Officer, and will soon be converting the new Swordfish display pilots. During his career he has amassed 5,000 rotary-wing and 1,500 fixed-wing flying hours.

U s appointment signifies a change of emphasis in the way the Royal Navy supports the Flight. Along with the obvious PR and recruiting benefit the Flight provides to the MOD, much is being U s fighting efficiency by outwardly supporting our unique and courageous past. The Flight plays an essential part in spreading this message around the country and reminding the public of our illustrious past.

The Royal Navy Historic Flight update by Mike Abbey



*With such a key year for Naval Aviation, the lack of a flying Swordfish at any of the FN 100 events has been very keenly felt by all in the Flight. Unfortunately, circumstances conspired against us and we were unable to get LS326 back in the air after her engine problems. The Pegasus engine repair stalled due to the unavailability of piston rings. What we initially thought was going to be an easy problem to resolve, was halted by having to manufacture the piston rings from scratch. Cast iron of the correct specification and dimensions was unavailable in this country and we ended up going to Poland to have the metal made and cast into the correct tubular size. On the up side, because we had to procure a minimum amount but in excess of requirements, we now own the*

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*The rings were completed by FJ Engineering in October and subsequently delivered to Deltair for the Pegasus repair to progress. Best estimate is that the engine will be completed, bench tested and*

returned to the Flight in November. That leaves us the remainder of the winter period to fit, fly and test the aircraft in time for the 2010 display season.

Sea Fury VR930 remains in the Flight hangar undergoing minor repairs and awaiting its Centaurus engine from Vintage V12, California. Guess what the overhaul is waiting for, yep piston rings. Luckily, we know someone with a few to spare! You have to admire these clever designers using common sizes for all their engines during this period of aviation history! The latest estimate for the engine returning to the UK is early spring 2010, with a high probability of making an airborne appearance next season.

The Sea Hawk was reunited with its Nene engine and was back in the air on 28 August. After a comprehensive set of test flights and pilot training, the aircraft was able to catch the end of the display season making appearances at Leuchars, the National Arboretum and Southport. Lt Ian Sloan, our latest pilot, converted successfully onto the Sea Hawk and has already managed to complete a flypast and display. The aircraft is now back in a maintenance program ready to return to the air again in the spring.

In the absence of Sea Fury and Swordfish this year, John Beattie has been displaying the Kennet Aviation Seafire on our behalf. Our sincere thanks go out to Kennet and John for helping us out and making sure the Flight is not forgotten. O # U † repainted Sea Vixen at many air shows this summer, another stirring sight to ensure the public will not forget classic Fleet Air Arm aircraft. Unfortunately, Matt has been unwell during the latter part of the season and we all wish him a speedy recovery.

rest assured we are making sure that the aircraft will be around for the next 100 years.

### A round-up of events since May 2009.

Charity Golf Day, 1 June 2009

It certainly was the glorious first of June when 86 enthusiastic golfers took to the magnificent course



at Bowood in Wiltshire. Sponsored by AgustaWestland and supported by teams from most of the leading UK Aviation Defence industries, this was a great day out and a closely contested competition. During the day, we were entertained by a spirited flying display by John Beattie in Henry # K lowed by an early dinner and prize giving. The overall team competition was hard fought and it was only on a countback score that the Thales 1 team won the Swordfish trophy. The winning team were also presented with Callaway Golf bags,

kindly donated by Rolls-Royce. There were several other individual prizes for putting, longest drives and nearest the pin. I am delighted to inform our supporters that the day made £10,582 for the Trust.

We will be repeating the Swordfish Tournament at Bowood next year on Monday 7<sup>th</sup> June 2010. Details will be posted on the website soon, but please put it in your diaries now if you want to join us. Bearing in mind this is a fundraising event, the price will again be £600 for a team of four, or £150 per head if you wish to join another group.



## RNAS Yeovilton Air Day, 11 July 2009



Despite the weather once again marring the full flying display at Yeovilton Air Day, the FNHT Supporters Marquee proved a resounding success for those that joined us. The chance to rest on weary feet and take refreshments whilst meeting FNHT staff was taken up by over 130 supporters and their families. We were also fortunate that the First Sea Lord, Commander in Chief Fleet and Rear Admiral Fleet Air Arm all took time out to visit the marquee and chat to our supporters a great opportunity for the supporters to get the

Thanks also to the

which in itself raised a sizeable sum in donations. Jersey Stamps were also represented by displaying their Centenary of Naval Aviation Collection of Stamps.

We were also very pleased to receive at Air Day, a cheque from the Fleet Air Arm Association for £5000 kindly presented to our chairman by Brian Bingham the President of the FAAA (pictured). The donation was in recognition of the FAAA naming the Historic



We are extremely grateful to Jeremy Cozens who generously loaned us his Marquee and directed our team of riggers in putting the thing up and down!

## FNHT Charity Flying Day, 6 September 2009

This was the seventh time that a Charity Flying Day has been held in support of the Historic Flight and despite the economic downturn we were delighted at the level of support that we received from a wide range of the public and our own supporters. Over 120 took the opportunity to experience a flight in a variety of classic aircraft kindly provided by our supporters and enthusiasts. It proved a busy day and almost everyone managed to fly at least once with many taking the



opportunity to take a second ride in a different type. We were also entertained to a spirited flypast by the = Seahawk, M

who were leaving Yeovilton en route for Plymouth Navy Days. A local pub provided a hog roast as well as a bar and the entire event raised £10,337 for the Trust. We are indebted to all the volunteers who helped put up the Marquee, set out the site, act as check in staff, control entry, guide and strap our visitors into aircraft, liaise with Air Traffic Control and especially to k V Cadet Unit (TS Mantle) who did such a fantastic job helping out so enthusiastically in every aspect of the day.

## The Britannia Centenary of Naval Aviation Dinner - 16 October 2009

Our final large event for this year more than lived up to expectations. The weather in Scotland was benign and the evening began with a champagne reception in the Royal Drawing Room during which our guests were taken on exclusive tours of the principal rooms and



compartments in the former Royal Yacht. We were then entertained to Beat Retreat by the Band of Royal Marines Scotland on the jetty alongside, with the salute being taken by our President, Admiral Sir John Treacher KCB. Dinner was served in the State



Rear Admiral Terry Loughran CB and the last Flag Officer Royal Yacht, Rear Admiral Sir Rob Woodard KCVO DL both spoke in their inimitable styles after dinner and recounted tales of the centenary of aviation and a fascinating insight of life on board the Yacht when she was in Service.



The evening certainly was memorable to all those friends and supporters of the Trust who attended. It was especially remarkable as many of the guests live in Scotland, so it gave them a chance to enjoy the Centenary celebrations on their own doorstep. The evening was generously sponsored by the Britannia Trust and the FNHT will return an overall profit of around £10,000; another successful fundraising event!

Reduced Entry to the Fleet Air Arm Museum for FNHT Supporters.

The Director and Trustees of the Fleet Air Arm Museum have been extremely generous and have offered reduced entry for FNHT Supporters and their families. From Jan 1 2010, on production of your FNHT Membership Card (soon to be issued to all supporters) you can come into the Museum for a 50% reduction for up to two adults and a 30% reduction for up to two children (under 16). This means £6 each for adults and children, or £24 for a family of four. (Normal family entry is £34). You can use this offer as many times as you like. See more information about the Museum at their website [www.fleetairarm.com](http://www.fleetairarm.com).



Raise Money for FNHT when you shop online.

We are pleased to announce that you can now raise money for the Trust at no cost to yourself when you shop online. All the major on-line outlets, Amazon, Currys, M & S, Tesco, John Lewis, Boots, Argos etc etc have pledged to donate a percentage of all money you spend through their websites to a charity/cause that you nominate. All you have to do is register as a user at [www.easyfundraising.org.uk](http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk) and then you go straight to whichever on-line store you wish and make your purchase. We then receive a quarterly

that.....please use easyfundraising whenever you purchase anything on-line; the money you help raise goes directly to keep the Historic Aircraft in the air. Please tell all your friends and relations to use this fundraising site as well!

FNHT Supporters Membership Card

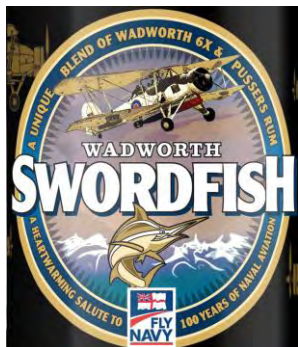
As mentioned in the paragraph above we are planning to issue all our supporters with a membership card which will enable you to gain reduced price entry to the Fleet Air arm Museum. It is hoped to distribute the new cards to all our supporters before January 1 2010, but with a postal strike already underway, please bear with us.

## The Supporters Group

Many of you will recall that in our previous Newsletter, our Chairman asked you all to encourage your friends and relations to help the Trust and join the Supporters Group. We are delighted to inform you all that with your efforts together with some other initiatives by the office staff, we have increased the total membership from around 250 to almost 600 with new applications arriving regularly. Thank you all for your hard work so far; that said, there is no room for complacency as we

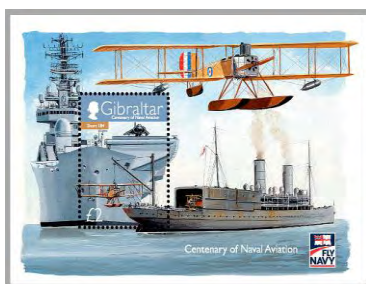
000 paying supporters already. So please keep encouraging your colleagues to join; every penny really does count.

## Swordfish Ale



with an idea to create a special beer to mark the Centenary of naval aviation. This blend of Wadworth 6X and Pilsener Beer was launched on 7 May 2009. Why Swordfish? Quite simply because the Fairey Swordfish is a symbol of the ability to press on and leave others behind whatever the conditions. The beer is brewed with all ingredients that go to make a good quality traditional ale! The beer can be purchased direct from Wadworth by calling 01380 732277 or going to their website [www.wadworth.co.uk/store/products/beer/swordfish](http://www.wadworth.co.uk/store/products/beer/swordfish).

## FN100 Centenary Stamps and Coins



Many of you may be aware of Stamps and Coins that have been produced to celebrate the Centenary. The stamps are all for Commonwealth countries and the coins for the UK market. The FNHT has only been on the periphery of these collectable items but details including purchases can be found by following the centenary of naval aviation stamps



going to the individual country stamp bureaux or for coins going to [www.westminstercollection.com](http://www.westminstercollection.com). A proportion of profits from sales will be donated to the Trust and we have already received over £8000 in royalties, so please support us in this way as well.

## Historic Flight Christmas Cards

The Flight is once again selling Christmas Cards and I have copied the newsletter. In order to save costs, the Flight prefer online sales, but for those who do not have access to the internet, you can obtain cards by phoning the Flight Business Coordinator, Katie Campbell on 01935 456279. The cards are £3.50 for 10 and are A5 size.

## FNHT Personalities.

RAdm Terry Loughran Chairman

Cdre Bill Covington Chairman of Fundraising

Mrs Sue Dible Business and Office Manager

Cdr Nick Foster Events Manager

Mr Bill Burgess Company Secretary

If you have received the newsletter by post you would prefer an e-copy (which saves us money) please let the office know.

## KEY FNHT EVENTS FOR 2010

**Further details will soon be available on our website at [www.royalnavyhistoricflight.org.uk/fnht](http://www.royalnavyhistoricflight.org.uk/fnht) or contact the office on 01935 842005.**

Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> March óThe Eastern Fleets Dinner óHMS President, London

Monday 7<sup>th</sup> June óSwordfish Golf Tournament óBowood

Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> July óRNAS Yeovilton Air Day

31<sup>st</sup> July - FNHT Grand Raffle Draw

Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> September óCharity Flying Day óRNAS Yeovilton

Date TBC óSupporters Party óSomerset