

TRENT VALLEY AVIATION SOCIETY

Newsletter April 2005

Summer is hopefully just around the corner and this issue of the newsletter includes details of the "more interesting" airlines you can expect at NEMA on the summer charter programme. The new TVAS website (www.tvas.info) is still under development and should be up and running in the coming months – until then the URL is now live and linked to the TVAS webpage on another site . . . more hopefully next issue.

SOCIAL EVENTS : 2005.

The following meetings, all to be held on the **THIRD MONDAY** of the month, are now confirmed. Our venue (unless otherwise stated) is Diseworth Village Hall (just ½ mile south of EMA and just round the corner from the Bull & Swan pub). Car parking is available at the rear of the hall. Arrive around 7:30pm for a quick drink (beer/cider £1.20, other drinks 50p) before a prompt 7:45pm start. If you're a first time visitor to the Village Hall, just give any of the Committee Members a phonecall for directions or take a look on the website under TVAS www.tvas.info

MON 18th APRIL 2005

External Speaker **CHRIS WALKDEN**, a long standing aviation enthusiast and employee of Manchester Airport, Chris will present an illustrated talk to us about his trip to the Baykonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan to see a manned Russian space launch !! The second half of the meeting will be a "blast from the past" with photo's from yesteryear at Manchester and on Chris's extensive trips around the world. This meeting will also be open to non-members.

MON 16th MAY 2005

Slides **MIKE SNOWDEN** - worthy winner of both the civil and military slide trophies in the 2004 TVAS photo competition, Mike will treat us to an evening of slides from his recent trips around the UK.

MON 20th JUNE 2005

TVAS AGM **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING** - the one "must attend" meeting for TVAS members. Your opportunity to "steer" the TVAS ship - let us know how you want to see the Society developing in the year to come. A follow up subject (slides/pictures) will be shown if time permits.

WED 6th JULY 2005

Bar-B-Q **BAR-B-Q** - note the "non-meeting" date for this year's Bar-B-Q. It has been changed from a Monday night to a Wednesday night in order for us to hopefully see the Lufthansa Cargo MD11F arrive in the fading evening light. Graham will again act as chef, ably assisted by Linda, with burgers and other hot goodies available for a small charge.
Open to members, their friends and families and non-members too - the more the merrier.

MON 18th JULY 2005

Speaker **MICK BAJCAR** - slides. Mick's delayed presentation of photo's from EMA over the years. Mick has an extensive collection dating back to the late 60's / early 70's and with NEMA/EMA in its 40th anniversary year this should be a particularly interesting presentation.

MON 15th AUG 2005

Images **ANDY MARTIN / BILL BLANCHARD** - digital images from Andy's and Bill's trips abroad in 2005.

MON 19th SEPT 2005

Speaker **STEVE GENSLER** - slides. Postponed from July, Steve will present an evening with a difference. Come along to find out what that difference is !!!

MON 17th OCT 2005

Speaker **DAVE MOORES** - new member Dave will present an evening on British Midland past and present.

MON 21st NOV 2005

External Speaker **ROYAL OBSERVER CORPS** - the first half of the meeting will be a talk from John Layne on the history and function of the Royal Observer Corps which, in 2005, is celebrating the 80th anniversary of its formation. The second half of the meeting will be fill in slides.

MON 19th DEC 2005

Photo Competition The annual Photo Competition - more details later in this newsletter.

MON 16th JAN 2006

External Speaker **AUSTER's** - Peter Stoddard will come to talk to us about this locally built aircraft.

SINCE THE LAST NEWSLETTER.....

Membership: Currently stands at 46.

January: Steve Davis treated us to an evening of nostalgia with slides from around the UK dating back to the 1960's with many shots from EMA included as well as some from abroad. Some superb shots of Constellation's and other propliners from an era now long gone. Steve only managed to get through about 50% of the slides he brought along so we hope to invite him back later in the year to "complete the show".

A healthy **21** members attended.

February: Phil O'Dell, chief test pilot with Rolls Royce, gave a superb talk on his work as a test pilot for RR and in particular the testing of the new Adour engine for the Hawk. Phil also spent a little time discussing the preparation and execution of the 100th anniversary flying display held at Donington Park in June 2004 as well as a few words about flying the RR Spitfire. An excellent evening thoroughly enjoyed by all who attended. We hope to get Phil back again for another talk in the coming years.

21 members and **1** visitor attended.

March: Steve Gensler filled in for Mick Bajcar who had car troubles – Mick will present to us in July. Steve covered the first half of the evening with slides of all the Antonov AN-124's that he has collected over the years and also some UK Forces air-to-air shots and some aerial shots of airfields. Roy Carr filled in the second half of the meeting with a selection of slides from Palma and the Woburn Moth Rally in 2004. Many thanks to both Steve and Roy for coming to our rescue at very short notice.

21 members and **1** visitor attended.

It's encouraging to see that we now have 46 members and as a result attendance at meetings steadily increases. Long may this trend continue.

TRIPS.....TOURS.....VISITS

A return trip to Chester has been secured but places will again be limited. We are arranging to visit on a date when there will be a good selection of aircraft for us to see and as soon as we know, we will of course let you know. Put your name down on Roy's list now – it will be strictly a case of – first come, first served!

Summer 2005 ~ exact date to be confirmed ~ get on the list now!

There will be a small charge for each trip in addition to the cost to cover petrol. Roy Carr is your contact if you want to put your name down for one of the above trips and he is also always available to act as a central information point on car trips. If your planning a day out anywhere and need an extra passenger or two, give Roy a call on 01509 673375. We are always attempting to obtain permission to visit / tour factories and bases that will hopefully prove interesting to the membership.

NEMA News

On the 1st April 2005, NEMA celebrated its 40th birthday. Whilst the airport was officially ready to open on the 1st though, the first aircraft to land (a BMA Herald from Glasgow) didn't touch down until the 2nd due to a "technical problem" – more details in Dave's article later. There will be a series of events throughout the remaining 9 months of the year to celebrate the 40th anniversary including a book to be published later in the year. The provisional Summer 2005 timetable is now available and the following extract details the "more interesting" airlines that will be visiting:

A/D	Time	Fit No	Airline	A/c type	From/To	Start date	End date	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su
Arr	01:10	SCY4454	Air Scandic	MD83	CFU	21/05/2005	08/10/2005							
Arr	02:40	SCY9965	Air Scandic	MD83	RHO	08/05/2005	30/10/2005							
Arr	04:00	SCY9912	Air Scandic	MD83	DLM	26/07/2005	13/09/2005							
Dep	05:00	SCY9971	Air Scandic	MD83	ZTH	01/05/2005	09/10/2005							
Arr	05:25	SCY4466	Air Scandic	MD83	KGS	08/05/2005	30/10/2005							
Arr	05:45	SCY9954	Air Scandic	MD83	DLM	07/05/2005	29/10/2005							
Dep	06:00	SCY4411	Air Scandic	MD83	CFU	02/05/2005	03/10/2005							
Dep	06:00	SCY4421	Air Scandic	MD83	HER	26/07/2005	04/10/2005							
Dep	06:00	SCY4461	Air Scandic	MD83	ALC	07/05/2005	29/10/2005							
Arr	06:30	FCA13	First Choice Airways	B767	SFB	05/05/2005	29/10/2005							
Dep	07:00	SCY4451	Air Scandic	MD83	TFS	27/05/2005	28/10/2005							
Dep	07:00	SCY4471	Air Scandic	MD83	KLX	01/05/2005	02/10/2005							
Dep	07:00	SCY9964	Air Scandic	MD83	RHO	07/05/2005	29/10/2005							
Dep	07:30	BD	BMI	ER4	NCE	22/07/2005	29/08/2005							
Dep	07:45	BD7571	BMI	ER4	FSC	22/05/2005	02/10/2005							
Arr	07:50	BHA	BH Air	TU154	VAR	21/05/2005	01/10/2005							
Dep	08:00	BD7565	BMI	ER4	OLB	21/05/2005	01/10/2005							
Dep	08:00	SCY9911	Air Scandic	MD83	DLM	18/07/2005	26/09/2005							
Dep	08:00	SCY9931	Air Scandic	MD83	PFO	25/05/2005	26/10/2005							
Arr	08:10	BHA	BH Air	TU154	BOJ	24/05/2005	04/10/2005							
Arr	08:10	BHA	BH Air	TU154	BOJ	15/05/2005	02/10/2005							
Dep	08:50	BHA	BH Air	TU154	VAR	21/05/2005	01/10/2005							
Arr	08:55	FCA37	First Choice Airways	B767	CUN	04/05/2005	19/10/2005							
Arr	08:55	FCA91	First Choice Airways	B767	PUJ	08/06/2005	26/10/2005							
Dep	09:10	BHA	BH Air	TU154	BOJ	24/05/2005	04/10/2005							
Dep	09:10	BHA	BH Air	TU154	BOJ	15/05/2005	02/10/2005							
Arr	09:55	PGT	Pegasus	B738	DLM	25/07/2005	19/09/2005							
Dep	10:00	SCY4421	Air Scandic	MD83	HER	03/05/2005	19/07/2005							
Dep	10:00	SCY4431	Air Scandic	MD83	RHO	04/05/2005	05/10/2005							
Dep	10:00	SCY9921	Air Scandic	MD83	JTR	03/05/2005	04/10/2005							
Dep	10:00	SCY9951	Air Scandic	MD83	JSI	06/05/2005	07/10/2005							
Dep	10:30	SCY4441	Air Scandic	MD83	ACE	05/05/2005	27/10/2005							
Dep	10:55	PGT	Pegasus	B738	DLM	25/07/2005	19/09/2005							
Dep	11:00	FCA12	First Choice Airways	B767	SFB	05/05/2005	29/10/2005							
Arr	11:05	S44900	Sata Air Acores	A320	FNC	04/07/2005	29/08/2005							
Arr	11:10	JJK3337	Spanair	A321	TFS	01/05/2005	29/10/2005							
Arr	11:15	AEA	Air Europa	B738	TFS	01/05/2005	29/10/2005							
Arr	11:15	AEA267	Air Europa	B738	TFS	01/05/2005	29/10/2005							
Arr	11:20	EZY917	EasyJet	A319	GVA	01/05/2005	29/10/2005							
Dep	11:25	FCA36	First Choice Airways	B767	CUN	04/05/2005	19/10/2005							
Dep	11:25	FCA90	First Choice Airways	B767	PUJ	08/06/2005	26/10/2005							
Arr	11:40	OS2363	Tyrolean	CRJ	INN	21/05/2005	24/09/2005							
Dep	11:45	EZY918	EasyJet	A319	GVA	01/05/2005	29/10/2005							
Arr	11:55	S44901	Sata Air Acores	A320	FNC	04/07/2005	29/08/2005							
Arr	12:00	EZY917	EasyJet	A319	GVA	01/05/2005	29/10/2005							
Arr	12:00	SCY4462	Air Scandic	MD83	ALC	07/05/2005	29/10/2005							
Dep	12:10	JJK3338	Spanair	A321	TFS	01/05/2005	29/10/2005							
Dep	12:15	AEA	Air Europa	B738	TFS	01/05/2005	29/10/2005							

A/D	Time	Fit No	Airline	A/c type	From/To	Start date	End date	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su
Dep	12:15	AEA268	Air Europa	B738	TFS	01/05/2005	29/10/2005							
Arr	12:15	BD	BMI	ER4	NCE	22/07/2005	29/08/2005							
Arr	12:15	FHE312	Britishjet	MD90	MLA	01/05/2005	29/10/2005							
Dep	12:20	OS2364	Tyrolean	CRJ	INN	21/05/2005	24/09/2005							
Dep	12:25	EZY918	EasyJet	A319	GVA	01/05/2005	29/10/2005							
Arr	12:40	FCA3744	First Choice Airways	B757	IBZ	01/05/2005	29/10/2005							
Arr	12:45	SCY9972	Air Scandic	MD83	ZTH	01/05/2005	09/10/2005							
Dep	13:15	FHE313	Britishjet	MD90	MLA	01/05/2005	29/10/2005							
Dep	13:15	SCY4463	Air Scandic	MD83	PMI	28/05/2005	29/10/2005							
Arr	13:25	FCA3545	First Choice Airways	B757	AGP	01/05/2005	29/10/2005							
Arr	13:25	FUA	Futura	B738	FUE	01/05/2005	29/10/2005							
Arr	13:30	BD7572	BMI	ER4	FSC	22/05/2005	02/10/2005							
Arr	13:30	SCY4412	Air Scandic	MD83	CFU	02/05/2005	03/10/2005							
Dep	13:40	FCA3742	First Choice Airways	B757	IBZ	01/05/2005	29/10/2005							
Arr	14:00	BD7566	BMI	ER4	OLB	21/05/2005	01/10/2005							
Arr	14:00	BY061B	Britannia	B738	CFU	01/05/2005	29/10/2005							
Arr	14:10	AEU572	Astraeus	B733	VBS	24/05/2005	12/07/2005							
Arr	14:10	AEU572	Astraeus	B733	VBS	06/09/2005	04/10/2005							
Dep	14:25	FCA3544	First Choice Airways	B757	AGP	01/05/2005	29/10/2005							
Dep	14:30	FUA	Futura	B738	FUE	01/05/2005	29/10/2005							
Arr	14:35	3W335B	Euromanx	RJ70	VRN	21/05/2005	01/10/2005							
Dep	14:40	BD7563	BMI	ER4	LJU	14/05/2005	01/10/2005							
Arr	14:50	VLM	VLM	F50	JER	14/05/2005	21/09/2005							
Arr	14:55	AEU595	Astraeus	B733	PMI	01/05/2005	29/10/2005							
Dep	14:55	SCY9973	Air Scandic	MD83	EFL	22/05/2005	09/10/2005							
Dep	15:10	AEU571	Astraeus	B733	VBS	24/05/2005	12/07/2005							
Dep	15:10	AEU571	Astraeus	B733	VBS	06/09/2005	04/10/2005							
Arr	15:10	SCY4422	Air Scandic	MD83	HER	26/07/2005	04/10/2005							
Arr	15:15	FR1144	Ryanair	B738	SNN	01/05/2005	29/10/2005							
Dep	15:25	VLM	VLM	F50	JER	14/05/2005	21/09/2005							
Arr	15:30	SCY4472	Air Scandic	MD83	KLX	01/05/2005	02/10/2005							
Arr	15:35	BD290	BMI	ER4	NCE	01/05/2005	29/10/2005							
Dep	15:40	FR1145	Ryanair	B738	SNN	01/05/2005	29/10/2005							
Dep	15:45	BY061A	Britannia	B738	CFU	01/05/2005	29/10/2005							
Dep	16:05	3W335A	Euromanx	RJ70	VRN	21/05/2005	01/10/2005							
Arr	16:20	OU516	Croatia Airlines	A319	DBV	10/05/2005	04/10/2005							
Arr	16:20	SCY4452	Air Scandic	MD83	TFS	27/05/2005	28/10/2005							
Dep	16:25	AEU596	Astraeus	B733	PMI	24/05/2005	25/10/2005							
Dep	16:30	SCY4473	Air Scandic	MD83	FAO	01/05/2005	30/10/2005							
Dep	16:40	SCY4423	Air Scandic	MD83	PMI	26/07/2005	04/10/2005							
Arr	16:40	XLA6101	Excel	B738	SKG	26/05/2005	13/10/2005							
Arr	17:00	SCY9912	Air Scandic	MD83	DLM	18/07/2005	18/07/2005							
Arr	17:00	SCY9912	Air Scandic	MD83	DLM	01/09/2005	26/09/2005							
Arr	17:10	BD290	BMI	ER4	NCE	01/05/2005	29/10/2005							
Dep	17:10	OU517	Croatia Airlines	A319	DBV	10/05/2005	04/10/2005							
Dep	17:30	SCY4453	Air Scandic	MD83	CFU	20/05/2005	07/10/2005							
Arr	17:45	KMC5178	Air Malta	B733	MLA	01/05/2005	29/10/2005							
Dep	18:00	XLA6100	Excel	B738	SKG	26/05/2005	13/10/2005							
Dep	18:30	KMC5179	Air Malta	B733	MLA	01/05/2005	29/10/2005							
Arr	18:40	SCY9932	Air Scandic	MD83	PFO	25/05/2005	26/10/2005							
Arr	19:10	SCY4422	Air Scandic	MD83	HER	03/05/2005	19/07/2005							
Arr	19:10	SCY4432	Air Scandic	MD83	RHO	04/05/2005	05/10/2005							
Arr	19:15	SCY4464	Air Scandic	MD83	PMI	28/05/2005	29/10/2005							
Arr	19:30	SCY4442	Air Scandic	MD83	ACE	05/05/2005	27/10/2005							
Arr	19:30	SCY9952	Air Scandic	MD83	JSI	06/05/2005	07/10/2005							
Dep	20:05	KM255	Air Malta	B733	MLA	01/05/2005	29/10/2005							
Arr	20:10	OHY	Onur Air	A321	BJV	01/05/2005	29/10/2005							
Arr	20:10	VIK6252	Viking	MD82	HER	06/05/2005	07/10/2005							
Dep	20:15	SCY4465	Air Scandic	MD83	KGS	07/05/2005	29/10/2005							
Arr	20:20	KM254	Air Malta	B733	MLA	01/05/2005	29/10/2005							
Arr	20:30	BD7564	BMI	ER4	LJU	14/05/2005	01/10/2005							
Dep	20:45	SCY9953	Air Scandic	MD83	DLM	06/05/2005	28/10/2005							
Arr	20:50	SCY9922	Air Scandic	MD83	JTR	03/05/2005	04/10/2005							
Dep	21:05	OHY	Onur Air	A321	BJV	01/05/2005	29/10/2005							
Dep	21:10	VIK6253	Viking	MD82	HER	06/05/2005	07/10/2005							
Arr	21:35	ECA	Eurocypria	B738	LCA	01/05/2005	29/10/2005							
Arr	21:45	LTE874	LTE	A320	TFS	01/05/2005	29/10/2005							
Arr	21:45	ZU544	Helios	B738	LCA	01/05/2005	29/10/2005							
Arr	22:35	SCY4424	Air Scandic	MD83	PMI	26/07/2005	04/10/2005							
Dep	22:45	ECA	Eurocypria	B738	LCA	01/05/2005	29/10/2005							
Dep	22:45	LTE875	LTE	A320	TFS	01/05/2005	29/10/2005							
Dep	22:45	ZU545	Helios	B738	LCA	01/05/2005	29/10/2005							
Arr	23:00	SCY4474	Air Scandic	MD83	FAO	01/05/2005	30/10/2005							
Arr	23:40	SCY9974	Air Scandic	MD83	EFL	22/05/2005	09/10/2005							

A few interesting airliners there that should excite the photographers amongst the membership. In addition there are of course the "based" units – ThomsonFly (Britannia) B767-300 and B757-200, First Choice A321, My Travel A320, Thomas Cook A320, Eastern J41, bmi regional 2 x EMB145, bmibaby 4 x B737-300/500, easyJet 3 x B737-300 as well as Ryanair with their daily flights to Dublin (3 x B737-200), Alicante/Murcia (B737-200), Barcelona/Girona (B737-800), Rome (B737-800) and the new flight to Shannon (B737-800).

On the cargo side, UPS should have commenced operations with the Star Air B767-200F's on the Edinburgh and Paris-CDG routes and Bluebird should have upgraded their B737-300F CGN>EMA>KEF service to B757-200F by the end of April. DHL, TNT and Royal Mail operations remain pretty much unchanged although DHL have added a KEF>EMA>BRU flight each weekday evening using an Islandsflug B737-300F.

Over at the Aeropark, the summer "events" dates have been announced as follows:
 Air Ambulance Day (tbc) & Open Cockpit Day Sunday 5th June 2005
 Open Cockpit Day Sunday 7th August 2005

Major work is taking place in the passenger terminal airside. The old "Domestic" and "International" departure lounges have been combined into a "Common lounge" and the old domestic lounge now serves as a forward holding or gate lounge. The main departure lounge has been extended westwards towards the old Royal Mail building and this new area contains three new departure gates, a large new bar and two new shops. The Local Hero pub upstairs has been removed and is to be replaced by an executive lounge for any airlines wishing to use it. The upstairs area will remain airside and accessible to passengers only for the foreseeable future, probably until the "new" terminal.

The Annual Aviation Enthusiasts Day was held in the terminal on Sunday 20th March and, whilst smaller than previous years, it still proved to be very popular. Hopefully some of you found something of interest to buy and maybe even took advantage of a bmi Embraer 145 pleasure flight.

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TRIP REPORTS

Sunday 30th January 2005 witnessed TVAS's first trip of the year to Derby-Eggington!! Following the Oct-04 meeting presentation by **STUART JACKSON** on the restoration of DH.88 Comet racer G-ACSP "Black Magic", a visit was arranged to look at how the work was going, 11 TVAS members attended and were greeted by Stuart and given a video presentation and full in-depth tour of the work that has taken place to date. Whilst there wasn't too much to see, the photos below show how things are going. As you can see, there is still a lot to do!!



Following the talk and tour, a full tour of Derby airfield was provided which revealed a larger number of light aircraft than expected by most members. A £22 donation to the project (£2 per person) was given to Stuart on the day as an additional thank you for the October talk and the January tour.

Our thanks to member **Paul Neumann** for his work to put TVAS in touch with this local project.

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2005 TVAS PHOTO COMPETITION

This annual event in the TVAS calendar will again be held at the December meeting. With the increasing emergence of digital cameras at all levels of photography, it was markedly noticeable at the 2004 competition that digital submissions far outweighed slide submissions – also civil far outweighed military. At the last committee meeting the subject was discussed at length. We currently have three trophies – two large "shield" shaped trophies and a "square" one. One of the shield trophies is now full of names and the square one is looking a little the worse for wear. Prizes will therefore be sought to: remove all the current names to the back of the trophy and put new engraving spaces on the front – or – to buy a new shield shaped trophy. The square shaped trophy will probably be ditched.

To make things really simple for 2005, we will probably have just two categories in the competition – best digital image and best slide. Each category will have a dedicated shield trophy.

We hope to discuss this more at the AGM in June but until then, summer's just around the corner so start snapping in readiness for December !!!

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My thanks to Dave Gretton for this article on the history and development of East Midlands Airport. As EMA, now Nottingham East Midlands Airport of course, celebrate its 40th Anniversary this year it was considered appropriate to re-print this article in two instalments during 2005. It was first published in Aviation News Vol 7 No 25 – 11-24th May 1979 edition.

East Midlands Airport at Castle Donington, near Derby, was the first newly constructed municipal airport to be built in this country since the Second World War (both London City and Sheffield City have been built since). The airport has been open 40 years in its present form, and there has been flying activity on the site since WW1, but the story really began in the 1930's when the RAF was rapidly expanding to combat the German threat.

The War Years.

The operational fighter squadrons naturally had priority, but following the Battle of Britain, the RAF's attentions were turned more to offensive operations, particularly the night bomber offensive. To cater for the expansion of Bomber Command a massive airfield construction programme was begun, and Operational Training Units were set up to provide crews with final training before a posting to a front-line unit. One of the new stations was Wymeswold, a few miles north-east of Loughborough, which was opened on 16th April 1942, as part of 93 Group, Bomber Command. It was quickly realised that Wymeswold required a relief landing ground to allow it to cope with its busy flying programme, and construction of a paved airfield was begun at Castle Donington, with surveying starting in 1941. This became operational on 1st January 1943, when part of Wymeswold's resident unit, 28 OTU, moved in, bringing with them Wellington Ic's (eg DV864/LB-X) and Ill's. In addition Martinets and Masters (eg DM427/WY-Z) were used by 28 OTU for target towing, and in some references Lysanders are also mentioned.

The first crews to pass through RAF Castle Donington were cleared for operations by 3rd June 1943, and the amount of training increased rapidly. Total flying time for the units at both Castle Donington and Wymeswold reached 800 hours per month. The airfield also received quite a number of

aircraft which had been diverted from their home bases because of weather or battle damage, including Halifaxes, Lancasters, B-17 Flying Fortress and B-24 Liberator aircraft, especially in a short period at the end of July 1943. One of the local amenities to be used was Loughborough swimming baths, which were used for dinghy drill and survival training.

In April 1943 the early Wellington I and III aircraft were gradually replaced by the Mark X variant (eg MF637/LB-B and LP520/LB-W both assigned to 28 OTU), which was more powerful, and intended at the outset as a trainer. Hurricane IIc's arrived as replacements for the existing target tugs, these aircraft having a more realistic towing speed. A number of Airspeed Oxfords were also taken on charge as flying classrooms.

In the period leading up to D-Day, crews from RAF Castle Donington operated special flights to drop propaganda leaflets to the patriots of Occupied Europe. Shortly after the invasion, on 11th June 1944 it was decided to make RAF Castle Donington the centre for training the Pathfinder Force. This relatively short-lived phase at Castle Donington began on 11th July 1944, by which time flying time was up to 1300 hours per month. However with the end of the war in Europe in sight, attention was drawn to the need for training of more transport crews who would be required for the Far East, and the post-war period.

On 1st December 1944 the airfield at Castle Donington consisted of three runways: 10/28 of 2000 yds x 50 yds, 06/24 of 1400 yds x 50 yds, and 16/34 of 1100 yds x 50 yds. Records show that the airfield was considered suitable for further expansion should this be required, but this would entail the demolition of some farm buildings. The airfield had only basic "air traffic control" facilities, but did have one T2 hangar and one B1 hangar, and 27 heavy-bomber type dispersals, although the accommodation was described as "temporary". Operating the station were some 60 officers, 212 SNCO's, 644 other ranks of the RAF, and 2 officers, 8 SNCO's and 180 other ranks from the WAAF.

28 OTU officially disbanded on 15th October 1944, and was replaced by 108 OUT, which was formed on 10th October 1944 at Wymeswold with no less than 40 Dakotas, Castle Donington retaining its satellite status. By February 1945, with this large fleet, the total flying time was up to 24,000 hrs per month. At the end of the war these transport aircraft were used to give the hard-worked ground crew "Cook's Tours" of the bomb damage done to Europe. On 10th August 1945 108 OTU became 1382 (Transport) Conversion Unit, equipped with Stirling I's and, later, Yorks. With the general contraction of the armed forces that followed the end of the war, RAF Castle Donington was closed in September 1946.

Construction and Development.

After the war was over, civil flights in the East Midlands were re-started by Derby Airways, later BMA and fore-runner of the present bmi British Midland, flying from the grass airfield at Burnaston, which lay to the south west of Derby. Although this airfield catered well for the smaller passenger aircraft that were prevalent during the 1930's, 1940's and 1950's, it became increasingly obvious by the early 1960's that this small airfield, that was also prone to waterlogging in winter, was going to become obsolete with the arrival of larger passenger aircraft, together with the trend towards more people wishing to fly abroad for their holidays. Derby Airways approached Derby Corporation with this in mind that and Derby discussed the issue with the Nottingham Corporation and it was proposed that the local authorities in the area should jointly investigate the possibility of replacing Burnaston with a brand new airfield, which would be designed, built, and financed by these authorities. Many sites were investigated, including Wymeswold, and the site of the old wartime Castle Donington airfield in Leicestershire was finally selected, close to the then proposed extension of the M1 motorway. A Joint Committee of representatives from the County Councils of Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire and Leicestershire and the City Councils of Nottingham and Derby was set up to finance and run the new airport. In 1963 this committee decided to go ahead with construction of the new airport. The agreement to proceed was taken by the Joint Committee on the basis of an estimate amounting to £1.375 million, covering the cost of the initial venture split between the authorities involved.

The investigation of the project by the Ministry of Housing and Local Government did not upset any plans of the committee, and the site was handed over to the main contractor, Richard Costain Ltd, on 9th March 1964. This company was responsible for clearing the site, breaking up the original runways, which had deteriorated to a point where they were not even suitable as a foundation for the new development, and building the new runway, with associated taxiways and apron surfaces. The runway was to be 5,850 feet long and 150 feet wide, with taxiways 60 feet wide. The main runway followed the line of the original main runway, but was completely re-built, while a grass strip of 2900 feet on an alignment of 01/19 was laid out for light aircraft. In addition to this, on the landside of the airport approximately 2 miles of internal roads, and car parking facilities for some 850 cars were built. Derby Airways, who had by then changed their name to British Midland Airways, would move from Burnaston to the new Castle Donington airport when it opened.

The Joint Airport Committee had appointed Mr Eric Dyer to the post of Airport Director. Mr Dyer had already had extensive experience in the field of airport management, having held the post of Airport Director at both Southampton and Leavesden, and in addition had been a pilot during WW2. To enable him and his staff of 51 people to start work as soon as possible temporary accommodation was taken in Castle Donington village while the administrative block was constructed. The terminal building (designed for 100,000 passengers), and all necessary service buildings, were constructed by J. Searson Ltd, mainly using the CLASP system of building (Consortium of Local Authorities Special Projects) then in vogue in the area for building schools etc, and excellent efforts by both contractors involved in the construction meant that the airport was ready for operations by 1st April 1965, some 13 months after work had started. Construction was still going on at the last minute however, and in the haste a digger vehicle severed one of the main lighting cables, delaying the issue of the Ministry of Aviation Licence to operate as a civil airport by some hours. However this problem was soon overcome, and East Midlands Airport opened its doors, and its runway, to the air travelling public the following day 2nd April – the first aircraft to arrive being a BMA Herald from Glasgow. Navigational facilities installed at the outset included a Decca 424 approach radar system, which gave coverage of aircraft within the immediate vicinity of the airport, allowing radar assisted let-downs to be performed when the weather was unsuitable for visual approaches.

Passenger numbers for the first year of operation came to 114,888, using 81 different types of aircraft. Despite several setbacks due to the financial failure of several of the major operators from the airport in the early years, traffic increased steadily until in 1968 the number of passengers for the year exceeded 250,000 for the first time. Simultaneously the quantity of freight passing through the airport had been built up to a respectable amount, and for the first time British Midland Airways operated an all-freight aircraft on a number of routes. Although the terminal buildings were still coping with the traffic throughput at this time following minor extensions it was apparent that further expansion was required in the shape of improvements to the runway and technical facilities, to cope with the increasing number of larger aircraft wishing to use the airport. In April 1969 it was decided to enlarge the terminal buildings, extend the runway to 7,480 feet, and widen the taxiways to 75 feet.

The extension of the runway was carried out by A. Monk and Company, at a cost approaching £0.5 million, and caused the closure of the B5401 "Swan Rivers" road between Castle Donington and Diseworth. Board of Trade approval for the use of the new runway was given on 23rd March 1970, and one of the first aircraft to use the new facilities was an Andover of the Queen's Flight, which brought in Princess Alexandra to an official engagement at Burton on Trent. A few days later, just in time for the Easter rush, the new facilities in the passenger concourse came into use. These included the 160 seat One-Eleven Restaurant, a self-service cafeteria, a new bar, and a conference room.

Along with the constructional improvements to the terminal, runway and taxiways, the navigational aids were dramatically improved with the installation of an Instrument Landing System (ILS), and following the certification of this equipment to Category II standard the airport was now capable of handling landings in all but the very worst weather conditions. To enable the introduction of more positive control over aircraft in the vicinity a Plessey AR1 Surveillance radar system was installed by the airport's own technicians, and after some early problems this was finally brought into use in February 1975, at the same time as a Special Rules Zone for air traffic control purposes was initiated.

Further expansion of freight traffic in the early 1970's led to a threat of congestion in the freight terminal, and it was decided that a second cargo terminal was required. This opened in 1973, and since then, with many millions of kilos of freight passing through the airport every year, the freight complex has been added to as traffic has increased. The taxiways were also extended to provide a parallel route to the eastern end of the runway, to improve traffic flow at peak periods, which involved the re-routing of the B5400 Diseworth to Kegworth road to form part of the A5129.

. *to be continued*

2004 TVAS PHOTO COMPETITION

November 2004's meeting was the traditional annual photo competition. As promised, the winning photos are produced below.

BEST MILITARY SLIDE



BEST CIVIL SLIDE



Both of the above slides were taken by MIKE SNOWDEN. The Dutch AF F.16 (J-016) was photographed during its display at the 2004 Waddington Air Show and the sunset landing of the B747 was captured on short finals for runway 27 at Nottingham East Midlands Airport.

BEST DIGITAL IMAGE



This Spitfire (AR 501) was captured by ANDY MARTIN in typical fast banking mode at one of the Shuttleworth Collection's regular air displays at Old Warden.

The standard of both slides and digital images was as high as ever in this competition and some superb images didn't make it through to the final three. Interestingly, there were more "general" digital images submitted than "military & civil" slides combined reflecting the national trend of a move away from celluloid. The Committee will bear this in mind when they decide on the categories and trophies to be awarded at the 2005 Photo Competition.

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Well, that's about it for this month folks. If there's anything you would like to see in the Newsletter, or if you have any suggestions for changes, please give me a call on the number below or drop me a line by email at – tvas@eqnx.co.uk

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