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AVIATION MONTHLY

November 1988

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FlyPost

Protecting the diggers

AUGUST's issue made reference in *Aviation Archaeology* to the 'excluded persons clause' proposed by the Ministry of Defence relating to their aim to regularise 'digs' and similar activities.

No mention at all was made that it was after much discussion with the British Aviation Archaeological Council over the matter that this clause was ultimately rejected. The BAAC received details of the scheme several months ago, as did the British Aircraft Preservation Council. (I believe they approved the idea!) We thought the idea totally unworkable and told MoD so. The result was that it was eventually dismissed.

You may be interested to know that the 22nd meeting of the BAAC was held on July 16 at the Lincolnshire Aviation Heritage Centre, East Kirkby. Among items discussed was a new scheme whereby groups could exchange crash site and other aviation items and the MoD decision not to introduce the 'excluded persons clause'. Here the value of the Council as a watchdog for member groups was highlighted.

Membership of the Council is now a healthy 25 aviation archaeology and associated groups. Enquiries about the BAAC can be made to the address below.

**Dave Stansfield, Chairman,
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Commentator's clangers

HAVING ATTENDED many air displays in the UK over the past ten years, I feel that I must comment on the poor standard of some of the airshow commentators that I have had the misfortune to listen to. It seems to me that even some of the long-standing, well-known commentators need to brush up on their facts and update their information files.

It would probably take up all the pages of *FlyPost* to list the many 'gaffes' that I have heard, but here are just a few samples of misinformation. Two commentators were talking at one of the well known shows about Charles Church's two-seat Spitfire PT462, when one of the commentators remarked, "The original twin-seat Spitfire was of course the T.8 G-AIDN, an aircraft that we ha-

ven't seen on the show circuit for a while now." Anybody with any knowledge of the vintage aeroplane scene knows full well that 'IDN has been in the USA for several years.

Another 'clanger' was, "the Skyraider flying here today carries Italian markings", when it was in fact painted in French markings. Perhaps a good set of binoculars could be bought for some of the commentators, for their eyesight seems to play tricks on them sometimes. Heard this year was a description of the BBMF Hurricane LF363, when in fact it was PZ865 that was being displayed, upon realising his mistake the commentator said "Oh, they seem to have changed the markings on this aeroplane."

Another point I've found at air-

shows in recent years is that some displays now use two commentators, which may be a good idea for sharing the talking workload, but it seems to lead to the commentators sharing 'in' jokes, which may be funny to them, but the jokes go over the heads of the listening public.

Mind you, I'm not tarring all display commentators with the same brush, to hear a man who knows his job and makes sure his homework is done properly, one only has to visit Old Warden on a flying day and listen to how it should be done.

I sometimes think that I could do a better job than some of the people I've had to listen to, anybody out there want a volunteer?

Robert Rudhall, Tewkesbury

One-month Harvard deadline

JOHN HAMLIN's Harvard article in the September issue had me reaching for my old log book. I joined 22 SFTS, Thornhill, Southern Rhodesia in June 1941 after completing my initial pilot training on Tiger Moths at 26 EFTS, Guinea Fowl.

My first flight at Thornhill was on June 16, 1941 in Harvard Mk.1 P5908 under the watchful eye of my instructor, F/L R Beverley, officer commanding 'C' Flight.

All the pupils had received dire warnings on reception at Thornhill

that the Harvard was an aircraft that required delicate handling. Spinning was forbidden and if by some mischance we found ourselves in that situation we were to bail out rapidly. The address of welcome finished with the cheerful statement "Some of you will probably be dead within a month but Good Luck anyway!" Among my memories must be included the number of military funerals which I attended subsequently.

F/L Beverley lost no time in taking me up in Harvard N7133 to about 6,000 feet and asking me over the Gosport tubes if I was aware of the ban on spinning Harvards. Before I could mumble agreement he had throttled back, pulled the nose up and kicked the machine into a vicious left-hand spin. He pulled out eventually and streaked across the *bundu*, scaring the springboks almost as much as he had scared me. I hope Mr Beverley is still around because he did me a lot of good when I think about it.

John Hamlin mentioned the

probability of a high speed stall when pulling out of a dive too severely. This reminded me of a trip in Harvard N7186 on August 11, 1941 with F/O Appleford as my instructor. The exercise was to teach me high dive bombing techniques.

My instructor was aware that I favoured this mode of combat and performed a series of vertical dives of such ferocity that I passed out completely during the last pull-out. I was actually unconscious for a short period but, of course, no one ever knew about this. My point is that we did not have a high speed stall as well!

Young Appleford's tuition must have been of benefit because, less than ten months later, I was high dive bombing German targets in Europe without losing consciousness (I think).

As a sequel it must be recorded that I squared accounts with F/O Appleford during a night flying cross-country exercise on the night of August 15/16 1941 when, after two hours wandering over Rhodesia, I told him I was lost. As he had been reading a book up in the front cockpit during that period, he was lost too.

After an exciting ten minutes he brought Harvard N7011 into a brilliant landing, in the dark, on the rugged bush land. The only damage was a broken tailwheel. What a pilot! What an aircraft!

**Dennis Conroy,
St Leonards-on-Sea**

FlyPast November



As might have been expected, our Harvard 50 'specials' generated a lot of feedback from readers. From Frank Jones in Devon comes this shot (above) of his days served as an instructor on secondment from the RAF in Luftwaffe Harvard IVBs 1959 to 1963. Fred Huston sent in this shot of the one-off XAT-6E 42-84241 fitted with a Ranger V-770 in-line by Fairchild at Hagerstown.

