

The *Spirit* of **North Weald**

The North Weald Airfield Newsletter | Issue 10 | April 2013

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The Spirit of North Weald

The Airfield is assessed for a new stage in its development

Epping Forest District Council is currently reviewing the future of the Airfield as part of its Local Plan. Consultants Deloitte have been looking at options for developing our 360 acres in different ways. The Council will consider their recommendation in due course.

Any drivers will know that the snowy weather has created many potholes on roads. The Airfield has not escaped frost damage either. We have carried out emergency repairs on sections of the tarmac runways and perimeter track. With leisure activities such as the weekly cycle races about to begin, we needed to ensure that everyone can operate safely.

Once again we have a full calendar of activities at the Airfield over the summer months. As well as the public events, we also welcome many car and aircraft clubs onto the site. Make sure you note our Community Day on Sunday 8 September in your diary. This year it will incorporate the Resilience Roadshow with major displays by all the Emergency Services and agencies. Don't miss it!

Darren Goodey
North Weald Airfield Manager

Heritage recognised

The Control Tower receives Grade II Listed Building Status...

We have just been notified that the Secretary of State has agreed to English Heritage's request to make the Control Tower a Grade II Listed Building. It is one of seven built during the Cold War to design 5223a/51.

Among the reasons for the designation are the following: "The Tower, which is larger than its predecessors, has an imposing presence and is illustrative of the development of the design of control towers in the face of increased reliance on electronic navigational aids in the post-war period; ... it is the best surviving example of its type on a fighter station, and amongst the best surviving overall." ■

Airfield Public Event Calendar

May	
Sunday 12	Test & Tune – Runway 02/20 closed
June	
Sunday 16	Test & Tune – Runway 02/20 closed
Saturday 22	Air Britain Classic British Fly-in
Sunday 23	Air Britain Classic British Fly-in
Saturday 29	Wings & Wheels – Runway 02/20 closed
Sunday 30	Wings & Wheels – Runway 02/20 closed (For both days the Runway is available from 0800-0900 and 1800-1900)



Fighting cancer...

Ladies. It's time to show cancer who's in charge at Cancer Research UK's Race for Life. There are over 200 types of cancers and we won't give up until we find cures for them all. It's fighting talk, but we mean every word we say. Cancer, we're coming to get you.

Last year, 2,048 women took part in Race for Life in Epping and raised a fantastic £154,116. This year, we need 2,100 women and girls to stride out to help raise £155,000 for this vital research.

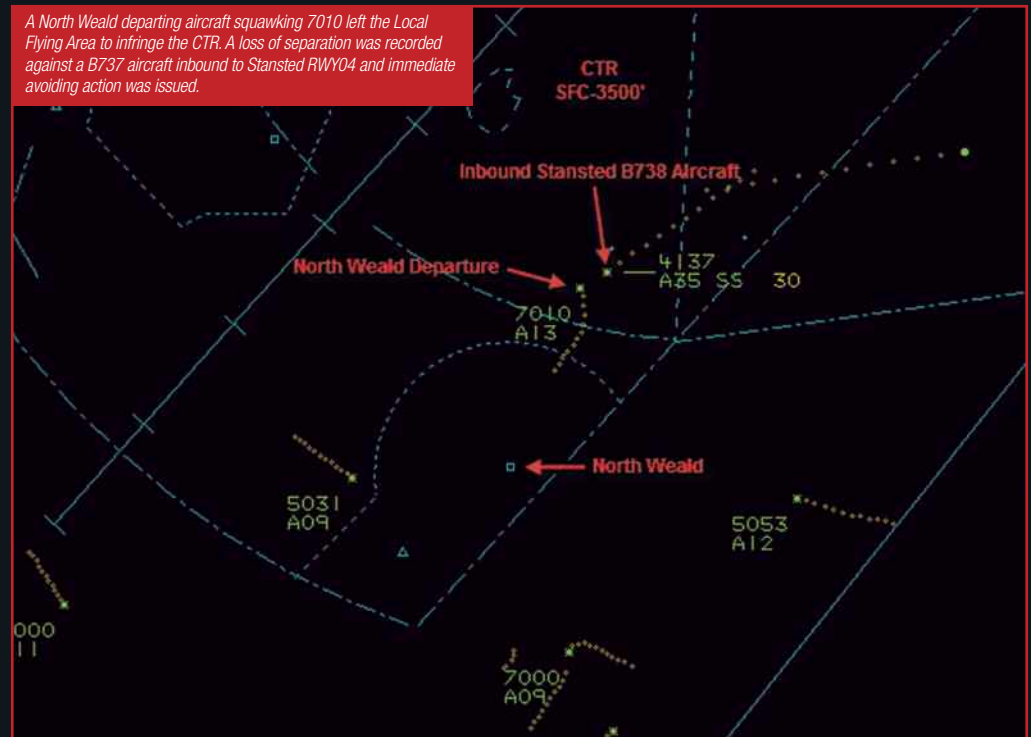
There are 5km and 10km courses once again at North Weald Airfield. To run, walk, dance or sponsor there is more information online at www.raceforlife.org



July	
Wednesday 3	Race for Life – Runway 02/20 closed from 1830
Sunday 4	Bus Rally (<i>Southern Showground</i>)
Sunday 14	Test & Tune – Runway 02/20 closed
Sunday 21	Damn Yankees American Car Show (<i>Southern Showground</i>)
Sunday 28	Bikefest – Runway 02/20 closed
August	
Sunday 18	Outlaws Picnic – Runway 02/20 closed
September	
Sunday 8	Community Fun Day & Fly-in and the Resilience Road Show
Sunday 15	Players Car Show (<i>Hangar 6 Apron</i>) Little Haven Charity Supercar Experience (<i>Southern Showground</i>)

Events correct at time of going to press. Please check for latest update.

A North Weald departing aircraft squawking 7010 left the Local Flying Area to infringe the CTR. A loss of separation was recorded against a B737 aircraft inbound to Stansted RWY04 and immediate avoiding action was issued.



Be TMZ aware! How to avoid infringements

The procedures for transiting the TMZ are straightforward, but we still have to deal with zone busts...

The introduction of the Stansted Transponder Mandatory Zone (TMZ) in September 2009 naturally had implications for flying at the Airfield. As we are situated on the eastern edge of the TMZ, any flights inbound or outbound to the west through the TMZ are required to follow the procedures contained within the Letter of Agreement between NATS and North Weald Airfield. This also defines the Local Flying Area around North Weald where aircraft may fly without a transponder and enter from outside the TMZ via the Epping VRP.

Unless an aircraft is Mode S equipped, the pilot needs to contact Farnborough North on 132.800 during operational hours (or Essex Radar at other times) before entering the TMZ. This includes aircraft without transponders, which can still transit the TMZ with a suitable clearance. We are happy for aircraft to remain in the Local Flying Area while they make contact, subject to traffic separation.



Most pilots comply with the simple and straightforward rules, but inevitably there are problems. A transponder may be switched off or not reporting altitude. We can usually solve this over the radio after we have had a call from Essex Radar about an unknown radar plot.

Church Langley Water Tower is on the edge of the Stansted CTR



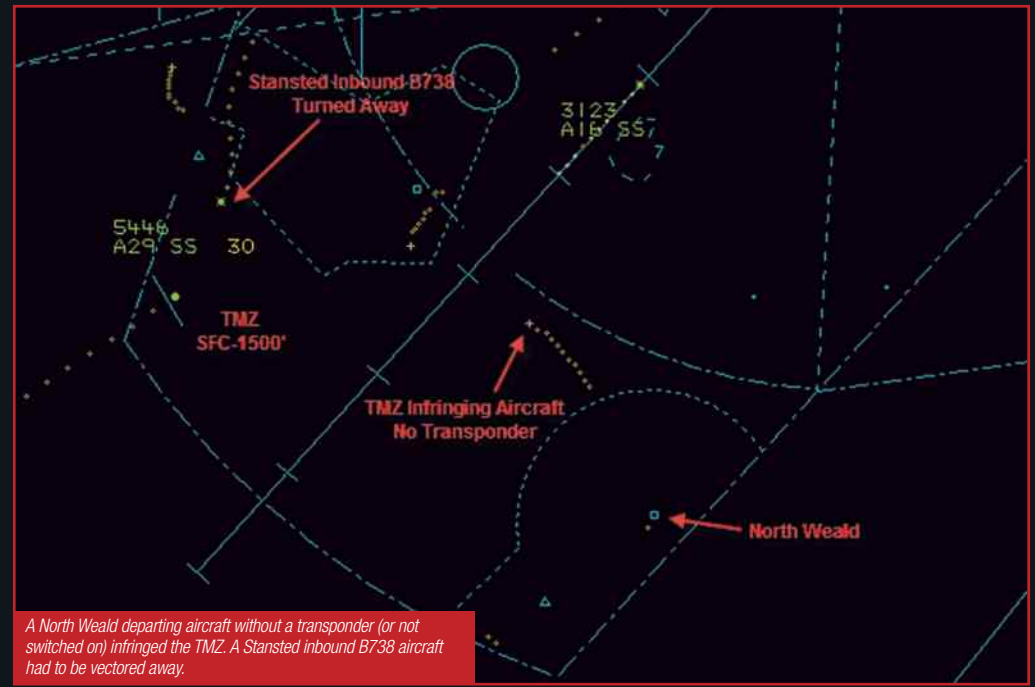
Keep south of the three lakes between Willingale and North Weald



The M11 Junction 7 roundabout at Harlow – 20 base leg turning point



The gap between St Margaret's Hospital and Coopersale



NATS

Another problem is pilots setting the North Weald Conspicuity Squawk of 7010 when they are not talking to us. Our official radio range is 10 nautical miles and sometimes the squawk is being used much further out than this. Nevertheless, using the squawk helps us deal with problems faster.

There have been infringements of the Stansted CTR straight from the North Weald circuit. It is important to note the local landmarks to avoid this. Many pilots tend to fly wide and extended circuits, which can lead to inadvertent airspace penetrations.

If there is a strong southerly wind, an aircraft can easily be blown off course and make an infringement on base leg. On one occasion three aircraft in the circuit all infringed one after the other for this very reason! So take care if extending downwind to maintain separation with aircraft ahead.

The best landmark is the distinctive Church Langley Water Tower next to the M11. **If you go beyond it you will be in the Stansted zone.** Similarly, aircraft joining on left base for runway 20 should keep south of the small lakes just to the east of the Airfield.

On runway 20, the turn onto base leg is over the Junction 7 roundabout of the M11 at Harlow. For Runway 02, there is a substantial gap between St Margaret's Hospital and Coopersale, which can be used for a tighter circuit.

Infringements cause the Essex Radar controllers all sorts of problems. An aircraft without a transponder switched on will result in traffic being vectored away from the perceived threat, causing delays for arrivals and departures with an ongoing knock-on effect for aircraft in the hold. Aircraft penetrating the Stansted zone itself require immediate avoiding action, which also causes similar delays.

Even aircraft approaching the edge of controlled airspace cannot be ignored as their intentions are unknown. So it is always best to fly as tight a circuit as possible, and avoid coming too close to the boundary. GPS units are not 100% reliable at plotting your position.

If Stansted is using Runway 04 the problem is potentially worse because inbound aircraft could be routing overhead North Weald on base leg or are descending rather than climbing away and so there is a greater chance of confliction.

When we get a phone call about an infringement, we try to settle things amicably, as we need to resolve the problem quickly. But occasionally, if the incident is serious, the aircraft registration may be disclosed and the CAA informed.

If you inadvertently enter controlled airspace inform the relevant radio frequency as soon as possible. They will help you get clear and maintain separation. Don't be tempted to switch your transponder off – that could be expensive!

Last year there were a total of 68 unauthorised TMZ penetrations and 224 infringements of the London LTMA and associated CTA/CTRs *(NATS statistics for the whole of the region)*



Our *Pilot's Self Briefing Notes* can be readily downloaded as a Pdf file from the *Information for Pilots* section of our website www.northwealdairfield.info. These list all the procedures for entering and transiting the TMZ.

Most pilots already talk to Farnborough North inbound and outbound, even if they have a Mode S transponder. We strongly advise that you make this your best practice too. We want everyone to fly safely. ■

Fly on Track

Promoting airspace awareness

The aim of this very useful website is to reduce infringements of controlled airspace. As North Weald Airfield is situated within the Stansted Transponder Mandatory Zone, pilots will find a great deal of helpful information, not only about our immediate area, but also other similar zones as well.

There is general navigation advice with downloadable CAA Safety Sense leaflets and VFR Guide, an A5 radio call reminder for a pilot's kneeboard, radar replays of controlled airspace infringements and a video of flying different routes under the London TMA.

There is also news on airspace changes. Links are provided for a range of official reporting forms, the CAA's *CAP 804* publication as well as information, including the latest amendments for VFR charts.

With such a wealth of useful data available in one place, the website is well worth bookmarking. It is constantly being updated with news and content. Check it out at: www.flyontrack.co.uk/content ■



The new disabled ramp to the front door of the Tower

Improvements from top to bottom

Completing a major programme of repairs for the Control Tower with better disabled access...

We have recently carried out a major programme of refurbishment and improvements on the Control Tower, which took several weeks to complete.

Starting at the top, contractors have recoated the roof, painted the outside of the Visual Control Room and replaced four of the large glass windows, which date from the 1950s. This was a major task because the glass is so thick, and needed to be carried up two floors, including negotiating the very steep stairs to the Control Room.

On the ground floor, we are widening the door of the meeting room for wheelchair access, and have already reconfigured the disabled toilet. There is now an automatic glazed front door and a full disabled ramp is in place outside, with dedicated parking spaces. Our contractors braved the high winds, snow and cold weather to complete the various projects.

Additionally, there are new chairs and sofas in the downstairs meeting room, a television and Wi-Fi access.

In our fire station – the 240 Building – we have also installed three additional electric shutter doors in the parking bays. The final door will have an electric shutter fitted later this year. ■



The automatic door and improved disabled toilet access



Replacing the glass



New electric shutters for the 240 Building

A wide angle view

Saxon Microlights has upgraded its Thruster training simulator...

Training for any pilot's licence can often be held up for days at a time by bad weather, and many hours can be spent waiting for the rain to stop or the wind to die down.

Saxon Microlights' CFI Joan Walsh has got around this problem by creating a simulator for her Thruster aircraft. She has recently added a large side screen to give the student pilot a greater degree of realism and situational awareness in training.

Her students have already benefitted from being able to carry out exercises such as crosswind landings on the simulator before repeating them in the air. This saves the



Joan and a student using the simulator

students money and means that the airborne training time has maximum practical value.

The visuals give a great view of the Airfield and the local training area out to the East. Joan can programme in different winds and other factors to add to the challenge. It is win-win for everyone, whatever the weather! ■

Sam Read / Colin I'anson



Sam Read / Colin I'anson



Boosting our cover

Duty Officer Sam Read describes his recent advanced fire training course at Teesside...

Despite North Weald Airfield being unlicensed and therefore not requiring CAA-approved Fire and Rescue cover, we have been providing Cat 1 since 2010. As part of our on-going programme of improving this cover, Duty Officer Colin I'anson and myself attended the Low Category Fire Officers Course at Teesside Airport, for a week's intensive fire training.

The course started with two sessions of theory in the class room before being put in the 'hot' seat out on the fire ground. The instructors set up various challenging scenarios involving different aircraft rigs and casualty numbers. This enabled us to take it in turns acting as Incident Commander and managing the scene and nature of the rescues. After the week we passed out as Junior Officers.

This will enable us to carry out live fire training on site at North Weald, train new staff and upgrade our level of fire cover to Cat 2 if required. We will nevertheless continue to work closely with North Weald Fire Rescue Volunteers for training and coverage at major events.

We are currently in the process of setting up a dedicated training ground for live fire training, as well as looking into upgrading our level of first aid cover to provide oxygen therapy. ■



At the end of World War 2, RAF North Weald became a Transport Command station equipped with Vickers Warwicks of 301 and 304 Squadrons flown by Polish crews. Then flying ceased altogether in April 1947, when it became the Aircrew Selection Centre.

In 1949, the Airfield was transferred back into Fighter Command. Two Royal Auxiliary Air Force squadrons arrived, flying Spitfires and soon to be converted onto jets. The North Weald Wing was reborn...

The Millionaires Squadron

No. 601 (County of London) Squadron, Royal Auxiliary Air Force

The Squadron was formed at Northholt on 14 October 1925 as part of the newly-formed Auxiliary Air Force. Flying began in early 1926 with Avro 504s, which were supplemented by DH9A light bombers the following year, when the Squadron moved to Hendon.

The unit was originally led by Lord Edward Grosvenor. It was known as the 'Millionaires Squadron' because many wealthy young men, who were already aviators, joined the part-time Auxiliaries as part of their social scene.

At the end of 1929, Westland Wapitis replaced the DH9As, and these were superseded by Hawker Hart light bombers four years later. In July 1934, the Squadron became a fighter unit, and later received two-seat Hawker Demons.

At the end of 1938 the Squadron converted to Gloster Gauntlet single-seaters, but then quickly began to receive twin-engine Bristol Blenheims in their place. These were fitted with a pack of four Browning machine guns under the fuselage and used as stop-gap fighters.

It was with these clumsy machines that the Squadron went to war in September 1939. By March 1940, Hurricanes were substituted. In the Battle of France, a detachment of these operated from French soil for a week.

During the Battle of Britain, No. 601 was based at Tangmere and involved in heavy fighting, before moving to Debden.

Tom Mulickson



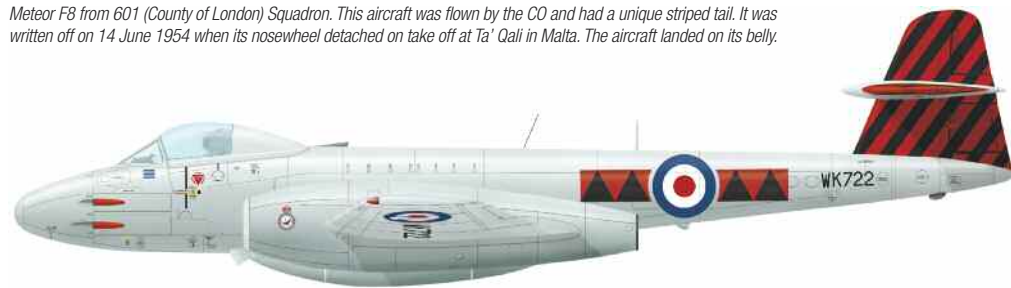
The losses were replaced by RAFVR and regular pilots and the Squadron lost its pre-war glamour and exclusivity.

In early 1941, it began offensive sweeps over northern France which continued until August, when it was received the new Bell Airacobra fighters. These proved to be a failure, and were replaced by Spitfires in March 1942. The next month the Auxiliaries set sail for the Middle East.

Fighter sweeps were flown over the Western Desert, and following the Battle of El Alamein the Squadron moved west into Tunisia. After the end of the North African campaign it went to Malta to cover the Allied landings in Sicily. From there it moved to Italy on ground-attack missions until it was disbanded in August 1945.

On 10 May 1946, the Auxiliary Air Force began to reform. No. 601 was once again based at Hendon, and by October it had commenced flying Spitfires.

The Squadron moved to North Weald in March 1949 where it started converting to Vampire F3 jet fighters during November. Within three years the more capable Meteor F8s had replaced them. On 10 March 1957, the Royal Auxiliary Air Force was finally disbanded and No. 601 Squadron stood down. ■



Feeding the guns

Geoff Monahan remembers his time as an armourer at North Weald

In May 1953, I was posted to North Weald Station Armoury from 72 Squadron. Typical of the RAF, I had just finished a four week course at Kirkham for promotion to SAC (qualified to sign Form 700s) – not a '700' in sight in the Armoury!

The Armoury was across the camp road, behind the Guardroom. We undertook maintenance work on 20mm Hispano cannons for 72, 601 and 604 Squadrons. They had to be stripped down, checked for wear and, if needed, have parts replaced before we cleaned, reassembled and returned them. All cannons had a history sheet and were marked with Squadron numbers and position on the aircraft, eg: 72 PU (72 Squadron Port Upper on a Meteor).

We had responsibility for the Station's arms, officers' personal weapons and for checking, weekly, Verrey pistols – which fired flares – in the control tower, the Station Flight Oxford and the flying control caravan at the end of the runway.

We also took turns as duty armourer. Once, I was called out to render safe an ejector seat of a Meteor that had been damaged during a Battle of Britain flypast rehearsal, hit by another diving out of control from a higher formation. The damaged aircraft, whose nose was badly smashed and canopy broken, was led by a colleague to an emergency landing at North Weald. It was just as well the pilot didn't try to eject, as the canopy was jammed; he would have been cut to ribbons!

In October 1953, my National Service finished. After settling back in Civvy Street in an office, I applied to join 601 Squadron RAuxAF. In early January 1954, I was interviewed by their CO, Squadron Leader McCarthy-Jones, and accepted.

An Auxiliary Squadron had exactly the same role as its regular counterparts, but was active only at weekends and its two-week air-firing camp every summer. The spirit was tremendous; probably 80%+ of personnel were volunteer auxiliaries. We were paid regularly for our attendance plus a travel allowance of 10 shillings (50p) per weekend.



North Weald Airfield Museum

601 Squadron was located in a hangar on the far side of the main runway (now Hangar 2). Squadron offices ran its length outside, between it and the flight line. (Incidentally, our "safety direction" on the line would, I am sure, have seen St Andrew's Church lose its tower if the guns had accidentally fired.)

Personnel came from a wide spectrum. I worked in an office, with one armament corporal who was a senior tax official at the Treasury. One chap drove a Green Line bus, there were four or five Fairey Aviation apprentices, and an ex-regular F/Sgt was an armourer's assistant. As a F/Sgt he had TE Lawrence in his squad at RAF Calshot pre-war.

Pilots were in City jobs, advertising, commerce or had their own businesses. There were one or two ex-National Service pilots too. Air firing figured prominently in our routines, so we were always kept busy. The two-week camps were always abroad and I attended Ta' Qali, Malta twice and Wunsdorf in Germany. They were busy times, but we did get some relaxation too. The briefing for Malta always ended: "... and 5000+ bottles of Coke," – sixpence a bottle (2½p)!

I had two main highlights. The first when we were paraded at Buckingham Palace to receive a new standard from Prince Philip, our honorary Air Commodore. We had to attend drill evenings at the Duke of York's headquarters beforehand. I was also privileged to speak to the Prince when he visited us at North Weald.

My other highlight was when 601's armourers were invited to Martin-Baker at Denham to see how ejector seats were made. We had lunch with Sir James Martin and Bernard Lynch, the first live ejection guinea pig! Then we were shot in turn up their 60 foot test rig. I kept my lunch down, luckily!

I enjoyed my four years and nine months at North Weald, serving under four aces as Station or Wing Commander. ■



North Weald's part-time fighter pilots

The Royal Auxiliary Air Force's No. 604 (County of Middlesex) Squadron

No. 604 (County of Middlesex) Squadron of the Auxiliary Air Force was formed at Hendon on 17 March 1930 as a part-time reserve for the RAF. It was equipped with DH9A bombers. These were replaced by the Westland Wapiti in September 1930.

After being re-designated as a two-seat fighter squadron, it started flying Hawker Harts on 23 July 1934. Hawker Demons replaced the Harts a year later.

During 1939, the Squadron converted to Blenheim long-range fighters, flying day and night convoy patrols from North Weald with a detachment based at Martlesham Heath. It then moved to Northolt and Manston, and saw action against German Junkers 52 transports at the Hague in Holland.

In July 1940, the Squadron took up nightfighting full-time and relocated to Middle Wallop. It patrolled the south coast and gained valuable experience with the early radar sets.

Cannon-armed Beaufighters started to arrive in September, along with improved airborne and Ground Controlled Interception (GC) radars. It was with these that F/Lt John Cunningham started building up his tally to become a nightfighter ace with 20 victories. After the war he joined de Havillands and became their Chief Test Pilot.

Early in 1943 decreasing enemy night raids allowed some of the Beaufighters to be used for intruder operations over enemy airfields in northern France.

The Squadron converted to Mosquitoes in February 1944, and joined Second Tactical Air Force to provide cover for the D-Day landings. In August it moved to airfields in Normandy, but was back in the UK in September for three months. From January 1945 until its disbandment on 18 April 1945, the Squadron operated from bases in northern France.

In May 1946, No. 604 reformed at Hendon as part of the newly reconstituted Royal Auxiliary Air Force, and was



The CO's Meteor, WK784, in the foreground of a Squadron line-up

North Weald Airfield Museum



Groundcrew ready to go!

North Weald Airfield Museum

initially equipped with Spitfire XVI's. The Squadron returned to North Weald and then converted to Vampire F3 jet fighters in November 1949.

These were replaced by Meteor F8s during 1952, the Squadron taking up residence in the new hangars and fighter pans on the western side of the Airfield. Lord Tebbit was one of the pilots serving on the Squadron at this time. The Meteors continued to be flown until the Auxiliaries were disbanded once again in 1957 as a result of the Duncan Sandys defence cuts. ■

From fighter to unmanned target

One of 604 Squadron's Meteors ended its days on missile trials...

Gloster Meteor F8, WK784, was built by Armstrong Whitworth at Baginton and delivered to the RAF on 17 July 1952. It served with 604 (County of Middlesex) Squadron at North Weald, and was flown by the Squadron Commander S/Ldr T Turnbull. The tail was painted in the Squadron colour of yellow for recognition purposes, following the fashion of the time. It was one of the aircraft from the Squadron which took part in the Queen's Coronation Week Display at Heathrow in 1953.

In early 1961 it was allocated for conversion to a U16 remote-controlled target drone for use in missile trials along with many other obsolete F8s. The work was done by Flight Refuelling at Tarrant Rushton in Dorset, and involved the installation of radio link equipment, an autopilot and other instrumentation in an extended nose section. The four cannon were removed and cameras fitted in jettisonable wing tip units. The aircraft was finally shot down by a missile over Cardigan Bay on 27 September 1962. ■

Jimmy Salandin and the UFOs

A very close encounter over Southend in 1954...

Flight Lieutenant 'Jimmy' Salandin was a 'weekend' pilots serving with 604 (County of Middlesex) Squadron at North Weald. He reported for duty on 14 October 1954, and at 4.15 pm went flying in his Meteor F8 jet fighter.

Climbing to the south in perfect weather conditions he saw two other Meteors flying in formation high above at 30-40,000 feet over the North Foreland leaving long vapour trails. He continued to watch the two aircraft while occasionally checking his instruments.

He had reached 16,000 feet over the outlying districts of Southend, Then, "through the middle of the trails I saw three objects which I thought were aeroplanes, but they weren't trailing." One of the objects was silver, another gold. Salandin watched these two until they disappeared, at the 9 o'clock high position to his port side.

After checking his instruments he looked in front of him and saw the third object heading straight towards him, which "was saucer-shaped with a bun on top and a bun underneath, and was silvery and metallic. There were no

potholes, flames, or anything. The third object could not have been far away because it nearly overlapped the windscreen. A Meteor's 37-foot wingspan just fills the windscreen at 150 yards."

The UFO avoided a head-on collision at the very last second by swerving off past the Meteor's port side. "I tried to turn round to follow, but it had gone"

Badly shaken, Salandin flew around quietly for a few minutes to regain his composure, and immediately reported the sighting by radio to North Weald. After landing he related further details to Derek Dempster, 604 Squadron's intelligence officer, who, co-incidentally, became the first editor of *Flying Saucer Review* the following year.

A report was sent to the Air Ministry but nothing further was heard about it. Salandin was annoyed, too, when he realized later that his gun camera had been loaded all the time, but he didn't have time to press the button. ■



North Weald Airfield Museum



Arthur Moreton gives a short presentation on the history of the Airfield



Finding out about the Ghats at Hangar 4a

James McDowall



The tour visited the Air Ambulance

James McDowall



James McDowall

Local pensioners visit their airfield

The day we treated the Thornwood Seniors to a tour around the Control Tower and hangars...

We had a visit by Thornwood Seniors, a local community group on Thursday 18 April. The event was very popular and oversubscribed. Forty eight people began their Airfield tour at the Gate Guardian Hurricane with a welcome by Arthur Moreton, the Airfield Historian. They then had coffee in the ground floor meeting room of the Control Tower, and Arthur gave them a short introduction on the history of the Airfield from World War 1 to the present day.

Afterwards they went upstairs to look across the Airfield, and many braved the steep staircase to visit the Visual Control Room at the top of the Tower, with its panorama of the runways and hangars. The Operations Officer on duty, Lee Peat, explained how we operate the radio and movements board, and also the computer systems in use for recording take offs, landings and flight plans.

The group then had a tour of the site in a convoy of cars escorted by the duty Fire Crew, James McDowall and Elliott Foster. With the kind co-operation of the Herts Air Ambulance and our aviation tenants, they were able to have a glimpse inside some of the hangars and see the wide range of historic aeroplanes based here.

Our visitors finished their morning with lunch at The Squadron. We were delighted to have so many senior citizens from the local community interested in visiting their airfield, many for the first time, and are very happy to accommodate any other groups wishing to do something similar. ■

A rare treat

Restoration project photographed

On the same day we hosted a photo shoot of a Land Rover Series 2 fire truck dating from 1959, one of only two remaining. This has been restored locally by Michael Harris over the past year, and is being featured in *Land Rover* magazine.

The Land Rover's previous owner was Terry Knight, who is a great friend of the Airfield. He obtained it from a Fire Brigade Sub Officer in Petersfield, Hampshire, about ten years ago. He displayed it at shows and won several prizes. The Land Rover was originally used by the Reed International Paper Group as a fire appliance. ■



Engine runs back in November



Parked after a taxi test



Getting ready to go

The Big Cat departs

Our Catalina goes to Biggin Hill after three years at the Airfield...

The camouflaged Catalina amphibian, which has been based at North Weald since December 2009 departed to Biggin Hill on Tuesday 5 March. Further work will be carried out, including refitting the transparent side blisters, before it returns to the USA later this year. Clive Edwards and his team of engineers have been preparing the aircraft for its ferry flight over several weeks, performing engine runs, undercarriage retraction and taxiing tests.

Built in San Diego during 1943, this Consolidated PB5A Catalina served with the US Navy for her first 13 years. From 1965, she was placed on the Canadian register as C-FJG for aerial survey work with Survair and several other companies including the famous Spartan Air Services.

The Catalina was returned to the US register as N423RS in the mid-1980s and after several changes of ownership was operated by Greenpeace for four years until 2001. She was then ferried to the UK, and based first at Duxford, then Le-on-Solent in Hampshire.

The aircraft is painted in the scheme of the Catalina JV928/Y flown by John Cruickshank of 210 Squadron, Coastal Command, when he won his Victoria Cross on 17 July 1944 while sinking a German submarine U-347. He suffered 72 separate wounds, but still managed to fly back to his base in the Shetland Islands. His navigator was killed during the attack when the aircraft suffered a direct hit on the nose. ■



The Extreme Stunt Show

Don't try to do this at home!



It's not easy photographing action in the dark, and the action was non-stop at the Extreme Stunt Show on Thursday 4 April. Giant trucks crushed cars, vehicles drove around amazingly balanced on two wheels. Bikers burst through burning barriers, jumped obstacles and performed complicated wheelies. A BMX team showed what push bikes can do. When the sun set it was bitterly cold, but the kids loved the crazy stunts. Over 1800 people came from miles around to see them. We look forward to more Extreme Stunts at the Airfield next year. ■



Fast forward!

Car Limits – the high octane driving experience

Car Limits provides high performance driver training and half-day classic sports car driving experiences at North Weald Airfield.

Personal coaching to improve technique

The most popular training activity is two or four person days. Instructor Andrew Walsh ensures the day is bespoke to a driver's needs, using exercises that lend themselves to a variety of techniques. For example, on the high speed bend a driver may experience understeer and oversteer and learn how to correct them, improve steering, learn balanced and trailing throttle, left foot braking, heel and toe and even how to control the rotation of the car and get it back in line from 90 degrees!

A circuit around soft cones is then used to put the techniques into practice and learn even more.

Car Limits also offers a rather more personal service, this course consists of two hours intensive instruction for one driver. It is entirely bespoke, focussing upon what the driver needs, be it perfecting a technique, improving on a circuit of the driver's design, learning new techniques or just testing and setting up a car.

Drive classic sports cars

Experience Limits is a three-hour session that allows participants to get behind the wheel of a range of classic sports cars such as the Lamborghini, Ferrari, Aston Martin DB9, Porsche, Lotus and Audi R8.

Hover Limits for that floating feeling!

For those who like a real challenge, there is also a two-seat hovercraft circuit on the Northern Showground grass area. It looks easy until you try to turn a corner, then the fun begins, especially if it's a bit windy!



The Lamborghini is the most popular Experience Day car



Hovercraft action on the grass



Driver experience for young people

Under 17 driver training

For young people, an initial driving experience is also available, which gives hands-on familiarisation in a safe and controlled environment with no other traffic. A passenger lap in a high performance car rounds off the session.

For more information on all types of activity see the Car Limits website at www.carlimits.com ■



Lining up for the High Speed Straight on an Activity Day



High visibility...

James McDowall reports on how the North Weald Ground Crew provides support for aviation events

The North Weald Ground Crew are a group of aviation enthusiasts who provide airside support at aviation events held here at North Weald Airfield.

The team are affiliated with The Squadron, which is on the north west side of the airfield and have actively supported events at North Weald Airfield for over 20 years. The team have been integral to organising the yearly Air-Britain Fly-In, which is one of the Airfield's biggest fly-ins on the summer calendar and have held this event here at North Weald for the last ten years.

Marshalling aircraft to their parking position is not the only task undertaken by the team. They also refuel aircraft and organise the logistics of the Fly-in, ranging from invites to special aircraft, providing a marquee, light refreshments and snacks for all the visiting pilots and members of the public.

All of the marshalling team have completed a training course led by the BAA chief training officer from Heathrow, Simon Newbold, covering aircraft Marshalling Theory and Practical Awareness.



Nigel Kemp and his brother Phil run the group. Nigel has added, "Some of the team work airside at some of the largest UK airports, so together with our extensive practical experience it enables us to adopt a professional approach to our all activities. We have been independently commended on our activities."

The team's activities are not restricted to just North Weald, they have provided support for events across the UK, such as the LAA rally & *AeroExpo* held at Sywell and the *Children in Need* airshow at Little Gransden. In more recent years, the team have also participated at events in Europe, namely *AviationExpo* at Bittburg in Germany. ■

