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# FORWARD —

By Air Commodore H. P. Connolly,  
C.B., D.F.C., A.F.C., A.F.M.

1968 sees the 50th Anniversary of the formation of the Royal Air Force and appropriate ceremonies and celebrations are widely planned. This year has also seen the most drastic cuts in defence expenditure since the Second World War, a profound change in British foreign policy in the decision to withdraw from East of Suez by the end of 1971 and, resulting from these, a fundamental rationalisation of British defence organisation, not least in the Royal Air Force.

All this has, of course, had a depressing effect upon us all. In the circumstances it is natural to take a gloomy view of the future both for one's self and for our Service. Natural, but in my view mistaken. For what has happened? For once, cuts in defence expenditure have been matched by cuts in commitments. We are not going to be asked now or in the future to undertake defence responsibilities which we are not equipped to face. So a reduction in size does not necessarily mean a corresponding reduction in efficiency, or career prospects, particularly for those just entering upon a Service career. Indeed, it can be argued that a smaller, more tightly knit Service with first class modern equipment will be more efficient, more interesting, and offering a better career than one which is overlarge, over-extended and, consequently, under-financed.

Trenchard's Air Force of the twenties and early thirties was small—about 30,000 all told, and very widely spread: but it was highly efficient and very professional, and provided the solid base upon which the vastly expanded Royal Air Force of the war was built, the force which was to absorb the shock of global war, survive, and win. And never forget that the vast majority of the tradesmen in that small Air Force who became the bulk of the technical officers of the larger force—and, indeed, many of the pilots, navigators, air engineers and air gunners as well—were trained as aircraft apprentices at Halton.

Viscount Tremarctus  
GEOFFREY GOSWOLD, C.B.E., C.M.G., C.V.O., LL.D.

The Architect

So, to the future. British defence policy is to have a European emphasis, with the support of N.A.T.O. its theme. Its sphere of chief interest will stretch from the North Cape through Europe to the Mediterranean and Westwards over the North Atlantic. To enable the Royal Air Force to meet its commitments under this policy new aircraft, including Phantoms, Harriers, Jaguars and Nimrods, are on order and these in substantial numbers which could well be increased. They will join a splendid transport force of V.C.10s, Comets, Hercules, Argosies, Belfasts and Britannias. We are of course disappointed not to be getting the F.111s, but I am sure we all realise that ultimately national economic realities must govern what the country can afford; and this is as true of defence as of everything else. Moreover, we have been assured that the Ministry of Defence is now urgently studying ways and means of meeting any shortfall in our future fighting capabilities caused by the cancellation of the F.111s.

The Royal Air Force, with the Royal Navy and the Army, represents Britain's investment in security. In the troubled world in which we live national security must, for the foreseeable future, continue to have first call on the nation's resources and funds. It follows that there is a firm future for the Royal Air Force and a full and worthwhile career for all those who enter what the Secretary of State for Defence has called the 'biggest family in the world.' So, put any doubts you may have behind you and face your future in the Royal Air Force with confidence. I am convinced it will be justified.





# Viscount Trenchard

G.C.B., O.M., G.C.V.O., D.S.O., D.C.L., L.L.D.

## 'The Architect of our Air Power'

TRENCHARD was born, a typical Victorian child, on the 3rd February, 1873, at Taunton. He was not a particularly brilliant scholar in his young days and disliked the mechanical drudgery of school lessons. Like so many Victorian parents, his father and mother had long decided on a military career for Hugh. Mother favoured the Royal Navy and had her way, but Hugh disappointed them by failing to qualify for Dartmouth. After many trials and tribulations at an army 'crammer' school, and on the third successful attempt at passing the military examination, Hugh Trenchard was gazetted in the summer of 1893 as a second lieutenant in the Second Battalion of the Royal Scots Fusiliers.

After a frustrating period of service in India, an exciting war in South Africa, where he almost died from a sniper's bullet, and after a variety of Army ventures in Africa, Trenchard joined the Royal Flying Corps in 1912. According to his first flight commander, Lieutenant Longmore, Trenchard was '... an indifferent flier whose age told against him, though he showed enviable pluck and perseverance.' Until the outbreak of the First World War, he served as Assistant Commandant at the Central Flying School, Upavon. In November 1914, Trenchard went to France to take command of No. 1 Wing in the Royal Flying Corps. During this period, Trenchard found an influential backer in Field Marshal Sir Douglas Haig, who was impressed by his dynamic leadership. On the 19th August 1915, Trenchard became a Brigadier-General and was appointed to command the Corps.

Trenchard never spared himself nor his pilots and men. Indeed, he was frequently condemned as being devoid of humanity and 'an unfeeling apostle of the bludgeon', but he was prepared to move heaven and earth on behalf of his pilots and he regarded the Royal Flying Corps as a family. His work and insistence upon the absolute importance of air power were both recognised in 1916 and his policy of attack became the basis for the tactics and strategy in the R.F.C. He envisaged the eventual domination of war by the air arm.

Important as was his work during the First World War, it was in the immediate post-war period that it reached its peak. The Royal Air Force had been established in time of the war emergency and now, in the first flush of peace, an apathetic nation and unsympathetic government seriously questioned the value of a separate air force. The difficult question of its future had yet to be solved. With his accustomed determination Trenchard put forward his solution in a Memorandum which was successfully placed before Parliament by Winston Churchill, the then Secretary of State for Air, in December 1919. It proposed the formation of a small, but highly trained Service, capable of rapid expansion should the need arise. The apprentice training school at Halton was one result of this policy.

It was interesting to note that the major portion of the meagre funds voted for building purposes was not lavished by Trenchard on the more refined Cranwell, but on the vast stores, workshops and barracks at Halton. However, the School's roots were very delicate in the early twenties and national economic and trade slumps encouraged politicians to suggest cuts in defence expenditure. How familiar that plan sounds again today! When Sir Eric Geddes, in 1921, suggested that Halton should be closed, Trenchard's dogged resolution won him another battle. He argued that a qualified Halton boy was not merely an important part of the R.A.F. technical backbone: he was a national asset by virtue of his sound technical education. In the end Geddes accepted Trenchard's view: Halton was saved from the economic axe. Indeed by the beginning of 1924, Trenchard had gained union recognition for the Halton aircraft apprentice scheme.

Throughout Viscount Trenchard's twelve years as the Chief of Air Staff, he toiled unceasingly to build the Royal Air Force on a sound foundation. He concentrated all the time on obtaining quality of manpower. 'I want brains to be pooled in the R.A.F.', he said. He fought the politicians as they continually sniped at the independent Air Force and he remained for ever convinced that air power had supplanted much of the old naval and military strategies. Perhaps, if more notice had been taken of his conviction that Singapore needed aircraft rather than fixed naval guns for its security, the fiasco in 1942 need never have occurred. Trenchard believed wholeheartedly in

the development of a powerful air offensive. He maintained that this 'will provoke in his weaker enemy increasingly insistent calls for the protective employment of aircraft. In this way he will throw the enemy on the defensive ...'

Books have been written on the practical application of this policy by 'Bomber' Sir Arthur Harris in the Second World War, and many critics have seen fit to condemn the policy of mounting a strategic bomber offensive. Perhaps Bomber Command did not accomplish the aims set down for it at Casablanca in January 1943, but it most certainly threw the enemy on to the defensive and materially assisted in 'exercising pressure on the enemy ... and the defeat of his armies.'

'Boom' Trenchard said farewell to Adastral House in December 1929 and apparently became just another half-forgotten celebrity. In the pacifist era of the late twenties and early thirties, Trenchard was out of tune with the feelings of the politicians and the public. His final statement of policy—to replace army and naval units abroad with R.A.F. squadrons became a 'last will and testament'. But his controversial plan withered away unlamented. Yet, when the testing time came again in 1939, Trenchard's hard work bore good fruit. The wonderful spirit and efficiency of the Royal Air Force in the dark days of the Battle for Britain was due to Trenchard's leadership and foresight. He laid well the foundations in the early days and lived long enough to witness the culmination of his efforts to promote air power.

As the Royal Air Force moves into its second half-century, the same spirit and enthusiasm, which Trenchard fostered, is even more urgently required. We live in times which are more troubled than those years in which the R.A.F. was the politicians' unwanted child. Trenchard said '... the morale of an air force is a delicate weapon easily blunted.' Service morale today is perhaps taking the same hard knocks it received in the 1920s. With Trenchard's resolution and determination then, the Service survived. Now, we must emulate the spirit and enthusiasm of our predecessors and justify the faith that Hugh Trenchard placed in the Royal Air Force.

## SOME MEMORIES OF THE FIRST

*By the First Halton Apprentice*

*Squadron Leader A. J. Akhurst, R.A.F., (Retd.)*

FIVE hundred of us arrived at Wendover station on a bleak January day in 1922, were bundled into lorries and taken to huddled accommodation at North Camp. (This same area is now known as Rosemead—a friend of long standing is right now living there in married quarters—what a contrast!) We later learned that the huts at North Camp had been condemned even before we had arrived but this news came as no surprise; we soon found they were far from weather-proof. On a rainy night it was usual to go to sleep with the beds in two lines only to wake up and find them scattered all over the place where they had been moved to avoid the leaks. Toilets were external and of the bucket and flap type. I am reminded of one occasion, just prior to one of the many V.I.P. inspections, when an over-keen cookhouse wallah decided to clean the dices with caustic soda. About midnight everybody made a dash for—well, anywhere. The following morning the camp looked like one of the heaps common to certain villages overseas. That same morning was a Sunday and I remember the Padre (later to become Chaplain-in-Chief and at that time a wonderful help to us Boys) gave a sermon on purging of the soul. We never did know whether the subject was a coincidence.

After a medical the fit were lined up for attestation more or less in alphabetical order. Little did I then know that by heading the line, I was destined to be the first Halton Apprentice.

The lucky ones were then kitted out. The issue of uniform was most welcome, for at least it gave greater protection against the cold than civilian clothes. The uniform comprised a suit of best blue with pantaloons and putties, together with a working dress of khaki slacks and ankle puttees. The latter was issued irrespective of size and I have a photograph in which my neck protrudes through

the tunic collar rather as a dog's does through his. The shortest apprentice, Bill Mackin (now Wg.Cdr. Mackin, O.B.E.), had a khaki greatcoat which almost touched the ground. I remember W.O. Marshal (now Wg.Cdr. Marshal, O.B.E.) calling out during one of the many drill periods: 'Hey laddie, you may be swinging your arms inside those sleeves, but swing the sleeves as well!!!' I can so clearly picture him and still wonder if he wore corsets. Maybe if he is still around he will satisfy the curiosity of those of us that are left.

Yes, uniform was a problem at times. Best dress of pantaloons and puttees looked reasonably smart on good shaped legs. Mine were skinny and I wore the tops of rugger socks under the puttees as a calf foundation. I went to a village dance once and was so engrossed that I did not realise that one puttee had become unwound. I came down to earth when I realised my partner and I were the only couple on the floor and my odd leg the centre of attraction.

The first six months were the worst; mostly squarebashing as the workshops and school building were not ready before that time. Not surprisingly, many Boys tried to run away, some with success (I wonder if 'Tarzan' Brown ever reached India?). These escapes were rather surprising as the S.P.s had bloodhounds to track down deserters and field telephones were installed along the line of hills at the back of the camp for the same purpose. In addition to the deserters we also had suicides. One Boy hanged himself in the toilet at Marylebone station rather than return from leave. Another rubbed his heel with emery and rubbed in metal polish.

We did get some sport of course. I remember the compulsory cross country runs and how we soon found the shorts cuts; until the P.T. N.C.O.s twigged this and posted a



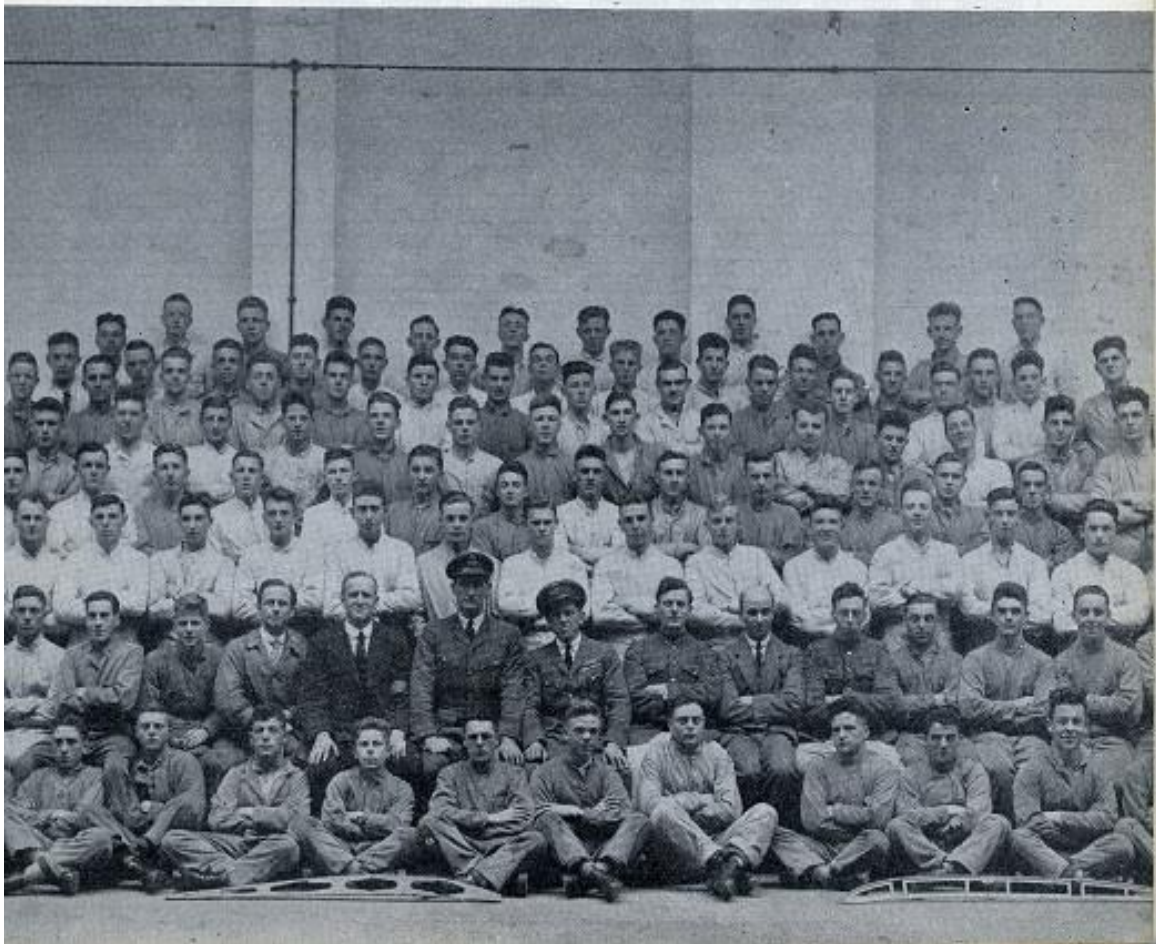
man at the furthest point to stamp our arm to prove we had reached him. We overcame this by washing round the stamp but they won the next round by changing the colour weekly. We then had to find out the 'colour of the day'. Strangely enough there came one week when I decided to run the full course. To my amazement (and that of the P.T.I.s) I did quite well and, by the time I left Halton, I was running for the Unit, Southern Counties, Highgate Harriers etc; and what was more I loved it! Surely there must be a moral here somewhere?

Fatigues were numerous and we spent hours spud peeling, mess cook, etc. Mess cook included serving the meal and, afterwards, washing plates, dishes and dixies, then

scrubbing the tops, bottoms and sides of tables and forms, and finally scrubbing the mess-decks (we had many Army and Navy terms in 1922). One Sunday the A.C.2 acting Cpl. i/c made me repeat the whole of the scrubbing three times before he was satisfied and I finished just in time to get the tea ready.

When we eventually started training our progress was continually hampered by changes in policy and syllabus. Some, of course, were justified but others were not. I found this fault continuing when I returned many years later as Armament Training Officer. It may still be perpetuated to this day. Considerable time was also lost in the long marches to and from work. We were

*The First Entry of Carpenter-Riggers, January 1922*



always glad to reach the top of the hill (opposite the Halton House entrance) as it was not much further to go. The marching distances were, of course, reduced when we eventually moved into Bulbeck (now Henderson) Barracks.

Parades were numerous and lengthy. One which sticks in my memory was the visit of the Duke of York, later to become King George VI. We had been rehearsed for months and were in position hours before the Royal arrival. Just as the Duke did arrive two little dogs decided to have a tug-of-war right across the front of the parade. Fortunately they were quickly dispersed by a quick thinking 'erk' who, although in scruff order, rushed out from a nearby building with the necessary bucket of water.

Till now I have referred to our rank as 'Boy' and this was, in fact our rank up to, I believe, the first year when it was changed to Aircraft Apprentice. One reason for the change was to differentiate between ourselves and that fine crowd the 1918 Boy Entrants. Incidentally many of these chaps helped us considerably when we finally reached the outside world as, by then, they had a lot of service experience behind them.

Life at Halton in those days was not all blood and sweat. How well I remember the friendship of the village folk, especially the Sunday afternoon cuppas followed by a session of bell ringing in the Church; very close comradeship between members of the Entry; the

real appreciation of privileges when they did eventually start; the help and understanding of most of the technical staff and civilian school masters (Fanstone, Ivor B. Hart, Kermode, etc); the feeling after Church Parade that, despite the polishing and inspections it had all been worth while; and the excitement in the early hours on the day that leave started. Then, at the end, came the realisation that despite all the difficulties, one had at last reached the goal.

Finally came our Passing Out. Our Reviewing Officer was that never-to-be-forgotten 'Father' of the Royal Air Force, 'Boom' Trenchard. Of the 500 of us who had started, only 131 passed out. Of 38 Fitters Armourer (The original 'Plumbers', a nickname subsequently grabbed by all technical types), only eight passed out and all A.C.1s. Being one of the eight, I had rather an inflated opinion of myself especially when the great man himself spoke to me. B.T. 'So you are now an A.C.1 eh?' A.J.A. (very pleased) 'Yes, Sir'. B.T. 'Well, I suppose that is some sort of start'. Deflation!

Many times throughout the years I have asked myself 'If, on that January morning at Wendover station you had been able to foresee the future would you have caught the next train back to Sussex? The emphatic answer has always been 'NO'. Troubles, frustrations, illnesses and disappointments there have been but I would never change my life with anybody.

\* \* \*

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HALTON CAMP

NEWSAGENTS, STATIONERS & TOBACCONISTS

TO THE R.F.C. AND R.A.F. SINCE 1913

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# half a century of technical training

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February, 1920, saw the inauguration of the Aircraft Apprentice Scheme, when it became clear, after the 1914-1918 war, that it would be necessary for the Royal Air Force to train its own mechanics.

Mechanics in the Royal Air Force must be able to think and act for themselves, they must also have skill, knowledge and mental alertness to meet rapid developments in aircraft engines, airframes, armament and instruments. It was therefore decided to enlist the services of educational authorities in the

recruitment of well-educated boys who could rapidly absorb the technical training necessary.

The trades needed in the Royal Air Force have changed with the developments since 1920, and corresponding changes have been made in the details of the apprentices' training, but the basic ideas underlying the training scheme have remained unchanged.

The first entry of apprentices to be trained at Halton arrived in January 1922. They



*The early days . . . .*



*His Majesty King George the Sixth visits the Workshops, 14th April 1939 . . .*

received their training, as the majority do today, at workshops, the airfield and schools. As compared with today their equipment was antiquated and the planes they learnt to service are only memories. The Bristol Fighter the Sopwith Pup, the D.H.9A and the Vickers Vimy were to be found in workshops and on the airfield.

The early trades consisted of Fitter Aero Engines, Fitter Rigger, Carpenter Rigger, Carpenters, Fitters Jig and Tool and those associated with the Allied Trades; these included Turners, Blacksmiths and Copper-smiths. The very names of the trades indicated the vintage of the planes they worked on.

Others were trained as Fitters Driver Petrol, this group were also trained as qualified drivers. Another group became Carpenters

Motor Body Builders whilst others were trained at Cranwell for three years to become draughtsmen.

There was a continuously changing pattern of training, with some trades disappearing whilst new ones emerged, and changes in the organisation of the system also took place. In 1926 a new system of grouping occurred when entries were attached to a Wing en bloc. From this time onwards there were Wing Workshops, and Wing Schools with their appropriate staffs.

As proof of their training the apprentices helped in the construction of the H.A.C. 1 in 1927 and in 1928 helped to turn this aircraft from a bi-plane into a high wing monoplane, calling it the H.A.C. 2. In this same year the Riggers of No. 2 Wing built a Gloster Grebe.

In the early 'thirties' many of the old trades were abandoned or amalgamated into a new scheme. This was the introduction of the Fitter II; this gave the apprentice eighteen months training as an airframe fitter and the same period of training as an engine fitter. However after only a short period of time this scheme was revised and we had the introduction of the Fitter II, Engine and the Fitter II, Airframe, each spending three years in his training.

entry would notice today, other than the syllabus and the teaching aids, would be very small numbers of civilian staff as compared to the uniformed staff: a complete reversal to the pre-war period.

When War came in 1939 many changes occurred and it became necessary to squeeze the apprentice training from three to two years. Planes and equipment also changed, the Harts, Hinds and Hendons quickly giving



*They came in all sizes . . . .*

Basic education and theory was given in 'schools' and here the pattern was always changing in order to keep abreast of the latest developments. In 1936, for example, written school examinations were taken into account in assessing trade qualifications. Probably the only difference the ex-apprentice of an early

way to Blenheims, Spitfires, Mosquitos and Lancasters. Possibly the armourer apprentice saw the greatest visual change when the 500 and 1000 lb bombs of 1939 gradually grew to the 22,000 lb bombs of 1945!

Towards the end of 1943 the three year



*An introduction to jets at Halton . . .*

scheme was re-introduced and in 1944 it was arranged for Fitter IIA, Fitter IIE Armourers and Instrument Makers to take the National Certificate in Mechanical Engineering, and the apprentice Electricians to sit for the Certificate of Electrical Engineering. With the end of the war in 1945 apprentice training was faced with many new problems. Not only had there been a great advance in aeroplane design and performance, there was also a complete new factor, the jet engine, developed by an ex-apprentice. This was a challenge to both apprentices and staff and it was to their credit that it was successfully accepted.

The immediate post-war period was a difficult one for all at No. 1 School of Technical Training and in 1947 the severe winter succeeded in closing down training. The new planes of the jet age started to appear, the Meteors and the Vampires, bringing, as always, new equipment and new problems.

In the fifties the Hunters were followed by the Canberras and the 'V' bombers. It was in the fifties that another change took place of a different nature. This was the introduction of a new trade for apprentices, the dental technician. Here again it was of a three year duration with trade training being the responsibility of the Dental Training Establishment of R.A.F. Halton.

However it was in the autumn of 1964 when apprentice training achieved a complete 'new look'. This was the introduction of three new apprentice training schemes and the last entry of the original Trenchard boys, the 106th Entry, passed out at Christmas 1966.

The three schemes introduced first, the newly termed Technician Apprentice Scheme, which lasts for three years and is a very comprehensive course, the successful candidate passing out with an Ordinary National

Certificate. The second scheme introduced the Craft Apprentice who trains for two years in one of the following trades, engine, airframe, electrical and armourer. Thirdly, the Administrative Apprentice Scheme gives a one year training to apprentices in order to become medical orderlies. This group's trade training is the responsibility of the Medical Training Establishment of R.A.F. Halton.

With the introduction of such radical changes many new problems have occurred, but to date most have, or are in the process of being solved. Technical and educational training can never stand still and the many changes that have occurred since 1920 in apprentice training at Halton illustrate that this school has always been to the fore in Technological Training development.



*Missiles and Men . . .*



# ROYAL SALUTE

The Royal Air Force Reviews - 1935 and 1953



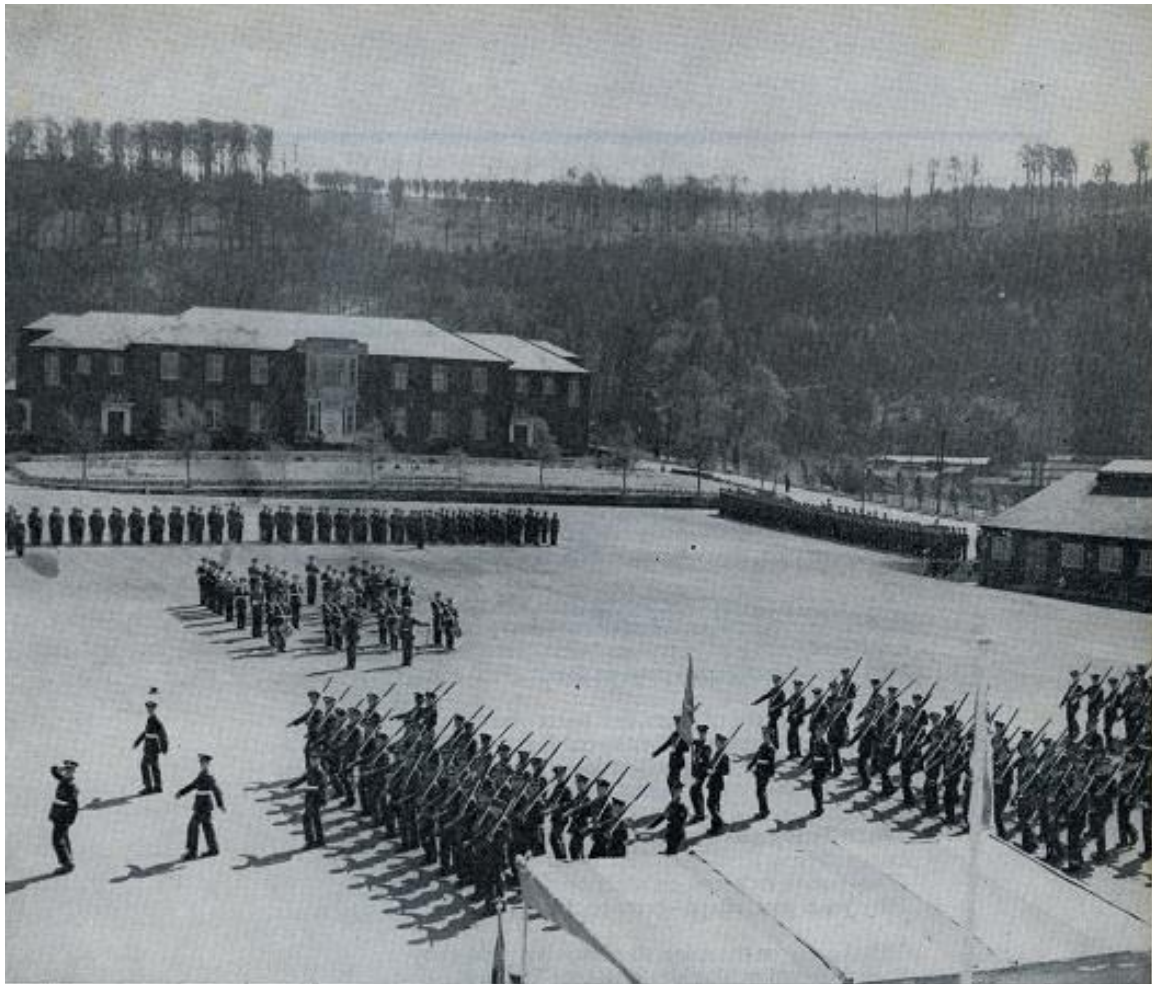
*The Jubilee Review 1935 . . .*

**I**N the summer of 1935 the Royal Air Force held a Grand Jubilee Parade to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the accession to the throne of His Majesty King George the Fifth. On the 6th July 1935, the King made his review of Service personnel and aircraft at Royal Air Force Mildenhall. The photograph shows the aircraft formed up at the Review Parade. It is an interesting exercise in aircraft recognition of the biplane types which formed the front-line strength of the Service at that time.

The European situation in 1935, created by the re-armament of Germany in the air, had repercussions upon the Royal Air Force in general and upon Halton in particular. It was decided that, by 1937, the Royal Air Force was to be equal to any continental power's air force. As the expansion got under way and the demand for technicians grew, the intakes at Halton increased accordingly:

33rd Entry	January	1936	—	853 Apprentices enlisted.
34th Entry	August	1936	—	1084 Apprentices enlisted.
36th Entry	August	1937	—	1250 Apprentices enlisted.
38th Entry	August	1938	—	1301 Apprentices enlisted.





However, the discerning may still distinguish relics of that bygone age when Army thinking dominated our Service. The scene is the same, you say. Ah! so it is; those red barrack blocks still nestle below the wooded Chilterns. But look more closely. Yes, the boots are still there. The skill required to wind on puttees has now been diverted into other tasks. It requires as much skill and even more patience to blanco the belts to satisfy the critical eyes of the N.C.O. Look even more closely. The Apprentices still carry rifles! One supposes that the same difficult decision had to be taken about the carrying of bows. When did the foot-soldiers of England cease to carry the bow on parade?

We shall reserve a space in the Halton Magazine in the spring of 2,000 A.D. for the Pass-Out Parade of the 177th Entry of Apprentices. As you then look at your Old Haltonian copy perhaps you will see yet more interesting changes in the pattern of parades. Doubtless, the red barrack blocks will continue to sit beneath the gentle Chiltern slopes. But what of the belts, the boots and that piece of offensive equipment? Parades may come and parades may go but Halton . . . .



**CAN ANY OTHER ROYAL AIR FORCE STATION BEAT THIS?**

Here is an interesting cross section of Old Haltonians at R.A.F. Luqa, Malta, arranged in ascending Entry order from the 24th Entry at the bottom left to 105th at top right. They form a nearly unbroken chain of service at Halton from September 1931 to July 1966. The group includes a Regiment Officer, Station Warrant Officer, two Supply Officers and many offshots of the Engineering Branch.

*Front Row Left to Right*

W.O. Spencer (24), W.O. Owen (25), Flt.Lt. Severn (29), Wg.Cdr. Gough (Guest), Ch.Tech. McGuire (31), W.O. Wisbey (32), Sqn.Ldr. Pike (34), Flt. Lt. Fell (37), Flt.Lt. Frapwell (38).

*Middle Row Left to Right*

W.O. Jones (38), F.S. Grundy (38), Flt.Lt. Bowd (40), Wg.Cdr. Willey (42), Flt.Lt. Lannon (52), Flt.Lt. Richardson (53), Ch.Tech. Hamill (69), Sgt. Batterbee (73), Cpl. Crowther (87), Cpl. Collins (87).

*Top Row Left to Right*

Cpl. Sullivan (91), Cpl. Pike (92), Fg.Off. King (92), Cpl. Massie, Cpl. Rae (95), Cpl. Cressman (96), Cpl. Soothill (95), Cpl. Davies (105).

# THE H.A.C. 1

## HALTON'S OWN AEROPLANE

EARLY in 1925 four people, Mr. Kermode (since Air Vice-Marshal, Director of Educational Services) Mr. Needham, Mr. Cullis and Flt.Lt. Hart, started work on the design of a light aeroplane. As their plans advanced, they founded the Halton Aero Club on the 3rd December, 1925, with the aim of building the machine and entering it for competitions.

As with all ventures where perseverance and dogged determination are required in no small measure, this one had its critics. There were some who said that the machine would never be built; others declared that, even if it were built, it certainly would never fly, and naturally the most pessimistic group of all stated that, if it did fly, it would break the pilot's neck. However, immediately on its foundation the Club started work on the machine and, within three months, had over one thousand Apprentice members and a balance of some £250.

After a series of set-backs which would have daunted those less determined, the H.A.C. 1 made its maiden flight from Bicester on the 31st January 1927. Flt.Lt. C. F. le Poer Trench was the pilot and the machine was airborne for ten minutes. The first official flight took place on the 11th March 1927 and, after a number of modifications had been made, the aircraft received its certificate of airworthiness on the 11th May.

The H.A.C. 1 was entered for a number of air races in the Hampshire Air Pageant at Hamble on the 15th May 1927. 500 Aircraft Apprentices went to Hamble and were thrilled to see their aircraft dive past the finishing post leading a score of other machines by a bare length. On the 16th May the H.A.C. 1 returned to Halton proudly bearing the Gold Cup for the President's Cup Race.

The Editor of the 'Aeroplane' wrote 'The Halton Light Aeroplane is undoubtedly one of the finest light aeroplanes in existence.' The machine was quite clearly one great triumph of co-operation and liaison. The Aircraft Apprentices paid every penny of the £185 for the small twin-cylinder engine. Over 200 Carpenters of the January 1924 Entry worked day and night in order to complete the aircraft which, during the summer of 1927, was to fly in competition races all over the country.



*The H.A.C. 1 after its first flight*

The H.A.C. 1, christened 'Mayfly', soon changed its shape. It shed its bottom wings and took to the air again on the 4th May 1928, as the H.A.C. 2, or 'Minus'. The Apprentices had an opportunity of seeing this machine take part in the Air Parade at the Royal Air Force Display on the 30th June. Even as this second machine was flying around the British countryside, plans had been approved for the construction of H.A.C. 3, or 'Meteor', which was to be a tailless monoplane, driven by two 'Cherub' engines.

At the time of the Halton Aero Club's formation, there were only three clubs in existence. All were Service clubs and no civil aeroplane club had been started. However, in the late 1920s several light aeroplane clubs, flying standard firm-built machines, sprang into being with such rapidity that the more amateur clubs faded into the background. This, coupled with the fact that the nature of air competitions had been so completely altered as to offer little inducements to club-built aircraft, led to the gradual abandonment by Halton of its aircraft building programme. Accordingly, Halton Aero Club, by a quiet process of metamorphosis on the 31st December 1930, became the Halton Aeronautical Society, a branch of the national organisation. Thereafter, the Society's programme was designed to provide a wider approach to aeronautical engineering and developments.





**No. 205 Entry of Craft Apprentices completes the first fifty years of  
Apprentice Training at No. 1 School of Technical Training  
Royal Air Force Halton**