



XM655 with SIX wheels in the air



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The Chairman's Introduction

Charles Brimson

Welcome to the Autumn 2012 edition of the 655MaPS Newsletter, and an especially warm welcome to those new members of the Society who are reading their first newsletter. An equally warm welcome to those who have expressed the wish to receive this Newsletter in 'soft copy' format via email. This has meant that although membership is steadily growing, we are actually printing less physical copies of the Newsletter this time than previously, as a result of which we will save precious money in order that we can devote all our financial resources to the core activity of maintaining and preserving our Vulcan....

Since the last Newsletter XM655 has been on the television – again! This time the aircraft was the backdrop, both externally and internally, for a BBC documentary called 'Jet! When Britain Ruled The Skies' featuring, amongst others, Tony Blackman who was the senior AVRO test pilot during the period of development and manufacture of all the 136 Vulcans produced at Woodford and Chadderton. It was actually the first time that Tony had climbed into the cockpit of a Vulcan for over 30 years – see further details in the article on Visitors elsewhere in this Newsletter.



Since Wings & Wheels in June we have increased our regular volunteer numbers by two – Isabel and Bob Jackson, who are already well known to the folks at the Vulcan to the Sky, have become valuable assets to MaPS. Thank you Bob and Izzy – we need more like you. We would of course welcome with open arms any of you that would like to come and help us, even if it is only on the occasional Saturday or indeed come along and help us make Wings & Wheels the great success that it (hopefully) always will be.....

Talking of people, we have embarked on a programme of training more of our volunteers to be able to operate the aircraft to the same safe and professional way that we have always done. As we go to press Len, Ben, Damaris and Avril have each received an initial training session during an EGR, although there will be further training given and homework expected before they can be 'signed-off' at some point in the future. Other training has seen the emergence of Roger Bowen as our back-up Crew Chief as well.



Over the last six months several commercial organisations have provided valuable support to our efforts in keeping '655 alive. Firstly, Satair at Heathrow (formerly Aero Quality Sales) have very generously given us (on a long term loan) TWO serviceable K2 aircraft batteries. These are

like hen's teeth, none having been manufactured by SAFT for a very long time and we are very grateful that Satair had them in their premises at Heathrow in the first place.

Secondly, Portsmouth Aviation, who you may remember provided our 'real' 1,000lb ballistic bomb have now provided seven arming vanes for us to add the finishing touches to our seven 1,000lb replicas with which we will 'arm' the Vulcan's seven store carrier.



Thirdly, I'm very grateful to Tony Jauncey of i360UK for producing seven wonderful images of the cockpit and bomb bay of the Vulcan in 360° format – you can access these images via a link on the MaPS website.

Last, but certainly not least, Newbow Aerospace of Redditch have kindly not only supplied us with an aircraft tyre pressure gauge but have provided us with on-site servicing and calibration as well.

newbow aerospace

For the past several years, MaPS have had a stand at each Boulton Paul Association Open Day at their heritage project at Fordhouses near Wolverhampton, partly to introduce MaPS to a different audience, but mainly as a thank you to the Boulton Paul guys for the assistance they have provided to us. Sadly, their open day on October 7th was their last event, as the premises they have occupied are changing hands, and will no longer be available to them. The fate of all the heritage items they have accumulated is currently uncertain, and we wish them all the best for the future.



We have recently dipped our toes into something that was previously a subject about which I knew nothing other than its name (and its name was a complete switch-off to me!) and that is 'social networking', or specifically 'Twitter'. We now have our very own official Tweetmaster, young Ben Tapp, and our own twitterfeed (@xm655maps) which we use to publicise events and activities associated with XM655.



There is also a twitter account run by one of our supporters (and recently recruited Saturday volunteer) Dave Taylor. His @xm655 account, with nearly 2,000 'followers', covers all things Vulcan-related and provides us with a direct link to other 'twitterers' who can spread the word to many tens of thousands of followers. Social Media may not be to everyone's tastes (recent press headlines suggest one might

be wise to have nothing to do with it), but there is no doubting that the introduction of MaPS to a wider audience has coincided with the busiest period of visitors to Wellesbourne that any of us can remember – see the Visitors section for more evidence of this!

As 2012 draws to a close, it has been on the MaPS committee's collective minds that we are only one year away from a notable double anniversary for XM655. 2014 will be the 50th anniversary of XM655 being manufactured at AVRO in 1964 and also the 30th anniversary of her arrival at Wellesbourne in 1984. We are thinking about marking this double anniversary in a fitting way, but would like to open up the opportunity to any of our Members who might have a better idea than any of us! There's a challenge – suggestions are very welcome, so over to you.....

Well I hope that provides a roundup of everything that has been happening at MaPS over the last six months from a non-technical point of view. Over the page our 'Sooty' Eric waxes lyrical about all the oily bits and pieces both on and off the aeroplane. Elsewhere in this edition of the Newsletter you will find a summary of Wings & Wheels 2012, which really was a great day to remember, and also a note to advise you about the 2013 show – which, if the amount of planning we have already done is anything to go by, will be even bigger and better than ever! So, I'll close by hoping that all of you, our loyal Members, enjoy this latest edition of our Newsletter and wish you on behalf of the MaPS committee and all the volunteers who turn up every Saturday come rain or shine, a very merry Christmas and a happy (and hopefully prosperous) New Year.....

Engineering Report

Eric Ranshaw

Despite the consistently terrible weather we have experienced this summer, it has been possible to make considerable headway with the endless task of painting and corrosion control. The fin has finally been completed, and Bryan has made progress on the upper fuselage and the grey areas of the upper wing surfaces. The picture shows preparation work on the seams between the panels.



Over the years the air scoops on the under-side of the engine doors had sustained a number of dents due to contact with ground equipment, and the unfortunate creation of another dent for the collection spurred us to address the damage. The dents were pulled and filled by Bryan, and Avril took on the task of repainting the underside of the fuselage, resulting in a great visual improvement.

The less-visible areas also need their share of the attention, and following the excellent preparation work on the inner surfaces of the bomb-bay doors by the 150 Sqn cadets, as reported in the last newsletter, the top coating has now been completed.

The inside surfaces of the ECM bay doors have been subjected to corrosion removal and surface preparation by Charles, and the painting was carried out by Avril and 150 Sqn cadets.

In preparation for Wings and Wheels, David McCulloch and a party of 150 Sqn cadets turned the Douglas Sentinel tug from the red oxide shade it has worn for some time to a more suitable RAF blue/grey.



Roger Parker has been pursuing a long-term project to remove, inspect, repair and refit all the small access panels under the wings. In many cases this also requires the replacement of captive nuts and sourcing of new screws in obsolete sizes ~ there is nothing metric on a Vulcan. This project will continue to be on-going for some time.

Following our success last year in obtaining a Vulcan Seven Store Carrier (i.e. bomb rack) on loan from the RAF Museum, and David McCulloch's construction of a wooden 1000lb bomb as reported last time, he has now used it as a pattern for moulding lightweight fibre-glass replicas. We have four installed in the bomb-bay so far, and intend to complete the set of seven in the near future. Roger Bowen has persuaded Portsmouth Aviation to give us a full set of the arming vanes which arm the real bombs, to make our replicas more



realistic.

Work has continued on the fuel contents system. The readings from all the individual tanks are now reasonably reliable, but the combined indications for tank groups are still giving us problems. The tank contents are also used to feed the centre-of-gravity indication, and this has been found to give erroneous readings. In order to establish the CofG for the aircrew we have developed a spreadsheet to do the calculations.



During the build-up to Wings and Wheels, we started to experience problems with the 28v supply from the Houchin ground power unit to the aircraft. The symptoms were loud interference on the intercoms and radios, and the problem was traced to the rectifier, which was allowing AC voltage to get through to the 28v DC feed. A general clean-up of the unit by Len and Eric got rid of the problem, but we will probably have to consider a rebuild of the diode assembly before too long.

The only problems which came up during Wings and Wheels were the stuck landing light mentioned elsewhere by Charles, which was easy to fix, and the over-voltage produced by the AAPP, which was reported by Barry Masefield. After XM655 was returned to the pan, we ran the AAPP and attempted to adjust the excitation to reduce the voltage, but with little success. Eventually, Eric and Charles installed and set up a replacement combined Control Unit and TRU, and the correct output of 115v has been restored.



All of the mainwheel sets have been removed, inspected and replaced one at a time by 150 Sqn cadets under the supervision of Ian Skelton. All of the brake assemblies were found to be well within wear limits. The tyres are now showing serious signs of age, and will be replaced before the next fast taxi. We are actively sourcing a couple of wheels to make up a second set, so that we can have a new tyre set for taxi and an old set for standing on the pan.

The ECM bay and starboard undercarriage bay servicing lighting has been rewired and the light fittings repaired by Roger Bowen, and all the service lighting is now in working condition. Roger also repaired a leak which developed in the ECM coolant circulation pump crankcase.

The stand for our old Olympus engine has been reduced in height and complexity, and Phil and Nigel have fabricated new support brackets to hold the engine in place. Once we have transferred the engine back into the stand, we will pass it on to Wellesbourne Wartime Museum as a loan item to add to their displays.

The canvas cockpit cover has started to show its age after a number of years of service, and whilst it was off for the summer Bryan took the opportunity to do some patching and repair work to see it through another winter.

Phil, Malcolm and Ben have started work dismantling our new Standard Airfield Bomb Transporter (SAB-T), and this will be followed by a major corrosion removal and painting exercise, together with work on the hydraulics associated with the running gear.





We didn't have time last winter to jack up the aircraft and recuperate the liquid springs in the main landing gear, so that is a high priority for this winter's maintenance programme. In preparation, we have overhauled all of our four jacks and changed the hydraulic oil. As the newsletter went to press, the overhauls had been completed and the jacks positioned under the aircraft ready for action. How we get on with the jacking exercise will be reported in the next edition.

The other tasks which will be receiving our attention this winter include replacement of the tyres, investigation of an oil leak from the 'Rover' AAPP, further work on the pitch and yaw dampers, and the removal and inspection of the No 1 engine. Lets hope the winter is not too cold, and more importantly, not too wet.

Wings & Wheels at Wellesbourne 17 June 2012

Charles Brimson

From the fantastic feedback that we have had from everyone who came along to Wellesbourne on 17 June, Wings & Wheels 2012 was the best one yet! The only literal dampener for the day was the very typical summer 2012 weather – it was cold, grey and with several showers interspersed throughout the show; with perfect ironic timing it started raining at the beginning of both taxi demonstrations by the Vulcan – typical.....!

After the slightly different arrangements for 2011, when David Thomas was busy with the RAF Waddington airshow, for 2012 we were back with our usual (and always welcome) aircrew of Sqn Ldr David Thomas as captain, Wg Cdr Mike Pollitt as co-pilot and Sqn Ldr Barry Masefield as AEO – but with an addition.... I was asked a few weeks earlier by David if he could bring along another Vulcan 'old hand' to Wings & Wheels 'for old times' sake' – I said yes and wondered who he might mean? During the rehearsal day on Saturday I was introduced to none other than Gp Capt John Laycock, former Vulcan and Victor pilot and Station Commander at RAF Waddington during the Falklands war. I had previously met John when he had attended an earlier Wings & Wheels with other members of his family as a 'customer', but this time he was here to earn his keep! John had not been at the controls of a Vulcan for nearly 30 years but under the careful eye of David (standing on the steps between the two pilots seats) and with Mike standing by,



just in case, John was soon taxiing the aircraft around the inactive runway like he had never been away! So on the basis of this, David declared John 'fit solo' and it was he who taxied the Vulcan on the fast run on Sunday with David once again supervising on the ladder between the seats....

The show itself has taken on a familiar and comfortable feel enjoyed by all who attend – this year we had an all-time high in attendance numbers at the gate – with the commentary as usual expertly and mellifluously spoken by Dave Rowland FRAeS, former Concorde pilot and Fleet General Manager.



The regular 'wheels' part of the show was expertly and jointly organised by Bryan Hull and his partner, and our Membership Secretary, Avril Magill, with a pleasing



increase in the number of classic cars attending this year. The 'best in show' prize (voted for by the owners of the vehicles themselves) was Mr Brian Baston in a Riley RME, with second prize going to Mr Ray Reeder in a MGC Roadster and third prize awarded to Mr Shaun Walsh in a Rover P6 3005 – many thanks to them and indeed all the devoted owners who bring their 'pride and joy' along for everyone's enjoyment to add to the fun of Wings & Wheels each year.

Next year we are planning to include two wheels, as well as four, and have classic motorcycles included as well – interested anybody?

Under the leadership of Warrant Officer Keith Vickers from 1046 (Fordhouses) Sqn ATC, we had our largest (and best co-ordinated) group of Air Cadets yet to help with safely and efficiently marshalling cars and people before, during and after the show. In total we had 100 cadets from squadrons including 1046 (Fordhouses), 1460 (Banbury), 150 (City of Oxford), 240 (Darlston) and 1200 (Polesworth). In addition 1460 (Banbury) provided a band to entertain the crowd just after the first taxi demonstration by '655. The cadets also did a first class job of catering for themselves and our volunteers on the Saturday evening and throughout the day on Sunday thereby providing some much needed funds for the Fordhouses Sqn.



One of the two most rewarding parts of the organisation for Wings & Wheels this



year was to invite two gentlemen with the same name – Jo(h)n Tye – to join us to be interviewed on the PA by Dave Rowland about their respective lives as pilots. The connection between the two men (apart from their names) is that they have each spent a good part of their lives flying aircraft propelled by Olympus engines – Jon as a Vulcan pilot and QFI and John as a Concorde pilot! The two had never met prior to Wings & Wheels but have now promised to keep in touch. It transpired during their interview on the PA system that John had

lost count of the number of times that passengers on his British Airways flights (he currently captains 777s) have asked him if he used to fly Vulcans – now he knows why! The two Jo(h)ns both flew in to Wellesbourne for the event (although sadly in neither a Vulcan nor a Concorde) and agreed to make the presentations to our Classic Car competition winners as well.

I mentioned two rewarding bits of organisation – the second was to do with our very own adopted air cadet squadron, 150 (City of Oxford), who have been providing a valuable source of engineering labour to MaPS now for more than two years. At least once a month we have a working party of cadets and civilian/RAF instructors who muck in, whatever the weather, and help us to keep '655 alive. I



had been wracking my brain trying to think of something to recognise their efforts when out of the blue Barry Masefield came up with the answer at our last Christmas lunch in Halford Bridge. Barry, who it turns out is a craftsman in his own right, had produced a highly polished and beautifully mounted Olympus 201 HP Compressor Blade for MaPS to use in whichever way we thought fit. Rather than us selling it (as Barry initially suggested), I thought it would make a wonderful Trophy to be awarded to the 150 Sqn cadet who, chosen by the Sqn staff, was most deserving of the award to be made annually at Wings & Wheels. I

mentioned to Barry that I would like to call it the 'Barry Masefield Trophy' but he was horrified saying it sounded like he was already dead! So, it gave me great pleasure at Wings & Wheels to be there when Barry presented the 'MaPS Trophy' on behalf of all of us to Cadet Alex Weller as the inaugural winner of this award. As it was the first year, the Sqn staff asked that we also made a 'runner-up' award to Cadet Finley Moncur, his prize being a VIP tour of the aircraft for his family. Well done to both cadets, and we look forward



to this award being a regular part of Wings & Wheels in the future. My thanks also, of course, to Sqn Ldr Barry Masefield for being such a good sport about providing the trophy and supporting our endeavours....

Although neither the Red Arrows nor the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight were available to give us an overflight this year (I do put in a bid each year), we were at least blessed with a variety of aircraft saying hello to us at some point during the day: this started with the Aerostars, a superb aerobatic team flying Yak 50 trainer aircraft.



Then Classic Flight from Coventry arrived with their AVRO Anson Mk1 which was on the static display line for the whole day, attracting a good deal of attention.



This was followed by Sybille, one of Classic Flight's beautiful de Havilland Dragon Rapides, which provided pleasure flights of the area for the duration of the show.

Later on we had a brief flypast by both the Blades and the Twisters aerobatic teams on their way to Cosford, and toward the end of the day Peter Teichmann flew in to park next to the Vulcan with his completely original WW2 Kittyhawk on his way back from Cosford. We were also blessed with a number of fascinating aircraft on the static display



including two Chipmunks, Michael Littler's lovely Piper Cub, Jon Tye's homebuilt Eurostar, and a Luscombe Silvaire amongst several others.

As the allotted time for the highlight of the day – the fast taxi demonstration – drew near, it started to rain (again) and the Vulcan started up without any problems for her big moment, she was directed to the southern end of the main north/south runway (which is a bonus for the volunteers as it means that we don't have to send two of our number out to the road that runs past the northern end of the runway to temporarily close it to passing traffic) and the aircraft accelerated briskly under the power of her four mighty Olympus engines running at 97% for just under 10 seconds. Would the pilots feel confident enough to raise the nosewheel off the ground to aid aerodynamic braking? They certainly did! The nosewheel came up so decisively that the front four tyres on the port main undercarriage all too briefly left the ground in sympathy with the two tyres on the nosewheels. Six tyres in the air – that's something that XM655 hasn't done without the aid of jacks since February 1984, and it provides our cover picture for this newsletter.

For all that excitement, the aircrew reported that the aircraft was fully serviceable, although Barry did mention that the AAPP (the 'Rover') was so excited with the day that it was producing rather more than the 115v that it should have been (see more detail on this in Eric's Engineering News). Another small problem that the eagle-eyed amongst you might have noticed is that the port landing light failed to retract after the fast taxi demonstration. It stubbornly remained out even after the MaPS engineers had a go later on that day and it transpired that the linear actuator electric motor had failed – never mind, our friends at VTTST were able to provide us with a replacement and it was fitted and working within a couple of weeks.



Wings & Wheels 2012 saw a repeat (and dare I say it, a further improvement) on the Town Square-type layout that we used for the first time in 2011. We had a few more stalls and exhibitors and we all think it worked very well, with everyone being near the action and the Classic Cars and car parking having plenty of space available.

The organisation of the day takes many months to plan, indeed we have already started the planning for June 2013 in September 2012. The safe execution of the day is really too much for our stalwart volunteers who spend every Saturday of the year helping on the aircraft. For this reason we were very grateful to have some additional helpers along for the day – this year that included Bob and Isabel Jackson along with Chris Jones and Paul, all from VTTSC (through Damaris), Terry, John and Kim (arranged through Avril and Bryan), Emma and Suzie (through Len) – we thank them all for giving of their time and energy so selflessly.

Our regular volunteers all worked their socks off to make the day enjoyable and successful with Len and Ian marshalling aircraft, Sarah and Avril looking after merchandise, membership and silent auction in the Tents, Roger towing the aircraft, Eric as Crew Chief, Bryan and Ben on the 'see-off crew', Damaris looking after all the commercial activities, Malcolm overseeing the pay gates, Bry and Avril also looking after the classic cars, and Kev in his element as Safety Officer. It never ceases to amaze me how so few people are able to achieve so much.

Once again, I must say how grateful we were to receive financial support to help us pay for the fuel used during Wings & Wheels by our good friend and Vulcan supporter Eddie Forrester, Managing Director of Aerobytes Ltd, Cranfield. The cost of Jet A-1 has risen enormously over the last few years (mainly due to an absurd rise in VAT on the fuel), the Wings & Wheels weekend costs us nearly £5,000 in fuel alone and it is incredibly generous of Eddie to part-fund that cost, especially as he is now the single most generous benefactor of keeping XH558 in the air as well....

Finally, it is worth remembering that Wellesbourne airfield is a very busy general aviation airfield, particularly at weekends (in fact our aircrew always comment on how busy it seems to be). We are therefore very grateful to the airfield management that we are allowed to hold our Wings & Wheels events as we know that it does cause considerable inconvenience to airfield operations for three days altogether. We would like to say a huge thank you to John, Mick and Rob Littler for allowing us to hold the event each year and also an equally big thank you to Frankie Stuart and the other air traffic controllers who manage visiting aircraft movements so professionally and with such calm and polite attention....

Here's to next year! – see back cover for latest news.

Visitors to XM655

Charles Brimson

'655 has had her fair share of televised publicity over the years, this year has been no different with a crew from the BBC headed by Producer James Millar coming to film both outside and inside the aircraft back in May (during what those of you with exceptionally good memories may remember was what passed for 'summer', that is between 29 and 31 May to be precise!). The reason for the filming was to interview Tony Blackman, former AVRO chief test pilot, for a documentary called "Jet! When Britain Ruled the Skies" which was broadcast a couple of months later. Tony's comment to me after filming finished was "I'd forgotten how awful the view was from the cockpit. How on earth did I used to see to fly the aeroplane?" The poor view didn't however prevent Tony from flying over 100 different Vulcans (including '655) during his time with AVRO....



One of the highlights for our volunteers on Saturdays is to show off our aeroplane to pilots who have flown in to Wellesbourne – we just know that pilots are impressed by the Vulcan. This was especially so one Saturday in May when we were visited by a former Concorde pilot and his family. John Tye (read more about John in the Wings & Wheels article elsewhere in this newsletter) was thrilled to become acquainted with a rather different delta-winged Olympus-powered aircraft than the one he spent a good part of his earlier career flying. He left the cockpit with a puzzled look on his face, where, he wanted to know, was the nose drooping control so that he could see where he was going?!

The Vulcan has always proved to be very popular with organised visits from car owners clubs and none more so than by the Bugatti Owners Club. They visited for the first time back in March but have returned TWICE since the last Newsletter in May and September organised as usual by the tireless Frank Ashley. The MaPS volunteers



were thrilled to see a genuine Bugatti of 1935 vintage lined up in front of '655 courtesy of its owner who had brought the car (in appalling weather) especially for the visit. Believe it or not, Frank is organising yet another visit for his Club members early in 2013.

The dreadful weather endured during the summer unexpectedly benefitted a Squadron of Air Cadets from Stafford in early June. They had arrived at Wellesbourne with their staff in anticipation of some air experience flights with Wellesbourne-based aircraft. The weather was so bad that flying was out of the question (Wellesbourne not having a suitable flying boat available) so instead the cadets spent the morning looking around the Vulcan and we were able to do systems demonstrations for them to boot.

Two separate 'high tech' companies have visited us during the summer.... Mike Brown, MD of Simtech in Stratford, has expressed his wish to laser scan the entire aircraft sometime soon. This will give us an incredibly accurate three dimensional picture of the aircraft's structure down to sub-millimetre level. Mike will use the finished product on his Company website (he needs iconic subjects from in and around his base in Stratford) and we will be able to use the scanned files in any way we wish. We have also been visited by Tony Jauncey of i360UK.com, a company which specialises in 360° photography. He is hopeful of using this technology to exploit opportunities in aviation maintenance. Our thanks to Tony, you will see some excellent 360° pictures of cockpit and bomb bay of '655 on our website www.xm655.com.

In July MaPS played host to former members of 35 Squadron from the mid 1970s when the Squadron was flying Vulcans and was based at RAF Akrotiri in Cyprus. The Squadron colleagues and their partners meet up every year or two and this year as they were staying nearby in Broadway decided to come over to Wellesbourne as the highlight of their reunion. The reunion was organised by Mo and Roger Frampton (Roger is a distinguished Vulcan pilot and later CAA examiner). Guest of honour was the former boss's widow, Yvonne Hepburn, who was presented with a bouquet of flowers by cadets from 150 (City of Oxford) Sqn who were helping to host the Wellesbourne part of the reunion. Simon Baldwin (ex 44 Sqn OC and 'Black Buck' veteran) also came over to reminisce about the good old days!



Later in July we had a visit from the Institution of Engineering & Technology in Gloucester, which was so well subscribed that it had to be split into morning and afternoon sessions. This visit was organised by Damaris Tapp – feedback was so good that in December VTTST are holding their own evening (featuring aircrew Barry Masefield and Andy 'Sponge' Marson) at the IET venue in Gloucester.



In August, a visit by a group of engineers from Cheltenham was organised by Alan Green.



On the 15th of September, we had an enjoyable visit by the Lawyers Flying Association, partly fly-in and partly drive-in! Their organiser, Keith Hudson, lives in Wellesbourne.

The very next day, on a Sunday, we had a further two organised visits – the Capri Owners Club in the morning...



....followed by 2322 (Dowty) Sqn air cadets in the afternoon. I am very grateful to



Mike Pollitt, one of our loyal aircrew, who came along to help with the cockpit visits for the cadets. One of the civilian instructors for the Squadron is an employee with Dowty who recalls assembling Vulcan undercarriage legs back in the 70s.... Another civilian instructor was an RAF armourer who went out to Ascension Island to support the Black

Buck missions in 1982. We heard some great stories that day.

On 22 September, the '655 pan was rather pleasantly enveloped in steam and the attractive aroma of burning methylated spirits as a group of Stanley steam cars in the midst of a Warwickshire tour visited the Vulcan. These cars are very rare and all date from between 1904 and 1912 – their condition was immaculate. It was a surreal sight to watch this almost lost technology driving along a live taxiway at an airfield as they departed at the end of their visit!



We had a 'small world' moment when we were told that Dawn Sparks, wife of Len the organiser, is the HR Manager for Dunlop Aircraft Tyres with who we are currently negotiating regarding the acquisition of new tyres for the aircraft.

The following weekend, a visit by a different mode of transport, this time on two wheels – the Vintage Motorcycle Club (Midlands Section)....



In October we had a return visit by the 1st Wellesbourne Cub Scouts who had previously visited about three years ago – obviously the Cub Scouts had changed, but Sarah Aston and her other helpers hadn't! Their visit was the culmination of the award of the Cub Scouts 'Air Activity Badge'.



At the beginning of November, on an absolutely horrible day, we had the third of our annual set-piece visits from members of the Vulcan to the Sky Club – as usual this was expertly organised by our very own Damaris Tapp (who shares her 'spare' time between MaPS and VTSC). We had two packed morning and afternoon sessions in order to get everyone 'up close and personal' to '655, something that is

impractical with the airworthy '558, owing to critical pieces of kit such as live ejection seats, etc. The Club members were very generous with their donations, so much so in fact that the MaPS committee agreed to make a substantial donation to VTTST to help with the winter maintenance programme – we wish all at Finningley and Hinckley well with their fund raising and engineering.



In mid November the Spice Adventure Group, Birmingham, sent their now customary group of enthusiastic visitors to enjoy the 'Vulcan Experience' – Spice are now one of our most regular group visitors with four group tours per year. The next one is in January.

Finally, just as the Newsletter is being written, we had a visit by a former Vulcan Navigator Plotter, Alan Jones, and three generations of his family. Alan had last flown in a Vulcan in 1969, when he was involved with the Giant Voice bombing competition in the USA. One of the four Vulcans that flew over to the States was – yes, XM655! Alan said the aircraft looks better now than it did as a five-year-old in 1969! Alan kindly brought along copies of photographs of '655 in the States, together with transatlantic navigation charts, flying log book entries, etc. Thank you Alan, it all adds to our growing archives of '655 life in the V-Force.

It can be no coincidence that with such things as the success of our revamped MaPS website, our introduction to the strange new world of Twitter, our growing MaPS membership, and anniversaries of the Falklands, etc, that the number of groups and individual people wanting to visit and experience our Vulcan are growing at a phenomenal rate. I only have space to mention the 'official' visits that we have had since the last Newsletter in April, but every Saturday without fail we have a steady stream of visitors arriving in the SWFS car park and wandering across to see the aircraft. Sometimes the level of visitors is so great that we have to stop all engineering work on the aircraft and ground equipment altogether. It also means that our volunteers are very often 'guides' more than 'engineers', but it is of course all part of the aims of the Society that we devote our time and efforts to – long may they continue!

A Neighbour's View

Question – What is the connection between 70s and 80s rock group Electric Light Orchestra and South Warwickshire Flying School? Answer – Dave Scott-Morgan, band member and flying instructor.

Can you see the likeness?



Dave has given us permission to reprint the following piece from his website.

Vulcanology

Outside the flying training club where I worked at Stratford there is an aeroplane parked up, slowly trying to corrode away. It is no ordinary aeroplane, not even the same shape that most aeroplanes are - it has no tail plane but instead one gigantic delta-shaped wing. It sits there, year in and year out, grandiose and resplendent in its green and grey camouflage, like a sentinel guarding the club, the airport, the empire! (for sure it doesn't know the empire has faded and equally for sure no one has the heart to whisper such a blasphemy within its earshot).

It is a 'Vulcan' bomber and it is big. Its massive wing swallows up four engines of a type that became the basis for powering Concorde, and the whole delta shape of the Vulcan was a precursor to the supersonic design. The difference is the vintage - whereas Concorde first appeared in 1969, the Vulcan is almost twenty years its senior, first flying in 1952.

But there are dark things about this behemoth - the darkest being that it was designed to atom-bomb Russia. And its name - 'Vulcan' - is also suspicious, belonging to no English town, city or settlement that I know of. Not only is it not named after a town, it is also not named after Lieutenant Spock, as much as this knowledge will devastate the Trekkies amongst us.

On the ground it is a giant camouflaged gazebo which I often walk under between training details, gazing up at its cavernous bomb bay, lost in a daydream where I see it loaded up with nuclear nasties, its engines revving away, while inside five freshly shaved young men talk numbers to each other in their professional clipped calm as they go off on their mission to end the world.

I climb inside it. In the cramped compartment, over to one side, is a metal box with 'Handle Like Eggs' stencilled on it. I ponder what manner of foul genie lay stowed in that container, waiting for the coded call to set it free. Up in the cockpit, I squat in one of the two ejector seats (the other three guys down below had to jump out of the bottom). A Red painted handle glares at me, daring me to pull it - a note suggests that the firing pins have been removed, but have they?? Around the windows, a thick nylon curtain lies coiled, ready to pull down when the bomb is dropped, so that you will be preserved from the blinding flash and able to see where you are going. Able to use your eyes to fly back home and see for yourself the black lifeless ruin it has surely become.

The Vulcan was the product of the Avro company but I have it on the authority of the Encyclopaedia Maximus Galactica that ever since the invention of the catapult, all Avro company bombers have been named after an English city or town (we all remember the 'Lancaster', even if we've never heard of the 'Manchester' or the 'Lincoln'). The strange fact is, my extensive library of maps does not show a place called Vulcan anywhere in Great Britain.

But there must be one somewhere, because there is definitely an Avro Vulcan bomber parked outside our flying club. There must be a place called Vulcan, probably even a county called Vulcanshire. There must be citizens called Vulcans - or Vulcs for short, and the thing is, the more I ponder this machine, the more I think I am one of them!

For I belong in that place where memories live, where the past refuses to be pronounced dead, where the dead refuse to be buried, a place colonized by those among us who are stricken with the malady called 'nostalgia'. And it's not just me....

Looking out from the clubhouse, I constantly notice a curious thing: The Vulcan's final trip to the scrap heap is forever being put back by a dad's-army posse of unsung heroes. These 'Vulcs' (they must be Vulcs), are Royal Air Force veterans who spend their own free time lovingly attending to the many demands of this venerable machine. After striking up conversations with the Vulcs I have become privy to many interesting snippets of information. 'Our' Vulcan is one of the last ones made - a 'B2' (that means bomber mark 2).

I can reveal that a mark two is distinguished from a mark one by an extended tail which houses electronic jamming equipment, and small protrusions under each wing which betray, like the glint of a concealed dagger, the evidence of betrayal in high places, for these hide the stubs of pylons where the Skybolt stand-off missile was to have been attached. The Americans thoughtlessly went and cancelled Skybolt after Her Majesty's government had gone and built these planes to carry it!

But thankfully, the Vulcan was never called upon to fulfil its primary duty, and never dropped anything in anger except a few ineffectual bombs upon Port Stanley airport in the Falklands, in 1982.

*Yes, unrequited history is built into this aluminium artefact along with all the substance of drama, glory and heritage, and that is why these men scurry so tirelessly about it. For one day the glory must finally be gone, but please, let it not be today.
I understand that! But then, I am a Vulc.*

Notice of Annual General Meeting 2013

The next Annual General Meeting of MaPS will be held at **10.30 am** on **Saturday, 4th May 2013**. This notice may appear to be somewhat premature, but the publication date of our Spring Newsletter is such that we would be unable to give the specified notice as required by the Society's rules.

As before the meeting will be held in the Wellington Room at On Track Aviation, Wellesbourne Airfield (near to the Control Tower and Touchdown Cafe). All members are welcome and tea/coffee and biscuits will be provided.

The agenda will be:

- Chairman's introduction and annual report
- Membership report
- Treasurer's report and approval of annual accounts
- Appointment of auditor for the coming year
- Any other business

Any items that members wish to add to the agenda must be sent in writing to

**The Secretary,
655 MaPS,
Wellesbourne Airfield
Loxley Lane,
Warwick
CV35 9EU**

to arrive no later than four weeks before the date of the AGM.

During the afternoon, XM655 will be open to visitors, and we will be carrying out demonstrations of as many aircraft systems as are possible on the pan. We hope that combining the AGM and an "open day" for visitors to the aircraft will encourage a few more members to attend the meeting.

Another Date for your Diary



**WELLESBOURNE 2013
WINGS AND WHEELS**
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SUNDAY 16TH JUNE
WELLESBOURNE MOUNTFORD AERODROME
NEAR STRATFORD-UPON-AVON

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