

## The Tenth Annual Dinner of The Helicopter Association of Great Britain

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The Association's Tenth Annual Dinner was held at the Dorchester Hotel on Thursday, September 6th, at 8 30 p m. Nearly four hundred members and their guests were present including many of our overseas members among whom were a number of the leading members of the American helicopter industry including Mr Sergei Sikorsky, Mr Frank Piasecki, Mr Bartram Kelley and Mr Richard Prewitt.

This year saw two innovations, the first being the somewhat greater formality of evening dress and the second was the absence of the usual lecture preceding the Dinner.

Our President, Lord Brabazon of Tara, received the following official guests of the Association: Lord Douglas of Kirtleside, the former President, and Lady Douglas, Vice-Admiral W T Couchman, Deputy Controller of Aircraft, Ministry of Supply, Professor Sir Alfred Pugsley, Chairman of the Aeronautical Research Council, and Lady Pugsley, Mr Cyril F Uwins, President of the Society of British Aircraft Constructors, and Mrs Uwins, Mr E T Jones, President of The Royal Aeronautical Society, and Mrs Jones, Mr and Mrs Charles Hughesdon, to whom we are greatly indebted for the recent Garden Party, and Mr A J Mollart, through whose generous contribution the Alan Marsh Memorial Trust Fund was founded, and Mrs Mollart.

Immediately after the Dinner, the Loyal Toast having been honoured, the President presented the first Alan Marsh Medal to Squadron Leader W R Gellatly.

The Speakers were Mr Cyril F Uwins, O B E, A F C, F R A e S, who proposed the Toast of "The Helicopter Association", the Toast to "The Guests" was proposed by our President, The Rt Hon Lord Brabazon of Tara, G B E, M C, P C, Hon F R A e S, and the Response was made by Vice-Admiral W T Couchman, C B, C V O, D S O, O B E. A brief summary of their remarks is as follows.

Mr Uwins said that when he had accepted the President's invitation to propose the Toast of "The Helicopter Association" he had not known in what capacity he would be speaking, whether it was to have been as a member of the Association, as Chairman of Bristol Aircraft, or as President of the Society of British Aircraft Constructors. He had waited until the evening of the Dinner to see the Menu and found that the 'hat' he was to wear was the last one.

His interest in helicopters had started some ten or twelve years ago when Bristol's had formed a small team under Raoul Hafner and he had then begun to realise that the adage hanging on a wall in the Ministry of Supply "You do not need to be mad, but it helps" applied in an ever-increasing degree to helicopter designing. However, during the past ten years intensive effort had been put into the design and development of helicopters, and at the 1956 Farnborough Airshow, rotary wing aircraft had put up a most memorable exhibition.

The helicopter, Mr Uwins said, was turning out to be not only a war vehicle but also a great humanitarian vehicle. One read daily of people being rescued from drowning, and also of people who had no desire to be rescued being whipped out of the sea.<sup>1</sup> He had no doubt that soon small boys would develop a habit of drifting around on small rafts in order to have a free flight in a helicopter.<sup>1</sup>

Before concluding, Mr Uwins referred to the eminent gentlemen who had occupied the Presidential Chair of the Association since it was formed. Mr Weir, the first President, Mr Mensforth, who was present at the Dinner, as well as the immediate Past President Lord Douglas of Kirtleside, and Lord Brabazon of Tara, the current President.

Mr Uwins then proposed the Toast of the Helicopter Association coupled with the name of its President, Lord Brabazon.

In reply, Lord Brabazon began by thanking Mr Uwins for proposing the health of the Association. He then went on to outline some of the notable events and achievements over the past year. He was particularly pleased to be able to thank Mr and Mrs Charles Hughesdon for the Helicopter Garden Party on July 28th, 'a wonderful party,' he said, and expressed hope that it would be the first of many such events.

There were still a number of points which needed attention to ensure the helicopter's continued progress. The loss of the South Bank site as a helicopter landing terminal was disquieting news, and he urged that an alternative location should be adopted without delay.

He was told, he said, that the helicopter is expensive to make and expensive to run although there was some truth in this, was it wholly true?<sup>2</sup> It should be remembered that the helicopter required only a small site with no expensive foundations and he asked whether it was fair that taxpayers should subsidise the aeroplane and not the helicopter. Air transportation was the only method of three dimensional travel, and although the aeroplane was supreme for long hauls, in spite of terminal delays, it was the helicopter operating from urban centres which had already proved the faster for short hauls of up to about 300 miles. For every one man wishing to travel 3,000 miles there are 10,000 wanting to make journeys of up to 300 miles. Was there ever a field which offered such potentialities?<sup>1</sup> Yet there were some great aeronautical firms who had not even started to consider helicopters, an industry which must one day become as great, and perhaps greater than the motor car industry. The spur-head of this new second conquest of the air resides in this country, in this Association.

Lord Brabazon concluded by proposing the Toast of "The Guests" and called upon Vice-Admiral Couchman to reply.

Vice-Admiral Couchman said that he was honoured to have been invited to dine with the Association and to reply to the Toast on behalf of his fellow guests. He thanked the President for an excellent dinner and enjoyable evening.

He said that we were passing through a period when the existence of the Helicopter Association was of great importance. In view of the uncertainty of future requirements and the fact that few commercial operators had as yet had extensive experience with this new machine, it was not possible for the Ministry to order helicopters off the drawing board in the same light-hearted way that aeroplanes were ordered. This led to the difficulty of finding money to continue research and development work without extensive

production orders. One important function of the Association was, he said, to maintain interest and faith in the helicopter and to form a focussing point for the conflicting theories and opinions about their future use. He was a great believer in the helicopter for use in the military Services but he felt that the military requirement could not on its own ensure the successful development of rotating wing aircraft. A thriving civil helicopter industry was needed to expand side by side with the military utilisation.

It was now clear that, in certain fields, there was no alternative to helicopter transportation, but the problem was to know how large that field was, and whether it was large enough to generate large production lines with lower prices. That was why the Ministry of Supply pinned their official faith in enterprises which offered good civil prospects based on military orders firm enough to spread development costs and lower prices. There were overwhelming advantages for the helicopter, and he hoped that those features of the helicopter which would lead to commercial success would be pursued. He wished the Association all possible good luck in doing so.

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### ADDITIONS TO THE ASSOCIATION'S LIBRARY

#### PAPERS

Journal of the American Helicopter Society Vol 1, No 3, July, 1956

"Notation for Rotorcraft Work"

Prepared for the Ministry of Supply  
by A Armitage

#### BOOKS

"Report on the Helicopter"

By Samuel C Williams  
(Brundage Story & Rose, New York  
Research Reports Series A — 1)

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### NEW MEMBERS

#### Members

Lt Cmdr C R Bateman, R N  
(Retd) (G B)  
E V Betts, A F R Ae S (G B)  
R S Brown, M I Prod E (G B)  
I C Cheeseman, Ph D, B Sc,  
A R C S (G B)  
E J W Schuller (Holland)

N W Hewett, R N (G B)  
A Hyland (Canada)  
F Meeus, A M I Ae S (Belgium)  
H E Tuisku, B Sc (Canada)  
J C M Wood (Pakistan)

#### Companion Members

**Associate Members**  
Capt R G Harris, R N (G B)

A P Pearson, M B E (G B)  
W/Cmdr A McK S Steedman (G B)  
L A Wingfield, A R Ae S (G B)

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### INCREASE IN PUBLICATION DATES OF THE JOURNAL

With effect from 1957 the Journal will be published **SIX** times a year. An extra issue, Vol 10 No 3, will be published in December 1956. There will be no Vol 10 No 4 and Vol 11 No 1 will be published in February, 1957.

Journal subscriptions will now be £3 4 6 per annum. There will be no increase in membership subscriptions.