

# The Thirteenth Annual General Meeting of The Helicopter Association of Great Britain

The Thirteenth Annual General Meeting was held at the Royal Aeronautical Society, 4 Hamilton Place, London, W 1, on Friday, 6th June, 1958 at 4 00 p m The Chair was taken by Lt Col J W Richardson, Chairman of the Executive Council

The routine business of the Meeting was conducted and the result of the ballot for election of members to the Executive Council was announced The constitution of the new Council for the year 1958/59 is as follows

B H Arkell	R Hafner
J A J Bennett	J E Harper
R A C Brie	N J G Hill
A E Bristow	A McClements
J A Cameron	J W Richardson
L G Frise	J S Shapiro
W R Gellatly	D L Hollis Williams
M H C Gordon	

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## The Chairman's Address

It is our custom at this point for the Chairman to review and comment upon helicopter affairs both domestic and general I approach this duty with the sort of feeling a man might have whose Rugby Football days are well over and who, on the strength of once having played in his School Fifteen, is asked to referee at Twickenham The task appals me for there are giants on this ground, but you have given me the whistle and I must do what I can about blowing it

I will begin by taking a look at recent events in our field and, as I have only time to pin point a few of them, I will safeguard myself by reminding members that such events and developments are recorded each year in our Journal, and the last review of this kind appeared in the December issue

The "Rotodyne" had just then made its first free flight, on the 16th November, and earlier this week it was given its first public demonstration In the intervening time the exploration of its flight envelope has been progressing steadily Members will agree that this is a most remarkable aircraft and an achievement upon which our Vice-President and all our good friends at Fairey's are to be most warmly congratulated

To-night you will hear something from our Lecturer of what has been going on lately at Westlands on a different application of the turbine to helicopters The first free-turbine shaft driven helicopter, the "Wessex" was seen flying at Farnborough last autumn, and the first production "Wessex" is now nearly ready to fly The first flying crane version of the "Westminster" has left the assembly shop and has had its first engine start

The "Whirlwinds," to which the Naval search and strike role has been added, the "Sycamores" and the "Widgeons" continue to flow off their production lines and have been joined by the Saunders-Roe "Skeeter," which is now, too, in full production

The Bristol "B192" has been undergoing intensive testing at Weston-super-Mare This is yet another user of the turbine, and here we see the developed "B173," with its twin Tandem rotors and twin power plants, but now these are Gazelle turbines, as in the "Wessex," and the ship is designed to carry 25 passengers I was recently told that free flight of the "B192" is expected very shortly

The British helicopter stable, so far as it has been made public, is completed by the Fairey "Ultra Light" which continues now as a private venture This has successfully carried out Naval deck landing trials in rough sea and exceptionally high wind conditions, and it has been going through C of A trials for various civil applications

It now seems safe to expect that we shall very soon be able to offer a complete range of helicopter, or near helicopter, aircraft from the 40/50 seater or 10,000 lb or heavier payload transport down to the flying bubble car

The field of commercial operation of these aircraft is still only being most circum- spectly explored. Recently figures were circulated (which, unfortunately, so I believe, cannot be quoted) by a very reliable source as to American Helicopter Exports. These are shown to have reached a very worth while figure already, and to be rapidly expanding. We are nearer than they to many worth while markets, and what we have to offer is well able to stand on its merits. There is here a great opportunity, if we can take it.

On the military side the outlook is also interesting. The French, with a difficult guerrilla war to conduct in difficult country, have gone boldly for the use of helicopters of all available sizes, getting these rather quickly from whatever sources they could, ourselves among them.

A recently published French report put the number of helicopters in the French Army and Air Force last autumn at over a hundred in each of those Services. I believe that these are pretty nearly all in Algeria.

The new German military mind, as some of us have reason to know, is very impressed by the potential, and the already proven, uses of rotary wing aircraft, and they are placing large orders with other countries, until, as is to be expected, they can supply their own.

I don't know, any longer, much about the American Forces picture, but I would expect that the figures there, and maybe in Russia, make any others look mean.

Turning to our own Army, however, the scene is rather different. True, they are now equipping the Air Observation Post Squadrons, or some of them, with light helicopters, and that is a thing which some of us have been crying out for for years. There is, too, "JEHU"—that joint Army/R A F Unit whose job is (or was, for I may be out of date on this) to find out how helicopters, of increasing sizes can be used for more general military roles. But although the bigger, and better, helicopters are with us, I don't hear much about the Army's new requirements for them. Yet I have little doubt that the Army has been doing plenty of thinking (not, I hope, just dreaming) about the advantages of mobility, surprise and dispersion conferred by helicopters in a cold or a hot emergency of the kind which seems always to be only just being avoided or not quite that!

Now we know, of course, that the problem is one of economics or largely so. And that is equally the problem of the civil operator, and this leads me to ask certain questions. Are we not now in sight of the stage when we can give the customer enough performance? Can we not now start to be very firm and refuse to spoil, to throw away, that reserve of power of which we have never so far had quite enough? Can we insist that the helicopter, and its near kin, are primarily always vertical take-off aircraft? Can we fight against extra equipment and unnecessary instrumentation in the basic aircraft? (I'm not talking about special to role equipment.) Can we not soon, consolidate the position gained, to get down to simplifications and cheaper production methods and see if it isn't possible to turn out a really tough line in flying motor lorries and get their cost down. And to that I would add another thought, which comes from that same French report which I have mentioned, a report of the first session of a Committee set up by the French Civil Air Ministry to investigate helicopter utilisation. It is that since existing civil helicopters are developed from military types, they are easily convertible for military roles, or for use in some catastrophe. Moreover civil utilisation of helicopters provides a most arduous and exacting testing ground. Should not, therefore, the civil operator be assisted, directly or indirectly by the State which would have the right of requisition in emergency? From that point my own dream is of a Helicopter Merchant Service which would form a part of the Army Reserve.

So far I have dealt mainly with what I see to be good, but I must not omit to emphasize that, if our helicopter foreground appears reasonably sunlit, there is a dark and turbulent background to the wider aeronautical picture. It is beyond me to guess the extent to which such clouds as those can spill their contents over us and falsify our hopes and predictions.

Turning to the Council's Report. This refers (page 4) to a Heliport Campaign. This has received great moral support and encouragement from our President, Lord Brabazon, and, indeed, had he not fallen ill, he was ready to lead the attack.

This Heliport Report is available (there is a stock of them here) to any member in the hope that he will later pass it on to some person outside the Association whose good offices might further our object. Although this Report deals only with London's need, much of it should be of interest elsewhere. Some of our supporting firms have assisted to defray the cost of printing a thousand copies by taking batches for their

own distribution, at 5/- per copy, and I hope that others will see fit to do the same, since this enables the remaining general distribution to be free

As you all probably know, there are now two projects for temporary Heliports to replace South Bank which have been subjects of recent Public Inquiries of which the results are as yet not known. Since these projects are still *sub judice* one ought not to comment on them. It is, however, I think, safe to say that the hearings very clearly indicate that the problem of "Noise" is going to be very much with us if we wish to locate Heliports in the central positions, where they must be, in Cities. Either you must bear with noise, which beyond a certain point people will not do, or you must exclude it, or reduce it by locating the Heliports at tops of tall buildings, or by dealing with the noise at its source. I think we will for some time be forced to do whatever is least expensive.

It is also possible to say of these projects, since all concerned have publicly agreed on this, that whilst either will fill an immediate need, neither scheme provides what must eventually be required, indeed what many of us think will very soon be required, and that is a central, permanent Helicopter Station for London which will be adequate to cater for scheduled Public Inter-city and International Services by helicopters, as well as for the requirements of Charter operators.

Therefore, the value of the Association's Report remains and we must not relax our campaign.

You will also see (in the Council's Report) reference to the formation of a Joint Committee by the Corporation of London and the London Chamber of Commerce. We have held two Meetings and we are quite hopeful of finding a practical solution to this problem. It will still then be necessary to get financial backing and approval by the Authorities, and so, I repeat, we must not relax our propaganda in this cause.

All members can help in this, initially, by suggesting addresses of persons to whom the Heliport Report should be sent, and by calling attention to it.

Turning, at last, to our domestic affairs. The Council's Report touches on the reasons for raising our annual subscriptions. I can assure you that your Council has resisted such action for as long as it could. Even so a glance at the Balance Sheet shows that we still be dependent on donations. Each year the Council has besought members to intensify their recruiting efforts, and it is still true that if every member would gain only one more, we no longer need be beholden to anyone for support. Your Council is, of course, constantly studying how best to further the aims for which the Association was formed. About eighteen months ago a suggestion came, from a source outside the Association, that our aims and objects are, so to speak on a narrow front, while those of the Royal Aeronautical Society are on a wider one. It was suggested that this concentration of our effort could be as well achieved, indeed might be better achieved, within that wider effort.

From this came the suggestion that the Society, which was intending to form certain specialised and largely autonomous Sections, should invite the Association to become merged within it—becoming its Rotorcraft Section, retaining, however, an individuality which would be reflected in an addition to the title of the Society.

We set up a Committee to study these proposals, or elaborations or modifications of them, and to discuss such possibilities with a Committee of the Society.

I cannot say here whether anything may come of this, except that if common ground (and obviously some such exists or we would not still be talking about it) can be found which satisfies your Council, then the matter will be put before the Members in full detail in the proper way, and you will be asked to decide upon it. I cannot say if that will be, or when it will be. But we think, and the Society agrees, that you should know of these discussions.

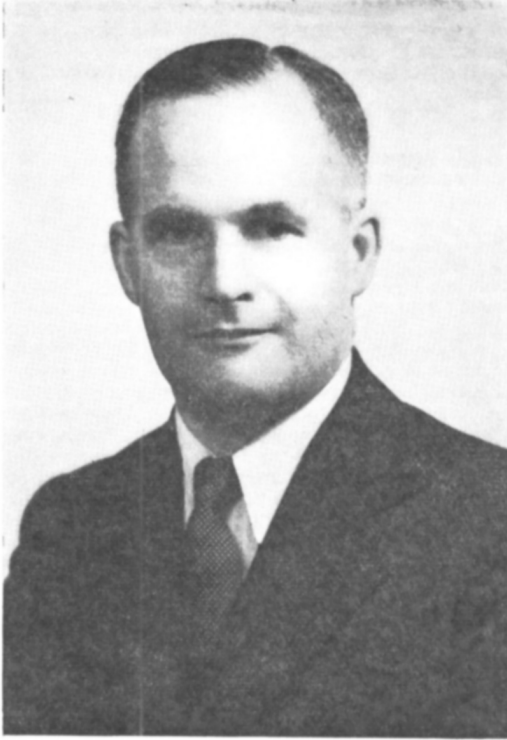
As you will also have seen from the Council's Report, we have a change of President this year. You will be glad to know that Lord Brabazon is fully recovered, but he has many activities and duties, and so he felt that he should not continue longer in our Presidential Chair. But he is as enthusiastic as ever for our cause, and as willing to support us in action. We felt greatly honoured to have so eminent a figure as Lord Brabazon to lead us, and his support and vigorous encouragement has put us in great heart.

And so, now, we welcome our new President, Eric Mensforth. This will be his second term of office for he was our most active President during three years, 1952-1955. It is very good of him to be willing to take on this task again, for he is among the busiest of men. And it will be good to have him there to guide us at a most critical moment in our development when many things are at stake and much can be made or marred. I know that you all agree with me.

### Reply by the President

Mr Mensforth expressed his appreciation of the honour of again being invited to become President of the Association. His earlier enthusiasm for the helicopter was as great as ever, and he was glad that he could contribute in some way to the activities of the Association. The issues at stake were very great and much useful work remained to be done. The Heliport Campaign was already achieving its initial objectives and a landing site would probably soon be available in London. He hoped that the volume production of helicopters would soon be quite common. If anything, the field of activity for the Association was likely to expand in the future and he hoped that we should see some very excellent progress in the coming year.

### HONORARY OFFICERS



#### The President

ERIC MENSFORTH, C B E , M A ,  
M I M E C H E , F R A C S , M I P E

The Association is honoured to once again have as its President Mr Eric Mensforth, who was previously President of the Association from April 1952 to June 1955.

Mr Mensforth is Chairman of Westland Aircraft Ltd, and Normalair Ltd, Director of John Brown and Co Ltd, and Managing Director of Firth Brown Tools Ltd.

#### Vice-Presidents

W/Cmdr R A C BRIE and Dr G S HISLOP have accepted our invitation to continue as Vice-Presidents for a further year.

#### Chairman

At the first meeting of the new Council, Lt-Col J W RICHARDSON was elected to the Chair for the second year.

#### THE PRESIDENT

### NEW MEMBERS

#### Member

Lieut C F J Chresta, R N (G B)  
J Nelson Daniel, B Sc (Eng)  
(U S A)  
David F Gebhard, B Sc (Eng),  
M Sc (Eng), M I A e S

Dr W Just, Dipl Ing, Dr Ing,  
Dr Ing habil (Germany)  
B K O Lundberg, Hon F I A e S,  
F R A e S (Sweden)  
P D Wolkovich (U S A)

#### Associate

J P Bond, B Sc (Eng) (G B)

S W G Foster, A F R A e S (G B)