



# Editorial

Mick Davis

The important first point to note is that our Annual General Meeting is scheduled for 18 April at the RAF Museum, Hendon. As ever, it is the opportunity for members to have a say in the running of the Society as well as a good excuse for a day chatting to fellow enthusiasts. This year's speaker is Jeff Jefford whose talk is entitled *ACCIDENTS – Investigation, Institutions and Attitudes, 1910-18*.

One of the most pleasant things to emerge from the last couple of years has been the number of members who have volunteered to help with the journal. Apart from David Fuller, who is now acting as pre-press and providing Warwick with print-ready layouts, other volunteers have included Ian Morris, Gregory Smith, Bernard di Broglio, Mark McKiernan, Paul Hare, Graham Mottram and Alan Simpson. Some have already made an active contribution; Ian, for example, edited the text of 'Beardmore Blues', which appears in this issue.

That article covers 21 Squadron's experience with the RAF RE7. The RE7 wasn't well photographed in operational service and it was by happy coincidence that I came across a clip on Youtube that includes footage of 2287 taking off, complete with Lewis gun armament. It's just a pity that 2287 was a 12 Sqn machine, not one of 21 Sqn, but the clip is well worth a watch on <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WtC-o-iwYwU>. A still is shown below.



This issue sees the start of what will be a lengthy series. Peter Dye and Roger Austin have compiled details of the flying sites in France, Belgium and Germany that were used by British and Australian units, as well as those of the US Northern Bombing Group. The series will follow the format established in the *Gazetteer of Flying Sites* in the UK and Ireland: i.e. an 8-page centre-spread supplement with tabulated information on each site supported, whenever possible by sites plans and photographs. An added bonus will be the provision of location maps. Just as the UK & Ireland feature had contemporary Ordnance Survey maps marked with locations and provided as insert sheets, this series will provide War Office 1:100,000 scale maps, similarly marked. Some maps cover very few sites, but all are to be included, so that members end up with map coverage of the complete theatre of operations. The 1:100,000 maps will be issued alphabetically, by nation, starting with France and the Abbeville and Amiens maps.

Stewart Taylor's article on 21 Squadron's experience with the

RE7 contains some rare and interesting images. The number provided by Stewart would have made the article top-heavy with photographs and so those that were not used have been placed on the rear covers, where their reproduction at large size really does them justice.

The other lengthy feature in this issue comes from Phil Jarrett and it provides an excellent insight to the flying undertaken by the RFC's Naval Wing at Eastchurch during 1913. The article is riddled with the names of famous naval aviators, several of whom went on to achieve high rank in the RNAS and, later, RAF. It is therefore surprising that the subject of the article had a name that few will recognise.

Paul Hare continues his focus on the BE2a by looking at those operated by the Naval Wing and RNAS. It's amazing that so many photographs are available to illustrate individual machines. The article had been made print-ready by David Fuller when another photograph turned up. The underwing RNAS cockades suggest that this was, almost certainly, Samson's famous No 50 machine serial number repainted while at Tenedos. The numeral 5 appears on the rudder, too



far aft to be part of the number 50. 3 Sqn RNAS applied local numbers to its machines and the number 5 is recorded by Ray Sturtivant and Gordon Page, in *Royal Navy Aircraft Serials & Units*, as being applied to a BE2c by 16 May 1915. Could the reference to 5 as a BE2c have been a typo? Has anyone any thoughts?

The articles on French aviation, so far published in this journal, have tended to focus on fighter pilots. The much-less glamorous work of night bombing has received little attention and so Thomas Nilsson's look at the 1918 operations of Groupe de Bombardement 8 makes for interesting reading. David Méchin deserves thanks for contributing illustrations to the feature.

Arnold Harvey poses an interesting question with the title of his contribution and this is another article to which David Méchin has contributed illustrations, David was joined in this by Greg vanWyngarden, who selected some wonderful individual colour schemes applied to German machines.

The article by Lorne Bohn reminds us of the pioneering work done before WWI, not just in aircraft design but also in related items such as clothing. The photo at the bottom of p.048 really tickled me.

Assuming that we obtain a good translation of the original, 2020 will see the publication of David Méchin's biography of René Fonck. Other features will include a study of the Royal Hellenic Naval Air Service, which, of course, operated many machines supplied by the RNAS/RAF, a look at Naval 8 Sopwith triplane pilots, an examination of enemy machines captured in the Macedonia theatre, further individual BE histories as well as further biographies.

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