

INPUT



EGATS QUARTERLY

SUMMER '78

Input

Egats Quarterly Magazine

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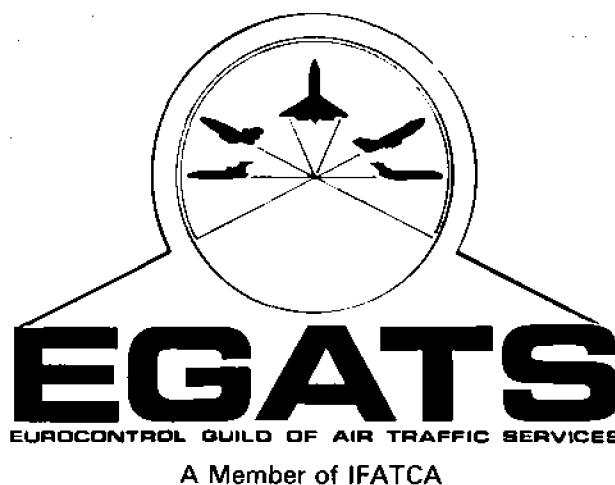
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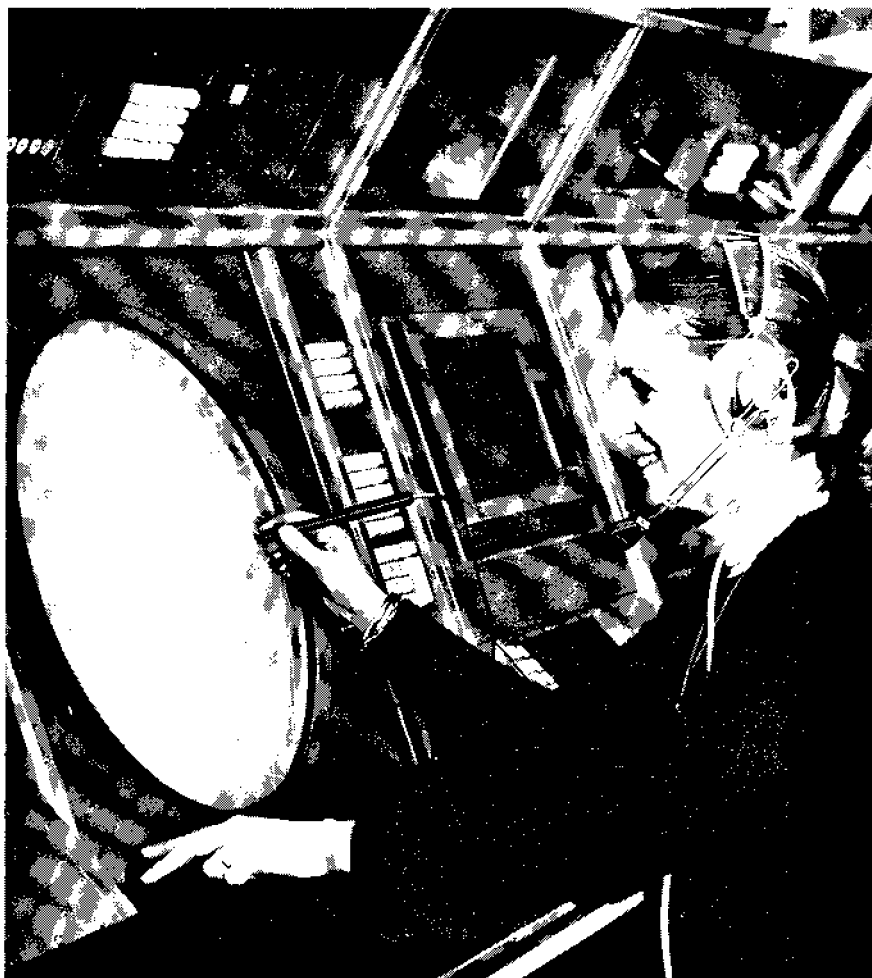
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Output

Two-way Communications

A year ago, INPUT drew attention to the IFATCA recommendations regarding familiarisation flights for controllers — i.e., there should be a minimum of two per year. However, due to budgetary restrictions imposed by the politics of international 'cooperation', Eurocontrollers have suffered a reduction in the already insufficient number of duty flights available, and can consider themselves fortunate if they get one trip in three years.

In the light of misinformed political attitudes towards ATC, it is perhaps unrealistic to suggest that a scheme be introduced, along the lines of the IFATCA suggestions, for aircrew to make regular familiarisation visits to ATC units. Nevertheless, such a programme could prove to be not only informative to both aircrew and controllers, but might also help expedite some of the improvements urgently required in many ATC environments.

It should be a comparatively simple matter for aviators to occasionally take the time to visit tower and approach units at the airports from which they operate — national security permitting. Some knowledge of the facilities available at airports is to be gained from the arrival and departure procedures, of course. But it is the area control centres which are to the greatest extent 'unseen', and whilst pilots may regularly fly under the jurisdiction of certain ACCs and UACs, they may never be fully aware of the conditions under which the area controllers are working. Therefore, the aircrew familiarisation scheme would perhaps be best aimed at these units.

The professions of controller and airman are completely interdependent. Aircrew are our strongest allies in striving to improve the ATC environment. Many pilots' organisations are vociferous in their requirements from ATC, but in some instances do not appreciate the difficulties faced by controllers. Contact between pilots and controllers should not be limited to discussions between a few representatives of each at annual congresses or forums. If the majority of those who fly daily were able to compare their sophisticated aircraft with the archaic ATC equipment still in use in many places, they would certainly understand why restrictive procedures are still in force. And it is probable that this understanding would lead to greater pressure being exerted upon the indifferent 'appropriate authorities' to improve matters.

All other implications aside, familiarisation flights must be encouraged as an essential part of a controllers' continuation training. There is no substitute for first-hand cockpit experience, where more can be learned in minutes than by hours of classroom study. The same encouragement should be given to aircrew to learn just how their safety is guarded. Or is professional awareness regarded as an expensive luxury?

Revision on....

Apart from all the official business conducted at IFATCA Conferences, delegates have the welcome opportunity to renew old acquaintances and to make new friends with controller colleagues.

The director of the Hungarian delegation, Mr. Eric Voit, was interested to read the account of the visit to Budapest in the Spring edition of INPUT, but discovered a few errors in the text which we would like to put right. First, on names; the "Fishermen's Castle" should have read as "Fishermen's Bastion", and what was referred to as "Franz Josef Castle" is, in fact, the Zsigmond Castle.

On the subject of Budapest TWR & APP:

- a. The Tesla RP3F PAR is not made by Telefunken but by Gilfallen
- b. The "heightfinder" is a Russian SSR (ICAO standard) which is on test for two years
- c. The ACC is located in a military headquarters, operated by civil controllers (some IFATCA members) and not controlling military traffic at all.

Our apologies for the inaccuracies, and our thanks to Eric Voit for pointing them out. Perhaps the excellent hospitality received by the visiting football party caused some of the detail to blur.

Footnote

This edition of INPUT is late appearing partly due to sickness, but mainly because insufficient material was available by the original deadline, which therefore had to be extended. For future reference, copy deadlines are the last Mondays in February, May, August and November. The contents and variety of the magazine depend upon what contributions are received — so, potential novelists, humourists, poets, playwrights etc., don't hide your talents, get practicing now. This is your magazine, and your help is urgently needed!

M. Lewis

Intercom

Letters to the editor.

Sir,

With reference to office notice 4/78 concerning the supply of free hot drinks. If office notices like this were produced as a single copy for the canteen notice board, instead of printing what must be hundreds and using a lot of expensive paper, there might be a bit of extra money for promotions, or even extra workers in the ops room! Doubtless 'someone' from the offices can explain!

Sir,

I did not find the reply to Mr. Hooper's letter regarding annual medicals (INPUT Spring '78) altogether satisfactory. Whilst exhibiting a distinct lack of appreciation for satirical humour, Mr. Gerretzen admits himself that the medical centre used for the last six years is hardly adequate for the functions performed within. He attempts to justify this by saying that things will improve in the future – if improvement is necessary, then obviously things are not as they should be at present!

If this "general industrial" medical examination is based on the assumption that the examinees are healthy, then how thorough does that make it, especially when specific complaints are to be ignored or considered the province of the family doctor? How many specialists in aviation medicine are there on the staff, aware of the demands made on controllers' health? The irregular hours mean irregular mealtimes, irregular sleep patterns etc, whilst performing an exacting task – facts that are ignored if one considers the pathetic lack of canteen and rest facilities for control staff at Maastricht.

Is two minutes with a doctor who asks only if you have suffered from back trouble during the last year really adequate? Does an eye test, involving standing barefoot and naked from the waist up, holding a plastic spoon in front of one eye whilst searching a chart for broken circles with the other, really conform to ICAO recommendations?

These questions have not been answered, and glib justifications are not enough.

M. Maus

Dear Sir,

I should just like to say how upset I was by Mr. Gerretzen's reply to my letter in the last issue. He got more laughs than I did!!

Paul J. Hooper

Dear Colleagues,

I wish to convey my thanks to all members of the Guild who during the past 18 months helped and supported me and the Executive Board through a difficult period in the Guilds' short history.

The Guild in the future has two paths open to it, either to become an association where direct union representation of the control staff is the requirement, or to explore the professional approach and give the Air Traffic Controller in Eurocontrol a status the profession world wide should command.

I feel the latter is the path we should take. This approach will require time, work and dedication before concrete results will be realised. There is no room in such a Guild for politics or management/staff divisions; all should subscribe to a common aim.

Even in these uncertain times the involvement of the Guild in national and international politics has delayed its progress and credibility. The Professional Committee should deal with matters of professional concern for the controller as defined by IFATCA and leave politics to the Unions.

The present situation allowing the Professional Committee "Carte Blanche" undermines the true authority of the Executive Board.

To enable the Guild to be a forum for discussion in Eurocontrol, all control staff must participate, whether management or otherwise. This would contribute towards communication and enable us all to benefit from the exchange of ideas. There is no link between Maastricht UAC ATC staff and Management on a regular basis. I feel that in this area the Guild can play its part for the Operations Room staff. Even in outside industry and national administrations staff participation in Management is both fostered and in some cases compulsory. Yet in Eurocontrol and Maastricht UAC no controller representation, even at a professional level, is envisaged or planned.

I would like to conclude by giving my special thanks to all members of the Executive Board who gave me their support and especially to team D for their unofficial concessions.

Roger S. Bartlett

What was that callsign again ?

SE FLAMINGO AIRWAYS

Flamingo Airways is a subsidiary charter company of Kenya Airways (INPUT Summer '77). The airline seems to be quite a regular operator through our airspace using B 707s chartered from British Caledonian (BR.). (There is no apparent truth in the rumour that when a Flamingo B 707 reported to Maastricht that his mode 'C' was u/s, the controller replied, "down to 190 you flamin' go!")

OF MONTANA FLUGBETRIEB GmbH

This Austrian charter airline began operations in 1976 with a B 707 leased from Atlas Air of the Bahamas. A wide variety of charters is undertaken, and indeed B 707 OE-IRA visited Beek on two occasions last April. The airline now operates two B 707s.

FF IAS CARGO AIRLINES

The prefix FF was once that used by an American airline, American Flyers, which is still very much remembered by our more senior staff who hardly saw a day go by without at least one FF flight to con-

tol. When American Flyers ceased operations in 1971, the prefix was taken over by IAS (International Aviation Services Ltd.). IAS is a British cargo airline operating world-wide charters from London Gatwick with a mixed fleet of DC-8s, B 707s, CL-44s, Hercules, and Britannias some of which they own and some of which are leased.

BA BRITISH AIRWAYS

Further to this column in Input Winter '77, British A/W is to drop the prefixes BE and BZ. This will be done in two phases (due to certain inabilities of their BABS Reservations System computer) of which the first phase, to drop the BZ prefix and to re-number all flights, is already in effect since April 1st. The second phase, where the BE prefix is dropped, will take effect from November 1st.

Reading the above information from the newspaper BRITISH AIRWAYS NEWS I was interested to note that no mention was made as to what r/t callsign would be used. A telephone call to the Flight Operations Dept. revealed that it is of the general opinion that the 'Speedbird' callsign will be retained and used for all BA flights, as from November 1st of course.

AIRLINE NEWS

Boboli Airfreight SprL. is a Belgian airline formed as far back as June 1976 to operate cargo charters out of Liege. This company is not yet operational but is, apparently, still negotiating for the purchase of a B 707 - 320C.

World Air is yet another Belgian airline being presently formed and financed by German interests. The airline plans to operate two lockheed Electras from Ostende.

Air Anglia fans will be pleased to know that with the airlines aquisition of an F 28 Fellowship for delivery in the Autumn, it looks like a faster ride from Amsterdam to Aberdeen.

As for our BMA fans, I have news (exclusive at time of writing) that the airline is negotiating a route swap with British A/W which would result in EIGHT new routes for BMA in exchange for only one of their routes, Birmingham - Brussels v.v. One consolation might be that one of the routes requested by BMA is Liverpool - East Midlands - Brussels v.v.

Finally, do you remember that rather interesting airline EFS BAHAMAS (Input Spring '77). Not long after that they ceased operations with many outstanding debts. Infact, they owed Beek airport £ 360.000, - !! They have re-formed again, this time under the name Skandinavian Air Cargo with a leased Air Zaire DC-8-63CF. They recently contacted Beek with the view of operating there again!!!

D.P. Grew

The Tragic Lack of International Controller Solidarity: Its Consequences and the Remedy

by G.J. de Boer*

The Situation as it is

It will be difficult to pinpoint another profession which is as international as that of the air traffic controller. The nearest is that of the airline pilot. Nothing of any significance can happen in Air Traffic Control anywhere in the world unless the substance has first been thrashed out in depth at international level by international experts of various nationalities. The air traffic controller of today has to abide by a multitude of complex international regulations and procedures; his bibles are the handbooks put out by the International Civil Aviation Organization; he is forever up-dated on what comes out of international air safety meetings and by technical memoranda distributed worldwide, and in his work he deals with people of all nationalities. You would expect such a person, wherever he may be, to have a totally international outlook, and have no time for isolationist tendencies.

But it is just not that way. The great majority of the world's controllers do not seem to be aware of the imperative need for all-out international controller solidarity. If they do give it a thought, they do not show it. True, they see the need for national controllers' organizations to look after their own national interests, but mostly their thinking does not extend beyond their country's borders, yet it is there more often than not where matters vitally concerning them are decided upon. The best illustration of this lack of international awareness is to examine the composition of the International Federation of Air Traffic Controllers' Associations (IFATCA). Among those not represented in IFATCA are the controller of the U.S.S.R., the U.S.A., Australia, Japan, and although the Federation has a membership of over 40 national associations, the sobering fact is that the majority of the world's controllers are not affiliated. As a result, this part-time, dedicated group, although successful in defending and promoting the controllers' technical interests, lacks the essential resources, outlook and status which only the support of the world's major controllers' organizations can give it. Of course, that would not matter so much if all is well in Air Traffic Control; if the controllers' profession is properly recognized. But, as we all know, our profession is not

De Limburgse Gemeenten helpen U aan een eigen huis

Het Bouwfonds voor Limburgse Gemeenten is een instelling van 94 Limburgse Gemeenten. Haar doel is het bevorderen van het eigen woningbezit. Dank zij de unieke voorwaarden werden tot nu toe maar liefst 45.000 hypothecaire leningen verstrekt voor een bedrag van zo'n 2 miljard gulden.



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We have just received our new spring and summer collection amongst which you will find wellknown marks of children's clothing, like Cacharel, O Heather, Cathy Mini and Kiki Blom.



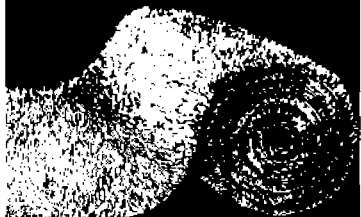
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given its rightful recognition and never will get it until controllers the world over band together and bring it about. No one will do this for us: we must do it ourselves.

Controller groups not willing to commit time, effort and money to keep into being an international controllers' organization, are participating in a clear form of self-denial which lessens their prospects of advancement. Only by being internationally organized can we hope to earn the regard which will enable us to deal effectively, consistently and professionally with governments and officials of all nationalities on all levels of the aviation ladder. For our own good, we've got to be organized not only internationally but also dynamically.

The Consequences

The consequences of the controllers' isolationist outlook and the absence of a world body embracing them all, are there for us all to see. The world of the air traffic controller on all continents is in turmoil. Strikes, go-slows, work-to-rule, general dissatisfaction, bad working conditions, you name it, the continents have it. And that in a profession which has as its one overriding aim the promotion of universal aviation safety! We controllers know why we have this turmoil although the general public does not: it is the obstinate refusal by so many governments who employ air traffic controllers to put their ATC house in order. Controllers, having high professional skills and responsibility for human life, are generally still paid on a clerical or technical salary scale which in cases borders on the poverty line; governments need to create new and special categories of ATC salaries and conditions within their public service. There are countries where controllers work for the equivalent of 100 U.S. dollars per month and where they hold up to three jobs in order to make ends meet. To illustrate what is wrong in Air Traffic Control, here follow some examples which were given to the Tripartite Technical Meeting for Civil Aviation of the International Labour Organization (Geneva 7-15 December 1977):

- 1) Controllers who have been downgraded and their salaries compared with those of train controllers, and controllers who are judged and classed in the same light as telecommunications personnel; this without any consideration of the skills needed to control air traffic safely and expeditiously.
- 2) Primary and secondary radar availability and proposals for the implementation of new safety procedures which are published although no controllers have been trained, the equipment is not full-proof and there is not enough staff on hand anyway.
- 3) The existence of bad working conditions, such as long continuous spells of duty (13 hours or even more); a regular 13-day working fortnight; poor or outdated equipment to work with; bad environment to work in; conditions in radar units which are below recognized health standards; the banishment from international airports to

smaller airfields in outlying areas of national association officials who complained to management, or their transfer to jobs outside ATC; etc. etc.

- 4) Controllers who have had to refuse clearances because, for example, the runway could not be seen from the Tower with military and agricultural vehicles crossing; in one case this resulted in the militarization of the personnel involved, and there are other cases where militarization was threatened.
- 5) In one major western country, more than four years after controllers took recourse to industrial action, the employer still initiates disciplinary action against those who were involved.

The list is endless. Until these bad conditions are eradicated, and let me again remind you that we are providing an indispensable aviation safety service, which I find sometimes very hard to grasp, our profession has no hope of being taken seriously. It is no good some of you saying that it does not matter what happens in other countries, because „in my country, the conditions are not too bad“. You will never achieve true, meaningful professional recognition as long as the inadequate conditions in Air Traffic Control in this aviation world of ours continue. I implore you to understand this. You will if you give it sufficient thought.

The Remedy

Only a full-time, professional international controllers' organization with proper resources, fully backed by all the big national controller groups, has any chance of turning the tide and chartering a new course which is long overdue. Only a solid wall of worldwide controller opinion and action, not endless talk, will bring results. The present lack of international controller solidarity is a tragedy. We cannot afford to let it go on.

We can do one of two things. We can reconstitute and re-charter IFATCA, make it into a really one hundred percent world controller organization, not a showpiece but devoid of all unnecessary frills and trappings, backed by all controllers' associations wherever they may be, whether they are unions, guilds, or whatever they are or call themselves, as we need them all for the realization of our professional, technical and industrial aims. Or we can form an entirely new world organization, which will start anew. There is, of course, no room for two different international groups. Whatever we do, it does not have to cost the earth. We need a permanent Head Office, suitably staffed and furnished, situated in a major world centre with easy access and easy connections to other places, run by a paid executive official who is forceful and knowledgeable, and who really is an executive and not a figurehead and who therefore has full Board status and powers in the same way as is the practice in certain other international organizations. We need a small, businesslike Executive Board, not necessarily full-time. The new or new-look organization will constantly

strive to improve the controllers' lot — all other issues are secondary — by making proper determined representations, ceaselessly if need be, to those national and international authorities who are in a position to do something towards the achievement of a better deal for those who work in ATC. It will by no means be easy, and the going will be rough, but I have no doubt of the eventual outcome if only we play it this way.
When do we start?

* Gé de Boer started work as an air traffic controller in 1946, and in 1978, after almost continuous service, is still employed as an operational controller. After 9 years at Amsterdam's Schiphol Airport, he emigrated to New Zealand and for 5 years worked in New Zealand ATC at Christchurch Airport. Returning to Europe in 1960, he became a controller at Luton Airport outside London. After a spell in the control tower at Salisbury Airport, Rhodesia, he is now settled in Johannesburg after joining South African ATC in 1964. From 1973 to 1977, Gé was the editor of "The Controller", the official journal of the International Federation of Air Traffic Controllers' Associations. It was in this function that he became convinced of the absolute need for a dynamic, non-nonsense, truly representative international controllers' organization, embracing all controllers the world over, which not one controller group can afford to ignore.

Lost pilot packs it in

DESPITE his A A map Eric Clutton was lost, so he landed his homemade flying machine in a village playing field to ask the way.

Mr. Clutton, 50, was unhurt when the bumpy landing threw him from the cockpit, but the plane's fuselage, mostly wood, was damaged.

If that was not all, a dog promptly devoured the pilot's provisions — a packet of sandwiches which dropped from his pocket.

Take-home plane

Police at Ollerton, Notts., checked that Mr. Clutton was a licensed pilot, and found the plane was registered as aircraft type Fred — The Take Home Plane.

Mr. Clutton who had flown from a disused airfield near his home in Newland Street, Stoke-on-Trent, wanted to know which way for Leeds. Police told him. But after a look at "Fred", Mr. Clutton phoned a friend and took it away in a furniture van.

Daily Telegraph

Copenhagen '78 — A Summary

Of primary concern to the Guild was the recent disagreement with the Executive Board of IFATCA and it was decided to have a meeting with the E.B., with Tom Van Hal, Appy Bonne and myself representing the Guild. Prior to the meeting the delegation probed very critically all proposals of the IFATCA E.B., abstaining from voting on issues where we were not able to put our views across. The meeting with the Board proved very frank on both sides and we underlined the fact that we wished the matter closed in order to start off on the right foot with the new E.B. We were satisfied that the E.B. went as far as they could in the circumstances without reopening the old dispute with the Netherlands at a time when relations between the two Guilds are vastly improved. For our part, we made concessions which remained within the limits we had set ourselves. The result was a letter* from the E.B. of IFATCA to the E.B. of the Guild with copies to the immediately interested parties. This letter should now close to the matter.

Once this matter had been closed there was less need for the Guild delegation to have the numerous internal consultations required at Nicosia last year and we could get down to full participation in the Conference, which permitted many useful contacts with other delegations and a suspension of our critical tactics as far as the E.B. was concerned. The entire delegation worked extremely hard to put across the Eurocontrol case.

First Plenary

It was immediately noticeable that the working part of the Conference would be a success, with the highest ever representation of MAs, 37 in all. The President, in the presence of the Danish Officials present at first plenary, was highly critical of the political decision not to permit the attendance of our colleagues from Rhodesia. In view of the late appearance of the Nicosia Report we had given the Board prior notification that we would request the transfer of this report to Committee A for discussion. The President stated that if we did so he would rule it out of order. We proposed in this case to raise the whole matter in Committee A. Nevertheless the Netherlands Director pointed out errors in the Report and we seconded him in putting the Report to Committee A for rectification.

This was carried.

The following were elected to the top table for the Committees:

- A Chairman Larry Curry (UK) Vice Chairman Roger Bartlett (EGATS) Secretary Lesley Austin (UK)
- B Chairman Art Cauty (Canada) V-Chairman T Karlsen (Norway) Secretary L. Finlay (UK)

C Chairman Jim Kouk (Canada) V-Chairman John Kalvik (Norway) Secretary Pat O'Doherty (Ireland)

We also had an address from Richard Weston on the Gradimir Tasic case, and the initiative of the Irish ATCA in seeking an interview with Marshall Tito while he passed through Shannon was highly praised. During the Conference it was announced that the Appeal Court had reduced Tasic's sentence to 3½ years and had dropped the charges against all the others. This is important as no parole is permitted in Yugoslavia for a sentence over five years until at least five years have been served. Now it is possible to have a release on parole after half the sentence has been served. That is not the end, for IFATCA will still pursue the question of having the sentence quashed altogether, by whatever means are available after the normal process of justice is terminated. Nevertheless the IFATCA action may have had a large bearing on the early hearing of the appeal.



Richard Weston addressing the Conference

Committee A

Roger Bartlett being Vice-Chairman, I myself represented the Guild in Committee A. The Agenda gave the impression that a number of difficult issues would arise and this was to prove true.

Application for Membership.

We proposed the Application of the East African Association as this brings the second Association from an International Organisation into IFATCA.

The application was passed unanimously.

Spain and Venezuela applied during the Conference and these applications were also accepted.

Cyprus opposed the application of the Turkish Cypriot Association and the matter had to be discussed fully in closed session. In view of the Nicosia Resolution on the illegal "Ercan FIR" the application was rejected but it was pleasing to note that during the conference the Turkish Cypriots applied to form a branch of the Cyprus Association.

Canada will present a paper next year on one Association per State or International Organisation.

The adherence of Spain makes the West European Region 100 percent represented.

International Organisations

A complete overhaul of methods of co-operation with IFALPA has been started at all levels. Co-operation with IFATSEA will be limited to questions of mutual interest. The Danish Assistants are seeking to form an International Federation and should our Assistants be interested they should contact the Danish Assistants direct.

Membership Cards

We have had to return 30 membership cards as members have not paid their subscriptions. The loss in this case is to individual members as more and more reductions are being obtained and SC III will issue an updated list shortly. On the other hand Holiday Inns in France have come under new management which has withdrawn the facilities.

Visits to South American Countries

The E.B. could report that through their on the spot action, conditions may well improve shortly in Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay.

Publications and Public Relations

The Editor had his appointment extended for another year. He is leaving the RAF and will have more time to attend to IFATCA duties. As with "Input", he also has need of copy, and members should write on any ATC subject or even just a letter to the Editor will fill space. The Report of SC II was accepted and their Guidelines for Members facing the newsmedia accepted as information as most of their points were already in the manual. Canada will study our suggestion on an IFATCA award for poor or misleading reporting in the press. Switzerland took over the work of SC II.

We had produced a paper, in co-operation with the



"O.K. you guys, hand in your essays!"
B. Jones, Editor the 'Controller', in reverse

Channel Islands and Switzerland on publicity through postage stamps. We are not directly concerned as an MA but the Board should enter into contact with the Associations in the Member States of Eurocontrol to co-ordinate our support for the project when they approach their postal authorities after the 1979 Conference. Meanwhile any member who can design a stamp should submit his design to the EGATS Board not later than the end of September. The Channel Islands becomes a sub-committee of SC II for this project.

Finance

The Treasurer's Report was accepted. A number of MAs explained their difficulties in payment. Three MAs came up for expulsion. The Malta Association no longer exists and we therefore supported the expulsion of Malta. Guyana is in the process of reorganisation and some of the money owing will be paid. This case was referred to the next Conference. A series of telexes and interventions of the Turkish Embassy kept the case of Turkey simmering. Final plenary decided that if Turkey had not paid in

60 days Turkey would be automatically expelled. One should note here that Venezuela was automatically expelled several years ago and is now once again a member.

Constitution and Administrative Policy

The vexed question of Annual or Biennial Conferences: Our delegates had done much research on this question and it became clear that many Associations felt like ourselves that Annual Conferences should be retained. The strongest supporters of Biennial Conferences, Canada and the Netherlands, did not foresee an immediate changeover. None of the papers presented had gone into the requirements for Constitutional changes and therefore we felt that it was not opportune to discuss one without the other. As there is also a strong case for Constitutional reorganisation, pending the eventual changeover to a permanent secretariat which must await financial resources, we proposed that SC VI study the whole question and that at next year's Conference a fourth Committee study the whole Constitutional question. As this would have meant an official Committee D it was decided to set up a working group at the beginning of the next Conference, this group to report to Plenary via Committee A. We will present ideas to SC VI for inclusion for the two circumstances. Nevertheless Constitutional changes require a two-thirds majority so the question of biennial Conferences is by no means won. Canada was re-elected as SC VI.

Regional Organisation

The reports of the Regional Councillors were accepted. A vote of thanks was passed for José Beder who has done a tremendous amount of work in the South American Region. The South Pacific had been struck by a tornado in the form of Daniel Gorin and the Pacific Region has gone a long way in getting organised thanks to the assistance of Fiji and New Zealand. A paper on the Regional Organisation was presented by New Zealand and it initially did not receive much enthusiasm. Following our policy of support to the worldwide ideals of IFATCA, we strongly supported our colleagues in the Pacific



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IFATCA COMMITTEE D

HE WILL TRY TO BE SOBER FOR AT LEAST TWO HOURS EVERY DAY. THIS CARD ENTITLES THE HOLDER TO FREE BEER WHILE FLYING SUPERSONIC IN CLOUD, INVERTED, NAKED, BELOW 500 FEET OVER AUSTRALIA.

President: T.D. ST. J. Murphy.

region. The paper was accepted as presented and we received the grateful thanks of the New Zealand Director Mac McLindon. As of course all regions have different problems, we proposed limitation of the "Terms of Reference of Regional Councillors" to one year to allow us to judge whether these will be relevant in other regions where the organisation is just beginning. We have offered in the context of the Constitutional changes to present ideas to SC VI and New Zealand would like a copy so that they too may comment. As regards the Pacific Region it should be noted that 66 Australians attended as observers and it will probably not be too long before Australia is back with us. Meanwhile I can also report that Gé de Boer is on a coast to coast tour of the USA to get support there again for IFATCA presentation at the PATCO AGM.

The paper on Definition of Regions was accepted in principle and this will be updated before incorporation in the Manual.

Six regional councillors were appointed, although the Far East has not yet been named. The others were: — North and Central America — Bill Robertson (Canada), South America — L.M. Dominguez (Argentina), Caribbean — R. Greene (Bahamas), Pacific — Daniel Gorin (France), Western Europe (after an election where Roger Bartlett took the Chair) B. Nilssen (Norway). Mr. Nilssen will be visiting Maastricht, Luxembourg and Bretigny during June. A vote of thanks was recorded for Larry Curry for his work done as West European Councillor.

Member Associations' Problems

A full report on the Court case of the Greek Controllers was given by the Chairman of SC VII. An IFATCA intervention in Court had been successfully concluded. Again the Chairman of SC VII had intervened in Israel after a Supreme Court Case against the controllers. He succeeded in obtaining what amounted to a reversal of the decision. The Israeli delegation was full of praise for the efficacy of such interventions. A full report on the Sri Lanka problem was given by the President of the Austrian Association. This was accepted as information. Sudan reported vast improvements thanks to the help of the Sudanese ALPA and asked the E.B. to send a telex thanking the pilots and the Director of Administration for their help.

The Moroccan situation has deteriorated and IFATCA will be keeping an eye on this. As already reported the situation in Argentina, Uruguay and Brazil seems likely to improve.

Ireland reported a vast improvement in conditions there.

Election of the Executive Board

Harri Henschler (Canada) was elected President
Hans Wenger (Switzerland) was re-elected Treasurer

Andreas Avgoustis (Cyprus) was elected vice-President (Professional)

This last election caused a problem. We voted for John Kalvik (Norway) on the grounds that Norway would have fewer political difficulties in the event of an E.B. presence being required and that Andreas was doing a fantastic job for the Federation as Chairman SC VII. The vote was 19 for Andreas and 18 for John. The Nordic Group and Canada knowing that some delegations might leave early planned to have the vote reversed in final plenary. We took the stand that a majority is a majority and therefore supported the use of proxies in final plenary. We also supported Cyprus in that it was not a new election but a ratification or not of the Committee A decision which was required. The vote was carried by 25 to 13.



Ted McCluskey with delegate from New Zealand



Members of the East African Association

**IFATCA CONFERENCE 1979
TO BE HELD IN BRUSSELS**

Other Business

Jean Daniel Monin was proposed by France for the Scroll of Honour. This was carried unanimously. We offered to provide one official for Committee A in Brussels.

Germany made a statement concerning the recent Court decisions in Germany and it may be that GATCA will be declared bankrupt.

The Korean Airlines incident broke during Conference. Roy Evans with the agreement of the Delegation drafted a strong resolution on this which served to get the matter discussed. Israel strongly supported us. During discussions it became clear that some delegations had reservations on attacking someone as big as the USSR. Some had reservations on the authenticity of the reports in the press. We therefore withdrew the paper and proposed "That the EB co-ordinates with IFALPA with a view to making a strong protest on the Korean Airlines incident as soon as facts have been substantiated. The E.B. is to inform MAs as soon as action is taken". This was passed with only one abstention, that of Hungary which was a proxy vote to Austria. We also proposed that SC VI study the idea of a Scroll or Certificate of Honour to be awarded to non-members for services to IFATCA.

Final Plenary

The reports of all the Committees were accepted. The new Board Members were installed. A presentation was made to Jean-Daniel and Romy Monin on behalf of the Board. The new MAs received their Charters as did the new Corporate Members. The East African delegate called for one minute's silence in memory of the Ugandan controllers murdered after the Entebbe raid.

Various observers from other Organisations addressed the meeting including Mr. Gordon Burch of Eurocontrol HQ.

General Comments

The whole delegation worked extremely hard during the Conference and we made many new friends as well as cementing our already good relationships with many MAs. The Costa Rican delegation presented me with a small flag in thanks for our help at the Nicosia Conference. This will go on display in the Board room at Maastricht.

Tom Van Hal gave me able support and the backing of the Board when needed. Adrian Enright learned the hard way, being launched into his first Conference already Chairman of SC V, and had to go it alone in Committee C as I was very much involved



"XR", working hard



Whatever you're thinking, Roy, your halo's slipping!

in the intricate problems of A. The Committee C report shows how well he had done his work for SC V and for us as Deputy Director. He was ably supported by Roy Evans. Jan Van Eyck had a roving commission and aided our delegation in each Committee as required. Roger Bartlett did an excellent job in Committee A, putting our name on the top table for the first time. Appy Bonne and Philippe Domogala also put in a power of work, both in Committees and in breaks, where much of the serious negotiation is done. The Guild can feel justifiably proud of its performance at the Copenhagen Conference. My thanks are due to the members of the official delegation for their support and assistance and a special word of thanks is due to those who came at their own expenses and who worked so well.

The Guild is now involved in the following tasks and I hope that all members will assist where they are best qualified.

We have a number of important subjects on behalf of SC I, notably automation, flow control and radio failure procedures. In many of these we work in a consortium and even a helping hand with correspondence would be appreciated.

We should make some input on stamp design to SC II and also help MAs in their negotiations with postal authorities.

We have to make an input on Finance to SC III.

We have to complete questionnaires etc for SC IV and we should not forget input to M. Gil of the ILO.

Adrian has gained the confidence of the MAs and again is chairman of SC V. He was a one man Committee last year so a helping hand from any members at Instilux would be a great benefit. He has offers of assistance from Denmark and New Zealand.

We have a large input to make to SC VI. On this point I would suggest that if the Board agrees, I would be willing to remain as IFATCA Liaison Officer until the 1979 Conference and would suggest that I become Deputy Director next year in order to participate in the special working group.

We again have a sub-Committee of SC VII and I am willing to carry on with this task if the Board approves. The nomination for this and Chairman SC V should be sent immediately to the Exec.Secy. IFATCA.

We must also send a list of any Members qualified in any branch of Law to the Exec.Sec. and the Chairman of SC VII. These members to be called on as necessary for discussions with the ILO and the ICAO Legal Commission.

E. McCluskey, Director

(Photos: R. S. Bartlett)

(This is a condensed version of Ted McCluskey's original report to the EGATS E.B.)



EGATS & Netherlands Guild together

Dear Tom,

As a result of the meeting between the EGATS delegation and the Executive Board of IFATCA held in Copenhagen the 24th of April 1978, the Executive Board agrees that the report on the meetings held in Nicosia between himself, EGATS and other European Associations should not have been included in the minutes of the Executive Board meeting. The Executive Board apologises for any inconvenience this fact has possibly caused EGATS or other Member Associations.

The Executive Board further confirms that the decisions taken at Nicosia were based on the information that was available at the time.

Yours sincerely

Jean-Daniel Monin, President

Nepal II

Last year, two controllers from Maastricht, Tony Gleadell and Tony Wymes, packed their rucksacks and sleeping bags and departed Eastbound for an adventure holiday in the region of the Himalayas. In INPUT Winter '77, Tony Wymes revealed some of his impressions; now Tony Gleadell continues with his account of further aspects of the twenty-four days spent in this remote but fascinating part of the world.

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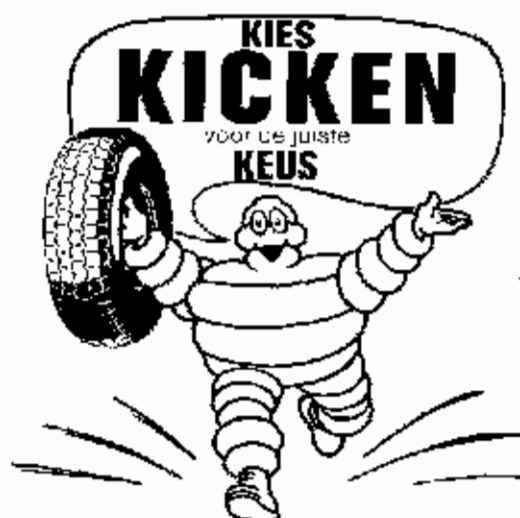
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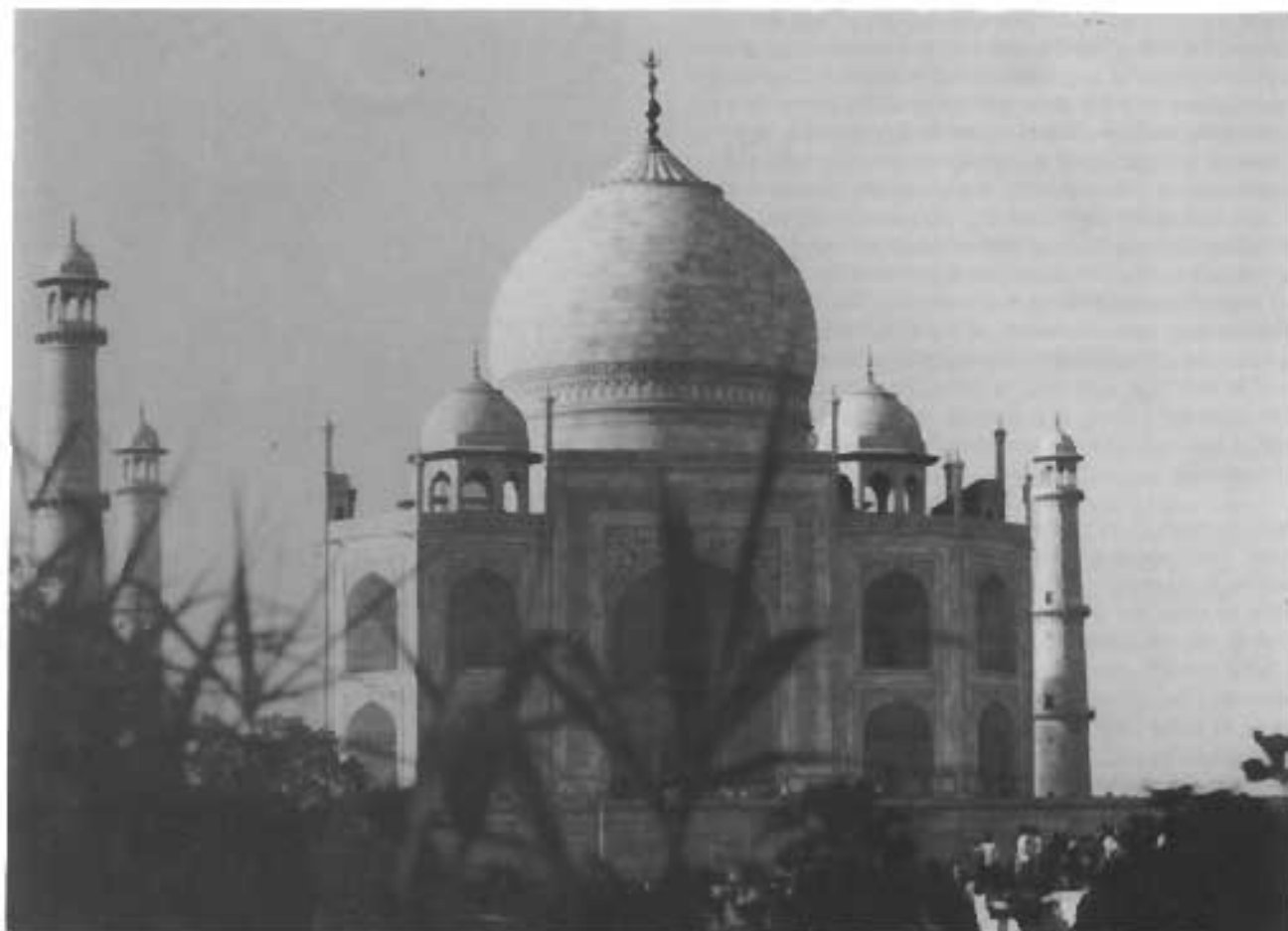
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Taj Mahal

Kathmandu, picturesque capital of Nepal, a country moulded by legends and situated in the Smiling Valley of the Gods, populated by a bustling assortment of Hindus and Buddhists. This peaceful co-existence of two religions has resulted in the many shrines and temples to both deities which can be found within Kathmandu, and close by, the oldest temple being Swayambhunath. Dating back 2000 years, soon after Lord Buddha's birth, it is a place of pilgrimage for Buddhists and, until recently, was a favourite spot for hippies; but since the Nepalese Government restricted the open sale of drugs, their numbers have declined.

About 5 miles from the centre of Kathmandu stands the impressive stupa of Bodhnath, a Buddhist shrine around which a village of Tibetan refugees has sprung up. The cold penetrating glance directed by the Everlasting Buddha in all four directions is strengthened by the third eye painted between the other two. Below is a question-mark design which, although it looks like a nose, is in fact the number 1 in devanagari script, symbolizing the oneness of Buddha. There are neither lips nor mouth depicted as the divine Buddha is content to see and know all but speaks to no one.

Most of the houses surrounding the stupa have little shops where Tibetan objects and craft are for sale. Also around the base of the shrine are numerous prayer wheels which the devoted spin as they walk around the stupa repeating over and over again the prayer 'Om Mani Padme Hum' (ie. Hail to the jewel in the Lotus). Care should always be taken to walk around a Buddhist temple in a clockwise direction, the contrary would be considered disrespectful.

A place of devout pilgrimage for the Hindus is Pashupatinath, a temple built on the banks of the holy river Bagmati, a tributary of the Ganges. Many cremations take place here and the ashes are scattered in the river so that they will eventually reach the 'mother of all rivers'. People also come to bathe in the holy waters, although at the time of year we were there the river bed was almost dry. From the terraces overlooking the temple you can see into the courtyard where stands an enormous golden statue of the bull Nandi, the traditional mount of Lord Shiva to whom the temple is dedicated. In Kathmandu city there are many shrines attractively decorated with woodcarvings; also streets of bustling activity where you must always be alert to prevent being run down by bicycles and rickshaws.

Since the end of 1973, free sale of drugs has been banned by the government but even now you are constantly being approached with offers of hash. Everywhere can be seen evidence of poverty: in the back streets dirty children play in the gutters but through all this came a happiness which I am unable to explain. The people's way of life seems settled and routine, also friendly; you are quite safe to walk the unlit streets of Kathmandu at night, provided you are quick enough to avoid the taxis. There are many restaurants in Kathmandu. The safest way of choosing one, however, is by recommendation, as stomach upsets are commonplace. One of the best is the Yak and Yeti, a rather imposing place with excellent food and service. Yak steaks are sold, I believe, but if anyone offers you a Yeti steak – beware!

Our journeying in Nepal also included a trip into the Terai, the jungle lowlands of Nepal south of Kathmandu to Gaida; in the Chitwan Wildlife where we were to stay for three and a half days. From the airstrip we travelled in an old converted green fire engine for one and a quarter hours along roads that were so dry, dusty and uneven that we were all covered in dust from head to toe when we eventually arrived at the camp site. The transition from the cold wastes above 5000 metres to the warm relaxing atmosphere of the jungle at 200 metres was a real tonic and the food was really appetising, as against the smoky sameness on the trek. At 6.30 a.m. the following morning we set off into the jungle perched precariously on the back of an elephant, the rolling gait of which threatened constantly to deposit you the two to three meters back to earth. The elephant strode across the wide shallow river and on to the tall elephant grass beyond, in search of the rare one-horned rhino. The tall, dense grass provided excellent cover for the rhino, but from our high vantage point it wasn't long before we came upon a grey shape standing motionless in the grass, gazing fixedly at the elephant. With its poor eyesight, the rhino could not see us, but was obviously aware of our scent, as he could be seen sniffing suspiciously at the air. We managed to get to within eight metres of him as he stood motionless like a living reminder of prehistoric times; and then he haughtily turned and, with a reverberating snort, walked away into the grass. To see such an animal in its wild state was both impressive and somewhat frightening, knowing that if any of us fell to the ground it would certainly cause the rhino to charge, the end result probably being a fight between elephant and rhino, not forgetting the poor unfortunate person on the ground being trampled into the dust. We left the elephant grass and wandered over to a water-hole where four rhinos were lazily wallowing in the muddy water, quite unconcerned at our presence. They proved ideal models for photography, after which we ambled back across the river for lunch.

The following day at noon, six of our party made for the river to embark in a dug-out canoe; we were



Bodhnath Stupa

going crocodile hunting. Each of us carried a black umbrella to provide shade from the blistering sun; the temperature must have been about 35° C. The canoe had a list to starboard so that everyone was obliged to sit to one side to compensate. Then, when everyone was seated on their straw, we set off. However, 200 metres downstream, we ran aground, so the boy in charge of the canoe had to get out and push. It was only 50 metres further when we ran aground once more, so much so that two of us had to get out to help push. This float and push routine continued until another tributary joined our river. Then we had half an hour of plain sailing until we turned from the main stream into a very narrow channel with vegetation forming almost a tunnel. We were all instructed to be extremely quiet as the crocodiles would be sunning themselves on the banks and our approach had to be silent. We saw one crocodile about two metres long basking on the river bank and we managed to get to within two and a half metres when suddenly he had seen us and then he was gone. Only a splash showed where he had entered the water, he had moved with such lightening speed. Our journey down this narrow waterway was halted when our guide stopped the canoe and pointed ahead; there

wallowing in the water, completely blocking the channel, was a one-horned rhino. A startled rhino can be unpredictable so we decided to stay where we were and have lunch, to wait and see if he moved on. The rhino in fact did move off into the jungle, but our guide thought it better that we retraced our route back to the main river, where we were met by two elephants that were to provide our transport back to camp. On the way back Tony



Permanent resident at Swayambhunath Temple



Dugout canoe disembarkment and drying out



One-horned rhino with young

Weymes lost a lens eye-piece from his camera, it fell into the dust and he gave it up for lost. However our elephant handler turned the elephant back and we went in search of it. From our high vantage point we spotted it and Tony was preparing to dismount when the handler told him to wait; the handler then instructed the elephant to pick up the eye-piece, something which was very thin and less than two centimetres across. The elephant's trunk snaked down and began sensitively searching until it touched the object, then much to our amazement, it carefully picked it up with the prehensile tips of its trunk and gave the eye-piece to his master.

Our stay in the jungle was all too short and soon we were on our way home, but, en route, we broke our journey to call and see the Taj-Mahal at Agra India, a building of which I had heard about many times but on actually seeing it I was truly amazed at its beauty and atmosphere which generated an aura of peace; it was a perfect ending to our holiday

A. Gleadell

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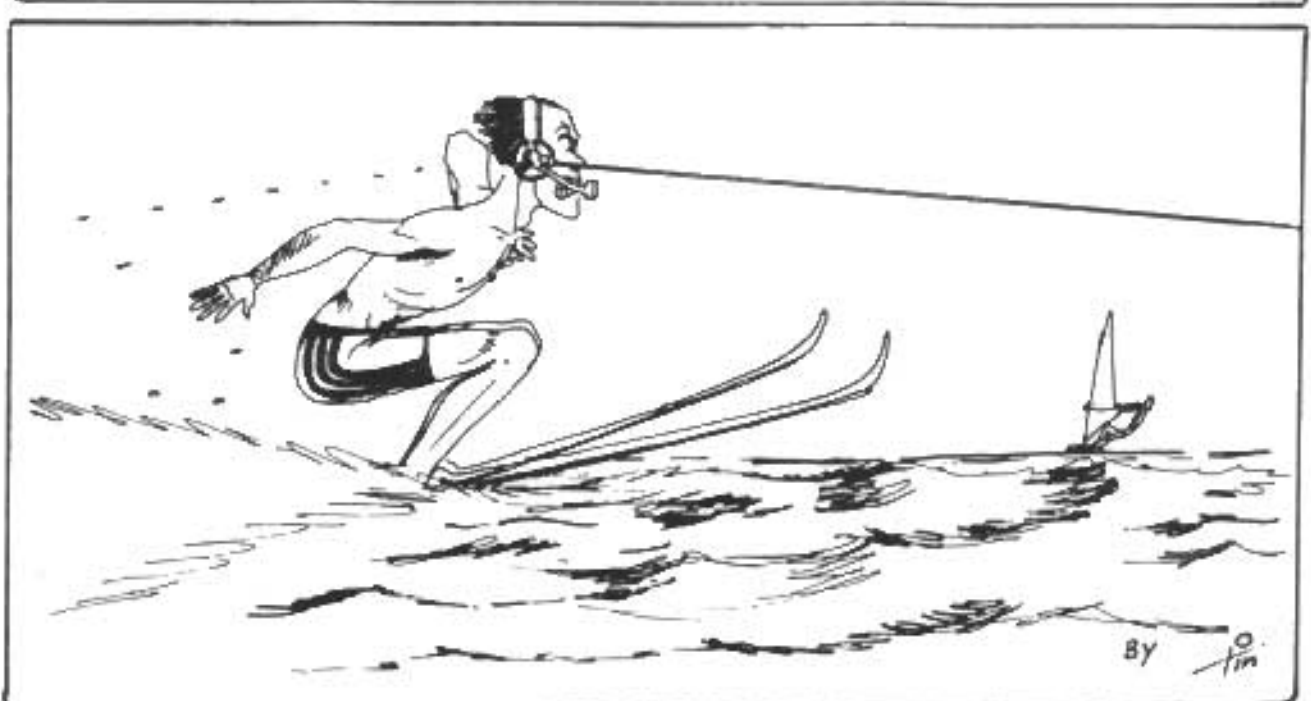
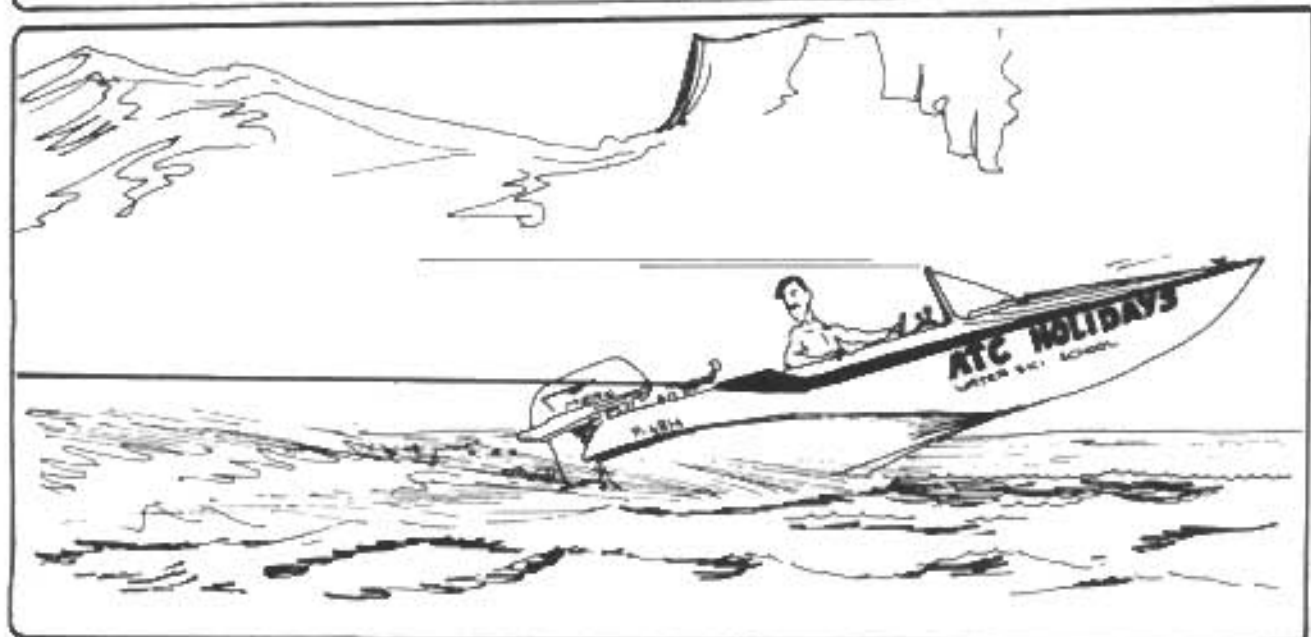
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By *Jim*

News from Philips

Philips announces new aeropp switching systems for AFTN

Philips Telecommunications Industries have announced two new message and data switching systems designed specifically for aeronautical operations. Philips is a major supplier of telecommunications equipment to the AFTN, with message and data switching systems installed in over 40 locations in 27 countries.

The new AEROPP I and II systems are designed to permit gradual, economic growth from a small initial installation handling only AFTN traffic to a powerful, multi-user centre providing a full range of aeronautical telecommunications services. A basic AEROPP I package may be initially configured to meet very low throughput requirements, and extended in steps to traffic handling capacities of several thousand messages per hour.

Within the AEROPP I structure, the low/medium-speed line termination facilities may be equipped only for the number of circuits required at the time of installation, and expanded by the addition of plug-in line control units to its maximum capacity of 64 low-speed and 4 medium-speed lines, or other low/medium-speed combinations. Basic AFTN functions may be augmented with OPMET, METEO and Flight-Plan Processing services by adding software elements and core memory modules as needed.

When throughput requirements exceed the capacity of AEROPP I or when additional functions are desired, the basic system can be converted to AEROPP II simply by adding disc facilities and introducing the more powerful AEROPP II software. In addition to the services of AEROPP I, AEROPP II provides MOTNE loop control and bulletin compilation, system-supported air/ground services, CIDIN medium-speed data operation and subscriber station facilities on circuit-switching networks.

AEROPP systems are offered together with complete system installation, maintenance and training services, as well as full network engineering support.

New Philips Voice Loggers at Düsseldorf

Another five new Philips 44-channel voice logging systems have recently gone into operation at West Germany's Düsseldorf Airport.

Philips have now been selected to supply equipment for around 80% of the West German requirements for civil airport voice logging systems. The latest installation at Düsseldorf joins those already in operation at other major airports around the country.

All Philips multichannel communications recorders provide 24 hours of continuous recording on a single eight-inch tape reel, with automatic switch-over



to a standby tape unit. The Ferroxcube recording heads have a guaranteed operational life of 50,000 hours and all vital units in the recorders are duplicated.

Utmost reliability is a key feature of the Philips multichannel communications recorders and constant monitoring of all recorder functions is automatically carried out to detect any fault conditions. Every vital unit of the recorder is duplicated and the standby automatically takes over if required. All other standby units remain independently available, unlike other types of recorder where a complete "standby bay" is switched in. A comprehensive selective alarm system is also provided both to indicate and pinpoint faults.

Voice Loggers provide the vital proof in air traffic control, IFATCA delegates told

Proof of what is said and done in air traffic control can be provided only by a comprehensive, completely dependable voice logging system. That was the message given to members of IFATCA - The International Federation of Air Traffic Controllers - by Mr. Joep Peeters, Voice Logging Systems Marketing Manager of Philips, at the Federation's 1978 conference in Copenhagen, held from April 23 to 27.

These voice logging systems are now widely used all over the world. They are designed to record all air traffic control communications with extremely high standards of reliability and security of recorded information. Philips voice loggers are market leaders

in this field, and have become accepted as the 'standard' for communications recording at over 120 of the world's major airports.

A simultaneous recording capacity of up to 44 separate channels can be provided, and very high reliability is ensured by duplication of every vital unit by an identical stand-by ready to take over instantly in case of a fault developing. The chance of loss of information through a recorder fault is therefore almost completely eliminated.

Duplication of recording facilities also allows a change of tape reel — necessary only once every day — without interruption of recording.

Design lifetime of Philips voice loggers is 10 years in continuous service, although over 20 years of experience with installed units shows that actual lifetime is very often considerably longer. The result of this long operating life and high reliability is a very economic true cost of ownership, Mr. Peeters said.

As well as large airports handling scheduled flights, many smaller airports today also want to provide a high level of facilities, Mr. Peeters told conference delegates. Communications recording is a vital part of those facilities, and Philips has recently introduced a new range of 'transportable' voice loggers to meet the demand of smaller airports for the maximum possible cost-effectiveness.

These new voice loggers are designed to provide the optimum compromise between cost and performance, and to bring the security of positive, continuous voice logging to every airport.

Concluding, Mr. Peeters declared Philips' intention to follow the IFATCA philosophy of seeking ever-increasing standards of safety and security in air travel. He pointed out that Philips saw its recent IFATCA membership as an important factor in allowing the company to keep in close touch with the demands of all those involved in air traffic control.

From The Press

Proposals for improved air safety

A call to the Commission to study the possibility of improving co-operation between national air traffic control authorities with the aim of ultimately setting up a single European air traffic control system was contained in a resolution from the Parliament's committee on regional policy, regional planning and transport. The committee's investigation into safety aspects of air traffic control was prompted by the 1976 collision over Zagreb.

The resolution presented by Signor Luigi Nae (Italy, C-D) called upon the governments of EEC states to redefine the tasks and responsibilities of the existing Eurocontrol organization in the new convention that would have to be drawn up when the existing convention expires in 1983.

France and the United Kingdom insisted many years ago in refusing to transfer responsibility for air traffic control to Eurocontrol and have remained responsible for their own air traffic control operations, acting on behalf of Eurocontrol.

In their report accompanying the resolution, the committee considered it unrealistic to advocate the effective exercise of air traffic control by Eurocontrol. Regrettable though this development might be, the time had come to think about possible alternative roles for Eurocontrol.

The resolution expressed grave concern at the division between civil and military control of air space and called upon European governments to achieve a common use of the same air space by civil and military traffic by joint civil and military control units in those areas where this had not yet been achieved.

States should improve the procedure for the reporting and investigation of near miss incidents and other evident deficiencies in air traffic control. It was also considered desirable for developments in short-haul air traffic and railway services between the same points to be better coordinated at a European planning stage.

The Parliament's committee on energy and research, in an opinion drafted by Mr. John Osborn (Sheffield, Hallam, C) stated that the rate of air misses had been too high in certain parts of the Community to permit complacency. It would be in the interests of European aviation to investigate the cost efficiency of collision avoidance systems and any other techniques that would improve safety. The Commission should initiate such a study. Eurocontrol might have a coordinating role to prevent duplication of research.

In the debate on the resolution, Mr. Osborn said the biggest administrative difficulty in Europe was that each government regarded its own air space as sovereign. Governments had supported the growth of their own air safety monitoring activities rather than carrying them out on a broader basis.

Each country too had differing arrangements for controlling civil and military air space and it had also to be borne in mind that, Europe had to combine Nato requirements with civil requirements. They should look to flying control systems and strategic planning such as had been developed in the United States.

Mr. Richard Burke, Commissioner for Transport, said the Community should aim at supplementing the activities of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and the European Civil Aviation Conference (ECAC).

The Council of Ministers had decided last year, after an initiative by the Commission, to set in motion work to identify topics of priority interest to Community air transport. The attention of the group doing this work would be drawn to the terms of the resolution.

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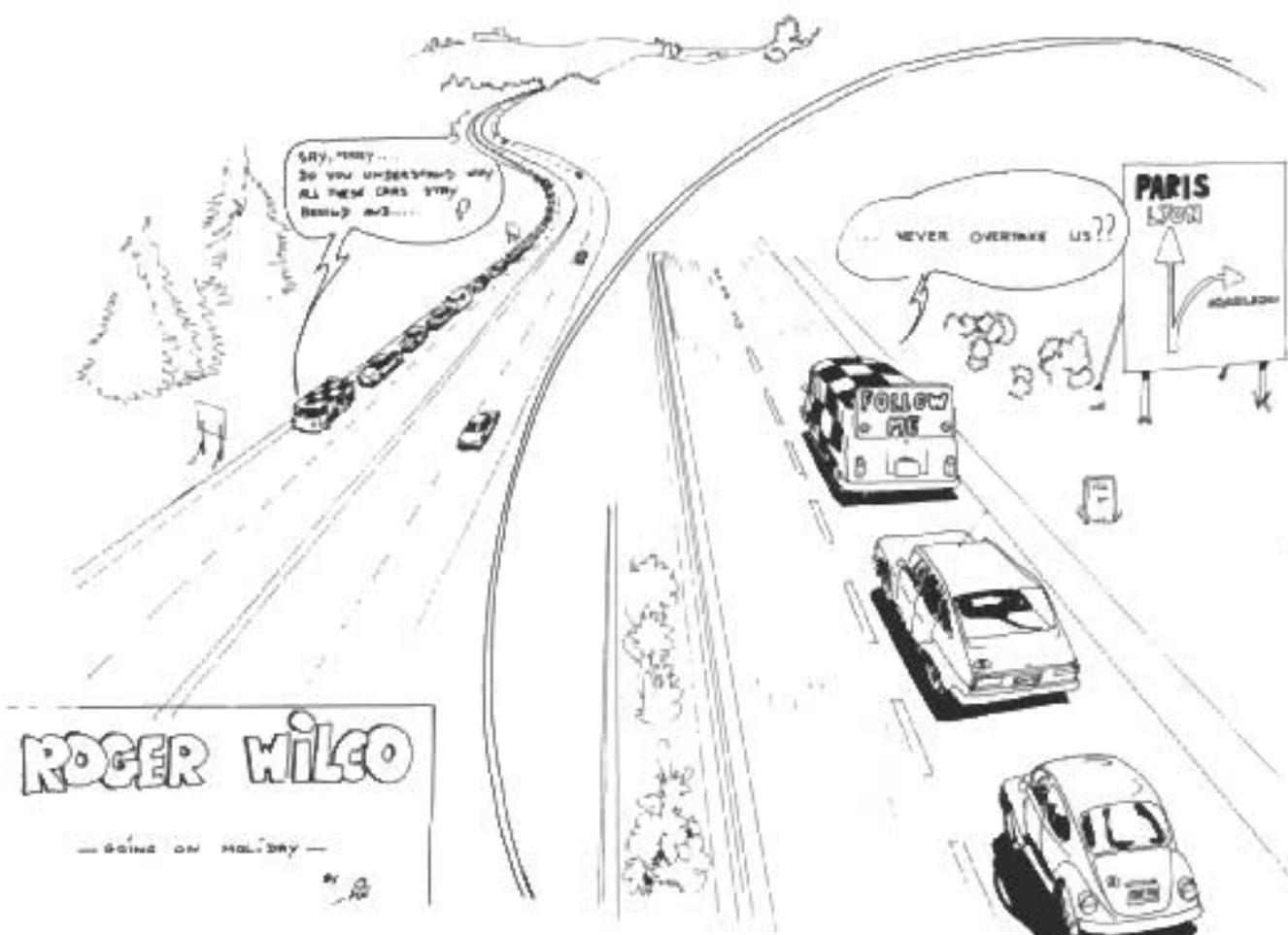
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Ferranti Microwave link for New Zealand air traffic control radar system

Ferranti Communication and Control Group has received an order from Marconi Radar Systems to supply a Type 14000 relay system for an air traffic control modernisation programme Marconi is carrying out for the Civil Aviation Division of the New Zealand Ministry of Transport.

Operating at 7GHz, the Ferranti microwave links will be used to connect a remote air traffic control radar system situated at Hawkin's Hill with the air traffic control centre at Wellington Airport. The links provide a fully-duplicated auto-switched frequency-diversity arrangement working simultaneously over two separate paths each of which employs passive reflectors to overcome awkward obstruction problems.

The equipment is scheduled for delivery in December 1978.

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Raquel Welch's private life — in detail —

The tale I am about to relate could well result in such retorts as "Coincidence!" or "Vivid imagination!". It might just be that you are getting a genuine ghost story. I have never attempted to draw any conclusions myself, preferring to maintain an open mind regarding matters of the supernatural. Anyway, here are the facts, make of it what you will.

We return to the days when I worked in A.T.C.(I). Prior to my arrival at Eurocontrol I spent five years at Heathrow Airport, London, where, with conscientious devotion, I performed all the standard A.T.C. Assistant duties in Tower, Approach and Flight Clearance. In addition I was trained and checked-out as a Runway Controller. Now, as I'm sure a great number of you have never heard of this highly esteemed position, allow me to offer a brief explanation. Although still generally found at military bases, State-run airports in the U.K. dispensed with the Runway Controllers' services around 1969.

The Runway Controller was ensconced in an orange and white checkered Runway Control Vehicle (RCV), or caravan as it was more commonly known, which in turn was located to the left of the runway's touch down zone. His tasks were to log aircraft movements, make tea, check hatches and doors closed on departing aircraft, make tea, check gear down on arriving aircraft, make tea, confirm that the runway was in fact clear whenever a landing or take-off clearance was issued, make tea, and to generally provide the Tower controller with a second pair of eyes. Our theory was that if we helped prevent one incident per year, our existence was more than justified. An additional task was to provide RVR information by use of a series of calibrated lights. These were supplemented by black and white marker boards during daylight. Needless to say this was before automatic RVR systems came on the scene.

Our caravans at Heathrow were also equipped with direct telephone links with the Tower, transmitters/receivers for the Tower and Ground frequencies, red and green filtered Aldis lamps plus a Very pistol for firing red or green flares. The barrel of the latter could be fitted with a 12-bore attachment to enable bird scaring crackers to be fired. All this equipment was available for those occasions on which the Runway Controller was obliged to countermand the Tower Controller's instructions, rare but sometimes necessary.

During the less hectic periods of the day it was not unknown for occasional pot of tea to be brewed! The caravans were manned by crews of two, either



One of the Heathrow RCVs.

two men or two women, sadly never a mix. This hardly made raving queers of us all but it certainly did nothing for the advancement of heterosexual relationships. Ah, to think how those night duties could have been spent! Normal procedure was to have one crew member working whilst the other relaxed and supplied his colleague with tea-leaf nectar to ensure his survival. Night duties operated virtually the same as at Maastricht except that changeover was at 0330.

Unfortunately I cannot be more precise than to say that I think the year was 1968. My partner and I had relieved the afternoon watch in 28R caravan, exchanging with them the standard verbal abuse before settling down to what was to be a quiet night — traffic wise. As I was to work the first half, my colleague bedded down at the rear of the vehicle around 2230. The movement rate was low enough to allow me to catch up on some reading until just before midnight when I commenced calculation of the day's traffic on runway 28R/10L. Having phoned the figures through to the Tower assistant I returned to my reading material. As with most night duties, approaching bed time I had shrugged off my tiredness and was feeling wide awake. So at 0300 I put away the book, dimmed the lamps and prepared to while away the last 30 minutes appreciating the stillness and remoteness of my location — the terminal was at least a mile off. A few minutes after three my attention was drawn to a flicker of one of the blue edge lights indicating the extremities of the 28R holding area not 15 meters away. Concentrating my gaze on that lamp I moved nearer the window. Against the dim glow of the blue lamps I could make out the silhouette of a human form. I watched the figure for several seconds. It appeared to be wandering quite aimlessly, but bent over as if in search of something on the ground. Whatever, it was obviously quite oblivious of my presence and continued its' meanderings towards the runway. Being a fully licensed, certificated and confirmed coward, I had no intention of challenging this character personally. I reached for the telephone and selected the Tower line. I asked the controller to contact the police on his direct line



Hooper demonstrates the fine art of being a runway controller in 28R RCV.

as I had a character wandering around in the vicinity of the caravan. This consumed no more than a few seconds but on returning to the window the figure was nowhere to be seen. Within an unbelievably short space of time, for that time of night anyway, two police cars arrived on the scene splaying their headlights around in search of our trespasser, but to no avail. My character had obviously produced an impossible turn of speed and performed an embarrassing, for me, disappearing trick. I'm sure the sizeable policeman who ascended the steps into the caravan was convinced I had a most creative imagination. Creative or not I had probably interrupted his card game which he was clearly anxious to return to.

By the time the morning duty relieved us at 0745 I was even beginning to have doubts myself about the earlier events, but on reflection I was convinced that I had seen the figure and that its' aimless searchings had not been a product of my tiredness. Remember, I have stated that I was quite awake at the time.

The incident, although puzzling, was forgotten.

On the morning of March 2, 1975, I was browsing through some old "Flight" and "Aeroplane" magazines when I came across the following item in the March 12, 1948, copy of "Aeroplane". "At 21.14 hours on March 2,* a Sabena DC3 (00-AWH) from Brussels crashed at London Airport in a fog, caught fire and killed 16 of the 19 passengers and the crew of three. Another passenger died later in hospital. According to M.C.A. (Ministry of Civil Aviation), the visibility was about 200 yards at the time. The aircraft made a steady approach using G.C.A., according to the company, and although Sabena was unable to offer confirmation it was thought that the aircraft touched down in the centre of the runway. Captain Henri Goblet was described as "an experienced pilot who had made plenty of G.C.A. approaches". The article went on to say that, as a result of the accident, the M.C.A. had issued instructions to the effect that G.C.A. would not be made available in visibilities of less than 800 yards, except in emergency.

Small coincidence that I happened to read about the accident for the first time on its' 17th anniversary, but a greater coincidence became apparent a little later that day. Following the traditional British Sunday lunch I settled down to the other weekly ritual, that of reading the Sunday newspapers. Thumbing through the Sunday Mirror I was more than a little taken aback when on page 36 I came across a photograph of the burnt out wreck of a Sabena DC3 which had crashed at Heathrow on March 2, 1948. The accompanying article referred to a woman medium who, just a few days previous, had attempted to make contact with the ghost of one of the 22(?) passengers that had died in the accident. It seems that the spectre had been seen on a number of occasions in the vicinity of the accident site on runway 28R. The first sighting was reported shortly after the crash when rescue workers told of being approached by a man in a bowler hat, who asked if anyone had found his brief-case.

Now, for the first time in eight years, I recalled the incident that night on 28R caravan site. Still I can quite clearly see that dark figure wandering aimlessly, bent over as if in search of something. Could that something have been a brief-case? Could the figure possibly have been.....

The Hoop



Splendid example of high powered inertia in 28L caravan.

* The article incorrectly quoted the accident date as February 2.

P.S. This article was to have been titled "Spook when you're spoken to", but would you have read it then?