

# THE CATALINA NEWS

**ISSUE No 84 - AUTUMN/WINTER 2015**



**A fantastic view of *Miss Pick Up* overflying *Operation World First's* Faxe Sø lake site in Greenland during July this year. Expedition Leader Neal Gwynne is standing on the shoreline. Read more about this special event inside  
Alan Halewood**

## PHOTOPAGE DOWN BY THE SEASIDE IN 2015

Several of our display commitments during 2015 were at seafront locations and here are photos taken at one of them – Llandudno in North Wales. Our back cover shows the excellent publicity poster for the show featuring a certain well-known flying boat!



Often, local topography combined with a long focal length lens can produce unusual perspectives such as this one taken at the May display. Most of the crowd are out of view on the prom'



This view shows *Miss Pick Up* down low over the sea during its run in toward the crowd line – it could almost be the North Sea in 1945!



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### EDITORIAL ADDRESSES

#### Editor

David Legg  
4 Squires Close  
Crawley Down  
Crawley  
West Sussex  
RH10 4JQ  
ENGLAND

#### Membership & Subs

Trevor Birch  
The Catalina Society  
Duxford Airfield  
Cambs  
CB22 4QR  
ENGLAND

#### Production Advisor

Russell Mason  
6 Lower Village Road  
Sunninghill  
Ascot  
Berkshire  
SL5 7AU  
ENGLAND

**Editor:** pby5@btinternet.com

**Web Site:** www.catalina.org.uk    **Webmaster:** Mike Pinder

**Operations Web Site:** www.catalinabookings.org

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Please note that renewal of membership of The Catalina Society will be invited annually. A reminder will be sent as appropriate to your date of joining.

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## INTRODUCTION

The season that has just passed has been an unusual and exciting one for our Catalina and all involved with her. In addition to a full programme of displays around Europe, the big event for us was *Operation World First* for which we flew all the way to Greenland and back with a party of students and staff from Worksop College. This is covered in a number of articles in this edition of *The Catalina News* but I do want to take the opportunity to thank all those within our organisation who made the trip both possible and a great success. The Catalina behaved faultlessly and everything went to schedule but none of this would have happened without an incredible amount of hard work by a lot of people. A number of our pilots not only flew this challenging operation but were deeply involved in the planning too. A great deal of administrative work was handled at our Duxford office by Natalie Gwyther and, on the engineering side, Garry Short worked very hard indeed to prepare *Miss Pick Up* for her big adventure. Garry was supported by our hard-working band of volunteers - *The Cat Pack* - as usual of course.

On the trip itself we had the services of Toby Lee as engineer and his expertise gained from working with piston-engined aircraft at Air Atlantique and the Shuttleworth Collection was both invaluable and a source of comfort! In addition, as you will read elsewhere, we had various volunteer crew members pre-positioned along the route to give assistance in case of engineering need. In the event, that help was not needed but nonetheless they all worked extremely

hard at more routine tasks to ensure that our wonderful aircraft was ready for flight and a credit to our organisation. This help also included mooring tasks on Loch Lomond at the beginning of the trip. It was great for me to know that we had some willing hands waiting and available to help us along the route. It was also brilliant to work with the team from Worksop College - pupils, staff and expedition leaders - and, all in all, it was a terrific culmination to several years of planning.

The Catalina behaved magnificently during the trip, with virtually no defects cropping up at all. However, shortly after our return to the UK, we had a bearing failure in the port engine which involved an engine change and other work before we could get back in the air again and meet our display commitments. Again, hard work by our crew ensured that down-time was kept to a minimum. It was very fortunate that this failure did not happen during *Operation World First* of course but, that said, we hate to let people down and miss shows and we were very sad that we were unable to display at events in Northern Ireland and Denmark.

As I write this we still have several shows to fly including displays in Spain and France, a week of water operations practice at Biscarrosse south of Bordeaux at the end of September and another of our 'future shareholder' events at Duxford at the start of October. Then, it's back to the hangar for winter maintenance. Nothing ever stands still at Plane Sailing.

Thanks for your support.

**Paul Warren Wilson: Chief Pilot**



**Plane Sailing's Chief Pilot Paul Warren Wilson keeps a close eye on the weather whilst on the lake in Greenland**

## CATCALL

In our last edition I included some material on *Operation World First*, the Worksop College expedition to Greenland that involved our Catalina. As you will have just read in Paul Warren Wilson's *Introduction*, the whole trip was a great success. It should not come as any surprise then that this issue of *The Catalina News* has several articles about the expedition. In fact there are four, written from the perspectives of Paul as Chief Pilot, several of the student expedition members, one of the individual students and the *Cat Pack* volunteers who assisted with the aviation aspects of the expedition along the route. I hope that you enjoy reading about this amazing trip.

Although Greenland takes up a lot of space in this issue, we have other articles on wartime RAF Catalina ops and a couple of profiles of our crew members as well as the usual book reviews and *World Catalina News*. I have material held over for our first issue of 2016 so if you have contributed an article or comment and not seen it published yet, it is probably still to come! However, do not be slow in coming forward if you have something about Catalinas or flying boats that you think would be of interest to the readership.

Before closing, I just want to mention that our Catalina Society website at [www.catalina.org.uk](http://www.catalina.org.uk) has just undergone a facelift and the result is fantastic! – many thanks to Mike Pinder for his hard work on this project. In addition, our Facebook site is getting busier by the day and is well worth visiting – one of our shareholder pilots Seb Mazzuchetti has been the prime mover on this. Great job!

**David Legg: Editor**

### **2015 DISPLAY REPORT by David Legg**

Despite spending the best part of a month in Greenland and Iceland and experiencing an engine problem during August, *Miss Pick Up* still managed to fly a full programme of air displays this year.

After the initial start-of-season shakedown flights had been completed, the first show of the season was at Abingdon in Oxfordshire. This was followed by pilot Type Rating and Display Authorisation renewal flights during early-May. Towards the end of that month, the Cat' flew at the Llandudno Air Show and the Duxford VE Day Anniversary Show over the same

weekend. Mid-June saw *Miss Pick Up* booked for the RAF Cosford Air Show but, due to bad weather on the Saturday departure day, we ended up flying the display from Duxford and back without landing on the Sunday. I am sure the show organisers were very relieved to see us anyway!

The following weekend the Catalina flew at the Weston Air Festival and Armed Forces Day over the beach at Weston Super Mare. The aircraft was based at Bristol Airport (I still want to call it Lulsgate!) and flew the show on both the Saturday and Sunday before flying back to Duxford. With *Operation World First* in Greenland looming, the Catalina still had bookings to fulfil between periods of pre-expedition maintenance. At the end of June it took part in the Chalke Valley History Festival in Wiltshire, flying out of Middle Wallop's grass airfield whilst the following weekend it took part in the Fly-In at Koksijde in Belgium for the second year running. Then it was straight back to Duxford on Sunday July 5<sup>th</sup> before departing for Prestwick in Scotland for the start of the Greenland trip on the 6<sup>th</sup>.



**Six P&Ws in formation. *Miss Pick Up* leads C-47 N147DC and Beech 18 G-BKGM at the Duxford VE Day**

Having safely returned to Duxford on August 1<sup>st</sup>, we were due to fly to Northern Ireland for the B/E Aerospace Festival of Flight. However, after completing a practice display upon departure from Duxford then setting course for the show, Crew Chief Steve Bailey alerted the captain, John Warman, to what seemed to be a substantial oil leak from the port engine. The engine was shut down and *Miss Pick Up* returned to base after which a main bearing failure was diagnosed. As a result, two further booked shows in Denmark (Roskilde and Stauning) had to be missed but, after installing our spare engine, we were able to make our appearance at the Scottish Air Show at Ayr in Scotland over the first weekend of September and the associated static display at Prestwick during the same period.

As I close for press, we are still due to appear at the Festa al Cel in Barcelona and the Féria de l'Air at Nîmes-Garons in the south of France during September after which we will fly to Biscarrosse in south-west France for a few days of water ops training. The final event of the year will be our second Future Shareholder Day at Duxford after which it will be back to the hangar for winter maintenance.

Of the shows flown during 2015, five of them were flown over non-airfield locations and the Cosford one was flown without landing although we would have flown from the airfield had the weather been kinder on the day of intended departure. Sea-front displays seem to be getting more popular and who knows what impact on UK shows the terrible accident at Shoreham this summer will have. It is great to take part in seaside shows although it does mean that we do not normally take our sales stand with us and we can rarely offer 'walk-throughs' at the airfields we are temporarily based at. In terms of merchandise, this can of course also be obtained via our excellent new website so we hope you will continue to support us via that medium. Wherever possible, we will still take our stall to airshows however so do come and see us!

## **OPERATION WORLD FIRST – THE FLYING REPORT by Paul Warren Wilson**

Plane Sailing Air Displays Ltd's Chief Pilot describes the flying aspects of Worksop College's *Operation World First* and what it was like to fly a 72 years-old flying boat in remote parts of Greenland .....

### **Aircraft Preparations:**

The Catalina is an aircraft, which is very much at home in the wilder parts of the world. The design stems from the 1930s, and initial versions were built as flying boats only, having no wheels - and were therefore committed to operating only from water. And on the water, she proved herself to be a rugged and capable aircraft; indeed, more than 3,000 were built for wartime service. Later models, such as ours, were produced as amphibians, with an undercarriage giving a capability to operate from land or water. Still, the design remained rugged - the wheels are of large diameter and the tyres are of low pressure, with a big footprint. So she is able to operate from semi-prepared strips of grass or dirt... just the thing considering Constable Point, which has a dirt strip 1,000 metres long, and which served as the forward operating base for the Catalina

during this expedition.

Nonetheless, despite her suitability for a trip of this nature, we wanted to do everything we could to prepare the aircraft for some 40+ hours of flying away from home base, and to minimise the chances of defects occurring while she was a long way from home. One of the best ways of keeping an aircraft like the Catalina serviceable is to ensure she is flying regularly. Aircraft do not like sitting on the ground doing nothing! They tend to get damp, or develop leaks, or otherwise become unhappy, so in the weeks leading up to the Greenland trip, we ensured the Catalina was flying every weekend, and on return to Duxford after each trip she was checked thoroughly and any defects rectified. In addition, we brought forward the forthcoming 50-hour check, and completed this prior to departure.

One of the most important parts of the Catalina is, of course, her engines. In preparation for this project, we planned a long way ahead, and decided to overhaul the port engine over the previous winter. The port engine had been operating well, with no snags, but was coming towards the flight time when we would plan to send it for overhaul. Actually, we sent an old spare engine for overhaul, then removed our port engine, which we protected and held in our hangar at Duxford in case of an urgent requirement for a spare engine. The freshly overhauled engine was then fitted and, as would be expected, operated smoothly and without giving us a single problem. The oil consumption - always a good indicator of engine condition - was the lowest we had ever experienced, at around 1/3 of a gallon of oil per hour. Up to one gallon per hour is considered normal, and more than this is to be expected with an older but still serviceable engine.

However, during May we noticed that the starboard engine was showing oil consumption somewhat over one gallon per hour. We decided, therefore, to make a thorough investigation of the cause, which turned out to be mainly due to valve guide wear in some cylinders. Consequently, we fitted six freshly overhauled cylinders to this engine - quite a big task, and one for which we called upon our overhaul shop in the USA to send over a mechanic for assistance. The task proved well worthwhile and, over the course of the flying in Greenland, the oil consumption of this engine was ¾ gallon per hour. For an engine that has run nearly 700 hours, this was a very satisfactory performance.

## **Satcom:**

For the area of planned operation in Greenland, and indeed in transit to and from Iceland/Greenland, the Catalina would be required to have long-range communications. To cover this requirement, we installed a modification to the Catalina, fitting a modern satcom device, the Iridium Go! satcom hotspot. This device allows communication from an iPhone or similar linked to the hotspot unit via wifi.

## **Route/Airfields:**

Another aspect of preparation to be addressed at an early stage was the route to be flown, and the airfields to be used en route. Because the Catalina would be carrying a moderately heavy load at times, with up to 16 people on board, and/or expedition stores, she would not be able to carry a full load of fuel, and we needed to limit sector length to not more than around 600 nautical miles, or five hours flying time. Because of the nature of the project, a departure from the UK from a water site was preferable, and eventually it was decided to use Loch Lomond. Thus the start of the routing was decided, with a short transit flight from home base Duxford to Prestwick, only a few miles from Loch Lomond. Water operations are the Catalina's bread and butter, and the aircraft always looks picturesque and controlled on the water, but the fact is that water operations must be planned with considerable care. We need a mooring buoy, but we don't want many obstacles within 100 yards if possible - the Catalina is not so manoeuvrable on water, with just differential power on the engines for steering control, as well as some minor effect from rudder and ailerons. We need a landing run into wind, and an approach without obstacles - this aspect was no problem where Loch Lomond is concerned, as there is plenty of space. And Tarbet Bay, the chosen location, offered quite suitable moorings. Nonetheless, we sent a small team with an inflatable boat to survey the area in advance and the report they brought back to us, as well as video of landing and approach paths, was invaluable for familiarisation and planning purposes.

Next, how to get from Loch Lomond to the destination? We prefer to operate from water at lower weights, and therefore decided that we would make just a short hop from Loch Lomond before refuelling. The stop chosen for this was Stornoway - not too far from Loch Lomond, and also well on the way to Iceland. Considering Iceland, the best option was Akureyri: this was an approved airport for entry to, and

exit from, Iceland. It was also relatively close to the forward base airfield of Constable Point in Greenland. And importantly, as well, avgas (the fuel which the Catalina needs) was available. And so the route fell into place: Duxford - Prestwick - Loch Lomond - Stornoway - Akureyri - Constable Point. The last question was where to leave the Catalina for the intervening period while the expedition was in progress. The best place for this was Reykjavik, where plenty of support was available, and where it was easy for changeover of personnel as needed using commercial flights via Keflavik. The return route would be similar, but stopping at Gamston in Nottinghamshire as this was close to Worksop College.

## **Fuel and Oil:**

Provisions for the Catalina down route were next - ensuring the availability of sufficient fuel, as well as oil. Stornoway could offer a tanker with a maximum of 2,000 litres, which was about right for us. Akureyri had fuel available as required. But Constable Point normally has no avgas fuel available. Fortunately, an expedition organiser who operates from Constable Point had six x 200 litre drums of avgas available, and we purchased these - at exorbitant price! That gave us just sufficient provision to operate all our planned flying, with a little spare too. Regarding oil, we decided to ship a drum of oil to Reykjavik, as we could not be sure of carrying enough oil for the whole amount of flying. That would allow us to assess actual oil consumption at the mid point of the project, and add the required amount of oil to the aircraft oil tanks (which hold approx 50 gallons each!). In fact, oil consumption was lower than planned, and the spare drum of oil was not required.

## **Boats:**

A vital part of this project was: how to get personnel and stores from the Catalina to the shore, after alighting at the destination lake in Greenland. The solution, of course, was to use inflatable boats. The Catalina has large, opening blisters at the rear of the aircraft and so it was that a boat dealer, local to our Duxford base, came and tried out a number of inflatables, to establish the largest sizes that would fit. The chosen boats were a tight fit, but two boats could just be fitted into the aircraft, one on top of the other. The planned operation on the lake would see the boats put on to the water from the open blister, and then moved to the aircraft forward hatch, where it would be possible to pass out the motor for each boat, and fit as

appropriate.

## **Spot Tracker:**

We decided to make use of a spot tracker belonging to one of our group members. This had proved to be of great interest during a previous project, as it would send its GPS position (by satellite) every ten minutes. A website link would then allow anyone to see the last 50 position reports, and hence the progress of the planned flights. The spot tracker gave excellent, useful information, although from time to time (probably due to atmospheric conditions) a number of position reports would be missing, somewhat disconcertingly making it look as though the Catalina had disappeared in the middle of nowhere...

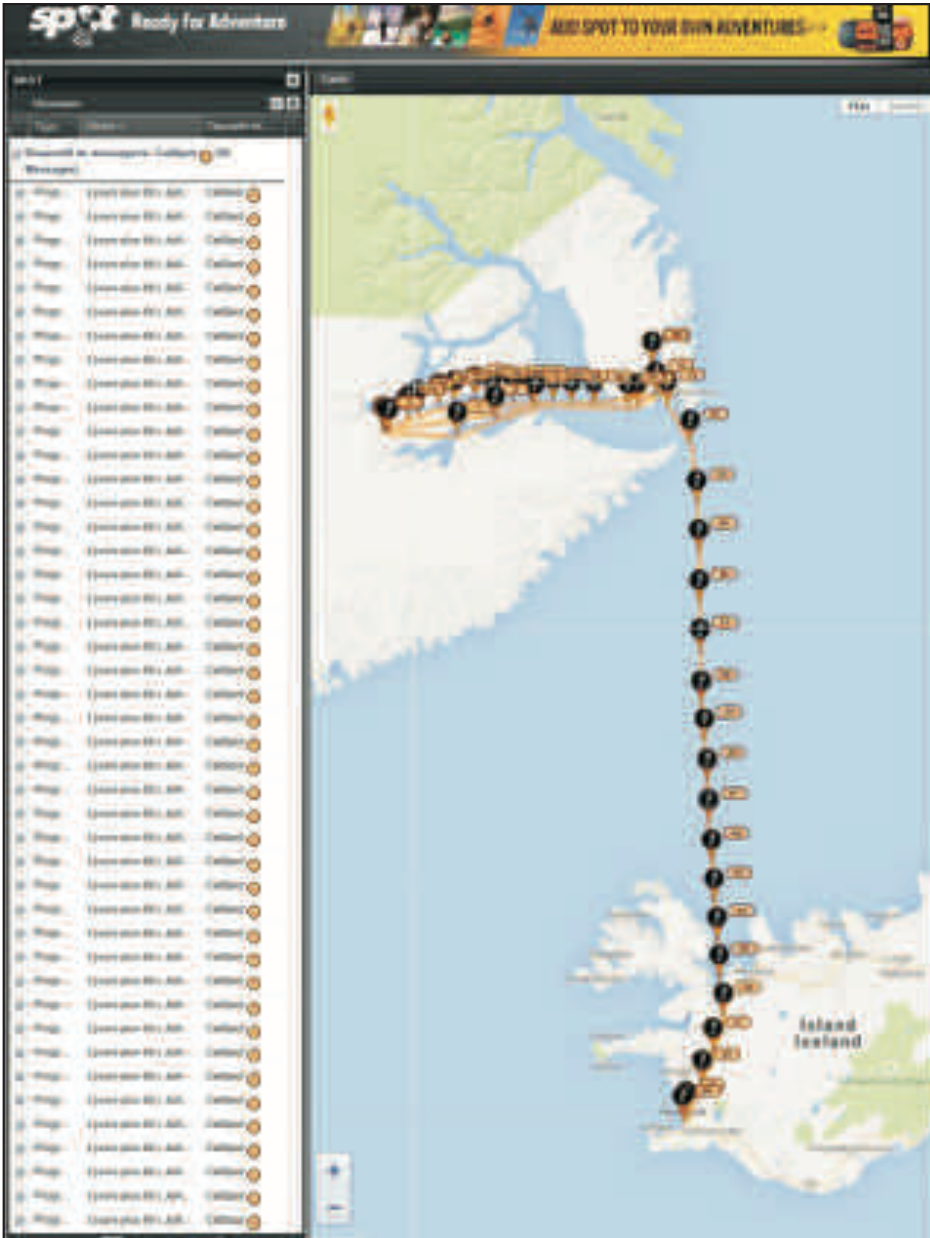
## **Crew:**

Choice of crew for the project was also important. Not all of our pilots are qualified to operate from water (six out of our thirteen pilots) and, of those who are water qualified, only two normally operate as captain from water. Those two pilots were chosen as the primary pilots, with another water qualified pilot to position to Constable Point and be available as spare. A fourth pilot was held ready for both halves of the operation, in case of sickness/unavailability. In fact, one of the two water captains was too busy with his normal job (chief test pilot for Pilatus in Switzerland) and was unable to fly for *Operation World First*.

For the water operation at Loch Lomond, we needed one crew member to operate as bowman, and to pick up the line to the mooring buoy. The chosen crew member was one of the group owners of the Catalina, who is also an experienced sailor, and who had already been trained with this important task.

We also like to take our engineer on longer-distance projects. However, our chief engineer was suffering from a minor medical problem as the project approached, and so we took along another of our small team of available, qualified engineers, experienced on the Catalina. This did have the advantage also that, in the event of an unserviceability during the project, our chief engineer was at base where he could immediately prepare any spare parts and tools needed, so as to get the Catalina back in the air in the shortest possible time.

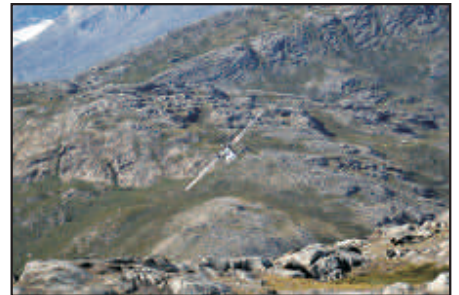
Finally, from our team of volunteers, we chose a number of people to pre-position themselves to all the planned operating airfields (except Constable Point) and to



One of the airfields used during the expedition was Akureyri in northern Iceland. It was used as a stopover point for refuelling and overnight stays on both the outward and return legs of *Operation World First*  
David Legg



Boats were a crucial element of the equipment used to transport the students. Here a dinghy is loaded through one of the rear hull blisters prior to flying out to the lake at Faxe Sø  
Alan Halewood



The area around the lake at Faxe Sø in Greenland was an amazing place to be operating in and out of!  
Helen Platt-Hawkins

Spot Tracker was used to show interested parties where exactly the Catalina was in real time. This shows (in French!) the part of the expedition where it was taking the students to the lake from Constable Point and then flying back to Reykjavik in Iceland  
via Seb Mazzuchetti

be on hand to assist with any tasks as needed. This would include refuelling, cleaning and similar - but, more importantly, would give an experienced person to assist in the event of a defect needing rectification. Again, the aim was to ensure that in the event of a problem the Catalina could be returned to flying in short order.

**Flying - Part 1:**

After the very thorough preparations for the project, the flying turned out to be remarkably straightforward and was

completed almost exactly as planned.

Day 1 (6 July) saw the aircraft position from home base Duxford to Prestwick.

Day 2 was a long day. An early start saw the Catalina fly from Prestwick to Loch Lomond, with a BBC cameraman, mooring to the buoy on arrival. She then made a short local flight, for filming/publicity purposes, again mooring to the buoy. The chosen participants then boarded the Catalina, along with their rucksacks, and the aircraft departed for Stornoway. Arrival there was

greeted by steady rain and low cloud, but this was no problem for the Catalina, which is fully equipped for instrument flight. After a welcome break for refuelling, the Cat' was airborne again, for the five-hour flight to Akureyri.

Day 3 saw the Catalina head off to Constable Point, and the excitement as we started to see the coast of Greenland, as well as ice on the sea, and some decent icebergs, was enough to ensure that most of those on board did not spend all of today sleeping! A short flypast of the Inuit

village, not far from Constable Point, was made on the way inbound. Constable Point then came into view and, after a low flypast to check the exact condition of the runway, as well as the details of the approach, the Catalina landed with ease on the relatively short runway. Now there was a considerable amount of work to do - everything was unloaded from the Catalina, all unnecessary items were left in the hangar to minimise weight, and then the boats, once inflated and prepared, were loaded ready for the next day.

Day 4 did not dawn bright and early... this is the land of the midnight sun, and the sun remained above the horizon all night! However, we were off in good time around 09:00, for the first of the day's two planned shuttle flights to the lake. For the first flight, which would see the Catalina operating at a higher weight due to the level of fuel on board, we decided to take just six personnel plus their kit, and sufficient supplies to ensure they could function safely for several days, in case the second shuttle flight (bringing the main stores) should be delayed. The destination lake chosen - Faxe - was actually the secondary destination. The primary destination at Holger Danskes Briller was still ice covered, and therefore impossible for landing, when inspected a couple of days previously. Faxe was a relatively easy alighting area for the Catalina, being approx five km long and reasonably wide. Since the Catalina would alight, switch off engines and wait for unloading to be completed, it was very helpful to have a large lake - once engines were stopped, the Catalina would be drifting with the wind. In fact, for both shuttle flights, conditions at the lake were excellent. In the light winds prevailing there were no difficulties choosing a landing direction, stopping the Catalina at a suitable point, and monitoring the situation whilst unloading was in progress. The GPS was a useful backup to monitor drift rates, showing speeds down to a fraction of a knot. The double shuttle flights were completed as planned and, importantly, allowed the crew to rush in for a quick bite at lunchtime, and arrive back just in time for dinner, which finished at 18:30!

Day 5 marked the end of Part one of the project as far as the Catalina was concerned, with a transit flight to Reykjavik. There, a number of staff and crew flew back to the UK for the middle part of the project, and the Catalina was given a check over and general cleaning by our engineer and our pre-positioned volunteer.

## **Flying - Part 2:**

The second part of the project saw very much the reverse of Part 1. However, because of the time it had taken to complete two lake shuttle flights on the same day during Part 1, a slight amendment was made. The Catalina would go back to Constable Point one day early, then make one shuttle flight on each of the following days. That turned out to be a good plan for another reason also - namely that the weather conditions had changed somewhat, and the lake was sufficiently choppy early each morning to make it a problem for the boats (though not the Catalina) to operate. Thus it was that the Catalina made a single shuttle flight each day, arriving at the lake around lunchtime. The smiling faces as people came back on board after nearly three weeks away from civilisation were wonderful to see!

They say that the last run of the day down the ski slope is the most dangerous one, and the most likely time for things to go wrong. And so it is with flying. Flying is not inherently dangerous, but is terribly unforgiving of any carelessness. Never has this been more so than with water operations. For unlike a land runway, which is fixed, and flat, and predictable, the water is always changing. Thus it is that I personally always approach water operations with a great deal of care and thought, and with a reminder to myself that complacency in any form is utterly unacceptable. Really, though, nowadays, we are in many ways spoilt. For example, if I want to work out which way the wind is blowing, I should be able to do this by looking at the water surface - although, if the wind is light, and there is no smoke, there are no boats or other clues on the water, it may be difficult. But I can also just look at the aircraft instrumentation, which will tell me the airspeed and the groundspeed. If I see airspeed 90 kt, and groundspeed 100 kt, I have 10 kt tailwind. If that is what I observe over the lake landing site, it tells me I need to land in the reciprocal direction.

On the last landing run at the lake, approaching from the east end, we had a tailwind of about 7 kt. Simple, then - we fly to the far end of the lake, turn around, and land. But wait - as we reach the far end, the 7 kt tailwind has turned into a 12 kt headwind! Now that is something quite hard to get one's head around... but of course, there are various valley effects. On this occasion, the wind was blowing into the lake from both ends. What exactly did it do when the winds met in the middle? Presumably, it went upwards! So there we were, on the last run, with exactly

the sort of situation that if treated with complacency could lead to a major problem. Landing downwind in a seaplane is a highly undesirable thing to do: the hydrodynamic forces on the aircraft are much higher than normal, and can lead to instability, a water loop or a nose dive. So I made several runs along the lake in each direction, finally choosing to land from west to east, as this gave the longer run into wind. All was well, and loading was completed in good time, including the interesting site of watching the expedition leader deflating a boat whilst still in it on the water, prior to loading it into the Catalina.

## **Conclusion:**

This was an expedition that was planned in great detail in all respects, and to very good effect. The result was a highly successful expedition and, from the flying point of view, with some flying that was unrepeatable, fascinating to undertake, and that will provide life-long memories.

## **OPERATION WORLD FIRST EXPEDITION SUMMARY by Joel Spencer**

Joel Spencer was one of the Worksop College students selected to take part in *Operation World First*; the expedition to Greenland that involved our Catalina. At the time of the expedition, Joel was 16 years old and a Year 12 student at the College. He has recently completed his GCSEs and by the time you read this he will be studying Photography, ICT and Business for his A-levels. Joel has kindly shared some notes about his personal experiences on the expedition and we are delighted to publish them.....

On the July 7<sup>th</sup>, 2015 ten Worksop College pupils, two teachers, two mountaineers and one doctor set off from Loch Lomond in Scotland aboard the Catalina flying boat *Miss Pick Up*, to travel to East Greenland for a 3 week expedition climbing previously un-climbed peaks in the area.

The aim of the expedition was to expose pupils, who are usually in a sanitised environment, to risks whilst in a dangerous but controlled environment.

Our transport to and from Greenland was the fabulous 72 year-old World War II PBV Catalina seaplane so we couldn't believe our luck! The Catalina flew the group from Loch Lomond via Stornoway and Iceland to Constable Point in Greenland. From there the Catalina transported us in two separate hauls to a remote lake in Faxe Sø, through





**The student party on the summit of the mountain they named *Catalina Dome*** via Joel Spencer

spectacular scenery of icebergs and glaciers viewed from the blisters and then making two perfect landings on the lake. We would not have been able to travel as far into Greenland if we had not had the use of the *Catalina* enabling us to land on the lake which was surrounded by mountains. Our food, medical supplies, climbing gear and two RIBs had previously been shipped to Constable Point, hence the need for two trips to the lake to spread the weight!

In the summer Greenland experiences 24-hour daylight which is a strange phenomenon for us Brits and makes sleep quite difficult. The weather in our area of Greenland which was 70° North, inside the Arctic Circle, was really mixed but we had some beautiful days which made the scenery even more spectacular. The area we visited was described as the 'Arctic Riviera' but the weather can sometimes turn quite nasty.

Because of the risk of Polar Bears in Greenland, we had to take precautions. This included two x 0.3006 calibre rifles and a polar bear tripwire that was set up around base camp. We also set up our rota for Polar Bear watch that meant each student taking it in turns to sit up for an hour during the night from 10 pm until 8 am when everyone else was asleep. Luckily, we didn't spot any polar bears or find any evidence of their movements; those guys are meat eaters and don't mess about if they are hungry!

Faxa Sø is a relatively untouched area of the world; we were only the second group ever to visit this area of Greenland, the last expedition to the lake being by a group of Belgians in 1958. We found evidence of the Belgian expedition in the shape of two 57-year old Nescafé coffee tins they had left behind near to the lake.

During our trip we climbed five mountains and one glacier in total; three of the mountains were previously unclimbed. These three have been named *Catalina Dome*, obviously dedicated to our transport to Greenland, and because of

the snow dome shape at the top of the peak (1,750 m); *Mount St Cuthbert*, named after our school chapel (1,670m), and lastly *Rose Britain* (1,110m). The glacier was also un-climbed so this was named *Worksop Glacier* after the town where our college is situated.

After three weeks of walking glaciers, climbing, camping around beautiful waterfalls and bonding as a group we spotted the awesome sight of the *Catalina* returning to pick us up. Two trips later we were all back in Constable Point and after a two-night stay we returned to Iceland for a couple of nights followed by a night back in Blighty in Stornoway. We flew back on the last leg of our epic trip on Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> August on a rather turbulent flight to be greeted by family and friends at Gamston/Retford Airport in Nottinghamshire.

We all owe a great deal of thanks to Plane Sailing, the group that flies the *Catalina*. The pilots, engineers and ground crew worked extremely hard to transport every member of the expedition to where we needed to be, safely and on schedule, even when it meant them braving some very cold nights camping at Constable Point. Every member of the expedition is extremely grateful for all that they did, as without them the expedition would not have been possible.

Our expedition leaders Neal Gwynne and Alan Halewood and our expedition doctor Tariq Qureshi all gave their time to the expedition for free as did the two members of the Worksop College teaching staff who accompanied us.

As for the *Catalina* herself, trust me, it's the only way to travel!

## **OPERATION WORLD FIRST – THE STUDENT'S DIARY**

Not surprisingly, the students from Worksop College kept diaries describing their impressions of travelling to Greenland and back in our *Catalina*, and of the amazing activities they experienced whilst in Greenland itself. The following is an edited version that covers the days when the students were flying. Sadly, space restrictions preclude inclusion of the complete version so apologies to the students whose contributions have not been used.....

### **Tuesday July 7<sup>th</sup> (Loch Lomond, Stornoway and Akureyri, Iceland):**

Two hours into the journey and we are having a stop in Stornoway. It all began



**The Worksop College students pose for an official photo during the pre-expedition safety briefing day at Duxford in June** via Worksop College

when Huw, Duncan, Abi and I did a test run in the 'plane. It was simply amazing - we were all leaning towards the window in amazement, looking over the Scottish Highlands and seeing small figures waving at the plane. The BBC were on board interviewing us and we were asked questions such as: 'what are you most worried about?' and 'what are you most looking forward to?' I expect when we return our family will have news about how famous we all are now! We are about to head off to Iceland about five hours north. So far, the journey has been brilliant (no-one's been sick yet!) so the patches are working well.

Hours later and we are now in Akureyri in the north of Iceland, camp is set up and we're waiting for our pizza to arrive. At the moment, it's safe to say the journey from Scotland was freezing cold and we were all wrapped in our jackets. The views were stunning especially from the back blister windows where the majority of the group got to sit at some point to admire nature's beauty. When the journey began today, one of the drivers of the powerboat that took us to the plane said to us 'as far as adventures go you are about to embark on the most incredible one'. I eagerly await what the days ahead of us have in store.

Well, this first day has been brilliant and



**Greenland here we come – the *Catalina* sets off up the Akureyri fjord on July 8<sup>th</sup>, destination Constable Point**  
Duncan McGregor-Riley

who knew they delivered pizza to campsites in Iceland – we didn't have this luxury in England. The evening finished with the group's tradition of card games, which shows that we've brought some of our home comforts with us. It's now time to catch up on some sleep to be ready for our continued adventures tomorrow.  
**Shirlyn Gathoni**

### **Wednesday July 8<sup>th</sup> (Akureyri and Constable Point, Greenland):**

Awoken around 8am and quickly packing my bag, Tariq (the expedition doctor) and I set off for the town in Akureyri in order to find breakfast and lunch for today, as well as fuel for the boats we will be shuttling across in tomorrow. After finding fuel



**The students start to load the Catalina with pre-positioned supplies at Constable Point for their extended stay in Greenland's interior** Helen Platt-Hawkins

from a Hertz garage, we went to deposit the 20 litre jerry cans at the airport. Here, we bumped into Alan Halewood and Mrs Platt-Hawkins for the first time only to learn we had suffered our first injury in the form of Mrs Platt's back. However, hopefully after Tariq gave her 'much more than that recommended on the side of the packaging' dose of Ibuprofen she will be okay. Tariq and I then hopped into a taxi to the local bakery where an array of pastries were presented in front of us. After a rather shocked worker presented us with 16 ham and cheese sandwiches and 13 various pastries we went back to the airport and embarked on the Catalina for our first major flight. For the first time, I sat in the blisters and, with Huw, witnessed the plane almost 'showing off' performing various moves over the Inuit village of Ittoqqortoormiit in Greenland. I'm sure that without Tariq's patch this would have made me vomit! The views from the blisters were amazing as we could see the colourful local houses against the white backdrop of snow. After landing at Constable Point airstrip, we were told we had to push the Catalina a little further forward, which was probably the hardest challenge so far! We then pitched our tents near the runway at which point a surprise guest in the form of Mr

Horgan (our College Headmaster) arrived. We then set about inflating the dinghies which was harder than it sounds, not least due to Abi's limited height when loading them onto the plane. To end the day, we had our first meal from the ration packs, which was overall successful, and the chicken pesto pasta was very nice indeed. Perhaps the best information of the day was that we are going to have two chocolate bars and one flapjack a day.  
**Calum Goodwin**

### **Thursday July 9<sup>th</sup> (Constable Point and the lake):**

Today, Calum, Oscar, Duncan and I awoke at 6.45am to be on the first shuttle to 'our' lake. Alan Halewood and Neal Gwynne were the only leaders to join us along with the pilots. The flight was spectacular as the Catalina flew low through the valleys. After the difficulties in loading the dinghies yesterday, those of us on the first shuttle had to take them off the plane. It was a difficult procedure with Duncan having to be squished into a corner to allow the boat to exit through the open blister. That being said, it was much easier getting the boats out than in. As soon as they were out we had to carefully guide them to Neal who was waiting to fit the outboard motors to them. Neal and Al operated the boats to the shore once they were loaded up with our supplies for the month. Calum and I were dropped off first and would meet Al and Neal on subsequent trips to the shore with supplies – of which there were many. Calum would catch the mooring rope as I unloaded. Once the rest of the team had arrived, we continued to unload from the Catalina. Base camp was almost a kilometre away and we got tired carrying the equipment from the shore to the camp. When unloading the boats, Calum and I had our first encounter with the Greenland mosquitoes and we were both badly bitten. Afterwards, we all set up our tents, as well as the base camp tent, in a dried-up river bed with nearby streams providing drinking water. Duncan is still getting used to the stove and the ration packs show little sign of improvement.

**Huw Robinson**

### **Friday July 10<sup>th</sup> to Sunday July 26<sup>th</sup>:**

The Catalina flew from Constable Point to Reykjavik on Friday 10<sup>th</sup> and it remained there until July 26<sup>th</sup> when it returned to Constable Point to start the process of picking up the students and returning them to the UK. During this period, the students were involved in many activities and these included: training in the use of rifles, satellite telephones and radios; first aid qualifications; lengthy treks over glaciers;

climbing various mountains; rope work and abseiling and practice emergency medical scenarios. Of course they were also gaining valuable lessons in survival, roughing-it and living together in a small group, dependent upon each other for their well-being and survival.

### **Monday July 27<sup>th</sup> (lake and Constable Point):**

Days of heroic endeavour are finally over. Today, as the roar from the engines of the Catalina approached the lake, it felt surreal to think it was all over. Talis, George and I were the first shuttle across to the 'plane and the sight of engineer Toby's head through the window brought back the wonderful memories of when it all began! 'Welcome back' he shouted as we just admired the 'plane like the very first time. We were kindly greeted by the pilots, Paul Warren Wilson and Rod Brooking, who were keen to know how the whole expedition had been. As we moved to the back we were introduced to a new member of the Catalina team; his name was Jeff Boyling, an Australian, who chatted to us for a while about the adventure. To our surprise, the 'plane came bearing gifts from pastries, to apples and bananas! Considering food cravings had been a constant topic of discussion, it's safe to say we drooled at the sight of proper food! It was delicious. As the 'plane took off we could now see a land that used to be foreign to us, but now we leave it as a familiar place. We've seen the areas from different points, though nothing really signifies our accomplishments like seeing everything from a bird's eye view. Our peaks really came to life as the 'plane flew past them and as we told Jeff of our ascents. The whole journey was just as spectacular as the first time, or even better actually, because we've now discovered the land. As we arrived at Constable Point, we got our 'back to Blighty' bags and had showers. Best shower ever! Unfortunately, the sea waters are frozen and it doesn't seem as though our boat trip



**What a place for selfies! Huw Robinson and Duncan McGregor-Riley enjoy the snowy landscape from the starboard blister area**

will be taking place – we'll see. At the moment, for most of us, it still hasn't sunk in that we will be home soonish. Quote of the day: 'It's actual food – that doesn't need boiled water or a spoon!' (Talis Harris)  
**Shirlyn Gathoni**

### **Tuesday July 28<sup>th</sup> (Constable Point):**

After a killer bear watch (4.30 – 6.00am), I awoke to the sound of mine and Huw's stove boiling water for breakfast – or not, as it took about 30 minutes to do so. We then packed our bags around 10ish and news came that the Catalina was to arrive to pick up the final seven at 11.45am. Waiting at the beach the four boys – Huw, Oscar, Dunc and I – played various games such as how many stones can Oscar balance on his head, and French cricket. Eventually, after the kit had been transported to the 'plane, Neal came to get the final three and, just as we arrived first at the start of the expedition, Huw and I left last. There was a strange nostalgic sensation as we had left where we spent the past three weeks. The 'plane journey – despite me sleeping for almost all of it – was awesome as the pilots flew so low over the icebergs in the water. Upon arriving at Constable Point, we received the dreadful news that we would be spending the night here rather than Ittoqqortoormiit as the route down Hurry Fjord was full of ice. This night was the coldest I'd been on expedition and had it not been for the excellent shower, spirits would have been low. Now, we fly to Akureyri for two days instead of one so that should be fun. **Calum Goodwin**

### **Wednesday July 29<sup>th</sup> (Constable Point and Akureyri):**

George and I rose this morning to the wonderful sight of 20 mossies in our tent. My first reaction was to open the front door of our tent, yet to our horror it was as though the whole mossie species had descended on Constable Point. It was so bad that, for the first time in expedition history, Al ate his breakfast in his tent! After packing up the tents we boarded the rather crammed 'plane that now contained all of us, our bags and all the sea freight that needed to be sent home to the UK from Iceland. The option of using the lav' in flight was somewhat impossible due to the huge boxes laying in the passageway. After three hours of stunning views we landed in Akureyri and, within the hour, we made our way to our lovely campsite. On arrival, Neal ordered Dominoes to be delivered to the campsite! After three weeks of dry packed food, a bite of *meat feast* was heavenly. The whole team managed to devour: thirteen pizzas, three garlic breads and ten litres of drinks in



**Easy does it! – Paul Warren Wilson on the cockpit roof directs the students as they approach in their dinghy on Faxe Sø  
Helen Platt-Hawkins**

under half an hour. It was amazing. Tomorrow we are heading into the town, which should be great. The thought of being back home in three days is rather difficult to comprehend. After spending three weeks with such an amazing group of people, I'm struggling to picture being at home without us all being together, but the wonderful memories will always be there. **Talis Harris**

### **Thursday July 30<sup>th</sup> (Akureyri):**

Today was one of the best days of the expedition and a great way to end the trip. It started off with everyone sleeping in 'till 9 am (which felt amazing) and then some of us had flapjacks for breakfast, whereas the rest of us could not be bothered to eat or cook. We then split into two teams, one cleaning tents, the other cleaning stoves (which took forever). At around noon we all went for a walk into town and got there at about 12.30 pm. We then again split into groups and my group spent the first 20 minutes walking up and down the street looking for the bank that was just around the corner of the main square. We then went into all the traditional-looking Icelandic shops. We sat in a lot of cafes and then sat in a *Subway* for 40 minutes (very cultural). Everyone then met up at 4 pm and separated. We had been told of a botanical garden but we did not get told the distance it was from the town square (Hah! – I found it OK! - Ed.). Afterwards, my group visited the huge church at the end of the high street on the way to "We Love Bloody Steak" where we had booked a table. While we were there it turned out to be the opening night and the smoke detector went off three times, the food took 40 minutes and they only had four menus, but the food was amazing (best chicken ever). Unfortunately they had forgotten all of Oscar's dinner and a little bit of everyone else's, so he got a £32 meal for free and the rest of us did not pay for our late items. Later we all met up at 8 pm on the square and then walked to a hill where a concert had been put on. We sat there for about an hour listening to some

amazing singers and they even sang *Under Pressure* which we all sang along to. During the concert, Oscar and I went and found free food including free sausages that tasted amazing. When we got back to the hill a singer was singing a song and the lyrics were "frisco disco" repeatedly being said. We got back to camp and fell asleep just after. Again, it was another great day.  
**James Hawkins**

### **Friday July 31<sup>st</sup> (Akureyri and Stornoway):**

Penultimate day. Little happened during the day apart from flipping between Iceland and Stornoway! As I slept for almost the entire flight, I have no idea what went on. We took taxis from Stornoway airport at about 5 pm and arrived at the campsite 20 minutes later. After pitching tents we walked into town to the restaurant. The whole team, minus Mrs Platt-Hawkins, Tariq and Paul, were present at the meal. The food was lovely and made a great difference after ration packs! Got back to the tents at about 10 pm. Up at 7.30 am tomorrow, then home.  
**Oscar Holliday**

### **Saturday August 1<sup>st</sup> (Stornoway and Gamston):**

The final day we woke at 7.45 am with only an hour to pack, ready for the final leg of our long journey. This month has been one of my greatest so far but it is going to be odd not to be surrounded by the expedition team who we have all eaten, slept, cried and joked with. The flight from Stornoway to Gamston should take about three hours and we shall arrive at around 1 pm. Hopefully to our awaiting family and possibly media. The weather at the moment doesn't look too promising as we are surrounded by cloud. Hopefully, it will brighten up on arrival. I think that I may have Arctic fever.

**Duncan McGregor-Riley**

Editor's note: The Catalina duly arrived at Gamston just after 13:00 hrs having experienced turbulent conditions after leaving Stornoway that caused some airsickness among the students, the first of the entire trip! Needless to say the gathered parents and college staff were delighted to see all of the students return safely from their adventure. Before long the Catalina was emptied of the remaining



Here is a selection of more photos taken  
Greenland



**With floats retracting for the photographer's benefit, G-PBYA heads up Akureyri's fjord en route to Constable Point, Greenland on July 8<sup>th</sup>** Hörður Geirsson



**Chief Pilot Paul Warren Wilson flies a steady path to the right of an iceberg close to Greenland's coastline**  
via Paul Warren Wilson



**A stunning view from the captain's seat .....**  
Paul Warren Wilson



**..... and from the starboard blister!**  
Calum Goodwin

**FIRST PHOTO PAGE**

during the Catalina's 2015 expedition to  
land



**A sight not entirely unfamiliar to some  
WWII Catalina crews** Derek Head



**At rest on the lake at Faxe Sø with a glacier in the  
background** Paul Warren Wilson



**With the props nicely dressed, the Catalina rests on the lake**  
Neal Gwynne



**Conditions on the lake were quite benign much of the time  
and the Catalina was left to gently drift – not too many  
buoys about at Faxe Sø!** Alan Halewood

expedition kit and the student's personal rucksacks etc and then it was off for the shortest sector of the trip, the flight back home to Duxford!

## **OPERATION WORLD FIRST – THE 'VOLLIE'S' EXPERIENCE** edited by David Legg

Because *Miss Pick Up* was flying to Greenland with pilots, engineer, the Worksop College party and lots of kit, it was always going to be the case that no other crew members would be able to join the flights. However, a few of us volunteered to provide support along the way. Here are some of our reports.....

As part of the careful and comprehensive preparations for the flying aspects of the project, a reconnaissance trip to Loch Lomond in Scotland was carried out on June 24<sup>th</sup> to assess the conditions there for the planned loading of students from the water en route to Iceland. The recce' team comprised **Crew Chief Trevor Birch, shareholder Humphrey Truswell and**



**Loch Lomond, July 7<sup>th</sup> and Trevor Birch manoeuvres around *Miss Pick Up* in his RIB whilst Humphrey Truswell tidies the ropes just after mooring on the buoy.**  
Helen Platt-Hawkins

**shareholder/co-pilot Gareth Bliss.** Trev picks up the story: "We flew up from Stansted to Glasgow with Ryanair before travelling across to Loch Lomond and taking a boat to the proposed landing site at Tarbet Bay. The reconnaissance was carried out with the help of Andrew Ritchie of the Ardmay Outdoor Centre and Stuart Cordner of Cruise Loch Lomond Ltd. It was agreed that on the big day Andrew would provide the necessary mooring line for the Catalina and RIBs to ferry the expedition members from shore to Catalina whilst Stuart would ensure that all cruise boats would be clear of the mooring area. After a successful day, the recce party returned to Duxford with detailed maps, photos and video to aid the scheduled arrival of the Catalina on July 7<sup>th</sup>."

"At 07:45 on Tuesday July 7<sup>th</sup>, I positioned

my own RIB at Tarbet Bay to await the Catalina's scheduled landing at 08:45. At that point the weather conditions were benign with no appreciable wind but with visibility varying from clear through misty to a low cloud base of less than 500 ft at times. The area was duly cleared of other boat traffic and the mooring line was attached to the buoy. *Miss Pick Up* arrived on schedule from Prestwick at 08:45, complete with BBC TV personnel on board and it was successfully moored to the buoy at 09:00, Humphrey Truswell carrying out the actual buoy hooking. Four of the expedition members were embarked and the Catalina flew off for a couple of circuits so that the BBC could conduct interviews. After landing the second mooring took several attempts as the zero wind conditions meant that the line had become entangled close to the buoy. I went out in my RIB and my daughter Jenny successfully freed the line so that Humphrey could hook it. After this, the remaining expedition members embarked and the BBC crew and Humphrey came ashore to watch the 'Cat' tug gently at her warps before slipping the buoy and departing for Stornoway at 11:00. For Humphrey and I it was job done and it had been great to get involved in this very early stage of the project."

**'Cat Pack' member Stuart Hurrell** had offered to be on station at Stornoway Airport on the Isle of Lewis, Outer Hebrides ready for when the Catalina arrived for refuelling after collecting the student party from Loch Lomond. "I travelled there by road via Stirling and through the Cairngorms with my wife Karen and miniature pinscher dogs Nellie and Percy. Then it was a ferry from Ullapool to The Isle of Lewis but not before obtaining a copy of *The Stornoway Gazette* with which I had been in contact beforehand to give them news of the Catalina's impending arrival. The article had duly appeared! The following day, Sunday July 5<sup>th</sup> was a wet day but time was used in touring the locality and visiting standing stones at Callanish. The next day it was down to business with a visit to Stornoway Airport to ensure that access would be granted to the 'live side' when the Catalina arrived the next day. An airside pass was duly arranged and all the staff at the airport expressed interest and enthusiasm about the visit. I also called in on the Editor of the 'Gazette to thank her for publishing an excellent article about the 'Cat' and *Operation World First*."

"Tuesday brought heavy rain and low



**The Catalina leaves Akureyri in Iceland bound for Constable Point, Greenland** David Legg

cloud so my heart sank. After walking the dogs I checked the flight tracker at around 09:30 and noted movement so decided to head off to the airport in my flying suit and passes. Once I had arrived I set up my laptop and noticed the Catalina was flying up and down Loch Lomond. I had probably reacted too soon so ordered coffee and cake and bedded down for a long wait. Once I could see the aircraft was near I headed off to the control tower and joined the crew for yet more coffee; we chatted and continued to track progress from their computer. The weather had only slightly improved but we could see the end of the runway. It was interesting to experience the function of a control tower as she approached.

After shutdown I directed the passengers to the terminal and then helped our engineer Toby Lee check fuel and oil levels as the rain got heavier. Re-fuelling took longer than anticipated as the airport only has a small bowser but once completed the passengers returned to the Catalina and, after assisting with external start-up procedures, I moved to the edge of the apron and watched the Catalina go on her way, next stop Iceland! My job was done and I noticed that I was so wet that my clothes were dripping! However, the experience of being part of this great project made up ten times for the very damp me! Ahead of us were a couple more days of holiday before returning home. It was a great adventure to visit Lewis, not on such a grand scale as for the students and adults from Worksop College, but one we would not have taken if it was not for the opportunity to be a part of this project."

**David Legg** elected to go to Iceland and provide support as required at Akureyri and Reykjavik. "I love Iceland and have visited a few times including one previous visit to Reykjavik in our Catalina in May 2012. I was very keen to return and to be involved in *Operation World First*. But first, I had an early commitment which involved going up to Worksop College with pilot Derek Head to give a



**David Legg tackles some of the Constable Point mud on the cabin floor at the start of the Reykjavik stop-over between Parts 1 and 2 of the expedition** Eggert Norddahl

presentation to the expedition leaders and students plus their parents on Catalinas generally and *Miss Pick Up* specifically. We were looked after very well and had a great time. The students went down to Duxford the next day so that Derek could give them a tour of the aircraft and a safety briefing.”

“I flew up to Keflavik from Gatwick by WOW air a couple of days before the Catalina left the UK and overnighted in Reykjavik. My original plan was to catch a bus to Akureyri, a trip of just under seven hours but my Icelandic friends had other ideas! Luckily the weather on the 6<sup>th</sup> was not too bad and this enabled Sigurjon Valsson to fly me from a small grass strip at Moso just outside Reykjavik across Iceland to Akureyri in his 60 year-old veetailed Beech Bonanza, just acquired from the USA. What a great trip and I am extremely grateful to 'Siggi' for giving up his time to fly me across his country. Upon arrival, I made myself known to both the local Fixed Base Operator (FBO) and the security personnel who readily agreed that I would have ramp access when the Catalina arrived the next day. At this point, I found that Akureyri does not have a mobile fuel bowser but a static tank so I checked the hose would be long enough to reach the Cat' and also ensured that the area was clear of obstacles allowing the aircraft to taxi close to the tank.”

“I used my spare time to explore the excellent Icelandic Aviation Museum at Akureyri Airport (well worth a visit) and going whale watching in Akureyri's fjord (Iceland's longest), arriving back from the latter trip in daylight at 11:30 pm! *Miss Pick Up* duly arrived from Stornoway in the early evening of Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> by which time it was much anticipated by the airport staff and the local aviation fraternity – word had got around! The expedition members quickly unloaded their kit and were gone! – what I didn't know was that they were camping locally that night and had to go off and set up their tents! I

helped engineer Toby with all the usual Crew Chief tasks that have to be done upon arrival and that included more than customary tidying up in the Cat's interior! The 'plane was then taxied to the tank to be re-fuelled ready for the next leg of the trip to Constable Point in Greenland. After refuelling, it had to be manually pushed back in order to avoid high lighting poles. By now it was quite late but still light of course and the crew (Paul Warren Wilson, Rod Brooking, Toby, myself and Derek Head) retired for pizzas at a local hotel.”

“The next morning, I left my accommodation above the Akureyri Gift Shop early and walked out to the virtually deserted airport to prep the Catalina for its flight to Constable Point. By the time the rest of the crew and Worksop party arrived all was ready and in due course they departed in company with a Piper Super Cub photo 'plane and headed out of sight up the Fjord. I enjoyed the rest of the day in Akureyri and flew back to Reykjavik that night in a Flugfélag Íslands Fokker 50. After a free day on the 9<sup>th</sup> I was ready for *Miss Pick Up's* return at Reykjavik Airport on the 10<sup>th</sup> where the very helpful FBO staff allowed full ramp access. The Catalina arrived and in due course, Paul, Rod and Derek left for their flights back to the UK whilst Toby and I prepared to leave the aircraft in a presentable state at Reykjavik before its return to Greenland later in the month. We spent the rest of the day and part of the following morning working on the interior and exterior of the aircraft (and emptying the elsan!). There was a fair quantity of Greenland mud spread around the floor but I managed to make some impression on it using borrowed kit from the local airline Eagle Air. We had dinner in town that evening with Worksop College Headmaster Gavin Horgan who had flown in from Constable Point in the Cat' and after Toby left for his flight on Saturday I had the pleasure of showing a party of friends from the Icelandic Historical Aviation Society around the aircraft. I then reluctantly bade farewell to the *Miss'* and returned to Gatwick the following day. I'd had a brilliant time and it was great to be involved in a small way with the project. I cannot wait to return to Iceland.”

The Catalina remained parked at Reykjavik until July 26<sup>th</sup> when it flew back to Greenland with Paul Warren Wilson, Rod Brooking and Jeff Boyling as pilots and Toby Lee as engineer. Just prior to this, volunteers **Gareth Bliss and Alfred Rijkers** had flown out to Iceland from the UK and USA respectively to assist Toby with preparing the aircraft for flight. Gareth picks up the story: “My partner Mel and I spent some time seeing some of



**It was great to be able to greet the students upon their arrival back at Gamston/Retford Airport on August 1<sup>st</sup>. From left to right: Huw Robinson, Shirlyn Gathoni, Abigail Mounde, Calum Goodwin, Oscar Holliday, Duncan McGregor-Riley, Talis Harris, Joel Spencer, James Hawkins & George Pickering** David Legg

the amazing sights Iceland has to offer including whales playing with a pod of dolphins, a monster truck ride on a glacier and trekking around some beautiful landscapes. We even discovered the wreck of an old DC-3 to explore! Refuelling at Reykjavik was something of a Krypton factor challenge as, having emptied the first Avgas tank on the airfield, and discovered that the hose on the second would not reach up onto our high wing, we jumped into a car and went to the other side of the airfield to fill up two 100 litre barrels. We then returned to hand pump the contents into the tanks – cheaper than taxying the Catalina across the airfield! After that, the only thing left was to give the 'plane a good wash and brush up.”

“Jeff Boyling soon arrived and being an Aussie just managed to avoid his customary deportation before the Catalina departed for Greenland. That evening over dinner I thought I'd check their progress on the Spot Tracker only to find it had stopped with a last reported position mid-Atlantic six hours prior! I sent a quick text to the Iridium Sat Phone but received no immediate response so I gave Reykjavik ATC a quick call to check if they had closed their flight plan on arrival and they had so panic over! Mel and I flew home a few days later although this was not the end of my involvement”.

Meanwhile, Alfred made his way to Akureyri where he was joined by **Jean-Noël Rey** from Switzerland. Alfred and Jean-Noël were then on hand as the expedition party made its way from Greenland via Iceland to home and they busied themselves assisting with refuelling and other ground duties (cleaning!).

After departing Akureyri, the Catalina

returned to Stornoway for an overnight stop. Gareth had already flown there, this involving a FlyBe flight from Birmingham to Edinburgh where there was a change of aircraft and a further intermediate stop at Inverness. The airline managed to lose his luggage at Edinburgh so Gareth arrived without toothbrush, flying suit etc! "The Cat' arrived the next day and I met the plucky young explorers and their leaders for the first time. It was in fact a quick 'hello' as they all filed off the Catalina to make their way to a local campsite. We all met again later for a meal together at a local restaurant so got to know each other a little better the Cat' crew stayed in their seats and the students and leaders moved every 45 minutes so we got to chat to them all!"

After over-nighting at Stornoway, the Catalina flew to Gamston in Nottinghamshire where the students and expedition leaders disembarked for the last time amongst a sizeable welcoming party of parents, relatives and College staff. Your Editor had driven up from West Sussex to give ground support and once again the airport staff were very helpful in providing access to the ramp etc. After a stopover that allowed parents etc to view the Catalina, Rod, Jeff and Toby flew back to Duxford at the conclusion of the trip.

So, because *Miss Pick Up* had behaved herself throughout the long trip, it had only been necessary for the various volunteers to carry out routine tasks and at no time were any of us called upon to assist Toby Lee with any major problems. Nonetheless, it was a great opportunity that had allowed some of the 'Cat Pack' members to get involved in a most unusual but rewarding project.

## THE FLYING LOG BOOK OF HENRY ROBERT THOMAS HILL summarised by Michael Hill and David Legg

Sorting out some papers recently I came across some old correspondence from Michael Hill that had not previously been used in *The Catalina News*. So, with my apologies to Mr Hill for the delay, I am using the material at last.....

Michael wrote: "A newspaper clipping in my Mother's possession comes from *The Daily Dispatch* newspaper dated October 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1943 and its heading reads "*Tirpitz* badly damaged by midget submarines – secret craft hit Nazi ships in Fjord". It goes on to describe the damage inflicted on the *Tirpitz* and other German vessels by the British midget submarines on



**Henry Hill flew in the original RAF Catalina JV928. Here is Plane Sailing's old Catalina painted as JV928 during a gloomy afternoon display at Jersey in the Channel Islands in the late-1980s**

David Legg collection

September 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1943. I recall my Father telling me how his Catalina was involved in taking reconnaissance photographs of the *Tirpitz* before the raid, only being told that it was for checking for any movement of the ship, either along the fjord it was docked in or if it sailed out of the fjord. After the raid, his Catalina was again involved in the taking of photos to assess the damage inflicted. Checking his log book around the time of the raid, I found that he was in Northern Russia just before September 22<sup>nd</sup> and returned to Woodhaven shortly afterwards. A few weeks before, he had also been involved in a dramatic air-sea rescue operation of which more later. Reading the cutting and referring to his log, I decided to summarise the contents and send them to *The Catalina News* in case they were of interest."

What follows is based on Michael Hill's summary with additional comments added by the Editor.

Henry Robert Thomas Hill, service number 1314284, trained as a WOP/AG (Wireless Operator/Air Gunner) on Avro Ansons at Wigtown (1 [Observers] Advanced Flying Unit), Boulton Paul Defiants at Stormy Down (7 Bombing & Gunnery School), Blackburn Bothas at Hooton Park (3 Radio School) and Airspeed Oxfords and Ansons at Carew Cheriton (10 Radio School). Once his training was over (some 75 hours flying) he was posted to 190 Squadron, Coastal Command and the first log entry for that period was made on March 27<sup>th</sup>, 1943 when in Catalina FP195 and with F/O Finch as captain, an air firing exercise was carried out, expending 200 rounds. At this time, 190 Sqn was based at Sullom Voe, Shetland but with a detachment operating from Reykjavik in Iceland. Over the next few weeks, Hill continued to fly in a number of different Catalinas (W8410, FP102, FP193 and FP203), mainly on gunnery and bombing exercises, until on May 29<sup>th</sup> whilst flying in FP183/V, the

crew spotted and attacked a U-boat but with no obvious results except an injury sustained to the Catalina's co-pilot. The next few flights include landings at Lerwick, Woodhaven and Invergordon/Alness and lighthouse photography during a flight in FP115/Z on June 16<sup>th</sup>. During this time, Henry's regular Catalina was FP102/L but he does not seem to have been part of the crew that took part in the epic rescue of a RAF Flying Fortress crew from the seas to the south-east of Iceland in mid-June (described in some detail in *Cat Contact Column*, Issue 81 of *The Catalina News*).

Another U-boat was sighted on June 20<sup>th</sup> but it dived under the water before an attack could be made. June, July, August and September continued with the logbook usually annotated with the initials DCO (Duty Carried Out) and often with the additional comment 'nothing seen'.

Early in September, the log shows that Hill was operating out of Reykjavik in Catalina FP215/E and on the 16<sup>th</sup> the crew carried out a 'special transit to Russia', returning to Woodhaven on the River Tay on the 24<sup>th</sup> and back to base at Sullom Voe on the 26<sup>th</sup>. This covers the period when the *Tirpitz* was under observation as mentioned earlier. On October 12<sup>th</sup>, Catalina FP183/V was involved in a search for an unspecified ditched aircraft but the log itself says no more on the subject. Four days later he flew from base to Greenock in FP113/S. Shortly after that he was sent on a BABS (Beam Approach Beacon System) Course, flying in various Avro Ansons, and once this was completed on December 16<sup>th</sup>, and after a spot of leave, he was to be posted back to Sullom Voe to join 210 Squadron (as 190 Sqn had been re-numbered on January 1<sup>st</sup>).

Here he flew mostly with regular captain Flt Lt White although he flew with others as the need arose. By now, he was flying in Catalina IVs and, initially, on a mixture of air tests and local flying including trips to Castle Archdale, Killadeas, Pembroke Dock and Greenock although in mid-March he went to North Russia and back via Invergordon. By the end of April the logbook shows that he was mainly flying escort missions and anti-submarine patrols with additional visits to Felixstowe and Woodhaven. On July 22<sup>nd</sup> he and his crew sighted a U-boat off the Norwegian coast and as it submerged it was attacked with six depth charges. No result was seen although the vessel responded with heavy flak.

His last recorded Catalina flight was in JV931/T with P/O Butler as captain. The flight was an anti-sub patrol but the



Catalinas appearing in the log book of HRT Hill .....		
Serial number	Mark	Notes
W8410	I	4 (Coastal) Operational Training Unit
FP102	IB	Code 'L'. 190 Sqn. SoC 22Dec44 with 265 Sqn, East Africa
FP113	IB	Code 'S'. 190 Sqn. SOC 29Aug46 with 209 Sqn, East Africa and probably scuttled in Lake Victoria off Kisumu
FP114	IB	Code 'O'. 190 Sqn. Missing en route Lough Erne to Gibraltar. Nine crew and four passengers lost; Cat.E FB in transit 03Aug43
FP115	IB	Code 'Z'. 190 Sqn. Hit water after steep approach to Kisumu whilst with Catalina Ferry Fly, Dar-es-Salaam 08Jul45. SOC 12Jul45
FP125	IB	Code 'M'. 190 Sqn. Damaged 04Sep43 whilst still with 190 Sqn after swinging violently on landing and sinking, 1/2ml E of Ungham Light, Sullom Voe; SOC 30Sep43
FP183	IB	Code 'V'. 190 Sqn. Cat.E damage whilst with 330 (Norwegian) Sqn, Woodhaven 19Dec44 and SoC 23Dec44
FP193	IB	4 (Coastal) Operational Training Unit. damaged 09Jan44 after hitting water during recovery from diving turn and catching fire whilst with 131 OTU, Lough Erne and SOC 09Jan44
FP195	IB	4 (Coastal) Operational Training Unit. SOC 12Jan45 whilst with 131 OTU, Lough Erne
FP203	IB	4 (Coastal) Operational Training Unit. Damaged 16Aug44 after hull damaged in undershoot whilst landing at Killadeas, Lough Erne whilst with 131 OTU, Lough Erne. SOC 26Oct44
FP215	IB	Code 'E'. 190 Sqn. SOC 19Oct44 with 628 Sqn, India
FP222	IB	Code 'P'. 190 Sqn. Became instructional airframe 5023M at Felixstowe in 1945
FP267	IB	Code 'Q'. 210 Sqn. SOC 29Aug46 with 209 Sqn, East Africa and probably scuttled in Lake Victoria off Kisumu
FP280	IB	Code 'U'. 190 Sqn. ran out of fuel and ditched in heavy seas and poor visibility in the Sound of Papa, Shetlands whilst still with 190 Sqn 12Oct43. Taxied for almost twenty hours then taken in tow by HSL. Sank after filling with water in rough sea. SOC 24Oct43
FP308	IB	Code 'Y'. 190 Sqn & 210 Sqn. SOC 29Aug46 with 209 Sqn, East Africa and probably scuttled in Lake Victoria off Kisumu
FP312	IB	Code 'X'. 190 Sqn. Damaged at Greenock whilst still with 190 Sqn after DBR in incident 01Jan44 and SOC next day
JV928	IVA	Code 'Y'. 210 Sqn. 17Jul44 badly damaged by fire from U-boat U-347 during attack 17Jul44 and beached on return to Sullom Voe. One crew member lost in attack; SOC as Cat.E FB 18Jul44. The John Cruickshank 'VC aircraft'
JV931	IVA	Code 'T'. 210 Sqn. SOC scrap 26Mar47
JV932	IVA	210 Sqn. Home Census 21Mar46 and SOC
JX202	IVA	Code 'O'. 210 Sqn. SOC scrap 26Mar47
JX203	IVA	Code 'L'. 210 Sqn. SOC 14Jun45
JX223	IVA	Code 'M'. 210 Sqn. SOC scrap 26Mar47
JX224	IVA	Code 'N'. 210 Sqn. DBR in forced landing on land 1½ mls SW of Oakington. Cambs due to engine failure 14Aug45. SOC 25Aug45
JX243	IVA	Code 'S'. 210 Sqn. SOC scrap 26Mar47
JX246	IVA	Code 'R'. 210 Sqn. SOC scrap 26Mar47
JX249	IVA	Code 'X'. 210 Sqn, SOC scrap 26Mar47
JX253	IVA	Code 'N'. 210 Sqn. Sold to Phoenix & Clifton Iron Works 10Mar47 for scrap
JX257	IVA	Code 'Q'. 210 Sqn. lost on anti-submarine patrol NE of Faeroe Islands 03Apr45. Nine crew lost; Cat.E missing 02/03Apr45
JX259	IVA	Code 'Y'. 210 Sqn. ditched in sea at 58.42N x 04.28W after stbd engine failure and fire. Towing line failed after 14 hours and sunk by gunfire from trawler HMS Elm, 10mls N of Durness, Scotland; Cat.E FB 12/13Jan45
JX262	IVA	Code 'K'. 210 Sqn. SOC scrap 26Mar47
JX264	IVA	Code 'W'. 210 Sqn. sold to Phoenix & Clifton Iron Works 10Mar47 as scrap
JX266	IVA	Code 'G'. 210 Sqn. Flew into sea at night during low-level radar training off Brora, Scotland 16Nov44. Nine crew lost; SOC 16Nov44
JX268	IVA	Code 'J'. 210 Sqn. sold to Phoenix & Clifton Iron Works 10Mar47 as scrap
JX574	IVA	Code 'T'. 210 Sqn. missing from patrol north of Shetland Islands 09Jun44. Nine crew lost
<b>Notes:</b>		
Additional information from David Legg Files		
SOC = struck off charge		
DBR = damaged beyond repair		



Catalina was recalled when the radar went u/s. In total Henry Hill flew 746 hours on Catalinas.

## CATALINA AND BISMARCK MEMORABILIA APPEARS ON EBAY – by David Legg

As is the way these days, many interesting and sometimes valuable aviation-related items come up for sale on ebay. These vary from aircraft components, photographs, badges and patches, uniforms, medals and personal papers including log books .....

Keeping up with what is on offer could be a full-time job and I tend to reply on tip-offs from others although sadly many interesting items are way outside my pocket! In August, **Robert Bergstrom** alerted me to a collection of items that had originally belonged to Frederick Cecil Davis who had served during WWII with the RAF's Coastal Command. The items were being offered from a location in Malvern, Worcs and included a number of post-war items including a commendation for outstanding service in January 1955 whilst a Flight Sergeant and a warrant for promotion to Warrant Officer in May 1956. A group of medals included a 1939-45 Star; Atlantic Star; Defence Medal 1939-45 and War Medal 1939-45, mounted in a group as worn. Of interest to Catalina enthusiasts however was Frederick's RAF Form 1767 or Observer's and Air Gunner's Flying Log Book. Two of the log pages appeared in photos within the ebay notice, one showing a series of flights in Supermarine Stranraer's and the other showing Catalina flights one of which relates to the famous *Bismarck* shadowing operations.

It seems that the items attracted a highest bid of £800 but did not meet the seller's reserve price. I wonder what will happen to them? It would be interesting to know what readers think of such items being sold in this way. Is it better for them to be sold to collectors who will treasure them or to be donated to places like the RAF Museum or IWM where they are unlikely to be seen on public view unless they feature very historic items? I do not know the answer but I do know that logbooks in particular contain information that is invaluable for researchers and authors. I also know that this information is irreplaceable and if it is lost or destroyed it can never be recovered. If we have Society members who are in the habit of 'ebay watching' and they see Catalina-

Summary of logbook entries from the RAF Form 1767 of FC Davis ....

Date	Hour	Aircraft	Pilot	Duty	Remarks	Flying Times
23May41	05:15	Catalina AH546	P/O Goulden P/O Round Lt Westhofen, USA	Convoy escort	Atlantic	16:25
24May41	14:50	AH546	Flt Lt Lowe Flt Lt Furlong P/O Goulden P/O Round Lt Wagner, USA	Ferring (sic)	Lough Erne - Greenock	3:00
25May41	15:30	AH563	P/O Goulden (probably Goolden - Ed.) P/O Round Flt Lt Louw (Lowe? - Ed.)	Ferrying	Greenock - Stranraer	1:05
25May41	18:00	AH563	ditto	ditto	Stranraer - Greenock	2:00
26May41	04:10	AH546	P/O Goulden (probably Goolden - Ed.) P/O Round Lt Johnson, USA	Search for German Surface Raider	Located German battleship Bismarck. Attacked by anti-aircraft fire. Contacted three enemy aircraft. Shadowed Bismarck for five hours.	20:15

Editor's notes: AH546 was coded BN-M and AH563 was BN-B, both of 240 Squadron. Other sources (via P/O Goolden) suggest the airborne time on the Bismarck mission was 19 hours, 36 minutes so the time in Frederick Davis' log may indicate the buoy to buoy time? Goolden also says that the Bismarck sighting time was 13:28 and that AH546 continued to shadow the Bismarck until 17:45. AH546 had taken over from AH545/WQ-Z of 209 Squadron that had made the original sighting. A few days after Davis had flown from Greenock to Stranraer and back in AH563, this Catalina was taken out of RAF squadron service and was converted for use by BOAC. It flew with the airline as G-AGDA and was destroyed in a fatal crash at the end of a training flight at Poole harbour on March 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1944.

related items, do tip me off using the email address on page three of this magazine.

## REVIEW COLUMN by David Legg

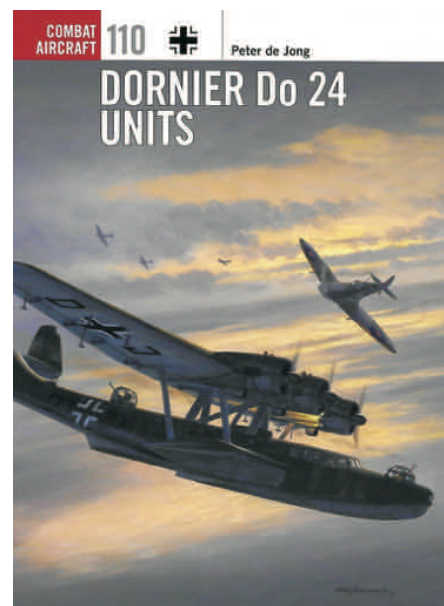
Not so much to review this time around but all three books appearing below will be of interest to Catalina and maritime aircraft enthusiasts.....

**Joseph Robert (Bob) Cleworth** is well-known in Australian Catalina circles for keeping the memory of Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) PBY crews alive. In particular he has done much to commemorate his brother, W/O JR (Reg) Cleworth 419457 who, as a navigator, lost his life on March 7<sup>th</sup>, 1945 in the Pescadores, Taiwan straits when his PB2B-1 Catalina A24-203 was lost without trace. He has previously authored a number of books including *Cats at War - RAAF Catalinas in the Pacific War* with Coral Gaunt and *The Fabulous Catalina*, a collection of anecdotes from veterans and relatives of those who flew these machines as well as two books on Australian war graves and memorials. His latest work is

titled *The Night Shift* and it tells the story of nocturnal RAAF minelaying Catalinas during the period from April 1943 to July 1945 and it is based on material and evidence uncovered during research for a thesis that was awarded a Master of Philosophy Degree. Starting with an analysis of the reasons for Japanese aggression in the Pacific area and background to the American 'Germany First' strategy, the study moves on to cover the move towards Allied offensive mining post-Midway and the start of RAAF Catalina mine-laying in support of US forces. It then analyses the effectiveness and success of the RAAF strategy and looks in detail at specific operations. This part of the thesis relies heavily upon personal experience of those involved. Other chapters look at the munitions used, the supporting surface vessels and the way that RAAF Catalinas were modified for the task. The whole book is illustrated with black and white and colour photos, most of which are from private sources and not previously published. As to be expected in a scholarly work, there are numerous appendices and comprehensive indices, reference source lists and acknowledgements. I have said before in

this magazine how much respect I have for authors who privately publish excellent work and I repeat this now for Bob Cleworth and his latest, 272-page title. It makes a very significant addition to the books available on RAAF Catalina usage and should be in the bookcase of any serious Catalina student. Order enquiries can be made via the Editor who will forward them to the author in Australia.....

**Hikoki Publications**, distributed by **Crécy**, have been releasing quality aviation reference books for some years and many of them have been reviewed in this column in the past. The latest title to come our way is *Nimrod's Genesis - RAF Maritime Patrol Projects and Weapons since 1945* by author **Chris Gibson** and it is a revelation! When I first saw the book advertised I assumed that it would probably be the story from the conversion of elderly Comets onward with perhaps a bit of historical perspective thrown in. In reality there is so much more and much of the early content will be of great interest to flying boat fans! The author starts off in his *Introduction* with an interesting comment about the lack of a Catalina in the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle of the Atlantic flypast over Liverpool in May 2013 and supports his comment with a picture of our *Miss Pick Up* (we did participate in a similar event over the Thames a few days before - Ed.). The introductory two chapters then describe the nature of the submarine threat in war and peacetime and the weaponry used by aircraft in anti-submarine ops before looking at the immediate post-WWII situation. This third chapter is entitled *Old Men and Airships: The Last Flying*



Peter de Jong's recent Osprey book on the Dornier Do 24

Boats and this is where the author looks both at flying boats that did serve in the ASW role and those that might have if they had ever left the drawing board. This chapter starts with two revealing quotes from AVM, later AM Geoffrey Tuttle. The first in May 1953 when he was Assistant Chief of the Air Staff (Operational Requirements) was: "The many firm believers in the flying boat are either very old men or those who have an affection for flying boats which no other type of aircraft has ever aroused". The second was in June 1959 when Tuttle was Deputy Chief of the Air Staff and was directed to Air Marshall Sir Edward Chilton, C-in-C, Coastal Command. It went: "I was recently drawn into an argument as to whether flying boats are as safe as their landplane counterparts; and to verify my argument that they are decidedly less safe, I have requested the Director of Flight Safety to make a brief study of the question". Perhaps some bias against flying boats was being made clear?

However, the chapter looks in some detail at post-war anti-submarine designs based on existing aircraft (Short Seaford and Shetland) and the un-built Short PD.2, Saro P.104/3 and /4, Supermarine 524 and Saro P.131 Duchess. In reality, the day of the large flying boat was over although the USA's Martin Mars, Mariner and Marlin were still to have their day as was Japan's Shin Meiwa family. It is fascinating to study the various British designs with the mix of turbine and jet engines, all of which are illustrated with drawings. Thereafter, the book looks at various RAF land-based maritime patrol designs including the Neptune and Shackleton but there are plenty of still-born ideas too including RAF Gannets, modified Varsitys and Viscounts and the Airspeed AS.69. But, as the book progresses, the flying boat puts in regular appearances as a solution to maritime patrol demand, albeit in the design office only. Who is familiar with the Saunders Roe P.208, Dornier NBMR.2, P340 4-07 and 6-07 or Breguet Br.1250 (flying boat version of the Br.1150 Atlantic transport). I certainly wasn't so there is much of interest here even without the myriad material on proposed MR landplanes (plans for modified Tridents, Vulcans, VC-10s and Vanguards among them). The Nimrod itself is covered of course and the chapters end with what is currently flying in the MR role (no longer the Nimrod of course!). The detailed appendices include passing reference to Operational Requirement OR.183 for an "Amphibious Air Sea Rescue aircraft - requirement met by Consolidated Catalina". Clearly, that is not what actually happened but it would be

very interesting to know if there is a detailed file in the National Archives at Kew - any takers?

In his personal prologue, the author writes: "How did a maritime nation come to have no maritime patrol capability, save for Reims Cessna F406s operated as fishery protection platforms and RAF C-130J Hercules transports operating as interim MR platforms in the search and rescue role? A further question is - interim to what?" Finding the answers by reading the book is highly recommended. It is ISBN 978-190210947 - retailing in the UK at £29.95.....

Finally, a flying boat that has not received a great deal of book coverage in the past, at least in terms of monographs, is the Dornier Do 24. Indeed the only two I have are the only two listed in the *Bibliography* section of *Dornier Do 24 Units* by Peter de Jong and both are Dutch language. So this latest book from Osprey Publishing's *Combat Aircraft* series fills a gap in seaplane literature that needed filling. The first chapter tells the story of the two Do 24 prototypes that were used by the Luftwaffe in the Norwegian campaign of 1940. Then the book looks briefly at the pre-war genesis of the type and its introduction to service in the Luftwaffe and Dutch MLD. Subsequent chapters look more closely at its use with the Dutch as the 'X-boat' (after the type's 'X' serial range), with German Atlantic coast rescue units, Luftwaffe ops in the Med', Black Sea and Baltic as well as special operations with Kampfgeschwader 200. One unusual aspect of this sleek flying boat's history is the fact that it was used by both the Allied and Axis sides during WWII and further chapters look at Royal Australian Air Force aircraft (surviving Dutch aircraft that had escaped the Japanese); the Swedish examples that were interned Luftwaffe aircraft and one of which later flew with the Soviets; a handful captured in Norway and used by 333 (Norwegian) Sqn within the RAF plus others used for evaluation; the aircraft built in France by CAMS for the Luftwaffe and post-war for the French naval air service and, finally, Spain where they were operated in the SAR role until withdrawn in November 1969! A small number survive as static museum exhibits (one ex-Spanish machine was controversially displayed in the RAF Museum at Hendon for many years) whilst one was used in the hi-tech Do 24ATT amphibian variant which has become well-known at European displays and which suffered an accident on the Wolfgangsee in Austria this summer.

It's fair to say that the Do 24 was a success and this excellent slim softback book does a good job in describing the squadrons and units that used it. The fully illustrated text is supplemented with 30 full-colour side profiles by Chris Davey that emphasise the Do 24's sleek hull lines. A relative 'snip' at just £13.99 in the UK it has the ISBN number 978-1-4728-0570-6.

As always, thanks are due to the authors and publishers that supply our review copies. They can be contacted at:

**Bob Cleworth:**

via the Editor at [pby5@btinternet.com](mailto:pby5@btinternet.com)

**Hikoki Publications:**

[www.crecy.co.uk/hikoki](http://www.crecy.co.uk/hikoki)

**Osprey Publishing:**

[www.ospreypublishing.com](http://www.ospreypublishing.com)

## WORLD CATALINA NEWS by David Legg

Yet again we have a surprising amount of news about surviving Catalinas around the globe.....

What was to be our opening 'good news' story rapidly turned into the complete opposite as widely reported in the aviation press and on the internet! **PBY-6A N85U** was the last working water bombing Catalina in the world and until not so long ago was still fighting fires in the north-west USA from its base in Washington State. Following retirement it flew a few airshows and was then selected to appear in a leading role in the film *USS Indianapolis - Men of Courage* 'co-starring' Nicholas Cage. When finished, the film will commemorate the wartime rescue of 56 survivors from the sea after the US ship was sunk by a Japanese sub' at the end of July, 1945. After some maintenance, N85U flew to Pierce County Airport - Thun Field in Washington and was repainted to vaguely resemble the original Catalina BuNo 46472 of VPB-23.



**There are many photos on the internet of N85U's demise in Alabama. Here is a photo in happier times just after it's re-spray as BuNo 46624 at Thun Field, WA**  
Bill Bailey



**N206M photographed at Rapid City Regional Airport, South Dakota earlier this year** Dennis Eiler

In late-June it flew down to Mobile, Alabama where filming was scheduled. So far, so good! On June 29<sup>th</sup> the Catalina landed on the sea off Orange Beach, Alabama and, not long after, started to take on water in the forward hull area, allegedly because some hull drain plugs were not in place. The crew taxied to shore close to the Flora-Bama lounge resort and put the undercarriage down but could not exit the water and eventually the bow became embedded in the sand. An attempt to pull the Catalina onto the beach using tractors and cables failed when the cables snapped.

At this point the Catalina was complete and essentially undamaged apart from the ingress of salt water but gradually things started to go wrong. As the sea began to give the bow section a pounding and bemused tourists looked on, a decision was made to tow the 'Cat' out to sea and recover it using a salvage crane and barge. What followed caused much comment and speculation on the internet but the end result was that the airframe was torn to pieces by the lifting strops and ended up as a pile of scrap on the barge. A very sad end to a fine aircraft and an interesting project. A US magazine has reported that the wreckage has been donated to a museum but further news on that is awaited.....

Fortunately there is better news from the USA concerning a number of airworthy and non-airworthy Catalinas so I'll start with **Model 28-5ACF N206M**, originally



**Canso A C-FUAW has now been fully painted to represent its RCAF period when it was serial 11042/K. It is shown here taxiing out at Victoria, BC on August 5<sup>th</sup>** Tim Martin

built by Consolidated in San Diego for the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) as a Model 28-5AMC and known in military service as a Canso A. In a long career that also saw it fly as a transport in Canada and a water bomber there and in Spain it later ended up in storage at Greybull, Wyoming before heading back south to Bloomington, Indiana where it is now owned by Black Cat Aviation LLC. Dennis Eiler is one of its pilots and reports that it is now airworthy again and flew back to Greybull for inspection plus some engine and passenger interior work in late-June before returning to its Bloomington base. Although currently in rather austere black livery this aircraft is notable for having a fine set of rear-hull blisters and an eye-ball bow turret.....

Not so long ago former-RCAF **Canso A N249SB** was languishing at Nanaimo on Vancouver Island, British Columbia awaiting a very uncertain future. It was saved and with borrowed engines and crudely covered blister apertures it was flown to McMinnville, Oregon for the Evergreen Aviation & Space Museum. It was restored for on-going static display and painted as a US Navy **PBY-5A** of VP-44 but now, due to big changes going on there, the Catalina has been put up for sale through Air Assets International. The Cat is described as 'flyable'. It has a very similar history to our own *Miss Pick Up* and served with many of the same commercial owners until going into storage at Nanaimo.....

Another San Diego-built aircraft is **Canso A N68740**, originally 9742 in RCAF service and converted for civilian use many years ago. It has spent the last couple of decades and more with the Lone Star Flight Museum at Galveston, Texas as a static exhibit. Although kept under cover, it was damaged by *Hurricane Ike* on September 13<sup>th</sup>, 2008. It seems that the museum has now decided to dispose of the damaged but complete airframe and it has been reported as sold to the Pima Air & Space Museum, Tucson, Arizona this summer. This is interesting inasmuch as there are already four Catalina hulls at the museum in Pima. The four vary in condition from fair to wreckage and it was understood that these would be used to produce one display standard hull. Quite what will happen to them now that N68740 is being acquired is not known at this stage.....

Up in Washington State, the Wright Cyclone-powered **Super Cat N9505C** has been stored at Ephrata for some years and not shown much sign of being restored to airworthy condition. A former US

Navy **PBY-5A** (BuNo 34027) it was used as a water bomber in the SLAFCO fleet until retirement. A recent post on our Catalina Society website suggested that work was going to start this summer on getting it up to fully airworthy passenger certification. More news as and when we get it.....

In our last edition, I noted that **Canso A C-FUAW** was ending its restoration period and was being repainted in RCAF livery as 11042/K, its original identity. This was completed in the summer and it flew again at Victoria, BC, attending its first air show on August 8<sup>th</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> when it flew to Abbotsford on BC's mainland.....

Now US registered but based in Greece is **N315KM**, once a Canso A but recently converted to TC-785 standard with new horn balance rudder. The aircraft is in very good condition and has undergone much maintenance in recent months although it has not flown for some years. Flight has come a step further however and engine runs were carried out at its Tatoi, Athens base in late-July.....

Also in Europe is **EC-FMC**, built as a tall-tailed PBY-6A but converted to a PBY-5A many decades ago after being sold by the US Navy. For some years it was used as a fire fighting water bomber and its last contracts were in Spain and Portugal. After retirement it was acquired by David Pajus who intended to restore it to airworthy condition and base it in his native Sweden. However, prolonged legal issues with the previous owner delayed the process and David has now decided to give up and dispose of the aircraft. I wonder where it will end up?....

Another illustration of the relative ease with which a Catalina can be acquired but the difficulty in then getting it flying again is the Catalina Flying Memorial's **PBY-6A VH-CAT** at Bankstown, New South Wales. It arrived in Australia from Portugal in late-2008 and has consumed a lot of cash since but flight is still some way off. According to a recent newspaper interview with Phil Dulhunty, CFML Chairman, a further A\$85,000 is needed for certification and some A\$650,000 is owed to creditors. On-going work continues both to gain sponsors and to reach an airworthy state. A major step on the way occurred in June when the engines were run for the first time since work started on restoration, a smoky event according to reports!....

In Queensland, the **PBY-6A VH-EAX** owned by the Qantas Founders Museum at Longreach has been re-painted to

resemble G-AGIE *Antares Star*'4' one of the five Catalinas flown on the wartime *Double Sunrise* service between Ceylon and Perth, WA. Although now grounded, the museum piece has been rigged up with an internal sound system so that visitors can experience something of the sound inside a flying Catalina! The museum are to be applauded for rescuing the aircraft and putting it on display. Good effort!

## CREW PROFILES

It is a while since we have featured any of our crew members in the magazine – they can be a coy lot! But, to make amends, here are two, one a shareholder pilot (Seb Mazzuchetti) and the other a long-standing *Cat Pack* volunteer and one of our Crew Chiefs, Steve Bailey.....

### Sebastien Mazzuchetti:

"Introduce yourself" David Legg said, not an easy task! I guess I should start with my name! Sebastien Mazzuchetti - it sounds Italian but I'm French. I was born in 1984 and grew up in Evian, a small town famous for its mineral water ("Live Young" as they say!) When I was 4 years old, my parents found out I liked 'planes. They had no idea about where it came from as nobody in my family was involved in that kind of activity. I was a very curious kid and tried a lot of different things (sports, music, science,...) but I always had a deep interest in aviation! In 1999, coming back from our holidays, after hearing me talking about 'planes for the 958th time (Seb is very precise! – Ed.), my father pulled the car over to the closest airfield and asked for information. At that time I was also a shy kid but after my first lesson I came back with a huge smile on my face! That's mainly why they decided to save money so I can train there on a DR400. After three years, during high school, I decided to stop my training so I could focus on exams.

I passed my Baccalauréat and started what we call "les classes préparatoires". It's a two or three years school at the end of which you take a lot of exams for different



**Seb Mazzuchetti with our Catalina in Andøya, Norway in the Arctic Circle, Summer 201** Copyright John Dibbs

engineering schools, including the ENAC. ENAC is a school (sponsored by the government) that matches you to different jobs related to aviation. One of the choices is E.P.L. (Elève Pilote de Ligne) and I applied twice for it before succeeding. In 2004, I started my EPL training and I liked every minute of it! I passed my ATPL (theory) and trained on TB.20, Cap 10 and Beech 58. Then in 2007 Air France came to our airfield to test us and after one or two litres of sweat, they offered me a job. Then, I had to discover the Airbus A-320 family and since 2008 I have had the privilege of flying for my living!

For two years I focused seriously on my new job but then I wanted more than that and the opportunity came via *FlyPast magazine*. I found an article about the Catalina Society and decided to come and say hello! I had a wonderful time around the aircraft and it convinced me to join! I did so in May 2010 and started my training in June. Two weeks later, I ended up in Farnborough as a co-pilot on our *Miss*'. What a start! During the weekend we flew to Scotland as well - I was exhausted but was hooked!

Flying a Catalina to airshows is really rewarding. It's not an easy aircraft to fly and it takes time to get to know her... but then our *Miss*' is interacting with you and you may find other aircraft quite boring in comparison! It's also about teamwork! You get to know the really nice people around G-PBYA and everyone is gently pushing you forward. It really makes you want to do the best you can. I was a bit worried at the beginning about talking in a foreign language and being understandable, but everyone in the group was so helpful with this (I still have progress to make by the way!). In 2012, the group had the opportunity to fly to Iceland and France, but also to Norway. Flying over the fjords is a once in a lifetime experience! We stayed in Andøya for an entire week with the midnight sun and wonderful landscapes! Less than a month later we gathered in Duxford for another great journey: we flew to Moscow to celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Soviet air force. Eleven hours to get there and a week full of surprises!

In 2013, I started to fly displays from the right-hand seat and trained for captaincy. A busy year! We also had the opportunity to alight our beautiful seaplane on the Wolfgangsee in Austria (Scalaria), had a picnic and slept inside the 'plane overnight. Soothed by the sound of the waves! Later that year I took the Catalina from Dublin to Jersey but as a captain at just under 30 years old.

Ever since, I fly this old beauty as much as I can and enjoy it like the first time! 110 hours of fun so far. Our group is really like a family to me. It's the sap that feeds the engines... no avgas, just dedication! And I really would like to thank them all for the warm welcome I had in 2010 and all the souvenirs since then! :) (to be continued!!) .....

### Steve Bailey:

I joined the *Cat Pack* in 1994 after I'd given up my dream of being a professional speedway rider and needed something else to get my teeth into. I've always been interested in aviation and wanted to get more involved so I answered a call for volunteers and was lucky enough to be selected. I'm not a qualified engineer but I've always been fascinated in how things work and have gained basic mechanical skills servicing my own cars and speedway bikes and repairing and assembling car and bike engines. Being able to get 'hands on' with the Catalina has been a tremendous privilege not least for



**Steve Bailey airborne in our Catalina**

the experience of flying with her.

My first year with the *Cat Pack*, participating in ten airshows, was quite special. It included two brilliant water-based events: a five-day stay at Ascona (Lake Maggiore on the Swiss/Italian border), followed by a weekend show in Ambri (Switzerland), and a two-week static event on Lake Windermere.

Other memorable national and international airshows over the years have included the International Air Tattoo at Fairford; Piestany (Slovakia) where we were asked to step in to 'bomb' a steam train when one of the other aircraft went 'tech'; a ten-minute take off and touch

down (!) in front of President Sarkozy at Le Bourget; a week in Sweden at the small but pleasurable Dala-Järna airshow; flying the length of Norway and ending up in the Arctic circle at Andøya (stunning scenery but not much sleep as a result of the Midnight Sun); the seafront show at Barcelona, covering a three-mile long beach within a ten-minute display slot; and, of course, Duxford's own Flying Legends. The trip of a lifetime, however, was the ten days at Moscow for the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of military aviation in Russia. We met some really interesting people and were treated like rock stars; asked for autographs and worthy of a police escort (including blues and two's!) between our Moscow Hotel and Zhukovsky airfield.

The best thing about being part of the Cat Pack and working at airshows is the interesting people you meet and the friends you make – some, sadly, no longer with us. I even met my wife at an airshow! I guess fate brought us together at the 1995 Eindhoven Airshow, as neither of us was supposed to be there (I was a replacement crew and Chris had been feeling poorly earlier that day). We fell for each other, married around seven weeks later, and the rest, as they say, is aviation history!

It's really great to be part of this dedicated team of people from all walks of life who share a single vision: to keep this wonderful Catalina flying – and share some banter along the way!

## DONATIONS

We continue to be really grateful for the donations that members make over and above their subscriptions – all funds received in this way go towards the operation of our airworthy Catalina and are much appreciated. Since our last edition, the following individuals and families have made gifts. In addition, two organisations made generous donations

after we had given talks to their members.....

Haverhill Aviation Society  
 Martlesham Heath Aviation Society  
 C Shackel & family  
 J Lyons  
 M Bowyer  
 MA King  
 J Wynn & family  
 N Dean  
 C Rust D'Eye  
 A Hawkins  
 N Maugham  
 B Osmond & family  
 P Barnard & family  
 G Gurr  
 M Purslow-Tomlinson  
 D Collard  
 J Gunton  
 C Hall  
 M Smith  
 C Barclay  
 H Rodgers  
 The Clements family (funeral collection)

The final donation acknowledged above was made by *Cat Pack* member Rob Clements' family following his untimely death (recorded in our last issue). Fellow volunteer Steve Bailey has written this appreciation:

Although I didn't know Rob that well we occasionally met on Sunday workdays at Duxford before he switched to Mondays. But we did spend ten crazy days together during the Cat's trip to Moscow in 2012!

As reported by Mike Connally in a previous issue of *The Catalina News*, we had a fantastic, if sometimes frustrating, time: if there were many hours spent waiting for things to happen, this also gave us plenty of time to meet the exuberant Russian people. It soon became clear that Rob had a fascination for all things Russian, especially the vehicles and hardware of the military, and he displayed obvious delight at being able to get close to such things. Near the end of the trip we

were invited to Vadim Zadorozhny's Technics museum for a personal tour. Rob was delighted and climbed all over the armour, telling me about the assorted vehicles in great detail. After the tour we were invited to what can only be described as a banquet by our gracious host. We ate bear (shot by Vadim himself!) and Beluga caviar and downed copious amounts of excellent, if rather strong, vodka. Rob was beside himself with joy at having the good fortune to be part of the crew on this trip and his obvious glee and wicked sense of humour infected us all and made the trip such great fun!

I learned more about Rob at his funeral: he was a former member of the Territorial Army, a passionate model maker, and took great pride in his day job, working with the famous Jeep brand and all that it stood for during WWII. The picture I chose to accompany this short appreciation of Rob's life shows Rob trying to down a bottle of coke in one, just for the fun of it. Typical Rob!



**The late-Rob Clements – RIP**  
 Steve Bailey



## LIFE MEMBERSHIP PAID MONTHLY

Some time back we offered the possibility of becoming a Life Member by paying £10 per month for 30 months. This offer enabled members to make a long-term commitment and at the same time provide a valuable income stream to support our airworthy Catalina operation.

This plan is still available. After 30 payments, you will receive full Life Membership, with no further membership fees ever due. So, you get the satisfaction of knowing that you have helped us get the Catalina in the air with proper funding, as well as receiving Life Membership without the usual lump sum outlay, and we get some valuable extra support when needed.

We already have a good number of members who have taken advantage of this scheme and are supporting us in this way. If you would like to join the scheme, please drop a note to the Membership and Subs address on Page 3 (or email ops@catalinabookings.org) and a standing order form will be on its way to you. Please note that this scheme requires payment from a UK bank account.

## NEW MEMBERSHIP

If you, or one of your friends, would like to become a member of the ever-growing Catalina society, this is how you do it. Just fill in the application form below and send the appropriate sum of money by cheque or postal order (overseas subscribers should see the note below) and you will be sent a full Catalina society membership pack including car stickers, colour pictures of our Catalina, membership certificate and card and official Society badge along with the first of two issues of this magazine, *The Catalina News*. You will also then become entitled to all the normal benefits associated with being a member of The Catalina Society. If you do not wish to cut up this magazine, a photocopy of the form will be fine or download one from our website. You can also pay your first subscription over the internet using *Paypal* and your payment or credit card.

SPECIAL NOTE to all overseas subscribers – please pay by *Paypal* or an International Money Order in Pounds Sterling due to the high charges we incur if payment is made by other means. Alternatively, we can accept payment in

cash in all major currencies. Payment in notes only please, not coins and at your own risk if lost in the post.

Regrettably, we cannot accept credit card payments for renewal subscriptions but we do offer a '6 years for 5' option, available to all but particularly intended to help overseas members for whom making payments each year can be difficult and expensive.

**To: The Catalina Society  
(Attn. Trevor Birch), Duxford  
Airfield, Cambs  
CB22 4QR ENGLAND.**

I/We would like to enrol as member(s)  
of The Catalina Society.

Name(s).....

Address .....

.....

.....

.....

Telephone .....

Email .....

**Individual membership** YES/NO  
(1 yr - £15; 6 yrs - £75)

OR

**Family membership** YES/NO  
2 adults and up to 2 children  
(1 yr - £20; 6 yrs - £100)

OR

**Life membership** YES/NO  
(£250 for UK & £300 Europe and  
elsewhere)

I/We enclose a cheque/postal order/  
money order for £ ..... made payable  
to The Catalina Society (or cash).

Signed .....

Please allow 28 days for delivery of  
membership pack.



## STANDING ORDERS

As a member of The Catalina Society you are helping us to keep a Catalina flying. We aim to make the best use of your financial contributions and we try hard to keep our costs to a minimum – all involved in The Catalina Society are volunteers and give their time free. Paying subscriptions by bank standing order can keep our costs down further as they are less costly to administer than writing annual reminders to you and it saves you the bother of having to send your sub to us! Around half of our membership now pay their sub this way, sending more of their vital contributions toward keeping us flying.

To those who have not yet joined the scheme yet – if you would like to do so, please drop us a line of contact us by email on ops@catalinabookings.org

## BACK ISSUES OF THE CATALINA NEWS

Back issues are available from the Membership and Subs address (on Page 3) at a price of £1.75 per copy in the UK or £2 per copy overseas. Some early issues are now out of print and only available in photocopied form. Please order using the mail order page remember to state clearly which issues you require and how many copies!



# LLANDUDNO AIR SHOW 2015

SATURDAY  
MAY 23



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