



BNAPS News July 2021

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Farewell to UK's Military Islanders and Defenders

On 8 July 2021 the last of the UK's BN-2T-4S Defender R.2s made a farewell flypast over the Middle Wallop airfield, the home base of the Army Air Corps (AAC). This event marked the end of the AAC's long association with the BN-2 type.

In 1989 five BN-2T Islanders were acquired by the AAC to replace Beaver AL.1s, that had served the AAC for many years, followed by two more Islanders a couple of years later. Designated as AL.1s, the Islanders served in Northern Ireland on a variety of missions with an exceptional record of service. Islander AL.1s also served in the Gulf War conflict and in the peacekeeping operations in Croatia. One of the Islanders, ZG993, gained the nickname "Pinky" from its Desert Sand colour scheme applied for its operation in the Middle East region. This aircraft is now preserved and features as an exhibit in the Army Flying Museum at Middle Wallop.



Former Army Air Corps BN-2T-4S Defender R.2s parked at Solent Airport July 2021. On the left is BN-2T G-DLRA, at one time used for special trials by MoD as ZG989, now with B-N (David Moore).

In the early 2000s, at the time of the Middle East conflict, the AAC needed a more capable surveillance platform and this resulted in an order for the BN-2T-4S Defender type, also known as the Defender 4000. The aircraft were procured under Urgent Operational Requirement (UOR) arrangements and assigned to the AAC's 651 Squadron. Information about the various classified and covert missions undertaken by it, by definition, on a "need to know" basis. However, the flavour of 651 Squadron's experience of operating the BN-2T-4S Defender is recounted in a book about the history of 651 Squadron titled "First in the Field" by Guy Warner.

In 2019, all AAC fixed wing aircraft were assigned to the RAF and received new designations of Islander R.1 and Defender R.2, apart from the T.3, which remained T.3. Since that time the Islander R.1s were progressively withdrawn from service. The Defender R.2s were expected to be in service into the early 2030s but the UK Defence Review conducted in 2020 indicated that this type would be retired early in line with rationalisation of the UK's ISTAR (Intelligence, Surveillance, Target Acquisition and Reconnaissance) assets.

Following the 2020 review Defender R.2s have also been withdrawn from service, de-militarised and placed in storage with Britten-Norman at Solent Airport, Lee-on-Solent. Three Defender R.2s, ZG997, ZG998 and ZH002, were flown from Solent Airport on 8 July 2021 to make a farewell flypast over Middle Wallop, thus marking the end of some 30+ years of service for the BN-2 type with the UK military.

Read more about the AAC's Islanders and Defenders and the lead in to retirement on page 16.

A new BNAPS postcard of Islander AL.1 c/n 2202, ZG 993, "PINKY" in operation is now available - see page 40 for BNAPS sales contact details..

In this issue of BNAPS News:

Islander G-AVCN Re-assembly Progress Report

AAC Islanders and Defenders in Service - Looking Back to Islander 30

Islanders and Trislanders on the Beach - Flying Trislanders in Fiji for Air Pacific

Plus more news of Islanders and Trislanders around the World

BNAPS Chairman's Update – July 2021



Dear BNAPS Supporter,

BNAPS Trustees resumed their quarterly meetings on 29 June, some 17 months since the last meeting in January 2020. With restoration work on our Islander now close to completion, the meeting addressed a number of topics related to way ahead into 2022. Whilst there are longer term matters still under consideration related to the future direction and aims of BNAPS, when all restoration work is complete and the exhibition space has been set up, BNAPS Trustees have reviewed the present state of play which resulted in the following directions:

"Official Unveiling" Event

It is proposed to set a date in late April, 2022, for this event, timed to coincide with, or near, to the 55th anniversary of VCN's first flight. The principal reasons for setting a new date include:

- 1 VCN restoration work is not expected to be complete until the latter part of 2021 or beyond. This applies particularly to the installation of trim, carpeting etc that will not be installed until all work involving painting, control line rigging, electrics, flap drive motor installation and other work has been completed.
2. The exhibition space flooring will need to be improved by means of a surface covering that is durable and suitable for public access around the aircraft.
3. The height of the wing and tail plane presents a significant hazard for visitors and the restoration team alike. Provisions will, therefore, be made to raise the aircraft by about 12 inches (300mm). These will take time to organise and construct, but this is regarded as an immediate priority.

Wight Military & Heritage Museum Open Day/VCN "Preview Day" 25 September 2021

The museum will be holding an open day on 25 September, 2021 - entrance charges will be waived for the day.

1. At this time VCN is expected to be externally complete so the event is a good opportunity for BNAPS Supporters in particular to come and view the aircraft in the museum.
2. For BNAPS visitors, it is anticipated that there will be arrangements on site for an informal get together along the lines of the Brickfields Workshop Open Days, all are welcome to attend.

BNAPS News

BNAPS News will continue in its present form at least until April 2022.

Fundraising

This will continue with an emphasis on meeting the costs incurred in preparing the exhibition space and creating and setting up exhibition items around Islander G-AVCN. Also, part of the funds available will be needed to help commission the "Islander Experience" flight simulator in its initial form and later upgrading.

As always, our grateful thanks go out to all the BNAPS Supporters Club members for their loyal support over the past 10 years and to the many organisations and individuals that have generously supported the project to restore and preserve Islander, G-AVCN.

For more information regarding the above please contact BNAPS by email bob@bnaps.org.uk or Telephone 01329 315561.

Yours sincerely,
Bob Wealthy,

Britten-Norman Aircraft Preservation Society Chairman

G-AVCN Restoration Progress May 2021 – July 2021

Summary of Activities during the period:

1. Re-assembly after the move from Brickfields

All the main component parts of the aircraft have now been re-assembled, with the exception of propellers.

2. Aircraft Positioning

Positioning the aircraft in the museum exhibition space was a difficult task due to tight clearances with walls and girders. A set-back was caused when two sets of wheels on the fuselage cradle collapsed during the manoeuvring. The cradle had done sterling service since the early days at Harbour Farm including the 50th Anniversary display at Bembridge Airport. Such a shame it could not last another hour or so! The task was finally completed by carefully moving the aircraft supported by the wing stands.

3. Fuselage:

Contact with Indigo Graphics has re-started with a view to their applying the Vinyl black cheat lines on the fuselage sides (not the nose cone) along with "Islander" and the B-N Logo transfers. The red over nose painting and cheat Line was sprayed at Brickfields. Once the black cheat lines have been applied, the black area on the nose cone will be sprayed.

Fitting of the wing to fuselage fairings has started.

Internal trim is progressing with Paul Brook working on the front end cockpit area and Paul Thomasson the main cabin section. Paul Thomasson has already fitted all side panels and has manufactured from UPVC angle new door surrounds which are now also fitted. Window surrounds have been restored but not yet fitted as they are the originals and quite fragile.

4. Wing, Ailerons, Flaps and Engines:

Engines are fitted and exhaust system, air box with carburettor and alternators have been installed. Fitting of the cowlings has just started. The spinners and back plates are with the painter and once returned the propellers can be fitted.

Ailerons and flaps fitted but controls and rigging still to be done.

5. Tail plane, Elevator and Elevator Tab:

A problem was encountered when connecting the elevator controls as elevator travel and positioning were incorrect. One of the elevator control rod sections was found to be too short and was modified to the correct length. The Trim Tab is not yet connected.

6. Fin, Rudder and Rudder Tab:

All fitted but controls not yet connected. A fairing piece needs to be made between the bottom of the Fin LE and top rear of the dorsal fin

7. Landing Gear:

Fitted but the wheel trims for the main wheels are still to be fitted. Main wheel brake units still to be fitted.

8. Engine cowlings

The rear fairings are now fitted. Fitting of the cowls has started. The cowlings need to have the black and red "Cheat Lines" applied by a combination of spraying (aerosol) and roller.

9. Installation of Navigation Lights, Landing Lights and Strobe Light:

Landing light fittings and glazing have been fitted and navigation lights tested and port side glazing fitted. The starboard side glazing did not fit and could be the wrong part. Paul Thomasson is modifying the item to suit.

10. Missing Items List:

The list is regularly updated by Bryan Groves and Bob Wealthy both of whom have been successful recently in obtaining several required parts.

Thanks go to Kurt Whitney at FIGAS for organising the donation and carriage to the UK of a pair of alternator brackets and breather adaptors.

*Alternator brackets and
breather adaptors donated
by FIGAS.*



G-AVCN Restoration Progress May 2021 – July 2021

The following captioned photographs show the results of some of the work undertaken in the last period:



Installation of the starboard engine in progress with, left to right, Mark Porter, Paul Thomasson, Steve Cooley and Maurice Dyer



Guy Palmer and Bryan Groves installed engine ancillaries, air box, carburettor and exhaust system



Paul Thomasson and Steve Cooley installed the port engine.

G-AVCN Restoration Progress May 2021 – July 2021



Left to right, Steve Cooley, Mark Porter and Maurice Dyer checking port engine mounting frame fixings.



Paul Brook re-connected the wing/fuselage wiring harness ready prior to testing the electrics.



Bob Wilson and Bernie Coleman fitted the central elevator fairings

G-AVCN Restoration Progress May 2021 – July 2021



Bob Wilson installed the elevator trim tab drive rod.



Patrick Gallagher, left and Steve Cooley investigating a rudder cable that had got trapped during installation of the fin.



Installation of the port engine ancillaries and exhaust system in progress with, left to right, Guy Palmer, Bryan Groves, Bernie Coleman and Steve Cooley.

On the right Keith Winter and Paul Thomasson are working on the door lock for the rear passenger door.

G-AVCN Restoration Progress May 2021 – July 2021



View of the port engine after installation of ancillary items, exhaust system, air box and carburettor.



Mark Porter, right, and Guy Palmer installed the top section of the port engine cowling.



View of the port engine after installation of the top section of the cowling.

G-AVCN Restoration Progress May 2021 – July 2021



View of the port engine alternator installation using support bracket donated by FIGAS.



Front view of port engine with both upper and lower engine cowling sections installed.



Side view of port engine with both upper and lower engine cowling sections installed.

G-AVCN Restoration Progress May 2021 – July 2021



View of Islander G-AVCN during installation of the engine cowlings.



Tim Barton in the process of installing the modified section of the elevator control rod of the correct length.



Mark Porter is seen here installing a fairing on the dorsal fin.

G-AVCN Restoration Progress May 2021 – July 2021



View of fuselage roof where aileron and rudder trim control cables have been reconnected



View of fuselage roof looking aft where aileron and rudder trim control cables pass through the wing in the area of the wing to fuselage join.



View of wing to fuselage join area where control cables and electrical cables were reconnected

G-AVCN Restoration Progress May 2021 – July 2021



External 24 Volt DC supply connected for electrical system checks after re-connection of wing to fuselage wiring harness by Paul Brook.



Electrical check conducted by Paul Brook showed that all instrument panel lighting was functioning correctly.



Electrical check showed that the Passenger Service Lights were functioning correctly.

G-AVCN Restoration Progress May 2021 – July 2021



Electrical check showed that the anti-collision strobe light was illuminated but the rotating part of the mechanism was not active. The light unit was removed and is with Bryan Groves for investigation and rectification.



Following electrical check of the navigation lights, Paul Brook installed the light unit covers. The covers had not been installed earlier as they are particularly vulnerable during wing lifting and aircraft moving operations.



Wing to fuselage fairings were installed by Steve Cooley

G-AVCN Restoration Progress May 2021 – July 2021



General view of the work area alongside the aircraft where work tables have been set up following a general clear up.



Bob Wilson organised and secured in place two racking bays for finished parts and various installation kits and ancillary components.



The BNAPS ownership plate was installed on the fuselage port side aft section.

A Transport Trust emblem was also installed, as requested by the Transport Trust, in recognition of the awards given to the project.

Work planned through to end of September 2021

1. Wing and Engines:

1. Fit propellers and spinners.
2. Complete Engine cowls fitting and then black and red painting.
3. Fairings fitting and painting.
4. Remove Wing Lifting Brackets and fit remaining inspection panels.
5. Fit Brake Units.

2. Fuselage:

1. Ongoing internal trimming work in particular floor carpet and roof lining.
2. Apply Fuselage Black Cheat lines and transfers.
3. Spray black areas of nose cone
4. Complete installation of the wing to fuselage fairings.

3. Controls

1. Complete connection and rigging of all flying controls.

4. General:

1. Complete tidying up, get rid of unwanted items and generally sort out the area for satisfactory working and storage
2. Raise the aircraft by approximately 12 inches to increase head clearance and improved visitor visibility. Support main undercarriage under the leg tubes not the wheels, support nose wheel on a block.
3. Gust Locks to be sourced and installed.
4. Pitot Head protection to safeguard against personnel collision.

5. Islander VQ-SAC Fuselage Section Work Items:

1. Fabricate door hinges and door catches and install doors and windows and trim.
2. Install electrical earthing connection for fuselage structure.
3. Install and commission Stage 1 desktop flight simulator equipment.



UK MoD Islanders and Defenders Withdrawn from Use July 2021

B-N Islanders and Defenders procured by the UK MoD for use by the military and for trials purposes was the subject of an article in the May 2019 issue of BNAPS News. Recent news reports have come in regarding the withdrawal from use of all the former Army Air Corps BN-2 aircraft types. This situation is as a result of the recent UK Defence Review and changes in operational requirements and disposition of assets following the transfer of the Army Air Corps Islanders and Defenders to the RAF, as reported in the May 2019 BNAPS News article:

UK transfers Defender and Islander special mission aircraft from Army Air Corps to the Royal Air Force

The possible move was mentioned about two years ago arising from a defence review but this arrangement has now been formalised in a recent MoD press release. On 2 April 2019 Janes Defence Weekly's reported that the UK MoD had transferred control of its Britten-Norman Defender AL.2 surveillance aircraft, T.3 training aircraft and Islander AL.1 surveillance and utility aircraft from the British Army Air Corps (AAC) to the Royal Air Force (RAF) on 1 April. The Defenders and Islanders that had previously been under the authority of the Joint Helicopter Command (JHC) will now fall under the direction of the RAF's No 1 Group.

As noted by the head of No 1 Group, Air Vice-Marshal Harry Smyth, the AAC's 651 Squadron that fields the Fixed-Wing Manned Aerial Surveillance (FWMAS) capability has transferred to the RAF as a unit, while its personnel will transition over the next few years. "It will be operated in a joint fashion for a period as various postings out and in occur," Smyth said.

While 651 Sqn. is based at JHC Flying Station Aldergrove in Northern Ireland, neither AVM Smyth nor the head of JHC, Rear-Admiral Jonathan Pentreath, noted any future change in the unit's location.

The AAC's 651 Sqn. is a special forces support unit, so the Ministry of Defence (MoD) rarely comments on the unit or the Defender and Islander aircraft and their operational deployment and use.



Army Air Corps Islander AL.1, ZG848, c/n 2199 (BNAPS Archive Collection).



Army Air Corps Defender AL.2, ZH002, c/n 4016 (Richard Davies).

Two different BN-2 versions were in use, designated as Islander AL.1s (later as R.1 after transfer of the assets to the RAF) and Defender AL.1s (later upgraded as AL.2s in AAC service and then R.2 after transfer to the RAF). The last operational mission of this type was flown by 651 Squadron on 30 June 2021. To mark withdrawal of the BN-2 type from service by the British military there was a flypast by ZG848 (Islander R.1) and ZH002 (Defender R.2) at the Joint Helicopter Command Flying Station (JHCFS) Aldergrove on the day. 651 squadron itself is expected to be disbanded in the near future

The Islanders /Defenders were used in the ISTAR (Intelligence, Surveillance, Target Acquisition and Reconnaissance) role. Originally, seven Islander AL.1s were delivered to the Army Air Corps during 1989 and 1990. This was just in time for the First Gulf War (January-

March 1991). Islander AL.1 ZG993 was deployed under "Operation Granby" painted in pink Desert Sand colour scheme and was given the nickname of "Pinky".



Islander AL.1, ZG993 taking off from a sand airstrip during "Operation Granby" (BNAPS Archive Collection/George Bacon).



Islander AL.1, ZG993, "Pinky" at Bembridge Airport in its Desert Sand colour scheme (BNAPS Archive Collection).

With the start of the Second Gulf War (March 2003) the demand for aircraft acting in the ISTAR role increased significantly and the MoD issued an Urgent Operational Requirement (UOR) for three additional aircraft. An order was placed with B-N for three BN-2T-4S Defender 4000 type, specially equipped for their ISTAR mission. These were delivered in 2004 (two) and 2005 (one), and they were designated Defender AL.1. Six more aircraft would follow between 2007 and 2011. All were Defender AL.1s, with the exception of one aircraft (ZH004) which was to be used as a training aircraft and designated as a Defender T3. Defender AL.1s were progressively upgraded to AL.2 standard during service with the Army Air Corps.

Initially, the Islanders were operated by the Advanced Fixed Wing Flight (AFWF) at AAC Middle Wallop and later by 1 Flight at what was then called RAF Aldergrove. With the purchase of additional Defenders, 651 Squadron was activated at RAF Odiham in 2006. It moved to RAF Aldergrove in July 2008, where it absorbed 1 Flight and thus combining all Islander and Defender operations under one unit.

One Islander was damaged beyond repair in an accident, three Islanders were eventually withdrawn from use (2010-2012) and the remaining three were re-designated Islander R.1 in 2019 (ZG845, ZG846 and ZG848). These three have remained in service with 651 Squadron until 2021.

The AAC Defender AL.1s were also used for domestic security operations. For example, missions were flown over London during the 2012 Olympic Games, but also more recently over the English Channel in an attempt to stop illegal human trafficking. Ever since Islander aircraft were used by 1 Flight at RAF Aldergrove, the aircraft have also been used in security and surveillance operations over Northern Ireland. In this role, the aircraft are now replaced by Shadow R.1 (Beech 300) aircraft operated by 14 Squadron from RAF Waddington. For this purpose, 14 Squadron will maintain a detachment at JHCFS Aldergrove based on requirements.

The disposition of all the former AAC BN-2s, as at 8 July 2021, is summarised below:

Islander AL.1/R.1

ZG844, c/n 2184, to RAF Shawbury for storage on 23 July 2012;

ZG845, c/n 2194, to Cumbernauld (Scotland) on 9 March 2021, registered as G-BLNT, 7 April 2021;

ZG846, c/n 2195, to Cumbernauld (Scotland) on 8 March 2021, registered as G-BLNU, 7 April 2021;

ZG847, c/n 2196, to RAF Shawbury for storage on 25 August 2011;

ZG848, c/n 2199, to Cumbernauld 8 July 2021;

ZG993, c/n 2202, to RAF Shawbury for storage on 1 July 2010, by road to AAC Middle Wallop on 25 November 2015, presented to Museum of Army Flying at AAC Middle Wallop;

ZG994, c/n 2206, damaged on 30 June 1999 after it struck a tree while performing a training emergency landing at Lopcombe Corner. Subsequently it went to Britten-Norman at Bembridge where it was stripped for spares.

Defender AL.1/AL.2/R.2 and single T.3

The eight Defender AL.2 aircraft were re-designated Defender R.2 in 2019, with the single Defender T.3 (ZH004) retaining its original designation. After being withdrawn from use, all Defenders were flown to Solent Airport (former HMS Daedalus, RNAS Lee-on-Solent) where they are stored with Britten-Norman pending disposal. Two aircraft were already retired in 2020, one in March 2021 and the remaining five in June and July 2021.

ZG995, c/n 4005, stored Lee-on-Solent since 27 May 2020

ZG996, c/n 4010, stored Lee-on-Solent since 2 June 2021

ZG997, c/n 4012, stored Lee-on-Solent since 8 July 2021

ZG998, c/n 4014, stored Lee-on-Solent since 8 July 2021

ZH001, c/n 4015, stored Lee-on-Solent since 1 Mar 2021

ZH002, c/n 4016, stored Lee-on-Solent since 8 July 2021

ZH003, c/n 4017, stored Lee-on-Solent since 11 June 2021

ZH004, c/n 4009, stored Lee-on-Solent since 28 June 2021(T.3)

ZH005, c/n 4018, stored Lee-on-Solent since 4 May 2020



Defender R.2, ZH002, c/n 4016 at Solent Airport, July 2021. One of the three Defender R.2s in the Middle Wallop farewell flypast on 8 July 2021 (Tony Dann).

This article is based on information from the Dutch Aviation Society website: www.scramble.nl/military-news/farewell-islander-defender

Deployment of Army Air Corps Islander AL.1 as part of "Operation Granby" was reported in the Summer 1991 issue of B-N's Approach magazine:

ISLANDER PROVIDES VITAL SERVICE TO BRITISH FORCES IN THE GULF

On 31 May a British Army Air Corps Islander touched down at Bembridge to celebrate the end of a successful four-month deployment to the Gulf and marking the return of the last of the British Army's aircraft from the theatre of operations.

The Islander AL Mk1 was deployed to Riyadh on 29 January at the request of Headquarters British Forces Middle East (BFME). Supported by six aircraft technicians of the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers (REME), it ferried senior BFME officers between their HQ at Jubayal and forward units, saving them a ten-hour journey on roads that caused several fatal accidents. By the time it returned to the UK it had logged more than 600 flying hours, and during its four months in theatre it was serviceable on every day but one, when an engine change was required.

One senior officer wrote to the Director of the Army Air Corps that "the aircraft developed something of a personality in theatre and 'Pinky' (a nickname derived from its Desert Pink Camouflage) became something of a byword among senior officers for flexibility and reliability.

Its combination of range, carrying capacity and economy lay quite beyond the reach of any helicopter, and the relatively small investment in men and machine was repaid many times over."

After a short welcome ceremony at Bembridge, the Islander took off for its home base at Middle Wallop and an official reception by senior Army Air Corps officers.

● 'Pinky' was in the limelight again three weeks later, when it joined a military aircraft formation in a Gulf victory flypast over the City of London. The weather this June day was unfortunately typical of one of London's wettest. The RAF's fixed-wing contribution to the flypast was reduced to a token nine aeroplanes, but once again demonstrating its all-weather capability the AAC Islander brought up the rear of the helicopter formation.



Islander AL Mk1 ('Pinky' to the officers it served in the Gulf) in typical forward operating conditions during its four month tour with BFME.



Welcome home! Mayor of South Wight Mr H. Howe congratulates L to R. WO2 Chris Sherlock and Major George Bacon on the completion of their aircraft's successful deployment in the Gulf.

BNAPS restoration team members were pleased to meet up with George "Smokey" Bacon when he visited recently to view Islander G-AVCN. George spoke highly of ZG993's serviceability record when he piloted "Pinky" as part of Operation Granby, where it logged over 600 flying hours during a four month period in arduous conditions and was serviceable every day but one, when an engine change was needed.

Islander AL.1 ZG993 preserved for posterity and on show at the Army Flying Museum, Middle Wallop, Hampshire



Islander AL.1, ZG993, now in the standard grey Army Air Corps colour scheme, is displayed in a dramatic take off attitude in the Army Flying Museum at Middle Wallop (Alastair Mellor).

Celebrating the First Flight of the BN-2 Islander

For BNAPS a highlight of the past 10 years was the celebration on 13 June 2015 of the 50th anniversary of the BN-2 Islander's first flight. The Islander 50 event attracted a large attendance and the day included a re-enactment of the historic first flight of 13 June 1965, thanks to George Cormack in Islander c/n 2272, G-BUBP. The re-enactment flight followed a formation flypast of BN-2 variants courtesy of Britten-Norman.



BN-2 Flypast at Islander 50, courtesy of B-N, consisted of, left to right, BN-2B Islander G-BEXJ, BN-2T Islander G-JSAT and BN-2T-4S Defender 4000 G-GMPB (Simon Thompson).



George Cormack made the re-enactment flight for Islander 50 in Islander c/n 2272, G-BUBP (Simon Thomson).

For Islander 50 BNAPS transported the restored fuselage of Islander G-AVCN from the Harbour Farm workshop so that all could see what progress had been made. Now, in 2021, the 56th anniversary year of the first flight of the BN-2 prototype G-ATCT. Islander G-AVCN has now moved to the Wight Military & Heritage Museum where it will soon be on public display.

A Look Back at Islander 30, Bembridge Airport, 24 June, 1995 by Peter Smithson

On the 24 June 1995 Pilatus Britten-Norman hosted the largest gathering of BN-2's to grace Bembridge Airport for a number of years. The BN-2 Islander's first flight took place on the 13 June 1965 and to celebrate the 30th Anniversary of this historic day, a gathering of operators of the Islander family of aircraft had been arranged at Bembridge.



An early arrival at Islander 30 was Aurigny Air Services' flagship Trislander c/n 1016, G-JOEY (Bob Wealthy).

Because of the remoteness with which a lot of operators are based, it was unviable for many of them to bring their own aircraft, but many owners made the journey especially for the occasion.

Certainly, when I met Mark Oberman, the owner of Channel Islands Aviation, at Camarillo Airport in February 2019, he spoke about the 30th Anniversary and said what a great time he had. I also met with Hendrik Brunzema of FLN in Germany in June 2018. They have the largest and most modern fleet of Islanders, he again said what a great event it was.

The actual first flight date was celebrated on the 13 June 1995, when a number of us flew from Netheravon to Bembridge onboard Islander G-AYRU. Once at Bembridge, we were treated to a tour of the factory to see the outfitting of the aircraft.



Islander G-AYRU, c/n 181, owned by the Army Parachute Association, made a celebration flight from Netheravon to Bembridge on 13 June, 1995 and also flew in for Islander 30 on 24 June, 1995 (Peter Smithson)

On the day of the event, the weather was great and there was a real party atmosphere at the airfield. BN Historians had a table where memorabilia and souvenirs of the event were available. Pilatus Britten-Norman arranged an air towed celebration banner and a BN-2 formation flypast, all much appreciated by those attending.



PBN celebratory banner flypast at Islander 30 (Peter Smithson).



BN-2T formation flypast at Islander 30 (Peter Smithson)



LFH of Germany brought Islander D-IORS c/n 641, which was built in Romania in 1971. This aircraft had never visited Bembridge until it flew in for the 30th Anniversary (Peter Smithson).

It was nice to be able to talk to the pilots of the various aircraft and listen to their experiences as they were obviously proud of their aircraft.

A significant milestone was achieved during the event with the arrival from Romania of G-BVFK c/n 2277, which was the 500th BN-2 Islander produced by Romaero of Romania.



Islander G-BVFK, c/n 2277, at Islander 30.

Every operator of the Islander that I have visited has said what a capable and rugged aircraft it is and how it so perfectly fits their operation.

It would be fantastic if an event such as this could be arranged in 2025 in celebration of the 60th Anniversary of this enduring and well liked aircraft and who knows, we may even see an alternatively powered Islander.

Images, courtesy of Peter Smithson, of most of the aircraft attending Islander 30:



Belgian Army Islander B 09, c/n 533.



Belgian Police Islander G-05, , c/n 2146.



Cormack Aircraft Services Islander G-BDWG, c/n 530.



Air Alba Islander G-BNXA, c/n 80.



Islander G-BUBO, c/n 2271, in Taiwan Airlines livery but not delivered, went to LFH Germany as D-ILFB, 27 February 1996.



BN-2T-4R Islander, modified for Westinghouse Electric Corp., G-BVHX, c/n 4003. Took part in the Islander 30 flypast.



Hampshire Police Islander G-HPAA, c/n 2244.



Aurigny Air Services Trislander G-JOEY, c/n 1016, now with 3 bladed propellers on wing engines.



FR Aviation Islander G-MAFF, c/n 2119. Operated for the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food.



BN-2T-4R Islander G-RAPA, c/n 2115. Modified for Westinghouse Electric Corporation.



BN-2T-4S Defender 4000 Prototype G-SURV, c/n 4005.



CAE Aviation, Luxembourg, BN-2T Islander LX-KEV, c/n 2102.



Army Air Corps BN-2T Islander AL.1 ZG844, c/n 2184.



Army Air Corps BN-2T Islander AL.1 ZG845, c/n 2194.

Reg	Con No	Built	Type	Operator (24/6/95)	Notes
B-09	533	1976	BN-2B-21 Islander	Belgian Army	Now YV381T
D-IORS	641	1971	BN-2A-6 Islander	LFH	Now HP-1312A
G-05	2146	1982	BN-2T Islander	Belgian Police	Now 6V-AHW
G-AYRU	181	1970	BN-2A-6 Islander	Army Parachute Assoc'n	Reg'n cancelled 11/9/18
G-BDWG	530	1976	BN-2A-26 Islander	Cormack Aircraft Svcs	Now F-HSUR
G-BNXA	80	1969	BN-2A Islander	Air Alba	Now N80KM
G-BSWR	2245	1991	BN-2T Islander	Police Service for NI	Still registered G-BSWR
G-BUBO	2271	1994	BN-2B-26 Islander	'Taiwan Airlines'	Became D-ILFB, Written Off 3/3/07
G-BVFK	2277	1995	BN-2T Islander	PBN	Now G-JSAT
G-BVHX	4003	1994	BN-2T-4R Islander	PBN/Westinghouse	Dismantled
G-HPAA	2244	1991	BN-2B-20 Islander	Hampshire Police	Now N345CP
G-JOEY	1016	1975	BN-2A-III-2 Trislander	Aurigny	Preserved Guernsey
G-MAFF	2119	1981	BN-2T Islander	Flight Refuelling	Now G-BJED
G-RAPA	2115	1981	BN-2T-4R Islander	PBN/Westinghouse	Scrapped
G-SURV	4005	1994	BN-2T-4S Defender 4000	PBN	Became ZG995, now stored
LX-KEV	2102	1981	BN-2T Islander	CAE Aviation	Now G-BIIO
ZG844	2184	1985	BN-2T AL.1 Islander	AAC	Stored
ZG845	2194	1986	BN-2T AL.1 Islander	AAC	Now G-BLNT



Pilatus Aircraft brought two aircraft to Bembridge for Islander 30. Pilatus PC-7 Mk II, c/n 11, HB-HMS (left) and Pilatus PC-12, c/n 102, HB-FOE (BNAPS Archive Collection).

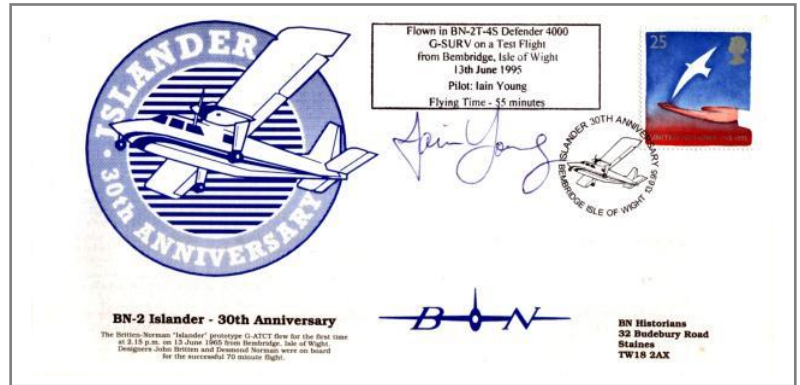
Once again thanks go to BNAPS Supporter, Norman Hobbs, for providing postal covers related to Islander 30, one celebrating the event and the other marking the delivery from Romania of the 500th BN-2 built in Romania.

Commemorative Postal Covers for Islander 30

BN Historians organised Islander 30 postal covers to be flown in Islander G-AYRU and Defender 4000 G-SURV. The reverse of the cover is stamped to confirm the 24 minute flight from Bembridge to Netheravon on 13 June 1995 with Steve Clarke as the pilot of G-AYRU.

This BN-2A-6 Islander's maiden flight took place at Bembridge on 8 May 1970 with registration G-51-181. On 30 July 1970 it was flown with registration OH-BNA to Sir Air in Helsinki. They named it "Pialysmies".

In 1971 it was used by B-N as a demonstrator until being sold in April 1972 to the Army Parachute Association at Netheravon who operated it for over 34 years. Then short spells of ownership when it was based at Shoreham and Cumbernauld until it was flown to Sweden in 2012. Versatile Air Services, based in Sierra Leone, took delivery in September 2017. Unfortunately, the C of A expired and the CAA cancelled registration G-AYRU on 11 September 2018.



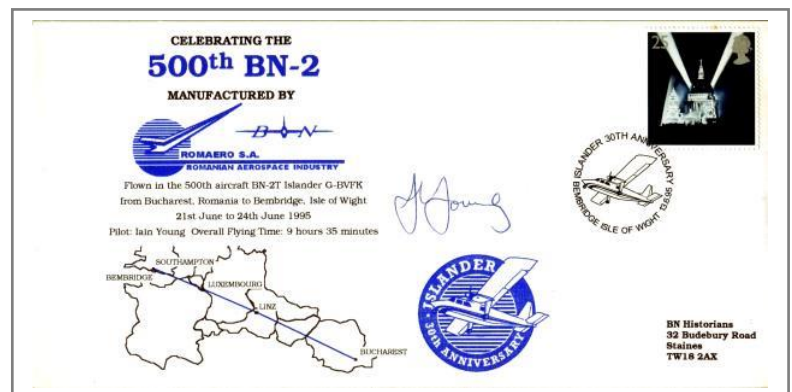
500th Romanian Built BN-2 Delivery Flight

From 1969 up to the time of Islander 30, about half of the total Islander production was built in Romania.

The first Romanian Islander, assembled by IRMA at Bucharest's Baneasa airport, was from a kit supplied by Britten-Norman. All subsequent aircraft were built entirely in Romania. B-N pilots flew the primer-painted aircraft from Bucharest, Romania to Bembridge on an average 10+ hour flight across Europe using dedicated ferry engines and a comprehensive radio ferry pack.

On 24 June 1995, during the 30th Anniversary Celebrations, the 500th Romanian Islander, BN-2T, G-BVFK, c/n 2277, was delivered to Bembridge after a near record breaking delivery flight of just over 9.5 hours.

The maiden flight of BN-2T c/n 2277 G-BVFK took place at Baneasa Airport on 12 June 1995. Given a new registration of G-JSAT, on 9 March 1998 it was delivered to the Rhine Army Parachute Association in West Germany, who operated it for over 13 years. It is now back with B-N as a demonstrator and was given a gold coloured paint scheme for B-N's Islander 50 celebrations in 2015.



Pilot of Islander G-BVFK, Iain Young, left, and PBN's Chief Pilot John Ayers with the 500th Romanian built BN-2 aircraft (George Marsh Collection).

A Close Call for B-N

Islander 30 took place towards the end of time when Britten-Norman operated as Pilatus Britten-Norman (PBN), after its acquisition in 1979 by Pilatus Aircraft, part of the Swiss Oerlikon-Buhrle Group. It was evident at Islander 30 that by 1995 PBN had gained significant benefits from investment in new and updated BN-2 variants.

However, back in 1981 mounting losses at B-N, together with a downturn in the aviation industry was the cause of concern at the group HQ in Stans, Switzerland to the extent that Dr. Egon Haefliger was given instructions by the parent company to liquidate the B-N side of their business.

Fortunately, having taken stock of the business, and taking a positive view of what he perceived as its future prospects, Dr. Haefliger convinced the parent group to adopt a more positive approach and proposed the introduction of major changes to make the B-N business profitable, together with a number of initiatives related to new products, staff training and stock management. Some of the story of how Dr Haefliger got this done is presented in this 1983 Guardian news item that follows:

Guardian, London – 26 July 1983. MANAGEMENT AT WORK

“Training got the Wight elephant to fly profitably”

Jane McLoughlin

When Dr Egon Haefliger first came to the factory at Bembridge on the Isle of Wight where the famous "jack-of-all-trades" aircraft the Islanders were made. He had been told by the parent company, Oerlikon Buhrle Group, to liquidate the business. That was almost two years ago now. It was not the first time the Islander operation of Britten-Norman had nearly folded its wings. It was rescued by Fairey in 1972, then was almost grounded again in 1977. Added to that, the last two years have seen a dramatic downwards dive throughout the aviation industry.

But - and isn't there always a but - in what, may, now, be a happy ever after story. Dr Haefliger was not convinced by the case for the liquidation. In spite of the state of the world industry or the 1981 loss which was running at £1.76 million. Dr Haefliger is Swiss and he thought a little more attention to detail might make a lot of difference to what is now Pilatus Britten-Norman.

So, there was a recession! So, there would be less to spend on very expensive aircraft to carry the very very expensive weaponry countries were certain to go on buying. He decided that with new products, together with a new management approach, a miracle might be made to happen. The Islander started life after the War as a crop spraying plane; the answer to a business problem devised by a former bush pilot, fruit grower, an ex-RAF pilot and a designer. Since then it has done almost everything anyone who wants a flying workhorse could think of - ambulance, commuter, survey and maritime patrol. Dr Haefliger decided to change direction - "On the civil market the aircraft had been very successful as a piston version in the Third World. But the civil side was in recession, with our rivals, Cessna, Piper and others all forced to lay off people. The product was no longer right for the market. But this coincided with a rethink on the military side. Countries can no longer afford to use aircraft which cost up to 20 times more than ours to do a job which could be done by much cheaper, aircraft. So that's the way we went-producing a reliable aircraft 10-20 times cheaper than what they had been buying, and very sophisticated advanced technology on the hardware side."

Dr Haefliger took stock of the situation. Pilatus Britten-Norman had a good workforce of 250 people, but output was low. Morale was low; it showed in the rather rundown ramshackle sheds at the airstrip at Bembridge, Isle of Wight. There was also a huge €10 million-worth of stocks, too high overheads, the wrong product, no proper production control and planning - and the management which had produced this situation.

And this is where Dr Haefliger set to work. "The British worker is as good as anywhere in the world. In England the problem you see every day is in middle management. There is no proper middle management. They are not trained. They are given jobs because of their blue eyes, or because they meet the right people in the right places in the evenings. Dr Haefliger made a clean sweep - three directors changed in one year and then, he set about middle management. Some he fired - "demotion is a bad principle, it creates a bad atmosphere." Other managers he had trained. "There was a Swiss girl who came here as an au pair girl, married, then got a job on the switchboard, then telex then into marketing as a secretary. Then she was made assistant commercial manager. In Switzerland, you would need to be qualified as a lawyer or an accountant to do such a job. I told her to do these courses to continue the job, and that is what she has done. She has the asset of intelligence, but the right training is important too."

He also decided that the company was not viable unless it had new products, and now with the Turbine Islanders, with various adaptations for specific purposes, he feels that this had been solved with a range, which will see out this decade at least before it needs updating.

"One problem with the military, application is we can't sell to everyone-just friendly nations, and NATO countries and some in the Commonwealth, but not all, and some in South, America, but not all. But we do hope that as the civil side comes out of the slump, it will grow on the back of our military developments."

It seems possible that the Ministry of Defence could consider the Islander as a new trainer. In the past, the company has suffered somewhat in that it competes against British Aerospace which, as a nationalised industry, had first bite at government aid and also ECGD allocations. Pilatus Britten-Norman had its first government grant two months ago, to put de-icing on the aircraft - but Dr Haefliger concedes that help was turned down on previous applications because the management had approached it in the wrong way.

The effect has been discreetly dramatic; there are now 210 workers rather than 250 but output has increased. The £10 million stocks have been reduced to £2 million. In 1982, the company made a profit of £100,000, and is on line for £500,000 this year. But what is harder to disperse is the reputation which it will take time to reverse. We were known for very bad product support - terrible. It is no longer true, but it is hard to tell people that. "Word of mouth from satisfied customers helps, and we show video tapes and visit customers, but it will take another two years or so to be rid of it, I think."

Administration costs have been cut and the whole operation streamlined. For instance, on the Isle of Wight, transport is a more complicated problem than on a mainland site. Dr Haefliger has simply put the whole thing out to contract. The airframes are still made Romania - the design and the complicated equipment fitting is done at Bembridge. Each aircraft is fitted and adapted to meet the exact needs, of the customer - a coastal patrol for India, or an ambulance plane or military trainer. One thing worked in Dr Haefliger's favour - there was no union resistance to what he did and no resentment among the workforce. They were eager for the changes. It must also be said that Dr Haefliger's own approach must have helped - his cheery -"good morning" to everyone he meets, his determined efforts to hear the problems of his workforce from them individually - he visits once a fortnight and if anyone has a problem in his work this is then sorted out up the line "That's the important thing - to listen," says Dr Haefliger.

As a result of Dr Haefliger's efforts, the BN-2T variant was put into production in the 1980s and the Defender 4000 was designed and a prototype flown by 1995. Pilatus Britten-Norman continued to operate through to 1999 when the Oerlikon-Buhrlé Group decided that the B-N side of the business was not a good fit, and was in certain respects in conflict, with the future direction of its Pilatus Aircraft business operations.

Thus the B-N side of the business was offered for sale and was subsequently acquired in 1999 by the Biofarm venture capitalist operation, an arrangement where B-N was once again to be threatened with liquidation - but that is another story.....

Thanks go to Adele Stephenson for kindly writing up an account of her time as a Trislander pilot with Air Pacific based in Fiji. Adele gained a Private licence at 17, commercial at 19, and worked as flying instructor and air taxi pilot. Adele's husband was a CAA Airworthiness Division Surveyor. The CAA was contracted by the Fiji Government to provide two CAA staff, responsible for supervising operations and engineering in Fiji. The Flight Operations staff member was already there and Adele's husband joined him for 5 years in the engineering capacity. Air Pacific happened to want a multi-engine flying instructor at the time, so the airline decided to offer Adele employment and a work permit. Adele flew professionally from the age of 21 to retirement without a break and finished as a BAe 146 captain with KLM UK.

Trislanders in the South Pacific.

It had to be Trislander s/n 1008 masquerading as G-RLON which will, one day, be proudly representing Trislanders at the Solent Sky Museum in Southampton. This Trislander started life as DQ-FCF, Charlie Foxtrot, the first owner being Air Pacific Ltd of Fiji. First of all, it had to get there. For those without an atlas to hand, Fiji consists of a number of islands some 1,000 miles south of the Equator on the other side of the world. Think of Australia then plunge off to the right. Charlie Foxtrot was placed in the hands of an unknown ferry pilot to convey it to Fiji, but clearly had a fit of temperament in Bahrain and was left there. It was collected for its onward journey by ferry pilot Janet Ferguson in July 1975 and it behaved by arriving at Air Pacific's base – Nausori Airport, Suva – six days later.



Trislander c/n 1008 as G-RLON in 2017 at Solent Airport (Bob Wealthy).



Trislander c/n 1008 as DQ-FCF in later Air Pacific colours at Opa Locka, USA (BNAPS Archive Collection).

In case you are wondering how long the usual journey takes in a Trislander from Bembridge to the South Pacific (with ferry tanks) it is approximately 2 weeks and 80-85 hours flying time. Longest sector is Karachi to Calcutta, about 8 hours. It was almost exactly a year later, in June 1976, that I first flew DQ-FCF, now operating as one of Air Pacific's fleet of Trislanders, which had replaced the Herons which, in turn, had replaced Drovers. At that time there were 4 strips, each 3,000 ft long, and each about an hour's flying time from the base in Viti Levu, the main island of the Fiji group.



Trislander landing at Matei airstrip, Taveuni, one of the islands very popular with tourists (Adele Stephenson).

At 21 degrees south of the Equator, there was a slight seasonal change in the weather, but basically day & night were approximately of equal length. The visibility was either good or reduced to nothing in rain, the cloud base varied. Pressure was steady and winds were light, unless there was a hurricane due. At an altitude of 5,000 ft, one was clear above all high ground. This was all to be carefully taken into account as there was no Air Traffic Control radar and no navigation aids apart from a VOR and ILS at the main international airport, Nadi, which were of no use elsewhere. There were one or two non-directional beacons, with the usual levels of accuracy (not great). The most useful navigational aid - not fitted to Trislanders - was an aircraft's own radar, which could be tilted down to pick up the coastlines and islands. Communications were by VHF (limited by line of sight) and HF.

The Trislander was flown single crew. Islands always have two characteristics in common when talking aviation - freight and expensive fuel uplifts. Freight can consist of anything & everything - food, machinery, livestock and anything else that could be crammed in. Landing a Trislander with dozens of eggs in trays in the front locker used to cause a certain nervousness in the hands at the crucial moment. The average Pacific Islander is not slim and slender, so weight was always a consideration and a problem.



View of Air Pacific Trislander DQ-FCF being loaded with baggage and freight typical of operations in the Fijian Islands (Adele Stephenson).



This Trislander, seen here being refuelled, is in the old Air Pacific colours and was kept at Tarawa. The 'patch' on the nose is the temporary repair by a Tarawa engineer. Someone did not fasten the nose locker properly and it came open in flight. The Trislander was flown back to Fiji by Adele for a new cover (Adele Stephenson).

My job with Air Pacific was to train the local pilots for their first command, which would be on the Trislander. After ab initio training in the UK then flying as a First Officer on Air Pacific's HS 748s, the Trislander operation came as quite a change, not the least being alone to cope with anything thrown at you. The beginning of my Trislander lecture to new pilots started with pointing out that the aircraft had three engines because it needed them. I used to do the C of A test flights and we had to do a 3 minute climb with the critical engine (the left one) feathered. Ballasted up to maximum weight, it was not unusual to have sunk a few feet at the end of the three minutes then be unable to unfeather the shutdown engine. Back to Nausori on two engines for a tweak here & there and another attempt.

The Trislanders gave little trouble on line, but if there was any incident, Charlie Foxtrot was always involved. Just to keep something going all the time, the Artificial Horizon instrument constantly toppled after even the smoothest of landings. It would do so in quite dramatic form after a harder bump leaving a new trainee covered in embarrassment. The senior avionics engineer complained bitterly that the problem was even mentioned to him while at a local cocktail party.....



*Air Pacific Trislander DQ-FCE, c/n 1004, at Savu Savu Airport on the
Fijian island of Vanua Levu (Joe Tourist).*

One passenger was nearly lost in flight when the number two (rear) engine crankshaft broke. The descending front two cylinders and prop which hit the roof and disappeared into the ocean didn't cause damage to the passenger – Trislander roofs were clearly built like tanks – but the passenger donned his life jacket and shouted to the captain to ask if he should jump out now. Confusion between a parachute and a life jacket had to be sorted out in rather trying conditions.

The Trislanders were also flown in what were known as the Gilbert Islands, now the Republic of Kiribati. These consisted of a line of atolls spread north to south across the Equator. There were five coral strips at that time plus Tarawa, which had a runway. Tarawa attracted visitors due to one of the bloodiest battles of the South Pacific in WW2. The old Japanese airstrip at Betio was still noticeable among the palm trees.

Amelia Earhart, the American pioneer pilot, was lost in that area in 1937 and visitors regularly made the long journey there in the hopes of finding a clue to her disappearance. I found it ironic that, 40 years later, the Trislander had the same cruising speed as the missing Lockheed Electra and much the same radio equipment - HF and a medium frequency direction finder. The modern version meant one didn't have to crank the loop round but the answer was still not a lot of help.

Ferrying the Trislander up from major maintenance in Fiji to Tarawa via the Ellice Islands (now Tuvalu) had a nail biting stretch before the first of the atolls was sighted when there was nothing but ocean. Point of No Return (the fuel calculation) becomes very significant. I tried flying the Trislander at 10,000 ft to save fuel, but found it didn't. Better to stay at 500 ft and watch the wind on the waves then climb when it was likely to see the first atoll. If there was fair weather cumulus over them, the lagoons turned the clouds green. The old Pacific pilots tipped me off on that one. Most of those pilots were still qualified and experienced in astro navigation. Amazing to think what GPS has done for those parts since then.....

Adele Stephenson
July 2021.

7 (BN-2A-26) C-GSAD Gillam Air Services, Gillam, Manitoba. To Alair - MHA Enterprises, St Theresa Point,, Manitoba. 7.5.19.

121 (BN-2A) G-AXUB Britten-Norman. Due for delivery to Island Airways, Charlevoix, Michigan in September 2021.



246 (BN-2A-3) 9J-ACB Sky Africa, Gauteng, South Africa. Withdrawn from use 2019 when Sky Africa ceased operations.

280 (BN-2A-3) 9J-ACM Sky Africa, Gauteng, South Africa. Withdrawn from use 2019 when Sky Africa ceased operations.

302 (BN-2A-20) YJ-AL3 (1st) Air Taxi, Port Vila, Vanuatu. 26.2.15.
Permanently withdrawn from use at Port Vila.

715 (BN-2A-27) EC-CKL Victor Echo SA, Valencia, Spain.
Cancelled 2.21.

891 (BN-2A-26) N406CW Calypso Aircraft, Lewes, Delaware. 19.5.20.
Fitted with 4 bladed props.

2102 (BN-2T) G-BIIO GAMA Aviation, Farnborough, Hampshire. 11.6.19. Noted flying at Solent 29.3.21.
Delivered to GAMA at Bournemouth 30.3.21.

G-BIIO (c/n 2102) of GAMA Aviation seen flying at Solent 29.3.21. (Rich Davies)



2194 (BN-2T) ZG845 Royal Air Force, Aldergrove, Northern Ireland. To Islander Aircraft, Cumbernauld, Scotland. 9.3.21. Arrived Cumbernauld 9.3.21. Re-reg. **G-BLNT** 7.4.21.

2195 (BN-2T) ZG846 Royal Air Force, Aldergrove, Northern Ireland. To Islander Aircraft, Cumbernauld, Scotland. 18.3.21. Routed Solent - Cumbernauld 18.3.21, reported to be last flight for RAF. Re-reg. **G-BLNU** 7.4.21.

2199 (BN-2T) ZG848 Royal Air Force, Aldergrove, Northern Ireland. 1.4.19. Withdrawn from use, last flight 30.6.21. Flew to Cumbernauld 8.7.21.

2230 (BN-2B-26) DQ-FHG Sunflower Aviation, Nadi, Seen at Port Vila 3.21. To Air Taxi, Port Vila, Vanuatu. 6.21 as **YJ-AL3** (2nd)



YJ-AL3 (2nd), c/n 2230, at Port Vila, Vanuatu, 24.7.21 awaiting an engine change prior to entering service with Air Taxi (Tony Deamer).

2238 (BN-2T) MP-CG-02 Mauritius National Coast Guard, Port Louis, Mauritius. To Business Partners (Mauritius), Ebene, Mauritius. 12.20. Stored at Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolan airport.

2283 (BN-2B-20) G-BVSG Britten-Norman, Lee on Solent, Hampshire. Rebuilt. Noted outside at Solent 19.4.21 with no engines and wing fences; no reg in primer. Noted painted all white at Solent 8.5.21 with reg and wing fences and piston engines. Flew for first time after rebuild 11.5.21. We understand it is being prepared for a customer in Europe.



G-BVSG (c/n 2283) seen test flying at Solent in May 2021. It was later noted with crop spraying equipment. (Rich Davies)

4005 (BN-2T-4S) ZG995 Royal Air Force, Aldergrove, Northern Ireland. Withdrawn from use. Stored at Solent 27.2.20. Restored to UK Civil Register 30.7.21 as G-SURV.

4009 (BN-2T-4S) ZH004 Royal Air Force, Aldergrove, Northern Ireland. Withdrawn from use. Stored at Solent 28.6.21. Restored to UK Civil Register 30.7.21 as G-BWPO.

4010 (BN-2T-4S) ZG996 Royal Air Force, Aldergrove, Northern Ireland. Withdrawn from use. Stored at Solent 2.6.21. Restored to UK Civil Register 30.7.21 as G-BWPR.

4012 (BN-2T-4S) ZG997 Royal Air Force, Aldergrove, Northern Ireland. Withdrawn from use. Stored at Solent 8.7.21. Restored to UK Civil Register 30.7.21 as G-BWPV.

4014 (BN-2T-4S) ZG998 Royal Air Force, Aldergrove, Northern Ireland. Withdrawn from use. Stored at Solent 8.7.21. Restored to UK Civil Register 30.7.21 as G-BWPX.

4015 (BN-2T-4S) ZH001 Royal Air Force, Aldergrove, Northern Ireland. Withdrawn from use. Stored at Solent 1.3.21. Restored to UK Civil Register 30.7.21 as G-CEIO.

4016 (BN-2T-4S) ZH002 Royal Air Force, Aldergrove, Northern Ireland. Withdrawn from use. Stored at Solent 8.7.21. Restored to UK Civil Register 30.7.21 as G-CEIP.

4017 (BN-2T-4S) ZH003 Royal Air Force, Aldergrove, Northern Ireland. Withdrawn from use. Stored at Solent 11.6.21. Restored to UK Civil Register 30.7.21 as G-CEIR.

4018 (BN-2T-4S) ZH005 Royal Air Force, Aldergrove, Northern Ireland. Withdrawn from use. Stored at Solent 4.5.20. Restored to UK Civil Register 30.7.21 as G-CVGB.



Thanks go to BN Historians for the latest update on BN-2 owners and operators. To buy a copy of the BN Historians BN-2 Production History "Islander 2021" produced to order please contact BN Historians "enquiries@bnhistorians.co.uk"

Breaking News 28 July 2021 - Ex RAF Defender R.2s Acquired by B-N

B-N has made an announcement on its facebook page that the fleet of nine BN-2T-4S Defender R.2 aircraft, recently withdrawn from RAF service, has been acquired from the UK MoD and will shortly be available through B-N's pre-owned aircraft sales team.

B-N describe the aircraft as being in excellent condition and will undergo full factory refurbishment as part of a \$25m export sales package. Roles available include commuter, medevac, freight and special missions.



Artist's impression of a BN-2T-4S in civil livery (B-N).

Roraima Airways Trislanders Serving Remote Guyana Regions

.A number of images have been posted recently by Learie Constantine Barclay of Roraima Airways showing Trislanders in operation providing vital air links serving communities in remote regions of Guyana.



Roraima Airways Trislanders 8R-GRE, c/n 1042, and 8R-GRF, c/n 1023, at a remote mine site in Guyana (Learie Constantine Barclay).



Roraima Airways Trislander 8R-GRE delivering essential supplies to a remote community at Kurukabaru, Guyana (Learie Constantine Barclay).

Islanders and Trislanders on the Beach

Following on from the story about the prototype Islander, G-ATCT, landing on the beach at Bembridge in 1966, as recounted in the January 2021 issue of BNAPS News, we take a look at some other situations where Islanders and Trislanders have operated from beaches, including one occasion that was not originally planned.

Outer Hebrides – 75 nautical miles from mainland Scotland

Barra

Barra is at the southern end of several islands that make up the Outer Hebrides off the west coast of Scotland. Barra Airport (IATA: BRR, ICAO: EGPR) (also known as Barra Eoligarry Airport) is situated in the wide shallow bay of Traigh Mhòr at the northern tip of the island of Barra. The airport is operated by Highlands and Islands Airports Limited, which owns most of the regional airports in mainland Scotland and the outlying islands. Barra Airport opened in 1936. The airport is unique where scheduled flights use a tidal beach as the runway. The beach is set out with three runways in a triangle, marked by permanent wooden poles at their ends, in directions 07/25, 11/29, 15/33.

Loganair Islanders and Trislanders have operated from the beach at Barra with the proviso that "times are subject to tides". Now Loganair use Twin Otter aircraft as well as their B-N Islanders for medical emergencies. Occasionally Hebridean Air Services, part of the Airtask Group, operate Islander charter flights to Barra.



Barra Airport Terminal Building and Beach (BNAPS Archive Collection).



Loganair Trislander G-AZZM, c/n 321, at Barra c1973 (BNAPS Archive Collection).



Loganair Islander G-BDDV, c/n 461, at Barra 1978 (GJM Photos).



Hebridean Islander G-HEBS, c/n 2267, at Barra June 2021 (BNAPS Archive Collection).

Other sites in the Outer Hebrides used for beach landings for charter flights, typically for wildlife survey parties and environmental groups.

Northton Beach Isle of Harris



Loganair Islander G-AXSS, c/n 603, on Northton Beach, Isle of Harris (Ken Foster).

Solas Beach North Uist



Unidentified Loganair Islander on Solas Beach, North Uist (BNAPS Archive Collection).

Islanders and Trislanders on the Beach (continued)

Sable Island Nova Scotia Canada

Sable Island (French: île de Sable, "island of sand") is a small Canadian island situated 300 km (190 mi) southeast of Halifax, Nova Scotia, and about 175 km (109 mi) southeast of the closest point of mainland Nova Scotia in the North Atlantic Ocean.

Sable Island Airport has official registration (IATA: YSR) but has no actual airport infrastructure. The designated landing area is the hard sand of the Island's south beach. Although tidal cycles do not affect the south beach, storm surges occasionally flood the entire landing area to a depth of more than a foot, rendering it unusable for fixed-wing operations. Prior to aircraft landing or taking off, the Operations Coordinator of Parks Canada's Sable Island Station must thoroughly inspect the area in use that day to ensure that it is not too soft. This is accomplished by driving a truck (the only vehicle allowed on the island) up and down the length of the landing area, thereby marking out the "runway". Too much rain will render the sand too mushy to safely land the aircraft; conversely, in the heat of summer the sand dries out to such an extent that the area becomes too soft to support the weight of the aircraft.



Sable Island beach landing area (BNAPS Archive Collection).



Sable Aviation Islander C-GILS landing on Sable Island beach (BNAPS Archive Collection).

Sable Aviation operates Islander C-GILS, c/n 416, and makes regular flights to the beach from Halifax Stanfield International Airport as the contracted fixed wing service provider for Sable Island. Sable Aviation is an Air Taxi (Part 703) operation owned and operated by Debbie Brekelmans who is both Operations Manager and Chief Pilot. Debbie has just celebrated her 15th year of flying to Sable Island. Debbie has an ATPL and over 8200 hours flight time and has extensive experience in developing training programmes, promoting safety, and encouraging professional development, both for herself and others.



Sable Aviation Islander C-GILS departing from Sable Island (BNAPS Archive Collection).



Debbie Brekelmans with Sable Aviation Islander C-GILS celebrating her 15 years of flying to the island, July 2021 (Debbie Sable Island Pilot).

Falkland Islands Beaches

Since 1979 FIGAS have flown B-N Islander aircraft onto Kepple Island beach and Pebble Island beach. Pebble island beach is currently used in winter months when the grass strip becomes waterlogged.



FIGAS Islander VP-FAY, c/n 872, on Kepple Island beach c1980 (FIGAS).



Stamp (SG721) showing a FIGAS Islander on Pebble Island beach was issued in 1994 (Norman Hobbs).

Islanders and Trislanders on the Beach (continued)

Stewart Island New Zealand

Stewart Island is New Zealand's third largest island, situated 30 kilometres south of the South Island, across the Foveaux Strait. Much of the island is National Park, and is a haven for brown kiwi or Tokoeka, blue penguins and rare yellow-eyed penguins. The island is served by Stewart Island Flights with its fleet of two BN Islanders, ZK-FXE, c/n 110, and ZK-FWZ, c/n 52, with regular flights from Invercargill and from the main airport at Oban to various parts of the island.



Typical views of Stewart Island Flights Islanders in operation at Mason Bay (Stewart Island Flights).



There are four beach landing sites, West Ruggedy, Little Hellfire, Mason Bay and Doughboy Bay, all on the east side of the island. Mason Bay is the starting point for the Coast to Coast walk adventure. Mason Bay is 14km long end to end and provides a choice four different landing areas. This beach is the one most used by Stewart Island Flights Islander aircraft.

St Ouen's Bay, Jersey, Channel Islands

On 8 June 1998 Aurigny Air Services Trislander G-BEVT, c/n 1057, was on a scheduled service between Jersey and Guernsey with 16 passengers on board. After take-off the pilot observed that the left engine had failed and so he feathered the propeller on that engine. With maximum power on the remaining two engines, the aircraft was unable to climb and the pilot elected to make a landing on the nearby St Ouen's beach (right).



The beach landing was successful and the passengers were able to evacuate through the normal exits. The aircraft was not damaged and, following inspection and ground runs, it was flown off the beach later in the day. After inspection several fuel system components were replaced as a precaution, the subsequent incident report concluded that the Maximum Take Off Weight had been exceeded and this accounted for the lack of climb performance on two engines.

Precision Terrain Survey's Islander G-AWNT in Japan July 2021

Specialist aerial survey company, Precision Terrain Surveys based in Edenbridge Kent, operates the oldest Islander on the UK register, c/n 32, G-AWNT. News has just come in from BNAPS Supporter Ron Valentine that the Islander has been sent to Japan to provide communications relay support for the Olympic Games. Thanks to the Flight Radar 24 facility and the watchful eye of Steven Byles based in Japan, it was noted that Islander G-AWNT was operating from Chofu, a small regional airport near Tokyo to conduct its missions.

Islander G-AWNT is at present on lease to PixAir Survey based in Rouen, France. The company has specialised in providing air cover for events such as the Tour de France to relay TV signals back to studios for transmission.

PixAir Survey pilot Jean Jerome took the Islander on an epic flight from Rouen to Japan via Lithuania and several stops in Russia. Overall the flight took 6 days arriving on 21 July.

Islander G-AWNT has been owned by Precision Terrain Surveys since 2007 and is a remarkable example of the type's dependability and utility, 53 years after it made its maiden flight on 7 September 1968.

BNAPS has been in touch with Precision Terrain Surveys and we hope to tell the full story of Islander G-AWNT's epic flight to Japan and future prospects for the aircraft in a future issue of BNAPS News.



Precision Terrain Surveys Islander G-AWNT at Matsumoto Airport, Japan, 21 July 2021 (Fly Team Japan).

Island Airways to Acquire Fifth Islander

In a B-N press release on 24 June 2021 it was announced that US Islander operator, Island Airways, that serves the community of Beaver Island, Lake Michigan, will take delivery of a fifth Islander aircraft. The Islander is c/n 121, G-AXUB, to be delivered in September 2021. It will undergo an extensive programme of refurbishment works including: a new interior, paint scheme, BN landing gear and upgraded avionics. A cargo modification will also be installed to suit Island Airways increased freight requirement.

Island Airways is a unique 76-year-old family run business. The company serves Beaver Island's small community, which has a year-round population of 600. The operation is run by husband and wife, Angela and Paul Welke from Welke Airport, a privately owned public use airport on the Northeast side of the island. The company predominantly transports guests, freight and mail from Charlevoix to Beaver Island, Michigan, USA. In winter, Lake Michigan freezes, the island community becomes dependent on Island Airways for everything, including medical supplies, food and a medevac service.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Island Airways team feared for the future of the airline. Since then a transformative change has occurred within the region's tourism sector, a trade Beaver Island relies heavily upon. Domestic inter-state travel has risen almost exponentially. This has opened the island up to a new, more local market seeking respite and escape. This market change triggered the requirement for a fifth 260hp Islander.

Angela Welke, President of Island Airways, stated: *"The Islander is the perfect aircraft! There is no rival twin engine in existence. The flight from Beaver Island to Charlevoix is just 15 minutes and my husband, Paul, has over 15,000 hours flying the Islander; that's how vital it is to our operation. For us, versatility is key. The Islander allows us to meet the unprecedented demands of an entire community. We can readily switch between roles, not only delivering lifeline freight and passenger services, but also providing a medevac service in the case of emergency. Paul and I are delighted to see demand increasing again, we look forward to serving this wonderful community even more efficiently with our new aircraft."*

A feature article about Island Airways is planned for the September 2021 issue of BNAPS News

HRH Prince Michael of Kent Visits B-N at Solent Airport

HRH Prince Michael of Kent, GCVO, HM Lord-Lieutenant of Hampshire, Nigel Atkinson Esq and Equerry Lt Cdr Ian Dorward RNR, visited Britten-Norman's Lee-on-the-Solent facility on Wednesday 21 July 2021.



HRH Prince Michael of Kent, centre, with B-N CEO William Hynett OBE, left, and Lord Lieutenant of Hampshire Lt Cdr Ian Dorward RNR (B-N).



In the course of his hangar tour, HRH Prince Michael of Kent was introduced to B-N's workshop manager, Pete Dowers (B-N).

HRH Prince Michael of Kent was greeted by William Hynett, OBE, Chief Executive at Britten-Norman who briefed him about the many exciting new innovations, including the electric and automated Islander projects now under way at B-N. Also Mr Hynett emphasised that the Islander is an enduring design which has inspired a devoted fan base over 56 years of continuous manufacture and development.

Several different types of BN-2 aircraft were lined up outside the B-N Final Assembly hangar for the occasion. HRH Prince Michael of Kent toured the hangar where he had the opportunity to meet some of the B-N personnel there.

Islander G-NOIL Moves to Redhill

In the May 2020 issue of BNAPS News it was reported that Islander c/n 334 ,G-NOIL, was undergoing a major overhaul at Staverton Airport. News has just arrived, courtesy of Ron Valentine and photographer John Day, that the aircraft is now at Redhill aerodrome in Surrey. At present it is not known what work will be carried out if G-NOIL is to go back in the air. Any information about its future will be much appreciated.



Recent views of the fuselage of Islander G-NOIL stored in a hangar at Redhill Aerodrome (John Day).

Islander c/n 334, registration mark G-BAXC, was built at Bembridge as a BN-2A-8 made a first flight on 11 June 1973. Delivered to Fair Oaks Aviation Services on 8 July 1973, it was exported to Israel on 30 July 1973 where it operated with Kanaf/Arkia, Tel Aviv and took up the registration 4X-AYR. In May 1975 it was leased to Olympic Airways, Athens, Greece where it was registered as SX-BBX, returning to Israel in October 1975 and reverting to registration mark 4X-AYR. In January 1982, it returned to the UK when it was acquired by Harvest Air, Southend and allocated registration mark G-BJWO. At Harvest Air it was converted to a BN-2A-26 and fitted with Micronair aerial spraying equipment. After changes of ownership with Regionair, Southend, Chapman Aviation and Kent Air, Biggin Hill, in June 1992 it went to the Peterborough Parachute Centre, Sibson, Cambridgeshire. In May 2002 the aircraft was reported as being acquired by Falcon Parachute Centre, Hacketstown, Co. Carlow, Ireland. Later in August 2006 it was reported as withdrawn from use at Turweston, UK. On 23 November 2006 ownership was assigned to Metachem Diagnostics. Following refurbishment Islander c/n 334 was returned to flying condition in 2007. In 2012 Islander c/n 334 was purchased by Aerospace Resources Ltd and registered as G-NOIL.

In 2012 Aerospace Resources Ltd (ARL) were contracted to purchase and modify a Britten-Norman Islander aircraft with an innovative oil spill dispersant spray system, in readiness for a Special Operations role to meet oil industry response regulations for the UK government's Department of Energy and Climate Change. Islander c/n 334 was acquired in December 2012 and modification work completed by March 2013, the aircraft being appropriately registered as G-NOIL.

ARL's engineering team project managed modification work to meet a demanding environmental operational requirement to support oil spill response missions in the region of the UK Continental Shelf in an all year round, 24/7 standby role for both visual verification and oil dispersant application, as the critical first-line of defence in the event of a suspected or confirmed oil spill event. For the project ARL had worked in partnership the aviation arm of Cobham plc to provide a complete end to end managed solution from inception through to test and deployment.



Islander G-NOIL with oil spill spray gear installed (Aircraft.com).

Islander G-NOIL Moves to Redhill (continued).

In March 2013 Islander G-NOIL was ready for acceptance testing and part of this activity can be viewed on Youtube: www.youtube.com/watch?v=UN2mCGb3DKs&t=24s

It appears that Islander G-NOIL was overtaken by events not long after he modification work had been completed. Expected to go into service with Cobham Aviation as part of its oil spill response service, decisions had been made to replace an interim contract with a 10 year contract that involved a specialist company Oil Spill Response Ltd (OSRL) and operation of two Boeing 727 aircraft modified to provide a high capacity oil dispersant spraying capability. It is believed that Islander G-NOIL remained in the aircraft fleet until 2015. Its Certificate of Airworthiness lapsed in 2016 and it is believed to have then been placed in storage at Staverton Airport, see May 2020 issue of BNAPS News.



Islander G-NOIL with Boeing 727 and Dornier 228 OSRL aircraft c 2014 (ARL).



Islander G-NOIL taking off from Bournemouth Airport September 2013 (John Coates).

Subsequently comprehensive specification details of Islander G-NOIL were presented on the auction site, Aircraft.com when it was offered for sale. It was stated that the aircraft had been operating under EASA AOC conditions, was exceptionally well equipped and had been maintained to very high standards. Converting from special role to passenger configuration is "an afternoon's work" The unique spray capability had been approved by a cooperative of the world's major oil companies and is a fully certified EASA modification.

The fully EASA certified STC aerial spray system has a 420 litre capacity variable rate spray system. Spray rate is variable up to in excess of 40 litres per minute with adaptable nozzles for variable droplet sizes suitable for oil dispersants, insecticides etc. Also included was a parachuting modification.

Total airframe time was quoted as 9260 hours, and engine times of 615 hours since major overhaul, with one propeller having accumulated 178 hours of operation while the second propeller was zero time. More about Islander c/n 334 will be reported in a future issue of BNAPS News.

From the Archive

An image of the BN-2 prototype G-ATCT at the 1965 Paris Air Show has recently surfaced. Apart from the aircraft being depicted from a low down camera position that is not often seen, on the right of the image both John Britten (extreme right) and Desmond are there with the aircraft. Credit for the image is not known, but it is most likely a B-N image taken for publicity purposes.



Wight Military & Heritage Museum Open Day and Islander G-AVCN Preview Day 25 September 2021

On 25 September 2021, the Wight Military & Heritage Museum (WM&HM) will be hosting an open day with free entry. Alongside this BNAPS invites all BNAPS Supporters and anyone interested in taking a look at our restored Islander at the museum to our "Islander G-AVCN Preview Day". There will be opportunities to meet with some of the BNAPS Trustees and members of the restoration team who will be there for the day with the aircraft and in an adjacent function room that the WM&HM manager is making available to BNAPS for the day.



A recent view of Islander G-AVCN in the WM&HM exhibition space with detail assembly work under way.

The WM&HM is open from 10.00 until 15.45 and is situated on the main Cowes to Newport road on the west side of the River Medina at Northwood Camp, 490 Newport Road, Cowes, Isle of Wight, PO31 8QU. There is a bus every 10 minutes on Southern Vectis Route 1, the County Show Ground stop is directly outside the museum. For more information go to: whahm.org.uk

Wight Aviation Museum Update - July 2021

The Wight Aviation Museum (WAM) at Sandown re-opened to visitors in June.

Opening times are Monday, Tuesday, Saturday and Sunday 1000-1500 hrs with additional opening days to suit Sandown Airport events. See www.eghn.org.uk/calendar/ for further details.

The operations room has been completed, and a well equipped meeting room is now available for talks and society meetings. For details, bookings and eager volunteers, please contact Helen Blake at hblake39@hotmail.com

WAM will be holding a commemorative event on 28 October 2021 to celebrate 50 years since the launch of the Black Arrow and the Prospero satellite. For further details please see the WAM website www.wightaviationmuseum.org.uk

A commemorative plaque will be unveiled to acknowledge the people who worked on Black Arrow. If anyone has a connection with Black Arrow, or knows someone involved, please contact Tony Smart at tonysmart.iow56@yahoo.com

WAM's Britten-Norman CC-7 CushionCraft XX102 c/n 005 is on a cradle so the skirt can be removed to facilitate inspection. An original operations and maintenance manual has been acquired to assist restoration work. WAM is looking for sponsors for a concrete hard standing.



Black Arrow launcher replica and gantry is now in place at Sandown Airport alongside the museum entrance gate (Tony Smart).

New BNAPS Postcards Just Released

A new BNAPS postcard of B-N Trislander G-BEVT, c/n 1057, in flight is available to purchase direct from BNAPS, in the Duxford Aviation Society shop and at the Trislander on display at the Imperial War Museum Duxford site.

Trislander G-BEVT is part of the society's British airliners collection line up at Duxford. For details of the collection and Duxford events go to www.duxfordaviationsociety.org and www.iwm.org.uk



Another BNAPS postcard features Aurigny Trislander G-JOEY, c/n 1016, landing at Bembridge.

New BNAPS Islander postcards include:

Army Air Corps	ZG993, c/n 2202 "Pinky"
Fly My Sky	ZK-SFK c/n 236
Hebridean Air	G-HEBS, c/n 2267
LFH	D-IEST, c/n 2253

To obtain an up-to-date list of postcards available and to purchase postcards, please contact BNAPS by email: norman@bnaps.org.uk

BNAPS Sales

Please contact BNAPS at sales@bnaps.org.uk if there are any questions regarding stock items and availability. A revised stock list and sales catalogue will be available in the near future.

BNAPS on the Internet - information and back issues of BNAPS News go to www.bnaps.org.uk
Facebook - Look out for latest posts and news on the BNAPS Facebook page

More BNAPS Supporters Needed

If any BNAPS Supporters Club member knows of someone who would be interested in joining please pass on contact details to our BNAPS Membership Secretary, Rita Edgcumbe at sales@bnaps.org.uk

The principal aims of the BNAPS Supporters Club are:
"to assist BNAPS to preserve the history and aircraft of Britten-Norman through member donations and to provide assistance with the day-to-day operations of the charity"
Anyone with an interest in local aviation heritage is welcome.

As a point of clarification, whilst BNAPS has contact with B-N Group from time to time, as a charitable trust BNAPS is an independent organisation.

Forthcoming BNAPS Events

It is now planned to hold a "VCN Preview Day" on September 25 2021, the event is being run in conjunction with the Wight Military & Heritage Museum's free entry Open Day.

All are welcome to attend - donations to BNAPS to help with restoration and preservation of "Charlie November" will be much appreciated.

The "Official Unveiling" is now scheduled for late April 2022, details to be advised nearer the time

If anyone needs more information about BNAPS and what is happening please do not hesitate to get in touch.

BNAPS

BNAPS is a Registered Charity, No. 1100735, set up to "preserve the history and aircraft of Britten-Norman with the support of members' subscriptions, sponsorship and donations"

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Trustees are Peter Graham, Bob Wilson, Guy Palmer and Bob Wealthy.
Bob Wealthy is currently the Trust Chairman.

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