



BNAPS News

May 2019

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Wing Lift on 23 May 2019 Marks a Major Milestone for the Restoration of Islander G-AVCN

Thanks to a great team effort and support from our workshop neighbour, Ian Hallett, together with the loan of adjustable wing trestles by B-N, arranged by B-N workshop manager Pete Dowers, on 23 May, 2019, the wing of Islander G-AVCN was successfully lifted from the vertical stands and positioned on the horizontal wing trestles. Work will now get under way to move the fuselage to enable the wing and fuselage to be joined.



Left: First the fork lift had to be driven into the workshop and positioned for the lift.



Right: Lift is complete with the wing supported on the adjustable wing trestles, now mounted on wheeled bases.



Left: Group photo of the BNAPS Team members involved in the lift with Ian Hallett, who kindly provided and operated the fork lift that made the whole wing lift possible.

Thanks go to all who contributed to making the wing lift a great success. For more about the wing lift see the March 2019 – May 2019 VCN Progress Report on Pages 4 -12.

In this issue of BNAPS News:

**G-AVCN final assembly progress;
Defender 4000 First Flight 25th**

**Army Air Corps, Royal Air Force and MoD Islanders and Defenders;
Plus more news of Islanders and Trislanders around the World**

BNAPS Supporters Fund Raising Appeal – May 2019



Dear BNAPS Supporter,

BNAPS Trustees have continued to explore a number of possibilities that could offer a long term home for our restored Islander G-AVCN but at present this has not proved fruitful. Now, with final assembly of the Islander well under way, our principal concern is to ensure the restored aircraft can be maintained in safekeeping until a place is found on the Isle of Wight to put it on public display.

In the meantime action is underway to make the Brickfields workshop more suited to support group visits and open days, partly to support fund raising but mainly to stimulate interest and take pride in what has been achieved by the restoration team. Also tribute will be paid to all the organisations that have helped the project with parts, services and funding awards which, together with our BNAPS Supporters Club members' support and the many donations received from friends of BNAPS, have all ensured a successful outcome to the restoration project

The level of support, interest and enthusiasm for the project to save the historic B-N Islander G-AVCN has been most gratifying. At or around the end of this year decisions must be made regarding the future for G-AVCN. If a permanent home is found by this time the decision is fairly straightforward. If not then the principal concern is to maintain G-AVCN in safekeeping, either fully assembled under cover and accessible for visits, or dismantled and placed in secure storage. For BNAPS it is crucial that there must be sufficient income to cover the rental of suitable accommodation and other expenses such as insurance. Continuing income from donations made by BNAPS Supporters Club members, fund raising initiatives and other sources will be most appreciated. This funding is absolutely vital for sustaining the project and assuring its longer term prospects.

If you wish to support the fundraising appeal please contact BNAPS by email bob@bnaps.org.uk or Telephone 01329 315561. All donations large and small will be gratefully received.

Yours sincerely,

Bob Wealthy, Britten-Norman Aircraft Preservation Society Chairman

Isle of Wight Sandown Bay 50+ Club Sponsored Walks to Raise Funds for BNAPS.

On 29 May, walkers from the Isle of Wight Sandown Bay 50+ Club arrived at BNAPS workshop at Brickfields near Ryde having completed their sponsored walk from Bembridge to raise funds for BNAPS.

At the workshop walkers were provided with light refreshments and also took the opportunity to view work in progress on the restoration of Islander G-AVCN.

Thanks go to Charlotte Winter for organising the sponsored walk, to the walkers who took part and to Rita Edgcumbe and Jeni Gallagher for organising the refreshments.

BNAPS has been invited to attend a tea party on 24 July at the end of the last walk of the series where the funding raised by the sponsored walkers will be presented to BNAPS Chairman, Bob Wealthy, and BNAPS restoration team volunteer, Keith Winter.

G-AVCN Wing Lift Considerations and Implementation Scheme 2 May 2019

The last period has seen much attention to devising a method for lifting the wing from the vertical stands, rotated through 90 degrees to a horizontal position and then raised vertically to a height that will enable the wing/fuselage to be joined and supported by means that will allow the wing to be moved. Some of the thinking and the basis for how the wing lift will be accomplished are outlined as below:

The original plan was to use two heavy duty fence posts as fixed pivots close to the wing c of g, but this was abandoned in favour of using lifting plates attached to the top surface of the wing: span wise close to the engine bays and chord wise approximately above the c of g. One of the advantages of the first idea was that no crane or lifting equipment was required. However, as the rotation needs to be accompanied by a vertical lift and transferred to mobile supports this would have meant a multi stage approach that would take longer.

Height restriction at the far end of the workshop is an important consideration as vertical lift is restricted, but the problem eases as the turn takes place. This is easier to control using lifting plates and a crane or forklift. Also, using lifting plates will allow the wing to be turned and raised to a height suitable for moving over the fuselage and positioning it on moveable supports, whereby it can be moved over the fuselage in one operation. The use of one, or possibly two, car engine hoists was considered, but dismissed for two main reasons-

1. High risk of instability when lifting a 49 foot long wing that weighs approximately 850 lbs:

2. Lack of clearance between the hoists and the wing as the lifting height increased.

Having examined several possible schemes for lifting the wing, the preferred option was to use a fork lift. A suitable item is owned by a neighbouring business and the proprietor kindly agreed to its use and to operate it for the lift.

The next problem that had to be addressed was how to get the fork lift into the workshop as access through the large door at the back of the workshop could not be used because of adjacent building works by the site owners. The problem will be overcome by removing the workshop front access door and surrounding frame to make enough width to get the fork lift in and out.

Based on an arrangement successfully used by B-N for several wing turns and lifts, Tim Barton has made a pair of lifting plates and which were installed on the wing.



Left - This shows one of two lifting plates fitted in place of access panels on the wing's upper surface adjacent to strong points around the main landing gear tube support structure. The existing access panel cover plates were used as templates for drilling the lifting plate fixing bolt holes.

Following a recent visit to the workshop to discuss the wing lift issues, Pete Dowers, B-N's workshop supervisor based at Solent Airport, has obtained permission from BN CEO, William Hynett, for the loan of two height adjustable wing trestles (both fore and aft adjustable) provided they are used in controlled conditions and are not modified.

As these trestles are not moveable each trestle will be mounted on a heavy duty moveable support structure, now being built, and fitted with suitable high load bearing castors that have now been purchased.

The height of the supports will be such that the under surface of the wing will be slightly above the fuselage roof line so that once the wing is turned and mounted on the supports it will be possible to manoeuvre the wing over the fuselage ready to be fitted. Before this the fuselage will be moved to the assembly position - room is tight but

G-AVCN Wing Lift Considerations and Implementation Scheme 2 May 2019 (continued)



View of the adjustable wing trestles on loan from B-N.

Once the fuselage has been positioned for joining with the wing, final alignment with the fuselage will be achieved with the adjustable wing trestles to allow the wing attachment bolts to be fitted.

Once the wing attachment bolts are in place, the nose landing gear wheel and tyre can be fitted along with the main landing gear wheels and tyres. The complete wing/fuselage assembly will then be lowered so that it is resting on its wheels and the wing trestles removed during the process.

BNAPS Workshop, Brickfields, 2 May 2019.

G-AVCN Restoration Progress Report March 2019 – May 2019

- 1. Final Assembly Preparation:** The wing trestles on loan from B-N were mounted on the moveable base structures that had been constructed. After a “walkthrough” of the wing lift process and completion of a risk assessment, the workshop was re-arranged to enable the fork lift to be moved in and positioned for the wing lift. With the engine hoists supporting the main landing gear legs and the wing trestles positioned ready to be moved into place, the lifting strop was secured to the lifting plate shackles and the fork lift blades. The lift was directed by Bob Wilson and as a result of careful preparation and good teamwork the lift went to plan with no hitches. Subsequently the fuselage was positioned under the wing.
- 2. Fuselage:** The two new seat cushion bases have now been upholstered by Ryde Upholstery.
- 3. Wing:** Some detail work has been carried out on a few of the access panels.
- 4. Ailerons and Flaps:** Awaiting installation.
- 5. Tail Plane:** Awaiting installation.
- 6. Fin, Rudder, Rudder Trim Tab:** Awaiting installation
- 7. Elevator:** Awaiting installation
- 8. Landing Gear:** Main and nose landing gear oleos installed less wheels
- 9. Engine cowlings, engine mounting structures and air baffles:** Awaiting detail fitting, painting and final installation
- 10. Missing Items List:** The list has been updated by Bryan Groves and Bob Wealthy to reflect a number of parts that have been obtained over the past 2 or 3 months together with other detail parts needed that have recently been identified. The updated list has been circulated as necessary.
- 11. Parts Donations:** Thanks go to Falkland Islands Government Air Service Manager Morgan Goss and Quality Manager Kurt Whitney for donating a Flap Actuator Drive Motor to the project.

G-AVCN Restoration Progress Report March 2019-May 2019 (continued)

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



Picture 1

View of the Flap Actuator Drive Motor Unit donated by Falkland Islands Government Air Service. The unit is functional but was deemed non serviceable due to excessive backlash in the gear mechanism.



Picture 2

Another view of the Flap Actuator Drive Motor Unit - the unit was made in 1980 by Electro Pneumatic International GmbH 8146 Hausham W. Germany, Part No FS40



Picture 3

As the flap position indicator and wiring in G-AVCN is for an earlier Flap Drive Actuator Motor, Bryan Groves is engaged on sorting out a modified wiring scheme and other provisions needed to suit the unit now available to the project as it is later model unit than that originally fitted to G-AVCN.

**G-AVCN Restoration Progress Report
March 2019-May 2019 (continued)**



Picture 4

View of one of two the seat cushions for which new covers had been made by Ryde Upholstery.



Picture 5

Bernie Coleman worked on cleaning up and refurbishing the air filter box assembly.



Picture 6

View of the air filter box after it had been worked on. A second filter box assembly is still being sought.

G-AVCN Restoration Progress Report March 2019-May 2019 (continued)



Picture 7

Bryan Groves and Paul Brook connected the Redbox 24 Volt DC ground power unit to check the electrics



Picture 8

Paul Brooks checked that all electrical functions operated correctly. A temporary earth connection was installed in the fuselage as the connection would not be made permanently until the wing is in place.



Picture 9

View of the instrument panel during the check of electrical functions with the 24 Volt DC ground power unit connected.

G-AVCN Restoration Progress Report March 2019-May 2019 (continued)



Picture 10

The base units, originally made when the wing was spray painted, have been fitted with heavy duty castors to provide a mobile base for the adjustable wing stands on loan from B-N. The wing stands are secured to the base by four U bolts.



Picture 11

Left to right, Guy Palmer Mark Porter are seen here installing one of the adjustable wing stands to its mobile base unit.



Picture 12

General view of the wing stand and base unit now ready for use during the wing lift, a second wing stand and base unit has also been assembled.

G-AVCN Restoration Progress Report March 2019-May 2019 (continued)



Picture 13

View of the workshop after moving the fuselage and clearing space for the engine hoists and wing trestles to be placed into position.



Picture 14

View of the wing in the vertical stands prepared for the lift.



Picture 15

View of the starboard side of the wing showing the engine hoist set up to support the load on the main landing gear legs at the initial stage of the lift.

Wing trestles were aligned with the wing ready to be pushed into place under the wing when the wing had been lifted and horizontal.

G-AVCN Restoration Progress Report March 2019-May 2019 (continued)



Picture 16

Side view of the engine hoist and wing trestle for the port side of the wing.



Picture 17

View of the engine hoist and wing trestle for the starboard side of the wing. Aluminium sheet was used to cover the plywood sheets to prevent the jockey wheels digging in.



Picture 18

The fork lift truck is moved into position ready for attachment of the lifting strop to the shackles fitted to the wing mounted lifting plates.

G-AVCN Restoration Progress Report March 2019-May 2019 (continued)



Picture 19

The wing is seen here resting on the wing trestles at the completion of the lift. The whole process was completed in around 10 -15 minutes and no unexpected problems were encountered.



Picture 20

View of the wing from the leading edge at the completion of the lift. After detaching the lifting strop the fork lift was then driven out of the workshop, although clearance between the top part of the fork lift and the starboard wing tip was tight.



Picture 21

View of the fuselage after it was moved under the wing ready for starting the wing and fuselage alignment and joining process.

G-AVCN Restoration Progress Report March 2019-May 2019 (continued)

Work planned for the period through to completion of final assembly

With the wing lifted and supported in a horizontal position on the adjustable wing trestles and the fuselage now positioned under the wing, the alignment process will now get under way so that the wing and fuselage can be joined. Landing gear wheels will then be fitted and the aircraft lowered so that it is resting on its wheels. The following tasks will then be carried out, not necessarily in order. The extent of the work will be restricted in some areas to avoid nugatory work, bearing in mind that there will be the need to take the aircraft apart at a later stage for storage or transport to the final display location:

- 1 Fit the four main wing to fuselage attachment bolts. Temporarily fit the wing to fuselage fairings so they can be easily removed
- 2 Finish the fuselage painting (nose area and cheat lines);
- 3 Apply the Lion logo to the fin;
- 4 Slave fit the fin, rudder and rudder trim tab;
- 5 Slave fit the tail plane, elevator and elevator tab;
- 6 Slave fit flaps, install flap actuator positioning electrical wiring and indicator;
- 7 Slave fit ailerons;
- 8 Install the engines and propellers and all associated dressing items, fit nacelles;
- 9 Fit undercarriage fairings;
- 10 Paint remaining items such as nacelles;
- 11 Install fuselage interior trim, carpeting, seats;
- 12 Check/adjust flight and trim controls;
- 13 Check/adjust flap operation;
- 14 Final electrical check;
- 15 Final inspection and detail remedial work as necessary.



Focus on Islanders and Defenders in Service with the Army Air Corps, the Royal Air Force and the UK MoD

With the recent UK MoD decision to transfer the Army Air Corps Islander and Defender fixed wing assets to the Royal Air Force we felt it appropriate to take a look at the UK military and MoD use of the BN-2. The following is based on an article by that appeared in the August 2016 issue of Air Forces Monthly. Thanks go to the editor of Air Forces Monthly, Thomas Newdick, and the author, Jon Lake, for giving BNAPS permission to use the article.

The first Islander bought by the UK MoD was for use as a dedicated test bed for the projected Corps Airborne Stand Off Radar (CASTOR) programme sponsored by the Army. CASTOR was intended to produce a dedicated stand-off surveillance platform, using Moving Target Indicator (MTI) radar to detect, track and isolate ground targets to meet staff requirement SR (LA) 925. This was primarily designed to support British Forces in Germany, and the Army envisaged the aircraft as a 'Corps-level' asset to be operated by the Army Air Corps. The RAF had a more comprehensive requirement for battlefield surveillance, and pressed for a more versatile CASTOR concept, using the radar in a higher-flying Canberra to see further and provide a 'bigger picture'. Nevertheless, in 1983 the MoD authorised the purchase of a BN-2T Turbine Islander (G-DLRA, later ZG989, c/n 2140) for conversion into a specialised CASTOR test-bed and trials aircraft.



MoD BN-2T Islander G-DLRA/ZG989 with the CASTOR "platypus" radar nose shape (BNAPS Archive Collection)

It flew in its new guise on 12 May 1984, with its long, flattened, circular plan-form nose housing a Ferranti Defence Systems multi-mode all weather radar, and with two operators' workstations inside the cabin. Sometimes referred to as the 'Flying

Platypus', the aircraft proved the CASTOR concept and the Army was keen to acquire a full squadron of aircraft.

Unfortunately for the Islander-based solution and the CASTOR project, a classified Racial Synthetic Aperture Radar had been tested by the Royal Signals and Radar Establishment (RSRE) at Malvern, near Salisbury, Wilts, and this produced near-photographic quality imagery. A combined Synthetic Aperture Radar/Moving Target Indicator (SAR/MTI) radar was developed and flown in a Canberra test-bed used by RRE (Royal Radar Establishment) Pershore, Worcs, and in 1992 a new requirement for a new ASTOR (Airborne Stand-Off Radar) intelligence gathering and target acquisition system was drawn up. The requirement called for an aircraft capable of operating at altitudes of about 50,000ft 15,240m), in order to gain a wide area of coverage for the radar, with less terrain shadow and allowing it to operate well back from the front line and outside the range of enemy air defences and the Army's CASTOR concept was no longer supported.



MoD BN-2T Islander ZG989 at Boscombe Down now with the spherical nose radome (BNAPS Archive Collection)

BN-2T ZG989 subsequently gained a new, spherical nose radome in July 1989, perhaps indicating installation of a new AEW/surveillance radar. In October 1991,

The aircraft was demonstrated in Ankara (Turkey) as G-DLRA, before being returned to the MoD as ZG989 on 20 November 1991.

It remained in use as a trials platform for use by DERA and QinetiQ and also conducted trials when fitted out with a small synthetic aperture radar as part of the Mini SAR proposed by EADS Astrium.



ZG889 with EADS Astrium synthetic aperture radar installed (BNAPS Archive Collection)

The aircraft was maintained and flown as XG989 by Britten Norman for DERA/QinetiQ. In March 2012 it was retired and stored at RAF Shawbury. More recently the aircraft reappeared as G-DLRA and was registered to Britten-Norman on 29.11.16, presumably still for use as a trials platform.

British Army

A UK military requirement for the Islander emerged during the 1980s, as the Army's ageing DHC-2 Beavers neared the end of their useful lives. These long serving aircraft had filled a useful niche in Northern Ireland, providing a rugged, low-cost sensor and general purpose platform. Another fixed-wing aircraft was considered to be the best replacement for the Beaver in the reconnaissance and surveillance roles and the B-N Islander/Defender type was seen as being well suited to the Army's requirements.

Although piston-engined Defenders were available, the Turbine Defender, powered by two Allison 250-BI 7C Free Power Turbine turboprop engine, was the Army's preferred choice as it offered all the advantages of the piston-engined variant whilst giving lower operating noise levels and allowing use of the same jet fuel which powered the Army Air Corps' helicopters. The Defender was offered by B-N with a

number of additional airframe options, including various opening panels and ports for sensors, a sliding door on rear port side that could be opened in flight, and provision for four under-wing hard-points for standard NATO pylons to attach fuel tanks, weapons and other stores.

The British Army aircraft were built as Defenders but with provision for only two under-wing pylons. They lacked the sliding door but were given provision to accept a wide variety of mission equipment items.



AAC Islander AL.1 ZG844 (BNAPS Archive Collection)

As procured by the Army the aircraft were designated Islander AL.1s, five BN-2T Islander AL.1s (ZG844-ZG848) being procured to replace the last five Beaver AL.1s. The Army Islanders were bought out of the NI budget as opposed to going through the usual and more protracted aircraft procurement process.



AAC Islander AL.1 with under-wing fuel tanks installed (BNAPS Archive Collection)

Two further Islander AL.1 aircraft (ZG993-ZG994) were bought for use on behalf of the Royal Artillery to chase target drones but were subsequently absorbed by the Northern Ireland fleet.

The first of the Army Islanders joined the Northern Ireland Regiment, Army Air Corps at RAF Aldergrove, which consisted of two rotary squadrons and one fixed wing flight, on 10 March 1989, and six aircraft soon replaced the surviving Beavers. The Regiment's Beaver Flight then became No.1 Flight, the previous title losing its meaning with the retirement of the older aircraft.



AAC Islander AL.1 ZG847 at Middle Wallop (Steve Kilvington)

On 1 October 1993, the Northern Ireland Regiment was re-titled 5 Regiment AAC. A seventh Army Air Corps Islander AL.1 joined the Advanced Fixed Wing Flight (AFWF) at the Army Air Corps Centre at Middle Wallop, Hants, where it was used primarily for training. The Islander's primary task in Northern Ireland has always been photo-reconnaissance, carried out under the direction of the Reconnaissance, Intelligence and Geographic Centre. (RIGC).

The Islander AL.1s can be re-roled with a photographic reconnaissance/surveillance fit consisting of a door-mounted Zeiss 610 camera, a vertical Zeiss Trilens 80mm and a second vertical camera fit, consisting of an F126, a Zeiss RMK or two KS-153 cameras, or a Vinten F143 panoramic camera.

Islander AL.1s have been used for a number of other roles in Northern Ireland. These have included light transport and liaison duties, with seats for up to 9 passengers fitted in the cabin, and the type can even be used as an airborne command post or as a radio relay platform. There have been suggestions that the aircraft has been used for electronic eavesdropping.

The Army Air Corps' Islander AL.1s

displayed subtle differences in their external appearance according to their role, though it is believed that all aircraft can be rapidly re-configured to fly any role. To allow them to operate safely in Northern Ireland, aircraft gained provision for an AN/ALQ-144 Infra-Red jammer under the fuselage from 1994, missile approach warning sensors can also be fitted. Since 1998, a Lockheed Martin IRCM (Infra-Red CounterMeasures) suite has been tested on at least one Army Air Corps Islander AL.1. Islander numbers in Northern Ireland fluctuated over the years, and they were also used in the Middle East and the Balkans.

One aircraft (ZG993) was deployed to Saudi Arabia as part of Operation Granby, painted in desert pink. Others, including ZG993, saw service with British Army SFOR (Stabilisation Force) contingents in the former Yugoslavia.



AAC Islander AL.1 ZG993 "Pinky" in its desert colour scheme (BNAPS Archive Collection)

At one stage, No.1 Flight was using just three aircraft - one permanently fitted out for photographic reconnaissance, one for 'Special User Support', and one available for training, liaison, 'rapid compassionate evacuation' or for Role conversion to augment the two 'mission' aircraft.

The 'Special Users' supported were Army

Special Forces and the RUC Special Branch's 3 and E4 departments. The E3 department was reported to be responsible for operating inside terrorist Organisations, according to contemporary newspaper reports, while the E4 section was responsible for the surveillance of paramilitary suspects.

No.5 Regiment's has supported Operation Banner, the code name given to the British Army's long-running operation to back up the Police Service Northern Ireland (PSNI), and its predecessor, the Royal Ulster Constabulary. One of the Army Air Corps Islanders (ZG994) was badly damaged in an accident at Broughton on June 30, 1999. The crew escaped, but the aircraft was written off and returned to Bembridge to be stripped of useful spares.



AAC Islander AL.1 ZG994 after its accident at Broughton on 30 June 1999 (BNAPS Archive Collection).

With the addition of another aircraft used by the AFWF (Army Fixed Wing Flying) at Middle Wallop, this reduced the Aldergrove fleet to five aircraft, though the AFWF aircraft subsequently joined the Northern Ireland fleet, and in 2006 all six Islander AL.1s were operating from Aldergrove.



Defender 4000 prototype G-SURV, c/n 4005, as ZG995 after delivery to the AAC as the first BN-2T-4S Defender AL.1, later upgraded as an AL.2 (BNAPS Archive Collection).

The British Army procured three of the B-N Defender 4000 BN-2T-4S aircraft for service in Iraq as Defender AL.1s to meet an Urgent Operational Requirement (UOR) endorsed on 18 December 2003. The first aircraft ZG995, (c/n 4005) was actually the prototype BN-2T-4S, refurbished and upgraded for its new role, it entered service with the Army on 1 October 2004 with 651 Squadron.

In 2006 651 Squadron, as an Army Air Corps squadron, was assigned as part of the Joint Special Forces Air Wing (JSFAW). The Defender AL.1 aircraft are used for reconnaissance missions and typically fitted with an array of sophisticated surveillance equipment such as low light level television (LLTV) camera, fitted in a turret mounted under the Defender's nose, a number of cabin-mounted cameras or COMINT (COMMunications INTelligence) equipment for listening in on radio signals. Infrared jammers and other defensive systems can be carried in pods under the wings in order to defend against surface-to-air missiles. Around 3,500lb of surveillance equipment can be fitted and with 8 hours endurance the aircraft can patrol up to 150nm of border per flying hour. The aircraft are equipped for day/night all-weather operation at low-level to 25,000ft, with a loiter/patrol speed 60-160kts and can operate from short, rough airstrips.



AAC BN-2T-4S Defender AL.2 (BNAPS Archive Collection).

Official statements on the current role of 651 Squadron are not at present available in the public domain. However, as 651 Squadron operated as part of the JSFAW, it is likely that the main assignment is that of supporting UKSF operations. 651 Squadron aircraft are understood to have been operating in Iraq in support of the British presence there based out of Basra and Al

Amara, monitoring movements of insurgents along routes into the capital. Such operations can be expected to involve close coordination with UKSF ground units. Another likely role is to provide support to SAS Task Force Black which operates throughout Iraq. (At the time the original article was written a fourth Defender AL.1, serial number ZG998 was reported to be under construction at Bembridge, see listing on page 19 for later BN-2T-4S Defender AL.2 and T.3 deliveries).

Royal Air Force

The RAF ordered the Islander at virtually the same time as the Army Air Corps, but the certification and clearance process took rather longer and, as a result, the RAF released the Islander aircraft to service several months after the Army. Officially released information has not been forthcoming regarding their role, and only a few details have emerged unofficially. It is known that the single Islander CC.2 aircraft that was ordered for service with the RAF Northolt Station Flight, serial number ZH536, (c/n 2235), was delivered on 17 December 1992.



RAF Northolt Station Flight Islander CC.2 ZH536 (BNAPS Archive Collection).

A "stop gap" aircraft, the former Britten-Norman Maritime Defender demonstrator, was delivered in August 1991 under the designation Islander CC.2A, ZF573, (c/n 2034).

Initially this aircraft was operated in a naval blue/white colour scheme, but was later repainted in the same overall grey scheme as the Army Air Corps aircraft, though with a toned down blue cheat line running from nose to tail.

The stop-gap aircraft was retained after ZH536's delivery, though the Northolt Station Flight officially had a 'required

operating fleet' of one Islander. The older aircraft was classified as an 'in use reserve', although there has been sufficient tasking to keep both aircraft fully employed.



BN-2T Islander ZF573 in its earlier role as an MoD Trials Aircraft for the air launched Stingray torpedo (B-N).



RAF Northolt Station Flight Islander CC.2A ZF573 (Joop de Groot)

The RAF Islanders are designated as a CC.2 and a CC.2A, normally denoting a communications role, but apparently this has never been their primary task. Speculation that the aircraft carry out a classified surveillance role is supported by circumstantial evidence. Both RAF Islanders have been sighted circling over London and other metropolitan areas for extended periods on many occasions, and it is suggested that ATC have to give them a higher flight priority than scheduled flights. Some reports have suggested that the aircraft have been seen with a comprehensive antenna fit. Other reports indicated that the mission equipment is carried internally, perhaps with some kind of retractable antenna array. Photographs of the aircraft on approach at Northolt have shown no obvious antenna farm, with no

more than an extra whip antenna and minor fairing to distinguish them from Army Air Corps Islanders.

The aircraft have been observed more recently with their main cabin windows obviously blanked out, with only the forward and rear windows left clear. This resulted in more speculation that the RAF were operating the aircraft on behalf of one of government agencies, such as MI5 or MI6 to locate, identify and even monitor signals traffic from various sources such as embassies and to provide surveillance and monitoring as part of anti-terrorist operations.



*RAF Northolt Station Flight Islander CC.2
ZH536 (Wembley Bob)*

There have been suggestions that the aircraft may carry a retractable under-fuselage, gyro-stabilised Wescam 12DS200 dual-mode sensor incorporating both an infra-red thermal imager and a daylight colour TV camera with a 20x magnification lens, this being a version of the same basic kit as that fitted to the two Islanders recently donated to Nepal by the British Government.

In the late 1990s one of the RAF's Islanders is reported to have spent some time attached to, or being used by, the Air Warfare Centre at RAF Waddington, Lincolnshire. This station specialises in systems used for reconnaissance and electronic intelligence gathering and at the time hosted the RAF's 51 Squadron Nimrod R.1 reconnaissance aircraft that were later retired.

Post Script

RAF Northolt Station Flight

In April 2008 the former SELEX demonstrator, BN-2A Islander G-SELX, (c/n 2118), was delivered as an Islander CC.2B, ZH537, to the Station Flight at RAF Northolt. This aircraft was a replacement for ZF573, the "stop gap" aircraft delivered in 1992.



BN-2T Defender G-SELX as a demonstrator for SELEX radar equipment. In 2007/2008 it was converted to a BN-2T Islander CC.2B for the RAF Northolt Station Flight and given the serial number ZH537 (BNAPS Archive Collection).



RAF Northolt Station Flight Islander CC.2B ZH537 (David Blaker).

RAF Sport Parachute Association

Although G-DLRA was the first BN-2 procured for the UK MoD, two other Islanders were purchased for the RAF Sport Parachute Association at Weston-on-the-Green. G-DIVE, c/n 2011, was acquired in June 1979 and in February 1984 a BN-2T was added, G-WOTG, c/n 2139. Each aircraft was allocated a "shadow" serial: G-DIVE was allocated ZA503 (later corrected to ZB503) and G-WOTG allocated ZF444. Neither serial was ever worn; both aircraft were later sold in the civilian market.

AAC/RAF Islander and Defender Aircraft (May 2019)

Islander AL.1

Of the seven Islander AL.1s delivered to the Army Air Corps, three are active and two are in storage. One Islander AL.1, (ZG993) is now on show in the Army Flying Museum, Islander AL.1 (ZG994) was damaged in a landing accident on 30/6/99 and written off.

Islander AL.1 List: ZG844 c/n 2184 (stored); ZG845 c/n 2194; ZG846 c/n 2195; ZG847 c/n 2196 (stored); ZG848 c/n 2199; ZG993 c/n 2202 (now in Army Flying Museum); ZG994 c/n 2206 (written off).

Islander CC.2

Three Islander CC.2s were acquired for the Royal Air Force, all of which have been sold to the civilian market.

Islander CC.2 List: ZF573 c/n 2034 CC.2A; ZH536 c/n 2235 CC.2; ZH537 c/n 2118 CC.2B.

Defender BN-2T-4S

Of the nine BN-2T-4S Defenders delivered, eight are Defender AL.2s, of which seven are active and one is in storage, and one is a Defender T.3.

Defender AL.2 List: ZG995 c/n 4005 (stored); ZG996 c/n 4010; ZG997 c/n 4012; ZG998 c/n 4014; ZH001 c/n 4015; ZH002 c/n 4016; ZH003 c/n 4017; ZH005 c/n 401

Defender T.3 List: ZH004 c/n 4009.

MoD Trials BN-2T Islander Aircraft

BN-2T Islander c/n 2140 was acquired in 1989 as G-DLRA and later allocated serial ZG989. It was modified for radar trials associated with the ASTOR project and was later further modified to suit several other radar trial installations. In 2016 ownership was assigned to B-N.

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.

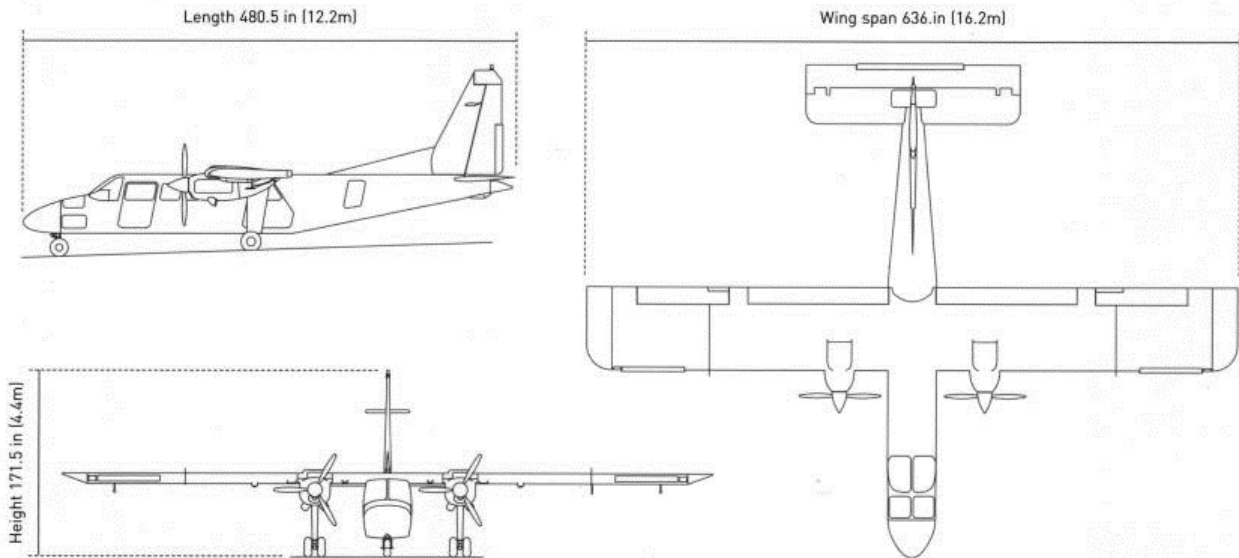
As noted by the head of No 1 Group, Air Vice-Marshal Harv Smyth, the AAC's 651 Squadron that fields the Fixed-Wing Manned Aerial Surveillance (FWMAS) capability has transferred to the RAF as a unit, while its personnel will transition over the next few years. "It will be operated in a joint fashion for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

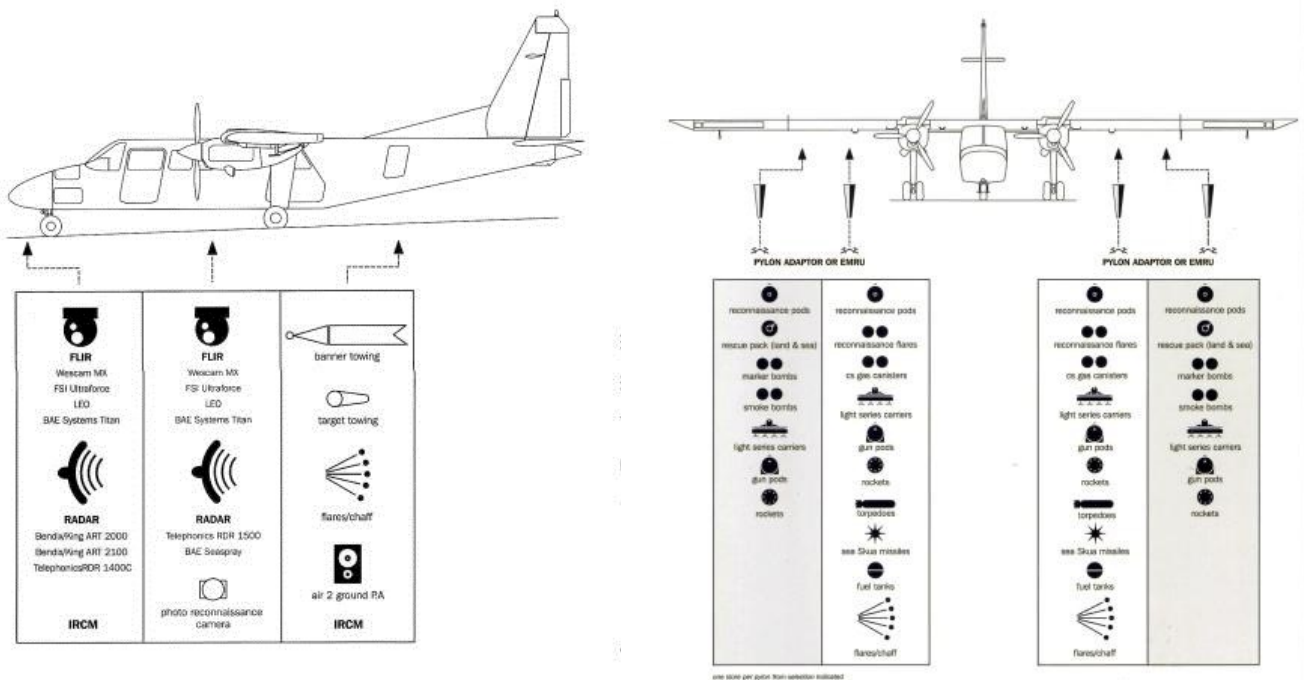
The AAC's 651 Sqn. is a special forces support unit, so the Ministry of Defence (MoD) rarely comments on the unit or the Defender and Islander aircraft and their operational deployment and use.

Britten-Norman Defender 4000 Developed for Military and Government Missions

The Defender 4000 was developed by Britten-Norman in the early 1990s when the company was owned by the Pilatus Group. It was aimed at providing a more capable air platform for military and government agencies involved in various forms of intelligence and surveillance operations and for weapons carrying and logistics support missions. Although similar in overall configuration to the BN-2T Islander and Defender range, the Defender 4000 required a significant proportion of new design. The wing and landing gear was based on the Trislander components, the fuselage was lengthened and higher power turbine engines were specified.



Defender 4000 General Arrangement



Defender 4000 Internal accommodation for mission equipment and capability for carrying under-wing stores.

Defender 4000 Prototype's First Flight – August 1994

The prototype Defender 4000, c/n 4005, given the type designation of BN-2T-4S, was constructed at Bembridge and made 55 minute a first flight on 17 August 1994 piloted by Iain Young, B-N's Chief Test Pilot, with Nigel Davies, B-N's Head of Flight Engineering and Chief Airworthiness Engineer, in the right hand seat as Flight Test Observer. A second flight of was made on the same day after which there was a 20 minute flight to Bournemouth to be painted in the blue and white livery for the SBAC Farnborough Show. Thanks go to BNAPS restoration team member Maurice Dyer for the photographs below - these were taken when he was B-N's Project Engineer for the Defender 4000.



Defender 4000 c/n 4005 in final assembly at Bembridge (Maurice Dyer).

Defender 4000 c/n 4005 first flight preparation (Maurice Dyer).



Defender 4000 c/n 4005 engine runs during ground testing (Jim Matthews).

Defender 4000 c/n 4005 climbing away after taking off on its first flight 17 August 1994 (Maurice Dyer).



Defender 4000 c/n 4005 at the SBAC Farnborough Show in September 1994 now in an attractive blue and white paint scheme and registered as G-SURV (BNAPS Archive Collection).

Approach

THE
PILATUS
BRITTEN-NORMAN
NEWSLETTER
ISSUE 14
AUTUMN 1994

SUCCESSFUL LAUNCH FOR DEFENDER 4000

Pilatus Britten-Norman's new Defender 4000 has made a maiden flight and public debut within a few weeks of each other. The privately funded prototype aircraft flew on 17 August and was one of the few new aircraft launched at the Farnborough Air Show '94.

G-SURV made a successful 55-minute first flight from Bembridge on Wednesday 17 August, with head of flight department Iain Young at the controls. With him was Nigel Davis, head of flight engineering and PBN's chief airworthiness engineer.

"Performance and handling were entirely as predicted by our design department," Iain Young told Approach afterwards. "The aircraft handles well across the entire flight regime. There were no surprises!"

Iain Young's handling tests were extensive and took place at

altitudes up to 9,000 ft. So well did the aircraft's behaviour correspond with predictions that he progressively opened out the flight envelope to the full Vne of 191 knots (achieved in a shallow dive), a notable achievement for a first flight. Low speed handling was up to the remarkable standards set by existing PBN aircraft.

The second flight came the same evening - a 20 minute hop to Bournemouth where the aircraft was booked in to receive its paint finish - and within three weeks the freshly liveried G-SURV was taking a bow before the Farnborough public.



G-SURV on flight trials marks the arrival in the marketplace of a new potent asset for airborne surveillance.

DEFENDER "LOOKS RIGHT AND FLIES RIGHT"

Defender 4000's well-proportioned appearance has been widely admired, while PBN's flight operations have praised the handling of the latest aircraft from the Bembridge design team.



Defender 4000 G-SURV pictured during her 17 August maiden flight from Bembridge.

"Defender 4000 both looks right and flies right," says flight operations' head Iain Young. "I'm sure time will prove that in this aircraft, we have a winner."

The increased size of the Defender is apparent in the air.

"It feels more spacious and handles like our MSSA (Multi-Sensor Surveillance Aircraft) which too is an enlarged and higher all-up weight Islander airframe," says Iain.

Even so, the first take-off was shorter than expected. After the flight test Iain commented,

"G-SURV was airborne and climbing well before she reached photographers waiting alongside the runway for her to unstick."

Pilots have been impressed by the extra field of view afforded by the improved windscreen

and nose, and the larger side windows.

"Added to that, the propellers are 30 in further back behind the flight deck, so they are not intruding into your visibility."

Another plus for pilots, the EFIS instrument panel, is "extremely pilot friendly," say flight operations.

"The system gives you all the options and you can select the information you need. We spent many hours in a cockpit mock-up and on the systems bench refining the system and we're confident customers will be pleased with the result."

G-SURV's recent maiden flight launched the Defender 4000 into an intensive certification programme which will include 100 flight hours between now and planned type certification next June.

BN-2T-4S Defender Aimed at ISTAR Market

BN-2T-4S G-GMPB, c/n 4011, the first Romanian built example of the type, was originally delivered to the Greater Manchester Police in 2002 with comprehensive surveillance equipment installed to provide a high level of security cover for the Commonwealth Games.

In 2015 G-GMPB was acquired by B-N. With a striking new paint scheme, and re-registered as G-WPNS, it became a key part of B-N's initiative to tap the ISTAR (Intelligence, Tracking, Surveillance, Target Acquisition and Reconnaissance) market place.



BN-2T-4S Defender c/n 4011 as G-GMPB when it was with the Greater Manchester Police Authority (BNAPS Archive Collection)



BN-2T-4S Defender c/n 4011 at RIAT 2017 now with B-N as the ISTAR demonstrator G-WPNS (Richard Davies)

Islander AL.1 ZG993 – Now on Show at the Army Flying Museum

Army Air Corps Islander AL.1 ZG993 went on show as part of the revamped Museum of Army Flying Middle Wallop, now renamed as the Army Flying Museum, when it re-opened in April. ZG993 arrived at Middle Wallop in November 2015 after it had been transported from RAF Shawbury where it had been in storage for several years. ZG993 was re-assembled in the early part of 2019 and then placed in a dramatic flying attitude as a centrepiece of the museum display in the main hall.



Army Air Corps Islander AL.1 ZG993 is displayed in a dynamic take off pose in the main hall of the Army Flying Museum at Middle Wallop (Ian Haskell)

Another view of Islander AL.1 ZG993 showing the simple but effective display stand support structure (Ian Haskell)



Story of the Trislander Kits that Went to the USA

Introduction

When B-N was acquired by the Fairey Group in 1972, Trislander production was subsequently established in the Gosselies Works in Belgium. Following the collapse of the Fairey Group and the subsequent sale of B-N to Pilatus Aircraft, all Islander and Trislander airframes in production were recovered to the UK.

Following a period of storage, when some of the airframes were fed into production, by the time a decision had been made to cease Trislander production it is believed that 11 Trislander airframe kits remained.

Unassembled Trislander Airframe Kits

11 of the kits were recovered from the Trislander production line set up at Gosselies in Belgium when B-N was owned by the Fairey Group. The 12th kit, c/n 1038, originated from a Trislander that had been dismantled at Bembridge in 1979.

A total of 12 kits were sold to International Aircraft Corporation Florida in 1982 and are identified against the following construction numbers (c/ns):

1038, 1062, 1063, 1064, 1065, 1066, 1067, 1068, 1069, 1070, 1071, 1072.



View of some the ex Gosselies Trislander kits in storage at Eastleigh Airport (Barry Friend).



View of some the ex Gosselies Trislander kits being prepared for shipment at Eastleigh Airport (Barry Friend).

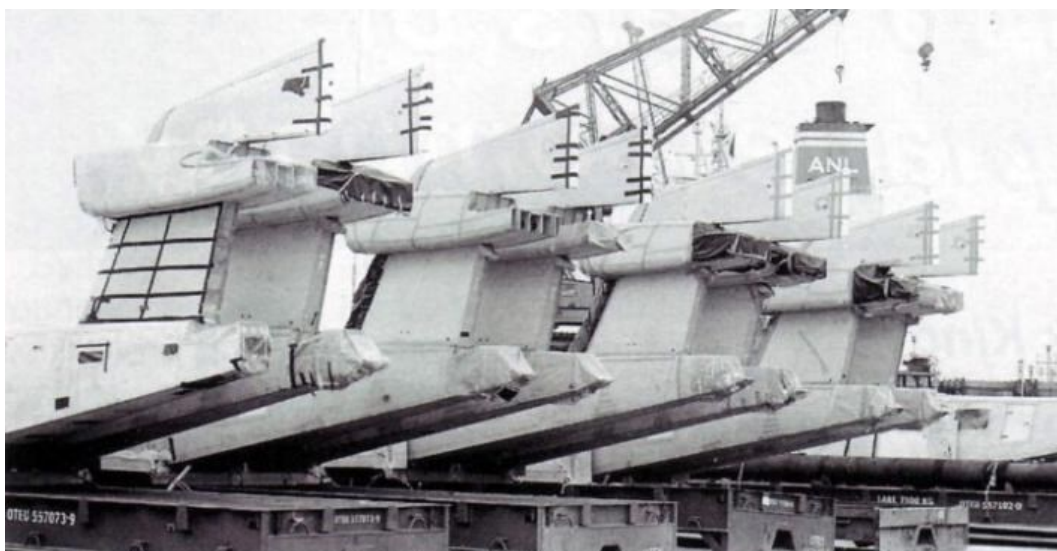


Two Trislander kits are seen here leaving Bembridge presumably for shipment via Southampton. They could be c/n 1038 and possibly c/n 1065 but this has not been positively confirmed (Keith Winter).

The kits were shipped to the USA via Southampton as reported by an Air Britain correspondent:
"4 August, 1982, saw a road convoy arriving with ten BN-2A Mk.III-2 Trislanders destined for Berth 201 and coming from the Britten-Norman store at Eastleigh. None were registered, but all carried their manufacturer's serial numbers on the side (1062-1064, 1066-1071). The odd thing was that there were two fuselages marked 1067. One being annotated "1067(ex 1038)". Whatever that implied was not understood and, no doubt, it was left to the American importer to worry about. All were later loaded aboard MV Finnclipper which sailed for Port Everglades on the following day."



Trislander kits ready for loading at Southampton Docks (Air Britain).



Another view of the Trislander kits ready for loading at Southampton Docks (Air Britain).

It is known that c/ns 1038 and 1065 were also shipped to the USA and it is possible that these may have been brought over from the Isle of Wight, as c/n 1038 had been dismantled and stored at Bembridge since 1979.

Disposition of Trislander Kits

On arrival the kits were issued with US N registrations initially when ownership was registered to International Aircraft Corp. (IAC) and later when registered owner was Phoenix Continental Corporation (PCC). US registration allocations were as follows:

c/n 1038 N3265Q/N199PC

c/n 1062 N3265T/N299PC;

c/n 1063 N3266A/N399PC;

c/n 1064 N3266B/N599PC;

c/n 1065 N3266G, sold by IAC in 1995 and delivered to Anglo Normandy Aero Engineering for rebuild of c/n 359;

c/n 1066 N3266H/N889PC;

c/n 1067 N279K/N279PC;

c/n 1068 N3266R/N449PC;

c/n 1069 N3266T/N559PC;

c/n 1070 N3266W/N929PC;

c/n 1071 N3267A/N929PC;

c/n 1072 N3267J, sold by IAC in 1995 and delivered to Anglo Normandy Aero Engineering. It was subsequently acquired by Cormack Islander Aircraft and the fuselage used as a prop in the James Bond film "Spectre".

At present it is thought that some wings may have been sold and only fuselages remain in a store somewhere in Florida. No records can be found related to IAC or PCC. Another company called Audrey Promotions in Australia had expressed an interest in using the Trislander as a basis for a single engine version and appeared to have some involvement with PCC. Current ownership of what remains of the Trislander kits supplied in 1982 is unknown.

Of the 12 kits shipped to IAC, 2 are known to have been sold so it is believed that 10 fuselages and an unknown number of wings remain in storage in Florida.



This is a fairly recent view of some of the Trislander kits in storage somewhere in Florida.

Recent News – October 2018

Recently a report has surfaced that the Trislander parts were stored in Deland, Florida and had been purchased by Air Flamenco and may subsequently have been scrapped.



Trislander fuselages in open storage believed to be at Deland, Florida

There are still many aspects of the tale of the Trislander kits that require explanation. It is hoped that more information will surface in time that reveals what happened to the kits and whether any of the Trislander airframes still exist or not.....

Anguilla Air Services Trislander VP-AJR Enters Service

Anguilla Air Services new Trislander VP-AJR, c/n 1055, entered service on 27 April.

After its epic delivery flight from Vanuatu earlier this year, see report in March 2019 issue of BNAPS News. Trislander VP-AJR has had replacement engines installed, been painted in its smart Anguilla Air Services livery and is now looking like a new aircraft.



Air Flamenco Trislander

Air Flamenco's Trislander N902GD, c/n 905, is now used mainly for cargo flights. Thanks go to Nikolay Pertusenko for posting the images on BNAPS facebook page.



Air Flamenco Trislander N902GD on the ramp being loaded with cargo (Nikolay Pertusenko)



Pilot's view from Air Flamenco Trislander N902GD (Nikolay Pertusenko)

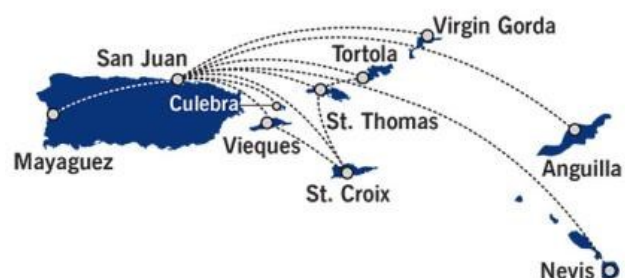
Cape Air Islanders Deployed on Caribbean Services for 2019

Cape Air has officially relaunched two important routes from San Juan, with flights to Puerto Rico's island of Culebra and to Virgin Gorda in the British Virgin Islands using Cape Air's Islanders.

Four flights daily will operate between San Juan and Culebra, and three daily between San Juan and Virgin Gorda, both instantly providing a significant boost for the islands.

As the two routes are expected to see service increases over time, Cape Air intends to launch routes with a frequency of 3 or 4 services per day before raising that number to as many as 8 or 12 per day.

The return of both services, which had last operated two years ago, is part of a bigger push for Cape Air which has long been one of the most crucial carriers in the north eastern Caribbean.



Vieques Air Links – Islander and Trislander Photo Gallery

Thanks go to Julio A Fuentes for posting on the BNAPS facebook page an excellent set of images showing Vieques Air Links (VAL) Islanders and Trislanders at their base in Puerto Rico. A selection of these images is presented below:



VAL Islanders and the Trislander parked on the ramp at Isla Grande Airport.



VAL hangar at Isla Grande Airport.



VAL Trislander N869VL, c/n 1048.



Scenic Flights by Islander from Land's End Airport

In addition to flights from Land's End Airport to the Isles of Scilly Skybus is offering scenic flights by Islander over the spectacular West Cornwall coastline. Prices depend on the number of passengers, for a passenger load of 4-8 passengers the adult fare for the 20 minute flight is £50 – for more details call 01736 334220 or visit:

www.islesofscilly-travel.co.uk



Shetland Islands Islanders – Visit Report by Peter Smithson

Peter Smithson has just returned from 3 days on the Shetland Islands, going to see and fly with Airtask (www.airtask.com/shetland-islands-inter-island-service) and their Islanders. The operation is completely at the mercy of the weather, as Peter found out on his last day. Airtask operates two BN-2B-20 Islanders from Tingwall Airport in the Shetland Islands on behalf of the Shetland Islands Council. (Photos are courtesy of Peter Smithson).

Airtask operates scheduled services out to 3 main Islands, Fair Isle, Foula and Papa Stour. Flight times range from 25 minutes, out to Fair Isle, 15 minutes to Foula and 10 minutes to Papa Stour. These are PSO (Public Service Obligations) flights such that a carrier has to provide a set level of service on particular routes to ensure the service satisfies fixed standards of continuity, capacity, regularity and pricing.

The Islanders are kept in immaculate condition and to look at them together you would not be able to say which was the newest, despite one being 14 years older. I met with Conrad who maintains the two aircraft and is kept busy carrying out regular checks on both aircraft. He is a veteran of B-N aircraft, having worked for a number of years for Anglo-Normandy Aero Engineering in Guernsey.

Islander G-SICA, c/n 2304, was built in 2006 and first flew on the 19 September 2006, delivered to Directflight on the 10 January 2007 and has been at Tingwall since then. G-SICB, c/n 2260, was built in 1992 and first flew on the 16 October 1992. Originally registered G-BTVN and built as a BN-2B-26, it was converted to a BN-2B-20 and had a camera floor fitted in preparation for joining the North East Support Unit in Teesside. Registered as G-NESU it spent 9 years flying for the Police, until being purchased by B-N in 2005. In 2006, it was re-registered G-SICB and leased to Directflight to be operated out of Tingwall and was subsequently purchased in late 2006 and has been operated from there ever since.

I had planned to fly to all three of the destinations over a 2 day period. I managed to fly to Fair Isle and Foula on my first full day and had planned to visit Papa Stour on my last day. Unfortunately the weather came down and all flying was cancelled. The pilot for my flights on board G-SICA was Marshall – a true gentleman and superb pilot. Even on the last day when the weather had stopped all flying, Marshall was kind enough to offer me tea and biscuits and I had the pleasure of talking to him regarding his past flying and experiences in his current role.

From May 2019 Airtask will be offering sightseeing flights out of Tingwall from May 2019. These flights are obviously weather dependent and will last 25 or 50 minutes.

Despite the weather beating me on the last day, I had a great time. The staff at Airtask at Tingwall, work tirelessly to make the flights happen and are hugely flexible in their approach to the operation. Thanks go to everyone I met for giving their time and their hospitality during my visit.



Tingwall Airport terminal building.



Islander G-SICB at Tingwall.



Islander G-SICA taking off from Tingwall.



AirTask Islander in typical Shetlands scenery.

CIAS Islander Official Unveiling and Blessing

The new Channel Islands Air Search Islander (CIAS), G-CKYC/2-CIAS, c/n 2314, known in the Channel Islands as the Lions' Pride, made the trip from Solent Airport to Jersey on 13 April, 2019 to be unveiled at a blessing ceremony sponsored by Gama Aviation.

Dignitaries from across the Channel Islands watched on as the Deans of Jersey and Guernsey blessed the plane at a service this weekend.

The specially equipped Islander supplied by Britten Norman was expected to become fully operational in May.

The founder of the Channel Islands Air Search organisation, Roger Dadd, said "the new aircraft will shape the future of air and rescue missions for the next 30 years. It's the mark of a new era, leading-edge technology for a search aircraft which is unique, only one of its kind in the world. It's a Channel Islands venture, Jersey every bit as much as Guernsey and the smaller islands. Everyone's contributed not only money but their time and expertise as well."

For more information and details of how to support the work done by CIAS go to: www.ci-airsearch.com



B-N Announces FIGAS Order for two New Islanders

B-N has announced that the Falkland Islands Government Air Service (FIGAS) has ordered two BN-2B-26 Islanders. The acquisition has been approved by the islands' government and will add to the four Islanders already in service with FIGAS. The first of the two new aircraft will be delivered in the summer of 2019, with the second scheduled for early 2020.

FIGAS has operated Islanders since October 1979 serving almost 30 different airfields located in the Falkland Islands and offers air taxi flights for the local community and tourists from Stanley via Port Howard, Pebble Island, Hill Cove, Fox Bay, to Bleaker Island and from Stanley to Saunders Island via Sea Lion Island, Port Edgar, Weddell Island, Hill Cove, and West Point Island.

Britten-Norman has long been a part of the Falkland Islands community. Grahame Stone, Britten-Norman Aircraft Commercial Head, said. "We are delighted to support FIGAS' increased operations through the delivery of two new Islanders."

For more about FIGAS go to: www.fig.gov.fk/figas/



Above and below: Typical views of FIGAS Islanders in action serving the Falklands Islands community and tourists (FIGAS)



Long Serving Headcorn Parachute Club Islander G-AXUB goes back to B-N

Headcorn Parachute Club's long serving Islander G-AXUB, c/n 121 was given a fond farewell when it departed from Headcorn Aerodrome on 30 April, 2019. Now back with B-N at Solent Airport, Lee-on-Solent G-AXUB is remarkable in that in the 50 years since it was first flown on 13 October, 1969, it has been with only two operators.

Originally given a US registration N859JA, in anticipation of sale through Jonas Aircraft in New York, it was not delivered and took up the registration G-AXUB. On 9 January, 1970, it passed to Fair Oaks Aviation Services and on 3 April, 1970, was sold to Bristow Helicopters based at Redhill. Bristow's then assigned G-AXUB to support its operations in Nigeria where it took up the registration 5N-AIJ.

After 10 years of service in Nigeria it returned to the UK and took up its original registration mark on 6 May 1980. On 5 May, 1981, ownership passed to the Headcorn Parachute Club based at Headcorn Aerodrome in Kent. With the increasing demand for skydiving which requires the drop to be made at around 10000 ft+, the Islander takes around 30 minutes to get to this altitude whereas the club's Cessna Caravan can get there in around 20 minutes.



Left: Islander G-AXUB receives a salute from the Headcorn Aerodrome fire service on its departure for Solent Airport (Headcorn Parachute Club.)

Right: Islander G-AXUB is seen here on 14 May parked at Solent Airport ready for refurbishment by B-N (Ian Haskell.)



Still looking smart in its recently acquired red and white paint scheme G-AXUB has accumulated over 20000 hrs of operation and looks good for more service in the future.

Another Long Serving Islander - Aer Arann Islander EI-AYN

Thanks go to Joe Carroll for drawing attention to the fact that Islander EI-AYN, c/n 704, came into service with Aer Arann on 29 April 1974. Now over 45 years late, this veteran aircraft is still at the forefront of Aer Arann (Islands) operations on the storm besieged Western frontier of Europe carrying out multiple short flights per day to the islands. Few aircraft in the world can have such a long service record with one airline.



Above: Islander EI-AYN at Connemara Airport being prepared for its next flight (Joe Carroll)

Left: Islander EI-AYN about to touch down at Connemara Airport (Joe Carroll)

B-N Group News

B-N Group has recently made a number of important announcements:

Order from the Falkland Islands Government Air Service for two new Islander aircraft to meet Falkland Islands' growing passenger demand;

Extension of the UK Ministry of Defence contract for Through-Life Support of Islanders and Defenders in service with the Royal Air Force;

Initiation of a three-year Pilot Training Contract with the Armed Forces of Malta;

Expansion of civil B-N Aircraft subsidiary's manufacturing facilities at Solent Airport UK ;

New aircraft lease options launched;

Britten-Norman also paid tribute to inspirational women in aviation for the 2019 International Women's Day featuring Islander pilot Debbie Breklemans at Sable Aviation:

Debbie Breklemans is Operations Manager and Chief Pilot at Sable Aviation in Halifax, Canada and has been flying for thirty-one years, flying light piston twin aircraft and turbo-props primarily in eastern Canada and the United States.

Debbie owns Sable Aviation with her husband and took over running the company in 2016 so that he could take partial retirement.

Sable Aviation's Islander is operated on charter service flights from Halifax to Sable Island. Debbie describes Sable Island as an amazing little sand bar in the North Atlantic Ocean that is inhabited by a handful of federal government personnel, hundreds of wild horses, thousands of birds and hundreds of thousands of grey seals. There isn't an airport on the island so Debbie lands on the beach.



Debbie Breklemans with the immaculate Sable Aviation Islander C-GILS, c/n 416 (B-N).

For more about Sable Aviation go to www.sableaviation.ca/

For more about the B-N Group and the recent announcements see the company's completely revised and updated website at www.britten-norman.com

A feature article about B-N, titled "Backing Britten", appeared in the 2-8 April 2019 issue of Flight International.

From the BNAPS Archive –

First Flight of the First Romanian Built Islander 4 August 1969

Islander c/n 601 was built as a kit, originally identified as c/n 85. It made its first flight on 4 August 1969 and was delivered to Bembridge on 22 September 1969. Later purchased by the Crown Agents, and after being fitted with Micronair spray equipment, it was gifted to Desert Locust Control in Nairobi, Kenya and delivered on 30 July 1970. It was subsequently registered as 5Y-AMG.

After being written off at Addis Ababa in May 1974 the remains of the wing and centre section were shipped to the UK for use in the film "Cry Freedom".



Islander G-AXHY, c/n 601, is seen here at Bembridge having the Micronair spray equipment installed (BNAPS Archive Collection).

From the BNAPS Archive – Islander c/n 100 First Flight and Delivery 50 years ago

BN-2A Islander c/n 100 made its first flight as G-51-35 from Bembridge on 24 July 1969. On 15 September 1969 it was delivered to Aerial Tours, Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea where it took up the registration VH-ATV. Later it was operated by Douglas Airways, becoming P2-DNV in 1982. In 1991 it was acquired by Simbu Aviation and registered as P2-SAB. In June 1995 it went to Airlink as P2-ALE and in April 2007 to National Aviation Services as P2-NAJ. It is understood that c/n 100 is still active according to the 2019 Papua New Guinea Civil Aircraft Register.



BANTER Group Annual Get Together May 2019

The BANTER Group is organised by Ray Burt and consists of retired B-N employees. The group recently met up at the Spinnaker Hotel Bembridge, on Friday 3 May when about 50 people attended the annual get together event, now in its 9th year.

One of those in attendance was Paul Brook who commented that “It is a very social occasion to meet up with old work colleagues who we haven't seen for a while, have something to eat, have a drink and a chat,-a good time was had by all. This is an event open to all ex BN employees who have now retired, and we are always looking for more recruits”.



BANTER Group members at the Spinnaker Hotel for the 2019 get together (BANTER)

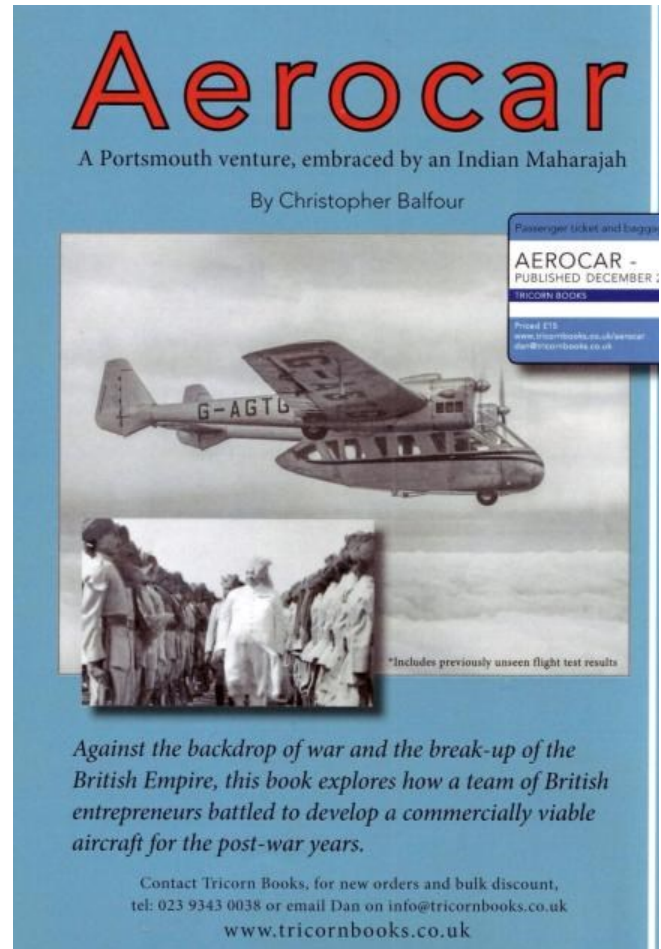
The Portsmouth Aerocar Story

BNAPS is pleased to recommend Christopher Balfour's book about a promising light transport aircraft that was flown in 1947 – the Portsmouth Aerocar.

Christopher's father, Lionel Balfour, pioneer of the cross Solent air service in the 1930s, was the inspiration behind the project and with his colleague, Francis Luxmoore, they came up with a radical twin boom design that was offered to meet an Army requirement in World War 2 but was not taken up. They then turned their attention to the post war era where they envisaged a demand for an efficient and affordable light transport aircraft that could fulfil a variety of roles.

Christopher has drawn upon valuable historic documents and images from his father's papers to relate a fascinating story of "what might have been" and the political difficulties (or obstructions) encountered when they already had nearly 300 orders.

In the introduction reference is made to the similar line of thinking by John Britten and Desmond Norman that led to the highly successful BN-2 Islander and Christopher, when talking with John and Desmond, appreciated their acknowledgement of the Aerocar forer. He remains full of admiration of how they persevered and eventually surmounted so many difficulties.



The book is priced at £15.00 and is available from Tricorn Books (www.tricornbooks.co.uk), The Aviation Book Shop (www.aviation-bookshop.com) and Amazon.

Wight Aviation Heritage Tours

Subject to demand BNAPS is planning a series of Wight Aviation Tours in 2019.

There is a discounted price of £65.00 For BNAPS Supporters Club members and £47.50 for those members already on the Isle of Wight and joining the mini bus for the tour at Ryde Hovercraft Terminal.

Wight Aviation Heritage Tours		
<p>Itinerary</p> <p>Hovercraft flight Southsea to Ryde, depart 0930 Travel by mini bus to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • East Cowes to see flying boat exhibits and Saunders-Roe Columbine Works • Sandown Airport to see the Wight Aviation Museum's progress • Bembridge Airport including light lunch at The Propeller Inn • BNAPS workshop in Ryde to view restoration of B-N Islander G-AVCN <p>Last stop Ryde Hovertravel Terminal for Hovercraft flight Ryde to Southsea, departing 1645.</p>	<p>East Cowes</p>  <p>Ryde</p>  <p>Sandown</p>  <p>Bembridge</p> 	<p>Price</p> <p>All inclusive price - £72.50 per person - payment in advance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Tour will be escorted with full briefing at each stop; -Price includes souvenir Wight Heritage Tour brochure; -12places/tour; -Hovercraft fare included. <p>2019 Tour Dates Please enquire for latest schedule details</p>
<p>Proceeds from Wight Aviation Heritage Tours will help the Britten-Norman Aircraft Preservation Society (BNAPS) fund restoration of the historic B-N Islander, G-AVCN, the oldest Islander in existence.</p>		
<p>For further details and a booking form please contact: Wight Aviation Heritage Tours c/o BNAPS, 7, William Close Fareham, Hampshire, PO14 2PQ Tel 01329 315561 Mob 07840036216 e mail solentaeromarine@hotmail.co.uk</p>		

Wight Aviation Museum News

The Cushioncraft CC7 has arrived at the museum at Sandown Airport, the museum is expected to be open to the public soon. For latest information and more about the Wight Aviation Museum see the museum's facebook page or go to the museum's website: <http://www.wightaviationmuseum.org.uk/>

Valom 1:48 Scale Islander Model Kits Now Available from BNAPS

Valom 1:48 Islander model kits are available to order at £27.00 for BNAPS Supporters Club members and £30.00 for non-members, payment in advance. UK post and packing, first class signed for delivery is £5.00.

The following models are available:

48008 Islander- G-AVCN Aurigny Air Services colours

48009 Islander- Israeli Air Force colours

48010 Islander - Loganair, BA franchise, colours.

Please contact bob@bnaps.org.uk to place your order.



BNAPS Sales Catalogue 2019 Edition

Please contact Rita Edgcombe at BNAPS Sales to if you would like to receive the latest catalogue by email: sales@bnaps.org.uk

BNAPS on the Internet - information and back issues of BNAPS News go to www.bnaps.org.uk

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 Edgcombe 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.

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"

BNAPS registered address is:
7, William Close
FAREHAM,
Hampshire,
PO14 2PQ

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

Forthcoming BNAPS Events

BNAPS Workshop Open Day is provisionally planned for Saturday 29 June from 1200 – 1600 – date will be confirmed and detail arrangements announced shortly.

Further Wight Aviation Heritage Tours are planned for 2019 when visitors will be able to view Islander G-AVCN either nearing completion or later on fully assembled.

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

How to contact BNAPS:

Email:

bob@bnaps.org.uk

Telephone: 01329 315561

Post:

BNAPS (Dept NL)
c/o
7, William Close,
FAREHAM,
Hampshire,
PO14 2PQ.