



# BNAPS News

## May 2020

BNAPS News Vol 10 Iss 3 – May 2020

### **BNAPS Workshop Shutdown and Reflections on Islander G-AVCN in 1967**

At present there is no real indication of when we can re-start the work of completing the final assembly of G-AVCN. This period of inactivity is somewhat in contrast to what was happening at Bembridge Airport just over 53 years ago. Islander c/n 3 G-AVCN had made its first flight on 24 April and was soon being prepared to attend the Paris Air Show in June 1967. Parts for the first 30 production Islanders to be built solely by Britten-norman had been ordered.



*Islander G-AVCN at Le Bourget in June 1967 for the Paris Air Show  
(Interair Press/Denis Calvert).*

Such was the sales demand for the Islander that the arrangements for its production had to be completely revised. The new Britten-Norman assembly building was gearing up to a production rate of something like 10 Islanders/month as the wings and fuselages were delivered from the production lines established at the Falcon Works, East Cowes under a major sub-contract with the British Hovercraft Corporation.

The "Islander Saga" feature article in this issue of BNAPS News gives an impression of the high level of B-N's operations and activities at Bembridge and something of the challenges faced in getting the Islander into production and to market in the late 1960s.

#### **In this issue of BNAPS News:**

**From Prototype to Production - The Islander Saga**

**Early Days of German Islander Operator OLT**

**Islander Update from BN Historians**

**The "Long Nose" Islanders**

**Plus more news of Islanders and Trislanders around the World**

## BNAPS Chairman's Update – May 2020



Dear BNAPS Supporter,

*Inevitably the need to temporarily interrupt our restoration work will mean that we now expect to remain at the Brickfields site beyond the end of 2020. After a successful year in 2019, which saw the wing lift accomplished and in short order the landing gear, fin, tail plane, control surface, flaps and engines installed, the restoration of our historic Islander, G-AVCN, has moved ever closer to being completed.*

*At the start of this year we had plans for workshop open days and a number of workshop visits for local groups, clubs, societies and individuals to have the opportunity of viewing the aircraft, meeting the restoration team members and being introduced to the story of B-N and the Islander and how the restoration project came about. These activities were seen as all helping to raise funds to cover the expense of keeping the project alive and in particular covering the rental of our workshop - this being around 90% of our annual expenditure.*

*BNAPS has been extremely fortunate to have built up a competent and loyal restoration team. This has enabled a wide range of skills to be deployed from the endless task of removing corrosion, fabricating parts to replace missing or damaged items, internal trim, seating, electrics, instrumentation, surface preparation for paint spraying, engine installation, identification and sourcing of missing parts to all hands being involved in moving the wing and fuselage and preparation for critical lifting operations. Thanks go to all our team members for their loyalty, forbearance and perseverance over the past 10 years.*

*As ever fund raising is a key activity that is of greater concern at this time because of the restricted workshop access and the extended time period that is needed at the Brickfields site to complete final assembly of Islander G-AVCN and to progress the "Islander Experience" flight simulator that was started in January. BNAPS is indebted to our BNAPS Supporters Club members for their interest and help in making the restoration project a success.*

*Due to the impact of the Corona virus situation BNAPS needs to raise in the region of £5,000 to take the project to a point in 2021 where our Islander is ready to go on public display or into temporary storage. As part of a fund raising drive BNAPS will be asking BNAPS Supporters if they are willing to pay their 2021 renewal subscription in advance. There will also be a discount sale of BNAPS merchandise; the BNAPS sales catalogue and order form will be circulated next month. If anyone is able to make a donation to help the project, as always, this will be much appreciated. BNAPS Trustees continue to seek various ways and sources of funding to ensure the project can continue to a successful conclusion as planned. For more information regarding the above please contact BNAPS by email [bob@bnaps.org.uk](mailto:bob@bnaps.org.uk) or Telephone 01329 315561.*

*Yours sincerely,*

*Bob Wealthy,*

*Britten-Norman Aircraft Preservation Society Chairman*

## G-AVCN Restoration Project Status – May 2020

As of 17 March 2020 BNAPS Trustees decided to close the restoration workshop until further notice due to the COVID-19 emergency restrictions. The work items that the team will be engaged on when work resumes are summarised as follows:

### Islander G-AVCN Restoration Work Items

#### 1 Wing and Engines:

- 1.1 Complete the height adjustable wing support trestles including profile boards.
- 1.2 Complete engine dressing.
- 1.3 Fit propellers complete fitting of the engine cowlings and fairings ready for painting.

#### 2 Fuselages:

- 2.1 Ongoing internal trimming work.
- 2.2 Continue application of the cheat lines.
- 2.3 Complete the wing to fuselage fairings temporary fit

### Islander VQ-SAC Fuselage Section Work Items:

- 1 Prepare exterior surfaces and etch prime
- 2 Install windows in fuselage and doors
- 3 Fabricate door hinges and install doors
- 4 Fabricate and install door trim panels and sidewall trim
- 5 Fabricate and install instrument panel blank and centre console
- 6 Install coaming
- 7 Install desktop flight simulator equipment
- 8 Install electrical earthing connection for fuselage structure
- 9 Commission flight simulator



## Getting the BN-2 Islander Off the Ground

In the March Issue 2020 issue of BNAPS News the early days of the Islander were recounted with deliveries to Papua New Guinea and the Islander's success in winning the London – Sydney Air Race in December 1969.

In this issue of BNAPS News we look at the people who set up and backed the BN-2 project and the story of how the Islander moved from concept to production - "The Islander Saga". The pace at which things happened can only be imagined, with a new factory being built at Bembridge with major sub-contracts being let to increase production to match the unprecedented level of worldwide sales of the Islander and recruitment of new people to make it all happen. In the period from 1965 to 1969 the company had grown from just a few hands to some 300 employees.

It must be recognised that the design of the Islander relied upon the credentials of Miles Aircraft at Shoreham together with a number of Miles design draughtsmen and engineers. This situation changed early on when B-N gained its Air Registration Board accreditation as an aircraft design organisation. Prior to this B-N had held accreditation as an aircraft constructor. A number of the Miles personnel subsequently joined B-N at Bembridge, notably Denis Berryman and Ron Dack.

### **The People Behind the Islander – a Wealth of Skill and Hard Won Experience**

*Based on an article by John Deighton originally published in  
Britten-Norman News Issue 1, May/June 1967.*

Aeronautical skill plus the hard-won experience of the men at the top. This is the unbeatable combination which spells out the success of Britten-Norman, a company which can now boast of having "a winner" in the `Islander'. Indeed, the company says it will sell more than 1,000 `Islanders' over the next 10 years! *[Ed: it actually took 15 years to get to 1000]*

Combined knowledge makes a compact, expert and mature team, to whose proven ability in technical design and aircraft engineering is added many years' experience of aircraft operation built up in the field all over the world. In addition, Britten-Norman's three executive directors are themselves pilots.

Desmond Norman, aged 38, educated at Eton and the De Havilland Aeronautical Technical School, Hatfield, saw eight years' service with the Royal Air Force, including auxiliary service. He flew jets as a fighter pilot with 601 Squadron - which his father, the late Sir Nigel Norman, commanded before the war-and later was for two years export assistant at the Society of British Aircraft Constructors. Desmond Norman has clocked up almost 4,000 hours flying time - almost 1,000 on jets - and has flown 59 different types of aircraft.

John Britten, aged 39, was educated at Dartmouth Naval College and the De Havilland Aeronautical Technical School-where he first met Desmond Norman. He has flown some 700 hours in light aircraft, and is an Associate Fellow of the Royal Aeronautical Society.

Australian born Jim McMahan, with more than 5,000 flying hours, was a licenced aircraft engineer with Trans-Australian Airlines after wartime R.A.F. service. He gained wide experience of flying during the pioneer days of agricultural aviation in New Zealand after the war.

Frank Mann, another director, is a life-long aircraft enthusiast and an operator in his own right.

The fifth board member, Alan Bartlett, 35, the company's financial director, is a director of a number of British public and private companies.

The company itself can be traced back to 1950 as a partnership between Desmond Norman and John Britten to design and build a light aircraft, the homebuild BN-1, sponsored by the Ultra Light Aircraft Association. Moving on from this venture they then specialised in the conversion and export of de Havilland Tiger Moths for top dressing in New Zealand to the specifications of an aerial crop spraying entrepreneur, Jim McMahan.

## From Prototype to Production – The Islander Saga

*An account of the design philosophy the development and the production of the B-N short haul transport aircraft based on an article published in "Aircraft Engineering", August 1970.*

### Introduction

Simplicity is the keynote of the Britten-Norman Islander light transport aircraft. Simple in construction and with simple systems, the whole conception of the aircraft was based on the specific needs of the third level and commuter airlines and the air taxi companies for an economical and efficient aircraft with excellent payload capacity over relatively short distances. The fundamental design philosophy behind the Islander was to bring a new low level of operating cost and the potential of a high level of profitability to short haul air transport. For many years the general trend in aircraft manufacture has been to make transport aircraft larger, faster and more complicated; this has applied just as much to small aircraft for the air taxi or feeder line operator as to intercontinental airliners, although perhaps not in quite so dramatic a fashion as occurred with the introduction of the Boeing 747 which presented the airlines with an aircraft having double the capacity of its predecessor.



*John Britten (left) and Desmond Norman*

The men behind the Islander, John Britten C.B.E., and Desmond Norman C.B.E., Joint Managing Directors of Britten-Norman (B-N), were convinced of the need for a robust utility aeroplane from their early

experiences in operating a scheduled service commuter route in the Cameroons.



*First public showing of the BN-2 was this model at the 1964 SBAC Farnborough Air Show.*

As they saw it, there was a gap in the market for an aircraft designed to have minimum capital cost per saleable passenger seat on short haul sectors. In keeping with this philosophy the airframe structure had to be simple and designed with the fatigue problems of small aircraft very much in mind. Laminations were to be used extensively for spars, inter-spar stringers and skin plating to cut machining costs and to simplify repairs. A high standard of corrosion proofing was needed to give reliability and for operation in all parts of the world. Ancillary equipment that was already proven and in world-wide use was specified so that the reliability would be of a high order and spares would be easily available. Low wing loading and a high power to weight ratio were necessary to give STOL performance without the use of expensive and sophisticated flaps. A large payload capacity together with a cabin that could be quickly adapted for passengers, freight, ambulance, photographic and geophysical survey, agriculture, parachuting and many other roles were also essential requirements.

Any recent visitor to Bembridge had only to look around at the flock of Islanders grouped around the airfield and finished in the colours of the many different operators from all parts of the world to realise that the two partners did their market research with an accuracy that must have been the envy of some of the major airframe manufacturers.

In the early days the B-N, partnership, founded in 1951, was involved in the design and construction of a homebuilt aircraft the BN-1, a project that was

sponsored by the Ultra Light Aircraft Association.



*John Britten speaking to the pilot of the BN-1F "Finibee" prior to a test flight (Peter Gatrell).*

Flown as the BN-1F "Finibee" in May 1951, the aircraft was withdrawn from use after limited test flying and B-N became involved in aerial crop spraying with the refurbishing and conversion of war surplus De Havilland Tiger Moths that were in demand for agricultural top dressing operations in New Zealand.



*Tiger Moth with Micronair aerial crop spraying equipment in action.*

The demand for Tiger Moth conversions for this work began to fall off by 1954 and the two partners turned their attention towards the improvement of crop spraying methods, and the design and production of the highly efficient Micronair rotary atomisers that gave a significant improvement on previous spraying devices. In 1955 B-N became a limited company and a subsidiary, Crop Culture (Aerial), was formed at the same time. A task force of two Tiger Moths and an Anson completed a successful season of crop spraying in the Sudan and by 1956 the Micronair equipment was beginning to sell in quantity as it became better known.



*Desmond Norman (centre, John Britten (right) and Dave Williams with their Anson support aircraft about to depart for the first crop spraying venture in the Sudan (Peter Gatrell).*

As part of their varied interests the partners set up a company called Cameroons Air Transport (CAT) in 1960 to run a scheduled service linking Tiko with Douala entailing a 15 min. flight across the estuary of the Mungo River in the Cameroons. The alternative was a long and tedious journey over poorly surfaced roads and the air link was soon popular with business people and shoppers as well as transit passengers who wished to join the flights to Europe and other parts of the world from Douala. The route is typical of many third level or commuter services for which there is a growing requirement throughout the world, as many small towns with grass strips that used to be served by aircraft such as the DC-3 found themselves out in the cold when airlines re-equipped with jet equipment that was uneconomic when used on very short sectors apart from being incompatible with the airfields.



*Cameroons Air Transport Piper Apache (Bob Ward).*

CAT initially operated a five seater Piper Apache on the Tiko-Douala service, which had the merit of being economical to use, but had the drawback of lack of cabin

space when it came to bulky loads. In hot and high conditions its single engine performance was found to be wanting when stricter public transport regulations were introduced, and it was replaced by an Aztec. The additional power of the Aztec was intended to produce more range and a higher cruising speed, but it had only one additional seat. For this type of route the additional performance was of little advantage. What was wanted was a high seating capacity for the size of the aircraft (coupled with the capability of being able to use the large cabin volume for freight) and reasonable short field performance.

As a result of this experience John Britten and Desmond Norman came to the conclusion that they must build their own aircraft. B-N conducted a survey of all the twin engined aircraft available that cost less than £25,000, but there were none that went any way towards meeting the requirements of the route.

B-N felt certain that they were not alone in needing an aircraft that would fill this general specification and the go ahead was given to design their own solution to the problem.

In 1963 John Britten began design work on the new project and in January 1964 the decision was made to go ahead with the building of a prototype. Metal was first cut in September of the same year.



*The BN-2 prototype, G-ATCT, being prepared for its first flight June 1965.*

A mere nine months later on June 10, 1965, the prototype was rolled out of the hangar at Bembridge and the shape of the BN-2 was revealed. It had a high rectangular wing of generous area and high aspect ratio coupled with large flaps to give good short field performance.

The fuselage was long and slim to give a large cabin with wide doors on each side for easy access and with the floor at walk-in height; the frontal area was kept low by the absence of an aisle. A fixed tricycle undercarriage with twin wheels on the main legs resulted in low footprint pressures. In fact the aircraft looked as it was intended to a rugged workhorse without frills but with the performance to fit the specification it was designed to fill. The rest is history.



*Desmond Norman in the BN-2 mock up fuselage.*



*BN-2 prototype under construction in the hangar at Bembridge Airport early 1965.*



*BN-2 prototype G-ATCT at the Paris Air Show on 20 June, 1965.*

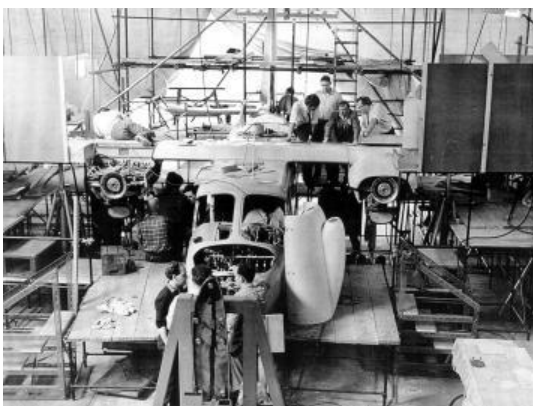
After an intensive period of initial test flying the BN-2 prototype, soon to be given the name "Islander", appeared at Paris to make its first public appearance just a few

days after its first flight. There were of course problems in the early development of the aircraft. The prototype had a maximum permissible operating weight of 4,900 lb. and was fitted with Continental IO-360A engines of 210 bhp. The performance was found to be below the estimates and this was cured to a large degree by extending the wingtips and by modifying the engine air intakes and the nacelle fairings. As the airframe had been provided with inherent stretch, the decision was taken to fit Lycoming O-540 engines of 260 bhp and to increase the maximum operating weight to 5,200lbs. This gave an additional 130lbs of payload and increased the empty weight of the aircraft to 3,070lbs.



*BN-2 Islander G-ATCT now with Lycoming O-540 engines installed.*

B-N initiated the Islander project as a private venture, but once it was under way they came to the conclusion that the potential market was such that their original production goal of about 30 aircraft per year was far too modest.



The first production Islander is seen here being assembled in the Bembridge Airport hangar.

With a view to achieving a viable production flow at the earliest possible moment and of being able to quote firm

delivery dates (the smaller the aircraft the less the lead time between order and delivery the customer is prepared to tolerate) led the firm to approach the Government for launching aid.

This, however, did not delay the manufacture and flight development of the prototype which went ahead while the Transport Aircraft Requirements Committee was considering and evaluating the Islander. This decision was not reached until the autumn, and in fact the whole cost of the design, prototype construction and the early flight test development as well as the initial production tooling and component building until the end of 1965 which amounted to some £170,000, was met by B-N themselves. At this time the aviation industry in this country had reached its nadir: an entire new generation of military aircraft had been cancelled, resulting in a major restructuring of UK aviation companies. It was not the healthiest of climates to look for additional resources to support an aircraft project, particularly as credit restrictions were also in force.

Fortunately the Ministry of Aviation on the advice of the Transport Aircraft Requirements Committee made a recommendation to the Treasury that the Islander project should be supported on the basis of its achievements at that time and its potential prospects. An announcement was made on November 1, 1965, that the Ministry of Aviation was prepared to meet up to half the launching costs with the usual proviso that the advance would be returned to the Government in the form of a levy on Islander sales.

The launching aid support first amounted to a loan of £190,000. It gave greater impetus to the project and enabled a new factory, with an area of 56,000 sq. ft., and tailored to Islander production, to be built at Bembridge.

This significant addition to B-N's facilities was brought into use towards the end of 1966, and resulted in a marked acceleration of production. Early in 1967 the orders and increased interest that the Islander had attracted once it had entered service brought additional support from the Ministry of Aviation in the form of an interest-bearing loan of £250,000.



*Aerial view of the new B-N factory building at Bembridge Airport (Simon Thomson).*



*Aerial view of Bembridge Airport showing the taxi way from the B-N factory to the aircraft parking area.*

### **BN-2 Islander Key Features**

The concept for the BN-2 Islander originated by John Britten and Desmond, as realised in the production design, embodies a number of key features that proved to be just right for light transport utility aircraft operators worldwide as outlined below:

#### ***Easy Access for Passengers and Low Cost/Seat Mile***

The Islander can carry 9 passengers plus a pilot. There is no central aisle and passengers enter through low step doors much as they would in a car. Passenger baggage is carried in a large rear luggage bay.

The Islander's low initial cost, low operating and maintenance costs make it a good revenue earner even on lightly loaded routes.

The Islander can be converted into a cargo carrier in a few minutes and can carry up to a ton of freight.

The Islander's cabin can be fitted out for other roles such as air ambulance, aerial

survey, logistics support or mixed freight and passenger operations.

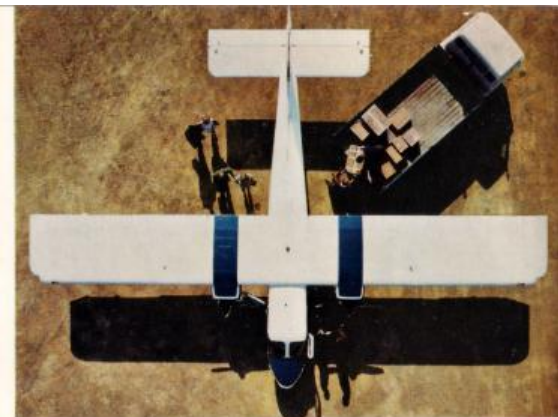
#### ***Cabin Layout – Passengers or Freight***

The passenger cabin is equipped with four rows of two place seats. Each position is equipped with a light and fresh air vents. Passenger seats can be removed in a few minutes to make the full unobstructed cabin space available for carrying freight



#### ***Lightly Loaded High Wing Configuration***

The Islander's large lightly loaded wing gives a short take off at low speed and low stalling speed. The Islander's high wing configuration gives passengers an unobstructed view through the large cabin windows as well as keeping the engines and propellers well clear of the ground when operating from rough, semi prepared surfaces.



**Easy Access for Passengers**

Access to the Islander's cabin is made easy with a door for every seat row. The large doors and low sill height enable easy loading and unloading when carrying freight and other types of cargo.



*Passenger Door Port Side Aft*

**Quick Change**

The Islander's passenger seats can be removed from the cabin in a few minutes and stowed in the baggage compartment allowing an easy change from passenger to freight use



*Pilot's Door Port Side*



*Passenger seats stowed in the baggage bay*

**Proven Engines**

The Islander is powered by two well proven engines, the Lycoming O-540, and is fitted with Hartzell propellers.



*Passenger Door Starboard Side.*



*View of the port Lycoming O-540 engine installation.*

### **Easy Servicing**

Engine cowlings can be removed easily to allow access to the engines for maintenance and routine servicing without the need for special ground support facilities



*Engines are readily accessible for routine servicing and maintenance.*

### **Rugged Fixed Landing Gear**

The Islander's rugged fixed landing gear is designed for rough field operation and low maintenance.



*View of the starboard main landing gear [Note leg fairing design is original style, this changed after c/n 70].*

### **Production Programme**

Early in 1968 a radical reorganisation of the production programme was made. The total order book was now over 200 and it was evident that the facilities available at Bembridge were not sufficient to cope with the demand.

The company already had a subcontract arrangement with the British Hovercraft Corporation (BHC) at East Cowes for the supply of 700 sets of wings for the

Islander. This order later altered to one for the supply of 236 complete airframes at a fixed price against scheduled delivery dates.



*Islander fuselage in its assembly jig at BHC's Falcon Works.*

Westland Helicopters, like BHC, a subsidiary of Westland Aircraft, are also participants in the programme and manufacture components of the Islander at their Weston-super-Mare factory as a supplement to the East Cowes production. The new factory at Bembridge was cleared of all component manufacture and was set out for the final assembly lines.



*Overall view of the fuselage and wing production lines at BHC's Falcon Works.*

Another firm involved in subcontract work is C. F. Taylor (Hurn) for production of the flying control surfaces such as ailerons, elevators, rudders, tail plane and flaps exhaust system and detail parts.

Romania is also involved in Islander production as the result of an offset deal made when Tarom, their national airline, decided that Western equipment would prove more attractive in the flourishing tourist market.

The Romanian aircraft industry was anxious to develop its skills to Western standards which they recognised was an essential factor if they were to have any hope of penetrating Western markets. A package deal was made whereby Tarom ordered five B.A.C. One-Eleven airliners and was able to recover some of the cost by their industry building Islanders under licence from B-N. The basic contract is for the supply of 215 aircraft that are assembled at Baneasa Airport near Bucharest from materials and components supplied by B-N. The entire output of Romanian built aircraft is purchased by B-N who are responsible for all Islander sales. The aircraft are fitted with a ferry instrumentation package and finished in a basic white colour scheme before being flown to Bembridge where the final fitting out for avionics and colour scheme to the customer's requirements is done.

The target production rate of four aircraft per month is expected to be reached in the near future; already aircraft are being turned out at a rate of one every ten days. In its early stages the Romanian scheme was backed by engineers from B-N and a full time representative from the Air Registration Board (ARB) who was responsible for the build being to U.K. standards of airworthiness. Now the aircraft is in full production the ARB and B-N engineers are expected to be withdrawn later this year and the inspection will be on the basis of periodic visits. Although the first aircraft produced by the Romanians were assembled from components supplied from Bembridge, they now have a complete set of jigs and their thirteenth was entirely fabricated in Romania using the basic materials supplied by B-N. At the beginning of the project it was impressed on the Romanians that the aircraft must be made according to the drawings and this policy has been strictly adhered to by them. The first Romanian built Islanders were checked very closely when they arrived at Bembridge and the standard of workmanship was found to be very high and was thought to match any comparable work in Western industry. Once delivered to Bembridge, no distinction is made between the Romanian and British-built aircraft.

*(For more about the production of Islanders in Romania see the article on Page 19 "The People's Islander").*

### **Production Methods**

The aircraft is constructed primarily from L72 zinc-free aluminium alloy. This material is well known as having particularly good fatigue characteristics. Another factor affecting this is that the working stress levels on the wing load surfaces have been kept below 2,000 lb/sq. in.. Assuming that a safe life factor of five is applied, the aircraft would have a fatigue free life of 15,000 hours based on the extremely severe spectrum of 6.8 flights per hour.



*B-N technician engaged in applying corrosion protection for detail Islander components.*

Particular care is taken in corrosion proofing that is carried out to a very high standard. All airframe components are sprayed with etch primer and epoxy primer before assembly. Boxed in components are given a double coating. Once assembled, any rivets or parts of the structure which are exposed are also treated before the final application of grey finishing coat.

The entire wing span is a single continuous structure with separate wing tips. It is of a two spar type, each spar consisting of angle section booms with shear webs of 18 swg L72 sheet. Together with three interspar Z section stringers top and bottom, these, with the skin plating, constitute a torsion box.

Special attention is given to the construction of a strong and simple airframe. The use of lamination in the structure, including spars, interspar

stringers and skin plating, serves as an indication of this. Over the central area the spar booms comprise three nested angles. They are Redux bonded and reduce in both directions outboard, first to two sections and finally to one. Outboard of these points the spars are of a lighter section, riveted and butt strapped to make up the complete spar unit.



*View of an early production Islander wing under construction at B-N's Cushioncraft Works near Bembridge.*

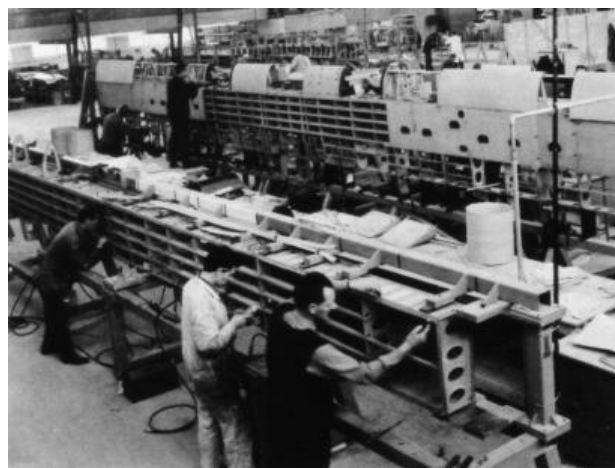
The Islander production methods are as conventional as its structure. The sheet metal detail manufacture consists largely of routing to shape and drilling, followed by flanging and forming on a rubber die press. The press is served by two sliding tables and to maintain continuous production it can be fed from opposite sides on to the platter.

The main assembly stages of the Islander are the building of the fuselage and the wing and tail unit as separate components for subsequent joining to form the complete aircraft. Initially the assembly tooling for the Islander was designed by B-N. Since the work is now undertaken by sub-contractors additions have been made for the greater capacity involved. The nose section of the fuselage, the side, roof and floor of the cabin section, the rear fuselage and the tail unit are built at one factory,

and further assembly of these sections into the complete component takes place at the Falcon Works of BHC at East Cowes. The main assembly fixtures are constructed from steel tube, 4 in. square. The rigidity of this material permits the construction of

simple basic structures, free from bracing. It also gives maximum accessibility to those working on the structures. The flat faces of the tubing are a further advantage since they facilitate the attachment of brackets and pick-up locations for the key inter-changeability points of the components.

The wing is assembled as a complete unit in two main stages, in a vertical position with the leading edge upward.



*View of a wing box spar under construction at BHC's Falcon Works*

Firstly the torsion box is built and then the wing structure is completed. In this second stage the leading edge and trailing edge structures are assembled and the engine nacelle structures are fitted to the underside of the torsion box.

The aircraft, wing and fuselage components are transported by road to Bembridge for final assembly.



*View of the BHC goods receiving area at Bembridge where wings and fuselages are trial fitted before being accepted by B-N and entering the final assembly line.*

There are seven stages of assembly, each one consisting of several assembly

operations and balanced on time to permit the aircraft to be moved forward at fixed intervals. The complete operation up to flight status takes 380 man hours.



*B-N's final assembly line at Bembridge*

The wing is joined to the fuselage, the nose wheel, main undercarriage, and flaps and flap controls are assembled. Then the engine is installed, and elevators are fitted to the tail plane and the tail plane to the fuselage.



*Islanders on the final assembly line at Bembridge*

The next stage is the fitting of the empennage: rudder to fin, fin and rudder to the fuselage. At this stage the ailerons are fitted to the wing, the rudder fairing and fin dorsal fairing are assembled, the engine-nacelle fairing, undercarriage leg fairings and wing to fuselage fairings. Brakes and pipe systems are added. The fourth section of the assembly involves electrical wiring, and filling, stopping and cleaning. Then flying controls, fuel cocks and flap actuators are rigged. The trim and cowling windscreen are fitted, and the

instruments connected up after cleaning out the piping.



*Completed Islanders emerge at the end of the final assembly line for flight test and delivery*

The last stage performed in the shop is the weighing of the complete aircraft. Following this the aircraft is taken outside for final ground checks and engine running. The aircraft then undergoes its initial production test flying prior to being painted to the customer's specification by C.S.E. at Oxford or Marshalls of Cambridge.



*Islanders have appeared in a variety of colour schemes for customers world-wide.*

The other line in the assembly shop at Bembridge is for the incorporation of customer options for which on the average about 300 man hours are required. The basic build includes heaters and is to a comprehensive standard, as it has been

found to be quicker to take out the occasional item that is not required by a particular customer than to add items that might affect the basic structure after the completion of the build.

The present rate of production at Bembridge, without the Romanian input, is three aircraft per week, but this rate could easily be stepped up to four or five without difficulty.

### **Development**

The Islander has undergone a steady programme of development since it first flew and this has been divided into two separate areas. The first objective has been to improve the standard product by a process of analysing reports from operators and introducing modifications to the design when this has been proved desirable. The changes have been fed into the production lines as quickly as possible. The second objective has been directed at improving the performance together with an increase in permissible gross weight resulting in a larger payload.

The two programmes proceed in parallel with the common principle of all modifications being designed for retrospective fit. The firm informs the operators of all the improvements and these are on offer as a series of kits to enable the earliest model of the Islander to be brought up to the latest standards.

### **Product Improvement**

A system of analysing field reports from operators was initiated which showed the pattern of recurring minor defects and the requests for changes to the aircraft, and made apparent the priorities to be applied to the product improvement programme. A further input to the programme had resulted from visits to Bembridge by Islander operators who have often made valuable suggestions resulting from their experience in the field.

The analysis system has resulted in many minor improvements which are first fitted as trial installations on the company's aircraft to find out if the modification is effective and whether it would give rise to other problems when introduced into service. The Test and Instrumentation aircraft, Islander G-ATWU, rarely flies more than ten hours per week with the result

that a certain amount of time is needed before a modification can be proved to be worthwhile.

Improvements at present under way include items such as improved braking systems, improvements to heater mufflers and cabin heaters and various alternative avionics packages. Certification is expected before the end of the year.

In the longer term there are several projects on which work is going on. One of the most important is a new design of cabin interior, with the aim of producing a more robust standard of trim that would be easier to remove for cleaning and of a quality comparable to their competitors. The decor will have a new look and the materials, the furnishing and the method of attachment will be changed. Close attention is also been given to the ability of the interior to withstand tropical environments.

### **Performance Improvement**

In common with all twin-engined aircraft, the Islander is primarily limited in its performance by its single engine capability with the flaps retracted. Early modifications to the Islander to improve its performance in this respect resulted in changes to the wing span and the adoption of the Lycoming O-540-E power plant of 260 bhp. The Islander was originally certified in 1966 at an a.u.w. of 5,700 lb. but it was not long before it was updated to 6,000 lb. by the introduction of some minor modifications. At this time the single engine ceiling in ISA conditions was 5,200 ft. The engine nacelle shape was investigated at this stage and the seventieth aircraft off the production line was fitted with a new square shaped rear nacelle and undercarriage leg fairings of increased chord. This modification NBIM/358 resulted in a dramatic improvement to the performance by increasing the single engine ceiling by nearly 2,000ft and the cruise speed by 4 to 5 knots. The B-N flight test department regarded this as the minimum increase achieved as several operators reported increases of up to 10 knots. The increase in performance was basically due to the reduced induced drag resulting from the replacing of a virtually three dimensional flow by a two dimensional flow. The installation of the new nacelle and

undercarriage leg fairings raised the maximum operational weight as far as the single engine performance was concerned to 6,300 lb.

The company then investigated the possibilities of clearing the structure to the same weight and found, owing to the conservative approach that they had adopted in the early days when stressing the design, that the weight could be achieved with no structural change to the aircraft. This was due to the high stalling speeds that had been used for the basic stressing. Flight test results showed that the stall speeds were in practice from six to seven knots slower than those used for stressing purposes. When these were used in the construction of a flight envelope it was possible to add a surprising amount of weight to the aircraft to give the same stresses as originally predicted. At the new weight the aircraft met the structural requirements of the British and American airworthiness authorities without any restriction.

To meet the performance requirements at the increased weight some changes were found to be necessary, particularly in the U.S.A. where there is a single engine climb requirement of  $.02 V^2$  at 5,000 ft. The Islander with the modified nacelles met this easily at 6,000 lb. but its performance was marginal when at 6,300 lb. a.u.w. The fix found for this was not to increase the single engine rate of climb but to reduce the stalling speed which brings down the single engine rate of climb requirement under American regulations. This was done by introducing a larger radius leading edge to the wing between the engine and the fuselage, i.e. adopting a cambered leading edge for this area. This modification reduced the stalling speed by about 4.5 knots under certain conditions and was first fitted to the one hundred and eightieth aircraft off the production line.

The drooped leading edge was originally fitted across the whole span of the wing. but this resulted in a stall speed only one knot less than that achieved with the droop between the engine and the fuselage. An interesting anomaly was found in that with the original nacelle fitted the drooped leading edge gave an increase of 15 to 20 ft/min. on the single engine rate of climb, but when fitted with the production rear

nacelle this figure was reduced to a value between 5 and 10 ft/min.

The same sort of thing happened when performance checks were made on an aircraft fitted with the optional wing tip tanks. As well as fulfilling their primary purpose of increasing the endurance by two hours, they also improved the performance by increasing the aspect ratio of the wing. Flight tests showed that with the original nacelle a rate of climb increase of about 55 ft/min. on one engine was obtained with the tips fitted. With the modified nacelle the increase was reduced to approximately 30 ft./min.

The precise reasons for the reduction in the effect of these modifications on aircraft fitted with the modified nacelle is not known, but it is thought to be the result of a change in the wing span wise lift distribution. However, the modified nacelle gives such a basic performance increase that the net result with both the drooped leading edge and the wing tip tanks fitted is always better than without it. The wing tips add about 1,000 ft. to the single engine ceiling, because in effect they push the wing tip vortices out another couple of feet on each side and thus increase the aspect ratio.

A marked increase in overall performance will be available with the Islander fitted with Lycoming IO-540-K fuel injection engines of 300 bhp. Certification is expected the summer of 1970 and deliveries are expected to start early in the autumn. With these engines the aircraft will have a 10 m.p.h. increase in cruising speed over the standard aeroplane and a 2,500 ft. increase in single engine ceiling. Flight tests have shown that the aircraft is extremely pleasant to fly and has not acquired any vices as a result of the higher powered engines. The minimum control speed is still below 40 knots and the stalling behaviour as immaculate as ever. In its definitive form the aircraft is fitted with a new design of engine cowling that is squared off in cross section and has a reduced frontal area. This cowling will be available for the O-540-E engined aircraft later on.

A wing flap droop of 6 deg. has been introduced on the higher-powered aircraft which helps to improve the attitude at which the aircraft flies in the cruise at

maximum weight and, of greater importance, it helps to concentrate the lift on the inner section of the wing thus enabling the all up weight and the zero fuel weight to be increased without increasing the wing bending moment. This configuration has no detrimental effect on the aircraft performance and is expected to allow an a.u.w. of over 6,500 lb. without structural penalty when certified. The modification will be available for retrospective fitting to all Islanders and will be eventually a standard fitting for 0-540 engined aircraft. The wing portion between the flap and the aileron will be adjusted to fair the two surfaces together and the wing root fillet will be lowered to coincide with the flap angle.

### **Payload/Range**

The improvement in performance of the Islander over the past year has allowed the maximum authorised take-off weight to be increased from 6,000 lb. to 6,300 lb. This has been achieved with a very small increase in empty weight and therefore the increase in all up weight is directly reflected in the payload that the Islander can carry. In two years, the disposable load of an Islander fully equipped for IFR flight and including the pilot, has increased from about 1,600 lb. to 2,200 lb., an increase of 37 per cent. When it is considered that an Islander can fly one mile for each pound of fuel used, the significance of this weight increase is obvious.

The Islander has a still air range of over 350 miles with 9 x 170 lb. passengers. Under BCAR rules, in which the zero fuel weight has been increased from 5,800 lb. to 6,000 lb., (i.e. the payload can be increased by 200 lb.), 9 x 170 lb passengers each with a 20 kg. standard international baggage allowance can be carried for 170 miles. The present payload range characteristics for the Islander are now very similar to that of the Piper Navajo or Cessna 402B, but at an Aztec's operating cost.

The Islander was designed for short sectors of under 100 miles, but there were some operators who required more fuel to operate in a congested IFR air traffic environment where the distance to alternate airfields is significant. For example, Suburban Airlines' route from Red

Bank to Kennedy is only 26 miles but half an hour's extra hold fuel is necessary at Kennedy and a 100 mile diversion is mandatory; therefore 330 lb. of fuel is required for this 26 mile sector. This fuel has now been made available by the recent weight increase.

### **Tip Tanks**

The new wing tip tanks were designed to increase the endurance of Islanders equipped with cameras, magnetometers etc. and used for survey flights. With an extra 59 U.S. gallons available, more than two hours extra endurance is available at cruise speed. The standard aircraft has five hours endurance; set aside one hour's fuel for reserves and this leaves a cruise endurance of four hours; hence the tip tanks have increased the practical range by 50 per cent, a not insignificant margin. The still air range is now 950 miles with full IFR reserves, or nearly 1,300 miles to dry tanks at economical cruise speed, carrying a payload of approximately 650 lb.

### **Cruise Speed**

The change in engine nacelle shape and the wide chord leg fairings have increased the speed by 5 per cent, and over 160 miles per hour true air speed is achievable at full load with a fuel consumption of 26-27 U.S. gallons an hour.

### **Performance Requirements for Public Transport Operation**

The commercial use and profitability of the Islander is also dependent upon it being allowed to fly, i.e. meeting the performance requirements of the various certification authorities. Various formulae are used around the world to calculate a safe single engine performance, but in round terms the aircraft must be able to maintain a 1 per cent gradient of climb or approximately 75 ft. a minute at 5,000 ft. or, in another way, a single engine ceiling of approximately 7,000 ft. is required. It is to these performance requirements that the Islander is built and the all up weight has been increased to absorb the improved single engine performance. In the United States and the United Kingdom the aircraft can fly IFR at 6,300 lb; in Australia the Islander can fly at 6,300 lb. VFR, 6,000 lb. IFR or 6,250 lb. IFR with wing tip tanks

installed. In countries such as New Zealand and Scandinavia where the aircraft are required to maintain a single engine climb gradient of 1 per cent at the minimum en route altitude, at 6,300 lb., the aircraft can fly IFR at 4,000 ft. or just under 5,000 ft. with tip tanks fitted. As a rough guide, 200 lbs. of payload is equal to 1,000 ft. single engine ceiling, therefore the standard Islander carrying 5 passengers has a single engine ceiling of over 9,000 ft.

In order to meet the requirements of an operation in the Arabian Desert at very high temperatures under the British rules, the Islander with the standard engines has been fully cleared for operations at ISA plus 30 deg. C. (i.e. 113 deg. F. at sea level). As a comparison, the majority of United States general aviation aircraft are designed to meet the requirements of the American standard hot day, which is 100 deg. F. or ISA plus 23 deg. C. at sea level. This is of particular significance in hot countries and especially to those operators who support the oil industry.

Again, of special significance to those countries which operate under FAA rules, scheduled air operators are required to have similar safety factors on take-off as the larger airliners, i.e. the aircraft have to be able to suffer an engine failure on the runway on take-off and either stop safely on the runway or continue the take off and climb out on one engine. Very few current aircraft can meet these requirements without being uneconomically weight limited. It is significant to note that although the Islander does not have to meet these requirements and hence is a more attractive commercial aircraft as a result, it does in fact meet them with a field length of around 2,500 ft. At the present time, in most countries, it can be said that the more rigorously performance requirements are applied to scheduled or

air taxi operators, the better the Islander's performance compares with its competitors and gives an important selling advantage.

Although these performance requirements have been achieved with comparatively small changes to the Islander, this does not mean that they have been obtained without considerable effort by B-N. Two Islanders are used at Bembridge for trial installation purposes and performance measurements and 550 hours were flown in the last year in support of this programme.

The cost of an aircraft to an operator, and hence its profitability, are directly related to the capital required to provide one passenger seat mile of transportation. A contemporary standard for any good aircraft is approximately \$80 per seat mile. For a 100 mile sector, (taking account of a recent N.A.T.C. study showing that over half the routes in the United States were under 100 miles), the capital cost per seat mile for an Islander is \$80, for the Cessna 402B \$109, for the Twin Otter, \$167 and for the Beech 99 \$185. Just for interest, the capital cost per seat mile for a Boeing 707 operating on a transatlantic sector is about \$75 and for a 747, with its designed passenger load of 450, it is \$70, but as it is currently being operated with about 360 passengers, this becomes about \$85 a seat mile. Therefore, whether or not these figures are accurate to within 10 per cent or so, the Islander's profitability is obvious.

### **The Future**

Successful as they have been with the Islander, with a total of 190 delivered, over 310 sold, and now in service in over 40 countries, B-N have no intention of resting on their laurels. A lot of thought has been given to a stretched version of the aircraft and this will soon reach the prototype stage.

### ***The Islander Saga Continues.....***

*The original article "The Islander Saga" reflects the situation in the latter part of 1969 and therefore, in 2020, all the costs, performance, weights etc are for illustration only.*

*The original author of the article was not named in the August 1969 issue of Aircraft Engineering. Although only a guess, it is felt that much of the content came from B-N and in particular the product development and performance may well have originated from Andy Coombe, B-N's Chief Airworthiness Engineer. Working alongside John Britten and Desmond Norman, Andy was a driving force in getting the BN-2 from prototype to production. Others have taken up the challenge over the years and the Islander Saga is a continuing story and will go on and on.....*

## **The People's Islander - Islander Production in Romania**

*Report from Bucharest by David Woolley  
FLIGHT International- 18 June 1970*

Production of the Britten-Norman Islander in Romania is now reaching the four units per month specified in the contract. Immediately after holding its first-ever distributors' conference in Jersey on June 1-3, the Bembridge company flew the delegates to Bucharest to inspect the production facilities at the IRMA works. Flight accompanied the party, which was composed of representatives from many countries, and found that all the visitors were favourably impressed with the Romanians' operations. It was generally agreed that construction standards for IRMA-built units are at least as good as those for the other Islander production line at British Hovercraft Corporation, Cowes, Isle of Wight. Several of the visitors commented on the general cleanliness and good organisation of the IRMA shops, which were set up and equipped specifically for Islander production.

The standard has not been attained without difficulties; the distance involved and the language barrier are two that immediately spring to mind, while the difference in outlook and approach as between a small private-enterprise company in Britain and a state-owned, ministry-controlled enterprise in Communist Romania was a factor that could, without a generous measure of goodwill on both sides, have put paid to the venture at an early stage. But much has been staked on the project by Britten-Norman because production rate has been a critical factor in the Islander programme, and by the Romanians, because the re-establishment of a national aircraft industry is rated highly in the country's policy of independence and non-alignment within the East European political scene.

Much of the credit for putting the programme on a smooth course must go to the Britons on the spot in Bucharest. Mr Bob Wall of the Air Registration Board and Mr Ken Mills of Britten-Norman. The ARB has direct responsibility for the airworthiness of the Romanian product as of the British, even though the entire manufacture (except for the installation of avionics) and much of the test flying is in Romanian hands. (Eventually the ARB will hand over this responsibility to local authorities.) Ensuring the establishment of a new factory from scratch, and seeing that it comes on line in a well-ordered fashion, has clearly called for a tough but very diplomatic approach. On the other side, the Romanians have shown that their system is not as inflexible as Western observers might have supposed. Following hiccups in the initial stages, responsibility for the IRMA production was transferred from the Ministry of Transport to the Ministry of Machine Production, and management changes were made which have contributed to a progressive atmosphere.

The contract with the Romanians is for the construction of 215 aircraft, of which 12 have been delivered. The production rate of four units a month has only just been reached, a few months behind schedule. A total of 37 Islanders are to be built this year, and then 43 will be built each year until all 215 have been completed in 1974. [*Ed: this actually took until 1977*].

All the raw materials are shipped direct from source to Bucharest involving Britten-Norman in a complicated logistics exercise-and the completed aircraft are flown back to Bembridge after being test flown in Romania, usually by Romanian pilots who have completed a training course at Bembridge. An avionics package is fitted for the ferry flight alone, and the customer's specified avionics are installed at Bembridge. Engine cowlings are at present among the parts being supplied to Romania, but it is planned to produce these locally at an early stage.

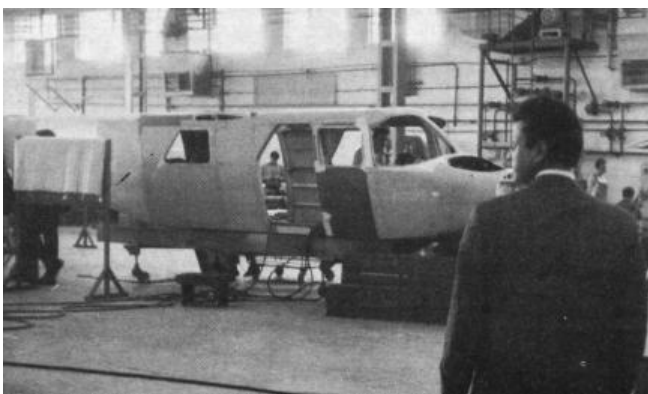
The history of the Romanian production of the Islander dates back to 1967, when the national airline Tarom was in the market for jet equipment. The country's policy of independence and its economic situation commended the purchase of Western aircraft with which to enhance

Tarom's hard-currency earnings, and the choice had been narrowed down to the One-Eleven and the Caravelle.

In return for buying in the West-this was no barter deal for apples or what-have-you-Romania wanted two things. One was assistance with the import of machine tools and the modernisation of the country's industry; the other was the re-establishment of the aircraft industry, which from its inception in 1906 had, made considerable progress up to the Second World War. In 1937 one of its products, the TAR-80 fighter, was claimed to be the third fastest aircraft in the world, with a maximum speed well over 300 mph, 480km/hr.

BAC was able to clinch its One-Eleven sale by arranging for the satisfaction of these two Romanian requests. The company concluded that Britten-Norman offered the only possibility on the British scene for meeting the aviation need, and approached them accordingly, with encouragement from the Ministry of Technology. The reaction at Bembridge at first was that they had enough on their plate without launching out on production in distant countries, but opinion swung round when the extent of production capacity problems in the light of the upward trend in Islander orders became apparent. Tarom bought six One-Elevens (and is now in the market for six more); and Britten-Norman signed up with Technoimport, the state agency representing IRMA.

An extensive training programme followed, with Romanian engineers undergoing courses at Bembridge. The British company soon noted a good overall standard of competence, and some very able individuals. Advice was also given in the setting up of the Bucharest factory. There are now 210 shop floor employees working on the Islander, with one inspector for every eight workers. The learning curve has progressed satisfactorily with the assistance of the experience available from Bembridge. The cost of Islanders built in Romania is less than of those built in Cowes, chiefly because of lower labour costs, although various overheads, including a contribution to those of the Bembridge establishment, narrow the gap considerably.



*An Islander fuselage (left) ready for final assembly at the IRMA works at Bucharest. Romanian engineers install cockpit equipment (Right)*

The question of what happens when the Romanian contract comes to an end is still open. Clearly the Romanians want at least to renew it, and preferably to increase the production rate. At the same time Romania would like to become a distributor for Eastern Europe; at present they have no franchise for direct customer sales, and the six Islanders bought by Romania were supplied by Britten-Norman. A further possible development would be participation in other Britten-Norman developments. Not only the Nymph springs to mind; the company is known to be actively evaluating an Islander development, although details are a closely guarded secret. Indications at the moment are that, as earlier rumoured, it will be a three-engined aircraft of less than 12,500lb, that a decision on whether or not to go ahead is now quite close and that more may be known in the early autumn.

## Early Days of German Islander Operator OLT – Ostfriesische Lufttransport

*We have heard from Rolf Wurster who tells the story of German operator OLT's first 2 Islanders, c/n 21 & 22:*

As a pilot with OLT, and with little experience, I enjoyed flying one of the first Britten-Norman Islanders. In April 1968, I went to Bembridge, Isle of Wight, with my colleague Günter, to collect the first Islander for OLT. At that time Bembridge only had a very soft grass runway. We took one of our Cessnas and landing wasn't easy. There was another problem, my colleague was not happy with his navigation and radio. We were still using the Consol navigation system at the time. The two stations Stavanger and Bushmills were still operational, which gave us an accurate position. All this aside, we safely arrived at Bembridge.

The ground training was tricky. The technician knew what he was talking about but could not explain it well to us foreigners. The workers tried to help, so eventually Desmond Norman spoke to us from a position of authority. Nevertheless, we got our first Islander (c/n 21 D-IOLT) on 17 April 1968, and the rest is history.

*[Of interest to our readers, OLT's first two Islanders had the same colour scheme as G-AVCN]*



*OLT's first Islander D-IOLT, c/n 21 (BNH Collection).*

The idea of an aircraft factory on a holiday island seems a good idea. However, living here it became evident that there were many aircraft manufacturers, and many who once worked at Saunders Roe and Westland Aircraft were now unemployed. We were one of the first Britten-Norman customers from outside UK. The design of the first machines was simple, they had all been assembled at the Bembridge factory.

The BN-2 prototype, G-ATCT, was lost during a demo tour from Emden to Bembridge because the "experienced" RAF pilot Peter Hillwood encountered bad weather and climbed to a good height to avoid the worst of the conditions. However this allowed the aircraft to ice up in cloud when over Holland. The aircraft broke up in the air due to being over stressed and crashed into Lake Ringwiel near Sneek. The pilot and his passenger, Albert Weerda, the B-N representative in Germany, died in the crash. Peter Hillwood was well known from his time as one of the crew of a world record flight to Canada in an English Electric Canberra.



Getting the second Islander (c/n 22, D-IJAN), delivered on 25 April 1968 was a matter of honour. Now we also get to learn the secrets of the machine, as some experience has been gained. The flight manual already has an improved approach speed table, which needs to be accurate.



Every year, the ILA is held at Hanover in April-May. Britten-Norman is usually present, but did not bring its own demonstrator to ILA. Instead the company issued tickets to fly prospective customers with us to the 300 meters long grass field. It was mostly rainy around this time, so the air strip had to be ploughed every day and must be rolled overnight to be considered acceptable for the flights.

Soon a special mission came into us. The music group "The Hollies", who were then at their peak of fame, were to fly from Cologne-Bonn to Ostend and the next day to Leeds Bradford.

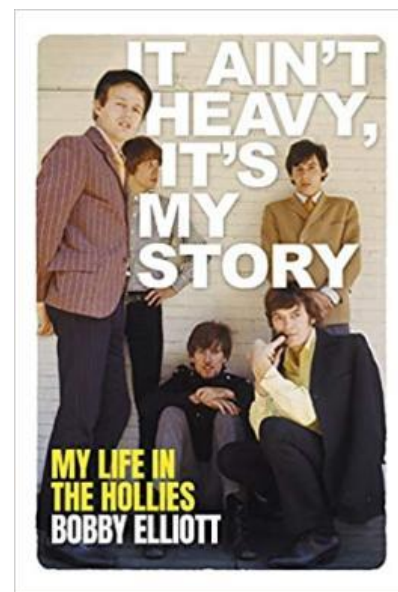
Having no idea who The Hollies were, I was ordered to Cologne. Punctuality is the top priority of our industry. I was greeted by an elderly gentleman at the still provisional former RAF square and prepared for the flight. It was supposed to go to Ghent, but this ex-air base was not available at the time, the flight was diverted to Ostend. Then came the stars! My reception committee quickly developed into a star portrait session with the photographer of the group.



*"The Hollies" (and captain!) posing on the wing of an OLT Islander (Rolf Wurster).*

After the start of the flight to the west, not much happened. Since the Islander is not only loud but slow, it took some time for the Belgian metropolis Brussels to appear under the wings. The radar controller put us on the ILS and then it goes down like on rails. Taxiing in after landing and turning right to arrive at the Ostend Airport reception hall, everything still looked a bit provisional. The last airliner to have landed in this place must have been many years ago! From Ostend we boarded a bus that took one hour to get to Ghent.

In the hotel I was able to talk to the guests. Of course, I wanted to watch the show and get to feel the sound of the 60s up close, especially the drummer Bobby Elliott. He still has a good recollection of those times and has just written a book about his memoirs, which was published on 2nd April 2020. ('It Ain't Heavy, It's My Story'), which, of course, will cover the Islander flight.



I flew for OLT for 7 Years. After OLT, I flew for 14 years with a business called Viessman in Islander D-IHVH (c/n 303) all over Europe - from Milan to North Cape Norway, from Biarritz to Stockholm. Later I flew ATR 42/72 for Eurowings and then to retirement after 36,000 flight hours.

### **Rolf Wurster April 2020.**

*[The July 2018 issue of BNAPS News has Peter Smithson's report on his visit to several Islander operators in Northern Germany including OLT].*

*Editors Note: Today OLT have a fleet of 5 Islanders (2037/D-IOLM, 2043/D-IOLN, 2185/D-IFBN, 2305/D-IOLO, 2306/D-IOLK). The later two were new build aircraft delivered in 2007 and 2009. The company (now part of the OFD Group) have operated BN Islanders continuously since 17 April 1968 – that’s 52 years!*



*D-IOLK (c/n 2306) OLT’s most recent Islander, landing on one of the Frisian Islands (BNH Collection).*

OLT’s first two Islanders, c/n 21 and c/n 22 were in service from April 1968 until 1972. Individual histories are as follows:

### **BN-2 Islander c/n 21**

Registered as G-AWCC it made a first flight on 11 April 1968. Delivered to OLT on 17 April 1968 and registered as D-IOLT. Sold to Continent Aviation Services, Emden, in 1972 then was with Luftverkehr Wilhelmshaven – Friesland, Wilhelmshaven. Later with Roland Air, Bremen and written off at Helgoland, 18 May 1983.

### **BN-2 Islander c/n 22**

Allocated registration G-AWHZ, but this was not taken up. Made a first flight on 23 April 1968 as G-51-5. Delivered to OLT on 23 April 1968 and registered as D-IJAN. Sold to Continent Air Services, Emden, in 1972 then with TT Air Service, Wilhelmshaven, W Germany later in 1972. Later with Kurfiss Aviation, Echterdingen, in 1973, written off at Bremen 27 June 1975.



*A third Islander, BN-2A c/n 46, registered as D-IBNB, was acquired by OLT from Aertirrena, Florence, Italy in February 1970 (BNAPS Archive).*

# BRITTEN-NORMAN NEWS

NUMBER THREE

MAY/JUNE, 1968

*The newly delivered OLT Islanders featured on the front page of Britten-Norman News, issue number three, May/June 1968.*



An Islander in the colours of Ostfriesische Lufttaxi will be operating a shuttle service with their new Islanders at Hanover during the show

## BY ISLANDER TO THE HANOVER SHOW

DEUTSCHE 1968  
LUFTFAHRTSCHAU  
FLUGHAFEN HANNOVER 26 APRIL- 5 MAI



A SPECIAL shuttle service between Hanover airport and the Hanover Fair is being run with Islanders by Ostfriesische Lufttaxi who will make 50 trips each day. The Emden based air taxi firm have bought two Islanders.

The company has been operating since 1958 and makes 90 flights a day between the Friesland Islands, Emden, Dusseldorf, and Bremen. Apart from passengers the company carries a large amount of cargo. In 1967 Ostfriesische Lufttaxi carried 98 tons of cargo in its existing fleet of small light aircraft. They transport papers to the Friesland Islands every

day. In future the Islander with its 1-ton payload will enable Ostfriesische Lufttaxi to expand this very useful part of the business. Captain Jan Jansen, the founder and managing director of the company, said: "I chose the Islander because it is the best and most economical aeroplane for short-haul traffic and I am very impressed by its quick adaptability from passenger to freight, or mixed loading."

**36** (BN-2A-26) P2-NAS National Aviation Services, Boroko, Papua New Guinea. Damaged beyond repair at Hauwabaga Airstrip, and abandoned (date unknown).

**41** (BN-2A-9) DQ-FDV Sun Air, Nadi, Fiji. Withdrawn from use at Nadi. Noted at Nadi 10.5.02. Noted partially dismantled at Nadi 7.06. Used as an instructional airframe at Nadi Technical College. 4.08. Donated to Fiji National University, and later scrapped.

**75** (BN-2A-8) H4-AAH Solomon Airlines, Honiara, Solomon Islands. Destroyed in the ethnic war on Guadalcanal 16.9.00. Arrived at Babanakira Airfield 16 September 2000, and was seized by rebels and hidden in the jungle. Reported to have been returned to the airfield, fuselage filled with coconut husks and destroyed by fire. The semi-burnt out hulk was still thought to be extant at the airfield. Enquiries made to this isolated village community confirmed that the remains of the torched Islander had since been destroyed by explosives, nothing remained save a few miniscule pieces of mangled aluminium.

**76** (BN-2A-26) P2-NAM(2) National Aviation Services, Boroko, Papua-New Guinea. Withdrawn from use at Port Moresby. Noted at Port Moresby 2.9.19 partially dismantled. Reported sold to a Philippine air training school.

**81** (BN-2A-26) P2-NAV National Aviation Services, Boroko, Papua New Guinea. Abandoned and withdrawn from use at Vanimo. Visible on Google Earth.

**112** (BN-2A-8) VH-SLM Rockhampton Aero Club, Rockhampton, Queensland. To Peace Aviation, Frenchville, Queensland, Australia. 2.18.

**113** (BN-2A-26) P2-DWA North Coast Aviation, Lae, Papua-New Guinea. Damaged beyond repair; scrapped.

**124** (BN-2A) P2-ALM National Aviation Services, Boroko, Papua New Guinea. Withdrawn from use at Port Moresby. Noted at Port Moresby partially dismantled 2.9.19. Reported sold to a Philippine air training school.

**132** (BN-2A) P2-ATZ Douglas Airways, Port Moresby, Papua-New Guinea. Written off Kwainj 8.8.88 in the Kokoda Track area, killing one passenger and injuring two others.

**165** (BN-2A) VH-RUT Seair Pacific, Runaway Bay, Queensland. To Colville Aviation Services, Archerfield, Queensland, Australia. 1.17

**188** (BN-2A-21) VH-CWG Colville Aviation Services, Archerfield, Queensland. To Air Taxi Solomons, Honiara, Solomon Islands. 20.6.19 as **H4-AT2**.



H4-AT2 (c/n 188) in the process of having markings applied at Port Vila, Vanuatu in August 2019 (D. McCartney).

**205** (BN-2A-6) PT-DYL Norte Jet Taxi Aereo, Belem, Brazil. Reported sold in Guyana 2019.

**252** (BN-2A-7R) N158SP Island Air, Guanaja, Honduras. Registration cancelled 3.1.20.



*N158SP (c/n 252) when operating with Island Air in Honduras (from BNAPS' Facebook collection).*

**287** (BN-2A-3) VQ-SAC Forward fuselage only, owned by Britten-Norman Aircraft Preservation Society (BNAPS). Moved from temporary storage at the Hovercraft Museum, Lee-on-Solent to Brickfields, Ryde, Isle of Wight. 11.1.20.



*The former VQ-SAC (c/n 287) forward fuselage is now at the Brickfields workshop with G-AVCN (BNAPS).*

**372** (BN-2A Mk.III-1) ZK-LGR Now owned by Don Subritzky, Dairy Flat, New Zealand. Stored dismantled. Noted at Dairy Flat 29.8.19, fuselage only stored.

**381** (BN-2A Mk.III-1) ZK-LGC(1) Now owned by Don Subritzky, Dairy Flat, New Zealand. Stored dismantled. Noted at Dairy Flat 29.8.19, fuselage only stored.

**425** (BN-2A-21) P2-IAC North Coast Aviation, Lae, Papua-New Guinea. No longer part of NCA fleet.

**494** (BN-2A-21) VH-WQA Cape Air Transport, Horn Island, Queensland. To Torres Strait Air, Horn Island, Queensland. 6.17.

**521** (BN-2A-20) VH-VPC Cape Air Transport, Horn Island, Queensland. To McGilvray Aviation, Queensland, Australia. 11.17

**537** (BN-2A-21) VH-IOH Torres Strait Air, Horn Island, Queensland. To McGilvray Aviation, Mareeba, Queensland, Australia. 11.10.16.

**609** (BN-2A-27) YJ-AL2 Air Taxi, Port Vila, Vanuatu. Seriously damaged after being hit by an ATR72 at Port Vila 27.7.18. Repaired with parts from YJ-AL3 (c/n 302)

**660** (BN-2A-21) V6-03FM Caroline Island Air, Pohnpei, Micronesia. Written off Ta Island 18.9.19.

**709** (BN-2A-20) P2-ISB North Coast Aviation, Madang, Papua-New Guinea. No longer part of NCA fleet.

**719** (BN-2A-26) ZK-MCD Milford Sound Flightseeing, Milford Sound, New Zealand. DQ-MCD Pacific Island Air, Nadi, Fiji. Not taken up. To Colville Aviation Services, Archerfield, Queensland 11.19 as **VH-IZH**.

**755** (BN-2A-26) RP-C809 Pacific Missionary Aviation (FMS), Manila, Philippines. To Belau Air, Koror, Palau. 2.14. Operated by Pacific Missionary Aviation as **T8A-208**. Noted 27.9.19 at Yap International under maintenance, no markings.

**759** (BN-2A-21) ZK-KTR Now owned by Don Subritzky, Dairy Flat, New Zealand. Stored dismantled. Noted at Dairy Flat 29.8.19.

**768** (BN-2A-21) P2-NCE North Coast Aviation, Lae, Papua New Guinea. No longer part of NCA fleet.

**818** (BN-2A-21) HP-1338MF My Flight Corp. Substantially damaged 19.7.13. Repaired and noted 3.19 operational, now registered **HP-1338CP**. Owner not known.

**842** (BN-2A-20) VH-IOA Cape Air Transport, Horn Island, Queensland. To McGilvray Aviation, Mareeba, Queensland, Australia. 7.16.

**1040** (BN-2A Mk.III-2) HI962 GECA Servicios Aereos, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. To Aerojet Parts, Clermont, Florida. 24.10.19 as **N928MJ**.

**2170** (BN-2B-26) 6Y-JLU Timair, Montego Bay, Jamaica. To JAGS Aviation, Georgetown, Guyana as **8R-GBK**. Arrived in Guyana 14.2.15.



*8R-GBK (c/n 2170) now with JAGS Aviation in Guyana with 8R-GGT (c/n 635) (BNAPS' Facebook collection).*

**2291** (BN-2B-20) F-OIJU St Barth Commuter, St. Jean, St. Barthelemey. To unknown owner, Guyana as **8R-HML**. F-OIJU cancelled. 29.8.14 to Guyana

**2297** (BN-2B-20) VH-BNC Colville Aviation Services, Archerfield, Queensland. To Torres Strait Air, Horn Island, Queensland. 1.19.

**2316** (BN-2B-26) G-CLHR Britten-Norman Aircraft. 3.7.19. First flight 2.3.20 as a BN-2B-26. For Falkland Islands Government Air Service (FIGAS), Port Stanley, Falkland Islands. To become **VP-FMC**. To Hurn for painting late 2.3.20. Noted at Hurn 18.3.20 fully painted in new colours as VP-FMC. Delivery to Falkland Islands delayed by the COVID-19 crisis.



*VP-FMC (c/n 2316) was painted in the new FIGAS colours at Bournemouth in March 2020 (FIGAS).*

**3004** (BN-2A-26) N404WR International Air Services, Carson City, Nevada. Cancelled to Australia. 3.20.

## Maya Island Air - Belize

Maya Island Air is Belize's leading domestic commercial passenger airline offering air travel, charters and cargo services. The airline was formed and started operations in 1962 as Maya Airways. It was established to succeed the government-owned British Honduras Airways which had ceased operations in 1961. On 8 May 1989, Island Air began providing similar airline services to San Pedro and Belize City.



As the need for air services throughout Belize grew, executives of Maya Airways and Island Air began planning and negotiating a merger that would eventually become one of the biggest and most successful in the industry. On 1 December 1997, Maya Airways and Island Air merged to form Maya Island Air.

Today, the airline's head office is on the second floor of Building #2 of the Belize City Municipal Airport in Belize City, with its main base being at the Philip S. W. Goldson International Airport located on the International Airport Rd, Ladyville.

Maya Island Air employs over 150 people and offers over 250 scheduled flights daily. At the time of writing it has 13 aircraft, 8 Cessna 208 Caravan, 1 Cessna 182 Skylane, 2 Britten Norman Islander, 1 Gippsland Airvan, in its fleet and presently offers regular scheduled services to 9 destinations in Belize and charters to Guatemala and Honduras. It is understood the Islanders have, or soon will be, stood down for more Caravans.



*Typical local scene as a Maya Airways Islander waits for take-off clearance (Jan Koppen)*

Since 1970 Maya Airways/Maya Island Air has operated a number of Islanders:



*Maya Airways Islander V3-HBI (Jan Koppen).*

177 VP-HBI Maya Airways 20.6.70 re-reg V3-HBI 1983 Maya Island Air 1.12.97. Sold 1999.

374 VP-HCD Maya Airways 26.7.73 written off 22.2.77.



*Maya Airways Islander VP-HCT (Jan Koppen).*

571 VP-HCT Maya Airways 16.4.77 re-reg V3-HCT 1983, written off 25.11.89.

572 V3-HEP Maya Airways 9.87 Maya Island Air 1.12.97. Withdrawn from use 2001.

610 VP-HCU Maya Airways re-reg V3-HCU 1983. Sold 1991



Maya Airways Islander VP-HBX at Opa Locka, Florida (BNH Collection).

627 VP-HBX Maya Airways 11.71. Sold 1987.



Maya Airways Islander c/n 839 V3-HFA (BNH Collection).

839 V3-HFA Maya Airways 7.90 Maya Island Air 1.12.97. Withdrawn from use 2002.



Maya Island Air Islander V3-HGK (Nelson Mejia).

853 V3-HGK Maya Island Air 9.02. Current in fleet.



Maya Island Air Islander V3-HRT (BNAPS Archive).

876 V3-HRT Island Air 12.94. Maya Island Air 1.12.97. Sold 2002.

907 V3-HFB Island Air 1995? Maya Island Air 1.12.97. Written off 30.5.18 (unconfirmed).



Maya Airways Islander VP-HDV (Jan Koppen).

908 VP-HDV Maya Airways 19.5.81, re-reg. V3-HDV 1983. Withdrawn from use 2001.



Maya Island Air Islander V3-HGE (Carlos Herera).

911 V3-HGE Maya Island Air 2.02. Current in fleet.

2015 V3-HIA Island Air 9.91, Maya Island Air 1.12.97. Sold 2002.



Maya Island Air Islander V3-HEZ (Wikimedia).

3008 V3-HEZ Maya Airways 6.89. Sold 1997.

## Air Sarnia

Thanks go to Peter Smithson for his recollections of Guernsey based Islander and Trislander operator Air Sarnia and the services it provided for the Channel Islands from 1985 to 1990.

Air Sarnia appears to have been restricted to charter operations but finally got an agreement to operate scheduled services from the Channel Islands to the UK mainland. However, in May 1990 a number of difficulties arose due to outstanding landing fee payments which led to Trislander G-SARN being impounded and in September 1990 Air Sarnia ceased trading.



*Air Sarnia Islander, G-UERN  
(Peter Smithson)*

Air Sarnia's Islander G-UERN is a BN-2B-26 c/n 2025. First flown in November 1980, registered as G-BHXI it served with Euroair Transport at Biggin Hill and was occasionally used by parachutists. It was acquired by Air Sarnia in June 1985. The Islander remained with Air Sarnia until the company ceased trading in September 1990. It then went into storage at Bournemouth until 1993 and was then sold to Airlines of Carriacou of Grenada and registered as J3-GAF. Islander c/n 2025 is still flying in the Caribbean region and is now with SVG Air of St Vincent and Grenadines as J8-VBI.



*Air Sarnia Trislander, G-SARN  
(Peter Smithson)*



*Air Sarnia Trislander G-BEFP  
(BNAPS Archive)*

Air Sarnia's Trislander G-SARN, c/n 1041, is one of three Trislanders that were operated by the airline. Trislander c/n 1041 was built in 1976 and was first registered G-BEFO. After spending just over 5 years in the Caribbean as VP-LMB, then V2-LMB, it came back to Europe and joined Air Fret in France as F-BY CJ.

Air Sarnia acquired this Trislander in August 1988, but only spent 2 years in operation with the airline before the company ceased trading in 1990. Around 2 years later it went to Zanzibar and flew with Air Zanzibar for 3 years before heading over to Fiji in 2002 as DQ-TRI. At present it is believed that Trislander c/n 1041 is currently withdrawn from use at Nausori.

The other two Trislanders operated by Air Sarnia were c/n 359, G-BAXD, and c/n 1042, G-BEFP. Islander c/n 150, G-AXXJ was also operated by Air Sarnia.

## Air Alderney - Latest News

An Air Alderney news release that appeared on facebook on 26 May has given new information about the efforts to get the proposed air service up and running. "Air Alderney is expecting to take delivery of its first BN-2 Islander shortly subject to the restrictions on travel being lifted" An application for route licences covering Alderney to Guernsey, Jersey, Lee-on-Solent, and Cherbourg was re-submitted after the original permits expired in 2018. A booking facility and route map can be seen on the webpage: [www.airalderney.org](http://www.airalderney.org)

## Reflection on Channel Islands Air Services 50 Years Ago

There is no doubt that when Aurigny Air Services started to operate over 50 years ago the Channel Islanders, visitors and business travellers alike were able to enjoy, frequent, "no frills" air services for passengers and freight between the islands of Guernsey, Jersey and Alderney and to the UK Mainland and France. Over the years this "Golden Age" gradually faded away for a variety of reasons, possibly never to return.

Why did this happen? Was it down to fashion, affordability, comfort, convenience, changing travel patterns - who knows?

The efforts Air Alderney to re-establish "original" style air services have to be admired for perseverance in the face of adversity.

For now the Aurigny Air Service advertisement dating from 1969, and featuring the Aurigny's first aircraft, B-N Islander c/n 3, G-AVCN, serves as a reminder of those early days of excitement and enthusiasm.

Photographed, designed and printed in Great Britain by Jarrold & Sons Ltd, Norwich 1969

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## Airawak – Islander Operator in Martinique

Airawak is a small air charter company based in Martinique. In 1997, two professional pilots, Bernard and Guinot Rouffignac set up a flying school under the name Air Tourisme Instruction Service (ATIS).

As a result of demands from their customers for air transport services, Airawak was formed in 2005. Following expansion of ATIS and Airawak operations in 2009 it was decided to concentrate on scenic and tourist flights.

Its first Islander, a BN-2A-21, F-OTAG, c/n 760, was acquired in 2011 and later a second Islander, BN-2A-26, F-OGXA, c/n 788. The Airawak Islanders are painted in a striking red and cream colour scheme.



*Typical scenic view of the region (Airawak)*



*Airawak Islander F-OGXA (BNAPS Archive).*



*Airawak Islander F-OTAG (Airawak).*

## Islanders Deliver Vital Medical Supplies

Reports have come in of Islanders being deployed to deliver vital medical supplies during the COVID-19 pandemic crisis. Over time no doubt more details will emerge about these flights. For now news has come in about those in the Philippines and in the USA as outlined below:

### Philippine Navy

Philippine Navy Islander NV 320 flew from Sangley Point, Cavite City to different parts of the archipelago on April 8-11 and April 15-16, 2020 to deliver personal protective equipment and medical supplies for the use by front line staff in different naval bases, mission-essential equipment of Navy planes and helicopters in different areas, repair and spare parts necessary to Navy water and air assets up and running, as well as crew members of various Navy ships operating in the waters of Visayas and Mindanao.

Also they were able to provide services and logistics for the Naval Forces Western Mindanao, Central, West, and Naval Installation Facility in Palawan. The delivery of the spare and repair parts for deployed Navy ships and aircraft ensured their operability, especially at present that these assets are needed for transportation of relief goods, personal protective equipment, and other logistical requirements to support the fight against COVID-19.



*Cargo being sanitised during unloading of Philippine Navy Islander 320, c/n 520 (Philippine Navy).*

### Philippine Coast Guard

The Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) continues to provide public service, along with the widespread fight for the health and safety of the Filipino people. A PCG Islander delivered additional medical supplies and personal protective equipment to Mindanao for the health workers of Davao del Sur Provincial Hospital and Maranan Medical Centre.

*Right- PNG crew members unload supplies from Islander PCG-251, c/n 3002 (PNG).*



### USA – Island Airways Islanders Maintains Essential Services

Island Airways based at Charlevoix, Lake Michigan operates a fleet of four Islanders to run air services for Beaver Island residents and for tourists. Under the COVID-19 emergency conditions Island Airways Islanders were used to deliver medical and other important supplies to Beaver Island and other parts of the Lake Michigan region. Special measures have been introduced in accordance with State and FAA guidance to protect the health of the passengers and crew so that services can continue during the emergency. Face masks are worn by the crew and passengers, there is a plastic screen between the pilots and passengers and aircraft are sanitised between flights.



*Left: View of an Island Airways pilot and plastic screen in place to maintain separation from the passengers.*

*Right: Typical view of passengers boarding an Island Airways Islander.*



*Photos courtesy of Island Airways.*

If any BNAPS readers have information about other instances where Islanders have supported various passenger and freight services during the pandemic emergency please get in touch.

## Islander G-NOIL – Major Overhaul at Staverton

Thanks go to Peter Smithson for the photos of BN-2A-26 Islander G-NOIL, c/n 334, undergoing a major overhaul at Staverton Airport, Gloucestershire.

Islander c/n 334 made a first flight as a BN-2A-8 at Bembridge on 11 June 1973 as G-BAXC.

In August 1973 it was exported to Israel, taking up the registration 4X-AYR. It returned from Israel to the UK in January 1982 and took up registration G-BJWO with Harvest Air. It was converted to a BN-2A-26 configuration and fitted with Micronair aerial spraying equipment.

In June 1992 it went to the Peterborough Parachute Centre at Sibson then to the Falcon Parachute Centre in Ireland in May 2002 and was reported as being withdrawn from use at Turweston in July 2006. Ownership of c/n 334 then passed to Metachem Diagnostics; it was refurbished and flew again in June 2007.

Subsequently it was acquired by Aerospace Resources and extensively modified to carry out a role to observe and verify oil dispersant application when deployed as part of the Oil Spill Response company's aircraft fleet, taking up the registration G-NOIL.

Peter Smithson reports that Islander G-NOIL has been at Staverton for at least two years. The overhaul looks to be very extensive and it is said that additional work has been needed to correct earlier unapproved repairs to the wing. The aircraft has been extensively modified over the years to suit its use for aerial crop spraying, parachuting and for the operations with Oil Spill Response.

If anyone has more information about the future prospects for Islander c/n 334 then please get in touch with BNAPS or BN Historians.



*Islander C/N 334 as G-NOIL in its Oil Spill Response colours (James Grove).*



*Islander c/n 334 as G-BJWO with Harvest Air (BNAPS Archive).*



*Islander c/n 334 in work at Staverton (Peter Smithson).*

## Yukon Islander Operator Great River Air

Thanks go to Mark Prins for these images of Great River Air BN-2A-26 Islander C-GRNZ, c/n 2010, operating out of Dawson City, Yukon Territory, Canada.



*While Islander C-GRNZ is being refueled diesel is being loaded on board*



*Islander C-GRNZ taking off, note the larger soft field tyres.*

## From the BNAPS Archive – The Long Nose Islanders

The prospect of increasing the capability of the Islander was introduced at the 1972 SBAC Farnborough Show when BN-2A-8S "long nose" Islander c/n 308, G-BAAE, went on show. The lengthened nose was similar to that adopted for the BN-2A-Mk.III-2 Trislander. The additional baggage capacity and two extra seats in the cabin potentially offered increased revenue earning capability for minimal extra cost.

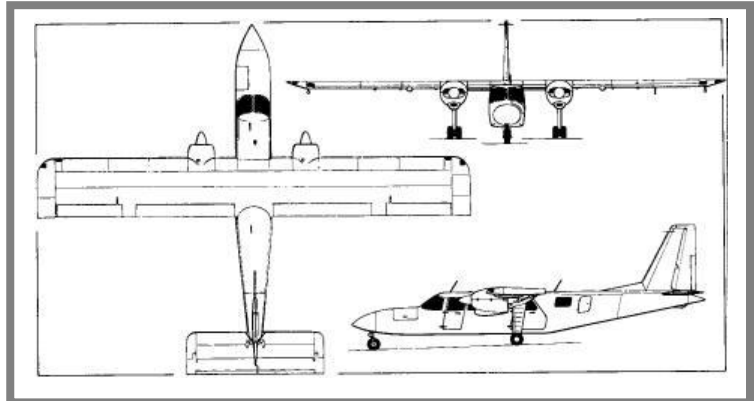
From the BN-2A-8S GA drawing on the right it can be seen that the aft baggage bay has been moved towards the tail and an additional window added aft of the port side passenger door for the occupants of the two additional seats. The BN-2A 260hp O-540 Lycoming engines were retained.

The BN-2A-8S made its first flight on 19 August 1972. Details of test flights following its appearance at the Farnborough show are not known, but it is believed that further development work was seen as necessary to resolve the aerodynamic effects of the long nose.

At the time there appeared to be no real market demand for the additional capability offered and c/n 308 was converted to BN-2A-3S configuration and delivered to Heli Orient, Singapore, on 23 March 1973.

In May 1974 it was sold to Bali International Air Service, Indonesia, and registered as PK-KNA. After a number of years of service in Bali it was permanently withdrawn from use in 1998. Ownership passed to Aero Pacific Sales Pty and the remains of PK-KNA were reported as being sold for scrap in May 2004.

A second long nose Islander appeared in 1976. Originally built as a BN-2A-25, c/n 504, G-BDPR, made a first flight on 22 April 1976. It was converted to a BN-2A-41, now with Lycoming LTP 101 engines installed, to become the prototype Turbo Islander and was first flown in this form on 6 April 1977. Test flying showed that the aircraft was over-powered and c/n 504 was withdrawn from use in August 1979 and dismantled. The engines were returned to Lycoming. It was acquired by Audrey Promotions, Port Macquarie, New South Wales in August 1992 where it was rebuilt and converted to a BN-2A-27LN, now with 260hp Lycoming O-540 engines installed, and registered as VH-LRX. Islander c/n 504 is now operating in the Turks and Caicos Islands as VQ-TDA and is reported as being for sale



*The BN-2A-8S Islander in the static park at the 1972 SBAC Farnborough Show*



*BN-2A-41 Turbo Islander c/n 504, G-BDPR on a local flight in mid 1976.*



*BN-2A-27LN Islander c/n 504 VQ-TDA in the Turks and Caicos Islands*

## BN Stamps and Flown Covers

Thanks go to BNAPS Supporter Norman Hobbs for contributing to BNAPS News with more about B-N aircraft that have featured on postage stamps and flown postal covers to mark special events and occasions.

### Malawi Postage Stamp – Air Malawi Islander 7Q-YKC

A Malawi stamp issued on 9 February 1972 featured an Air Malawi Islander. The Malawi 15 tambalas value stamp (Stanley Gibbons ref: SG 410) depicted Islander c/n 105, registration 7Q-YKC. This stamp was part of a miniature sheet of four Malawi aircraft, a Vickers Viscount, an HS 748, a BAC 1-11 and an Islander (Stanley Gibbons ref: MS 412).



*Malawi stamp set and the stamp featuring Air Malawi Islander 7Q-YKC*

The maiden flight of BN-2A Islander c/n 105, carrying the class "B" registration G-51-38, took place from Bembridge on 25 August 1969. In September 1969 registration mark G-AXMZ was allocated. The aircraft departed Bembridge on 21 October 1969, en route to Blantyre, Malawi.

Air Malawi needed the Islander, now registered 7Q-YKC, to expand their domestic network and reach more remote parts of the country inaccessible by their HS748 turboprop aircraft.



*Air Malawi Islander, c/n 105, 7Q-YKC (BNAPS Archive).*

A second Islander, c/n 604, G-AXST/7Q-YKD, joined the fleet in September 1970 and both Islanders remained in service until April 1982. In May 1982 Southend based Flightspares leased both Islanders to Pardo Air Service in Lima, Peru.

## Zambia Postage Stamp – Zambia Flying Doctor Service Islander 9J-ACB

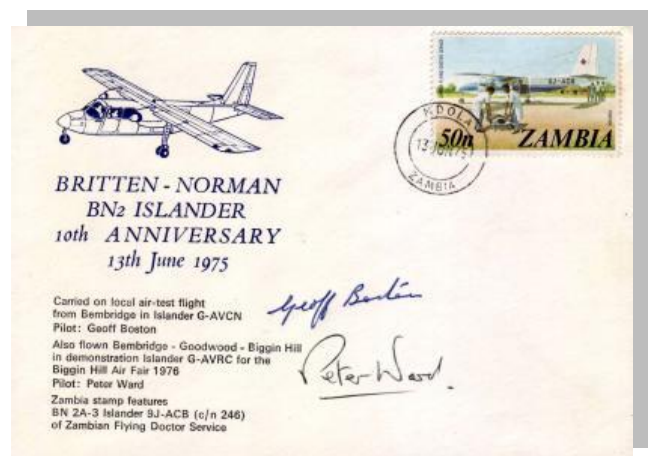
A Zambia Flying Doctor Service (ZDFS) Islander aircraft featured on a Zambian stamp issued on 2 January 1975. The 50 ngwee value stamp (Stanley Gibbons ref: SG 237) depicted Islander c/n 246, registration 9J-ACB. On 5 March 1985 the Zambia postal authorities re-issued this stamp surcharged as 5 kwacha value (Stanley Gibbons ref: SG 424).



The maiden flight of BN-2A-3 Islander c/n 246, with class "B" registration G-51-246, took place from Bembridge on 30 November 1970. On 25 February 1971 Zambia's High Commissioner, Amok Phiri, was flown by Islander from Gatwick to Bembridge to accept delivery of c/n 246, now registered 9J-ACB. Also accepted for delivery on the day was a second ZFDS Islander c/n 254, G-51-254/9J-ACC. At the formal handover ceremony it was announced that the Islander had been chosen as the ideal aircraft to supply medical aid to remote parts of Zambia. Desmond Norman praised this new service and that the initial order for five aircraft was worth over £250,000. ZFDS later increased its fleet to seven Islanders. Islander 9J-ACB remained in service with the ZFDS until January 2007 when it was sold to Sky Africa of Gauteng, South Africa.

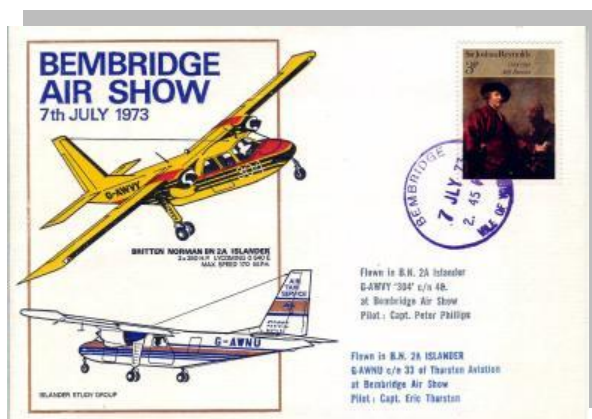
### Flown Covers to Celebrate Prototype Islander's First Flight 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

In June 1975 the 10th anniversary of the maiden flight of the prototype Islander, that took place on 13 June 1965, a few postal covers were issued featuring the Air Malawi and ZFDS stamps. These covers were franked 13 June 1975 by the Philatelic Bureau in Blantyre, Malawi and at Ndola, Zambia respectively and were subsequently flown in Islander c/n 3, G-AVCN by pilot Geoff Boston and in Islander c/n 8, G-AVRC by pilot Peter Ward.



### Bembridge Air Show Flown Covers 7 July 1973

To celebrate the 1973 Bembridge Air Show the Islander Study Group produced a postal cover that was flown in two of the Islanders participating in the air show - BN-2A Islanders c/n 33, G-AWNU, and c/n 48, G-AWVY.



*The air shows at Bembridge Airport attracted the crowds as well as some of the major air show performers including the Red Arrows, the VC10 and the Avro Vulcan in 1973*



*Capt. Eric Thurston's aircraft for the postal cover flight was Islander c/n 33, G-AWNU.*



*Capt. Peter Phillips' aircraft for the postal cover flight was Islander c/n 48, G-AWVY.*

### **Capt. Geoff Boston and Islander G-AWVY**

In the March issue of BNAPS News there was report about some B-N memorabilia having been found in a Cambridge skip. Subsequently BNAPS has been fortunate to acquire the memorabilia from the finder, Shaun Pleasants. It consists of a somewhat faded image of Islander G-AWVY in a frame together with the construction number and manufacturer's ID plates from the aircraft.

The image of G-AWVY has the message "To Capt. Boston Best Wishes Simon Thomson 20/9/76" (Simon was BN's Publicity Manager at the time) and has been signed by a number of Capt. Geoff Boston's BN colleagues at what appears to be either a leaving or retirement party of some kind. Amongst other duties, Capt. Geoff Boston piloted Islander G-AWVY on the regular parts delivery and technical liaison flights from Bembridge to Islander and Trislander production lines at the Fairey S.A. Gosselies factory in Belgium.

If any BNAPS News readers can tell us more about Geoff Boston please get in touch.

## Looking Ahead to the Trislander's 50th

Looking ahead, the 11 September 2020 will mark the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first flight of Islander BN-2A-MkIII, G-ATWU, c/n 2, at Bembridge. The prototype was a proof of concept trials aircraft and not the intended production configuration. Unofficially referred to as the Tri or Trislander, the name was soon formally adopted for the aircraft.

In the July and September issues of BNAPS News the Trislander will be featured in several articles and news items. If anyone has recollections of designing, building, maintaining, piloting, operating the type or travelling in the Trislander please get in touch.



*Aurigny Air Services Trislander G-JOEY symbolises the airline's "Trislander Era" and is now preserved at the Oatlands Centre on Guernsey (Toby Dixon).*

The outstanding record of service of Trislanders with Aurigny Air Services from October 1971 until 31 May 2017 is remarkable and clearly demonstrated the viability of the original design concept, often referred to as a "Triumph of Ingenuity". For a reminder of the glory days when Trislanders ruled the skies over the Channel Islands take a look at this 1988 mini documentary about Alderney Airport and the Aurigny Trislanders titled "Just Another Day":

<https://www.facebook.com/ronnie.cairnduff.1/videos/130279985335015>



*United Air Charters Trislanders Z-AIR, c/n 1054, and Z-UTD, c/n 1055, in Zimbabwe. Trislander Z-UTD was previously with the Botswana Defence Force and was the last Trislander delivered from Bembridge in 1984 (BNH Collection).*



*Trislander Z-UTD, c/n 1055, went to KAL in Greece, then on to Unity Airlines, Vanuatu and now operates with Anguilla Air Services, Anguilla as VP-AJR (K West).*

## New BNAPS Restoration Project Video Clip on Youtube

Thanks go to BNAPS Supporter Clynt Perrot who has recently compiled a 10 minute video clip with the name VCN 2020 showing the highlights of the past 10 years of the current restoration work. The video clip is accessible on YouTube and is linked from the BNAPS Facebook page. Use this link to view YouTube video clip: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cF75W8aOrcE>

Thanks also go to Allan Wright of BN Historians, and one of the founder members of BNAPS, for managing the BNAPS Facebook page- [www.facebook.com/groups/BNAPS/](http://www.facebook.com/groups/BNAPS/) BNAPS Facebook posts have proved increasingly popular over the past few months with contributions from all over the world from enthusiasts for and operators of Islanders and Trislanders.

## Wight Aviation Museum

Wight Aviation Museum has announced that it will be closed until further notice due to the COVID-19 emergency situation. However, in early March the opportunity was taken to erect the Black arrow launch vehicle replica and a video of the operation can be accessed from the WAM facebook page.

Also accessible from the facebook page are several video clips giving an introduction to the museum, its exhibits and the team of volunteers.

More about the museum can be found here: [www.wiahtaviationmuseum.ora.uk](http://www.wiahtaviationmuseum.ora.uk)

## Discount Sale of BNAPS Merchandise

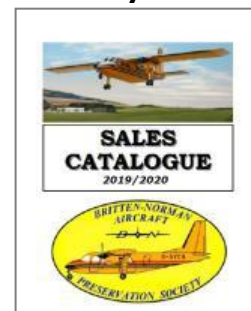
As an exclusive offer to BNAPS Supporters BNAPS merchandise will be available at a generous discount of 25%. The discount sale will help raise much needed funds to enable our project to restore and preserve and to ensure safekeeping for our the Islander G-AVCN as we move into the next phase where it is planned for it to go on public display on the Isle of Wight.

An order form will be circulated along with the BNAPS Sales Catalogue next month.

UK postage and packing will be free of charge on orders of £10 and over, for overseas orders, postage and packing will be charged at cost.

*Later on BNAPS expects to be in a position to offer a range of Britten-Norman memorabilia, photographs, brochures etc. These items will become available when a full inventory of the BNAPS archive collection has been compiled and any surplus items, such as duplicates and non core collection items, will be up for disposal and offered for sale to raise funds.*

## BNAPS Sales Catalogue 2019/2020



Please contact Rita Edgcumbe at BNAPS Sales to if you would like to receive the latest BNAPS Sales catalogue by email: [sales@bnaps.org.uk](mailto:sales@bnaps.org.uk)

**BNAPS on the Internet** - information and back issues of BNAPS News go to [www.bnaps.org.uk](http://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](mailto: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

**Due to the present emergency situation restrictions there will be no workshop open days or opportunities for group visits until further notice.**

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

## How to contact BNAPS:

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