



BNAPS News November 2019

BNAPS News Vol 9 Iss 6 – November 2019

B-N Islander G-AVCN Nears Completion – November 2019

After some 10 years of restoration work and 20 years after the historic Islander c/n 3, G-AVCN, was repatriated from Puerto Rico, sponsored by Airstream International with support from BN Historians and effort provided by Britten-Norman. Islander, G-AVCN, can now be seen in the workshop on the Isle of Wight getting ever closer to completion. Visitors are amazed to see that the dismantled collection of corroded and damaged parts of G-AVCN, recovered into safekeeping in July 2010, has now been transformed into a high quality static exhibit.



A recent view of Islander G-AVCN as interpreted by Clynt Perrot

This transformation was made possible by the loyal and dedicated efforts of the BNAPS restoration team together with our BNAPS supporters Club members, individuals and organisations that have supported the project in various ways and grants and awards from the Transport Trust, WightAid, The Daisie Rich Trust and The Isle of Wight High Sheriff's Trust. Thanks go out to all who have helped make the project a success.

For the latest information about the progress of the restoration work see page 3.

BNAPS News is now entering its 10th Year of publication

In this issue of BNAPS News:

**Dr Gordon Watson's Memoirs of his time as MD of Britten-Norman
Islander Update from BN Historians
Plus more news of Islanders and Trislanders around the World**

BNAPS Supporters Fund Raising Appeal – November 2019



Dear BNAPS Supporter,

Another year has passed all too quickly it seems. Now, after a good number of years spent sorting out corroded metal, painting, repairing damaged parts and seeking out missing parts, 2019 has seen our historic B-N Islander G-AVCN emerge as intended as a high quality static exhibit.

The turning point was completion of the wing rebuild and getting it painted in early December last year. The early months of this year were spent on preparing for the major challenge of lifting the wing and joining it with the fuselage..

The wing lift took place on 23 May and since that time the final assembly of VCN has progressed at a quickening pace. For the restoration team it is still difficult to adjust to the fact that when entering the workshop we now see a complete aircraft rather than a collection parts at various stages of completion.

There is still work to do and also we have to pay for our accommodation, which has served the project well over the past three years. Fund raising is essential to ensure VCN is maintained in safekeeping ready to go on public display.

BNAPS trustees offer their grateful thanks to all who have supported the project in various ways over the past 10 years to make it an outstanding success. It is hoped that the project will continue to benefit from this support.

Together with continuing to seek a permanent home for VCN, BNAPS trustees are planning to arrange a formal unveiling for VCN sometime in 2020 to which all who have supported the project will be invited to attend.

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

Yours sincerely,

Bob Wealthy, Britten-Norman Aircraft Preservation Society Chairman

BNAPS 2020 Desk Calendar Now Available

BNAPS 2020 desk calendar is priced at £5.00 plus £1.50 UK p&p, overseas postage charged at cost. For supporters on the Isle of Wight we will use our best efforts to deliver by hand.

The 2020 calendar is in a CD size fold out case and features a selection of images of Ivan Berryman's paintings depicting all types of B-N aircraft.

All proceeds from calendar sales go towards restoration and safekeeping of Islander G-AVCN.

Please contact BNAPS at the earliest opportunity if you wish to purchase a calendar by email sales@bnaps.org.uk



G-AVCN Restoration Progress Report September 2019 – November 2019

1. Final Assembly:

The main undercarriage fairings have been fitted.
The temporary fit of the wing to fuselage fairings are in work.
Aileron and flaps have been fitted.
The fin and rudder and elevator and elevator tab are fitted

2. Fuselage:

In addition to the fitting of the wing to fuselage fairings as referenced above, completion of the fuselage paint scheme (cheat lines) is in work. The red top section over the nose has been applied and the stripe running back along the fuselage starboard side was marked out, masked off and painted.

Transfers will be required for the nose sides of the BN logo (original style) and the word Islander as per the original font style.

3. Wing and Engines:

Both engines are now fitted and engine dressing is in work. Ignition harnesses have been fitted as have the exhaust stacks (less tail pipes at this time). Baffles and air boxes are in work.

One of the propellers went back to PropTech for specialist work to enable the pitch of the blades to be adjusted by hand.

The repairs and re-priming/top coat paint spraying to the leading edge are complete.

Work is in hand to fit the modification to allow fitment of the flap actuator motor.

Following fitment of flap actuator and final wiring amendments, it is planned that flaps will be operational (circuit breaker can be tripped to prevent accidental or unwanted operation e.g. in a museum environment or when unattended).

4. Ailerons, Flaps:

As stated a modification is required to enable the flap actuator motor to be installed and this is in work

5. Tail plane, Elevator and Elevator Tab:

Installed

6. Fin, Rudder and Rudder Tab:

Installed. The Aurigny lion logo has been applied to both sides of the fin.

The cover at the base of the fin to dorsal does not fit properly and corrective action is in work.

7. Landing Gear:

Nose and mains all installed including wheels and tyres.
Main undercarriage fairings now fitted.

8. Engine cowlings:

Cowlings and rear fairing fitting has just started. It is most likely that work will be required to allowing fitting and correct fixing as it is unlikely that holes will line up. Once fitting work is complete the cowlings will be top coat spray painted.

G-AVCN Restoration Progress Report September 2019–November 2019 (continued)

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

Electrical wiring for the navigation lights and the strobe light has been connected. The strobe light has been installed temporarily to check it is functioning. Nav lights and landing lights will be installed at a later stage.

Note that the landing lights will not be electrically connected to prevent overheating of the Perspex covers in the static condition.

10. Missing Items List:

The list is regularly updated by Bryan Groves and Bob Wealthy and circulated as necessary. This has resulted in locating a number of useful parts for the project.

11. Donation of Parts:

Very many thanks go out to Kurt Whitney and Morgan Goss at FIGAS for their generous donation of more parts to the project. The latest batch includes a pair of oil coolers and support frames, the tail banjo fairing, landing light lenses, surrounds and internal parts and a pair of starter ring gears, all much needed.



*Oil coolers and support frames and
banjo fairing parts from FIGAS*



Starter ring gear from FIGAS

12 Workshop Visits:

The Isle of Wight High Sheriff, Geoff Underwood, visited BNAPS workshop on 3 October. After a briefing on the progress of the restoration work and a good look at the Islander, the High Sheriff addressed the restoration team members present and expressed his admiration for the excellent results of their work.



G-AVCN Restoration Progress Report September 2019-November 2019 (continued)

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



Picture 1

Rear engine nacelle fairings were prepared for installation.



Picture 2

Fixings for the rear engine nacelle fairings needed some work to ensure proper alignment. Here Mark Porter is checking the details and assessing the fitting work needed.



Picture 3

Mark Porter and Bernie Coleman are seen here trimming the fairing edges to ensure a good fit.

**G-AVCN Restoration Progress Report
September 2019-November 2019 (continued)**



Picture 4

Mark Porter in the process of installing the port outer rear engine nacelle fairing.



Picture 5

Starboard outer rear engine nacelle fairing after installation.



Picture 6

Port rear engine nacelle fairing after installation.

**G-AVCN Restoration Progress Report
September 2019-November 2019 (continued)**



Picture 7

Patrick Gallagher is seen here spray painting the red section of the nose around the avionics bay cover.



Picture 8

Nose section after painting the area around the avionics bay cover and red lining along the fuselage side.

Picture 9a



Bob Wilson and Patrick Gallagher continued marking out the red cheat line.

Picture 9b



View of the fuselage starboard side after the red cheat line had been painted.

G-AVCN Restoration Progress Report September 2019-November 2019 (continued)



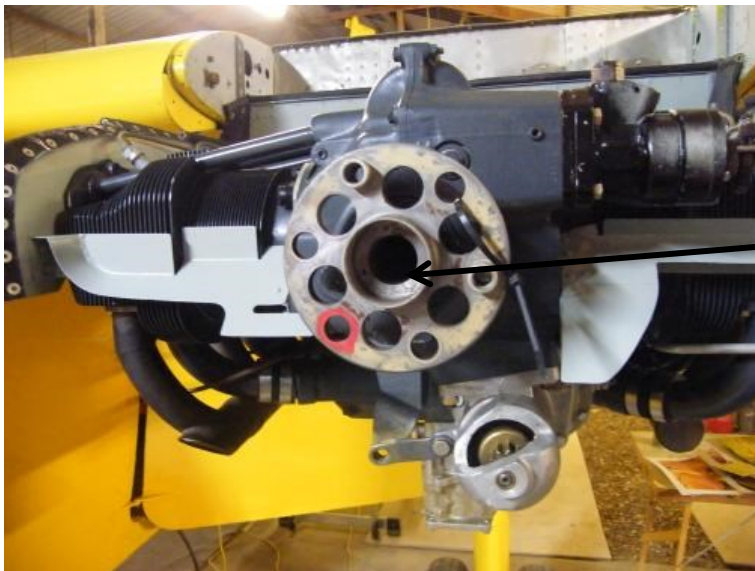
Picture 10

Bryan Groves adapted a ball joint puller as a special tool to enable the bushes to be extracted from the crankshaft propeller mounting flange. The bushes were too long and had to be modified to suit the ring gear that fits between the propeller and the crankshaft.



Picture 11

View of the crankshaft propeller mounting flange after the bushes had been removed. Note that the crankshaft used to make up the engine fitted on the starboard side has a solid end face and will not allow full movement of the propeller blade pitch.



Picture 12

View of the port engine showing the bore in the end of the crankshaft that allows the full travel of the piston associated with propeller pitch control.

G-AVCN Restoration Progress Report September 2019-November 2019 (continued)



Picture 13

Bryan Groves carried out a trial fit of the port engine ring gear, alternator and drive belt.

The alternator support/adjustment bracket is at present on the missing parts list. Bryan Groves made a template to enable a bracket to be made to suit for use at a later stage.

Picture 14



Left- Paul Brook installed the electrical connections for the tail light

Right – Tail cone with light unit installed

Picture 15



Picture 16

Mark Porter (left) and Steve Cooley (right) with Bernie Coleman and Guy Palmer carried out a trial fit check of the port engine cowlings. The results were encouraging. The overall fit appeared generally acceptable, the latch fasteners need some attention and the edges of the cowling top half require tidying.

Work planned to the end of 2019

1 Wing and Engines:

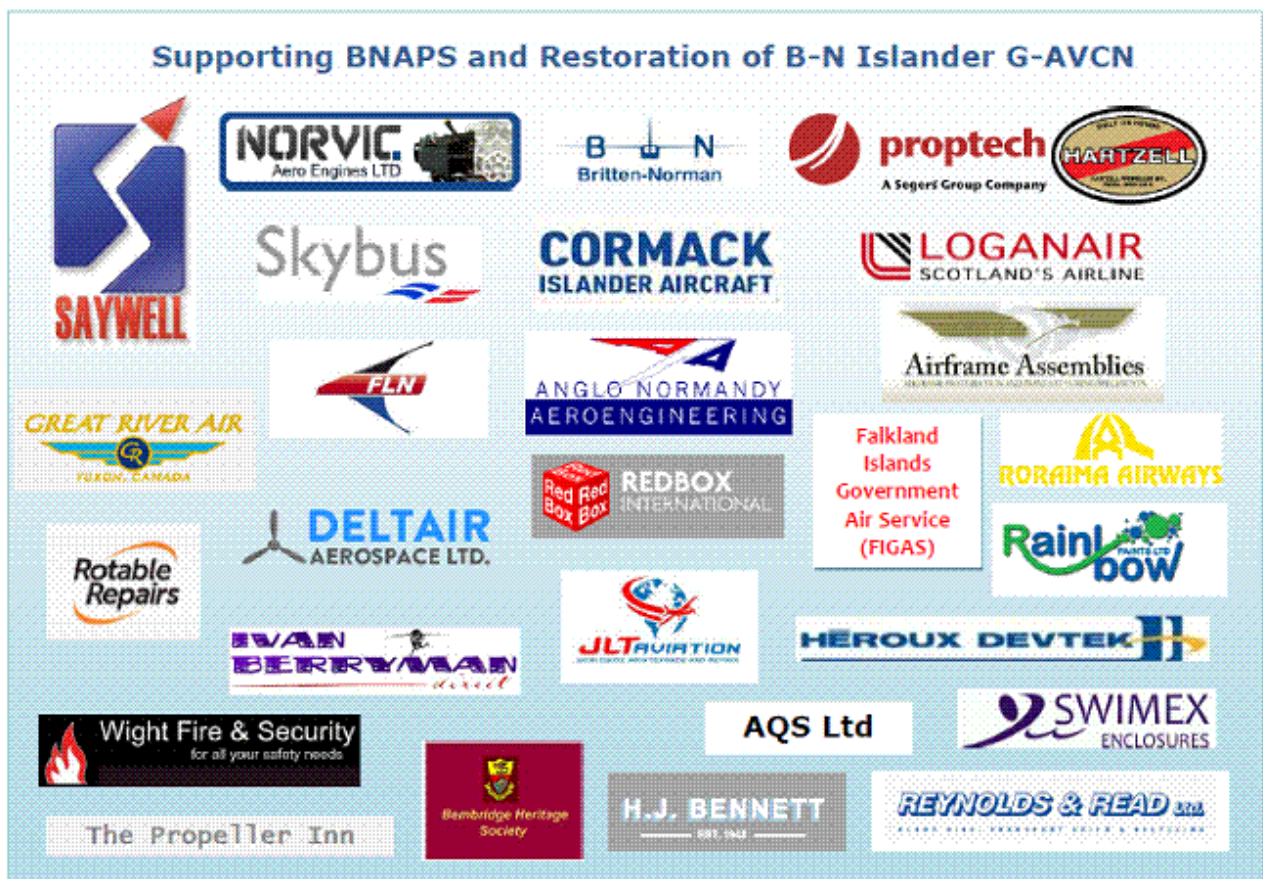
- 1.1 Complete the height adjustable wing support trestles including profile boards to stabilise the wing whilst work is in progress and to enable transport of the wing to the final exhibition location.
- 1.2 The trestles loaned by BN will be returned probably before the end of the year. Note these have a limitation in that they are not sufficiently adjustable.
- 1.3 Complete engine dressings with all available parts. Continue pursuing outstanding shortages. Fit engine oil coolers and baffles.
- 1.4 Install propellers
- 1.5 Complete engine cowlings and fairings fitting and paint.
- 1.6 Fit navigation lights and landing light bracketry and perspex covers.

2 Fuselage:

- 2.1 Ongoing internal trimming work.
- 2.2 Continue application of the cheat lines.
- 2.3 Complete the wing to fuselage fairings temporary fit.
- 2.4 Repair and install fin to tail plane banjo fairing donated by FIGAS

3 Islander Fuselage Section Exhibit:

Recover fuselage section from mainland storage and transport to the workshop



The Fairey Britten-Norman Era

The feature article by the late Dr Gordon Watson in this issue of BNAPS News gives a personal view of the situation he encountered when B-N was owned by Fairey S.A.. The lead in to the Fairey Britten-Norman era was the financial crisis that hit B-N in 1971 and the appointment of a receiver with the resultant restructuring of the business for sale as outlined below:

B-N Financial Crisis and Receivership

During the latter half of 1971, B-N was experiencing further cash flow problems and several attempts were made to inject new capital into the company. In the main these problems were due to the rigid way in which it produced aircraft which meant that a steady flow of newly produced Islanders were coming off the Romanian line, which had to be paid for upon delivery to Bembridge. These aircraft together with those produced from the Bembridge factory line, gave a combined production rate of 12 per month. Against a background of sales decline for the Islander, there was inevitable stock piling of new aircraft at Bembridge. This situation was compounded when one of America's distributors cancelled an order for 10 Islanders due to a newly imposed 10% US import levy.

An attempt was made to produce the dormant Nymph in Singapore, but this also failed. B-N owed the UK Government £257,000 from previous loans, and the Government could not see its way clear to provide a further loan to make more working capital available. The company's bankers, Lloyds Bank, together with its subsidiary, Exporter's Refinance Corporation (ERC), provided most of B-N's backing.

Following the cash flow problems encountered during 1971, ERC had already loaned over £2 million and indicated that it was reluctant to extend the loan any further. Trade creditor pressure for significant payments forced HM Government and ERC to decide whether to advance further loans or to appoint a receiver and manager. In the event ERC decided to demand repayment and with the agreement of the B-N board, Monty Eckman of Price Waterhouse was appointed as Receiver on 22 October 1971.

The prime objective of the receiver was to try to keep B-N in business. Within one month no fewer than six companies had indicated an interest in purchasing the company. Meanwhile, although production had been slowed, deliveries were again under way. The Government had take over completely. After examination of B-N's books Monty Eckman announced the formation of a new company, Britten-Norman (Bembridge) Limited, on 23 November 1971, to take over the assets of the old B-N. The new company was managed by Monty Eckman until a suitable buyer could be found. In the last two months of 1971, the company delivered 13 aircraft including two Trislanders and the first Defender. The much slimmed down company now employed 170 people, including 60 on the shop floor, an overall reduction of about 120 people.

A memorandum was issued by Price Waterhouse & Co on 29 February 1972 that set out all the facts relating to placing B-N into receivership and the formal basis for carrying the company forward as a going concern as Britten Norman (Bembridge) Ltd.

1972 saw continued success in sales with orders for Islanders from Turkey, Brazil and Zaire, together with Trislanders for Kenya and Gabon. Early in the summer Britten-Norman (Bembridge) repaid in full £275,000 to the UK Government. At the same time, Monty Eckman was able to reveal that since receivership, the new company was trading profitably, and had delivered 34 aircraft. In August 1972 the Receiver finally accepted a bid from the Fairey Group for the takeover of Britten-Norman (Bembridge). This bid was selected from 30 bids worldwide. Monty Eckman's decision was based on many factors, but his main priority was to keep at least part of the work on the Isle of Wight.

Fairey Group acquires Britten-Norman (Bembridge) Ltd

The acquisition of Britten-Norman by the Fairey Group was announced in a letter sent to all employees on 31 August 1972. The letter was signed jointly by John Britten and Desmond Norman and summarised the implications and benefits for the company under new ownership. The text of the letter was as follows:

BRITTEN-NORMAN (BEMBRIDGE) LIMITED, BEMBRIDGE AIRPORT, ISLE OF WIGHT, ENGLAND.

31st August 1972

To all Britten-Norman Employees and Distributors

Dear Sir

The Fairey Group have to-day contracted to purchase the business of Britten-Norman. The company will continue to be based at Bembridge and will remain British.

We have much appreciated your loyal support of the company during the recent difficult period and we believe that in a large measure this loyalty has enabled a generally satisfactory solution to be found. Both the aims and resources of the Fairey Group are to a remarkable extent complementary to those of Britten-Norman so that combined we now have a splendid opportunity to prosper. The new company structure and a sound financial base are certain to boost customer confidence. We therefore expect to increase sales. Projects that previously were handicapped by lack of adequate financial resources can now be reviewed. All these factors are certain to improve employment opportunities.

The present programme at Bembridge and in Romania for the production of Islanders and Trislanders will continue. B. H. C, have been asked to quote for the completion of 29 Islander kits.

Amongst the companies in the Fairey Group is Fairey S. A, which is a wholly owned subsidiary with a well-equipped factory in Gosselies, Belgium. Production can be done there at competitive prices due to a satisfactory base load of other aircraft sub-contract work.

The business of both Britten-Norman and Fairey S. A, will be linked through a holding company to be called Fairey Britten-Norman.

The Britten-Norman name will be retained. Additional appointments to the B-N Board will be made by Fairey. We have been invited to join the Boards of Fairey S, A, and Fairey Britten-Norman.

The overall objective is to take full advantage of the facilities and skills of both companies. It is therefore envisaged that Bembridge will as at present remain primarily concerned with design, development, marketing and 'customerising'; Fairey S. A, will be available for production.

We look forward to showing that the faith that Monty Eckman and his team showed in the future of Britten-Norman and its products is indeed justified.

Yours sincerely

N D Norman F R J Britten

Directors

M. J. Eckman F. C. A., F. R. J. Britten C. B. E. , N. D. Norman C. B. E., J. W. S, Macdonald A. C. A.,
A. M. Roman A. C. A.

It is believed that the agreement that covered Fairey's acquisition of Britten-Norman included provisions for John Britten and Desmond Norman to remain in their positions as directors for a transition period after which they would be free to move on.

By early 1976 it is likely that the time period was running out and that was when Dr Gordon Watson was offered the position of Managing Director of Britten-Norman (Bembridge) Ltd. Dr Watson's recollections of his time with B-N give an inside account of the latter days of the era of Fairey's ownership of B-N.....

Dr Gordon Watson - Recollections of My Modest Contribution to the Britten-Norman Story

W. Gordon Watson
North Connel,
Argyll, Spring, 2015.

Introduction

I have just read 'The Last Great Adventure in British Aviation?' by Derek Kay. I enjoyed this book, even though I only appear as a name twice - pages 132 and 139. It would appear that I had little, if any, influence on the fortunes of B-N. That is entirely true, and so I have no resentment about being but a passing name.

My recollection is that I started as Managing Director of Britten-Norman (Bembridge) in June 1976, and was made redundant by the Receiver of the Fairey Group - B-N's holding company - in November 1977. Whether it was sixteen or seventeen months is immaterial; it was less than a year-and-a-half.

For reasons I will not bore people with, I had resigned from being Director, Technical and Marketing, of Scottish Aviation Limited at Prestwick, Ayrshire, the only aircraft manufacturer in Scotland. We were used to 'southerners' assuming we were a primitive little outfit working in a barn half way up some remote glen, surrounded by sheep. (I exaggerate slightly.) It was fun casually to let them know we were profitable, and had over two thousand employees.



In early 1977 Dr Gordon Watson, left, presented a photograph of a Belgian Army Islander to Commandant A. Dooms, Commandant of the Belgian Army Islander Attachment based in West Germany. The presentation marked completion of a contract to supply 12 Islanders (B-N).

We had the rights - and Design Authority - of the Bulldog (ex-Beagle) and the Jetstream (ex-HandleyPage) and were producing both.



Above - Scottish Aviation Bulldog for the Swedish Air Force.

Below - Scottish Aviation Jetstream T.1



Stemming from the RAF order of the mid-sixties for Lockheed Hercules transports, we were producing 60% of the fuselage structure for all Lockheed's output of their world-famous military transport. We were part of the Hercules

SEPTEMBER 1974



Bulldog

Aerobatic basic trainer

The Bulldog is currently in service with the R.A.F. for basic training operations and is also either in service or on order by 6 other nations. Much more than a trainer, however, the fully aerobatic Bulldog can be readily equipped to operate effectively in armed configurations and in liaison, forward air control and observation roles.



Jetstream

Light Transport Aircraft

Jetstream is the light transport aircraft with the big, big cabin. Now being delivered to the R.A.F., it will be used for multi-engine pilot training, and is also designed to operate in communications, freight, V.I.P., casualty evacuation and command post roles.

More details available on stand S.37 - and leave more about Scottish Aviation's extensive airframe assembly and precision machining facilities currently employed by major aerospace companies in Europe and North America.

STAND S.37 AT FARNBOROUGH INTERNATIONAL 74 AND PRESTWICK INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, AYRSHIRE, SCOTLAND

SCOTTISH AVIATION LTD

production line; no parallel line existed, and we had been doing this for about ten years. We had been overhauling Pratt and Whitney engines for decades, and for some years had been, subcontracted by Rolls-Royce, the overhaul centre and spares manufacturer for Merlin and Griffon engines, at that time largely for the RAF. We had put freight doors and replacement booms on the main spars of early Viscount airliners, this work under the design supervision of Vickers. We had been the base maintenance for the Royal Canadian Air Force in Europe for many years, doing total overhauls on North American Sabres and Lockheed F 104s.

So I came from a large and successful aircraft manufacturer, and although production and accounting were not my forte, I had absorbed some of the basics in these areas that are required for overall success.

negotiations concerning BAC 111 jet airliners and Romania's need for foreign currency All the production aircraft were delivered to us by air.



Romanian built Taronm BAC 1-11

My family liked the Isle of Wight, so did I, and I was mightily impressed by the lovely atmosphere of enthusiasm and the very great skills of the Bembridge staff. They were, quite simply, a great bunch.

I had met Des and John (I expect everybody in the U.K. aircraft business had) and liked and admired them both. I met them occasionally, on very friendly terms, during my brief tenure of office. Neither made any attempt to ask me what was happening, or to offer advice. I was glad of that; a 'new broom' should be free to do its own sweeping.

**From Alaska to Puerto Rico.
From Boston to San Francisco.
The Britten-Norman Islander
means business.**

The Islander wasn't built to be something else, like a corporate airplane that might put in a few hundred hours a year. From its inception it was built for air transport use with unlimited airframe life in mind and straight forward simplified systems to keep dispatch reliability high and cost of operation low.

All for the purpose of profits. A full nine passenger aircraft approved for single pilot operation, the Islander converts in an instant to freight with seats stowed easily in the rear. 2,000 pound capacity with true

STOL performance. Less than 200 metres for take-off or landing.

Around the world, experienced operators have learned the Islander is a wise choice as a money maker and as an investment. Just check the price of used Islanders. They've depreciated less than any other aircraft sold in the last ten years.

For more information, write or telex.

Fairey Britten-Norman
Bembridge Airport
Isle of Wight, England, Telax 66785
A Member of the Fairey Group

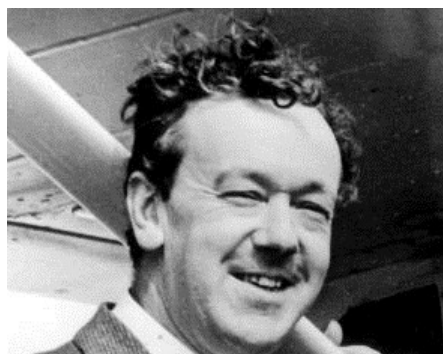
HANDL'S AIR SERVICE, Geneva, Alaska, uses an Islander for scheduled passenger, freight, mail service under contract with West Air Alaska.

DOMINGO BRIGGS, Dallas, Texas, North West operates eight Islanders on scheduled service to San Juan International Airport and the Virgin Islands.

PROVINCETOWN BOSTON AIRLINES, over 25 years in the commuter airline business, added the Islander after exhaustive study of available aircraft.

STOL AIR, San Francisco, serves the bay area with three Islanders averaging 60 scheduled flights per day and 3,000 passengers per month.

Bembridge had almost exactly three hundred employees. We had the authorisation from the Civil Aviation Authority to undertake design and development and 'In service technical support' for all existing Britten-Norman aeroplanes, and our shop floor were authorised to fit modifications and customer requirements to aircraft completed to bare flying state either at the Fairey Group factory at Gosselies in Belgium or from a state-owned factory in Romania. The latter situation had arisen from some



John Britten



Desmond Norman

I had also met Hugh Kendal, a multi-talented man, pilot and engineer, but perhaps the most uncommunicative person I've ever met. He was around and about at the Surrey Gliding Club in 1949 when I did a fortnight's gliding course there.



Hugh Kendal

Ken Mills and Denis Berryman were first class professionals, Denis in particular impressing me with the depth of his knowledge on all specialist technologies that went into aircraft design. He had unbounded enthusiasm and confidence - you name; he could do it. I expect he could indeed do it, but whether or not it was worth doing might be another question.



Ken Mills



Denis Berryman

I had not appreciated how much George Miles had been involved with B-N. I knew George from the competition for the RAF mufti-engine trainer competition between Scottish Aviation's Jetstream (ex-Handley-Page) and the Aero Commander from America being promoted through George. I admired George greatly, indeed, I consider him to have been a genius. If ever my little lot were to need backup, the prospect of George being brought in was comforting.



George Miles

I only met John Allan, ex-Handley-Page Chief Designer, two or three times, but I was much impressed. He was a highly competent professional, practical with his feet on the ground, and he would probably be around if required.

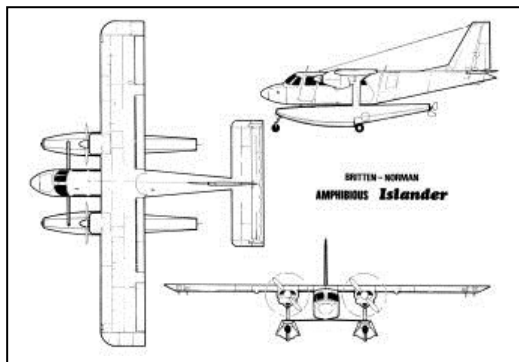
What a marvellous team to be in a position to lead! All I had to do now was to decide where I wanted to lead them. And I was sure I would determine that before too long.

Product Improvement Considerations

I thought the Islander was a superb creation. I reflected on the Beech Bonanza aeroplane, which had by then been in production for some forty years. It had grown from 180 hp to 285 hp, and from four seats to occasional six, but it was still a Bonanza, built in the same jigs. Although that aeroplane was then the outstanding example of longevity, there were many others from the US, and in many cases the aeroplane had not been developed as dramatically as the Bonanza.

I was already sure that our path should not be towards the pinnacles of innovation, technology, enterprise and risk. Improvement, refinement, consolidation, and rationalisation were more what I was pretty sure would be my aims, and I was pretty sure there was much to be gained along these lines. After a few years addressing these matters, we could, maybe,

start dreaming dreams again. My keen types had lots of ideas they wanted to pursue, I didn't think much of their idea of a floatplane Islander. Where was the market? Everybody knows about Canada; but where else? Nobody was quite sure. As for Canada, Found and Husky produced utility floatplanes in Canada, not to mention De Havilland's Beavers and Otters available with floats. What chance had a small British company of succeeding in a market already supplied with a variety of home products?



GA diagram of the Amphibious Islander float plane that did not get beyond the mock-up stage in 1976



Islander c/n 3, G-AVCN, as the amphibious Islander mock up

I didn't think much of their idea of a tanker/firefighter Islander. Canadair were producing their CL 215 water bomber, which was about five times the weight of the Islander, and the Martin Mars - the largest flying boat ever produced in series - was very successfully converted to firefighting. I was going to need a lot of convincing that the Islander was big enough to be effective, and therefore marketable.



Demonstration of firefighting Islander version, but this version did not attract orders.

I was not against the idea of a turbo-prop Islander. At the time, there was much talk that the fuel companies might concentrate all their aviation energies on Avtur for turbine engines and to withdraw from supplying, or massively to increase the price of, Avgas for piston engines. I was not alone in thinking this was unlikely, but there was uncertainty. Further, if we wanted to sell Islanders to armed or security services, they might want to standardise on turbine power throughout a mixed fleet. However, I believe B-N's original idea had been to use a new Lycoming turboprop of 600 hp.



BN-2A-41 Turbo Islander prototype G-BDPR, cn 504, fitted with Lycoming LTP101 turbines, was trialed in April 1977. On test it proved to be overpowered and was withdrawn from use in August 1979 (Ivan Berryman)

I thought that was ridiculous, but common sense eventually prevailed and the 400 h.p. Allison was selected.

It was noticeable that my chaps really had no ideas about the Trislander. I did not challenge them on this - they would have dreamed up any number of ideas in no time - because I had the impression they were not very confident about the future success of that machine. Although that feeling would need to be reviewed, it coincided with my own instincts.

OCTOBER 1975

Lowest capital cost per seat of any 16-17 passenger transport. Best fuel efficiency.* 3500 pound cargo capacity. Three-engine passenger appeal. Rugged Lycoming engines. 2000 hour TBO. Fixed undercarriage, simplified systems. Rough field capability. Only one hour airframe maintenance per one flying hour. 85% parts commonality with the Islander. Multiple doors for fast loading—passengers or cargo. Designed for air transport. Selected by airlines around the world. In wide use also for geophysical survey.

Fairey Britten-Norman
What more could you ask for in any short haul transport even at twice the price?

Fairey Britten-Norman
 Berridge Airport
 Isle of Wight, England, Telex 86277
 A Member of the FAW Group

*16 seat miles per Imperial Gallon, 77 seat miles per US gallon based on 170 mph cruise, 17 psk, 30 Imp Gals per hour.

By the time everything went wrong, i.e. the receiver was called in and I became redundant, I was about ready to launch my ideas on my team. I was going to lead them in a review of the Islander, but I would tell them forcibly that I did not want to alter the concept in any way. The question was what could we improve about the Islander which would still mean it was an Islander doing the same job; only doing it better? I would tell them I wanted more performance but from less drag, not more power. I wanted a higher cruising speed, not to cut journey times for the passengers - that was irrelevant - but to improve the economics, and the climb performance would benefit from less drag.

I was going to throw questions at them like:

1. Had we got the best aerofoil section? I think the existing one was NACA 23012, which was used in more than half the light aeroplanes contemporary with the Islander. Had things moved on since then? I did not mean laminar flow sections; they had no place on utility aeroplanes. Just changing the shape of the wing ribs would be pretty easy.

2. Could we reduce the drag of the undercarriage? I did not mean retracting it, that was not sensible for a utility aeroplane, or reducing the size or number of the wheels and tyres but how about considering a fuselage mounted, transverse leaf spring unit 'a la Cessnas?' That would need some changed fuselage frames, and how about the reduction in weight relief for the wing structure? What were the 'pros and cons?'

3. How about retracting the nose wheel? Not with hydraulics, could it go up vertically using an electric screw jack, with manual reversion?

4. Has the Islander ever been tested in a wind tunnel?

5. Have wool tufts ever been stuck on an Islander? Where might they be put?

6. Generalised over altitude and temperature, is the performance on take-off better or worse than on landing? Should we consider more sophisticated flaps?

7. If we were to consider a water plane version, a flying boat version might have better performance than a float plane. Lateral stability on the water?

Props high enough above the water?

9. Any other wild idea that might occur to me.

I would want to find the history i.e. on a time basis, of what engines have been fitted to what Islanders. Then do we need the options we offer? Should we consider changing or standardising or both?

I would then start on the big question of how to cheapen the production of the airframe. I would announce that every US general aviation

aeroplane I've ever seen had far fewer piece parts in its airframe than the equivalent European one.

1. Could we start with a review of every drawing, and make a quick assessment of the number of parts - and the weight - that might be saved.

2. An all-flying tail would save parts.

3. Engine controls on the roof? The Twin Otter has the control levers on the roof, so why not the Islander's? Could the 'control columns' be suspended from the roof? I wanted a general 'tidy up' of control runs.

4. A review of all customer options offered, and a rational reduction in their number.

The major questions that might come out of all of this would be:

Are any changes worthwhile?

Are we thinking of some modifications, or sensibly a new edition of the Islander? A realistic assessment of design costs, (including Technical Publications costs) production tooling, jigging and learning curve costs would be required. I did not expect the airframe would be broken down into different major assemblies, so the learning curve and jigging costs should be quite small.

What were my hopes for this review?

Perhaps a 20% reduction in drag which would give a 10 mph increase in cruise speed, and 6% reduction in fuel consumption, and better climb performance:

Perhaps 150 lbs. off the empty weight and the same increase in payload;

Perhaps 10% off the price, coming from 20% reduction in the number of piece parts, some simplification of systems and some cheaper, or negotiated price reductions, on 'bought in' components.

Finally, there might arise from this review the question of increasing the fuselage length by one seat pitch; this to be by the simplest possible insertion of, hopefully, but one 'plug.' Or combine that with a fuselage-mounted landing gear?

I did not think these improvements would result in a rush of new orders. B-N's excellent sales history meant that many of the areas of the world needing 'Islander type' aviation had the aeroplanes they required. Of course, new customer areas would emerge with world-wide economic growth, and a better aeroplane might advance the date at which new operators might emerge. Existing operators might expand, and make their moves earlier because the new aeroplanes were better.

But my overall view of the Islander market was that it would, slowly and in the long term, decline somewhat. Like sensibly all the machines - all metal, not 'stick and canvas -

now produced by the 'General Aviation Manufacturers' had useful lives undreamt of in decades past. Gradually, the Islander would have filled all its existing markets, but, while individual aircraft could fly for decades and tens of thousands of hours, operators would be tempted to 'change up' to a now efficient aircraft with better operating economics. I became convinced this was the way to be explored. In the somewhat different sphere of jet airliners, it was not long before there was an example of my belief. Boeing B 747 100 Series machines, with decades of 'life' left in them, began being parked on American mid-west deserts, and this was simply because later series 747s had better economics. And sales of 747s continued and increased.

However, I have no proof that would have happened with the Islander, but I remain convinced that a wide ranging study as to what improvements could be made, and made standard, to the Islander was a worthwhile exercise. That review never took place, and that was because there was chaos and total ineptitude in the Fairey Group.

The Rise and Fall of Fairey Britten-Norman

I had only been at Bembridge for five months when, in November, I phoned my erstwhile colleague from Scottish Aviation times, Hugh Laughland, now managing an investment trust. I told him of my firm conviction that Fairey would shortly become bankrupt, and asked him if the Stock Market felt the same. He responded a day or two later saying that 'The Market' was happy with Fairey. I repeated my warning to him.

My judgement was at fault - but not in forecasting the result, only in the timing. It was the following November when the axe fell, but I had expected it months before.

Now I was an engineer to trade, someone with no experience of finance, little training in that discipline, and no access to the Fairey Group's current accounts. How could little old me be so clever? But I did not think I was in the least clever; to me the evidence was staring me in the face. The Group was insanely - I have chosen the word with care - driven 'to keep production going.'

Before I got my job, I was interviewed by the Group Managing Director, Alastair Brown, if I remember his name correctly, at the Fairey Engineering works in Manchester. During that meeting he told me, with great glee, that on that day they had received an order from somewhere in South America worth £10 million, for some form of prefabricated bridge they had patented. Later, informal contact within the Group told me that full scale production had

been mounted, and completed, though the contract had not been finalised and no money had been received. I believe the Receiver got the contract. And anyone with the tiniest degree of common sense would have wondered why there were many Islanders, which had flown in from Belgium and Romania, parked around the Bembridge airfield.



Typical sight in 1977 of "green" production Islanders from Gosselies and Romania parked at Bembridge Airport (Simon Thomson)

Now when I had recently been Technical and Marketing Director of Scottish Aviation, we were producing Bulldog military training Aircraft. Apart from the Swedish army and the RAF, the orders were quite small, usually less than twenty aircraft, and tended to come in fits and starts.

At one point, we were facing the prospect of a gap in production, the Detail Shop, which made all the small light metal parts and was the earliest part of the production line, was sensibly out of work. Our vastly experienced Sales Manager, the famous Ranald Porteous, assured us that a firm contract and initial payment from a new customer - for rather less than ten aircraft - was due within, at most, two weeks. We paid attention to his opinion, but it was with much trepidation that, for once, we ordered a start on work on a small batch of detail parts which was not covered by a completed contract and proof that the customer had at least some money, having made an initial payment. (The order, and money, came in days.)

So with my background and the evidence in front of me, I did not consider myself at all clever in expecting disaster. Yet the directors of the Group were not taking any action, and, to my great surprise, the Group's bank apparently continued to supply money to fund all these unsold completed products. Was I the only sane person observing the situation? I even, briefly, wondered if everyone else was sane and it was me who was nuts.

I think there were three basic reasons why the Fairey Group failed:

1. The somewhat elderly and ineffective members of the Group Board.

2. The inept and abrasive management style of Alastair Brown, who was 'obsessed' by the production side of the business. (I believe his career had been that of a production engineer.) He dominated the Board and arranged that most of those reporting to him were not experienced professionals. While my knowledge of the latter point did not extend to the whole Group, it was certainly true of Fairey Britten-Norman.

3. The aircraft factory at Gosselies was viewed as some sort of 'Sacred Cow,' to be preserved at all costs.

I admit I was not well acquainted with the Group Board. I had been introduced to them at some function, and there was a very occasional visit by individuals to Bembridge. I was not impressed. They were invariably gentlemen, pleasing company, but I did not detect knowledge of aviation -and very little of any other business. The Chairman was a lawyer from Taunton, a very nice man, but that encapsulates the situation.



Above and below - The busy assembly line at Bembridge in 1977 where Gosselies and Romanian built Islanders were equipped to customer specifications and flight tested before delivery (Simon Thomson)



After the receivership I met briefly and casually with one of the erstwhile directors who asked me if I blamed the Board. I replied that I did

not blame them entirely for the insanity of the last few years, but I did blame them for not recognising it and stopping it.

It grieves me to place much of the blame on Alastair Brown, because he was a Scot and came from Paisley, which is on the outskirts of Glasgow, my native city. The man was a thug and a bully; he had no management skills, created no loyalty. He was driven to 'maintain his empire' by keeping production going at all costs, but had no conception of marketing, nor did he even recognise its vital importance. Furthermore, certainly as things got worse, he became very inefficient. I once received a short memo from him sharply blaming me for something - I have forgotten what - and threatening me with dismissal if there was a repeat. I responded by saying I knew nothing of the incident other than that it had happened entirely outside my area of responsibility. That was true, and I heard no more, but it was a mistake indicating he had forgotten who did what.

There was more than one occasion when, in the early afternoon, I was told to be at the Fairey Head Office at, for example, 3.30 pm. This entailed commandeering an aeroplane and pilot, flight to White Waltham, staff car to Head Office at Hayes, and the return trip. Now, as the Managing Director of a subsidiary company, jumping into action when the Group M.D. barks can be expected on serious occasions. However, I might have to wait until 6.30 until he saw me, and the meeting was over in about five minutes. Now never mind the inconvenience to me and the pilot, the pilot and I lost an afternoon's work, and the aeroplane flew for a couple of hours, and the car and driver did two return journeys, all of which could have been avoided by a five minute 'phone call!

The composition, staffing, and activities of Fairey Britten-Norman were also somewhat lacking. It was in charge of Gosselies and Bembridge factories, and had sole responsibility for aircraft sales. (That nice chap, Pat Hatswell, had his office in Bembridge, but that was only a geographical convenience; he did not report to me.)

Now I had been recruited by, and reported to, Derek Thurgood, the Managing Director of Fairey Britten-Norman. I liked Derek; he was sharply dressed, drove an E-Type Jaguar, had energy, and a sense of humour, but he was not conceited, and quite happy to tell jokes against himself. Without ever being sure, I believe his background included journalism and public relations. He knew much about classic cars, very much more than I did - and I knew much more than most motorists. The trouble was, I do not believe he had ever managed anything,

and, while he may have sold a few classic cars, he certainly knew nothing about selling aeroplanes, and 'less than nothing' about the 'ins and outs' of aviation.

When I met his sales staff, my worries multiplied tenfold. Bright young men perhaps, but I think all were in their twenties, and new to aviation. Now inexperienced bright young men can do well, but they need direction, particularly in something as complex and lengthy as selling aeroplanes abroad. That embraces much travel, assessment of probabilities, working with and understanding local agents, and understanding local 'cultures,' which, in many places, means how the bribery system works. No one at Fairey Britten-Norman had the knowledge and experience to lead these youngsters. I do not imply that I was experienced, I simply had been in aviation long enough to know these complex factors existed. (Pat Hatswell had much knowledge and experience, but had been side-lined and resigned before 'the axe fell.' My friend Ranald Porteous, ex Auster, ex Scottish Aviation, was superbly fitted to sell Islanders, but joined Fairey Britten-Norman too late to have any chance of success.)

Three stories will illustrate the inexperience and madness abroad in the Fairey Group. The Chairman, the nice Taunton lawyer, went on 'An African Sales Tour.' I have no idea of his briefing, backup, or itinerary, but he breezed down to Bembridge immediately on his return, and announced that he had sold thirteen Trislanders! He then instructed me to take thirteen Trislanders from the stack of completed aircraft in open storage on Bembridge and other airfields, and 'get them ready'. I did nothing. Some nine months later, the Receiver got a contract and initial payment on one Trislander!

The last example of insane management came to my attention when Derek visited Bembridge to announce that the sales target for the year was 176* aircraft. Then he told me I would have to increase my workforce. I replied that I would only act on his written instruction, which would have to include an indication of numbers of staff required. Although our conversation was quiet and amicable, he accused me of being pessimistic and unenterprising. I said I was being realistic, and explained myself to him as follows;

Britten-Norman have an enviable record of selling between 86 and 104 aircraft per annum over ten years.* The target figure is some 170% of the previous best result. This has to be achieved with a) exactly the same product, b) sold at the same price, or with a small inflation increase, c) sold by your same team of bright but inexperienced young men, d) sold through

the same local agents, and e) observers of the General Aviation scene forecast only average sales for the coming year. I concluded that the target was ridiculous, and left to me, I certainly would not increase staff. I did not say I was sure the Fairey Group would not survive the year. I went on to say that I wished him success; there was a year's average shipment of completed, unsold aircraft in open storage lying around our, and other local, airfields; the situation was ridiculous and critical.

The last bit of insanity appeared just before the collapse. A dictate came from Brown to the effect that all overseas sales were to be routed through a newly appointed, completely unknown French Agent! Only by assuming 'last ditch' - and possibly nefarious - desperation can this be explained. And the juggernaut of production rolled on; the 'sacred cow' of Gosselies was still being worshipped. I once had a chat with a 'company doctor,' who told me, to my surprise, that sometimes the initial diagnosis of the problem was easy. Old fashioned, gentlemanly boards of directors could have intense emotional bonds to some product or activity - 'Grandad founded the company by making these very widgets!' - which was losing much money, and was taking far too much management energy in attempts to preserve it, when clearly the product or activity no longer had a viable market.

* Any small errors in these, and following, figures do not affect my argument.

Historical and Political Influences and "Sacred Cows"

Now Avions Fairey had been founded in 1933 and was a revered part of the Group. I can accept there was the sense that it was part of the history of Fairey, its self a historic company in British aviation. I accept that Group decisions adverse to Gosselies would be hard to take - but company directors earn their remuneration for taking hard decisions; a bunch of idiots can take easy decisions.

I also accept that there was one real problem about Gosselies, and that was, under punitive Belgian employment laws, very, very high compensation payments had to be paid to workers made redundant. When I first heard of this, I thought it could not be true, it was ridiculous, but I probed about and found it was real, very real.

However, I am convinced that the real cause of the failure to be realistic about Gosselies, to support it to the point of bringing Fairey and Britten-Norman down, lay in the recent history of European aircraft manufacture, and a mistaken idea that it would repeat itself.

After World War 2 a near bankrupt Britain managed to retain second place to the United States in aircraft manufacture. The rest of Europe - with the exception of France, which poured massive monies into hare-brained projects, really was not interested in advanced engineering; rebuilding themselves was their priority. If they wanted military aircraft they purchased a few.

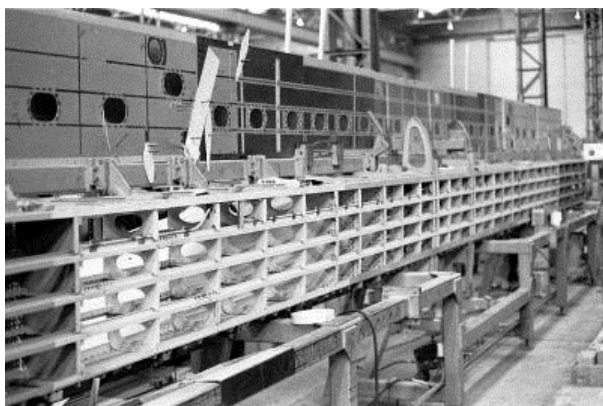
Later on, with NATO being an established reality, and the Cold War menacing, some NATO countries decided that it would be a good idea if they all had the same aircraft, an up-to-date one built in some combined enterprise by a group of themselves.

The American company Lockheed put forward their F104 single seat, Mach 2 fighter as a contender for a licence- build programme. It was not a good aeroplane, but, as was rumoured at the time and subsequently confirmed by Lockheed using massive, widespread bribery, it was selected.

Agreement was reached to divide the manufacture to various aircraft firms in various countries, and very lucrative contracts, believed to be 'helped along' by Lockheed, were awarded. Gosselies was one of the contractors, and great benefactors, but that programme naturally came to an end.



Islander under construction at Gosselies (Simon Thomson)



Islander wings under construction at Gosselies (Simon Thomson)



Islanders and Trsilanders parked at Gosselies awaiting a ferry flight to Bembridge (Simon Thomson)

The shortcomings of the F 104 strengthened the idea that there would be a replacement aircraft programme, and that the 'good financial times' would happen again, and quite soon. 'Hold tight and there will be lots of lovely money.'

The first supposition was correct, though some air forces kept the F104 in service for some twenty years. I, and many other realists, did not believe the second idea. Would governments be bribed and stupidly open-handed again? It seemed unlikely.

So there arose the problem for Fairey of keeping Gosselies in work somehow until the replacement fighter project emerged. Since Gosselies was a 'high tech' factory with horrific labour costs, keeping it occupied by introducing a production line of small, simple, 'low tech, utility aircraft, already being produced in quantity, and cheaply, elsewhere, seems the height of folly.

But the 'sacred cow' had to be fed, and Fairey bought Britten-Norman and put the Islander into production at Gosselies while retaining the Rumanian production.

The result was, of course, far greater production of Islanders than the market could support, and the excess was created at a price the market would not pay.

In passing, it is interesting that, according to the inspectors at Bembridge - who examined every aircraft on arrival from Gosselies and Rumania - the Rumanian ones were of better quality. Further, the Rumanian machines arrived on the scheduled dates, with but minor allowances for bad weather on the delivery flight, while the ones from Belgium seemed to arrive 'as and when.'

Receivership and Redundancy Looms

The inevitable decent into receivership happened. Of course I was sorry it happened, but primarily for my chaps at Bembridge. I was a qualified, reasonably well-known, mobile professional in my mid-forties, with enough conceit to believe I would find suitable

employment. My conceit was strengthened by the fact that the forecast of the future I had made after but four months in my job had proved correct; albeit later than I had expected. It was the Fairey Group which was insane, not me.

Now under receivership, staff of the appointed receivers are positioned variously in the failed organisation, and they take all, repeat all, managerial decisions. If it's a scattered organisation, a number of people called Managing Director of this or that subsidiary are powerless and redundant.

So I was not surprised to be made redundant, and with but minimum redundancy pay. I did, however, think that doing it virtually immediately, as opposed to a few months later, was perhaps a little premature. If the receivers were going to try to sell Bembridge as a going concern, perhaps an existing Managing Director, who could not be blamed for the receivership, might be an asset.

Short Brothers showed some interest and when Short's Chairman, whom I had met, visited us we were on first-name terms. I think it possible he might have retained me had Shorts proceeded. While there was some logic in the Islander joining the Short's Skyvan and 360 utility aeroplanes in a marketing package, I suspect Shorts baulked at the problem of Gosselies.

Reflections on the Fairey Britten-Norman Experience and Future Directions

I have no worthwhile comment to make about Pilatus taking on Bembridge. It seemed a strange thing to do, but Pilatus did many things that seemed strange to me. They built some specialist aeroplanes, mostly in small numbers, the exception being over three hundred metal sailplanes. It was perhaps typical of them that they concentrated on 'military' Islanders, but that seems not to have been a successful, long term policy. After a remarkably short time, I became Director of Scottish Airports for the British Airports Authority in charge of Aberdeen, Edinburgh, Glasgow and Prestwick Airports. I retired after ten years in the best job I ever had. I was lucky to make such a recovery from the debacle of Fairey.

So, was I happy at what had happened? No, remains the answer. Just because I was very, very fortunate in what happened to me after I was made redundant does not mean that I wanted Fairey to fail, with the inevitable consequence to me. Had the failure not happened, would I have wanted to stay at Bembridge? Under the then Fairey regime, I think the answer is no. Although I was formulating my ideas as to what I believed my

talented team should be working on, I very much doubt if the Fairey Board would have listened to me; they were not interested in the future of anything or anywhere other than Gosselies. Success for me at Bembridge was not possible without a revolution at Fairey, and I would have been looking elsewhere within perhaps a year after the date of the receivership.

Would you have stayed if you had been made M.D. of Fairey Britten-Norman? No, is the answer. The board would not have listened to me telling them to 'grasp the nettle' about Gosselies, and, though I believe I had learned - from Randal Porteous when we were both at Scottish Aviation - more about selling aeroplanes than the good Derek and his men put together, I saw no prospect whatsoever of any sales team selling the excessive production, even at some entirely stupid reduced price.

The fact is - as I saw it- that the end was inevitable, and these questions are therefore unreal.

A real question would be, why did I stay on for about a year after arriving at my belief that disaster would happen? The answer is in three parts.

First, I had uprooted my family from the only home they had known, and they, and I, liked the Isle very much. I hesitated - and that is the right word - to uproot them again, particularly after such a short time.

Secondly, when not involved with, or worrying about, Fairey, I thoroughly enjoyed my job at Bembridge.

Thirdly, I suppose I just lived for the day, put my head in the sand, and hoped for the miracle of Fairey suddenly being transformed into a professional and aviation-minded body.

Let me pose a hypothetical question; the purpose of which is so that I can demonstrate my feelings about Britten-Norman. If the Fairey Group had been, or by a miracle transformed into a professional, aviation-minded organisation, would I have wanted to remain working for it? The answer is an emphatic yes. The fatal overproduction problem of Gosselies would have been solved, and the fatal haemorrhage staunch. (I suggest an approach could have been made to the Belgian government saying they could have Gosselies for nothing if they paid the redundancy costs as long as they ceased Islander production. That is nearly what happened under the receivership, and Gosselies did have a part in the later, and smaller, F16 multi-national fighter programme.) I had great faith in the product and in the Bembridge team. I believe we could have rationalised a continuing future for the Islander, which would have been approved by a

transformed Fairey, and quite probably conceived a new complimentary design and a researched and convincing business case for its initiation. The estimated sales figures would have been conservative.

Under these circumstances I would most certainly have stayed, whether just at Bembridge or in some promoted position associated with that enterprise. I would probably not have stayed beyond ten years - assuming, of course, my performance had continued to be considered satisfactory. There is a danger that being in one job for longer than ten years can lead to complacency, the 'I've seen it all' syndrome, which is not good. (The truth is that the world changes, new challenges and situations continue to appear, you have never 'seen it all'.)

In any case, in time I would have wanted to return to Scotland. There are no political connotations to that statement. Think of a Yorkshireman who lived and worked in Yorkshire until he was middle aged. He then needs a job, and has the good luck to get a fine one on the Isle of Wight, which he finds a very pleasing place. Now nobody would be surprised, most would understand, if after ten years he said, 'It's time I went back to Yorkshire.' In my case, substitute Scotland for Yorkshire, and nothing more need be said. I had some good times at Bembridge. The Isle, my little lot, and the product were all super. I had the pleasure of being flown by Hugh Kendal and John Neilan, both of whom displayed quite immaculate flying and airmanship. (You cannot 'back seat drive' in an aeroplane, but I am a knowledgeable and avid 'right hand seat pilot'.)

Memorable Meeting with Ian Karma

I have one memory of my time on the Isle of Wight which I would like to share. The Botswana Defence Force bought some Islanders. The chief of that force, Ian Khama, son of the ruler Seretse Khama, came to Bembridge to be checked out on the Islander, he already being a well-qualified and experienced pilot. I asked one of our pilots who did our training about Ian Khama. Without hesitation, he told me he was the most gifted pilot he had ever flown with. I asked another of our pilots, and got another response filled with superlatives. Out of courtesy, but I admit also out of curiosity, I invited him out to dinner. He politely, but firmly refused, then pressed me to dine with him at the hotel in Ryde where he was staying. I found him to be, by a large margin, the most charismatic and impressive young man I have ever met. (He was 23 or 24 at the time.) He was charming, relaxed, and modest - though you could sense that he was

highly intelligent and very well educated. I managed, I trust very gently, to get the subject round to the problems of most of Africa emerging from colonial rule. Although speaking quietly, he took over the conversation - not that he was lecturing me - it was almost as though he was going over, re-examining, his own thoughts, beliefs and ambitions.

He did see problems ahead, complex ones, and he was desperate to navigate through them to the benefit of 'his people.' Now I did not object to him using that phrase, democracy had not yet arrived in Botswana, though he wanted to introduce it, gently, over time, and to avoid, at all costs, having some thug of a dictator find a way to power - the fate of several ex-colonies in Africa.



Ian Karma in later years when he became President of Botswana (Wikipedia).

His modest sense of responsibility was, like his whole personality, very, very impressive. I repeat, he was the most charismatic and impressive young man I have ever met.

(Researching Ian Khama and Botswana on the Internet, shows Botswana to be now a successful small country which has been peaceable for a very, very long time. Ian has been President since 2008, and presides over a cabinet. I judge that he has achieved the goals he described to me back in the mid-seventies. Well done - but I am not surprised, his personality and commitment made it possible. Incidentally, in his itemised biography under the heading of 'Profession' is the word 'Pilot'.)

Memorable Night Flight from Heathrow

And I have one last memory. I have forgotten who we were delivering to, or collecting from, Heathrow, but it was at night. I have also forgotten which of our pilots was doing the flying, but I asked if I could go along. Heathrow, at that time, still had a small private aeroplane terminal somewhere in the middle of the airport, and I thought a night flight to

Heathrow in an Islander, in nice weather, would be interesting, and worth the result of being late to bed.

I was up front in the right hand seat enjoying the whole, brilliantly lit experience, and, as we taxied out for the return flight, I remarked, 'I've never done a take-off at Heathrow.'

'Is there a hidden meaning behind that remark?'

'I suggest that, if you value your job, you think about it.'

In silence, we got lined up on the runway and the take-off checks were done.

'Oh, I've just thought of something. Would you like to do the take-off?'

'What a kind and generous thought! Yes, please.'

I did a night take-off at Heathrow, quite one of the highlights of my small flying career.

(Some people think aviators have no sense of humour.)

Some Final Thoughts in Retrospect

Did I achieve anything? I regret to say that only one thing comes to mind. I discovered that the expenses of Bembridge were not in any way allocated to individual aircraft. We received them, stored them, brought them into work, bought in avionics and other bits, sent them for painting, and so on, and all costs were just 'the expense of Bembridge'.

Some aircraft had expensive customer requirements, some were cheap, but there were no records. The customer had, of course, been quoted a price, but nobody knew if that price made a loss or a profit. I could not believe it! How could you assess whether or not the Fairey Britten-Norman sales people knew which end was up, how did we know which of the aeroplanes has been efficiently handled - most, of course - and which had added costs because of customers late requests? It was a shambles. I got a Works Order Number issued against every aircraft as it arrived, and all labour time and costs allocated to it, plus overheads. The information was sent to Fairey Britten-Norman. I very much doubt if they ever looked at it.

My part in the story of Britten-Norman was tiny, and I am in no way upset that historians of the company view it as such. I do, however, wish circumstances had given me a chance to have played a bigger part - even though that would have resulted in my performance being judged by these historians. I'll just have to let sleeping dogs rest undisturbed.

BNAPS is most grateful for the fact that Dr Watson took the time to make his B-N memoirs available and very many thanks go to Dr Watson's family for giving BNAPS permission to publish the account.

Postscript – Botswana Defence Force Air Wing B-N Defenders and Trislanders

It would appear that the time that Dr Watson spent at B-N and his meeting with Ian Karma in 1976, who at the time head of the Botswana Defence Force, could well have paved the way for a significant order for eight B-N Defenders and two Trislanders to serve with the Botswana Defence Force Air Wing.



Botswana Defence Force Defender OA1, c/n 791 (BNAPS Archive)



Botswana Defence Force Trislander OE1A2-AGX, c/n 1054 (Phillip Evans)

Botswana Defence Force Air Wing B-N Fleet List

Defender

BN-2A-21, c/n 791, OA1 10/77
BN-2A-21, c/n 795, OA2, 1/78, wo 5/78
BN-2A-21, c/n 783, OA2, 11/78
BN-2A-21, c/n 799, OA3, 2/78
BN-2A-21, c/n 772, OA4, 5/79
BN-2A-21, c/n 836, OA5, 4/79
BN-2A-21, c/n 918, OA6, 9/81
BN-2B-20, c/n 2226, OA7, 11/90
BN-2B-20, c/n 2227, OA8, 12/90
BN-2B-20, c/n 2257, OA9, 3/93
BN-2B-20, c/n 2258, OA10, 3/93
BN-2B-20, c/n 2265, OA11, 1/94

Trislander

BN-2A MkIII-2, c/n 1054, OE1, 8/84
BN-2A MkIII-2, c/n 1055, OE2, 9/84

The Demise of Fairey – extract from "Seventies Ringway" by Mark Williams

The Fairey group appeared stable, but alarm bells rang in July 1977, when a profit of £1.3m for the previous year was announced, a far cry from the £5m forecast! News of a special shareholders meeting to approve an increase in the board's borrowing powers sent the shares plummeting. As Fairey Group had many interests outside aviation by then, the profit shortfall couldn't be solely contributed to their aviation activities, although it probably was the case.

Under the Fairey Britten-Norman (FBN) banner the group manufactured the Islander, Trislander and Defender at their own Gosselies plant in Belgium and Bembridge had licence deals with Romania and the Philippines. As of July 1977, the production at Gosselies of eight aircraft per month had continued for longer than intended, due to delays in commencing production of F-16 fighter aircraft for NATO. At this point, Fairey had the expense of maintaining a 400-strong Belgian workforce. As their stock of Islanders stood at over £6m, they forced back the Gosselies output, stressing that production had been adjusted to reflect its selling rate. By this time sales of all versions of the Islander stood at 762.

In a statement issued on 19 August 1977, Shorts Brothers of Belfast announced their Managing Director was holding discussions with the Fairey Group's Chairman, Robert Holder, concerning acquisition of the Islander and Trislander aircraft business. Dealings in Fairey shares had been suspended on 16 August, when the group announced its detachment from Fairey Britten-Norman. This news and the groups concern over the excess unsold stock, estimated at one hundred aircraft, caused further loss in confidence. During September, discussions on the Shorts Brothers takeover were underway and a declaration of intent was signed, with a view to the deal concluding on the 21st. Production at Fairey's Gosselies plant had already ceased in August, but one of the most difficult factors in the negotiations was compensation for the Belgian workforce and discussions on the transfer of jigs and tools from Belgium to Belfast were ongoing. The implications for Manchester meant the end of aircraft activity at the hangar and an uncertain future.

By October, there were still complications on the transfer of jigs and tools and the thirty unsold aircraft currently parked in Belgium were also stalling the final agreement. In the meantime a sit-in by Fairey workers at

Gosselies was threatening the contract to build the F-16. In response to the action, Fairey threatened to close the plant and terminate the F-16 contract if they weren't allowed to transfer the civil aircraft production line without paying unacceptably high compensation. Shorts were unwilling to sign a firm agreement to take over the Islander and Trislander until the situation was resolved. By 11 October, the receivers had been called in and two parts of the Fairey group, Fairey Britten-Norman and Fairey SA (the Gosselies plant), were immediately liquidated. It was another story at Bembridge however, as it was business as usual for the three hundred employees, involved in finishing, modifying, testing and selling the Islanders and Trislanders. High operating costs at Gosselies had emerged as the main reason for the group's financial difficulties, compounded by borrowings for the Belgian plant, guaranteed by the parent company. When the group's financial problems first came to light in the summer, great efforts were made to sell the design and manufacturing rights for the Islander and Trislander and had this have been successful, it would have relieved Fairey of a loss making operation and raised the capital to repay its debts.

Negotiations with Shorts advanced. The price and takeover of Britten-Norman had been agreed and would include the production jigs at Gosselies, but the Belgians decided the offer was too low and wouldn't compensate them adequately, so they forcibly prevented the removal of the jigs. At this point, Shorts still wanted to buy the Islander and Trislander part of the group and had the Government's approval to do so. Gosselies had been the primary manufacturer of these aircraft since Fairey bought the original Britten-Norman operation in August 1972. Bembridge had the design office and produced trial installations for modifications, fitted out primer aircraft and acted as a point of sale to the customer. Some of this work had been undertaken at Manchester, including major overhaul. The plan was for Britten-Norman (Bembridge) to buy the primer airframes from Gosselies and the Romanian production line. With regards to Shorts, their interest was likely to diminish if they couldn't obtain the equipment from Gosselies, to put the aircraft into production at Belfast.

By 5 November, hopes of Shorts purchasing the aviation side were receding and Fairey SA made independent efforts to sell Islanders, Trislanders and spare parts. It was even suggested they may apply for Belgian type certification. On 19 November the receivers, acting on behalf of Fairey, rejected an offer from Shorts for both

Britten-Norman and the Islander and Trislander interests of Fairey SA. Details weren't fully known, but Shorts negotiated jointly for the two sets of assets. Even though some rights, including the name Britten-Norman and the production and servicing rights were understood to be held by Fairey SA, Shorts were still keen to acquire Britten-Norman, but they weren't prepared to resume negotiations as by then they were having difficulties raising enough funds from Northern Ireland to make a realistic offer. November also saw Britten-Norman amend its trading name to Britten-Norman (Aircraft) Ltd. By December, Britten-Norman was still going and appointing new dealers and Fairey SA at Gosselies were keen to continue marketing aircraft, possibly in the USA. Negotiations with the Romanians on joint Islander production and ran into trouble when Fairey couldn't raise the funds. The Romanians were still keen on the venture mainly because Fairey SA was the only organisation holding a complete set of Islander jigs tools, as even the Romanian production line received the complete centre-sections from Gosselies which was the only plant in the group capable of building and supplying the structures. By the end of 1977, the situation was still not fully resolved.

Fairey Holdings was formed in January 1978 to manage the non-aviation subsidiaries of the group, including Fairey Engineering. Production in Romania continued at the planned rate of four aircraft per month, which were delivered to

Bembridge on completion. In February, after completing final assembly of twenty-two Islanders and eleven Trislenders, production ceased at Gosselies, by which time the Belgian Government had effectively nationalised the Belgian plant to safeguard the nation's commitment to the assembly of F-16 fighters.

Bembridge and Gosselies agreed terms for the delivery of the remaining aircraft to Britten-Norman in the UK. Belgium claimed they had the manufacturing and sales rights to the Islander and Trislander, but their claims were rejected by Britten-Norman. Another fifty Islanders, stored at Bembridge and Thorney Island, were mostly sold. The closing part of this story took place in May when the Group shareholders, who called in the receiver last October, were told they had lost their investment.

Fairey tried for two months to sell the Britten-Norman part of the operation, citing the high cost of Islander and Trislander production at the Gosselies plant for the group's financial difficulties. At one time, Shorts seemed the likely buyer, but the extended negotiations had led to nothing. Britten-Norman continued to operate in receivership, but they no longer had the Belgian production line.

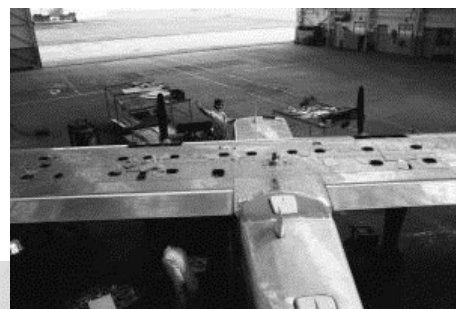
Subsequently Britten-Norman became Pilatus Britten-Norman after acquisition by the Swiss company Pilatus Aircraft in the latter part of 1978.

Islanders and Trislenders at the Fairey Aviation's Ringway Base, Manchester Airport

During the Fairey Britten-Norman era facilities at Fairey Aviation's Ringway, Manchester Airport, base were used for modification and overhaul of B-N aircraft. The images below, courtesy of Alan Bishop, show some of the activities undertaken there.



Left and right – Views of an Islander undergoing maintenance work at Fairey Aviation's Ringway hangar (Alan Bishop)



Left – Trislander c/n 361, G-BBWP is seen here on the ramp alongside the Fairey Aviation hangar. This Trislander was fitted with special survey equipment and went to Questor Surveys in Canada as C-GOXZ (Alan Bishop)

26 (BN-2) 501 Golden Jubilee Museum of Agriculture, Khlong Luang, Thailand. Museum of Agriculture, Thailand. Moved by road to Nakhon Sawan Agricultural Airport early 2019.

97 (BN-2A) J8-ELR Inter Caribbean Express, Castries., St. Lucia. To SVG Air, Kingstown, St. Vincent & the Grenadines. 2015.



J8-ELR (97) looking very good for a 50 year old aircraft, operating for SVG Air (via FlightAware)

121 (BN-2A) G-AXUB Headcorn Parachute Club, Headcorn, Kent. To Britten-Norman, Bembridge, Isle of Wight. 30.4.19. Flew from Headcorn to Solent Airport 30.4.19. Registered to Britten-Norman 9.5.19.

188 (BN-2A-21) VH-CWG Colville Aviation Services, Archerfield, Queensland, Australia. Noted at Port Vila 26.6.19. Cancelled to Solomon Islands 20.6.19.

333 (BN-2A-27) C-GHRK Gillam Air Services, Gillam, Manitoba. To Great River Aviation, Whitehorse, Yukon, Canada. 4.19.

421 (BN-2A-20) VH-WZK Torres Strait Air, Horn Island, Queensland, Australia. To West Wing Aviation, Townsville, Queensland, Australia. 9.19.

445 (BN-2A-21) RP-C2138 Pacific Airways, Manila, Philippines. To Far East Aviation Services , Cebu, Philippines.



RP-C2138 (c/n 445) seen at Cebu in April 2019 (David McCartney)

452 (BN-2A-21) RP-C2141 ChemTrad Aviation, Manila, Philippines. Withdrawn from use. Stored at Barradas Airstrip, Tanauan. CofA expired 8.10.05. To Flightline Aviation, Plaridel, Philippines. 2019. Dismantled.

456 (BN-2A-21) 304 Philippine Navy, Sangley Point, Philippines. Withdrawn from use 2019.

501 (BN-2A-21) B-05 PS Aero, Baarlo, Netherlands. Dismantled. Reported at Paintball Park, Maasbree, Netherlands 6.19.

538 (BN-2A-21) 311 Philippine Navy, Sangley Point, Philippines. Noted at PADC facility 3.5.19 undergoing major rebuild.

727 (BN-2A-21) PK-WBA Kalimanis Group, Jakarta, Indonesia. Withdrawn from use and with airport fire service at Sepinggan Airport, Balikpapan.

755 (BN-2A-26) RP-C809 Pacific Missionary Aviation (FMS), Manila, Philippines. To Belau Air, Koror, Palau. Noted at Yap International under maintenance, no markings.

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

2002 (BN-2B-20) 5H-KLA Kilwa Air, Mwanza, Tanzania. Noted at Mwanza 22.7.10 with "Tandrill Ltd." titles. One of a number of abandoned aircraft at Nairobi-Wilson were auctioned on 9.8.19 and reportedly 7 were sold.

2019 (BN-2A-26) N863VL Vieques Air Link, Vieques, Puerto Rico. Withdrawn from use at Vieques. Noted stored outside 18.10.19 at Vieques, in primer and no engines.

2020 (BN-2A-26) G-BEXJ Returned from lease to Channel Islands Air Search 14.6.19. Registered to Britten-Norman, Bembridge, Isle of Wight. 20.9.19. Registered to BN Sales, Wilmington, DC, USA as **N880GL** 4.10.19. G-BEXJ cancelled 1.10.19. To Great Lakes Air, St. Ignace, Michigan, as N880GL registered 16.10.19. Noted flying at Lee on Solent 16.10.19. Delivery flight to Michigan ended 23.10.19 after 3600 miles, 36 hours, 5 days.



N880GL (c/n 2020) seen leaving Solent Airport 19.10.19 prior to the ferry to Michigan (Terry Coombes)

2034 (BN-2T) G-BJOH Islander Aircraft, Cumbernauld, Scotland. To GAMA Aviation, Farnborough, Hampshire. 11.6.19. Noted flying at Bournemouth 22.6.19.



G-BJOH (c/n 2034) looking smart in new colours of GAMA Aviation. (Tony Guest)

2102 (BN-2T) G-BIIO Islander Aircraft, Cumbernauld, Scotland. To GAMA Aviation, Farnborough, Hampshire. 11.6.19. Arrived at Bournemouth in yellow primer 6.6.19.

2118 (BN-2T) G-BJEC Islander Aircraft, Cumbernauld, Scotland. To GAMA Aviation, Farnborough, Hampshire. 11.6.19.

2119 (BN-2T) G-BJED Islander Aircraft, Cumbernauld, Scotland. Air Alderney titles removed by 2.7.19.

2123 (BN-2A-21) IN137 Indian Navy, Cochin, India. It is now confirmed that this was one of the 6 former Indian Navy Islanders transferred to the Myanmar Air Force, Naypyitaw, Myanmar in 2006. This one is confirmed as serial **4303**.

Note: It is assumed that the remaining 5 aircraft are c/ns 889, 2134, 2148, 2149, 2150, leaving the Indian Navy with a fleet of BN-2Ts only. The Myanmar Air Force serials are likely to be 4301, 4302, 4304, 4305 and 4306, but tie ups with c/n is unknown at present.



4303 (c/n 2123) photographed towards the end of a major overhaul in Myanmar (Phowzawoo Phowzawoo)

2170 (BN-2B-26) JAGS Aviation, Ogle, Guyana. This is now known to be **8R-GBK**.

2186 (BN-2B-26) VP-MNT Monserrat Airways, Brades, Montserrat. Ran off the end of the runway 24.9.19 at John A Osborne Airport. Minor damage, no injuries.

2210 (BN-2B-20) N848MA Moro Aircraft Leasing, Two Rivers, Alaska. To SXM Airways, Princess Juliana International Airport, Saint Martin, Netherlands Antilles. 6.19 as **PJ-SAB**. N848MA cancelled 26.6.19.

2217 (BN-2B-26) N26BN cancelled 3.9.19. To Unknown operator, Netherlands Antilles, 9.19 as **PJ-???**

2235 (BN-2T) G-BSAH Islander Aircraft, Cumbernauld, Scotland. To GAMA Aviation, Farnborough, Hampshire. 11.6.19.

2248 (BN-2B-26) N203PR Air Flamenco, Isla Grande, Puerto Rico. To Sociedad de Servicios Aéreos y Marítimos Archipiélago, Tepual Airport, Chile. 5.19 as **CC-AXS**. Operated by Archipiélagos Aviación

2282 (BN-2B-20) JA127D New Japan Aviation, Kagoshima, Japan. To Colville Aviation Services, Archerfield, Queensland, Australia. 28.9.19 as **VH-ZKQ**.

2291 (BN-2B-20) F-OIJU St Barth Commuter, St. Jean, St. Barthelemey. Sold in Guyana as **8R-HML**.

2296 (BN-2B-20) D-ILFD FLN - Frisia Luftverkehr, Norden-Norddeich, Germany. To Prop Air, Tallinn, Estonia. **ES-VBN**.

2314 (BN-2B-20) N70AS Channel Islands Air Search, Guernsey, Channel Islands. Delivered 29.6.19. Registered to Southern Aircraft Consultancy Trustee, Bungay, Suffolk. 26.6.19. 2-CIAS delayed due to 2- certification. Left Solent for Guernsey 27.8.19. N70AS cancelled 18.9.19. To **2-CIAS** 18.9.19.

2316 (BN-2B-26) **G-CLHR** Britten-Norman Aircraft, registered. 3.7.19. Fuselage noted at Solent 5.7.19.

3009 (BN-2A-26) PZ-TYD Caricom Airways, Paramaribo, Suriname. To Easy Air (EZ Air), Boniare, Netherlands Antilles as **PJ-TYD**.

Compiled by Allan Wright

19 November 2019



Thanks go to Allan Wright and Andy Clancey for providing the BN Historians Islander Update 134 for inclusion in BNAPS News

Great Lakes Air Islander N880GL Ferry Flight

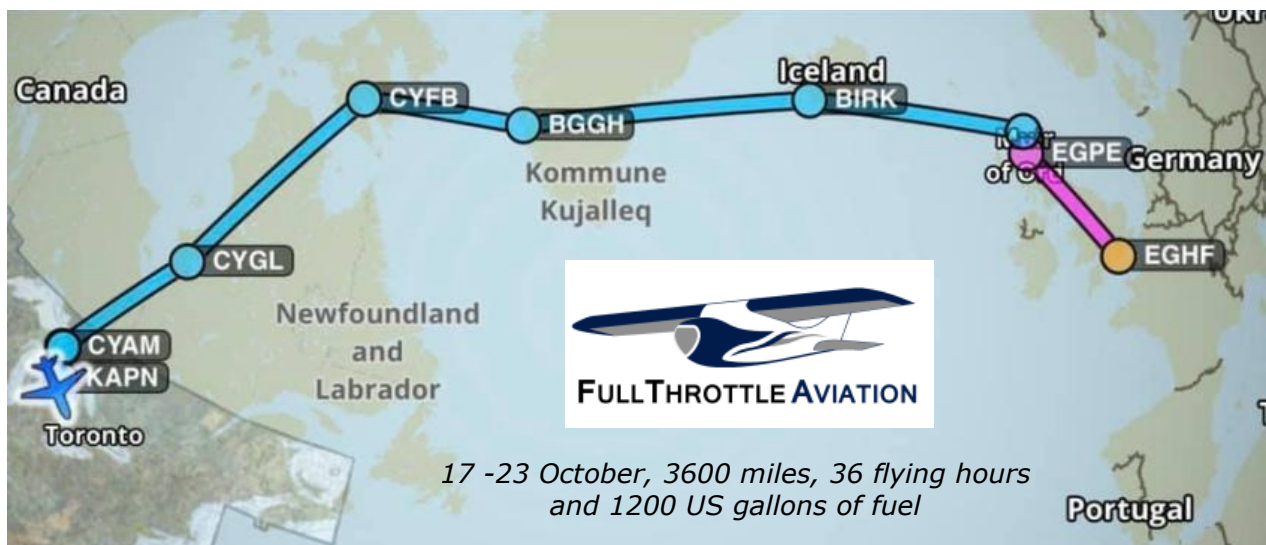
B-N Islander c/n 2020, G-BEXJ, took up the registration mark N880GL as a result of its recent sale to Great Lakes Air based at Mackinac County Airport in St. Ignace, Lake Michigan, USA (see news report about the sale in the September 2019 issue of BNAPS News). N880GL's ferry flight to the USA departed from Solent Airport (EGHF) UK on 19 October and was undertaken by Full Throttle Aviation.

The flight required 36 hours flying time over 5 days, covering a distance of 3600 miles at an average speed of 105 knots. Flying in the soup, instrument approaches to minimums, crosswinds, 50 knot headwinds, snow, rain, exceptionally clear weather over the ocean and with many barrels of fuel consumed, N880GL arrived safely on 23 October in the USA on the first westbound crossing made by Full Throttle Aviation in a small aircraft.

(All images courtesy of Full Throttle Aviation)



Full Throttle Aviation's flight crew, Captain Sarah Rovner (right) and co-pilot Randall Williams, ready to depart from Solent Airport with Islander N880GL on 19 October.



Captain Sarah Rovner is seen here with Islander N880GL at CYFB, Iqaluit Airport, Nunavut Canada, on October 22, 2019 before departing for the next stop at CYGL La Grande Riviere Airport, Radisson, Newfoundland, on the way to Sault Ste Marie Airport, Michigan.

Great Lakes Air Islander N880GL Ferry Flight



In Iceland taking on more fuel in the ferry tanks.



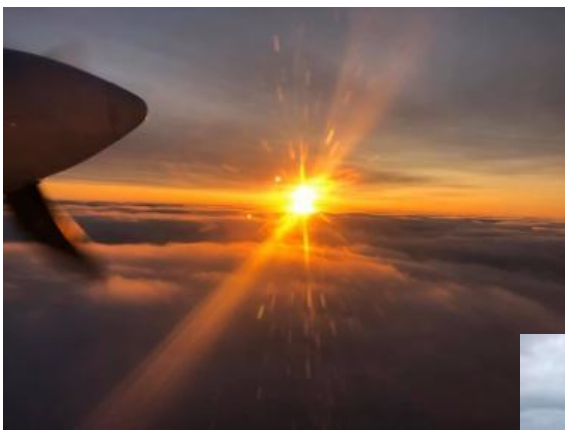
Co-pilot Randall Williams and Captain Sarah Rovner were well wrapped up to withstand the cold during the flight



Left - View Near Nuuk, Greenland on the west coast.



Above - Over the great lakes on the way into the destination, Alpena, Michigan.



Left - Sunset over the Arctic while flying over northern Canada.

Islander N880GL and Captain Sarah Rovner with the Chief Pilot and owners of Great Lakes Air after a safe arrival at Alpena, Michigan on 23 October



Thanks go to Capt. Sarah Rovner for all the help given with this news item for BNAPS News

Isles of Scilly Skybus Islander Fleet to Stand Down by 14 March 2020



Isles of Scilly Skybus Islander G-SSKY in the latest colours (Isles of Scilly Travel)

Isle of Scilly Skybus has operated a small fleet of B-N Islanders since 1984 to provide a virtually "walk on walk off" air service that is vital for the Isles of Scilly that are heavily dependent on tourism. It is the only airline serving St. Mary's with the Islanders making the 15 minute flight from Land's End Airport, day in day out, in all but the most extreme weather conditions and all year round. The islands are also connected to the mainland by a ferry, operated by the Steamship Group that is also the parent company of Skybus. The company is owned by over 1,000 small shareholders, including a substantial number of Isles of Scilly residents.

On 31 October, 2019 an announcement was made that Skybus intends to phase-out its four Islanders by 14 March, 2020, as it strives to reduce losses generated by its shuttle flights between the Isles of Scilly and the United Kingdom mainland.

The reasoning behind the decision was explained in this quote in a press release from the Skybus parent Steamship Group:

"We are beginning the process of moving to operating a single fleet of Twin Otter aircraft on our Skybus routes to and from the islands. This follows our discussions at this year's Annual General Meeting (AGM) on how best to improve the efficiency of the currently loss-making air services while maintaining schedules and providing a better experience for our customers,"

Skybus currently operates four BN-2 Islanders and four DHC-6-300 Twin Otters, using them to run shuttle flights between St. Mary's in the Isles of Scilly and Land's End, Newquay, and Exeter (seasonally) on the UK mainland. In 2018, the airline made a loss GBP500,000, (USD645,000).

"A considerable amount of work in reviewing operations and forward planning has been done to ensure that a more efficient use of our Twin Otter fleet can allow us to fly a schedule to fulfil the demand for the summer of 2020," Steamship Group added.

The company also said that it was working to "implement efficiencies" across its aviation business, including new commercial policies.



Isles of Scilly Skybus Islander in 25th anniversary livery on the ramp by the new Land's End Airport terminal building (Skybus)

Origin of Isles of Scilly Skybus

In the spring of 1984 the Isles of Scilly Steamship Company made an application for a licence to operate a low cost daily passenger and freight air service from Land's End to Scilly, using a twin-engined Shorts Skyvan aircraft and the operating name Isles of Scilly Skybus, a subsidiary company of the steamship company being formed for the purpose.

Following a decision at the 1982 AGM of the steamship company, a comprehensive feasibility study had been carried out and a demonstration of Shorts Skyvan G-BJDC had taken place at St Just in February 1984. An integrated sea and air service was envisaged, the air service running in conjunction with the "Scillonian". In the winter the "Scillonian" could concentrate on bulk freight, with sailings possibly reduced to two each week, whilst the aircraft could operate daily with passengers, perishables and flowers.

An objection was made by British Airways Helicopters (operator of the helicopter service from Penzance to St Mary's), on the grounds that the available air travel market could not support two operators on the route from Penzance. The Council of the Isles of Scilly also opposed the scheme, although many councillors saw merit in a freight-only service (support for which also came from the county council planning committee and Penwith District Council - the latter expressing its support at a meeting in March 1985 for a full passenger and freight service).

Skybus also approached the Duchy of Cornwall with a view to either buying or leasing the airfield on St Mary's. However, the Duchy was already negotiating with the Council of the Isles of Scilly for the transfer of the airfield to the council.



Isles of Scilly Skybus Islander c/n 877, G-BFNU, in its early livery on the left and on the right in a later more colourful livery style (BNAPS Archive)

By August 1984 Britten-Norman Islander G-BFNU had been acquired by Skybus. It was proposed to operate the aircraft on charter work in conjunction with Westward Airways (Land's End), also based at St Just. The Islander's initial visit to the Isles of Scilly was on 9th August, one of its first tasks being to take a small party of local authority officials on a short flight. The party included the chairman of the Council of the Isles of Scilly, Mr Mumford, and the chairman of Penwith District Council, Mr Daniel, together with their respective chief executives.

The Islander started freight services to the Isles of Scilly at the beginning of October, and provided much needed support during the two week annual refit of the "Scillonian" during the following month.

The initial meeting with the Civil Aviation Authority to consider the licence application had been planned for December 1984, Skybus hoping to commence passenger services at the start of the 1985 season. Although details had not been finalised, it was anticipated that a minimum of four return flights could be flown daily, carrying around 700 - 800 passengers a week. During periods of high demand a shuttle type service could be flown. It was thought that the Islander might be retained, being an extremely useful and flexible aircraft with a low break-even load factor, and held in high regard by Skybus.....

(The above is an extract from "To the Sunset Bound" by M J Ingham courtesy of Air Britain)

Cape Air Celebrates Tecnam Travellers Arrival for Service

On 3 October Hyannis, Massachusetts-based regional airline Cape Air recently celebrated its 30th year in business with the arrival of two new 11-seat Tecnam P2012 Traveller aircraft from Italy. Cape Air operates a large fleet of Cessna 402s and four B-N Islanders, acquired in 2016. Cape Air's plan is to progressively replace all the Cessna 402s with Tecnam Travellers with projected orders for up to 100 aircraft.

It is not known what the plans are for the Islanders. These are at present deployed on services in the Caribbean region. Cape Air has also expressed an interest in the Alice 9 passenger all electric aircraft recently revealed at the 2019 Paris Air Show.



Tecnam P2012 Traveller, N133CA, one of two recently delivered from Italy from Cape Air's initial 20 aircraft order (Cape Air)



One of Cape Air's Islanders, N510BN, is seen here on the ramp at Culebra, the island served by Cape Air from San Juan, Puerto Rico (Belle Epoque 1899).



View of the Traveller's flight instrument panel with its Garmin G1000NXi avionics equipment fit installed (Tecnam)



The Traveller's cabin features 11 leather seats with under-seat storage, LED lighting and USB power ports (Tecnam).

At the forecast rate of production for the Traveller of twenty plus aircraft/year it will be some time before Cape Air's Cessna 402s are replaced. Also this will depend on Cape Air exercising its options for another 92 aircraft in addition to the current order.

Cape Air held a special event to celebrate Cape Air's 30th anniversary and to launch the Traveller. The event was hosted by Cape Air's founder Dan Wolf and there were also several guests from Tecnam present including Giovanni Pascale, grandson of the Tecnam founder Luigi "Gino" Pascale. Luigi Pascale was the inspiration for the Traveller design. He passed away aged 93 on 14 March,, 2017, after a short illness, not long after the prototype Traveller made its first flight on 21 July, 2016, - an event that he was able to witness.



Luigi "Gino" Pascale and the prototype Tecnam P2012 Traveller (Tecnam)

New Zealand's Fly My Sky Islander Flights to Middle Earth for Hobbiton fans

Visitors to Hobbiton on New Zealand's North Island visitors can now fly to and from Middle Earth.

New Zealand airline and B-N Islander operator, Fly My Sky based at Auckland Airport, has announced the introduction of scheduled flights and tours to the Hobbiton Movie Set, New Zealand's third largest tourism destination.



Fly My Sky Islander ZK-EVO, c/n 785, (MRC Aviation)

The scheduled flights and tours will operate return journeys twice daily, seven days a week. The service will operate between Auckland Airport and Matamata Airport.

Fly My Sky Director, Keith McKenzie, said the flights will allow passengers a quick and easy way to visit the Hobbiton Movie Set, and give customers more choice and flexibility of travel options. "The Islander aircraft, well respected around the world, are a perfect fit for the journey between Auckland and Hobbiton," McKenzie said. "As a low flying aircraft, passengers can enjoy the sights of the natural New Zealand landscape during their journey. Upon arrival at Matamata Airport, passengers will be taken on a private shuttle to the Hobbiton movie set."

Scheduled flights and tours begin from Monday, November 18, for more information about Fly My Sky and the Hobbiton tours go to www.flymysky.co.nz

Long Serving New Zealand Islander ZK-MCD on the Move

A recent post on BNAPS facebook page by Mike Condon reported that Islander ZK-MCD, c/n 719 was sighted at Ardmore, on New Zealand's North Island, being prepared for delivery to Australia with its final destination believed to be with a new owner in Tasmania.

Islander c/n 719 is a Romanian built aircraft and made its first flight on 20/8/74. Originally a BN-2A-6 and registered as G-BCAG it was converted to a BN-2A-26 soon after arrival in the UK. It was exported through Islander Aircraft Sales, Lakemba, NSW, Australia in December 1974. On 25/1/75 it was delivered to Mount Cook Airlines, Christchurch, New Zealand where it took up the registration ZK-MCD and was equipped with skis.

Islander ZK-MCD remained with Mount Cook Airlines until 1993 when it joined Tourism Flightseeing, a joint venture by Mount Cook Line Milford Sound Flightseeing and Fiordland Travel Milford Sound Fly'n Sea.

Islander ZK-MCD was said to have clocked up 22,778 hours when it was offered for sale in July 2018.



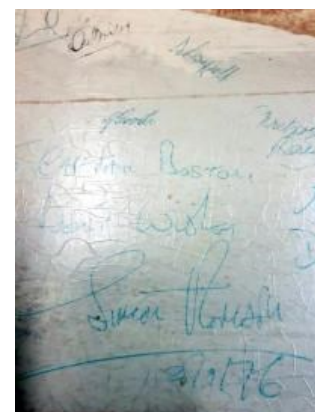
Above- Islander ZK-MCD at Ardmore on 5 November, 2019 (Mike Condon)

Below- An earlier view of Islander ZK-MCD in Mount Cook Airlines livery (BNAPS Archive)



Relics of Islander G-AWVY Found in a Cambridge Rubbish Bin

Shaun Pleasants recently posted on facebook that he had found some relics of Islander c/n 48, G-AWVY, in a bin in Cambridge. There are a number of signatures on the placard and it may well be a retirement or leaving gift for Capt. Boston. Also it is signed by Simon Thomson and dated 16/8/76. As Simon was B-N's Publicity Manager at that time this is a helpful clue as to the event to which the relics relate.



BN-2A Islander c/n 48 was first flown on 30.1.69, registered as G-AWVY and delivered to Aurigny Air Services on 6.3.69. It returned to Bembridge on 26.1.72, converted to BN-2A-26 standard and assigned to Fairey Britten-Norman Air Services. For several years it was used as the shuttle aircraft between Bembridge and the Gosselies factory in Belgium. After several changes of ownership it returned to the UK in 2007 and later withdrawn from use. By 2017 Islander c/n 48's days had ended as one of around 6 Islanders used as props for the James Bond film "Spectre" in the Islander action sequences.

Roraima Airways Islander Bill Board

This Roraima Airways bill board ad was spotted by Paul Culshaw on his recent trip to Guyana. The large bill board is located in a prominent road side location and features the airline's B-N Islanders (Right).

Paul also saw several examples of operational and non-operational Islanders and Trislanders during his visit and the images will be included in the next issue of BNAPS News.



Loganair Electric Islander Project - Cranfield Aerospace Solutions (CAeS) announces £9m UK Government grant

CAeS received a UK Government grant of £9m for Project Fresson to design, manufacture and integrate a hybrid-electric propulsion system into a B-N Islander aircraft, typically used on short flights and island-hopping routes.

The Project Fresson team includes UK businesses: Rolls-Royce, supplying the power management system; the Denis Ferranti Group, supplying the electric motors; Delta Motorsport, providing battery packs; WMG (University of Warwick), performing battery testing and characterisation, and Britten-Norman, as the aircraft OEM (Original Equipment Manufacturer), providing the baseline Islander aircraft and aircraft data/design support. CAeS parent Cranfield University will be researching key technology solutions vital for the 30-month project.

Following the demonstrator project, CAeS will go on to certify the modification through EASA to obtain a Supplemental Type Certificate. This will then be immediately available in the global market,

Romanian Islander YR-BNC

On 7 December 1944, at a Convention on International Civil Aviation in Chicago, attended by 52 countries, it was decided to form the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO). This agreement became known as the Chicago Convention and in 1947 ICAO became a specialist agency of the United Nations.

In 1982 the ICAO Secretary General, Yves Lambert, suggested to the Civil Aviation Authorities to consider the issue of special postage stamps to commemorate the 40th anniversary. Forty-seven countries participated, with issue dates ranging from 1984 to 1987. The B-N Islander was chosen by Romania and five other postal authorities. The other ICAO 40th anniversary Islander stamps issued were: Caicos Islands (SG 80), Cape Verde Islands (SG 557), Dominica (SG 925), Grenadines of Grenada (MS 664) and the Isle of Man (SG 271).

At 1730 hrs on 15 October 1969 BN's Chief Pilot, Jim Birnie, accompanied by Andy Coombe, took off from Bembridge in BN-2A Islander c/n 122, registration G-51-48.

This maiden flight lasted 60 minutes. After further flight tests and painting, this aircraft, now registered YR-BNC, left Bembridge on 28 November 1969 to join the Romanian Air Force. Subsequently it carried the military serial number 122.

On 15 August 1984 the Romanian postal authority released a set of four stamps and a first day cover to commemorate the 40th anniversary of ICAO (top right).

The 1.50 Leu stamp (lower right) depicted YR-BNC (Stanley Gibbons ref: SG 4879).



Right - BN-2A Islander c/n 122, YR-BNC remained in service with the Romanian Air Force at Bucharest - Otopeni until around 1990 when it was withdrawn from use (BN Historians -Paul Huxford).



Of the original fleet of five Romanian Air Force Islanders three are still in existence: C/n 97 ex YR-BNB/97, now registered J8-ELR, is flying scheduled services in the Eastern Caribbean with SVG Air, based in St Vincent and the Grenadines.

C/n 130 ex YR-BND/130 at the Museum of Aviation near Banaesa Airport, Bucharest.

C/n 816 ex YR-BNT/816, now registered YJ-RN1, is resident at Bauerfield International Airport, Port Vila, Vanuatu.

Thanks go to Norman Hobbs for researching the above and for the postal images

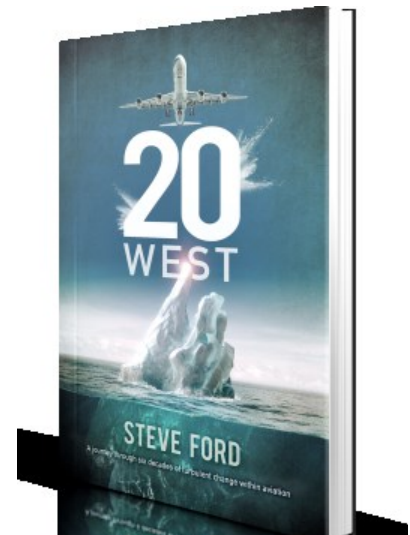
New book "20 West" A journey through six decades of turbulent change within aviation by Steve Ford

Spanning six decades, from propeller-driven transport aircraft to composite, fly-by-wire and wide-body double-decker aircraft plucked from the pages of science fiction, 20 West charts the emotion, the physical experience, the joy and the anguish of flying.

It is not a blow-by-blow account of the aviation industry. Nor is it merely one person's story of their career in aviation. Rather, it is a collection of snapshots – some humorous, some heart-breaking – of the people and the aircraft that shaped a lifelong passion for flight.

'Flying is a way of life that wraps itself around you and enters every pore as you fall within its envelope.'

20 West book is available in paperback form from Amazon at £8.99.



Steve Ford's book gives a real insight into the world of aviation – an interesting and absorbing read that is highly recommended - BNAPS News Ed.

New Valom BN-2T New Valom BN-2T Turbine Islander/Defender 1/48 Scale Model Kit

Following on from the Valom 1:48 scale BN-2 Islander model kit, introduced earlier this year, the Czech Republic kit manufacturer Valom is now offering a 1:48 scale model BN-2T kit – the kit is due for imminent release.

The BN-2T kit includes underwing pylons and fuel tanks and decals for Army Air corps and RAF BN-2Ts ZF536, ZF537 and ZF 573.



Wight Aviation Museum

The Wight Aviation Museum is based in a hangar bay at the Isle of Wight Airport at Sandown. Fund raising is under way for a project to have a dedicated purpose built aviation museum at the airport. The museum's volunteers have assembled a collection of exhibits related to the local aviation heritage.



For details of opening times, special events and news go to the Wight Aviation Museum's facebook page or website www.wightaviationmuseum.org.uk

Wight Aviation Heritage Tours/Workshop Visits

National and social media advertising has not attracted sufficient interest so no Wight Aviation Heritage Tours, aimed at fund raising for BNAPS, are planned in what is left of 2019, plans for 2020 are under review.

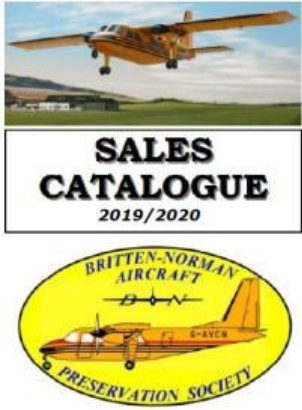
BNAPS workshop visits from interested groups are most welcome. Please contact BNAPS Chairman Bob Wealthy to make arrangements for workshop visits.

BNAPS Sales Catalogue 2019/2020 Edition

The 2019/2020 edition of the BNAPS Sales Catalogue lists the currently available merchandise and price reduction offers

Please contact Rita Edgcumbe at BNAPS Sales to if you would like to receive the latest catalogue by email:

sales@bnaps.org.uk



BNAPS Ltd in the sales area of BNAPS, selling books, prints and memorabilia etc. and makes a significant contribution to our restoration funds. All the items in this Catalogue can be purchased direct from BNAPS Ltd, at BNAPS events and sales stands and by email order.

If you wish to purchase specific items please contact BNAPS Ltd Sales by e-mail sales@bnaps.org.uk

Postage rates will be quoted upon contact with the sales office. We can ship worldwide.

BNAPS on the Internet - Information about BNAPS, including back issues of BNAPS News, can now be found from the following link: www.bnaps.org.uk

More BNAPS Supporters Needed

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

The principal aims of the BNAPS Supporters Club are:

"to assist BNAPS to preserve the history and aircraft of Britten-Norman through member donations and to provide assistance with the day-to-day operations of the charity"

Anyone with an interest in local aviation heritage is welcome.

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

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.

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

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Forthcoming BNAPS Events

During the coming months there are opportunities for pre-arranged group visits to the workshop – please get in touch if interested

The BNAPS Christmas Meal will be at Fox's Restaurant, Bembridge on Saturday 14 December, 2019. Places are limited so please contact Rita Edgcumbe without delay to make a booking.

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

How to contact BNAPS: Email:

bob@bnaps.org.uk

Telephone: 01329 315561

Post:

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

All best wishes for Christmas and the New Year go out to BNAPS Supporters and friends and all BNAPS News readers