



Issue 24 - Apr14 - May14

# Contraails

## Newsletter of the Christchurch Aviation Society

CAvSoc

### Vanuatu - A South Pacific Airfield

Our March meeting was addressed by Tom Kelly who, whilst a CAA air traffic controller, responded to an advert by the Crown Agents for a manager at Vanuatu airport and he took his family with him.

They spent a year on the island of Espirito Santo located 1,000 miles east of northern Australia. When Tom was there in 1983/4, the islands had recently gained independence, following an increasing campaign started after WW2. The islands were previously known as the New Hebrides but with independence the group of islands was renamed to Vanuatu. The archipelago is a loose group of islands of volcanic origin with a poor indigenous economy but tourism and base as an offshore tax haven has helped. Nevertheless a lot of support is provided by Australia and New Zealand.

With previous British and French involvement the language is a mixture but mostly a pigin style so the name for Tom was "Man blong britis". Flying is mainly inter island with light aircraft such as the Islander and more recently an ATR72.

The locals used to carry pigs on board the aircraft and it was not unusual to find travellers with pigs in the departure lounge giving it a somewhat residential feel and the local chieftains displayed their status by the number of pigs tusks adorning a pole outside their houses.

During World War II the Americans built airfields on the island and there are many wrecked aircraft still in the undergrowth. Such was the effect of this place on James A Michener, then a lieutenant in the American Army, that he wrote the legendary Tales of the South Pacific from which sprang the musical South Pacific. Michener would gaze across the sea to a volcanic island, often with its summit shrouded in cloud and dream of "Bali Hai".

After an initial start with a DC9 contracted with Ansett, links to New Zealand and Australia are now by Boeing 737 as shown below.



### Meetings List 2014

**03 Sep14** Mission Aviation Fellowship

**05 Nov14** History of Flight Refuelling, James Kemmitt

### Visits - dates tba - names to Steve Robson

Planning is underway for a visit embracing the WW2 bunker at RAF Uxbridge and the deHavilland Heritage centre Salisbury Hall in North London

### Sea Vixen

After several delays due to weather the Foxy Lady finally became airborne on 3rd May with a full programme ahead of her including the Bournemouth Air Festival.

Photo © Andy Rodgers.



**Snippets** The 4th May 1904 may not strike a chord with many people but it was a day that created history and contributed to saving this country in the Battle of Britain. At the Midland Hotel in Manchester on that day a man called Henry Edmunds brought together two people, the Hon Charles Rolls and Henry Royce. Rolls-Royce Limited was formed two years later. Charles Rolls died in 1910 at Southbourne where a tribute will be held on **12th July** and Henry Royce went on ultimately to develop the PV12 (Private Venture) which became the Merlin engine. The Rolls-Royce Enthusiast Club met at the Midland Hotel for the 110th anniversary to remember the event. Incidentally the Museum of Science and Industry (MOSI) in Manchester holds two icons sited together, Royce's first production car next to the P1 Lightning prototype.

**Vulcan** Work has proceeded apace with the new No 5 tank being delivered, however, during the fitting process some panels were discovered to be in a poor state so to play safe these have been replaced causing some delay. Although not in the official VTTS program yet, only displays up to mid August have been announced, the Vulcan is expected to fly several times in the Bournemouth Air Festival **28th to 31st August**

**Bournemouth Aviation Museum** is now forging ahead following a grant of permanent planning permission. The efforts of the trustees and volunteers have been rewarded with a promising future. New additions are a Westland Wasp, a Palmair 737 and an ETPS BAC 1-11 (forward fuselages) and shortly a Jet Provost. Pictured is the arrival of the 1-11.

