

AIRSHIP HERITAGE NEWS

WWW.AIRSHIPSONLINE.COM
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Dear Supportive Member,

As with all Charitable Organisations, 2020 has proven an extremely challenging year to overcome, changes to be quickly organised, and then re-organised at the last minute. I am proud to say that your AHT team did it!

We have learnt to adapt and change to new technologies quickly. We were still able to undertake as much as we could that had originally been planned, in that our excellent *Dirigible Magazine* was able to continue to be produced, printed, dispatched and enjoyed by all, with little interruption. I'm hearing many reports of other small charitable organisations struggling with retaining printing production during this time with staff on sick leave, or furlough, or at worst print companies closing down. Thankfully our Editor Giles Camplin did a wonderful job of working closely with Catford Print to ensure they could still produce the magazine.

As to change, we were able to start sharing content further online with helping the Bedford Creative Arts team and The Higgins Bedford, with material content, interviews etc. Despite not being able to get together for our AGM, and with our Joint Conference and Exhibition with the Airship Association, as with most things, having to be moved 12 months to September 2021, we still have more to look forward to for next year.

We are still looking for members to come forward and will be looking for members to help out with the event and so more details will be posted nearer the time, but will include:

- help setting up and dismantling
- attendants to floor walk and help answering questions from the public
- volunteers to give a talk during the conference.



In the meantime we will look to also provide some online talks in 2021 and so if you already give a talk on a specialist lighter than air related subject, an event, or particular ship, then please let me know and we can look to setting this up online for our members. Remember, these days you don't have to be in the UK and so reaching out to our overseas members, if you would like to give a short talk then please let me know, and don't be shy. We have many people with varied interests in our membership, why not share and get to know others.

I thought this wonderful image of the R 33 carrying two Gloster Grebes in 1926, by artist Marshall Young was an appropriate lighter than air representation of changes and advancement of technologies quickly over time, then adapting existing solutions.

Thank you to you all for your wonderful contributions and continued support of the Airship Heritage Trust through an extremely stormy and unpredictable 2020. By renewing your membership and helping us financially through sales of books, postal covers and gifts in our gift shop you keep the Trust's finances in good shape for the future. In the world of LTA, buoyant is good. We move in to 2021 still buoyant and can steer our own course despite unforeseen stormy conditions. Again the R 33 famously survived that as well.

At this Christmas time, I would like to say that it's most important to stay safe and well however you are able to mark the holidays this year in your Christmas Bubbles.

Best wishes to you and your families, and many thanks for sticking with us through a difficult year – roll on 2021 for more hope and gladness, and above all to be able to see each other again.

Alastair Lawson

Chairman



Good news as well on the membership, with 5 new members this year. Do spread the word about membership, and our 'world-class' website; I am sure that this is a key to our success. www.airshipsonline.com . Congratulations to our Webmaster/Chairman Alastair.

If you feel you can add something to the website, please do contact Alastair directly.

Our commemorative covers are moving now – why not use them, they are numbered and so unique, as a New Year's gift for a loved one or friend? They help to fund our charitable activities.



Do you have 'airship crew' relatives in your family?

As you have seen from the commemorative covers, five of our members with 'airship relations' have signed them to assist our fundraising. With time slipping by, especially in this pandemic period, we feel that it is important to record this member connection to all airship crews.

Please do send details to me if you believe you are related, no matter how distant. I know of several families who were hoping to meet for the R101 90th anniversary which could not take place, having so enjoyed the 80th commemorations. membership@airshipsonline.com

Many of you know of Jane Harvey, who used to live in Shortstown, and was a local historian. She now lives in Lincolnshire, and has a very good website:

www.britishairshippeople.org.uk Can you also assist her, with any photos, or details of relatives please?

Speaking of Shortstown, and the Short Bros, this email from members Barrie and Liz Walker. See their website for more: www.shortbrothersaviationpioneers.co.uk

Liz (great, great niece of the Short brothers) writes:

"It has been our mission, right from the start, to tell the world about the three Brothers and their wonderful pioneering efforts in the world of flight from 1908 - 1948.

There is so much 'ignorance' out there about ALL the fabulous aircraft pioneers our country produced, many of whom, e.g. C.F. Fairey, who rated Horace Short as 'the best aircraft designer and engineer I ever met' went on to do their own pioneering.

We have done lectures in Rochester and other parts of Kent over the years and we find in the street, that very few have heard of Shorts whilst in Belfast "SHORTS" is still a byword for employment even though the company was no longer Shorts after 1948 and since has been Bombardier and now Spirit Aviation.

We have restored Oswald's grave at Haslemere and are yet to complete those of Horace, Eustace and their families at Hampstead. This together with a dream of a monument on the High Street in Rochester would be a completion of our 'work'. (A pleasure - not really work as we have been to places and met great people we never would otherwise have met)".

Any assistance anyone can give please?

Do please tell me your stories, which could appear in future newsletters.

A book to read of that period: 'Birth of British Aviation: Prisoners of Hope' by Helen Landau.



Further to Peter White's letter in *Dirigible* 90 page 29, *highlighting his car number, DLZ 127*, are photos he took in Egypt, and at Friedrichshafen. *How low is Low flying?!*



Peter remarks that the Zeppelin was not moored – as one passenger came out, a new passenger climbed in. Lift/weight balance maintained.



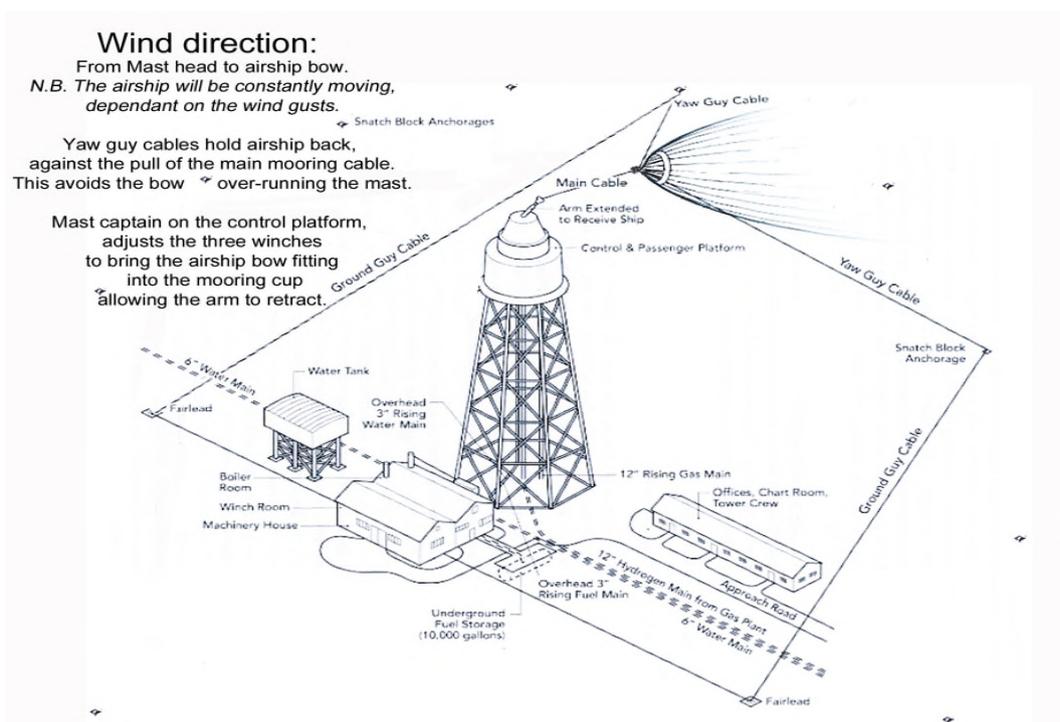
The semi-rigid Zeppelin may be able to rest on the ground, but the R-100 and R 101 had a 203ft high mast at Cardington.

How was Mast mooring done?

What was the sequence of events?

Who did what?

I have created a drawing from several others, which I think shows how it was done, and an explanation follows. *(Please do tell me if you think I am wrong.)*





It also helps to read Captain G.F. Meager A.F.C.'s book, 'My airship flights 1915-1930'. Page 155 – 158. His two sons, Tim and Romilly, are both A.H.T. members.

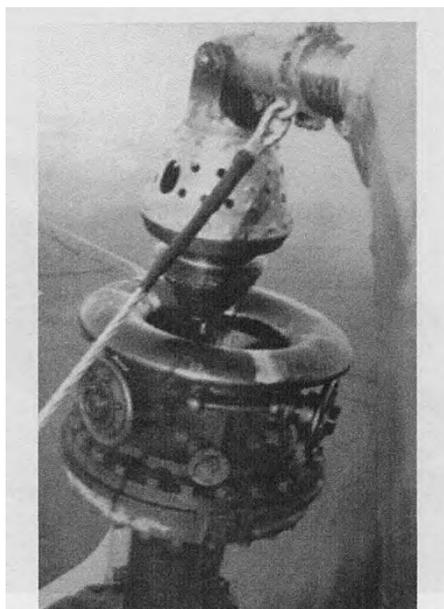
Preparation: Knowing the wind direction, the two ground guy cables from the mast winches are pulled out towards the downwind snatch block anchorages, about 45° each side of the wind direction. The mast head mooring cable also pulled out a similar distance to the landing 'T', in line with the wind. (*Using a Jowett van?*)

The Mast Officer takes his place at the three winch controls on the gallery of the mast.

Mooring: The Airship approaches at about 700ft, and lets out the bow cable (3/4 inch steel cable) to the 'stopper' when about 750 ft away from the tower. This is cable once earthed on the ground, (*disperses static electricity which could kill!*), is manhandled by the ground crew back to the 'T' and joined to the mast head cable by a 'Thomas Block'. ** The airship is then trimmed nose up to take up the slack, and wound in gently. (*Photo: the bow cable to the mast head, and the steam exhaust from the winch engines.*)



The two yaw cables are also lowered at



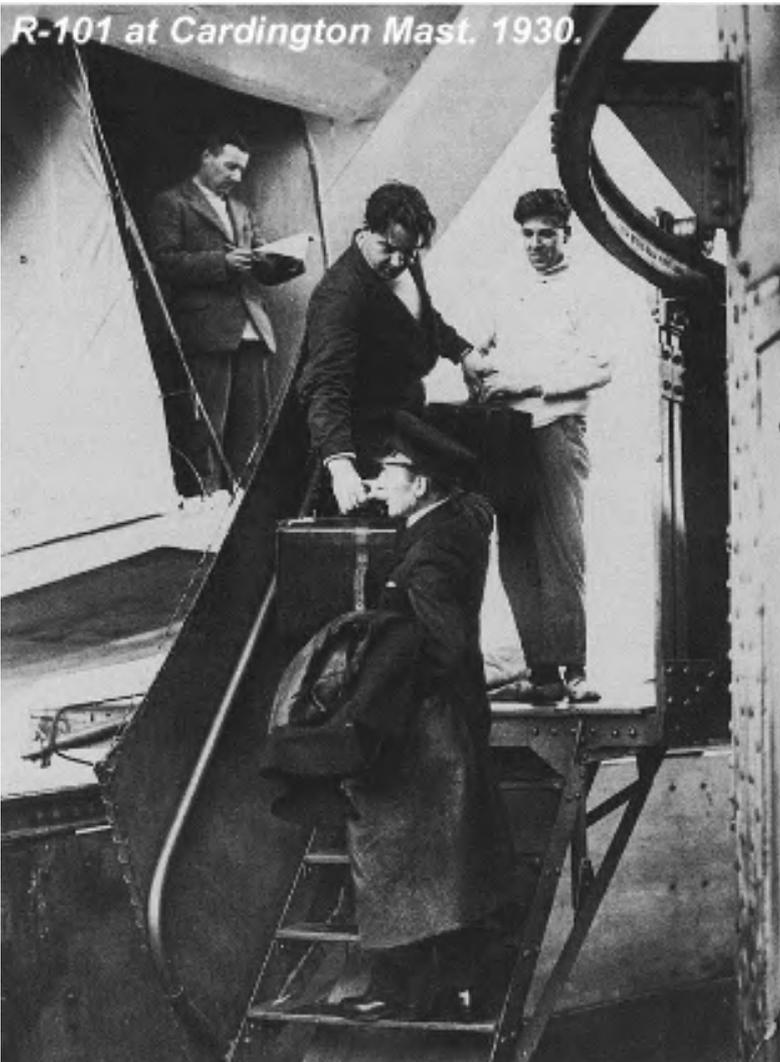
The cup and cone mooring system

about 500ft,
- again the
ground crew
attach them

to the ground guys from the winches in the mast, via snatch blocks clipped to the chosen anchorages.

These are now wound in tightly, thereby stopping the airship coming forward into the mast.

By using the three cable winches, both separately and together, the Mast Officer brings the cone at the bow of the airship gently into the cup at the top of the arm, and the securing clips snap into place. (*A crew member on the mast head then checks their security, 203ft above the ground!*)



The recoil slide is then advanced to lock the clips, and the arm is retracted and locked into the floor of the mast head.

The various services are now plugged in, (telephone, water etc,) and the four 'garden rollers' are put in place, whilst water is taken on to balance the weight of crew and materials leaving the airship.



Canadian Government Motion Picture Bureau Photograph.

Visitors entering the R-100 from the mooring mast at St. Hubert Airport. There was a gap of about 20 inches between the top step at the mast and the entrance platform of the airship, and as the gap was nearly 200 feet in the air some visitors were inclined to be nervous.

Everyone exits from a platform below the bow, to which a rotating staircase on the mast upper gallery is aligned. *(Sadly not in Canada, when an error in mast construction required a 4 ft gap to be overcome, see photos)*



Wooden steps, and still a gap at 180ft in the air!



Chandler, Photograph.

One of the series of heavy carriages fastened to the R-100 while she was moored at the Canadian mast. These carriages helped to stabilize the ship as she swung in the wind. Occasionally the ship dragged these anchors about the field.

Passengers and crew can then go down a dozen steps to the lift, which starts at the lower balcony, and will take them to the ground. There is also a further staircase around the lift shaft in case of lift breakdown – which occurred regularly.

*** (If anyone knows what a 'Thomas Block' is – we need to know, and photos please!)*

Photo from Canada mast shows a 'Garden' roller in use.

There were four along the underside of the airship, all on progressively longer rope lengths. They weighed about 1.5 tons each, so if one was off the ground, there was a need for 1.5 tons of water ballast, or two raised would need 3 tons - to maintain equilibrium with the mast. They would sag if the airship was 'heavy'. They could also rotate with the airship, when the wind changed direction.

Links: <https://www.yuriysklyar.com/images/d-lz129-hindenburg-cricut-free-paper-model/d-lz129-hindenburg-cricut-working-file-by-yuriy-sklyar.pdf>

<https://bedfordcreativearts.org.uk/airship-dreams/unboxing-video-by-alastair-lawson/>

"Unboxing" video by Alastair Lawson - Bedford Creative Arts



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dR7TyYOPmMg> L-8. Mystery of the ghost blimp.

https://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/history/making_history/makhist10_prog10a.shtml BBC Radio 4. Making History, the R-38 disaster.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G3qfW3ydZuY&list=TLQMDcwNDlwMjDr3iyJobdAEA&index=8> Archaeopteryx sailplane.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k6m_idPex0Y Weird Russian airplanes incl. Ekranoplan. N.B. 5mins 22secs in. Another form of airship!

Jottings:

You all know that we have strengthened our Trustee team, so now we need members to come forward to assist in all sorts of functions, to allow the AHT to grow and include members in their locality.

Do please consider volunteering, that dreadful word, so that when Covid allows, we can have local meetings, as well as at the AGM.

Incidentally talking of the AGM, would you like to make it a 2 night event, - we arrive on Friday, and leave Sunday pm? *Please tell me how you feel about this.*

Would you like to have a members' Zoom meeting?
Please do let me know if you would like to join in.

Lecture: Tuesday February 9th 2021 at 19.30 GMT.

RAeS Loughborough Branch, have asked me to give the lecture on TEAMS (*this is the Universities' chosen platform*), which I gave at Brooklands in 2019 to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the death of Sir Barnes Wallis. About one hour duration.

Joining details nearer the time by email.

His Majesty's Airship R-100
designed by Barnes Wallis BSc.
- Innovator extraordinary



Loughborough Branch
ROYAL AERONAUTICAL SOCIETY




'Sub Lt Barnes Wallis RNRV with his first airship HMA 9'
copyright: BNF - Gary Saxe.

by Roger Allton. Trustee:
The Airship Heritage Trust, and long-time Air Enthusiast and Archivist.

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Research: I am trying to find out what happened to the wreckage of the R 101.

I know that Thos. W. Ward Ltd of Sheffield bought it, but I can find no information about the transfer from France to UK, or to which of their many sites.

When they scrapped say a steel works, they produced a brochure so that purchasers could buy from the site.

ALLEGEDLY, *see below*, they had a brochure for Airships? I cannot trace one.

There was a lot of stainless steel, so it would have been a 'specialist job' in 1930/31.

Rio Tinto Zinc took over the Company years ago, but so far I have had no information.

Can you help please? Photo montage below from a T.W.W. Commemorative book:



More: There was also a Ricardo diesel gas starter motor made for the R 101, to do away with petrol in the engine cars. Anyone know about it, or ever seen any photos?

Stay safe and well, recruit a new member or two, and a Very Happy New Year to you all,

Sincerely, Roger

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