

# AIRSHIP HERITAGE NEWS

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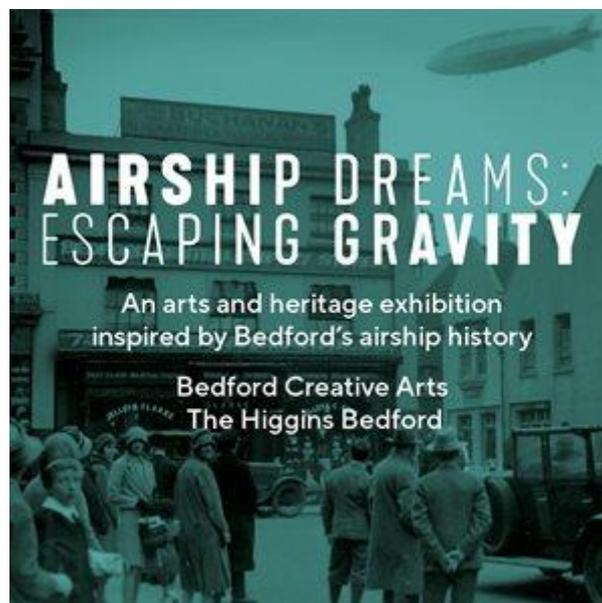
Welcome to this latest Edition of our Newsletter....

## Exciting News!

With Dirigible Magazine at the printing presses, and shortly to be arriving on your doormats, you may wonder why we are sending out a newsletter so close to the forthcoming Dirigible delivery. The reason is to communicate with you on two exciting projects which we have been working on and have started to come to fruition in the last few days.

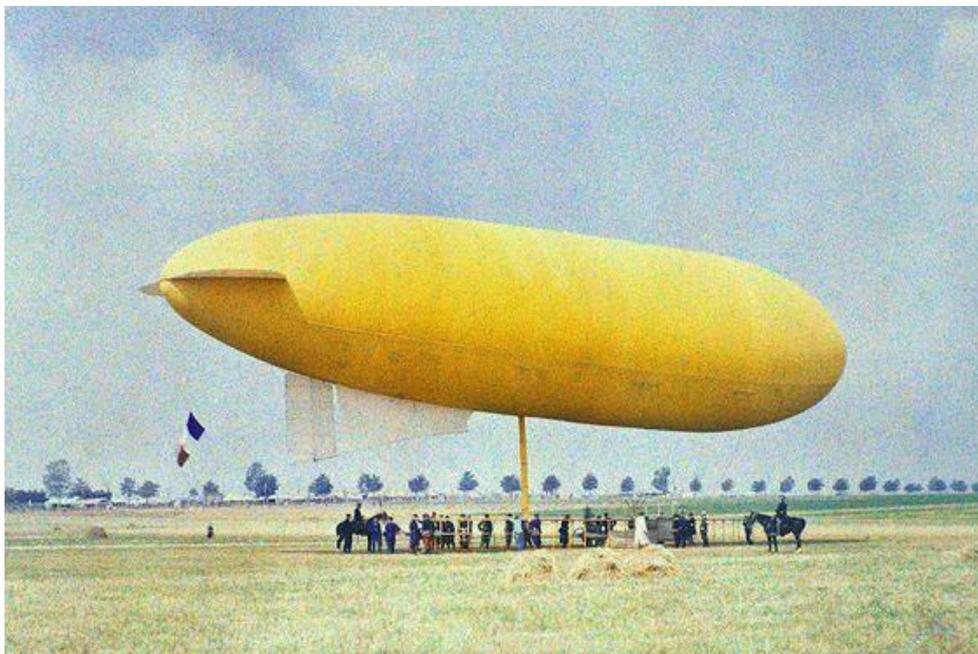
We need your help in researching items for an amazing project and to advise of our potential office location and research area.

## Airship Dreams: Final Call... Closes 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2022



As a reminder, the Airship Dreams: Escaping Gravity heritage exhibition closes on 22<sup>nd</sup> March, so your last chance to support the Higgins Museum and see the exhibits. The excellent team at the Higgins have put together a wonderful community curated exhibition of fascinating artefacts and personal stories. Please do go support the Higgins Museum by making a visit while you can.

But first some shared early history.



The Lebaudy n°1 which has been modified twice during its existence (1902-1909)

Press cuttings from The Times, from AHT Member Tony Francis

## THE FUTURE OF AIRSHIP SAFETY

FROM THE TIMES FEBRUARY 15, 1922

The conference at Australia House yesterday to discuss airships from an international point of view will visit Pulham Aerodrome tomorrow and will hold a further sitting on Friday. The conference, though it represents airship opinion in seven different countries, is not an official gathering, and the resolutions it adopts cannot be binding on the Government represented, but they represent a definite attempt to prepare the way for questions that will have to be considered internationally sooner or later. Long-distance flying is the accepted role of the airship. Its

voyages will involve the crossing of many frontiers and, indeed, British airships, like seagoing merchantmen, will be more often abroad than at home. In these circumstances standardization will have to be adopted with regard to equipment. These resolutions were adopted yesterday without dissent: (1) An arrangement that permits the airships of one nation to use the landing, mooring, gassing, and refuelling arrangements of any other nation. (2) That each country retains the right to receive airships by either or all of the following ways: at airsheds by mooring on the ground; on water; by three-wire mooring; by mooring mast. (3) That, when airships are landing on the ground or on the water, all trail ropes, pulley blocks and handling guys be standardized. (4) That on any countries adopting the principle of mooring to masts, such masts and ships be provided with standardized

couplings, water, petrol, and gas connexions. It was also decided to recommend the formation of a committee to determine the airworthiness of airships. This motion stated that it was recognized that the conditions of airship travel varied with the route and the season of the year and consequently it was impossible to lay down a definite margin of fuel and ballast to be carried. The situation could best be met by a permanent committee to determine margins for each route according to its merits. Such an arrangement, made with the cooperation of insurance companies to insure passengers and goods at minimum rates in airships complying with these conditions would indicate the relative risks of various ships and secure reasonable safety for passengers and crews.

THE TIMES.CO.UK/ARCHIVE

# US AIRSHIP DISASTER. FEW SURVIVORS

FROM THE TIMES FEBRUARY 22, 1922

The great Naval dirigible, the *Roma*, was destroyed by fire after an explosion, near Norfolk (Virginia) this afternoon. Thirty men are believed to have lost their lives. In addition to the regular crew, 20 in number, several other men had been taken up for purposes of training. After the explosion only 10 of the 42 answered the roll call. The fierce heat of the burning airship made the work of rescue impossible. The official report to the War Department states that the airship caught fire while engaged in a trial trip over the Langley Field

aerodrome to test its new engines. Something apparently went amiss with the steering gear and the vessel came down headlong to the ground. A terrific explosion followed and the entire ship burst into flames. One of the survivors, Sergeant Peek, who saved his life by jumping with a parachute, states that altogether 48 men, including six civilian mechanics, were aboard the ship at the time of the disaster. Sergeant Peek is ignorant of the cause of the fire; he jumped when he realized that the vessel was out of control. An eye-witness says that the rear part of the airship struck the high tension electric cables carrying 25,000 volts. A "wall of flame leapt hundreds of feet upwards," he adds, "and a terrific blast of scorching air threw me off my feet. Before the airship reached the ground several of the crew jumped with parachutes, but they were too close to the ground for the parachutes to break their fall."

A telegram states that the *Roma* had just emptied her helium gas, which is non-explosive, and was attempting a speed record when she crashed. The number of dead is not obtainable until the flames subside. The *Roma* contained all the helium gas in the United States, and consequently the naval authorities recently ordered her to empty it and store it, substituting ordinary balloon gas. The change was completed on Saturday. Today's flight was the first with Liberty motors, which were installed because the Italian engines did not work well in cold weather. The explosion is attributed to the fact that the *Roma* struck electric wires which entangled the rudder and ignited the gas bag. All those rescued are badly injured. Captain Dale Maybree, the commander, is dead; 20 bodies have been recovered.

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THETIMES.CO.UK/ARCHIVE.

## Desperately Seeking..... R 100 Answers... Can you help?

You may remember this (abbreviated) article in *Dirigible 91*, Autumn 2020.

Found by Roger Allton in *Royal Aeronautical Society Journals* of 1930]

### CORRECTING R100 "INACCURACIES"

#### CORRESPONDENCE

Dear Sir, - In the paper published on "R100" in the February issue of the *Journal* by Mr R.B. Brigham here appear such a number of inaccuracies, both on R100 and R101, that it is difficult in a short letter to correct more than a small percentage of the errors. Outstanding examples, however, are quoted below.

On page 186 it is stated that "the elevators and rudders - were operated by four small variable gear boxes. The ratio of the gears varied from 30 to 1 to 300 to 1". In actual fact, seven gearboxes are used on the two rudders and six on the two elevators. The gear ratio varies from 98 to 1 to 330 to 1.

It is with considerable regret that I write to point out these errors to the readers of the *Journal*. Technical literature upon the design of modern rigid airships, however, is so scanty that the publication of this paper may well have misled a number of interested persons both in this country and abroad.

Yours faithfully, N.S. Norway, The Airship Guarantee Co., Ltd., Howden, East Yorks.

This to highlight my current historical quest, and ask for members and their friends to assist me.

Why were these gearboxes mentioned by Mr Norway never found, or details of their construction ever seen?

Captain Meager in 'Leaves from my Logbook' published in The Airship magazine, says that every time the R-100 elevator helm was moved, it sounded 'ckackety-clackety-clackerty', and kept him awake. What was this? Was there a ratchet to hold the elevator controls in a certain position?

Apparently, he says, it was freed by holding the helm on centre, and the spring loaded elevator returned to level, without much winding of the helm. Designed to take the load off the helmsman?

*Meager says also that when he flew in R 101 for the 1930 RAF Hendon Display, the helmsman 'Mushy' Oughton (AHT Member Ron Oughton's uncle), was sweating and saying he could not hold the bow up. Meager let go ballast, and so balanced the R 101 better, reducing the load on the helm.*

It sounds as though Barnes Wallis had made life a lot easier for the helmsman of R 100.

Meager also mentions auxiliary control positions in the rudders and elevators. What were these, and how were they arranged. Did they have voicepipes?

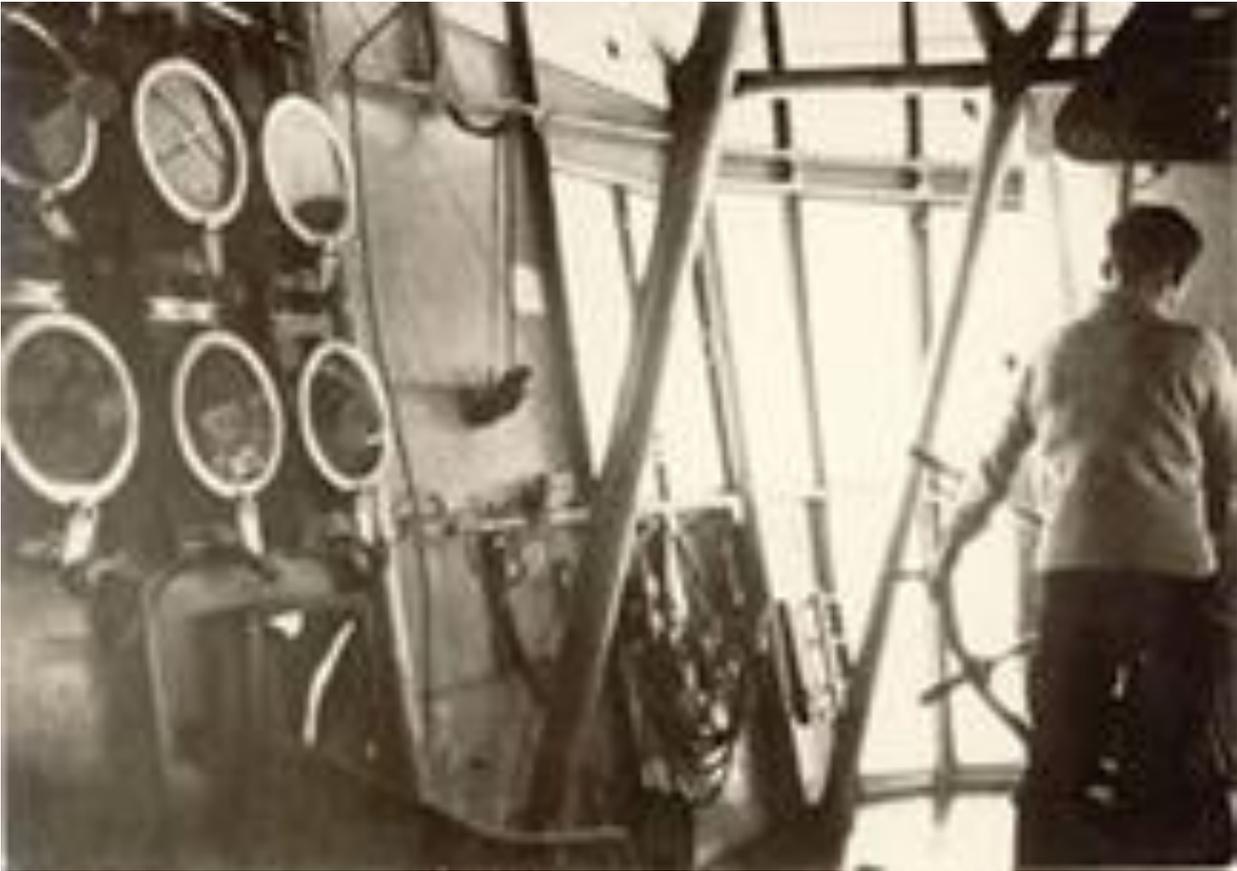
*I do hope you are understanding something of what was happening, and will email me with you comments and information please?*

## Now to the engine telegraphs, and winch room telegraphs.

Part of those in the control car are seen below on the left.

Very much in the Naval tradition, of course!





These are two with different dial faces which I have so far discovered. (Ignore the wooden mount, purely for display use)

Notice that the one on the right has the AC cars engine included, so obviously for a wing car. (No dynamo in the aft engine car.)

Does anyone know where there are more of these? I believe there should be at least twelve, yet so far I have found three.

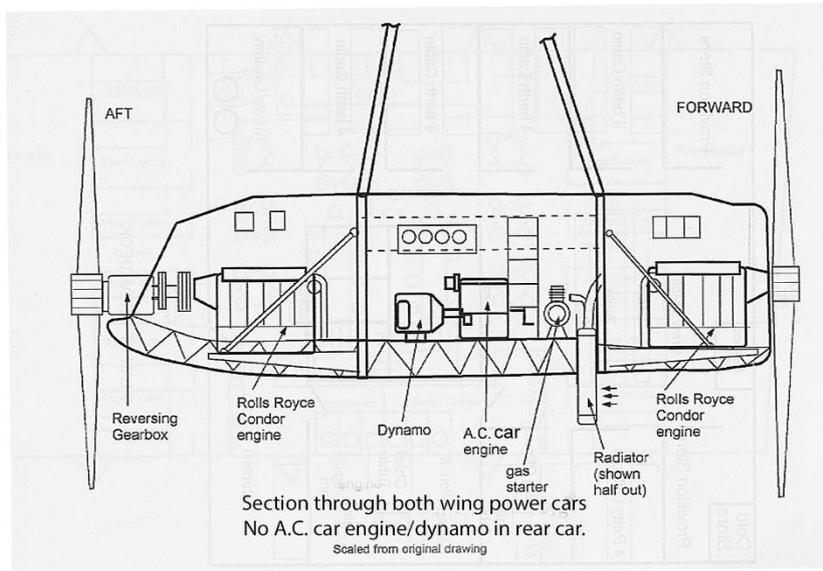
My reasoning is that there would be individual telegraph dials for each engine and the winch room, also an accompanying voice tube – I believe.

There are two listed by the RAF Hendon Museum, one on loan has now been returned to the owner. **Anyone know who?**

The other is 'quarantined' due to radioactivity!! Must be the paint in the dial – is it really so strong?

Hendon Museum also has a generator from R-100, so *they say*, but at a metre long, it does not sound like the dynamo shown in the diagram.

I know (below) that this is a sketch, but I believe that R-100 dynamo/electrical system was 220volts DC – unless anyone can correct me.



### Why the focus on this?

One of our members who is excellent at Computer Generated Imagery (CGI) is working to create the whole docking procedure for the R-100 at the Cardington Mast. Here is an example of his work – we might be there:



I am therefore hoping that this current research, will enable him to have the precise sequence/sound/visual of events online. I have also invested in a Virtual Reality computer and headset, so will be able to use his images.

So, if any member or friend can shed light on any of this, we shall be very grateful to hear from them, specially the location of the 'missing' telegraphs!

## BREAKING NEWS:

AHT trustees are close to having an office/store location, close to me near Nottingham. The details will be sent out very soon, of our future office on a small local industrial estate. Out of five potential locations viewed, this is by far the most suitable, accessible and best value for money.

This will mean that the various papers, books, artifacts etc. AHT donated items now in Trustees' lofts, sheds, under the desk etc, will be in one place.

We shall also be able to compile a library from donated books. This one of our Dirigible editor Giles' sincere wishes.

Those duplicates and surplus items not required for display or other uses, will be sold to assist funding. Please note that our Acquisition rules do ask that all items are donated for our use, and will be retained where possible for display. Surplus items may be sold, offsetting the cost of the premises.

A major feature of the office work will be the digitisation of 1920/30s Cardington records, and the transfer of Video cassettes to DVD where allowed. This is/will be a mighty time-consuming job.

We have the necessary kit for all this, just needing the time and assistance to create these items, for inclusion on our website [airshipsonline.com](http://airshipsonline.com) where suitable. I shall be working there still as a volunteer, the times to be agreed.

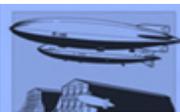
Members will be welcome to come to see what we have – buying items as well. Their assistance with the digitisation particularly, will be greatly appreciated.

I personally shall operate this office/store, since it is only 2 miles from my home, and on a day time 'every 10 mins' bus route.

More about this in Newsletter 7, which will be issued after we have everything signed up, and the many items stored together. Once there, we shall find what we are short of, so members may well have all sorts of item surplus, which they want to 'shift'.

Exciting times for us all, so do 'Stay safe' everyone,

Roger.



Roger Allton: Trustee and Membership Secretary. Website: [www.airshipsonline.com](http://www.airshipsonline.com)  
email: [membership@airshipsonline.com](mailto:membership@airshipsonline.com) Tel: 0115 933 4795. Mob: 07973223111

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