



Thursday 2nd October 2017 saw the first of our 'day-time' meetings' that are primarily designed to take advantage of an event or visit that would otherwise be unavailable in an evening. It also facilitates a good excuse for the employed within our ranks to be 'absent from the office' on yet another fictitious site visit or client meeting!

For those who have seen the light and retired it is a glorious excuse to heed those words from 'her indoors' to get from under my feet!

The visit was to the new AVRO Heritage Museum, located on the old Woodford site. Although the visit was on a Thursday, a day when the museum is usually closed, it was definitely a case of who you know that made the visit possible.

The person we knew was Alan Walker, aka Captain Mainwaring, who, since his retirement, has become a volunteer guide at the museum. On arrival the 20 strong visitors were warmly greeted by Alan who immediately switched into "tour guide" mode. The party were split into 2 groups to facilitate everyone having the opportunity to gain access to the various cockpits on display. Those not on 'pilot training duties' were given a very informative tour of the museum and an insight into the history of AVRO and how much Manchester played a significant role in the development of not only flight as we know it, but world famous aircraft with the iconic names of Vulcan and Lancaster to name just two.

Together with a VC10, it was possible to gain access to the cockpits of these flying legends, something which certainly brought out the schoolboy in most of us. The operation and the various functions of each example were described to us in detail by captains who had actually flown the respective aircraft in real life.

Richard Jones the VC10 and Terry Kenny the Vulcan. They too were volunteers and gave of their time freely but with enthusiasm, knowledge and an air of calm that all fliers seem to possess. Even when answering searching questions, and there were many, their replies were measured, at times humorous but modest as they perceived they were just 'doing their job'.

Whilst in the cockpit of the VC10 Mr Smith took the role of Captain whilst Mr Owen that of First Officer. After instruction, from the real captain Richard Jones, regarding how the plane flew etc. it was suggested that a simulated landing should be attempted.

Mr Coleman who was I recall the 'Navigator' said absolutely NOTHING. I'm not sure what my role was but as usual it would have only been a 'small job' as my seat was like a postage stamp.



Captain Smith



First Officer Owen

The conversation went along the lines of;

Captain; Check Wing flaps

1st Officer; Roger Wilko

Captain; Reduce speed

1st Officer; Roger Wilko (whilst moving the throttle levers)

Captain; Reduce speed

1st Officer; Roger Wilko (whilst moving the throttle levers)

Captain; Height and glide path?

1st Officer; Errm Roger Wilko

Captain: Prepare for landing

1st Officer; Roger Wilko (whilst moving the throttle levers closed and pulling the reverse thrust levers)

After a few seconds delay both Tony and Peter turned to look at each other and said in unison.....

DID YOU PUT THE LANDING GEAR DOWN?

Richard who had overseen this debacle calmly questioned "Wouldn't it have been wiser to ask that question BEFORE landing?"

Absolutely brilliant

Those members who went on the tour all readily agreed it was a superbly arranged visit and a big vote of thanks was given to Alan and his colleagues for making it possible.

For those who missed the visit the following link to the AVRO Heritage Museum website www.avroheritagemuseum.co.uk is where you can obtain all the information to arrange a visit of your own, something which I recommend whole heartedly.

Growing up in Cheadle Hulme as a schoolboy I witnessed not only the roar of the Vulcan engines being tested on numerous occasions, but also the site of this uniquely shaped aircraft flying low over the houses on test flights. Never in my wildest dreams did I think I would ever sit in the pilot's seat of a Vulcan.



No creature comforts, nothing looked pretty. It was just designed to do a job nothing else. Yes it was challenging climbing the ladder into the cockpit and even more fraught with personal danger getting my leg over the throttle levers!!

Was it worth it?Without a shadow of doubt.

In truth the Vulcan was NOT a stealth aircraft, far from it, as it could be heard from miles away, however it did have one unique virtue that was probably not detailed in any sales brochures. It sure did keep the dust off light bulbs.....

