

# Record

## Group Captain F. C. Richardson, CBE, FRIN, DBA, B.Com. RAF (Retd)

Group Captain Frederick Charles Richardson, CBE, FRIN, DBA, B.Com., RAF (Retired) – ‘Dickie’ to his innumerable friends – over a period of some sixty years made many valuable contributions to the science – or art? – and practice of air navigation. Of these the most notable was the production of that world-famous *Manual of Air Navigation*, the Royal Air Force *Air Publication 1234*.

As a young man, having graduated from the London School of Economics with a view to a career in commerce, Dickie altered course and joined the Royal Air Force. He was immediately sent to No. 5 Flying Training School at Abu Sueir in Egypt, where he learned to fly and won his pilot’s ‘wings’, followed by a posting to 216 Squadron at Heliopolis.

He soon made his mark as an outstanding young aviator and played an important role in the pioneering, through largely unknown and unmapped Africa, of the air reinforcement route from Takoradi on the west coast to Cairo. This was to be of vital importance in the later crucial Battle of Alamein. Other pioneering flights provided additional fascinating stories for the book which he recently completed and which is now pending publication.

His years of service in Egypt did not absorb all his energies and he caused astonishment and consternation in Cairo ‘high society’ by snatching from under the noses of his many rivals the debutante of the year and marrying her despite considerable opposition.

On returning to England at the end of his overseas tour, Dickie was awarded a permanent commission, to specialize in navigation. He completed both the Short N and the Specialist N courses before joining the staff of the School of Air Navigation at Manston. He and his charming bride were a very popular young couple in the social life of Manston.

Soon after the outbreak of WWII Dickie was moved to the Training branch of the Air Ministry, to help in the major task of improving the generally inadequate standard of navigation in the RAF. It was then that he was given the job of writing a new and up-to-date manual of navigation for the guidance of all concerned. Thus was created the ubiquitous *AP1234*, which effected a notable improvement in the efficiency of the Commonwealth Air Forces and even excited the envy of the Luftwaffe, who went to great lengths to obtain a copy. A senior Luftwaffe navigator, hearing of this prize, asked to borrow it from the Intelligence branch but was refused on the ground that it was ‘Secret’!

This task completed, Dickie, by nature a practising aviator and no armchair-warrior, got himself posted to command 502, the Ulster Auxiliary Air Force squadron operating ‘make-do’ Whitley bombers from Limavady in the desperate fight against the U-boats on the Atlantic shipping routes. This was tough going at that time, with inadequate aircraft, weapons, training and facilities in general, against which was pitted only heroic determination to do the best possible. He so distinguished himself that a year later he was promoted to Group Captain, to be the Command Navigation Officer at Headquarters

Coastal Command. There he played a major part in our ultimate success in the Battle of the Atlantic, the essential pre-requisite to the D-day invasion of Normandy.

After the war Dickie had a variety of RAF appointments, including those of Deputy Commandant of the Empire Air Navigation School at Shawbury, Senior Air Staff Officer in Kenya and Station Commander of RAF Bishops Court, eventually retiring from the Royal Air Force in 1959. During this time he was one of the moving spirits in the formation and subsequent development of both the Institute of Navigation – as it was originally called – and the Aries Association of Allied Air Forces Specialist Navigators. For many years he served as the hard-working Hon. Sec. of the Aries Association and his work for the Institute early earned him appointment to a Fellowship.

Back in civilian life he was appointed to the awesome job of Controller of Services for the University of London, a task which, with exemplary diplomacy and administrative ability, he performed for seventeen years.

As for Dickie the man, a good husband, father and grandfather, a loyal friend, an amusing and witty companion, we were fortunate to have known him. We shall miss him greatly; and the nation should be grateful for his life of unstinting service.

W. E. Oulton

## Guidance for Authors

Papers of navigational interest may be submitted directly to the editor. Papers will normally be refereed, and it may therefore be a few weeks before the editor can make a decision as to whether a contribution can be accepted for publication. Authors need not be members of the RIN.

Copy should be clearly typewritten with double spacing throughout, on one side only of A4 paper, and with a margin of at least 3 cm all round. Footnotes should be avoided, and authors are advised to consult a recent issue of the *Journal* for the style of paragraphing and the format for references.

The title of a paper should be concise, and should be followed by the author's name and place of work. Papers are generally of the order of 5000 words or less. Units, symbols and abbreviations should, as far as possible, conform with the recommendations contained in the Royal Society publication *Quantities, Units and Symbols* (1975).

Illustrations should be kept to a minimum and, where possible, original artwork should be provided in camera-ready form. Long descriptions should appear as captions rather than on the figures themselves. Line drawings should conform to the *Journal* style. Preferably, the original artwork should not be labelled, but a duplicate should be supplied showing lettering correctly positioned. Where photographs are necessary, they should be supplied as unmounted glossy prints. Colour illustrations can only be included if the cost is met by the author.

Papers should be written in clear, straightforward English and the use of jargon should be kept to a minimum. The author of the best paper published in the *Journal* during a particular year is awarded the Institute's Bronze Medal. The Technical Committee will take presentation into account in arriving at their recommendation for this award.