

## 20220403 THE BWPA ARCHIVE COLLECTION

The BWPA Archive constitutes material retained by the BWPA for record and research in support of BWPA Aim 1.3: Particularly outreach and applied as:

### OBJECTIVE:

The protection, preservation and maintenance of the BWPA's records as a base to:

- Provide wider historical background of the contribution of British women to aviation including as available from:
  - British Women Pilots' Association
  - Non-BWPA members:
    - Early aviatrixes and aviation trades
    - Other organisations (especially signposting of alternative sources).
- Enable and promote the study, understanding and appreciation of British women's aviation heritage, especially when applied to STEM activities.

### APPLICATION

To work with the assistance of other aviation heritage organisations and stakeholders the BWPA will seek to apply:

- **Selection:** Not every item can be preserved or retained
- **Preservation:** Assets: (primarily documents and imagery)
- **Presentation:** Assets must be accessible to the widest possible audience
- **Exploitation and benefit:** Women's aviation heritage should complement other engagement strategies and initiatives:
  - Perhaps celebrating the past, recording current matters and concerns whilst looking to the future.

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### Historical Context:

The British Women Pilots' Association was formed in March 1955, as a specific spin-off from the Women's Engineering Society, as referred in their timeline. Prior to formation of a separate BWPA many of its founding members were associated with the Australian Women Pilots' Association (AWPA) and indeed once BWPA "stood up" members of both associations were happily members of each other's association. At the BWPA's 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 1995 the BWPA Committee declared its ambition to set up an exhibition, which it subsequently achieved in 1999 by establishing an initial successful exhibition at Brooklands Museum.

The curated exhibition identified material much wider than BWPA alone and ran for a full 20 months before its "take-down" after major flooding at Brooklands in early November 2000, although exhibition elements remain throughout the Factory Hangar in later years. The exhibition also unwittingly marked a tipping point for aviation history, its records occurring when key figures from the start of powered flying and their accounts of life were second hand and the first-hand accounts of immediately pre-war and the bridging ATA pilots of the Second World War years were diminishing and at point of writing are gone. We are now at a stage of potentially losing early airline trailblazers and heading into breaking the military grip, for all genders, on British Civil aviation.

## Collection Development.

In 1962 the BWPA sought a 'Historian' and the task was filled some 18 months later and thereafter (1963) continuously. At a subsequent date the BWPA document custodial task was given the (honorary) 'Archivist' description. None were salaried or professional archivists and they all worked to the varying needs of the BWPA at the time, much being record keeping and researching matters initially in living memory. A prime comment of an earlier archivist Enid De Bois was that you never know who is going to become famous. From 2000 increasing use of electronic processes and media was a "double-edged sword" in that it assists administration, listing and accessibility, whilst overloading the collection constraints, which are physically limited to essentials.

## What is Collected

Notwithstanding the above, the Archive bottom line is that it is unreasonable to expect research material to be available if the material is not deposited in the first place and of course one can only destroy the only record once.

Broadly and throughout, it must be noted that the BWPA (volunteer) Archivist, works to the job descriptions over the years, expecting collection of: Minutes, key accounts and membership documents and Gazettes, Magazines and Newsletters, plus photographs all as offered and all categories at the discretion of the respective Archivists and donors. See Annex A for the detailed content description. Main BWPA Archive headings are in accordance with documents collected or deposited as per the Archivist's terms of re

Stored chronologically in case of

- Minutes stored when hard copies (signed or not) chronologically.
  - Current greater use of on-line material and stored accordingly.
- Other correspondence and policy documents
- Magazines, Newsletters or Gazettes (the description and sequencing has changed) so kept as sequence within title group.
  - NB Mandated British Library and academic storage mandated.
- Archivist's Notes / Research folders.as available.

Further to the governance-based records, person-based information is covered by wider accepted National Archives policy which accords with data protection regulation.

- Membership lists (NB: in 2017 all Membership data was stated destroyed by the Membership Secretary – see Archive Note). Mindless destruction of all personal data removes the value and ethos of a membership association and oversimplifies data protection legislation ie: it is collected for membership purposes.
  - Live people information – alphabetically and usually secured if not available elsewhere generally published. All Members have the right to correct or remove their record.
- Deceased People / aviators alphabetically, ideally in defined folders to permit controlled access.
  - Personal Flight Log books as entrusted, currently: Molly White (author) Daphne Poynter (Scientist, instructor and GVC Corps Pilot.)
- Visitors Book(s) – identifies those attending events – practice now virtually ceased.

- Awards and Scholarships Citations and their documentation remains with the appropriate Sub-Committee, although personal papers occasionally may reveal notes etc.
- Events and Projects – separate subject folders or even archive boxes as marked eg: Brooklands 1999 Exhibition and Careers Seminar is an archive box on its own. (Arrived with Aileen Egan's documents still in sort as at April 2022.)

Books are stored as an incorporated Library for reference and usually alphabetically:

- Person /subject – clarified in the accession listing.
- General publications or individual original research

Storage accords with the advice of the Aviation and Aerospace Archives Initiative (AAAI) particularly for advice on access and security, which applies equally to institutional or private storage. (Secure, reduced light, dry with limited humidity.) If something is called an archive or collection it is under the curatorial responsibility of the nominated Archivist, to prevent losses or damage. Accordingly, a group of records might be more than a family or personal collection yet retained in a domestic environment for reasons of control (security) administration and convenience of research – pending appropriate curated storage.

**Accession listing** is the industry-norm, across museums, archaeology, libraries, and archives and is a detailed listing, although only applied recently in BWPA whilst accepting its limited value, without expansion notes and key words. Material lodged in another organisation's facilities will routinely only be accepted if accession listed to folder / subject level.

Current BWPA Archive processes hope to follow (and do) the AAAI recommendation of: Rough / bulk list by source eg: Donation/Donor Collection > Rough listing of content > incorporation into main Archive listing and noted against collection list if moved and separated to another particular shelf or box.

As a whole the archive material will be stamped to avoid double listing and some origination as well as discouraging opportunistic theft.

## Archive Accessibility

Accessibility is essential for an archive and works both directions:

- The BWPA defines a need for historic (usually personal) data and draws upon its records, defined above, as well as the Archivist's notes. There is also a tendency for researchers to embark upon "fishing trips", in effect searching material in hope of a happy find:
  - Requests for information (RFI) are auditable documents, and not solely applied to the Archive activity, although most questions bypass the RFI. (Subsequently applied for consistency).
- No archive permits unrestricted access to researchers, which accords well enough with 'incidental domestic' storage, which common to many collections.
- It is hoped that members' records and material may be input to the Archive, although such donations are specific to an age group on a par with hard records.
  - Albums and press cutting books are no longer a routine find or donation, whilst being the most frequent interest for RFIs.
  - Talk scripts, correspondence and discussions are decreasingly frequent occurrences.

- In effect input might be reducing after a busy period, perhaps pending further member encouragement, as women continue to make a difference in flying, yet perhaps begs the question of need in BWPA. Until relatively recently there were frequent reminders to members for BWPA documents, although likely to be outside membership memory.

#### **Previous BWPA Archive/Archivist Uses:**

- Display photographic panels for large events such as significant BWPA anniversaries (30<sup>th</sup> – 40<sup>th</sup> (?50<sup>th</sup>) and hosting Federation of European Women Pilots' (FEWP)
- Similar panels for BWPA Events stands – produced latterly as media panels most recent at Telford 2015 and reused at Booker Aeroexpo ? 2017.
- Advisory and base for Brooklands-based Women in Aviation exhibition 1999/2000.
- PPT presentation prepared but not used, beyond rolling slides, for BWPA 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary event.
- Oxford Dictionary of National Biography x 8 entries (Enid DE Bois as Archivist) due more.
- Outreach talks also PPT-based, often wider than BWPA material and to external organisations (for donation payment). (One only to a BWPA group).

Referring above, it is possible that BWPA history is of little concern to its membership, who are busy flying and that accessibility requires a wider offer. See RFIs

Basis for assumption that BWPA may have no use for an archive of its own. (Update with effect 8 August 2021)

There are aviation historical dynamics at play here. The BWPA joined the virtual party in 1955, 44 years after the first woman's PPL qualification ..... After a flurry of interest around 2000

#### **Other resources:**

Archivists have increasingly kept notes, as referred above. The current custodian produces presentations which are intended for personal use and frequently range far wider than BWPA material. All such material comes under intellectual property rights.

## **BWPA COLLECTION / ARCHIVE SUMMARY OF CONTENT UPDATED AT APRIL 2022**

The custodian / archivist's job is developing with refinement of a realistic accession list, particularly with key words to assist searches in what is her effective working list. The following notes are to assist researchers deciding whether there is a need to request access, by providing a realistic assessment of the content. As described in the main document, this intends to follow the best practice suggested by AAAI.

Documentation supports a voluntary membership organisation where its members share a common interest in aviation. Not all British women pilots or equivalent join BWPA and indeed not all BWPA members are pilots – see historical notes on development of the association. It was formed as a sub-division from the Women's Engineering Society, a professional body that was operating to support the need of its largely engineering women members.

*With acknowledgement to the work of: Previous Historian / Custodians Mary Chase, Miss L Pennant-Rea (approx. 1977) Iris Goodjer (JLB winner), Enid De Bois until 2004*

ARCHIVE COLLECTION PLAN 2022

## BWPA Documents and Resources.

Much of the material comes from BWPA Committee inputs (including Newsletters and similar, plus that of Members wishing to maintain a record.

Documents	Medium	Range / Chronology	Expanding Description and Uses
Annual or Extraordinary General Meeting Minutes	Paper – Hard Copies	Essential Governance. Starts with initial EGM on 11 March 1955 – continues Not complete.	Annual reports, finance, confirmation of governance structure(s) and policy decisions for any particular year throughout period 1955 to present. Ideally includes extra notes in support such as CVs, nominations and detailed reports in support of the main report. Particular interest when those attending are listed, there is a major policy change.
Committee Meeting Minutes	Paper then electronic	1955 – present	
BWPA Policy documents	Mix of hard copy and electronic latterly	1955 – present	
<b>BWPA PUBLICATIONS</b>			
Gazettes	A4 Hard Copies	From 1995 to 2010 +	The documents are described variously, whilst listed under the various terms – First Gazette followed RAeC annual format including membership listing and prizes. NB production technique latterly requires lodging of Newsletters with the British Library and wider.
Newsletters	Hard Copies	Later	
Magazines	Hard Copies	TBC	
General communications to Members – eg Events bookings and fund raising		1950s to – 2010 + -	Usually sent out with Newsletters etc. A complete mix ranging from stencil to photocopy in various formats.
Membership Listings	Hard Copy (“Blue book”)	Various pre-2015	Examples being drawn from similar membership organisations, as an essential communication tool, yet latterly seen to fall foul of changing legislation.

Documents	Medium	Range / Chronology	Expanding Description and Uses
			DP does not prevent administration of legitimate organisations.
Accounts & Financial	Cash books, Box files and folders	Mix of cash books and membership	As a routine: based on HMRC financial documents are retained by the Treasurer as in-year plus 6 years. Some cash books assist recording of assets and even earlier record of members.

All of the above is to be understood in the light of the developing technology of document storage, the BWPA intended audience and all versus changing privacy requirements with control of personal information.

### KEY OR UNIQUE DOCUMENTS and PHYSICAL ASSETS

Documents	Medium	Range / Chronology	Description
Members' Personal flying logbooks	Bound log books	1950s – 1980s	<b>Molly White x 1; Daphne Pointer x5</b> (well-illustrated) They provide a reliable and general background to the woman pilot's flying life and in the case of one timing how social factors affected it and adds to flying ops in a youth organisation, plus the BWPA Condor use.
2 x Scrap books left to BWPA by Joan Hughes	Rebound scrapbooks		Received early 2000s TBC.
2 x Volumes of Sheila Scott press cutting volumes	Hard Copy press cutting albums.	1966 - 1971	Used by Judy Leden for her biography of SS plus Oxford Dictionary of National Biography entry by Enid.
Part complete Painting	Oil painting		By
Women in Aviation Exhibition associated notes and reference	Block of collection mixed docs being sorted	1999 (with earlier reference)	

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