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The 'guard's van' marks its 50th

The Brooklands Museum marked the 50th anniversary of its Vickers Vanguard on 3 December, by bringing together the first and last captains to fly the big turboprop.

Capt Jack Randell was in the BEA crew that delivered G-APEP on the short hop from Vickers' Wisley airfield to the airline's London Airport (Heathrow) base on 13 December 1961. Thirty-five years later, after sterling service in the passenger role and later as a freighter with BEA, British Airways, Air Bridge Carriers and Hunting Cargo Airlines, Echo Papa was flown into its Brooklands birthplace by Capt Gary West and Peter Moore.

On 17 October 1996, West and Moore – who died last year – positioned Echo Papa from Hunting's East Midlands base for a spectacular arrival on the remains of Brooklands' runway, which only had 600m (1,970ft) landing distance available.

Reminiscing at the reunion with fellow ex-Vanguard pilots about that impressive final landing, West joked: "We'd practised at East Midlands with the landing distance marked on the runway, but it still looked awfully short as we flew down the approach to Brooklands!"

However it all went to plan and the aircraft was easily stopped in the distance available. "We were very light so we touched down at less than 100kt," said West.

For information on Echo Papa and the museum's extensive collection (including Concorde G-BBDG) and motor vehicles, go to brooklandsmuseum.com

Laker's legacy

Richard Bamber provides today's world-weary, jet-lagged travellers with a reminder of how rare and thrilling flying long-haul was for most Europeans just a generation ago.

When Richard was six in



Randell (left) and West: Vanguard's first and last



Coach class: Laker hits the road

1977, his parents fulfilled their ambition of taking the family on a month-long trip to California.

As for thousands of others, what made the Bambers' dream possible was the Laker Airways Skytrain, which at a stroke put transatlantic travel in reach of ordinary Britons.

Thirty-four years ago, the Bambers' holiday was still unusual enough to feature in the local Runcorn newspaper under the headline: "A glimpse of the great American Dream".

To honour the low-cost pioneer, Richard's coach firm – Anthonys Travel – has named its latest coach *The Spirit of Sir Freddie Laker*, in honour of someone who, Richard says, "revolutionised not only the airline industry but transport in general".

Balloon-acy

A Christmas card wins its way to us, with a scene depicting what the anti-aviation lobby was fretting about 104 years ago.

It shows a host of passenger

balloons over London, spraying the city with ballast sand. The drawing's title: *The Coming Rain of Terror*

Great Vulcan

The Institution of Mechanical Engineers has presented an Engineering Heritage Award to the last airworthy Vulcan. Previous recipients of the award include Tower Bridge, *HMS Belfast* and the Channel Tunnel.

Ground down

Rapidly on the scene after the LOT 767 belly-flop at Warsaw was Boeing's AOG [aircraft on ground] team. Who better?

Oz oddity

Does *The Australian* newspaper know something we don't? The caption under this NASA-sourced picture reads:

New Qantas planes are nearing completion on the assembly line at Boeing's Renton factory in Seattle.



Boeing into the future

Hitting the heights

By nearly 50%, M Salmét, chief instructor of the Bleriot School at Hendon, improved on the British height record, which has stood at 6,595ft since it was made by Mr Armstrong Drexel at Lanark last year. Using a single-seater Bleriot, the pilot did well to reach 9,000ft, when he decided to come down.

100 YEARS AGO

Shares windfall

At the first general meeting of the Hawker-Siddeley Aircraft Co. Ltd, Mr T O M Sopwith, chairman of the company, said the board recommended the payment, out of net profits amounting to £378,000, of a cash dividend of 30%, less tax, on the first 4 million ordinary shares.

75 YEARS AGO

Enos in orbit

The occupant of NASA's Mercury spacecraft used in the Atlas-boosted MA-5 orbital launch from Cape Canaveral, a chimpanzee of superior intelligence named Enos, performed his scheduled in-flight tasks efficiently and was recovered safely after two orbits of the Earth.

50 YEARS AGO

Skyhawk upgrade

Despite pressure on the New Zealand defence budget after the country was dismissed from the Anzus pact, the NZ\$140 million programme to modernise its 22 McDonnell Douglas A-4 Skyhawks will still go ahead. The aircraft will be fitted with the Lear Siegler Navigation and Attack System.

25 YEARS AGO

100 YEAR ARCHIVE
Every issue of *Flight* from 1909 can be viewed online at flightglobal.com/archive