













# CONTENTS Issue No 32

#### **3 EDITOR'S LETTER**

## **6** AIR CORRESPONDENCE

## **10** 1940: THE BATTLE OF . . . KENT?

Greg Baughen commemorates the 80th anniversary of the Battle of Britain by comparing the war the RAF had been preparing for with the war it found itself fighting in 1940

## 22 ITALY'S FORGOTTEN AIRLINES Pt 2

Airline historian Maurice Wickstead continues his series on the history of Italian airlines with the consolidation of the inter-war operators into Ala Littoria, ALI and LATI

## **34 SHORTS: THE PERENNIAL THORN**

In his latest article tracing the political history of Britain's post-war aircraft industry, Professor Keith Hayward FRAeS turns his attention to the uniquely problematic Short Bros

## **42 CES HOMMES MAGNIFIQUES: LOUIS BLÉRIOT**

Louis Blériot needs no introduction to *TAH* readers — but his patents for early VTOL concepts and a prophetic "aerial runway" may do; Jean-Christophe Carbonel investigates

#### **48 TWO DAYS IN FEBRUARY**

In February 1943 the USAAF and Luftwaffe fought a crucial — but little-known — air war war over the settlement of Sidi Bou Zid in Tunisia. Dr Andrew Arthy opens a forensic two-part account of a vital 48hr — for both sides

## **62 MAD DOGS & ENGLISHMEN**

Top-hats in the noonday sun in Africa? We ponder an intriguing collection of photographs from the *TAH* archive of the antics of BOAC staff in Kenya in the early 1950s

## **64 HEINKEL'S LAST FIGHTER**

Based on an original German-language article by Wolfgang Mühlbauer, Tony Buttler examines Heinkel's post-war mixed-power He 31, which remained a "paper project" only

## **74** THE SHAH'S JETSTARS

In January this year the Islamic Republic of Iran Air Force retired the last example of the Lockheed JetStar in military service; Babak Taghvaee traces the type's career in Iran

## **82 TUESDAY THE 13th**

70 years ago the behemothic Cierva Air Horse helicopter crashed after a catastrophic failure of a vital component. Nick Stroud takes a look at the accident and its causes

## 92 FLYING THE "BATHFIRE"

The British could have developed a significant wartime advantage with the fielding of Canadian Bill Franks's "anti-g suit"; Dr Peter Hobbins reveals how they failed to do so

### 102 HAWK ONE Pt 2

The remarkable flying life of legendary RCAF pilot Wg Cdr Fern Villeneuve AFC concludes with his recollections of the Golden Hawks — and his near-fatal crash in a Sabre

## 114 SWEDEN'S PARASOL FIGHTERS

Jan Forsgren chronicles the short, undistinguished career of the obscure and little-lamented FVM J 23 and J 24/24B

## **120 ARMCHAIR AVIATION**

## 125 LOST & FOUND

## **126 HAWKER'S STAR DESTROYER**

While researching in the Hawker archives at Brooklands, Chris Gibson discovered a wildly ambitious 1950s VTOL flying-boat powered by "pinched plasma". What?

## **130 OFF THE BEATEN TRACK**