Pilot

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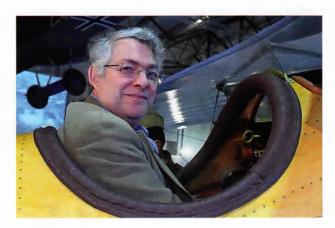
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Well deserved accolade



hen you turn to 'Pilot Notes' you will find news editor Mike Jerram's pick of those receiving awards from the Honourable Company of Air Pilots (HCAP, formerly the Guild of Air Pilots and Navigators). To anyone involved in the historic aviation world, respected warbird and display pilot Charlie Brown will genuinely need no introduction – and all would applaud him being presented with the Hanna Trophy for 'an outstanding contribution to the art of display flying of historic, vintage or modern fighter or combat aircraft'.

US pilot 'Hoot' Gibson receives the Company's Award of Honour for an outstanding aviation career, encompassing combat flying in Vietnam, serving as a US Navy test pilot and flying five missions on the Space Shuttle before leaving NASA to fly airliners – oh, and he was Unlimited Champion at last year's Reno air races.

As we have reported on www.pilotweb. aero – the place to go for all the latest aviation news – a current astronaut (and a British one, at that) Tim Peake is to be presented with HCAP's Master's Medal. Not much call for his piloting abilities on the Space Station mission – these days it is of course served by Soyuz capsules and not space planes – but Tim too has had a great career in aviation and is a pilot we all respect.

Which brings us to the other 2016 recipient of an HCAP Master's Medal; Tracey Curtis-Taylor. A furious and entrenched debate has been running on the aviation forums about the merits or otherwise of her flights retracing the steps of pioneering female aviators Lady Mary Heath and, latterly Amy Johnson. In *Pilot's* view (the editorial team is in one mind about this) Tracey's flying is of the reality

TV kind, with the stress on the TV performance bit and rather less on the reality. None of us finds much to admire in pretend 'solo' flights, with GPS guidance and supporting aircraft following all the way.

The Honourable Company no doubt hopes to dodge the flak that followed earlier awards to Tracey for her supposed piloting and navigational

abilities by presenting the new one merely for 'organising' the Amy Johnson tribute flight. HCAP's citation (not released with its award PR material nor found readily on its website, it must be said) credits Tracey with 'raising awareness of science and technology in general, and aviation in particular, amongst young women across the world' through her flying activities.

While it would be mean-spirited to try to deny that she and her sponsors have done a lot for raising awareness of aviation — indeed one of them, Boeing is both creating aerospace jobs in the UK and supporting initiatives to get young people of either sex flying (see 'Notes' p.15) — it is the absence of any true flying achievement that has us shaking our heads.

No such doubts about putative earthrounder Colin Hales, who has resumed the journey, departing from Alaska and now heading across Russia to China in his diminutive, self-built KR2 (see news story and link on www.pilotweb.aero and Colin's first-hand 'Flying Adventure' account of the journey so far, also available online). Colin has no backers and no support aircraft shadowing him - his is a 2016 piloting challenge much closer to those of the 1930s. He is very brave and probably just a little mad to attempt it. Again, the editorial team is in one mind about this - Colin; Pilot salutes you!

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Philip Whiteman, Editor