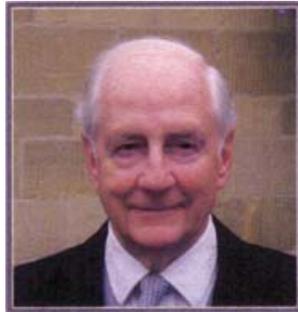


Obituary: Brian Calvert 1933–2005



Past President of the Royal Institute of Navigation, Brian Calvert, was born in 1933 at Hankow on the Yangtze in China (where his family was later interned by the Japanese during the Second World War) and educated at Stowe School, Buckinghamshire. He joined BOAC (now part of British Airways) in 1957, after National Service in the Fleet Air Arm. For his first two years with the airline he flew as a navigator, and this led to a lifelong interest in the subject.

He took part in a fascinating period of aviation history, flying such famous civil aircraft as Boeing Stratocruisers, Britannias, Comet IVs and VC-10s, as well as Concorde. In 1966 he joined BOAC's Flight Development Unit, where he became closely involved with the introduction of new aircraft and flight systems, and where his interpretations of the needs of aircrew had a significant influence on aircraft design. For his work in this field, and on the introduction and trials of new navigation systems, he received the Airlines Avionics Institute's Volare Award.

During Concorde's entry into service, as Flight Manager (Technical), he was responsible for deciding on the methods by which Concorde would be flown, the flying qualities of the aircraft and the suitability of potential routes, and played an active role in complicated and protracted negotiations with foreign governments (including the USA). He carried out acceptance trials on the new aircraft and flew several of its inaugural flights. In 1977 he received the Guild of Air Pilots and Navigators' Brackley Trophy for his outstanding contribution to commercial flying, and in 1979 was awarded the Queen's Commendation for Valuable Services in the Air.

Brian served as President of the Royal Institute of Navigation from 1981 to 1984 straddling the change of Director from the long serving Michael Richey to Rear Admiral Michael Burgoyne. The Institute was fortunate, or at least prescient enough, to have chosen someone with Brian's qualities to preside over matters at a time when, with the appointment of a new Director, it seemed proper to ask whether the Institute was on the right track. It was necessarily a pretty profound matter and Brian's first

task at the following annual general meeting was to present the Council's views in a document entitled *The Way Ahead*.

In many ways Brian, although no bureaucrat, always seemed to be the perfect Chairman. First of all he was a kind and considerate man with a quick mind that allowed him to follow the course of a debate like a chess player, only occasionally making a note (rather as a good judge might). He absorbed the meeting's views, seldom intervening, and then generally to clarify something. His manner was always courteous, authoritative, and generally persuasive. His essentially operational background of course helped. His contribution to the Institute's affairs during his time in office was memorable and included, in 1983, leading a delegation from the Institute to visit Beijing to discuss relations between the Institute, the recently re-established Chinese Institute of Navigation and the International Association of Institutes of Navigation. It was a useful meeting of which an account was published in the *Journal*.

(Contributions from Directors, past and present, and Graham Pitchfork)