

Pilot July
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Maurice Kirk

I presently live in Cyprus and my Pilot magazines arrive in batches. I always settle down to read them with enormous anticipation and pleasure, (a bit like the old five boys chocolate bar advert), and my wife of 41 years knows that I am now 'incommunicado'. In the March Air Mail I read the letter from Celia Jeune. She told us of her brother Maurice Kirk and his incarceration in Cardiff Prison. I was nonplussed initially, and then remembered encounters with the Welsh police from many years ago, while stationed at a Royal Naval Air Station in Wales. It would seem that the past forty-odd years have not changed them.

I noted the editor's words 'harmless eccentric' to describe Maurice. I thought them patronising and sad. Then on looking at the copies of April and May's Pilot, saw no further mention of the fate that had befallen Maurice. What a poor reflection on us pilots. I met and spoke to Maurice at a PFA fly-in some years ago, when he used to wear his Top Hat with the logo 'CAA - Campaign Against Aviation'. I have followed his flying expeditions with both admiration and trepidation over the years. He was indeed a little eccentric, but so were so many great pioneers in the past.

I have retired from aviation early, because of the utter contempt that I hold for our CAA both as a pilot and engineer. Perhaps in the future individuals like Maurice will be recorded in history with the same light as the explorers and philosophers who did not believe that the world was flat.

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Next year sees the 30th anniversary of the Hama massacre, when Syria's president Hafez al-Assad used his army to crush a Sunni Muslim revolt. Ten thousand people died in what has been described as the "simplest day of the revolution".