

From Squadron leader Ed Berwick BSc(Hons) AFC RAF



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Dear Master, and all at the Worshipful Company of Pattenmakers,

Following on from our previous update in Dec 23, ULAS have navigated an incredibly busy, but rewarding year. In Mar 24, the Squadron was awarded the Hack Trophy; a prestigious award given to the best performing out of the 15 UAS's located around the country, and something of which we are extremely proud. This accolade gave us the drive and determination to match, if not surpass the achievements of last year. The students have remained enthusiastic and engaged, grasping every opportunity that has arisen, including flying training and Force Development (FD) visits, as well as supporting numerous high-profile ceremonial and charity events around the city.

We continue to enjoy the formal flying training that the UAS provides. Although runway resurfacing works has restricted the amount of flying that we can undertake, two students have reached the important milestone of completing their 'first-solo' in the Grob Tutor aircraft, with two more students earning their Preliminary Flying Badges, having passed the challenging Pilot Navigation Test. Other flying related success includes two students passing their RAF selection to join as pilots, once their university studies are complete.

November is typically a very busy period, with the Squadron supporting a large number of Remembrance events, including attending services St. Paul's Cathedral, St. Clement Danes church, Senate House and Brunel University of London. The ULAS Senior Student, APO Alex Howells also had the honour of representing the entire UAS system in front of His Majesty the King at the Royal British Legion's (RBL) Festival of Remembrance. The Squadron was also heavily involved in supporting London Poppy Day, with students selling poppies at Kings Cross and Tottenham Court Road stations. Although this was an incredibly busy few days, it was also tremendously rewarding, and the Squadron were extremely proud to have raised in excess of £77,000 for the RBL over the period.

The Squadron has also partaken in other charity endeavours, mainly in support of the 6 Flying Training School (6FTS) affiliated charity, the Jon Egging Trust. Through half marathons and bike rides, ULAS raised £790 for this great cause, supporting vulnerable and under-confident young people to get back on track and realise their future potential.

We have also taken advantage of numerous FD and Adventurous Training (AT) opportunities since our last article. These include a ski trip to France and climbing camp in Spain, as well as supporting several events that act to expand our military knowledge and test our leadership and teamwork skills. We understand the value of station visits and have had students engage in Summer Vocational Attachments (SVA's) at RAF Waddington and RAF Coningsby, where they learnt about various professions and how stations operate. We also participated in two international Air Power Studies; a tour of Auschwitz, followed by Exercise Home Run,

where we learnt about life as a prisoner of war in Stalag Luft III and followed the route of the 'Long March' undertaken by thousands of captured allied soldiers as the war was coming to an end in 1945. Recruitment for this academic year has been positive; we attended 7 university Freshers Fairs attracting a great amount of interest from students who otherwise would not have been aware of the UAS system and the opportunities that we offer. At the time of writing, 48 students have passed the interview, several of whom have already passed their medicals and have been formally attested onto the squadron. We are looking forward to welcoming those who still require a medical and hope to be up to our full allocation of students in the next couple of months.

Looking toward the rest of this academic year, we are due to recruit new members of staff in to both the flying-instruction and admin-support pillars. These will be extremely welcome additions and will allow us to maximise our opportunities whilst on the Squadron. We are also due to celebrate our 90th anniversary in 2025, with events being organised in order to mark this important milestone. Here's to another 90 years!

Wishing you and the Worshipful Company a wonderful Christmas and a prosperous New year,

Yours Faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'E.T. Berwick', with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke extending to the right.

E T BERWICK
Sqn Ldr
OC ULAS