Invitation to Participate

You are hereby cordially invited to attend the Airship Association’s 12th International Convention and Model Regatta, which is to be held, jointly in collaboration with the Airship Heritage Trust, from Wednesday 30th September to Saturday 3rd October 2020 at the Mercure Bedford Centre Hotel, 2 St Mary’s Street, Bedford MK42 0AR United Kingdom (formerly Radisson Park Inn).

Bedford is a cosmopolitan town with a rich airship heritage. Centrally located between London, Oxford and Cambridge, it is close to the village of Cardington, which was home to Britain’s Royal Airship Works some 90 years ago. The giant sheds that housed the great rigid airships R100 and R101 still exist today, but they are currently in use as film studios and consequently closed to public access.

Convention delegates will be able to participate in a full two-day technical conference as well as enjoying the opportunity to network with the world’s leading airship experts, active practitioners and historians.

Social events will include an historical lecture, the opening of airship-themed public exhibitions and a full programme of activities to entertain spouses and partners. Delegates and their guests will also be welcome, on the Saturday, to attend the model airship Regatta which will feature an official FAI time trial plus performance competitions for radio-controlled models and other LTA drones.

Call for Papers

At the two-day technical Conference hosted jointly with the Airship Heritage Trust, delegates will have a rare opportunity to attend a mixture of historical and forward-looking presentations on a variety of airship-related topics. There will be an opportunity to meet with speakers and discuss their papers and to exchange new ideas with fellow enthusiasts on all matters concerning the past history and future potential for airships.

Major subject areas for consideration are:

1. Current Projects and Technology
2. History and Learning from the Past
3. Flight Operations and Potential Growth Areas
4. Infrastructure and Ground Handling
5. Loading and Unloading Payloads
6. Management/Regulation and Safety
7. Market Finance/Leasing/Insurance
8. Innovation/R&D/Environmental Impact
9. Education/Training/Skills and Simulations
10. Fun, Fantasy and Futuristic Concepts

Interested contributors should submit an Abstract of 250-words maximum (no figures or references) to:

papers-committee@airship-association.org

Abstract submission deadline: 30th June 2020
Paper selection decision by: 31st July 2020
Paper ready for publication: 2nd October 2020

Abstracts should include indication of their author’s preferred subject areas from those listed above.

Selected papers will be published in the Conference Proceedings and distributed free to all delegates after the Convention. Authors must present their papers orally (20 mins plus 10 mins discussion) : NB - No podium, no publication! (If authors do not turn up to read their papers at the Conference, or appoint a suitably qualified substitute to read it for them, then their paper will not be included in the Proceedings.)

The Airship Association and the Airship Heritage Trust reserve the right to publish papers given at the Convention in the Conference Proceedings and at any time thereafter in their respective publications. Copyright of papers will, however, remain with the authors and this will be acknowledged wherever and whenever papers are published.

The Convention is funded largely from conference registration fees and, consequently, speakers are obliged to register and to pay the requisite attendance fees. However, speakers will be eligible to pay a Discounted Registration Fee.
**The Conference Centre**

The Conference Centre is the Mercure Bedford Centre Hotel which is located in St Mary’s Street, close to the centre of Bedford on the south side of the river by the main A6 road bridge.

Set your SATNAV to MK42 0AR.

The direct telephone number is:

+44 (0)1234 799 988.

The general website for the hotel, which includes an option to reserve accommodation online is:


**Hotel Accommodation**

It will be necessary for all delegates and their guests to make their own travel and accommodation arrangements for the Convention.

However, the Convention organisers have negotiated and reserved for delegates a limited number of rooms at the Mercure Bedford Centre Hotel at a concessionary rate of £80.00 double room per night, or £70.00 single. Room numbers are limited and the concessionary rate will lapse one month before the Convention – so book before 30th August!

If the four star Mercure Hotel is not for you, the Conference Centre is within easy walking distance of Bedford’s main shopping centre where there are more hotels close by and other options such as Airbnb and Bed & Breakfast that will suit all budgets.

Sadly the Bedford Tourist Information Centre closed in 2017 but details of available accommodation in the Bedford area can be found online.

**Travel**

**Getting to Bedford**

Bedford is an ancient town that still retains much of its medieval layout. Whilst this adds to the charm of the place, it does make driving and parking difficult. Many hotels have their own car parks and delegates are advised to contact the hotels directly about parking.

The Mercure Bedford Centre Hotel has car parking for guests at the rear with space available on a first-come first-served basis. There is a charge for overnight parking. Adjacent public car parks and others in Bedford also charge for overnight stays.

Road Transport - Bedford lies 50 miles north of London on the A6 London/Carlisle road; the A1 and M1 roads lie to the east and west respectively. Cambridge is 40 minutes driving time to the east via A428/A45. To the west are Milton Keynes (25 minutes), Buckingham (35 minutes) and Oxford (75 minutes) via A428/A421/A422

Rail Transport – Bedford’s main Rail Station is a 15 minute walk from the Conference Hotel. It is served by frequent rail services to London St Pancras (50 minutes) with through services to Gatwick (120 mins), Brighton (135 mins) and northbound trains to Leicester, Derby, Nottingham and Sheffield. Services to West Midlands, Lancashire and Scotland go via Bletchley. For information call National Rail Enquiries 03457 48 49 50 or visit their website:

[www.nationalrail.co.uk](http://www.nationalrail.co.uk)

**Park & Ride**

Those who wish to attend as day delegates may find it advantageous to use the very efficient Park & Ride scheme which is “easy to use, easy on your pocket and easy on the environment.” according to Bedford Tourist Information. “Just park in the spacious car park in Elstow and the easy access buses will whizz you quickly … into the town centre …” At the time of printing buses run every 15 minutes, 6 days a week. Parking is free, you just pay to ride on the bus. More details can be found on the website:


**Association Membership**

Membership of the Airship Association is open to anyone interested in the development and future use of airships. Membership is £45.00 per year and can be secured by credit card payment on our website (click **The Airship Shop**), or by sending a cheque to the Treasurer, 1 Magdalen Close, Hempstead, Gillingham ME7 3TA, UK. A discounted rate of £25 is available for UK residents who are either in full-time education or over the age of 65.

**membership@airship-association.org**

**Cancellations**

Any refunds of delegate fees that are requested after registration has been completed will be made at the sole discretion of the Convention organisers irrespective of whether payment was by credit or debit card, cheque, money order or banker’s draft.
**Convention Format**

**The Conference**

Central to the Convention is a two-day Conference where all aspects of matters related to the history and future uses of airships will be discussed. Anyone wishing to submit a paper for presentation at the Conference should follow the instructions given above in this Call For Papers.

The Convention is funded largely from registration fees and all attendees are obliged to pay the requisite fee. A discounted fee is offered to chosen speakers, session chairs and volunteer helpers.

**Session Chairs and Volunteers**

Members of the Airship Association or the Airship Heritage Trust who would be willing to take on the responsibility of chairing a conference session, or who would like to volunteer to assist with helping to organise and run the events during the Convention, are requested to contact the Chairman of the Airship Association by email at:

**chairman@airship-association.org**

Session Chairs and Volunteer Helpers will be eligible to pay a Discounted Registration Fee.

**Welcome Reception**

The Mayor of Bedford will open the Convention on the evening of Wednesday 30th September 2020. After registering for the Conference the delegates and their guests will be invited to attend a Reception hosted by the Airship Heritage Trust (AHT). The theme of the evening will be the British Imperial Airship Scheme of the 1920s which aimed to connect the far flung countries of the British Empire with a fleet of gigantic airships providing a regular airline service carrying mail and fare-paying passengers. There will also be a fund-raising Auction and prizes to be won in a Raffle and a Quiz.

**Historical Lecture**

The 2020 Convention happens to coincide with the anniversaries of several significant events in airship history. These include the centenary of the last SS-Zero blimp to fly in the Royal Naval Airship Service, and the 90th anniversaries of R80’s first flight, R100’s successful flight to Canada and R101’s disastrous crash. An illustrated talk on Barnes Wallis and the R100, is planned for the Thursday evening sponsored by the AHT.

**Partner Programme**

On the two days of the Conference, the Wives, Husbands, Partners, Family and Friends of the delegates will be offered the opportunity to participate in a programme of visits to places of interest in the Bedford area. Some of these events will be included in the delegate’s fee.

**Model Flying Regatta**

In keeping with past practice we will be holding a model airship flying Regatta, but in a departure from previous events there will be a range of competitions for several different classes. In addition to officially sanctioned FAI competitions for University teams we hope to attract entries from schools and youth organisations as well as individual home-builders. To this end, a range of competitions is planned to suit all skill levels and prizes will be offered for completing tasks set by the organisers.

The Regatta is open to all comers but place numbers are limited and contestants must register with the organisers at least one month BEFORE the start of the event.

Anyone wishing to compete and enter a model airship in the Regatta should apply by email to:

**martinlta@hotmail.com**

Delegate Fees include two tickets for spectators but owing to limited space, entrance to the Regatta for non-delegates is restricted to members of the Airship Association and the AHT and their invited guests.

**Opportunities for Sponsors**

The Airship Association’s 12th International Airship Convention and Regatta will be a forum where manufacturers, designers, and potential customers can meet face-to-face to present news of their projects, showcase their capabilities, recruit experienced personnel, and discuss the latest ideas and developments within today’s LTA industry.

Details of sponsorship opportunities are available on application to the Treasurer at:

**treasurer@airship-association.org**

Throughout the Convention, the Airship Heritage Trust will be staging a Public Exhibition to mark several significant mile-stones in LTA flight history. The Exhibition will include a limited number of Display Tables for Convention Sponsors which will be allocated on a first-come first-served basis.
12th International Airship Convention and Regatta

RETROSPECTION AND RESURGENCE

Bedford, England : 30th September – 3rd October 2020

Delegate Registration Fees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Delegate Fee</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Airship Association and AHT Members</td>
<td>£200</td>
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<tr>
<td>Non-Member of the Airship Association</td>
<td>£230</td>
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<tr>
<td>Registered Students (Conference Only)</td>
<td>£70</td>
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<tr>
<td>Presenters of Papers</td>
<td>£180</td>
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<tr>
<td>Session Chairs and Volunteer Helpers</td>
<td>£180</td>
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A special reduced fee is offered to Presenters of Papers, Session Chairs and a limited number of Volunteer Helpers.

Registration fees for the full convention include conference lunches, teas, coffees and the welcoming reception.

Credit card reservation is available until 20th September 2020 from these websites:


https://the-airship-association.myshopify.com/collections/convention-2020

This payment method is preferred as it avoids bank charges associated with foreign currency exchange.

Registration can be confirmed by writing and enclosing the full remittance, to:

The Treasurer, The Airship Association,
1 Magdalen Close, Hempstead, Gillingham ME7 3TA, United Kingdom.

Please make cheques payable to The Airship Association Ltd.

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