



MAIN IMAGE: Phil Connolly (left) and Ralph Chappell looking purposeful as the UH-1 lifts off.

LEFT: The rear seats and the gunners' positions.



LEFT: Stencil detailing on the fuselage side.

FAR LEFT: Phil Connolly (left) and Ralph Chappell pose with the 'Huey' at Blackpool Airport during refuelling.



Far cry from the early 'Huey' - an AH-1W Super Cobra. BELL HELICOPTER TEXTRON

### Why 'Huey'?

Several aircraft have become known more by their unofficial name than their official title. Bell's UH-1 is a classic example. The helicopter is actually the Iroquois, named after the North American Indian peoples who lived between the Hudson River and the St Lawrence and Lake Erie. But everyone refers to it as the 'Huey' - where did that come from?

When the Bell Model 204 was ordered into production for the US Army it was designated the HU-1. It is from this that the famous nickname arose. In 1962 the designations of the USAF, Navy and Army were standardised and the HU-1 became the UH-1, but still the name 'Huey' endured.

Armed UH-1s received a variety of names during the Vietnam conflict, eg 'Hogs' with rockets and/or cannon. Some heavily-armed gunships were also known as 'Cobras' and this name was to stick in another manner. On September 7, 1965, Bell flew the Model 209 two-seat gunship based upon the engine, transmission and rotors of the 'Huey'. This was put into production as the AH-1 Cobra, but more often than not is called the 'Huey Cobra'. The AH-1 is still available for export.



1956: One of three XH-40 prototypes. BELL HELICOPTER TEXTRON



2005: Prototype Bell 210. BELL HELICOPTER TEXTRON

### 50 and still going strong!

Bell flew the prototype Model 204 'Huey', then designated XH-40, on October 22, 1956, having started work on the design the year before. After a series of pre-production machines, it went into production as the HU-1 (becoming the UH-1 in 1962).

The basic UH-1 family was extended to include the improved Model 205 (UH-1D and 'H). Beyond that there has been the twin-engine Model 212, the re-developed Model 214, the much-extended 412ST and the four-bladed rotor, twin-engine Model 412. The tandem two-seat AH-1 Cobra gunship is yet another member of the dynasty.

Since 1997, the 'Huey' has flown with the British military. The RAF's 60 Squadron at Shawbury, Shropshire, operates Model 412s as the Griffin HT.1 and has HAR.2s flying in Cyprus. The Army Air Corps also uses the type.

To go into details of all the variants, sub-variants and modifications carried out since that time would take several features this size! 'Hueys' have been licence-built in Germany, Italy (still building 412s), Japan and Taiwan. From 1989 the Model 412 has been built at Bell's Canadian plant at Mirabel, Quebec, and is still in production. Over 16,000 'Hueys' of all shapes and sizes have been built so far.

On December 18, 2004, Bell flew the prototype Model 210 at its Bristol, Tennessee, facility. Based on a 1974-built UH-1H, this machine is pioneering the classic 'Huey' as a 21st century helicopter, as either reworks or new production. The Model 210 is also aimed at the US Army's Light Utility Helicopter requirement, the winner of which should be announced in April next year.



Close-up of the two-blade rotor system that gives the 'Huey' its signature noise.

he has a specialist company that manufactures such equipment - SMP Ltd. This is a subsidiary of MSS Holdings, the team behind the 'Huey'. Phil is Managing Director of both companies.

All of this meant that Phil had little free time, and his passion for flying had to be suppressed until he could take it up again. Enter his wife Joanne, who bought him a trial flight voucher in 1998. Hook, line and sinker - he was caught! He got his PPL at nearby Blackpool.

That air experience flight in a Chipmunk when he was in the ATC had lasting effects. He was determined to acquire one for himself and he turned to the late David Needham who told him of former 'Barnstormer' Chipmunk

G-BCHV (ex-RAF WP807). Phil bought the 'Chippie' and set about restoring it. (David's Cessna Bird Dog graces page 72.)

On the hunt for Chipmunk parts, Phil travelled to RAF Shawbury, Shropshire, to see what it had to offer. While there, he was asked if he'd like to see the Westland Gazelles that were shortly to come up for auction. He clapped eyes on a hangar full of shapely helicopters and couldn't get the image out of his mind...

At the auction, on May 24, 2001, Phil could not resist, he bought former RAF Gazelle HT.3 XW858. It arrived on a trailer and it was then that he realised he hadn't told Joanne he'd acquired it! (When asked about this, Joanne was philosophical, saying it was a case of cause and effect and it was really her fault!)

Phil registered the Gazelle in honour of his company as G-DMSS. He sought CAA permission to keep it in military colours - he'd got himself a helicopter 'warbird'.

He was trained by Sqdn Ldr Neil Airey - 20 years a helicopter pilot with RAF. Neil now flies a Bölkow Bö 105 air ambulance and is Chief Pilot for the 'Huey' team.

### DETERMINATION REWARDED

Having flown his Gazelle and Bell JetRangers, Phil started thinking about the future. As his flying skills grew, he was looking for a challenge. He began to ponder: "What would be the ultimate helicopter to own and operate?"

It did not take him long to come to a conclusion. He decided that a Bell UH-1 Iroquois was what he was