

The Early Years 1964 - 1974

The formation of IFATE by dedicated Licensed Aircraft Engineers and individuals of the airline industry which subsequently established the basis for IFA.

1964

The first International Meeting and Conference of IFATE, assembled on the 14 September 1964 at the Royal Aeronautical Society's (RAeS) Headquarters, London, when delegates from eight countries attended to represent their Licensed Engineer Associations. The Foundation Council comprised of the following delegates:

- SLAET Australia
- Canadian Aircraft Maintenance Engineers Association
- Caribbean Association of Licensed Aircraft Engineers
- The All India Aircraft Engineers Association
- SLAET (N.Z.) Inc.
- The Society of Aircraft Engineers Pakistan (SAEP)
- The South African Society of Aircraft Engineers
- SLAET (U.K.)

Mr. Ivor J. Gregory, (Chief Maintenance Engineer B.E.A) (see photo) deputising for SLAET (UK) President, Mr. Freddie Laker, opened the Conference. It was at this meeting that the title of the new organisation was agreed as the International Federation of Aircraft Technology and Engineering (IFATE). Mr Gregory became the first IFATE President.

1966

The second IFATE Conference took place at the RAeS headquarters in London. H.R.H Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands (see photo) attended this meeting, and IFATE gained considerable prestige from the support of His Royal Highness; his address was given prominence in the news media. Later His Royal Highness became the IFATE Patron. It was at this conference that the SLAET (NZ) Patron, Air Comdr Geoffrey Roberts, received acclaim for the presentation of his paper "Aviation Technicians of the Future".

Following the success of the first two conferences, the future looked promising and arrangements were made for the next conference to be held in Amsterdam in 1968.

1967

On 26th May 1967, the IFATE Council held a meeting in the offices of Sud Aviation at Le Bourget airport, followed by a paper entitled "Concorde- Presentation into the World Market," presented by M. J De Lagarde of Sud Aviation.

1968

The third IFATE Conference took place during March in Amsterdam. It was the most successful to date and gave IFATE a great deal of international exposure.

In July IFATE published its first Newsletter edited by Maurice Wilkinson, (BOAC Engineer) a member of the SLAET-UK Overseas Liaison Committee. The editorship later passed to Mr. R W J Cockram and subsequently to Mr. Harry Payne, the SLAET-UK's Secretary General.

1969

On 1st January 1969 Mr George Weitz (ex FAA) took office as President of IFATE in succession to Mr. Ivor J Gregory who later became Vice Patron. Also, at this time, Air Commodore Geoffrey Roberts (see photo), (Chairman of Air New Zealand) and Sir Robert Hardingham, (Chief Executive of the Air Registration Board) and President of SLAET-UK, agreed to become IFATE Vice Patrons

On 2-3rd June during the Paris Airshow, the IFATE council again met at Le Bourget Airport. Later, twenty-five IFATE delegates were given a conducted tour of the Air France Maintenance Base at Orly airport.

1970

Mr. Alan McAuley SLAET (NZ) Inc, a member of IFATE, attended the 1970 meeting on 21-24th June, in Montreal Canada, immediately preceding the ICAO PEL/TRG/MED Conference. IFATE were able to provide observers to the meetings.

1971

During April 3-4 1971, the SLAET-(NZ) was well represented at the SLAET (Singapore) Symposium, 'Professionalism in Airworthiness Engineering', held which was attended by Mr. Barry Geddes, the President of SLAET (NZ), together with Air Commodore Geoffrey Roberts and Mr Len Gore. The Opening Address was given by Mr. T A Sawyer-Snelling, MBE, Chairman of the SLAET (Singapore Group). He was also, an executive of MSA. Air Commodore Geoffrey Roberts presented an excellent paper "Training the Airworthiness Technician". Also attending was Mr Don Smith, representing SLAET-(UK).

1972

The 5th IFATE Conference together with the SLAET Conference was held from 31 August to 2nd September, at Tunbridge Wells, England, and was attended by 80 delegates. The Welcome address was given by Lord John Boyd Carpenter, Chairman of the UK Civil Aviation Authority.

Air Commodore Geoffrey Roberts was elected as President of IFATE for a period of two years (1973-1975). It was an honour richly deserved, and gave a boost for the SLAET-(NZ). He gave his wholehearted support to IFATE/IFA and continued to do so until his death in August 1995.

These excellent meetings provided some 16 papers in two sessions:

1. Maintenance Effectiveness, Chaired by Mr Frank Ryder (Canada)
2. Maintenance Management, Chaired by Mr Ken Anderson (UK)

1973

1973 and 1974, were critical years for IFATE. Plans for a visit to New Zealand by the Secretary General and Vice President in 1973 had to be cancelled, as were arrangements for the Conference in 1974.

One good piece of news in 1973 was that Air Commodore Geoffrey Roberts, IFATE's President was knighted by H. M. The Queen.

1974

In late 1974, current members of IFATE were advised by the Secretary General, Mr Harry Payne (see photo) that SLAET (UK), which had already spent a great deal of time and resources in getting the IFATE organisation off the ground, were no longer able to carry the major administration responsibility of IFATE. They proposed that consideration be given to disbanding the organisation. The New Zealand Society discussed this proposal at a Council meeting, and Mr Barry Geddes (see photo), SLAET (NZ) President, submitted a counter proposal to strengthen, and develop IFATE to become a truly International Airworthiness Organisation. This move was strongly supported by Sir Geoffrey Roberts.

The proposals covered the following items:

1. That the organisation membership be expanded to embrace Airlines, Manufacturers, Repair Agencies, Regulatory Authorities, as well as the Professional Societies.
2. Administration control was to be independent of SLAET (UK)
3. That the President's term would be for two years.
4. Annual meetings to be on a firm basis and held at different venues worldwide, open to all professional organisations with no cancellations.
5. Adoption of an organisation title little changed from IFATE
6. Outline a Constitution and determine objectives.