



Squadron Leader Christopher Blount MVO RAF (1925-2024)

January 2025

From time to time in life one hears of truly exceptional people. **Christopher Blount** #626 on the web family tree was just such a person. He was born the son of an Air Vice-Marshal, a Royal Flying Corps veteran who died in a flying accident in 1940, and was educated at Elstree, Harrow and Trinity College, Cambridge. A year after her coronation he was selected as an equerry to **Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II** and accompanied her on her 1956 tour of Nigeria and her state visit to Portugal a year later. In 1957 he married **Susan Cobbold (1933-2021)** daughter of **1st Baron Cobbold (1904-1981)** #490.

During an eventful flying career he flew Mosquitos, twin-engine Brigand ground-attack aircraft for 8 Squadron in Aden and became ADC to Air Officer Commanding British Forces in Aden. After a spell at Biggin Hill where he flew Vampires, he was appointed to command 45 Squadron in action in support of Operation Firedog, the campaign against communist terrorists in the Malayan jungle. Initially they flew single-seat Venom aircraft but later were equipped with the twin-engine Canberra. In cloud, one such craft collided with the tail of Christopher's plane making it uncontrollable. He ejected from his upside-down aircraft at only 5000 feet and his parachute was open for barely 30 seconds, but he survived. On another occasion his Canberra's undercarriage would not lower and he was forced to make a smooth "pancake" landing.

In 1965 the family suffered further tragedy when Christopher's elder brother, Air Commodore John Blount, DFC, a former Spitfire photographic reconnaissance pilot and PoW, then serving as Captain of the Queen's flight, was killed when a Whirlwind helicopter crashed because of a rotor blade failure. In retirement he worked for Hambros Bank and later, Lazard. Christopher died last December aged 99. His funeral service was held in the village church of St. Mary Magdalene, Barkway which he supported vigorously. The congregation heard a recording, made last year by Christopher himself, of a poem 'High Flight' by John Gillespie Magee Jr.

There was not a dry eye in the house.

Oh! I have slipped the surly bonds of Earth

And danced the skies on laughter-silvered wings;
Sunward I've climbed, and joined the tumbling mirth
Of sun-split clouds, - and done a hundred things
You have not dreamed of – wheeled and soared and swung
High in the sunlit silence. Hov'ring there,
I've chased the shouting wind along, and flung

My eager craft through footless halls of air....

Up, up the long delirious, burning blue
I've topped the wind-swept heights with easy grace
Where never lark, or even eagle flew –
And while with silent lifting mind I've trod
The high untrespassed sanctity of space,
Put out my hand, and touched the face of God.

Anthony Cobbold