Remarkable story of the Cathay Pacific pilots who took on the system

You're a pilot, a captain no less with Cathay Pacific – one of the world's most prestigious airlines. One day you receive a DHL package at your home in Hong Kong. You're fired! No formality, no reason, no warning. Soon you discover that 48 of your colleagues have been unceremoniously dismissed in the same manner.

This nightmare scenario is exactly what happened in July 2001 to Captain John Warham and his fellow ‘49ers’. It was the final fall of the axe after a protracted period of bitter wrangling between Cathay management and its pilots' union over cost-cutting, pay concessions, rostering and flight safety issues. Over the next eight years, Warham and his 'Band of Brothers' fought tooth and nail against the mighty corporate power of Cathay in an attempt to exonerate themselves and show the company's true colours to the world. What resulted was one of the most complex and truly international litigation cases in aviation history.

In 2009, the pilots headed to court for what they hoped would be the final hearing of their case. John Warham's The 49ers tells their remarkable story.

John Warham graduated from The College of Air Training, Hamble in 1975 and began working in the same year as a commercial pilot for Casair Aviation Services in Teesside. He flew for British Air Ferries (Southend), Air Transcontinental (Windsor) and Monarch Airlines (Luton) before realising his boyhood dream as a Boeing 747 captain with Cathay Pacific, based in Hong Kong. As president of HKALPA, he worked with IFALPA on Flight Time Limitations and industrial issues in the 1990s and was awarded an IFALPA Presidential Citation in 2003. He currently lives in Hong Kong and is an honorary member of the Royal Air Force Association.

Contact: Laura (01273) 720900 laura@bookguild.co.uk