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DEVON STRUT NEWS - AUGUST 2007

Welcome to the Devon Strut: Co-ordinator's Comments

by Pete White

Perhaps you can exchange your pilot's licence for a submariner's ticket? Have we angered the weather gods to such a degree that our thoughts are of diverting from the passion that drives us all to do what we love most? No, stay strong, be positive; flying is our game and flying is what we will do!

Now let's go back to where I left off last month and my intention was to visit the Halwell fly-in after the Aeronca Club event at Badminton.... We got back but poor old Halwell was far from feasible and I believe another washout for the Devon Strut in this, *the year of The Precipitation*.

The following weekend was our South West Regional Rally at Dunkeswell and after many planning debates, site meetings, acquisitions of equipment and setting working rotas etc, we were on the starting blocks to bring about the best event we could muster.

Although it did not go as planned because of the weather, it was however very enjoyable for all those that came and as Mike Mold was heard to say "If everything is in place the people will come [*Field of Dreams – Ed*) so let's look at it as a rehearsal for next year". I agree whole-heartedly with that view and would like to thank you all out there for all your efforts and know that next time we will have a ball. (Mike's report is included below).

Farway Common was water logged and the plug was pulled on our 7/8 July weekend but luckily we can have another bite at this one on 18/19 August. It must be summer by then!

The next Strut fly-in of the month was Lundy on the 15th and the phone was buzzing with eager would-be visitors registering their interest and I was getting more excited as the week went on. Originally a small party of us were to visit on the Saturday to prepare and check the field for 'Lundy on Sunday' but with the awful forecast I had to cancel the fly-in on Friday evening. Never-the-less Alan Crutcher and Reg McComish in their Aeroncas were joined by Halwell based Luke Roberts in his Jodel D9 and Keith Wingate flying his Emeraude for an impromptu visit of the island on Saturday afternoon. Unfortunately I was diverted to Dunkeswell for essential maintenance for IVOR and did not get to a deserted Lundy until 19.30 hours. My visit included a chat to the island staff who were as disappointed as I was that the fly-in was off and I promised them that if another date became available we would quickly contact all our members for another event this year.

Now I urge you all to think "sun" with a capital S for the Branscombe Classic Extravaganza, which is on Sunday 29th July. This unique and brilliantly engineered event not only provides so much entertainment, it also makes a huge bucket full of cash for charity. Be there and you won't regret it.

And don't forget the very rural and idealic Treborough on Sunday 5th August and please join the gang at Farway on weekend of 18th/ 19th August. Finally I would like to thank you all for supporting your Strut at our Regional Rally and fly-ins so far this year and remember, just keep having fun!

Best wishes, Pete White.

PFA Regional Rally, Dunkeswell, 30th June-1st July

by Mike Mold

After many planning meetings and commitments from over 50 Strut members to help with the various volunteer duties, the organisation of the a/c marshalling and parking, stands for the 14 pre-booked trade exhibitors, judging, food, beer and toilets, it all fell into place and the prospects for the rally were excellent. That is, until the MO's 5 day forecast described the inevitable continuance of our abysmal summer weather. However, we had to be optimistic (they *had* got it wrong before.) and Dave Silsbury co-ordinated the set-up team to erect our 4 marquees on the Thursday afternoon, only for the overnight gale to wreck them. (We might be able to recover enough poles to make up one good kit!)



On the Friday we welcomed a grand total of 3 visiting aircraft, comprising Brissle Strutters Ian and Mary Leader in their Binder (Emeraude) G-DENS from Garston Farm near Bath, Brian Hope in his Jodel from Farthing Corner in Kent and Stewart Luck in the BaP Rans S6 from Audley End via Popham, who bagged the Most Meritorious Flight award. Brian tied down his Jodel and deferred to the hospitality of B&B with Mike Wells for the weekend rather than risk the inevitable discomfort of camping. Stewart was introduced to BaP2 benefactor Tim Gilmour-White and gave him a circuit in the Rans before departing back to Audley End, arriving home with 5 minutes to spare before his threatened divorce deadline! And Ian & Mary, with an eye on the approaching low cloud, declined the bbq invitation and headed home in the early evening.



Saturday was a complete wash-out but nevertheless we had about 50 visitors by road who put the world to rights in the restaurant and we ferried interested groups round to the communal hangar on the west side of the airfield to view the latest Build-a-Plane project. Those members who stayed into the evening enjoyed an excellent pork roast, a few beers and some thumping good blues from the "mature" trio hired to provide the entertainment.

On Sunday morning we held an impromptu aircraft insurance seminar with Jane Roberts and Andy Turner from Onrisk and Simon Kiddle of Albion Insurance. Despite some direct questioning they were able to provide suitable reassurances about their capabilities to cover claims. They are already paying out and also more thoroughly investigating what might be a blatant "try-on" by one claimant. Their commitment to providing a service to recreational aviation in the UK by challenging the established cartel came over loud and clear.



On Sunday afternoon Alex Jenaway, a new member but who's been around the local scene for ages, trailered in his Reality Escapade project with its new UL260i 95hp injected engine on the bearers. (see New Members section below) and there were four relatively "local" arrivals by air who defied the showery, gusty conditions; members Steve Cole (Fuji) and Colin Dukes (FSL Sprint) from Exeter, a 172 from Bournemouth and a PA28 from Yeovilton.



Notwithstanding the weather, all the feedback we've had has been positive and we've a comprehensive planning check list for next year!

Bound for Lyonesse – Flying in the Isles of Scilly (Part 1) by Maurice Wickstead

Many of us will have sampled the magical and mystical delights of the Isles of Scilly, not least during the Devon Strut's annual fly-outs. Romanticised in the poems of Tennyson and Thomas Hardy as the ancient sunken land of Lyonesse, the islands were first settled in the Stone Age but today derive some 85% of their income from tourism with many visitors and day-trippers arriving by air.

But it was in 1916 that the aeroplane first appeared in Scilly, with the brief stationing of a handful of Short 184 seaplanes on St Mary's, but they were soon withdrawn when the unprotected moorings were found unsuitable for the vulnerable machines. In response to the resurgence of Germany's submarine threat menacing the Western Approaches, five large Curtiss H.12 flying-boats were despatched from Plymouth's RNAS Cattewater to St Mary's during February 1917. The tidal surge at Porth Mellon proved too great and the contingent soon moved across to New Grimsby on Tresco where by the summer, full facilities had been established. The first patrol was undertaken on 26th February and from August, Short 184 seaplanes and Felixstowe F.3 flying-boats began arriving to bolster the advance guard. Conditions for the airmen were at best spartan but somewhat lightened when a vessel stuffed to the gunwales with port wine was wrecked nearby! The first conclusive result took place on 17th May 1917, when an unidentified U-boat was sunk by an H.12, whose crew were later decorated. A number of other actions followed, notably the thwarting of U-

boat attacks on the White Star liner *Persic* and later, a hospital ship. The last patrol was made on 10th November 1918, by which time all four Flights had been incorporated into the RAF as No.234 Squadron, before being disbanded in May 1919.

Although various barnstormers and aerial circuses toured Cornwall's mainland, apart from occasional visits by military seaplanes, it would be another decade before a civilian aircraft first touched down on Scilly. Mid-way through August 1929, a Gipsy Moth, flown by pre-war aviation personality, Colonel the Master of Semphill, alighted on the golf course near Hugh Town after a short hop from the Lizard. Seven months later, another Moth (G-AALG), owned by the Prince of Wales, brought the Secretary to the Duchy of Cornwall for a brief visit. In October 1930, there was considerable excitement when an American aircraft 'dropped in' on Tresco's Pentle Beach. This was none other than the Bellanca WB-2 *Maple Leaf* (NR237), flown by Lieutenants Errol Boyd and Harry Connor. Their direct flight from Newfoundland to Croydon was interrupted by a malfunctioning reserve fuel tank, forcing an unplanned landing in the islands. After a night in the governor's castle and with assistance from locals in preparing a take-off run, the pair continued to Croydon next day to be greeted by Giuseppe Bellanca's business partner, Charles Levine, who, with pilot Clarence Chamberlain, had already flown the same aircraft (as *Columbia*) non-stop between New York and Berlin in June 1927. Ironically, the Bellanca had been Lindbergh's chosen vehicle for his record-breaking NYC-Paris flight, but a dispute with the feisty Levine steered him towards Ryan Aircraft. In fact, the aircraft had also been prepared for the Orteig Prize transatlantic attempt, but an intervening lawsuit against the company prevented its participation, leaving the field clear for Lindbergh. The Bellanca was unfortunately destroyed in a factory hangar fire in 1934 but became the progenitor of a long line of innovative and successful designs that historically link through to the modern-day Citabria, Viking and Skyrocket recreational aircraft. Semphill made another sortie late in 1930 during a tour around the British coastline, this time flying a DH Puss Moth floatplane (G-AAVB), which used St Mary's Town Beach as its base. He reappeared in March 1932, to carry fresh flowers back to London for Buckingham Palace. The Royal connection was again in evidence in May of the same year, when the Prince of Wales arrived for a reception on St Mary's with a flight of four RAF Supermarine Southampton flying-boats from Falmouth.

Other than these occasional casual visitors, there was little sustained activity until the mid-1930s, when (Sir) Alan Cobham began prospecting the possibilities of opening a regular air service to the Isles of Scilly. His company, Cobham Air Routes, was already running a service between Croydon and Guernsey and by late August 1935, he had secured landing rights from the Duchy. Another airline, Provincial, whose DH Fox Moths and Dragons linked Croydon with Penzance via the south coast, had already expressed interest extending their 'West Country Air Service' during summer months, but folded in the autumn of 1935 before the idea could be developed. Cobham planned to commence flying in September 1935, but was forestalled by the loss of his company's Westland Wessex, which ditched in the Channel in July 1935 and eventually forced him out of business.

Another well-known commercial aviator, Gordon Olley, former senior Imperial pilot and head of their charter department, soon took up the reins. Olley was already familiar with the West Country, having operated the Great Western Railway's experimental Cardiff-Plymouth air service two years earlier. After acquiring the assets of Cobham Air Routes, in May 1936, he formed Channel Air Ferries as a subsidiary of his successful charter company, Olley Air Service. Readers familiar with the post-war Croydon Airport, will no doubt nostalgically recall the comings and goings of Olley's fleet of Doves and Herons, busily plying routes to the Channel Islands. Operating from Shoreham, CAF initially concerned itself with links to the Isle of Wight, but on 15th September 1937, Dragon G-ADCR made the first scheduled run to St Mary's in just 20 minutes, returning with five passengers including the island's oldest resident, octogenarian John Mumford, who declared that as a boy it had sometimes taken him 15 hours by sea to the mainland and now it took just 15 minutes!

The landing area chosen at St Mary's covered part of the golf course, where a small booking hut was sited on the second green, and part adjoining land at an annual rent of £100 (c. £3,750 today). Two runways were laid out NE/SW (393m) & NW/SE (416m) and a bell was rung to warn golfers of an impending arrival, while players were often called upon to help manhandle the aircraft in high winds! On the mainland, land was obtained at St Just near Kelynack Downs, where along with a small booking office, a hangar, transported from Blackpool, was erected; the field at St Just gave a landing distance of 680m. The initial service was once daily at a return fare of £1.15s (£1.75), interchangeable with the IOS Steamship services, and connections could be made to the GWR Cornish Riviera Express via a bus service to nearby Penzance. Additionally, a Fox Moth (G-ACFF) was positioned to offer pleasure flights and charters. A

second Dragon (G-ACPY) was in operation from early 1938, allowing frequencies to be increased, at least until the original machine was written-off after crashing in fog at St Just towards the end of June 1938, killing its pilot, New Zealander Capt D L Dustin, who had flown the very first service. A replacement arrived in the shape of G-ADDI, but in December it too was badly damaged, failing to get airborne at Lands End and colliding with a boundary hedge.

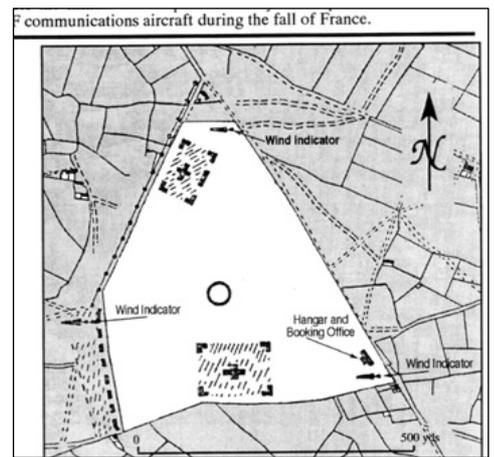


During the same month, Olley's aviation interests joined with those of the railway companies controlling Railway Air Services, resulting in the formation of Great Western & Southern Airlines, which from March 1939 took over CAF and RAS West Country services. This made it possible to fly from St Mary's to Bristol via Plymouth and make onward connections to the North, Scotland and across the Irish Sea to Belfast and Dublin. Another route, flown by Western Airways linked Lands End along Cornwall's north coast to Swansea. For the summer of 1939, up to eight daily returns were being flown with periodic assistance from Dragon Rapide G-ACPP, while

association with the railways allowed the interchange of tickets and the advance carriage of excess baggage by surface transport.



The increased frequency was taking its toll of the golf course, leading the Duchy to allocate land for a dedicated airfield at High Cross on St Mary's overlooking the Old Town, providing three strips, the longest of which was 610m. This was first used on 25th July 1939, and by the time that services were terminated at the outbreak of war a total of 10,000 passengers and 10.5 tonnes of freight and newspapers had been carried between the mainland and the islands.



Following a brief cessation immediately after war was declared, GW&S was allowed to re-open what had now become their lifeline air service on 25th September 1939 and from October 1940, mail was also flown over the route. Services were again halted in May and June 1940, when all available aircraft were pressed into service for the evacuation of the BEF from France. The tragedies of war was brought home to the island community with the loss of Dragon G-ACPY on 3rd June 1941 and five passengers, all

members of the same family on a day trip. The aircraft fell victim to chance encounter with a Heinkel III returning from an abortive raid on the carrier *HMS Indomitable* at Barrow-in-Furness shipyard. The incident was particularly unfortunate, since six Hurricanes of No.87 Sq, detached to St Mary's on 19th May had been withdrawn only four days previously to re-equip with a later marque before returning in mid-June. During the hostilities various unscheduled visitors arrived; a training AW Whitley crashed on take-off in January 1943; a damaged Liberator of Coastal Command was similarly lost in February 1944, while assorted Sunderlands, a Catalina and an American C-47 and P-38 Lightning were amongst those that limped in with battle damage, fuel shortage or mechanical problems. Much of No. 1449 Flight's, as it had become in March 1942, work involved escorting battle damaged aircraft or Walrus SAR sorties but before withdrawal in late February 1944, it had accounted for six confirmed 'kills' and two 'probables' for the loss or damage to eight of its own aircraft.

St Mary's was reduced to Care & Maintenance status in September 1944 in readiness to resume its civilian role, while St Just had been partially blocked off throughout the war but with alternative landing facilities having been provided at nearby Sennen. *(to be continued)*

Lundy Saturday 14th July



Keith, Alan & Reg pose for Luke's camera



G-IVOR on the island after a mag change



Keith Wingate approaching the point of stall, forming with Luke (who's offering shares in his Jodel D9 - see "For Sale" Section)



Around the Patch

by Christopher Howell

PLYMOUTH

We still maintain a strong Strut presence at Plymouth City Airport. John Kempton has been the most active resident with recent trips to Corsica and to Wilhelmshaven in northern Germany. John keeps his Bolkow 207 on the German register and this year he was able to take it to Dave Storey at Bodmin to oversee all the basic Permit work. Following some enquiring phone calls to Germany, Dave discovered that the aircraft needed to be flown to Wilhelmshaven for its final test flight and sign off. John recruited fellow Strut member Tug Wilson as co-pilot and they flew direct from Plymouth to Wilhelmshaven, taking five hours. The work was completed with the usual German efficiency and the intrepid duo departed for home the following day. The return journey took somewhat longer as they were forced by bad weather to overnight at Ostend. The weather en-route home was generally poor and the headwind was in excess of 30 knots as they tracked the south coast to Exmouth, shot up the Teign estuary from Teignmouth to Newton Abbot and then followed the A38 down to Plymouth. It is quite interesting flying back into Plymouth City Airport as they need to determine your capabilities and if you state VFR you need to remain VFR unless you have an IMC rating or IR. John and Tug were glad to be home and the controller very kindly switched on the runway lights for them. As a footnote, with the new EASA regulations coming in, Dave Storey will be in a position next year to complete all the Permit work on a German registered aircraft without the owner needing to take the a/c to Germany.

BODMIN

Engineering goes from strength to strength at Bodmin with Dave Storey now qualified for Part G of the new EASA requirements. Part F is in the pipeline and then Bodmin will have the equivalent to the old M3 qualification. Weather has been rather unkind to many of our events this season. Despite all this, at Pete White's instigation, the Bodmin contingent of the Aeronca Squadron made a very successful run to Maypole in Kent with 9 aircraft participating.



Bodmin-based Jabiru flown by Jenny Dalton, photo by Derek Boyce.

BRANSCOMBE.

Branscombe is a hot bed of activity as preparations gather full steam for the famous Branscombe Air Day. With all the hullabaloo about the salvage of the MSC Napoli, I am confident the wreckage will form a perfect turning point to aid pilots into Branscombe airfield on the 29th July. With all the recent unseasonably wet weather there have been concerns for all our grass strips. Concerns about Branscombe are not just about the runways, (which have a firm subsurface layer of shale) and the a/c park but for the general public show area which could become a quagmire if we experience more rain in the week leading up to the Air Day. Inspections were being planned for the Tuesday and Thursday of the preceding week and by the time you read this I hope we will have had the thumbs up from Joe Thomas. There is a good mix of interesting aircraft due to arrive, starting with the Aeronca Club on the Saturday and on the Sunday we welcome back Peter Vacher's Hurricane R4118, the wing walkers in the two Stearmans, the Old Farts WW1 display squadron, Piston Provost and Saab Safir (from Brimpton) and Beech 18, along with all the usual GA and PFA types and over 500 classic cars.

Make a note in your diary for Branscombe on Sunday July 29th, PPR 01297-680259. Radio call Exeter Approach 128.975 then Branscombe Radio 131.15 and please remember be on the ground by 13.00 hrs local as the runway will then be closed for the air display. Proof of insurance will be required.

EGGESFORD.

Eggsford continues to see a high level of activity. During a recent trip to Denmark bad weather left the Eggsford boys scattered all over Europe. Many were forced to use public transport to get home and collect the aircraft at a later date. Geoff Houlgarve has bought a Wilga which is now resident at Eggsford. Nigel Skinner made a foray to RAF Waddington in his Mk9 Auster along with Roger Benson in his Auster Autocar on the same weekend that the weather blew out the Regional Rally at Dunkeswell. Nigel remarked that by a fluke they got to Waddington on the Friday and managed to get home on the Monday. The RAF

base at Waddington resembled the aftermath of Glastonbury with the mud and debris that was left by the stormy weather.

EXETER.

At long last Exeter Airport could be becoming more GA friendly as John Spooner, the Airport Director, flies his own Beech Bonanza to work. That must bode well for light aircraft use at the airport. Exeter Flying Club is holding an Open Day on Saturday 28th July. Ace Flight will be there to offer Air Experience flights in their Tiger Moth and Andy Foan will have his Hawker Hunter and Beech 18 as static displays with cockpit access.

Dermot Richardson has an excellent new website offering all the delights of flying Robin Aircraft. Contact Dermot for some really enjoyable flying via the link on the Strut website. The Red Arrows will be based at Exeter along with two of the new Typhoon jet fighters while they perform various air displays in the region.

Welcome to New Members

Alec Jenaway of Whimple, Exeter trailed his part-built Escapade ULP G-MCUB to our Dunkeswell rally. The engine is the UL260i 90 hp fuel injected design from Belgium and is awaiting PFA approval.



Kate Powell of Drewsteignton, Exeter.

Chris Willis from Taunton owns Aeronca L-3B Defender G-BRHP which is currently undergoing a complete restoration by Dave Silsbury.



Geoff Hall of Beaminster, Dorset owns the ex ST Aviation Jabiru J400 demonstrator G-CCGG which he keeps at Dunkeswell.

Tony Hodder of Westward Ho!, N. Devon.

AEROLETTERS

From: Roger Burge

Mike, Got to Dunkers Saturday morning. Despite the weather and the lack of aviation taking place, it was obvious that much work had been done by both the airfield and strut members. I for one would wish you to pass on my thanks to all, and let's hope for next year.

Roger

From: Tim Price, To: David Millin

Hi David, Thanks for your kind email. It was great to meet you and your fellow Strut members and we both had a really enjoyable day. To have the opportunity to spend a good amount of time discussing the work you guys are doing there is probably a luxury we wouldn't normally have, and I'd like to thank you all for showing us such a warm welcome. The passion you all have for flying and for giving others the opportunity to enjoy it is really inspiring, and I hope Mike will put our addresses on the newsletter so we can keep our editorial team up to date on your projects.

Please pass on our regards to Mike, Pete, Peter and all at Devon Strut- look forward to seeing you in sunnier conditions!

Tim Price, Advertising Manager - *Pilot Magazine*

Hi David,

Thanks for your email. It really was a shame about the weather after all of your hard work – however I'd just like to reiterate Tim's comments, that we found the whole day extremely enjoyable and that it was great to meet everyone. Apologies for not returning for the hog roast – I must admit I had a bit of a nap and didn't wake up until about 8pm! If you could forward me the details of the key members of the strut that we met on the day it would be great, as I'd also like to drop them a line. I'm off tomorrow for a week's holiday (more sleeping I think!) so no hurry. I will give you a call when I get back.

Kindest Regards

Tina (Tina Cronin, Associate Publisher, Archant Specialist Leisure Division)

From Alan Crutcher in response to Pete White's announcement of the Lundy Fly-In.

Devonshire??? Only Americans think there's a place called Devonshire! Anyway, you're only trying to draw attention to it because, deep down, we all know it's really Welsh - even if it happens to be under occupation for a relatively brief moment in time. The Argies are sympathetic to our cause and have loaned us Exocets nos. 9 and 10 for the summer. So your landings may be bumpier than usual. Note that they don't usually make blind calls on SafetyCom but, in typical Latin fashion, simply turn up unannounced.

Which elicited the following repost from PW:

Dear Mr Crutcher, Thank you for your letter to the Devonshire Strut for inclusion in the Strut newsletter. The island of Lundy is a part of N. Devon as was Wales many years ago before the waters rose and created the Bristol Channel/Severn Estuary. It is also true to say that the Welsh are the only true and original English descendents, having the fastest legs when the Romans invaded. We look forward to you visiting us this weekend in your coracle and please don't forget your passport and visitor's visa. Kind Regards from the Devonshire Wing of the National Association of Sport and Recreational Flyers, Pete White. [p.s. the waters between N Devon and Wales have risen a little higher with the flooding in recent weeks so be sure to include your inflatable sheep's bladder buoyancy aid. That is why you keep sheep, isn't it, look you?-Ed]

From: Clive Dyer (Scoutmaster, Plymouth) to Chris Noble (Devon Scouts) **Subject:** Aviation camp

Hi Chris, I hope that you've recovered from the camp! Thanks very much for the photos and the certificates, Shaun was very pleased, I've received comments back from most of the Scouts as follows :-

Greg - "Thank you for letting me fly a plane, it was brilliant"

Bryony - "It was fun and I really enjoyed it. If I had the chance, I would definitely go again. Thank you all very much."

Jamie - "I thought that the aviation camp was brilliant and great fun, I also got to meet new Scouts. I would like to thank all the pilots and marshalls."

Shaun - "The aviation camp was great. I had a brilliant time flying the planes and learning about them. The pilots were very kind and helped us to fly the planes."

I would just like to add that even I will remember the camp for a long time to come, many thanks for all the efforts of you and your team, especially those 'Magnificent men in their flying machines' !!
Cheers, hope to meet you again, Clive.

National and Regional Gliding Competitions at Lasham

There will be two gliding competitions originating from Lasham airfield (EGHL) during August. The National Championship between 4 Aug and 12 Aug inclusive and the Regional Competition from 18 Aug to 26 Aug inclusive, each from 0830 UTC until SS and involving up to 80 gliders on task. Lasham Radio 131.025 can be used by aircraft flying in the vicinity to obtain the latest information. Further information from Colin Rule Competition Airspace Coordinator 07836-284096 Colin.rule@btinternet.com or Lasham 01256-384900

Strut Fly-Ins, 2007

DATE	LOCATION	HOST/ORGANISER	TELEPHONE	
AUG	5	Treborough	Mark Weatherlake	01984-641179
	18/19	Farway Common	Terry Case	01395-597535
SEPT	8	Belle Vue	Don Easterbrook / Jim Gale	01805-623113 01363-773767
	9	Watchford Farm	Brian Anning	01823-601268
	29	Dunkeswell Young Aviators	Strut Team	tba

August Free Landings

Pilot: Enniskillen, Longside (Scotland), Lundy (what madness to encourage the masses in there!), Sandtoft, White Waltham and Wickenby

Flyer: Bodmin, Donegal, Gigha and Panshanger

Today's Pilot: Blackbushe, Cottered, Dunkeswell and Newtownards

Ethanol in Mogas

Following a report of a positive alcohol test in mogas in a Strut member's aircraft it is worth reviewing the implications of ethanol in mogas. The topic was covered in a clear and concise article by Brian Hope in the February 2007 issue of PF in which he re-capped on the CAA Safety Sense Leaflet No. 4 on the Use of Mogas and clearly described the recommended test for assessing fuel for the presence of alcohol.

Ethanol (ethyl alcohol) is added to mogas to oxygenate the fuel and increase its octane value and is being encouraged by the government as an environmentally friendly measure. However, ethanol blended fuels have a propensity to very quickly absorb water compared to non-alcohol fuels. Ethanol can affect fuel system components made from rubber, plastic, aluminium and certain fibreglass materials. Engine seals and hoses may shrink, swell, or lose strength when exposed to ethanol reformulated fuels. The shelf life of ethanol blend fuels is much lower due to its water-absorbing and corrosive qualities.

A telephone survey of some of the major fuel suppliers on behalf of the Strut has confirmed that Tesco's mogas in the southwest does contain ethanol but the pumps at Texaco, Jet and BP garages do not. For some of these same suppliers this situation is different in other parts of the UK where their products are blended with fuel from other sources at the pumps. The choice is yours! All users of mogas should be

doing the alcohol check on the contents of their jerry cans before filling their a/c tanks and the strut committee would be grateful for feedback from members on any more tests that prove positive. Please also be aware of the PFA mandatory requirement to replace flexible fuel hoses every 4 years.

Two Bags

by Rick Reilly of America's "Sports Illustrated" Magazine

Now this message is for America's most famous athletes: Someday you may be invited to fly in the back-seat of one of your country's most powerful fighter jets. Many of you already have; John Elway, John Stockton, Tiger Woods to name a few. If you get this opportunity, let me urge you, with the greatest sincerity, move to Guam, change your name, fake your own death! Whatever you do, do not do it!!! I know. The U.S. Navy invited me to try it. I was thrilled. I was pumped. I was toast! I should've known when they told me my pilot would be Chip (Biff) King of Fighter Squadron 213 at Naval Air Station Oceana in Virginia Beach. Whatever you're thinking a Top Gun named Chip (Biff) King looks like, triple it. He's about six-foot, tanned, ice-blue eyes, wavy surfer hair, finger-crippling handshake, the kind of man who wrestles dyspeptic alligators in his leisure time. If you see this man, run the other way. Fast.

Biff King was born to fly. His father, Jack King, was for years the voice of NASA missions. ('T-minus 15 seconds and counting, remember?) Chip would charge neighbourhood kids a quarter each to hear his dad. Jack would wake up from naps surrounded by nine-year-olds waiting for him to say, 'We have lift-off'. Biff was to fly me in an F- 14D Tomcat, a ridiculously powerful \$60 million weapon with nearly as much thrust as weight, not unlike Colin Montgomerie. I was worried about getting airsick, so the night before the flight I asked Biff if there was something I should eat the next morning. 'Bananas,' he said. 'For the potassium?' I asked. 'No,' Biff said, 'because they taste about the same coming up as they do going down.'

The next morning, out on the tarmac, I had on my flight suit with my name sewn over the left breast. (No call sign -- like Crash or Sticky or Leadfoot. But, still, very cool.) I carried my helmet in the crook of my arm, as Biff had instructed. If ever in my life I had a chance to nail Nicole Kidman, this was it. A fighter pilot named Psycho gave me a safety briefing and then fastened me into my ejection seat, which, when employed, would 'egress' me out of the plane at such a velocity that I would be immediately knocked unconscious. Just as I was thinking about aborting the flight, the canopy closed over me and Biff gave the ground crew a thumbs-up. In minutes we were firing nose up at 600 mph. We levelled out and then canopy-rolled over another F-14. Those 20 minutes were the rush of my life. Unfortunately, the ride lasted 80. It was like being on the roller coaster at Six Flags Over Hell. Only without rails. We did barrel rolls, snap rolls, loops, yanks and banks. We dived, rose and dived again, sometimes with a vertical velocity of 10,000 feet per minute. We chased another F-14, and it chased us. We broke the speed of sound. Sea was sky and sky was sea. Flying at 200 feet we did 90-degree turns at 550 mph, creating a G force of 6.5, which is to say I felt as if 6.5 times my body weight was smashing against me, thereby approximating life as Mrs. Colin Montgomerie. *(now the ex-Mrs M, - Ed)*

And I egressed the bananas. And I egressed the pizza from the night before. And the lunch before that. I egressed a box of Milk Duds from the sixth grade. Because of the G's, I was egressing stuff that never thought would be egressed. I went through not one airsick bag, but two. Biff said I passed out. Twice. I was coated in sweat. At one point, as we were coming in upside down in a banked curve on a mock bombing target and the G's were flattening me like a tortilla and I was in and out of consciousness, I realized I was the first person in history to throw down. I used to know 'cool'. Cool was Elway throwing a touchdown pass, or Norman making a five-iron bite. But now I really know 'cool'. Cool is guys like Biff, men with cast-iron stomachs and freon nerves. I wouldn't go up there again but I'm glad Biff does every day. A week later, when the spins finally stopped, Biff called. He said he and the fighters had the perfect call sign for me. Said he'd send it on a patch for my flight suit. What is it?? I asked.

'Two Bags.'