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DEVON STRUT NEWS - SEPTEMBER 2007

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

by Pete White

Since we last spoke, much has happened within our organisation but initially I would like to thank all those enthusiastic and hard working members of our Strut who, despite the endless disappointments this year, caused mainly by the atrocious weather, have tirelessly offered their time and skills to help make us the respected West Country arm of the PFA. I don't need to name you all; you know who you are and you're the backbone of our organisation.

The Branscombe Air Day, one of our annual highlights and certainly a unique event for the UK, had to be cancelled due to the soggy ground conditions and all the planning by Joe Thomas, Mike King and their teams, was in vain. Branscombe airfield has been sold but will still host the event next year as the new owner is keen to continue the tradition. And the planning team is still in place so let's look forward to the Air Day in 2008. Joe has been a terrific host at Branscombe over the years and we wish him well on his return to Kent.

Treborough, on the other hand, had the weather gods looking the other way, which encouraged over 50 visitors to Mark Weatherlake's hill top airstrip. (See Peter Gristwood's report). But it was back to 'normality' for Farway Common (*twice!*) and again rain stopped play, as described below by John Havers! We still have fly-ins at Belle Vue on Saturday 8th September and Watchford Farm on Sunday 9th to look forward to, so let's make the most of the promised good weather and support these two events as flyers and helpers in true Devon Strut fashion.

Amongst the important recent local issues for your committee to resolve has been finding a replacement venue for our monthly Strut meetings as the Stowey Arms' function room has been converted into bedrooms. We narrowed down the selection from three alternatives and have chosen the Ley Arms at Kenn, just south west of Exeter. This is easily accessible from the M5 / A38 junction at Kennford, has a function room to accommodate our largest of meetings and in keeping (*excuse pun*) with its award as 2007 Village Pub of the Year, provides excellent food and drink, an important consideration for the social side of Strut meetings! More detailed directions will be published with confirmation of the speakers for the October to April meetings in next month's News and on the Strut website. As in previous years, meetings will be on the second Thursday of the month *except for the first meeting which will be on **Friday 5th October*** so please put this in your diary now.

By now most of you would have read James Tannock's article in September's Popular Flying (page 12) and you will also probably realise that members of your committee attended a recent National Council meeting at which the case for re-branding the PFA was presented by Roger Knights, our new marketing consultant. We have outgrown the 'PFA' and the new but simply titled "**Light Aircraft Association**" encompasses our wider remit in this 21st century organisation. The article in PF explains in more detail what it is entailed and Mike Mold has written a short explanatory piece for the benefit of those Strut members who aren't current PFA members. I know some of us older members may wish to remember things as they were but the Association is for everyone and the only way forward is to appeal to *all* pilots and enthusiasts, especially the younger element. We must move on and reflect the reality of progress.

Personally, I am enthused by this re-branding of our organisation and intend to put myself, and encourage the whole Strut to be, firmly behind the exercise to ensure we have a successful transition to the LAA. From discussions about the new proposals there is already a more positive feel towards those of us that fly older types of aircraft (after all, we do make up 20 percent of the membership) as well as preparing to more fully encompass the interests of enthusiasts and the airworthiness management of the new <1,000 kg European Light Aircraft (ELA) design category. Re-branding as the LAA coincides with the formation of the European Federation of Light, Experimental and Vintage Aircraft (EFLEVA), a new entity which will represent major national amateur built & vintage aircraft associations at Europe Air Sport (EAS) and EASA.

All this enthusiasm and “positivity” is enough to take your mind off the poor weather, but please now take time to read James’s article and if you have any questions, talk to me or any other member of our committee, as it is imperative as many of us as possible support the name change motion at the forthcoming AGM at Hucknall on 1st September, to allow our Association to move on and grow into *the Light Aircraft Association*.
All the best, Pete White

Treborough Fly-In, 5th August 2007

by Peter Gristwood

After a string of cancelled Strut fly-ins, the weather made a welcome change for the better for the first weekend of August. This led to a mad rush for lunch on the beautiful Exmoor airstrip of Treborough – at 1,300 feet amsl, one of the highest in the country.

Mark Weatherlake had mown the strip a few days before and the first arrivals helped him erect the ‘refreshment tent’. There were a few early birds, including Dave Millin, in his Rans S6 from Dunkeswell, Trevor Wilcocks in Binder G-DENS from Garston Farm and Mark Preston in his Tiger Moth from Watchford.



By late morning the number of arrivals in the circuit grew, and at times the approach looked like Heathrow. The good weather and the loss of so many of our events over recent weeks seemed to have brought many pilots out of semi-retirement. In all 52 aircraft made the journey to Treborough, making it one of the most successful events held there.

This had its downside as at times the organisers on the ground were considering stopping further arrivals, as we were running out of parking space on the edge of the runway. Despite the slope, the high temperature and tricky crosswind, the event passed off safely and tribute must be paid to the good sense of many of the pilots in organising their landings and backtracking of the runway. This minimised the number of go-rounds from finals.

Notable visitors included Howard Cox’s Bellanca Cruisemaster from Sheepwash, Richard Felix in the Hornet Moth G-ADNE from Oaksey and Russell Marshall in the EAA Biplane from Watchford. Rod Eyles arrived for his first Strut event in his Europa G-FIZY. Visitors ranged from the Turbo Cherokee Arrow to flex-wing microlights.



Although most visitors were based in the Strut area some came from much further afield, such as Dennis Cook in his RV6 G-ODEE from Lichfield and Dicky Bird of the Vintage Piper Aircraft Club in his Super Cub from Salisbury.

The weather forecast had promised rain by early afternoon (wrong again!), which probably explained why most visitors had left by 14.00hrs. Even then, late arrivals kept on coming. John Crabb (Jodel D117A) came en-route to Dunkeswell from the Luscombe event at Oaksey Park (just as the kettle had been disconnected), Alan Crutcher crossed the border again in his Aeronca from Cardiff and Ray Trute came from Belle Vue in his Bird Dog and gave his usual spirited departure fly-by! Thanks are due to Mark and his family for laying on the lunches (and for getting more when the lunches ran out!) and for their hard work in preparing the strip. Here's hoping for weather as good as this for next year.



Summer is Alive and Well and Living in Belgium, 10th -12th August.

by John Crabb

Tempted by a couple of days of nice weather, and only a mildly catastrophic forecast for the Sunday, I roared out of Dunkeswell on a very sunny Friday morning bound for Schaffen Diest. About two hours later, I dropped into Headcorn to refuel, and subsequently enjoyed a calm channel crossing. The weather was good up to about Kortrijk, just over the Belgian border, where I landed to clear customs. From then on it went convincingly downhill until, passing south of the Brussels CTR, I could scarcely see where I was going and it got so gloomy that I was thinking of breaking out my emergency candle. Luckily, it thinned out enough to let me see Schaffen and impinge relatively gently on Belgian soil. Schaffen Diest is a military airfield with a history going back to the First World War. It has an 800m grass runway and is presently home to the Diest Aero (Glider) Club and a Belgian Paratroop Regiment; the latter obviously have the major say in what goes at Schaffen! Once a year they permit the club to hold the international fly-in, and since the military all go home for the weekend anyway, this is no great problem to them. In my opinion, there is something special about very large grass fields, this one extends to 60 hectares, and has a very spacious and serene ambience. It is bounded on one side by a forest and on another by the main road into Diest— a charming old city with many old buildings, street cafes and restaurants. Every Saturday evening in the summer holidays a stage is erected in the main square and entertainment provided late into the night. The fly-in organisers offer a free taxi shuttle into town, so it is easy to visit.



John, just after impingement

Looking back into my logbook I discover that it was a full seven years ago that I last visited the fly-in at Schaffen Diest; not much has changed. They have obviously found a successful formula and simply polished it a little as the years have gone by. Aircraft park in rows on the grass as normal and camping is allowed. The public are not permitted airside, but the security fencing is folded into a number of fingers or piers which allow people to walk deep into the aircraft park. The organisers take care to position some of the most interesting craft right next to the fences. Their expenditure on infrastructure is obviously considerable, and they hope to recoup this by charging the public seven euros each to attend.

For this they, and the visiting pilots, get access to a huge hangar/restaurant where they can buy breakfast, lunch and (on Saturday night) a massive barbecue meal which goes on into the night with music provided by a live band. Visiting crew are actually given a free evening meal on Friday, free lunch on Saturday and

two free drink vouchers. Other incidentals that cost the club money are a marquee, the fire brigade, a huge crane jib from which four massive floodlights are suspended, generators, a double-length refrigerated container full of beer and food for the restaurant and bar, a mobile shower block and two (yes, just two) very small toilet vans. There was also an old car and military vehicle rally on site, and quite a few trade and special interest stands.

Saturday dawned bright, clear and warm and people turned up in swarms. The weather elsewhere in Europe was not so kind and fly-in visitors were down in the low hundreds, but it seemed busy enough. It was altogether a very enjoyable day.



Some nice balloons with a Motorfalke

On Saturday evening a handful of hot air balloons launched into the soft Belgian sky, including this interesting one-man effort. The pilot has the flaming gas cylinder strapped to his back! Visit <http://flyin.dac.be/gallery.html> for a host of other interesting pictures.

The other main thing is the beer, if that sort of thing interests you. The club has its own permanent bar on the other side of the main road. This is a very pleasant place to sit and take in the general activity across the road, whilst enjoying a wide variety of very interesting examples of the brewers art and a chat with the locals.



Fly-by!



Chris Lodge departing in his Taylor Mono

All too soon it was Sunday, another sunny day on the airfield, and time to think of leaving. The weather forecast was none too good further west, with a cold front crossing west to east across England and showers and possible thunder storms predicted for France. I prepared my route carefully, making special note of a chain of possible alternates to drop into if necessary. In the event, the main thing was the very

poor visibility over all of Belgium and Eastern France. Luckily, things opened out later and the channel crossing was as serene as it had been on the way in.

My arrival at Headcorn was, however, delayed by the unforeseen necessity to land at Kortrijk again. I gave them a cheerful courtesy call as I flew by to the south, only to be informed that I had not cleared customs and must land and report to the police. Who am I to argue? Of course I know that all UK pilots must land at and depart from a customs airfield in countries in the Schengen area, but I had believed that Schaffen were dealing with customs issues through a special dispensation for the weekend. This was disputed by the local fuzz. Anyway, after only a short period in the cells (not really, I took advantage of the unforeseen stop to have lunch) I was on my way again. The weather in England was clear, but very turbulent with a twenty knot headwind. By the time I landed at Dunks in the early evening I felt that I had had a great weekend, but possibly done enough flying for a day or two. Time for a beer – Belgian of course!

Farway Common Fly-In, 18-19 August 2007

by John Havers

Following cancellation of the June two-day fly-in at Farway Common due to the saturated state of the field, we all hoped for better luck in August. Come the preceding Thursday it looked as if we were in for another very wet weekend and so I proposed that we cancel but Terry Case was ever hopeful that a high was coming in! Saturday morning, as predicted, dawned wet with low cloud and so it continued. Nevertheless Alan Faupel, Maurice Wickstead and I, ever the optimists, set up shop but by mid-day it was obvious no one was flying in, let alone arriving by road.



Resident Piper PA-28R G-AWFD in the gloom of Saturday morning

The forecast for Sunday showed more promise and accompanied by the lady catering staff (Betty, Joy and Pam) we again opened for business and we did get two road visitors but from the air, nothing. By lunchtime, with the wind increasing, we opted to shut up shop having decided it had been a pleasant social occasion for us, if no one else!

My thanks to the team for their help and support and to Terry for providing the venue. Over the years there have been many successful fly-ins at Farway with just the occasional lost day but this year must surely rate as an all time low!

SWHT 'Gala Weekend' at Smeatharpe

by Steve Robson

Photos by David Steel and Alan Faupel

The weekend of 28 - 29 July saw the South West Airfields Heritage Trust 'Gala Weekend' take place at Smeatharpe airfield in the Blackdown Hills. Formally known as Upottery, the airfield is familiar to many strut members; its main claim to fame being that it was used as the base to launch 101st Airborne Division on D Day minus 1. More recently, the exploits of the 101st Airborne Division were made into the TV series 'Band of Brothers'.

Flying has taken place at Smeatharpe in one form or another for quite a few years with modellers and microlights making use of the long concrete runways. However, the airfield appeared to be going into a state of decay with piles of tyres and rubble blocking the runways and taxiways until it was bought recently and the new owners undertook a massive clean up job for the event.

The main 27/09 runway was cleared and swept by Robin Gilbert and his team and it was found to be in remarkably good condition with only a few small holes needing to be repaired. This work meant that 27/09 had around 1800 metres useable and 33/15 around 800 metres. This turned out to be crucial as Robin had arranged for one of the original C47 aircraft to visit over the weekend.

As it happened the aircraft arrived earlier than planned, on the preceding Thursday, causing a lot of interest from those people who might have thought for a moment that they had been transported back in time, seeing one of the original aircraft that flew from the airfield in 1944, parked on the runway.

The theme of the event was to commemorate the airfield and its history with the star of the show, being the C47, as well as military vehicles and lots of re-enactors dressed in some very authentic uniforms.



The Blackdown and Chesil Model Clubs put on some excellent flying demos keeping the crowds entertained. Adding to the atmosphere of the event were Austers, Andy Foan's Twin Beech and Nigel Skinner in the Broussard from Eggesford plus various other aircraft from around the country. The Strut also played a part helping to run the airside operations and providing safety cover and marshalling.



The weather did its best to interfere with the event which also probably kept people away but a total of 37 aircraft managed to arrive and depart over both days, in sync with the ever helpful and co-operative model flyers. Although the timing of this event was unfortunate because it clashed with Branscombe, it did provide

a lot of entertainment for those who attended. Also, because it has two very long and usable runways, it has lots of potential as a venue for future events.

I'd like to pass on my thanks to all those Strut members who helped out over the weekend, in particular David Millin and his son James, Chris Bailey, David Steel, Alan Faupel and John Havers, plus those who flew in and those who turned up to help.

Light Aircraft Association: Re-branding of the PFA

by Mike Mold

PFA members will, by now, have read the article in the September issue of Popular Flying by James Tannock (PFA Vice Chairman) in which he describes the business reasons for the suggested name change from PFA to Light Aircraft Association (LAA) and its related implications. For the benefit of the non-PFA members in the Strut, the following is a brief summary, including material from James's article, of the factors which culminated in the National Council making the recommendation to the Executive Committee that they consider a name change for the Association.

Progressively over recent years discussions with flyers and non-flyers alike have brought blank stares when the names Popular Flying Association and Strut are mentioned. In the 1950s and 60s the name "Popular" was associated with magazines to do with gardening and DIY mechanics and had a relevant place in the vocabulary of the time. However, times have changed and aviation interests that are representative of our current activities and future aspirations are not reflected in the old name. A change of name provides the timely opportunity to re-brand the Association, defy historical misconceptions and reaffirm its aims and ambitions in line with current trends, particularly those emanating from Europe with EASA.

These include the progression towards more advanced homebuilts and factory-built light aircraft, the latter in accord with the new certified European *Light Aircraft* design category (<1,000 kg), similar to the US *Light Sport Aircraft*, many of which originate in Europe and which are attracting the attention of many GA pilots. Ongoing airworthiness management and support for ELA owner pilots will be required and will provide an opportunity for the Association, in parallel with its continuing administration of the Permit, M/L(part), classic and vintage UK fleets.

These aircraft design and support initiatives coincide with the proposals for the pan European *Light Aircraft* Pilot's Licence, comparable with the NPPL. The PFA has been responsible for much of the behind-the-scenes negotiations on these initiatives; work that goes unnoticed by the rank and file member but which is positioning the European regulatory regime to our advantage in limiting the bureaucracy and costs of our flying.

Membership of the PFA has been slowly declining and with it, the subscription income. Thankfully, by good management, the Association's financial situation has been transformed but the outdated brand image was identified as one of the main reasons for some members not rejoining. In itself the name change is not the sole end product but the re-branding of the PFA is an opportunity for the Association to be more attractive and effective in the new regulatory framework to the benefit of existing members, whether they are enthusiasts, pilots or builders and to attract new ones from the lighter end of GA who may feel unrepresented. Diversity of member segments is likely to increase with six categories having been identified, namely: enthusiasts, amateur aircraft (Permit) builders/pilots, classic and vintage aircraft owners, microlights, CofA certified A/C owners and European Light A/C owners. With the change in name will come new member services, a modern logo and a PR campaign. Representation of each member sector will be provided at NC & EC level and a review of the magazine will consider the competition from periodicals available on the news stands.

The proposed name change will be discussed and voted on at the PFA AGM at Hucknall on 1st September with the intention to implement the change on 1st January 2008 and with related business changes being phased in thereafter for which a budgeted business plan is being prepared. A membership questionnaire will be circulated later in the autumn to canvas members' opinions on past issues and future requirements.

We are a more effective and relevant organisation than we seem from the outside. The intention is to make our image match reality and then make it even better!

Welcome to New Members

Clive Morris, Leicester.

Philip Foden of Northlew, Okehampton.

Around the Patch



Engine-less Ivor! Investigation of low compressions revealed a spun centre bearing, requiring a complete strip down.



Maurice Wickstead has assembled an emergency first aid and fire-fighting kit for Strut fly-in preparedness.

FOR SALE (New Items since last month)

- **Plymouth hangarage** now available. POA. Contact Terry Linge. 01752-515341
- **Wassmer Jodel D112 EI-BSB** (ex-G-AWIG); Continental A65 engine, Evra prop, Dittel radio, Aircraft total time 4530 hours, engine TSN 2250 TSOH 1065. SAAC Irish permit to May 2008. Reliable aircraft in good condition, being sold with regret and looking for a good home; always hangared; economical fun flying, 13-15 litres/hour avgas or mogas. £11,500 Contact Peter Gorman +353 86 174 1477 or pdq@cic4.com



Strut Fly-Ins, 2007

DATE		LOCATION	HOST/ORGANISER	TELEPHONE
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

If you would like to participate in the Young Aviators event on 29th Sept. please contact a committee member.

September Free Landings

Pilot: Peterlee, Eshott, Hucknall, Fishburn, Weston (EIWT), Dunkeswell

Flyer: Beccles, Gloucester, Scilly Isles and Sturgate

Today's Pilot: Andrewsfield, Cromer, Campbeltown and Eaglescott.

Dawn Take-Off by Rhymair

The engine catches, coughs, chokes,
A hoarse old man in the morning chill.
Propeller thins in the air.
The plane, a panting painted butterfly above the azure grass
Sniffs the breeze, tries to remember the sky.
The weight now transferred from wheels to wings,
Smooth into the air climbs the bright bird.
The ground no more, but not lost, for look, it is here around us.
As it is now, so it was for the first pilots.
That same unchanging ocean of the air.

Tailpiece

From Wikipedia, talking about the An-2

An interesting note from the pilot's handbook reads: "If the engine quits in instrument conditions (blind flying when you can't see the ground) or at night, the pilot should pull the control column full aft (it won't stall) and keep the wings level. The leading-edge slats will snap out at about 40 mph (64 km/h), and when the airplane slows to a forward speed of about 25 mph [40 km/h], the airplane will sink at about a parachute descent rate until the aircraft hits the ground." !!!
