

# ***DEVON STRUT NEWS***

The Newsletter of the Devon Strut of the Popular Flying Association. January 2005.

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## **CO-ORDINATOR'S COMMENTS**

**by Chris Howell**

Happy New Year and many days of warm sunny flying in 2005. While I write this it is late December and daylight hours approach their shortest. Bulbs in our garden have begun to pop up and see what the New Year brings along. Sunday today and the weather is particularly horrible, overcast, heavy cumulus, strong easterly winds and then the phone rings! Plowman, my chum from Yeovil warbles, "Lovely day up here Howell. Are you going flying?" I quickly pinch myself, look out of the window again and admit winter blues! "Lovely sunny day up here in Yeovil" chortles Plowman. I quickly phone Breakspear at Dunkeswell who confirms same, try and phone Cottingham at Sidmouth and then hop on the Internet as I find it hard to believe I have got it so wrong. Upon trawling through the weather sites, spot wind at 1000ft of 40kts at Exeter, Cardiff and Bristol. 15kts gusting 28kts means at Branscombe's 450amsl it is at least a steady 20kts, so I begin to feel a bit better I am still at home. Rightly or wrongly, I find those sorts of conditions uncomfortable for pleasure flying in a sixty year old vintage aircraft. Needless to say later I receive the phone calls "Oh you missed some cracking weather - CAVOK and 10kts of wind!" This is the eternal problem when you live over an hour's drive from the aircraft. I have lost count of the number of times recently when, upon observing weather in South Devon and then launching off towards Exeter, I've driven over Haldon Hill only to see thick murk all around the basin at Exeter.

So with all these thoughts mulling over in the grey matter it was interesting to have arranged for David Braine, BBC Spotlight's weather presenter to speak at our December Strut meeting. David is well qualified as a meteorologist, having previously worked for the Met Office in London and presented the National Forecast for BBC TV and radio before moving to the West Country to take up his current position at BBC Spotlight in Plymouth. He gave a lively and interesting talk, covering the history of weather forecasting and answering various weather-related questions. David has agreed to visit the Branscombe Air Day in July and be a guest presenter.

Exeter Air Traffic have been less than pleased with communications to them at some of our Fly-In events during 2004 so we have been summoned to a meeting at Exeter to sort out some guidelines for 2005. Exeter Airport has seen a huge increase in commercial traffic over recent years and the management has become somewhat less interested in small GA traffic. There are many fine events planned for 2005. The De-Havilland Moth Club is organising a tour and they plan to stop off at Yeovil, Dunkeswell and Eaglescott. John Beattie is planning an Air Enthusiasts' Day at Yeovilton in May and hopefully we can fly in and join in.

January's meeting is the Strut AGM so please forward any items you wish to include on the agenda to me before January 10<sup>th</sup>. Following the conclusion of the AGM we have arranged a talk by The Croydon Airport Society. Croydon Airport was for many years London's main airport and many famed aviators were associated with Croydon, including Amy Johnson, Charles Lindbergh, Bert Hinkler, Amelia Earhart, Lady Heath and many, many more. We can look forward to a very interesting talk.

John Mansell, our long serving Treasurer and Membership Secretary is retiring at this year-end. I would like, on behalf of all the Strut members past and present, to thank John for his dogged efforts and firm opinions over the last 10 years and to wish Shirley and John a very happy new year.

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## Oshkosh for Free, by winner of the “Join a Friend” Competition- Mike King

I know it is now several months since Oshkosh but I thought I should pen a few words about my free trip, thanks to the PFA. The first I knew about winning was when I opened Popular Flying and read my name out. This news was eventually confirmed by PFA and the tour operators.

The trip started by coach to Gatwick and a night in a hotel to ensure I made the departure times. Any long haul flight is or can be very boring and monotonous. However, I secured a window seat on the starboard front end of the aircraft and managed to get some good views of Greenland and Newfoundland. The snow- covered mountains with icebergs floating in the sea could be clearly seen. As we approached Newfoundland scattered cu lay below us and provided a beautiful picture and the wish to be flying around them. By the way, I hate being told by the cabin staff to close the blinds and watch some grotty video.

On arrival the weather was very British summer type – grey and overcast with temperatures at about 65 F. Friday was the same but I found it pleasant to be walking around this fantastic event in reasonable comfort. My first stop was the trade exhibitions which took up 4 large hangers. I had a purpose which was to make a purchase of a glass cockpit for a friend. The number of companies and the availability products is mind blowing. Items we need in the UK and have difficulty sourcing were there. Running a repair and maintenance facility down here in Devon really made me very envious of the Americans.

Oshkosh is very much a family affair with something for all the family. I met a number of people from all over the States and many had come with the whole family. One man I spoke to on the Saturday had been driven to the event by his family even though none of them had the slightest interest in aviation – looking after dad, maybe.



Cub with 150hp turbine



Pyrotechnics for the B 17 display

The flying display was magic. Variety and innovation are the order of the day. The Saturday display was the most memorable. Some 60 WWII aircraft took to the skies. A formation of 16 Harvards, followed by Mustangs, Corsairs, Mitchells etc. The climax of the show was the B17 which made several passes and included explosions and clouds of black smoke but the final pass produced a large explosion about 400 yards long and you could feel the heat on the crowd line. I took about 200 pics, most of them not very good but you may find the ones I have attached of interest.

In conclusion I can say that the trip was very exciting and enjoyable. It had been my intention to go to Oshkosh sometime but had been put off by many things including the long flight to the States. Thank you PFA for making this trip possible and to all who have never been – You don't know what you are missing.

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## Reasons to Belong (to the PFA)

by Mike Mold

A recent survey has identified that only about 20% of the people who take a trial lesson in the U.K. decide to have flying lessons. Of those, around 65% actually complete the course and become PPLs. Other than the handful who go on to career flying, 70% of all people who qualify as Private Pilots don't buy their own aircraft or a share and gradually reduce their flying and drop out completely within two years. Of the very few who stay as club flyers, most will be gone inside five years. Most aircraft owners will have sold their aeroplanes/shares and gone inside 6 years. So, after a six-year period, 95% of all people who came into private flying during the same year will be gone. Only 5% of those who qualify with PPLs will stay flying until they turn their toes up. They make up the constant core of active private flying in the UK.

To strengthen our influence in the face of increasing Euro-bureaucracy we need a stronger PFA with a larger membership. Hence, we all also need to understand the benefits of belonging to the PFA so we can promote the Association to those new PPLs who, statistically, will otherwise be lost from our ranks within a few years.

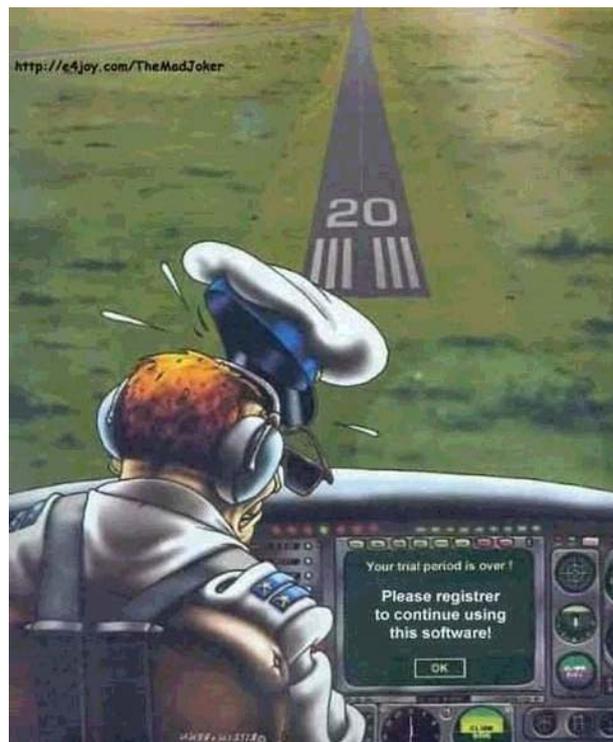
Last year's issue of "The PFA Today" spelt it out:

- Build &/or maintain your own Permit a/c.
- PFA Engineering (whatever the current problems, without it we couldn't afford to fly!).
- Learn to fly in permit a/c and improve your piloting skills (PFA coaching scheme)
- Affordable a/c ownership through PFA groups.
- Popular Flying Monthly magazine (and competing with the other glossy monthlies)
- Young Eagles (Encourage the youngsters. The average age of PFAers is probably older than you!)
- The Rally (now Flying For Fun).
- The Strut system, plus Strut Fly-In's (best in the Southwest!)
- PFA merchandise including. "How to-." Publications.
- PFA Credit card (Use it for convenience, always pay it off in full and all transactions earn the bank's % contribution to the PFA).
- Principal proposer of the NPPL & affordable, achievable medicals.
- Armstrong-Isaacs flying scholarship (total funding for young members to get their PPLs).
- Fight / negotiate with bureaucrats who would restrict our freedoms (EASA, Eurocontrol).
- PFA fighting fund (help to keep our airfields open).
- PFA tours (travel deals arranged by PFA to international events - Oshkosh, Sun'n'Fun, etc)
- Home insurance deals.
- Soon to be announced, a members' a/c insurance deal when we have to comply with compulsory insurance (May 2005).
- PFA website & bulletin board as sources of information & entertainment.

That's just for starters, and represents a good £45's worth in my book!

The Association needs to represent more of the private pilots in the UK, so it has a stronger voice to be able to cost-effectively administer the current fleet of permit a/c as well as the orphaned C of A types which the CAA are going to relinquish (Auster, Condors, etc) and which will come onto PFA permits in the near future, and to be able to fund the resources needed to combat the ever-growing threats to our freedoms of choice.

I think we should all be able to effectively promote the Association to prospective & existing strut members who aren't PFA members. To those owners of C of A aircraft that are likely to transfer to Permits, why not join now and enjoy the monthly Popular Flying?



"Please register to continue using this software"

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## Yak 52 Crash Landing

by Lee Burling

We had been performing some simple aerobatics over our usual practice area when it became apparent that we had lost almost all movement in the elevator control of the aircraft. We realised this when we were in a vertical dive towards the ground at around 3000 feet agl having just performed a "Humpty bumpy". Both of us pulled on the stick and the aircraft pulled out of the dive and entered climbing flight at just over 1000 feet agl. The speed built up in the dive allowed the aircraft to climb up to around 1700 feet where we found that we could hold level flight at 82% power but was unable to raise the nose and was therefore unable to keep level flight at slower speeds. An emergency landing was requested and an approach was attempted. As the speed dropped the nose continued to lower causing the speed to build once more. The throttle was reduced still further to try and lower the speed until 200 kph was reached. The deployed undercarriage had no effect on the speed so flaps were lowered and this reduced the speed to about 150 kph. Although this approach speed is normally acceptable we had no way of raising the nose so there could be no flare and we were approaching the runway at approximately 7 to 8 degrees nose down attitude and at a speed of 150 to 160 kph. The aircraft hit the runway at this attitude and speed and then bounced 50 feet into the air. The object that had jammed the controls had now been shaken loose and although only at 50 feet we were right on stall. The controls now free the aircraft was able to land, although heavy.

The damage sustained was 2 blade ends, 1 front nose tire and wheel, the engine mounts were bent as well as the main bulkhead being creased, 2 G meters which went off the scales, possible damage to other instruments that were shaken by the impact, Gear box and possible damage to the front undercarriage leg which went full compression. 1 pair of underpants! (I can't vouch for the pilot's underwear!!) Damage to myself is still being assessed but some injury to my lower back has occurred and an MRI scan is being taken in the near future to find out why I walk like an 80 year old in the mornings!

The jam was later found to have been caused by a mobile phone having become wedged in between the elevator quadrant and the aircraft skin. The similarities with the accident involving G-YAKW in January last year are quite frightening. We were very very lucky to escape with a broken aeroplane and it is "Sods law" that Parachutes were not being worn this time. The phone in question belonged to a passenger on an earlier flight and he, not being a pilot, did not realise the danger this could cause so didn't report that the phone could have been loose in the aircraft. It is interesting to note that the "banging" of the underside of the airframe did not sound anything out of the ordinary. This had been done on numerous occasions in the 4 weeks since the phone had been lost. It is possible as well that the constant impacting of the phone on the rear fuselage "Net" eventually caused it to fail and allow the phone into the rear area of the fuselage. We will have to wait and see the outcome of investigations. I am a share owner of another Yak 52 based at the same airfield and I have always taken FOD very seriously and had hoped that the checks carried out during pre-flight were adequate but it seems now that they aren't. I will from now on be "Insisting" that all passengers wear a Flight suit AND empty their pocket before flight, I will have to trust that the other pilots in the syndicate will do the same and I will be making it "an every other flight" rule to take off the rear inspection panel and check the nets and area in front.

On impact with the runway I was convinced that we had lost the undercarriage and was waiting for the crunch on the second landing but I was astonished at the minimal damage sustained and it is testament to the strength of the Yak 52. I have made this account fairly vague as investigations are ongoing but I wanted pilots to know what had happened and hope that things can be learned and implemented by you all. (Thanks to Steve Wells for this salutary story)

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## Members' News

You'd think the new love in Chris Pidler's life has some serious competition if Watchford locals are to be believed! His Topsy Nipper has given way to Fournier RF4D G-AVNZ, previously owned by Vic Norman at Rendcomb and still looking very smart after a recover and respray some years ago by Dave Silsbury. Her smooth, evocative lines are clearly irresistible to Chris who claims that it's his addiction to continuous looping that's making his coccyx ache!



## Welcome to New Members

Ian Quinn, Ashcott, Somerset. Ian is from New Zealand and flies commercially for Cathay Pacific. He and his wife, Kristee, keep their Cessna 180 N71763 at Franklyn's Field, just north of the Mendip mast.

Fred Baulch, Okehampton. Fred owns Taw Mill strip, and has shares in the Eggesford-based Auster Alpine G-ANXC, Auster AOP9 XN441, Cessna 172N G-BHUG & Cessna 182 G-BWMC.

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## E-111 Medical Insurance Form

This affects all UK citizens who carry the medical insurance form E111 when travelling abroad in other European Union countries. The old Form E111 will be invalid after 31 Dec 2004. If you are travelling in Europe you should now obtain a new "Transitional Medical Insurance Form" from your local Post Office. The "Family" E111 arrangement no longer applies and each person travelling, including children, must have their own form. The Transitional Form will be valid until December 2005. A new electronic medical insurance card, called the 'European Health Card' will replace the Transitional Form and will be available from Sept 2005. Further information is on the UK Foreign Office "Advice to Travellers" website <http://www.fco.gov.uk/>  
Thanks to Dave Wise for bringing it to our attention.

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## R.I.P. Mike Revill

Well-known businessman and aerobatic pilot Mike Revill has died suddenly at his home in East Budleigh, aged 60. Mike set up Revill Industrial Finishes at Exeter Airport and was one of the founding members of Exeter Flying Club, 31 years ago. He will be remembered for his spirited aerobatic displays in his Fourniers (RF5 'AI and the prototype RF7) and more recently in his Yak. Our condolences go to his wife, son & daughter.

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## January Free Landings

**Pilot:** Beccles, Huddersfield (Crossland Moor), Sandtoft, Seething, Tatenhill, Weston (Ireland)  
**Flyer:** Enstone, Newtonards (Ulster), Tatenhill, Bodmin

### Today's Pilot Offer

Michelle McDonald, Marketing Manager at Today's Pilot magazine, has let us know that they will be running a free landings promotion next spring. Several of the airfields they currently have on their books can't cope with winter landings as they only have grass strips, so they're going to start with a bang in the new year! [*Her words, not mine* –Ed] However, she is delighted to offer Devon Strut members 4 free issues of TP on a one-year subscription of £27.20 and 8 free issues on a 2-year subscription of £54.40, both equivalent to £2.27 per issue. A subscription form, which prospective subscribers can return to TP, should they wish to take advantage of the offer, is available from Chris Howell or Mike Mold.

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**Happy Christmas & turbulence-free New Year to all strut members.**

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