

# ***DEVON STRUT NEWS***

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

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

**by Christopher Howell**

January can be a tough month! Christmas and New Year have various side effects. My little domestic wasp has been complaining of Cabin Fever. When I enquired as to the cause of this ailment her rather terse reply was that the condition had been brought on by being cooped up with yours truly at home over the festive fever period! "Charming", I thought, very quietly to myself. This began me considering the parallels between women and computers. My present machine requires three passwords to get it going. Along the way it chirps about incorrect password entry even though I have entered the same word for months. It frequently shuts down the programme I am working on, telling me I have performed an illegal operation. Outlook Express freezes far too frequently and will not budge until the machine is put to sleep and woken up again. Then my dear friend Robin King remarked, when I was complaining about my woes, "Dear Boy, you need more RAM". Well that told me the answer - return to good old Victorian Standards when Men were Men and Computers knew their place!

Mandatory Third Party Insurance will be in effect for us all on April 29<sup>th</sup> 2005. There is a full report on the CAA Website. We have called most advertised insurance companies and very few have any information as to how much this will affect our premiums. Talking to Graham Newby at PFA HQ was most helpful as he is hoping that soon the PFA will speak with one voice when it comes to insurance. The plan is for the PFA to hook up with an insurance underwriter and offer members very competitive rates. Which makes a lot of sense as when you combine the number of PFA Permit Aircraft and BMAA aircraft, there speaks a very powerful voice.

The DeHavilland Moth Club has been planning a UK Tour for 2005. They have already 40 plus aircraft booked including two Dragon Rapides and expect the total numbers to be around 60 in addition to various back-up aircraft flying ahead with ground crew and supplies. The route in the Westcountry will be Friday 24<sup>th</sup> June Dunkeswell, Eaglescott and then overnight at Judwin (Yeovil). It would be helpful if Devon Strut members could assist with ground control duties at Dunkeswell. As you may imagine, with up to 60 Moth type aircraft arriving within an hour or two, there will be a fair bit of help needed. The plan is to have a grass strip prepared alongside Runway 23/05, then aircraft taxi over to the grass parking area on the south side where refuelling can take place and parking be arranged. We have also been offered the opportunity for Strut members to fly their own aircraft with the Moth Tour to Judwin (Yeovil) and stay overnight.

The PFA Scout Camp, which is being masterminded by Strut members Jim Gale, Pete White, Dave Silsbury, Mike Mold and Steve Robson, is gathering fearsome pace. Meetings have been held with Education Strut & EC member Alan Twigg and plans for the weekend of May 6<sup>th</sup> 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> are being prepared. The camp will be for 20-30 Scouts to achieve their Meteorologist, Navigator and Aeronautics badges. Strut Members' help is very much needed, both to help on the ground and fly the Scouts on a planned route to complete the Navigator Badge. Please contact Jim Gale or Pete White.

### ***STOP PRESS.***

*Joe Wright, the CFI of the civilian flying club at RAF Henlow, has invited the Strut to hold a Fly-Out to Henlow when the weather improves. More in the March Newsletter.*

Happy Flying  
Christopher Howell

## DEVON STRUT AGM – Minutes Abridged

### 1. APOLOGIES.

Apologies from Reg McComish, Terry Wilson and Ernie Hoblyn

### 2. MINUTES of the last meeting.

Agreed by Mike Mold and Pete White.

### 3. Co-Ordinator's Report.

Chris Howell outlined the meetings held during 2004 January -AGM, February CAA Safety Evening, March Exeter Air Traffic Talk, April Roger Henshaw Instrument Flying, October PFA Chairman Cliff Mort, November PFA Head of Engineering Andrew Moore, December David Braine Weather Talk.

### 4. Treasurers Report. -John Mansell

*This was John's outgoing report and besides presenting the income/ expenditure balance sheet for the past year, he also summarised the strut's finances, membership and aircraft ownership figures.*

#### Membership

- In 1994 we had 92 members which reduced to a low of 61 in 1998, before increasing again to 139 in 2004 (incl. 16 honorary members, 7 inspectors, 7 strip owners & 2 marshals). 105 were PFA members & 34 non-members.
- 34 new members joined last year but we lost 8 from 2003.
- 93 received their newsletter by email (67%). However, 11 members have email addresses but preferred to have the newsletter posted.

#### Aircraft

- 138 aircraft were owned or shared by members, a known understatement as some members chose not to declare all their aircraft.
  - 33 were shared by 59 members, so 80 members owned the remaining 105 a/c.
  - 18 were under construction, 12 were under restoration (6 permit & 6 C of A)
  - 85 were on Permits to Fly, 49 were on C of A's
  - 3 were gliders and 1 was a gyro

#### Accounts (abridged)

The accounts were healthy, with a similar surplus to that recorded 10 years previously. The annual subscription, which had been held at £10 since 1995, was being raised to £15 to cover anticipated increases in expenditure associated with the increased levels of activity, e.g. newsletter, website development, fly-ins and winter meetings. Membership increased by a net 26 to 139 in 2004 (34 new members but 8 lost), comprising 123 ordinary members, 7 inspectors, 7 strip owners & 2 marshals. 76% of Strut members were also PFA members, a reduction of 1% from the previous year.

Acceptance of the accounts was proposed by Mike King and seconded by Mike Mold. Steve Robson offered a vote of thanks to John for his excellent work over the previous 10 years.

### 5. Fly In Report - Derek Boyce.

Derek summarised the fly-ins organised by the Strut during 2004, referring to the diversity of locations, numbers and types of visiting a/c and the weather, and thanked the strip owners and

hosting members for their tireless work in making the events so enjoyable and raising considerable funds for local charities.

#### 6. National Council Report - Jim Gale.

Jim described the format and content of NC meetings and reported on the major issues that had featured on the agendas during 2004.

#### 7. Election of Officers.

Mike Mold, Chris Howell, Dave Silsbury, Jim Gale and Steve Robson agreed to carry on their roles for a further twelve-month term. Steve Robson pointed out this would be his final year as Safety Officer. With the retirement of John Mansell it was agreed to divide the duties of Treasurer and Membership Secretary between two separate members and the following were appointed:

Mike King –Membership Secretary (proposed by Roy Young, seconded by John Flisher)

John Kempton- Treasurer (proposed by David Cottingham, seconded by Pete White)

Given the increasing level of strut activities, it was also agreed to increase the present committee with the addition of the following volunteers:

Peter White (proposed by Dave Silsbury, seconded by Bob Beard)

Keith Wingate (proposed by Gordon Morris, seconded by John Kempton)

#### 8. Presentation of Strut Cup.

There was unanimous agreement that John Mansell should be presented with the Strut Cup as a mark of thanks for his ten long years as Treasurer and Membership Secretary. Other members who were mentioned “in despatches” were Jon Pote, Tug Wilson and Keith Wingate whose collective & decisive actions saved the life of the pilot of the Cessna 172 that crashed on Lundy. (Jon pulled the guy out of the wreck as it was catching fire and Tug & Keith operated the island’s fire engine to extinguish the flames.

Les Dray announced that he would be kindly donating a cup to the strut, to be awarded to a pilot & voted for annually by the members, starting from the next AGM.

#### 9. Any Other Business.

##### Devon Strut Safety Report 2005 – Steve Robson

Steve gave a detailed account of the direction in which he sees safety at strut events progressing. The take-home message was that we all have a responsibility to uphold the highest possible standards of safety in all aspect of a/c operation. The strut has a good safety record that should be maintained. Steve described the current safety guidelines, making the distinction between responsibilities for members of the public with respect to aircraft ground movements and flying risks. He reviewed the incidents that took place on Lundy and described the PFA’s current comprehensive review of safety at flying events that had been proposed by an NC member. Steve had previously carried out generic risk assessments for strut flying events and he proposed to update these and discuss the safety guidelines with strip owners and members who act as fly-in hosts.

##### Bodmin Celebration & Fund Raising for New Control Tower – Pete White.

Pete asked for support for the 1940’s Hangar Party at Bodmin to be held on Sat. 25<sup>th</sup> June in support of the fund-raising towards the new control tower

##### Congratulations to:

The Strut for winning the David Faulkner-Bryant best strut trophy for the second time and to Keith Wingate (Taylor Titch), Tug Wilson (Pietenpol Air Camper), Colin Wood (Jabiru), Ian

Walsh (Zenair 701), Mike Hayman (Currie Wot) and Robert & Nigel Nicholson (Eurostar) for the first flights during the year in their respective homebuilts.

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*After the formal AGM session our guest speaker, Bob Duffett, gave an entertaining talk about the history of Croydon Airport, illustrated by a collection of fascinating photographs from the period. The Croydon Airport Society <http://basic1.easily.co.uk/05F04C/02D020/index.html> is a 700-strong organisation, with members across the world who are dedicated to keeping alive the memory of London's first airport. The terminal building, now known as Airport House, is a Grade II listed building with a Visitors' Centre containing historic records, photographs and memorabilia. Images can also be found on the Control Towers website <http://www.controltowers.co.uk/C/Croydon.htm>. Bob kindly provided a summary of his presentation.)*

## **The History of Croydon Airport 1915 – 1959**

The fact that Croydon Airport was the UK's major International Airport from 1920 through until 1947 is probably a surprise to many people. In other words, it was the "Heathrow" of its day. The original aerodrome was opened in 1915, although its first aircraft did not arrive until 1916. Originally called Beddington Aerodrome, it had been built on land owned by New Barn Farm and was a fighter base to protect our capital city against the dreaded Zeppelin Bombers. After hostilities were over, surplus military machines were converted to civilian use at a factory to the north of the field, called The Aircraft Disposal Company, which for some reason was not allowed to "Test Fly" their newly converted aircraft on the military airfield. They therefore opened another airfield, Waddon Aerodrome, alongside. So now there were two airfields side by side, divided by Plough Lane but linked to each other by a taxi-way across the road, which could be closed off to motor vehicles by level-crossing gates!

The first commercial flights started around 1920 and initially used converted bomber aircraft where the crew sat in open cockpits, although most of the passengers sat in a rather primitive cabin. These early flights served just Paris and Brussels. Amsterdam, Cologne, Zurich and Hanover were later added to the list but because of the aircraft's very limited range all these further points required numerous additional landings en-route.

In the mid 1920's a decision was taken to close Plough Lane completely and merge the two small aerodromes into one larger airport. This gave a much larger airfield but regrettably all the buildings, terminal, hangers, the first aerodrome hotel, company offices and parking apron were right in the centre of the newly enlarged airfield. In 1926 a brave decision was taken to move all the buildings to the eastern perimeter alongside a major road, then called Cold Harbour Lane but now known as Purley Way - the A23 main road between London and Brighton. Once the first purpose-built airport terminal was officially opened in May 1928 things started to expand very rapidly. Many of the European governments heavily subsidised their airlines and most air carriers wanted to serve London, so Air France, KLM, Sabena, Swissair, CSA, Lufthansa, DDL, ABA, DNL, to name just a few, were all serving London's Croydon Airport by the mid 1930's.

1935/36 saw the development of the Empire Air Routes to Asia, Africa and Australasia. Most record-breaking flights to and from the UK used Croydon. Amy Johnson, Charles Lindbergh, Jim Mollison, Bert Hinkler and Jean Batten flew regularly in & out of Croydon. However, with declaration of war in September 1939 everything was to change. All the former Imperial Airways/British Airways equipment and personnel became BOAC and the whole operation moved to Whitchurch near Bristol, and all buildings were heavily camouflaged. Croydon reverted back to being a fighter base once again with the arrival of a Squadron of Gloster Gladiators, followed shortly afterwards by Hurricanes and Spitfires. Yet by 1941 the fighters had repositioned to other airfields and light-bombers and communications aircraft used Croydon. 1944 saw the arrival of the Dakotas

of 110 Wing Transport Command and as Europe was liberated so Transport Command started to fly to their capital cities, returning seriously wounded and former POWs back home.

The cessation of hostilities meant that civilian services could recommence to Europe as well as domestic flights, initially to Liverpool, Belfast & Glasgow (Renfrew). I started my career in civil aviation in August 1945, as a Junior Traffic Officer (glorified messenger boy) with Railway Air Services, one of half-a-dozen small airlines which been merged at the commencement of the war under the appalling title of the Associated Airways Joint Committee. Most of our pilots were ex-RAF and wore their RAF uniform. One elderly gentleman (I later learned he was 41 at the time!!) always wore a brown suit with a brown trilby hat. He was the stand-by pilot and amongst his responsibilities was to carry out Test Flights on newly serviced aircraft. When he learned that this 16 year old had never yet flown, he demanded I went with him on his next flight. It was only many years later that I learned that the "Elderly Gentleman" who gave me my first flight, was a very famous Imperial Airways pilot, Captain Jimmy Youell. I am still in contact with his son in Perth Australia. With the opening of Northolt and Heathrow in 1946/7, the major airlines moved away and left Croydon with a handful of Charter Companies and Flying Clubs. The last commercial flight operated on Sept 30<sup>th</sup> 1959 by deHavilland Heron of Morton Air Services to Rotterdam. Appropriately the flight was under the command of Captain Last. (Bob Duffett)

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## **New Super Seam Fabric Cement Advice**

*Paul Shenton posted the following anonymous warning on the Bulletin Board of the excellent UK Pietenpol Club website <http://www.pietenpolclub.co.uk> and Dave Silsbury has confirmed that Francis Donaldson is aware of it.*

"Following the discovery of the fabric bonding failures on the starboard wing, elevator and flap, I thought it would be useful to advise you of our findings to date. My aircraft was being rebuilt by \*\*\*\*\* at Thrupton until July 2003... The aircraft was (*then.*) transferred to the care of Andy Mcluskie (B licensed engineer) who undertook to complete the rebuild on a time and materials basis. In March 2004, we reached the point of needing to apply fabric to the newly repaired port wing. To ensure uniformity, we inspected the starboard wing which had been "re-fabriced" ..... Examination revealed that the reinforcing tapes had been omitted from the spar joint (upper and lower) and also from the joint to the wing walkway. Correction required a complete removal and re-fabric.

I invited Mark Miller, the chief engineer at De Havilland, to inspect and provide a report. During that inspection, as well as condemning the fabric due to the missing tapes, he discovered that the adhesion between fabric layers was deficient. In his opinion there was a high probability of failure. Since then, we have been investigating the reason why the fabric adhesion was so poor. We have determined the following:

1/ Ceconite is habitually applied with a Randall product called Super Seam. It can be "re-wetted" for adhesion purposes with thinners. It is quite normal to "paint" Super seam onto a surface, lay the Ceconite over it and then work thinners through the Ceconite to re liquidise the Super Seam, which then flows into the upper layer and on drying forms a fully integrated bond.

2/ In late 2002 or thereabouts, Randall was acquired by Polyfiber who make an alternative product to Ceconite called Stits. This uses a different adhesive and a slightly different process. At some point around Jan 2003, it appears that Polyfiber changed Super Seam into New Super Seam. However, New Super Seam cannot be "re-wetted" with thinners to form properly bonded joints. Essentially it is a one shot adhesive and all joints must be made while the adhesive is still liquid. The solvent for New Super Seam is MEK which has been around for Stits for a long time, but is regarded as less easy and less friendly to use. It seems that this change has not been notified either officially through

FAA, CAA or PFA, nor apparently has Randall/Polyfiber seen fit to issue any kind of bulletin (certainly not in the UK) warning of the change and the requirement to change procedure and selection of solvent.

3/ The tins in which Super Seam and New Super Seam are supplied are identical except for the word New which appears above the word Super Seam. Note that the label colouring and style is the same on both products. Small print on the label for New Super Seam advises consulting the latest Ceconite manual 101 for instructions on use.

4/ However, if reinforcing tapes are "stuck down" by simply laying them over dried out New Super Seam and then brushing thinners (with or without dope added), the bond will be weak. It is necessary to apply New Super Seam in small quantities at a time, and while it is still wet, "make the bond as you go along". This makes it more difficult to achieve neatness and uniform adhesion throughout the length of a join.

5/ The real danger appears to be the inadvertent use of both types of adhesive in the course of applying a fabric covering.

6/ Today therefore, if part way through a fabric application, one orders Super Seam from say Skytrade, one now gets New Super Seam. It is highly possible that occasional fabric workers still have Super Seam in their workshops which is within date, and they will order Super Seam when required and get New Super Seam which superficially looks to be the same. It is unclear at what point supply of Super Seam in the UK became New Super Seam. It is unclear whether aircraft are in fact flying around with defective fabric work as a result of the "change" slipping by.

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## **Devon Scout Aviation Camp, 6- 8<sup>th</sup> May**

The Strut has agreed to host a weekend aviation camp for Scouts in Devon to give them an insight into sport aviation whilst facilitating their Meteorologist, Navigator and Aeronautics badges with some fun flying. The first camp, which was organised under the auspices of the PFA's Education Strut, with participation of the Gloster and Wiltshire Struts, was held at Calcot near Cirencester last year and was followed by a second event run by the Gloster Strut at Croft Farm, described by Harry Hopkins in January's Popular Flying.

Jim Gale is taking the lead in organising the Devon event and having carried out a risk assessment of both flying and camping activities and of the organisational logistics, we believe the venue is likely to be Belle Vue. Pete White has started discussions with the Devon Scouts' Activities Co-ordinator and anticipates a maximum of 30 scouts will attend. We're also looking for volunteers from the Strut to give talks on navigation (map work & use of gps), meteorology, a/c instruments and effects of controls, help with the ground-school, marshalling (with a quad bike not an a/c!) and to fly the scouts on nav-ex's. These are planned to be 30-45 minute triangular flights with the Scouts doing the navigating. (Pilots *will* be briefed on where they're supposed to be going!). We're asking for about 15 pilots with 2-seat a/c, preferably side-by-side. The insurance criteria are a minimum of 250 hrs total of which 150 have to be PIC, 20 hrs PIC on type, 10 hrs **OR** 15 landings in the previous 3 months, with at least 3 of the landings on type in the last month. So we reckon there will be a lot of circuits and bumps in Devon in April! Based on the Calcot & Croft Farm events, it should be a lot of fun and a valuable opportunity to reach some enthusiastic youngsters, their parents and friends! Any members who would like to be involved should contact Jim Gale or any of the committee asap, please.



## The Aviator – Howard Hughes

With the recent release of Martin Scorsese’s film on Howard Hughes, there has been a flurry of interest in Hughes’s life and his aircraft, including the Spruce Goose and his H-1 racer. The H-1 was powered by a Pratt and Whitney Twin Wasp Jr. radial piston engine, which was rated at 700 hp at 8,500 feet but which could deliver 1,000 hp for high-speed flight. In 1935 Hughes set a world speed record of 352.322 mph flying over a specially instrumented course near Santa Ana, California. On 19 January 1937 he flew 2,490 miles non-stop from Los Angeles to Newark, NY, breaking the transcontinental record in 7 hours, 28 minutes, and 25 seconds. The maximum range of the H-1 was computed to be 4000 miles. A replica was built by Jim Wright of Oregon and in it he set a new world speed record (category C-1.d) of 304.07 mph on 13<sup>th</sup> September 2002. The replica was demonstrated at Oshkosh 2003 but sadly crashed, killing its owner on the homeward flight. <http://www.wrightools.com/hughes/> [http://www.wrightools.com/hughes/h1\\_history.htm](http://www.wrightools.com/hughes/h1_history.htm)



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### February Free Landings:

**Pilot:** Andrewsfield, Leicester, Perth, Peterborough (Sibson), Popham and White Waltham.

**Flyer:** Fife, Old Sarum, Shobdon and Thruxton

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## Welcome to New Members

Steve Cole of Sidmouth: [scole@rowcliffes.co.uk](mailto:scole@rowcliffes.co.uk) Steve is looking to buy or share an aerobatic a/c.

Vaughan Hatton from Churston Ferrers, Brixham, shares Lancair 320 G-PJMT and Maule N882JH

John Holden from Bradford-on-Avon [holdenjandm@aol.com](mailto:holdenjandm@aol.com) . John owns Eurostar G-CCAC and has been a visitor to our fly-ins.

Ron Perry from Brislington, Bristol [ronperry@smaragd.freeserve.co.uk](mailto:ronperry@smaragd.freeserve.co.uk) Ron shares Binder Smaragd G-BSVE with Daryl Mansbridge, based on the Mendips near Halesland. He can provide BFRs and is also member of the Bristol Strut.

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## Membership Renewal Reminder

For the few members who have not already renewed their subscriptions, this will be their penultimate newsletter. Membership forms were sent out with the January newsletter or can be downloaded from the strut website.

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## Next Meeting: Talk by Rod Dean

Buckerell Lodge Hotel, Topsham Rd, Exeter. Thurs. 10<sup>th</sup> Feb. 7.30 for 8p.m. start.

Rod Dean has been displaying civil aircraft since 1984 when he retired from the RAF after 21 years service. During his RAF service, where he spent his whole time flying on operational squadrons or training units, he principally flew the Hunter and the Jaguar but with some time on the Jet Provost, Meteor, Gnat and Chipmunk. In 1972 and 73 he was the Fighter Command Hunter display pilot at RAF Chivenor when he flew some 50 public displays over the two seasons and was the winner of the first WD & HO Wills Solo Jet Display Trophy at the North Weald International Air Tattoo in 1972. He left the service as a Squadron Leader and as a Qualified Flying Instructor and Qualified Weapons Instructor.

Since leaving the RAF, Rod spent 10 years as the Business Manager for a flight simulator training company and he now works for the Civil Aviation Authority, until recently as the Head of the General Aviation Department. He is now the Chief Executive Officer of Air Safety Support International, a subsidiary of the CAA tasked with overseeing the UK Overseas Territories.

On the civil display side, Rod has flown a wide variety of World War II and immediate post-war piston fighters such as the Mustang, Corsair, Wildcat, Sea Fury, Bearcat, Hurricane and, most favorite of all, the Spitfire. He has also flown a number of vintage jet aircraft such as the Meteor, Vampire, Venom, T33, F86 Sabre and, not surprisingly, the Hunter. His CAA Display Authorisation covers all these aircraft and he is fully qualified to lead formations of any size - as was shown at Duxford in September 2000 when he was privileged to lead the "Big Wing" formation of 19 Spitfires and Hurricanes. In 2001 he led a team of 5 Hunters at the RAF Cottesmore Royal International Air Tattoo. Their display was judged to be the Best Overall Flying Demonstration and the team was awarded the King Hussain memorial sword. Rod is also a CAA Display Authorisation Evaluator.

Unfortunately, a medical problem kept Rod out of the display circuit in 2003 but he is now fully restored and enjoying being back on the circuit. Rod and his wife live in Surrey with their daughter and youngest son. His eldest son is an RAF fast-jet pilot on the Tornado F3.