

DEVON STRUT NEWS

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

CO-ORDINATOR'S COMMENTS

by Christopher Howell

Eurocharges, EASA, CAA Inflated Charges, Mandatory Insurance and Air Traffic Control all conspire to inflict themselves on our chosen hobby and cause massive confusion. No sooner has one melted away than another rears its ugly head. It is almost impossible to make any sense of it all and you may scream "I JUST WANT TO FLY AND ENJOY MY HOBBY" but be wary where you sneeze; somebody may leap out and slap you with a writ! To address some of the above I have invited Martin Robinson from AOPA to come and talk at the October Strut Meeting, God Bless All Who Sail in her! Talking to Richard Webber and Nigel Skinner recently, a remote Scottish Island looked favourite to create a pilot's safe haven but float planes this maybe tricky as there are moves afoot to ban all floatplanes from Scottish Lochs! [see www.seaplaneassociation.org.uk Ed]

The Scout Camp Initiative is gathering fearsome pace with our target of May 7th and 8th at Belle Vue on track. It has been quite surprising how much work this has entailed and more than equal to overcome all the challenges has been the dedication of Pete White, Mike Mold, Jim Gale and Steve Robson. Meetings, which I sat in on, have been held in Exeter to work out the plan of action. Due to my advancing years there was some debate as to the level of my conscious state to which I responded with a startled "YES" when "Strut Co-Ordinator" dropped into the discussions but I know they were just testing me! I have to admit that with a four-year-old daughter and her level of energy and the rate at which she demands attention, evenings have become a twilight time for me, hence my dull senses! My daughter has now observed I am partially deaf! I asked politely how she arrived at this conclusion, to which she responded, " Well, Daddy, I have to repeat myself so many times because you just grunt."

It is heartening to see a steady arm take over the tiller at the flying school at Dunkeswell, under Brendon Procter and with a new name - Devon and Somerset Flight Training Ltd. Personally, I had been a member for many years, having learnt to fly there and found it good value for money, especially if you can get a good quantity of free tea, coffee and give Richard Breakspear a good stiff prod! This makes for a good afternoon's entertainment! There are also plans in place to base a Tiger Moth at Dunkeswell and offer tailwheel conversion courses and pleasure flights. This will be a most welcome addition as it has long been difficult to obtain tailwheel training in this part of the West Country. Brendon is offering free landings with tea and cakes on Easter Sunday and Monday and, for the rest of the year, he is happy to continue the half-price landing fee for Strut Members with Permit Aircraft which, at £4.50, is remarkable value. Avgas at 98p litre incl.VAT this is not far off mogas garage price for a superior product. Please make good use of these facilities on a "use it or lose it" basis.

The final talk of the winter Strut meetings will be on April 14th when the guest speaker will be Mike Rolffe from Customs and Excise at Plymouth. Mike will cover all aspects of light aircraft flying in and out of the country, which will include Special Branch instructions and details on tobacco, drink and drug recognition. To some members this may not seem relevant but to all members with children it is very useful to have first hand recognition of the range of drugs available and the problem areas this affects.

The traditionally first West Country event of the year, which Devon members have always attended in force, will be the Wessex Strut fly-in at Henstridge on Sunday 27th March. The Aeronca Club will be holding its first picnic/camp of 2005 at Bodmin on 30th April and the Isle of Wight Strut has extended

an invitation to the Devon Strut to fly over to Bembridge on 1st May for the opening of the new grass runway and enjoy a barbecue and general good hospitality. There will be free landing on the day but otherwise the fee is £5.

Happy Safe Flying.
Christopher Howell.

Members' News

[No apologies for focusing this month on developments within the strut, with several updates on existing projects and photos of the pride & joy of new members. – Ed]

New Aeronca Champ at Bodmin

by Derek Boyce

Aeronca Champ G-BPFM arrived at Bodmin on Saturday 19 March, making a total of four Aeroncas now based at the airfield. I think Pete White has a plan to attract as many Aeroncas to Bodmin as there are Austers at Eggesford, so just another 30 to go! Trevor Roberts (the previous owner) flew it from Rochester to Old Sarum and then Pete White and I flew it on down to Bodmin on a glorious but hazy day. Well, Pete did the take off and landing and I did all the rest.

'FM was first registered on 28 August 1946 to Western Skyways as NC1193E. It was completely rebuilt in 1976, making it nearly 30 years old instead of 60! In 1988 it was imported into the UK from Washington State, USA by Bob Grimstead to help fund the container bringing his Bellanca Champ G-HAMP into the country. In 1991 the engine was changed to an A65 from a Jodel, complete with silencer, which meant we were able to fly down from Old Sarum on what could have passed for a summer's day with the window open without being deafened! The conditions were quite sweltering, particularly as we had both dressed for flying in March! Sometime during its life it grew the larger tail normally associated with the bigger engined Champs, but the available records do not indicate when this happened.

Having flown the Cornwall Flying Club's C152s since getting my PPL, I found the prospect of owning an aircraft quite daunting, but thanks to the help and support from members of the Devon Strut and Aeronca Club, particularly Pete White and a very thorough inspection carried out by Dave Silsbury, this has become a reality. I can now look forward to doing the take off and landing bits!

Regards, Derek



Boredom Fighter Progress Report

by Ian Law

I'm in a state of limbo at the moment with my project - the chap who was going to supply me with some spruce for my spars (a Yacht Spar manufacturer) has gone all quiet on me. I paid him a deposit ages ago and he sent me some samples, which I tested. They seemed to scrape in at just over the minimum stress figure required by the plans and they met the other criteria as far as my limited experience could tell. I still felt a bit uneasy about using wood from such a source for my spars, though!

I wrote to him again about a month ago, after not receiving any response to my e-mails but haven't yet heard back from him! The cost of importing suitable spar material from Aircraft Spruce is truly extortionate - at least for my strangulated budget, which is the main reason for my lack of visible progress!

What I have left of my old stock of spruce seems to be far higher quality than the best that the hatch spar supplier could find for me, judging by the samples. He has truly tried to be helpful but there is quite a gulf between yacht spars and aeroplane spars and I can't expect him to fully appreciate this! This has all been dragging on for months and he has probably become bored with the whole thing. I wouldn't blame him! However, at least the PFA have confirmed that it should be OK for me to obtain the wood from him, if I can, and test it in the same way that I checked the samples. I would, of course, do this with the help of Dave Silsbury.

I've also spent a lot of time fiddling about with PFA's required modifications (all very worthy I'm sure) to my seat belt attachments. These involve dozens (well a lot anyway) of intricate gussets, ash and spruce filler blocks, aluminium bushes and other assorted bits and pieces, all of which have to be a very good fit to be of any use at all. They also have to be epoxied to the fuselage structure after the old epoxy varnish has been scraped away. The new steel fittings then have to be fitted up. It would all have taken just a day or two if it had been at the stage when I was building the fuselage. These bits of wood are all now ready to glue up, when the weather warms up a bit. As for the engine - I have an A80 which lurks in a heated box in my garage. Needs a total overhaul and a carb system etc to replace the old fuel injector.

I enclose a nice photo of an American "BF" with a round cowl taken from the Boredom Fighter website <http://adap.com/>, Hope mine may eventually look a little bit like this one. Best wishes! Ian



Wolf Boredom Fighter Specs: span 20', length 15'5", ht 6', empty weight 500lbs, mauw 738lbs, pwr typ. A65, cruise 85mph @2150rpm, 3 gph (US), stall 42mph. Not a touring machine but ffun!

John Flisher's Banbi G-NONE

We've featured John's Banbi before, and incredibly he's progressed from kit to awaiting clearance to test fly in the space of 10 months! The paint scheme and finishing has been done at Branscome by Mike King.



Banbi G-NONE First engine run-up



Derek Boxell's Fournier RF3 G-BLXH

[Derek was introduced as a new strut member last month and his RF3 'XH is normally based at Eaglescott but....]

However, as I'm in the RAF and based at RAF St Mawgan I keep her in a hangar at St Mawgan as it is easier for me to fly there during the winter months. XH must be the most protected RF as she is kept in a bomb-proof HAS (Hardened Aircraft Shelter)!! She's a delight to fly and I'm looking forward to meeting other Fournier aviators through the strut.



Vaughan Hatton is also a relatively new strut member but has been around the local flying scene for many years with a Maule M5 based at Exeter. His current model is an M7 on the N register and which he shares with his brother Nigel.



Vaughan also has a Lancair 320 in partnership with Paul Gilroy of Bishopsteignton, who, as Vaughan relates, has a good pedigree, having 1,700 + hrs on Hunters and 17,000 hrs on DC10 / B747s with Cathay Pacific and more lately on 747s with Virgin Atlantic.



And not to be outdone, this is Ernie Hoblyn's new canard project! Ernie, Brian Anning wants to discuss your hangar fees....



Congratulations to Mike King on becoming a PFA Inspector

Welcome to new member Brian Cassidy of Exeter. Brian has Thruster T300 G-MWAR under restoration

Places to Go

Tangmere – Jim Gale has visited the museum on the site of the WW2 Battle of Britain airfield at Tangmere. NE of Chichester, W Sussex and reports that it was very professional, interesting and well worth a visit. The site details are www.tangmere-museum.org.uk -Looks good if you're passing through the area.

Cobbaton Combat Museum – Chris Howell has contacted the management at Cobbaton, SE of Barnstaple, with a list of our fly-ins and an invitation for them to bring some of their interesting military vehicles to some of our events. <http://www.cobbatoncombat.co.uk/sales/sales.htm>

Ron Perry has requested we publicise a couple of fly ins he's planning to attend and in which other members might be interested. The first is at **Kyritz near Berlin** over 5th - 8th May. There will also be the opportunity to fly into **Berlin Templehof**. Ron went in 2003 and found it to be a great place. In the Emeraude it was 7 hours flying from Somerset with two stops - one in Kortrijk (Belgium) and Porta Westfalica (Germany). The fly-in is publicised for all wooden aircraft prior to 1970 but all are welcome! If anyone wants any more info they can contact Ron on 0117 9777 912 . Full details are also on the PFA website's "where to go" page. We want to swell the numbers!

His next good recommendation is a taildragger fly-in on 20-22 May at **Texel**, a Dutch Island 4 hours flying from Somerset, with one stop at Headcorn. He went last year and reports that all welcome but only 4 Brits have registered so far. Ron can provide the contact details.

Other recommendations which we have posted on our website include:

The Fleet Air Arm Museum at Yeovilton www.fleetairarm.com

Tracy Tools – This is a family-run company at Dartmouth that can supply just about any tool required for cutting, drilling, tapping, grinding etc. Both Chris Fitton and Jim Gale have praised their speed and quality of service. 01803-833134 or www.tracytools.com

C-130 Pilot's Story

[This is an entertaining story, particularly if you lust over mixed metaphors, by a "colourful" writer from the US 1st Marine Air Wing based at MCAS, Miramar.-Ed]

There I was at six thousand feet over central Iraq, two hundred and eighty knots and we're dropping faster than Paris Hilton's panties. It's a typical September evening in the Persian Gulf; hotter than a rectal thermometer and I'm sweating like a priest at a Cub Scout meeting. But that's neither here nor there. The night is moonless over Baghdad tonight, and blacker than a Steven King novel. But it's 2004, folks, and I'm sporting the latest in night-combat technology – namely hand-me-down night vision goggles (NVGs) thrown out by the fighter boys.

Additionally, my 1962 Lockheed C-130E Hercules is equipped with an obsolete, yet, semi-effective missile warning system (MWS). The MWS conveniently makes a nice soothing tone in your headset just before the missile explodes into your airplane. Who says you can't polish a turd? At any rate, the NVGs are illuminating Baghdad International Airport like the Las Vegas Strip during a Mike Tyson fight. These NVGs are the cat's ass. But I've digressed.

The preferred method of approach tonight is the "random shallow". This tactical manoeuvre allows the pilot to ingress the landing zone in an unpredictable manner, thus exploiting the supposedly secured perimeter of the airfield in an attempt to avoid enemy surface-to-air-missiles and small arms fire. Personally, I wouldn't bet my pink ass on that theory but the approach is fun as hell and that's the real reason we fly it. We get a visual on the runway at three miles out, drop down to one thousand feet above the ground, still maintaining two hundred eighty knots. Now the fun starts. It's pilot appreciation time as I descend the mighty Herk to six hundred feet and smoothly, yet very deliberately, yank into a sixty degree left bank, turning the aircraft ninety degrees offset from runway heading. As soon as we roll out of the turn, I reverse the turn to the right a full two hundred seventy degrees in order to roll out aligned with the runway. Some aeronautical genius coined this manoeuvre the "Ninety/Two-Seventy." Chopping the power during the turn, I pull back on the yoke just to the point my nether regions start to sag, bleeding off energy in order to configure the pig for landing. "Flaps Fifty!, Landing Gear Down!, Before Landing Checklist!". I look over at the co-pilot and he's shaking like a cat shitting on a sheet of ice. Looking further back at the navigator, and even through the NVGs, I can clearly see the wet spot spreading around his crotch. Finally, I glance at my steely-eyed flight

engineer. His eyebrows rise in unison as a grin forms on his face. I can tell he's thinking the same thing I am.... "Where do we find such fine young men?"

Flaps One Hundred!" I bark at the shaking cat. Now it's all aiming point and airspeed. Aviation 101, with the exception there are no lights, I'm on NVGs, it's Baghdad, and now tracers are starting to criss-cross the black sky. Naturally, and not at all surprisingly, I grease the Goodyear's on brick-one of runway 33 left, bring the throttles to ground idle and then force the props to full reverse pitch. Tonight, the sound of freedom is my four Hamilton Standard propellers chewing through the thick, putrid, Baghdad air. The huge, one hundred and thirty thousand pound, lumbering whisper-pig comes to a lurching stop in less than two thousand feet. Let's see a Viper do that!

We exit the runway to a welcoming committee of government issued Army grunts. It's time to download their beans and bullets and letters from their sweethearts, look for war booty, and of course, urinate on Saddam's home. Walking down the crew entry steps with my lowest-bidder, Beretta 92F, 9 millimetre strapped smartly to my side, look around and thank God, not Allah, I'm an American and I'm on the winning team. Then I thank God I'm not in the Army. Knowing once again I've cheated death, I ask myself, "What in the hell am I doing in this mess?" Is it Duty, Honour, and Country? You bet your ass. Or could it possibly be for the glory, the swag, and not to mention, chicks dig the Air Medal. There's probably some truth there too. But now is not the time to derive the complexities of the superior, cerebral properties of the human portion of the aviator-man-machine model. It is however, time to get out of this shit-hole. Hey co-pilot, clean yourself up! And how's 'bout the 'Before Starting Engines Checklist."

God, I love this job!"

Mandatory Third Party and Passenger Liability Insurance

With effect from 30th April new EU mandatory third party and passenger liability insurance will be in force. Details have already been publicised in Popular Flying and CEO Graham Newby hopes to be able to announce a scheme agreed with an underwriter, providing preferential rates for PFA members and permit a/c.

Free Landings – April

Pilot: Bagby, Enniskillen, Gigha, Roserrow, Stapleford and Thruxton

Flyer: Cumbernauld, Enniskillen, Old Buckenham and Stapleford

Next Meeting.

Mike Rolffe, Customs & Excise Officer

Thurs 14th April, 7.30 for 8.00

Buckerell Lodge Hotel, Topsham Rd, Exeter.

This will be the last evening meeting of the season and we will reconvene in October. May I wish all strut members a thoroughly enjoyable flying year, Mike.
