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DEVON STRUT NEWS – February 2008

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

by Pete White

Our AGM at the Ley Arms on Thursday 10th January was brimming which is perhaps surprising considering the nature of the annual necessity and possibly this just proves everyone turns up primarily for the Derek Boyce Show. This year's presentation was even more professional than in previous years but that may be because the Aeronca breed was well represented. - Don't shoot me please but I do love them!

The awards for 2007 were very well deserved and as a committee we do spend a lot of time mulling over likely candidates. As usual we had a few possibilities for both the awards but our decision was reached and happy we are to see the recipients receive them. The Strut Cup went to the 'Three Musketeers', John Havers, Alan Faupel and Maurice Wickstead and was a small way of thanking them for all that hard work and dedication to the Strut over the years at fly-ins, events and our evening meetings. Gentlemen, we thank you. The Les Dray Trophy for pilots could not have gone to a more deserving guy than Luke Roberts. Because of his quiet modesty, many of you would not know of his gliding and powered flying achievements including time in New Zealand as a gliding instructor and in the UK several adventurous flights in his little Jodel D9. Luke is now pursuing a career in commercial aviation and has just been engaged on ground school at Bournemouth with Cabair. Well done Luke and we all wish you well in the future of aviation.



Alan, Maurice & John receiving the Strut Cup from Pete



Luke receiving his cup from Les

The minutes from the meeting are available for you all to read at the end of this newsletter so there is no need for me to repeat the evening's proceedings. However I would like to stay with the AGM for a few moments to look at a few points. Firstly it is pleasing to see how many of you are arriving early enough to enjoy the food that is available, which is also another opportunity to catch up with people you haven't seen for a while. The venue is proving more than adequate for our needs and with the new managers, Steve and Sue in place I have booked our meetings until the 2009 AGM.

I would like to say another thank you to our committee members that retired, Mike King and John Kempton and hope they will still continue supporting the Strut with the same enthusiasm. Please

welcome to the team our new membership secretary John Hope, who encourages you to all be prompt with your 2008 subs which does save us all a lot of time having to chase those outstanding payments.

Steve Cole and Dan Griffiths were co-opted late last year after wishing to assist the team so at the AGM they were voted in as new committee members. We must constantly be looking at bringing in new young blood to have new ideas and keep us older members awake at the committee meetings! If any of you wish to help with the running of the Strut please contact any of the committee or me and we would be very happy to talk with you.

Another change to our committee was Dave Silsbury taking the new post of Engineering Officer, a job he has been performing for years in all but title. His wealth of experience and knowledge has kept a lot of our fleet airborne so this is well deserved recognition and a more apt title.

Already our new treasurer, Peter Gristwood, is fitting the bill very well and his PowerPoint presentation at the AGM was concise and easily understood. He will keep us all under control when it comes to spending your money!



Peter Gristwood (right) explaining the accounts

I'm pleased Ian Walsh is to continue as part of the Fly-in team with David Millin and Peter Gristwood with Keith Wingate helping Ian on safety issues. Jim Gale has masterminded the BaP2 project, which is going from strength to strength, and although very busy with EC business our Steve Robson has been assisting Jim with the build.

Due to illness, our NC rep and newsletter editor Mike Mold missed the AGM, which must be a first in all those years as a Strut member. Mike's work on both the newsletter and website is a shining example to all other Struts in the LAA and is always improving. The latest area in which you will notice Mike's efforts is a greatly improved Airfields page, added to other items he has updated on our website.

This has been a short resume of our Devon Strut committee who are working for us all so that we can get the best out of our hobby and once the weather changes, get up there and aviate! Brian Anning from Watchford Farm has decided to come out of retirement early and has expressed a wish to hold a fly-in on September 14th. Welcome back Brian!

I look forward to seeing you all at the **Ley Arms on Thursday 14th February** for our next meeting with our special valentine for the night, **Polly Vacher** who will treat us to 'Wings Around the World' (Polar flight). See you all there... All the best, Pete White.

When Flying Was Fun

by Maurice Wickstead

(with acknowledgement to the writings of Mac af Uhr, Robert J Serling & Airways magazine)

Maybe it's my age or perhaps my background but, personally, I don't find commercial flying as a passenger 'fun' any more. Discussing this with a fellow long-serving ex-airline man and now editor of a successful US aviation magazine, confirmed my perceptions are by no means singular. Time was, before today's airport 'cattle call', overbearing regulation and unnecessarily burdensome security procedures, when journey by air was a more leisurely and often, pleasurable experience - the skies were truly 'open'.

So with these thoughts in mind, it seems apposite to recount a few amusing tales from an era when individualism still flourished and airline flying was perhaps a less sterile, if a sometimes, unpredictable experience, though this first salutary episode, dated as it is, still has a whiff of bureaucratic officialdom.

Mail was the lifeblood of the early US carriers; paid by the pound, some of the smaller contractors even posted cards (and even bricks!) in quantity to themselves in order to up their take and stave off financial ruin. Their equally gung-ho pilots were a motley, but nonetheless courageous, band of ex WWI flyers, barnstormers and assorted oddballs, who flew often rickety biplanes in atrocious weather over hazardous terrain with only their innate skill and daring to carry them through.

One such was 'Duke' Ledbetter whose regular run was the 200-mile leg from Atlanta to Nashville. Caught in a storm one dark night over Chattanooga, he tried to climb his J5-powered Stinson mailplane over a 5,000 ft peak to give maximum gliding distance in case the engine failed. But quit it did - when the carburettor iced up and the Stinson went into a spin, levelling out just 200 ft over a canyon surrounded by mountainous terrain, before hitting a snowbank and flipping over.



Stearman C3MB mailplane, similar to the type flown by Duke Ledbetter

Coming to his senses, Duke was suddenly aware of the sound of petrol dripping onto metal from the ruptured fuel tank, but although undamaged, he was pinned in the cockpit and unable to release his harness. After what seemed an age, he heard distant voices and began yelling. His rescuers turned out to be an elderly woman and a twelve year-old boy who had dug through the thick snow for half an hour to come to his aid. Duke's next thought was for the safety of

the 250lb of mail and aided by some local farmers, the precious load was rescued and dragged over the canyon's rim to the nearest house. Rather like the fabled Pony Express riders of the Old West, whose imperative was "the mail must get through", Duke was anxious to get his load on its way and on learning that the nearest railhead was some fifteen miles distant, he hired a horse and buggy for the trip over snow-covered roads. On arrival, he discovered that the next train was not for four days and with the poor horse just about exhausted, he persuaded a farmer to drive him onwards to Cookeville (east of Nashville) in a battered old Chevy.

Along the way, the driver insisted on stopping at every farmhouse to recount the occupants with the exciting tale of an airmail plane falling out of the sky. At each stop Duke was offered whiskey, which he initially refused, but his ordeal and the cold weather soon weakened his resolve, so that by the time he reached his destination he was pretty well stoned! Such was the gratitude of the postal authorities that on handing over the rescued mail, the postmaster promptly had him arrested for being drunk in charge of the US Mail! But the tale had a happier ending.

Joined by his employer's top mechanic, after four days they managed to repair the plane and having induced a crowd of locals to spend several hours stamping out a 300 yard take-off run in the deep snow, he got off - just - with the remains of a bush still attached to the wing when he landed at Nashville. Decades later, as a senior captain with a major US airline, Duke was transitioning to Boeing 707s and on his first flight was introduced to the delights of the 'Dutch Roll' (as one instructor chauvinistically described it "everything you'd want in a woman, but not in an airplane!"). He astounded his check captain by gently coaxing the big jet back into level flight by employing the 'falling leaf' technique, learned on the Stearman back in his barnstorming days.

Recalling Kev' Lambton's recent enlightening talk on ATC and the occasional conflicts with pilots, reminded me of how one pre-war flier got his own back on the 'guys in the tower'. Si' Bittner, a captain with one of the pre-war 'Big Four' US airlines, was a legendary prankster and tales of his japes accorded him almost folk hero status among his colleagues. He once got into a spat with the controllers at Tucson, who threatened to report him to the then CAA for flying too close to their tower. Seeking redress at the perceived slight to his professional skill, Bittner secured the services of an awestruck company mechanic to get his revenge. Next day, the mechanic was duly stationed at the base of the tower (fairly flimsy affairs in those days) and when Si' whistled past in a DC-3 just a 'gnat's whisker' away, his co-conspirator gave the wall an almighty thump with a large sledgehammer. "He hit us" screamed one of the controller's and dived for the door, followed rapidly by the rest of the shift!

On another occasion, determined to teach a cocky young co-pilot a lesson, he arranged for an Army pursuit pilot chum to formate on his DC-3. Next day, Si' graciously allowed the youngster to perform the take-off and settle at cruising altitude. Lulled into a false sense of satisfaction and security and blissfully unaware of his senior's fearsome reputation, the



American Airlines DC-3 Sleeper Transport, similar to that flown by Si' Bittner.

youthful co-pilot failed to notice the little fighter pull along side. On cue and remaining unobserved, it promptly rolled inverted, at which point Si' gently tapped him on the shoulder and nodding in the direction of the fighter said "Don't panic, but we're flying upside down"!

Stewardesses, particularly the new girls, have always been the butt of flight-deck crew's mischief and another Bittner tale shows just how vulnerable these young ladies can be before they learn the ropes. Ever the jester, Si' attached a rubber glove to the flexible hot air window defroster hose of his DC-3, placed it on the throttles and having concealed the hose, engaged the autopilot.

After ringing the stewardess call button twice, he and the co-pilot scrambled into the forward cargo hold and when the hapless stew' arrived in the cockpit all she could see was the glove clutching the throttles, but no sign of the pilots. As she departed in a high state of agitation, one of the hidden pranksters reached out and grabbed her leg - her screams could be heard all the way to the back of the plane! But for all his antics, in almost 40 years of flying, Bittner never scratched an aeroplane nor injured a passenger.

In these troubled times, operating crew seem to be hermetically sealed in their computerised 'offices' for the duration, with only the occasionally disembodied PA announcement to indicate their presence. The recent case of a senior captain losing his job with a well-known holiday airline for allowing a passenger (on a private charter) onto the flight deck in order to allay his fears about flying, reminded me that not so long ago access to the cockpit was comparatively unfettered, as this last story will reveal. It relies on the layout of the Boeing 727 cockpit, which has the fuel dump controls behind a small access door betwixt the flight engineer's station and the forward bulkhead separating the first-class toilet.

The subject aircraft also featured a small blue lamp mounted high up on the bulkhead that lit up when the toilet was occupied; presumably designed to avoid passengers and crew embarrassingly colliding with each other upon exit.

Relieving the 'hours of boredom, punctuated by rare moments of panic' the F/E on one particular flight was more than gratified to admit an attractive young flight attendant to the cockpit and readily invited her to sit on jump seat, though the occupants of the flight deck were a little deflated when they learned that rather than sampling the delights of their company, she was merely awaiting a vacancy in the forward lavatory. With the quick thinking attributed to these highly trained men of action, the F/E shot a quick glance at the blue lamp, opened the fuel dump panel and cupping his hands to the aperture

stared intently into the 'hole' for several seconds before announcing "Your right, there's a little old lady in there, but it looks like she should be finished soon". The polite young girl, though almost speechless, pretended not to notice the obvious indelicacy. After a few minutes the telltale lamp was extinguished and to the almost irrepressible mirth of his colleagues, the F/E again made a production of peering into



his secret aperture and after slamming it shut, loudly proclaimed "The old lady is done. Her paperwork is complete. You can go in now". The embarrassed stew' made a hasty exit from the flight deck and shot straight down to the rear of the aircraft. But there was a sting in the tail – sometime later the captain got an irate call from the senior flight attendant about spying on first-class passengers ablutions and it cost the flight-deck crew a slap-up dinner and much grovelling to avoid being reported. The story goes that the young victim of their caper continued to fly for many years, but never again visited the forward 'loo' on a Boeing 727!

B727-200 Flight Engineer station; the fuel dump control panel location is masked by second officer

So be warned – in these times of wall-to-wall CCTV surveillance and pin-hole cameras, the next time you visit the 'facilities' on a commercial aircraft, have a good look round the compartment before proceeding. For with airlines trying to wring every last cent of revenue from their customers, you may find embarrassing footage of yourself appearing on 'Police, Camera, Action' or even, 'Auntie's Bloomers' ! Happy days!

Derwent Revival

by Richard Scanlon

(A short account of one man using his engineering skills to breath life into an old flame. Names have not been changed to protect the guilty.)

Early autumn and two Robin's were on their way to Eaglescott when something caught the eye of one of the pilots as they over flew Eggesford. Not unusual to see something out of the ordinary at this airfield, a Wilga and a Broussard stand tall over more Auster marks than you can shake a stick at. Add some Cubs, Chipmunks and other types (must mention our Emeraude!) and you have a colourful mix that makes LAA flying what it is.

But today was a bit different and, what the startled pilot saw (wake up Dermot!), didn't have wings. It looked like a vehicle but most cars don't have a tail of burnt Jet A-1 blowing the grass flat for a good distance behind as the locked wheels skate across the grass. The gaggle of onlookers had a better view watching, with fingers in ears, as Mark Taylor ran his MK V Derwent up to third throttle and back again. Even at this low throttle a gallon every 20 seconds was given over to a howl that I would defy anyone to walk by and not just stop and stare. Nigel Skinner had (sort of) given us permission to run it at the airfield but, as he was absent on the day in question, persuading his son to give the final seal of approval was a bit like asking someone if they would like free beer.

This is Rolls Royce's finest from the factory in Derby, a centrifugal compressor jet developing 4,200 pounds of thrust at full throttle. Bolt two of them under the wings of a MKVII Meteor and you have a frontline fighter of the RAF that was the mainstay of our defence in the middle part of the century.

My father, like many others of the time, saw the attraction of joining a university squadron (No 3 Flight Training School based at RAF Feltwell). The RAF *ab initio* trainer of the time was the Chipmunk, followed by a spell in the Harvard. Then, some two hundred and seventy hours later; the moment arrived to climb into the two seat T7 Meteor trainer.

For a young man of the day this must have been a heady moment indeed as, for a period of time, the Meteor did not enjoy a good safety record. Between 1944 and 1965 the survival figures did not bode well for a young cadet officer. In total 888 Meteors crashed with the loss of 431 pilots and 10 navigators (*Meteor Eject!* by Nick Carter). Maybe the RAF training policy of the time was flawed as, having spoken to a couple of ex-Meteor pilots, they only had good things to say of the aircraft. The first step was to see if the pilot could lock his knee to deal with the huge rudder force of asymmetric flying where one engine would be shut down (not throttled back!). The hapless pupil would then have to practice, IN THE CIRCUIT, with one engine. Failure to hold the knee in the locked position, even with some help from a not-so-spare hand, would see the Meteor perform a perfect roll straight into the ground. Another favourite was the failure of the canopy at altitude, as my father had the joy of experiencing. This sudden loss of pressurisation rapidly led to unconsciousness and subsequent loss of control and, for a period of time, was an unexplained loss of pilots and aircraft. My father was one of the lucky ones with a timely recovery to a state where he could land the aircraft, but leaving him medically unfit to fly jets again.

Some fifty years later and Mark is scouting round a well known local scrap dealer trying to source a particular alloy that would be suitable for a scratch built jet engine for his model helicopter. Even with little previous experience of gas turbines, the forlorn looking Derwent couldn't fail to catch his eye.

A deal is done and the engine is transported back to his home in West Hill with the intention of cannibalizing it for some precious metal to hand craft a 3" impellor blade. However, some people just don't think in the same way as the rest of us. So, over the following weeks came some head scratching, mixed with a lot of research and some phone calls - Rolls gave Mark the 'phone number of Meteor Flight Ltd in Yatesbury.



Enter stage left a small group of mostly retired enthusiasts dedicated to amassing what would appear to be the last remaining world stocks of new and used Meteor spares. www.meteorflight.com. When entering an old blister hanger, sited on what used to be an old WW1 airfield, the enormity of spares collected is such that one might think they have enough to build a whole squadron of Meteors. Many boxes remain un-opened as there is little time to catalogue or space to store the parts, so they just sit in the boxes quietly waiting. They have one airframe that is now nearly complete and its progress can be seen on their website. Mark's enthusiasm for his engine was recognised by the group and advice and spares, where possible, were exchanged for cash or engineering services.

Now the word was out and people regularly gathered to watch progress of the project trying to ask intelligent questions with little real idea of the workings of it all, other than identifying which end the air went in and where the hot gas came out. Sometimes the explanation of this part alone was all a bit baffling, best just to nod thoughtfully and pretend you understand it all.

Things were looking promising and a test bed was needed, maybe this could have wheels? So a scrap 1985 Mitsubishi L300 truck was found for £50 (a fitting make as Mitsubishi used to make Zero's), stripped of all its body, things added (ever seen Mad Max 2?) but, for the main, was kept standard, including all the drive, suspension and steering. Time for an MOT and then the project could really get



going. Add some cunningly placed tubes, brackets, belt and braces (as you don't want this puppy making a bid for freedom) and the Derwent had a new home, albeit not as graceful as slung under a Meteor. In total some two years passed until the truck was ready for the hardest part which, as usual, was the finishing. A few parts proved difficult to source, two of the flame tubes needed repair as well as a plethora of small parts to make things complete.

Finally the day came and the original clockwork mechanism started the sequence of actions required to get this era of engine going, all easier than starting an O-200. Set throttle to full, hit the start button, open the fuel shut-off,

while bringing the throttle back to idle and the automated set of relays does the rest. Then things start to whirl and clatter just before it all starts to get VERY loud. After a short while the engine settles to a modest tick over of 3,500 rpm then, if you're brave enough, full throttle cruise will see 14,000 rpm on the gauge or 14,700 for combat power setting! However, the old Mitzo truck was never intended as a high speed test bed so, to date, half throttle is as brave as Mark has been, as well as about the limit of how far one's fingers can be inserted into one's ears.

After the couple of short runs at Eggesford we had parked the Derwent by the hangar and, just before returning home, had a quick flight in the Emeraude. A friend and his wife arrived, a little late to see it running, but never-the-less, keen to have a look. Slightly lost for words all she could exclaim was "WHY?" It's one of those questions that you know the answer to, but just can't quite put it into words. Fortunately, after a moments silence, Richard H. had the answer. "Why not?" he said. Sounds like the right answer to me.



Mark Taylor earns his living as a stainless steel fabricator specialising in aircraft and motorcycle exhausts and generally making shiny things with a tig welder. Otherwise he can be found in my workshop laughing uncontrollably as I try and glue my Europa together.

For further information on the Derwent project Mark can be contacted at markt640@tiscali.co.uk.

Members' News & Aeroletters

Older Dog!

South Hams Flying Club is delighted to announce that member Bryan King was a little bit older than John Hilliard when he obtained his microlight licence at 77 years old and is still flying now at 84. He and member John Moore (one year younger) bought an unfinished MW6 project and completed it. Unfortunately, they then had a crankshaft break but Bryan landed perfectly in a small field. Then 2 years ago, aged 82, Bryan had



another engine out and ended up upside down in a field, dangling from his seat belt and with petrol pouring down. An extensive rebuild by these youngsters ensued which is now finished.

Meanwhile, ex-engineer Bryan built a beautiful metal hangar and masterminded another 3 hangars by making jigs, cutting metal, welding, drilling and assembling them at Halwell. Currently, John is training for his NPPL and when he passes his GST he will be 83 – so watch this space! *SHFC*.

Richard Walker has a new email address Richardwalker123@talktalk.net

Dear Jim,

Hope you and your family have a very happy Christmas and New Year. From all at the 3rd Air Scouts. Please also thank all at the Devon Strut for all their kind help with flying this year. Happy Christmas and New Year, Derek Andrew.

From Alan Faupel, John Havers and Maurice Wickstead

Dear Pete,

Our thanks to you and the Strut Committee for considering that the Three Musketeers were deemed deserving enough to be awarded the Devon Strut Cup. You can imagine we were surprised and appreciative that our marshalling efforts, which of course we greatly enjoy, should be so recognised.

You did say at the AGM that we were helped by others and we would particularly like to mention Barry Goose from Okehampton and Ernie Lee from Chard, and also those other Strut members who lend a hand on busy occasions. As John said last evening, we also value the way those pilots flying into our events co-operate so well with our vigorous arm waving! We look forward to be able to offer a similar service over the coming season.

With best regards, Alan, John and Maurice

Brian Murray, whilst expanding his flying horizons with Dermot Richardson's Exeter-based Robin Flying Group, is continuing to make excellent progress with his RV9a project at Teignmouth.



The LAA Engineering fees have just been revised to include those for transfer of previous CofA a/c on to PtF. I've just caught up with the Dec07 NC mtg minutes and note that Alan Twigg, who has a Jodel DR1050, has just completed an EASA CoA and the paperwork alone cost £450. So with an initial transfer fee for LAA PtF of £350 for the same aircraft type and an annual of £200, it seems that the LAA charges are cheaper (as well as all the other benefits). Regards, Jim.

The Strut's Scout Aerocamp to be held over the weekend of 7th & 8th June at Belle Vue is in the early planning stages. Due to alternative commitments of Paul and Mary Aston, we're looking for new tutors

to run the navigation lectures so if there are any Strut members who would like to join the team, please get in touch with Pete White on 01752-406660

At **Watchford**, Tony Simpson's Jodel D11 rebuild is nearing completion, as are Brian Anning's new hangar doors.



The Strut website has a new **Airfields page** based on Google Maps. In the course of updating the site, I spoke to John Tribble who used to own Henscott Farm and from where he flew his Rallye. John has now sold the farm and retired from flying and has asked that we publicise the fact that Henscott strip is no longer in existence. –Ed.

February Free Landings

Pilot: Fife (Glenrothes), Old Sarum, Pembrey, Peterborough (Connington) and Sturgate.
Flyer: Blackpool, Bourn, Kemble and White Waltham.
Today's Pilot: Blackbushe, Cromer, Panshanger and Wick.

Fly-In & Event Calendar 2008

March 23 rd	Henstridge	Wessex Strut	01963-32101/ 01963-364231
April 13 th	Popham	Jodel fly-in	01256-397733
May 3 rd	Bodmin	Pete White	01752-406660 / 07774-017704
May 4 th	Plymouth	John Kempton/ Steve Leach	01548-842057 01752-785452
May 3 rd -5 th	Popham	M/L Fair/ & AeroJumble	01256-397733
May 31 st / June 1 st	Dunkeswell R/Rally	Dave Silsbury	01752-690358
June 29 th	Halwell	Keith Wingate	01548-857531
July 27 th	Branscombe	Bill Hayman David Hayman	07920-263956 01297-680259
August 3 rd	Lundy Island	Pete White	01752-406660 / 07774-017704
August 17 th	Treborough	Mark Weatherlake	01984-641179
September 6 th	Belle Vue	Jim Gale	07887-906789
September 14 th	Watchford	Brian Anning	01823-601268

Non fly-ins

May 10th/11th National YA weekend
 June 7th/8th Belle Vue Scout Camp

FOR SALE:

Aeronca 65CA Super Chief 1941. Rare 2 seat side by side aircraft in first class condition. Cont. 85hp engine. Millennium cylinders, Slick magnetos, Sensenich propeller, excellent touring aircraft, 90mph cruise with superb STOL, 3.5gph (Mogas), 70lbs baggage capacity, 300 nm range, radio, GPS, Mode C transponder, £14,500 ono. Contact: Phil Brewer 07962 646035 or Pete White 01752 406660 / 07774 017704.



Alternator – 60 A, to suit C90 / O-200, surplus to Titch project. Offers: Keith Wingate 01548-857513

Jabiru J400 kit, untouched in its original packaging available for despatch from Seething Airfield at a heavily discounted price of £34,995 (a discount of £4000 on the factory price). If you would like to take advantage of this considerable discount and avoid many months delivery delay then please contact me for details. Steve Hiscox, Seething Jabiru Group, Tel: 01508 536033, Email: steve_hiscox@hotmail.com

Pre-Flight Planning

A useful checklist reproduced with acknowledgements to the Auster Club website. It is your duty as the Pilot in Command to carry out the following duties before flight:

1. Check all relevant Notams. <http://www.ais.org.uk>
2. Ring the Red Arrows hot line. 0500 354 802 (It is free)
3. Check the weather. <http://secure.metoffice.com>
4. You must have the required maps for the portion of the intended route.
5. You should have charts or a description of the airfield / strip you are going to land at.
6. If PPR is required you should obtain it by phone before departure.
7. If you have never been to the airfield before, whilst getting PPR if required or just for your knowledge, talk to the airfield and preferably the owner or a qualified CFI./FI and get a local area, airfield brief.
8. Approaching Airfield listen out before getting close, to pick up local weather, gauge how busy it is.
9. Know the airfield joining instructions, circuit direction, etc and follow them.
10. If it's a non-radio airfield, use Safetycom on 135.475 and make blind transmissions.

This list is not exhaustive but will aid in making life legal and safer for us all.

Next Meeting:

Thursday 14th February 2008, 7.30 for 8.00 p.m. Ley Arms, Kenn, Exeter. <http://tinyurl.com/2zw3dq>
Polly Vacher will talk about her 'Wings Around the World' polar flight exploits in support of Flying Scholarships for the Disabled and a collection will be made for this charity. A brief introduction to Polly can be found at www.airracinghistory.freeola.com/PILOTS/Polly%20Vacher.htm and <http://www.worldwings.org>

The Ley Arms is reached by exiting the A38 at the Kennford junction, adjacent to the Shell petrol station and following the minor road eastwards for 1km from Kennford into Kenn village.

Future Meetings *(the 2 remaining meetings have been rearranged)*

Thursday 13th March '08 **Bill Leary**. AN2 Club. Discover this big biplane and how to fly one!
Thursday 10th April '08 **Rob Midgely**. Shell Oil's technical expert.

Minutes of the LAA Devon Strut AGM. (10th January 2008, Ley Arms, Exeter.)

1. Apologies for Absence.

Mike Mold, Trevor Reed, John Kempton, Paul & Mary Aston

2. Minutes of the last meeting.

Proposed: John Havers; Seconded: Ian Walsh

3. Co-ordinators Report. (Pete White)

12 months ago I was press-ganged into service at the helm of the Devon Strut and my first year as Co-ordinator has been eventful in many ways but primarily it has been a strong and successful year for us all. When I put on my new hat, it was never my wish to 'rock the boat' when, after all, the Strut was rolling along nicely. But having been a member of the Devon Strut for a very long time and served on the committee, I had seen just how much work was being produced by so few for so many. Over the years I have served on several committees and teams and know that what we have here is quite the norm, but what concerned me was that this ever-hard working team would slowly screw themselves into the ground. So as a team we have reviewed our workload and co-opted new volunteers to help run the Strut. You will notice from our 2008 calendar that our events are tailored to suit our available team of volunteers.

Teamwork is the key to our success. E=t=F

2007 NC meetings had 4 members from the Strut in evidence, SR on the EC, JG as NC Chairman, MM as scribe and Strut rep and myself as a rep for Aeronca Club. As a Strut we have earned this position with years of dedication to the cause and as our strengths have developed we have become, and rightly so, an example to the rest of the Association.

Speakers for 2007 have been varied and extremely interesting,

February Melvyn Hiscock (Rearwin Cloudster)

March Mike Cross (AIS Website, AIC's and Notams)

April Members forum

October Members Forum LAA debate etc

November Francis Donaldson (guests, Chris & Barbara Puntis, EAA Chapter 14, San Diego)

December Kev Lambton (SATCO Plymouth)

Some of our many local highlights for 2007, BaP2 and its development with JG at its helm, FaTaP at Bodmin was very successful but no windows available this year with the limited help that is available. Scout Aerocamp June 8/9/10 **New Lecturers needed for Navigation and A/C Instruments** The SW Regional Rally, well what a brilliant logistical exercise with the practical rehearsal on the Dunkeswell Jodel Fly-in last Oct, making this year's Rally a dead cert to be superb!

Some of our gang made it to The Northern Lights Rally at Wick (SR, MM, MW) and again to the Sherburn Rally. John Crabb found the summer in Belgium. Polly Vacher visited some of our local aerodromes on her 'Wings Around Britain Tour', S. West Airfield Heritage Trust at Smeatharpe 28/29th July, Henstridge Vintage Fly-in, Aeronca Club French Aerotour, Dunkfest Sept 1st. PFA AGM on 1st Sept was where the deciding vote for the name change was established. Vintage and Classic type Clubs met at Kidlington to establish a unity and direction for the future. HAA and other non LAA Clubs were there.

Congratulations to Luke Roberts on securing a place with Cabair at Bournemouth to do his ATPL ground school. Congratulations also to Steve Robson for being awarded the President's Joystick at the PFA AGM for Services to the Association (in his role as Chairman of the EC sub committee on Events, Activities & Education, including the co-ordination of the 2007 regional rallies).

Rain did affect our events; Besides the RR at Dunkeswell there were Farway x2, Lundy and Branscombe. The Strut was well represented at SPLASH, backing the BaP2 and PFA stands. Some of our crew met up with Bill Tee from RAA Toronto who the Devon Strut has also twinned with. Our relations with Onrisk insurance builds as time goes on and I know many of our members are very happy that they have signed up with them. Remember Onrisk subsidises our web site and offer us all 10% discount off what is already a good rate.

Jack fell down... Sadly we have to record the passing of fellow pilots in 2007: Alex Henshaw, pre war & WW2 Legend; Neville Duke - WW2 and post war legend; Brian Brown - Real Aeroplane Co top pilot; Dick Stratton - Engineer and pilot supreme; Cliff Piper - ex RAF and PFA master pilot; Graham Jarvis - Vintage Cub pilot and ex SW; Michael Claydon - ex airline pilot, Tiger Club and Strut member.

2008 is all before us and I thank you all for your support and if any of you have a yearning to help in any way please contact any committee member or me. We try to bring fresh blood to the table so we don't get stale and it is your Strut so please, if you can be a part of it, **do** so and join in the fun.

4. Treasurer's Report (Peter Gristwood)

Devon Strut Balance Sheet for 2007

	Expenditure			Income	
	2006	2007		2006	2007
Web Site Development	322.49	217.50	Opening Balance	2249.88	2819.70
Stationery	21.65	28.50	Member's Subs.	2260.00	2620.00
Newsletter Post/copying	256.60	201.97	Interest	53.21	88.74
Membership Post/copying	80.36	84.00	Fly-In Profits	25.60	47.50
National Council Mtgs.	120.00	248.96	Aerosite Challenge	50.00	10.00
Strut Meetings	433.15	391.95	Website Adverts	500.00	750.00
Fly-in expenses	None	475.95	Other Income	None	734.69
Donations	None	None			
Misc. Expenses	1084.74	2922.91*			
Closing Balance	2819.70	2498.89			
	5138.69			5138.69	7070.63

* see misc expenditure below

Notes

- Membership increased by 23 to 196 in 2007, Subscription income increased by £360
- There were 33 new members in 2007, but we lost 10 previous members.
- 69 % of Devon Strut members were also PFA members in 2007, down from 85% in 2006
- The balance of Strut funds has fallen by £321 during the year, despite a rise in income. This is due primarily to the Strut being more involved in National activities and in increasing the Strut Assets.
- The Dunkeswell Rally in July cost the Strut £734.69, but this was balanced by income of £110 and a donation from HQ of £624.29
- The Strut Committee invested in a number of items over the year to replace or renew our Strut Assets
 - Investment in Fly-In Safety Apparatus cost £64.20
 - Investment in Road Trailer (Fly-In Gear) cost £600.00
 - Investment in 3 S/H Tents (Fly-ins) cost £240.00. Due to the poor weather 2 of these were destroyed.
 - Investment in S/H Display Tables cost £70.00
 - Devon Strut Liability Insurance (Fly-Ins) cost £735.00
 - Newsletter costs decreased by £54.63. Web site development/maintenance costs of £217.50, down from £322.49

*Analysis of Miscellaneous Expenditure

<i>Purchase of Equipment</i>	<i>Strut Expenses</i>	<i>Education</i>
Trailer 600.00	Strut Insurance 735.00	BaP2 160.51
Tents 240.00	Committee Exp 467.91	FaTaP 220.00
Tables 70.00	Bank Charges 32.00	Scout Camp 196.18
Safety Equipment 64.20	Other Expenses 15.93	Other Costs 121.18
974.20	1,250.84	697.87

Total Miscellaneous Expenditure £2,922.91. We propose that the subscription rate for 2007 remains at £15.00. The above represents a true and accurate account of all transactions posted during 2007.

Accounts Proposed: John Hope; Seconded: Roger Benson

5. National Council Report. (Jim Gale)

I attended 4 EC mtgs, 4 NC mtgs and the last PFA AGM. For various reasons there were always 3, sometimes 4 Devon reps at NC mtgs (JG as strut rep, MM as minute taker, SR as EC member and PW as Aeronca Club rep) so we always had quite a lot to contribute and generally it was acknowledged that the Devon Strut was an ideal example of what a Strut should be, so pat yourselves on the back! This was re-emphasised in the Dec 07 NC mtg when, during a round table survey of Struts, Devon's report showed that it held 4 times more events than any other Strut. At 196 members we are the largest "local" strut (one "national" type club has more). 135 of us are LAA members; we would like you all to be, to help strengthen the Association.

I helped several members through the year by taking their problems to PFA HQ and eliciting responses, mostly to the good. If you have a problem just ask me or Mike Mold (who will be NC rep this year) and we will endeavour to help.

The function of the NC is under review at the moment. This review is being overseen by Dicky Bird's sub-committee, which is due to report its findings in March. This is all wrapped up in the new impetus given by the Association name change, for which the NC by discussion, was hugely responsible in endorsing at their June 07 meeting.

Slightly off NC matters, on the Youth and Education side, we flew 65 youngsters who became registered Young Aviators (some of whom joined the PFA) and we probably took up as many parents and teachers as well, introducing them to the delights of PFA/LAA flying. Of two memorable flights for me were the one from a very cross windy and turbulent Bodmin on the FATAP day flying the teachers as well as the kids (one of whom is now learning to fly) and the other taking the scout leaders up on the Saturday evening of the Scout Aerocamp. Subsequently two of the Scouters have been helping with the Devon Youth Build a plane project, so again the Strut has made a suitable impression.

Regarding the BaP2 project, this continues to proceed at Tim Gilmore-White's workshop in Thorverton. (If anybody wishes to visit just ring Tim 01392-860520. We are there with youngsters Thursday nights and Saturday mornings but Tim will be pleased to show you around anytime.) The instrument panel is going together at Kingsbridge and some sheet metalwork is happening at Branscombe. The wings are about to go on at Thorverton (next week) and the engine installation soon after. We hope to be ready to test fly in April. Fingers crossed! I wish you all a safe and a good flying year in 2008, Jim.

6. Election of Officers.

Mike King & John Kempton retired from the committee and were thanked for their support to the Strut over recent years. The following members were elected / re-elected to the committee:

Co-ordinator: Pete White

Treasurer & Airspace Officer: Peter Gristwood

NC Vice Chairman / Youth BaP2 Co-ordinator – Jim Gale

NC Rep & Newsletter Editor – Mike Mold

Engineering Officer – Dave Silsbury

Membership Sec. – John Hope

Fly-In & Events Team:

Fly-In Co-ordinator – David Millin;

Safety Officer – Ian Walsh;

Assistant Safety Officer - Keith Wingate

Peter Gristwood

Executive Committee Rep. – Steve Robson

New Members:

Steve Cole (*proposed by Mike King, seconded by Steve Robson*)

Dan Griffiths (*proposed by Ian Walsh, seconded by Nigel Skinner*)

7. Presentation of Awards:

Strut Cup: Winners: John Havers, Maurice Wickstead & Alan Faupel

Commendations: Tim Gilmour White & Jim Gale

Les Dray Trophy. Winner : Luke Roberts

Commendations : Mike Wells & Steve Robson

8. Any Other Business

EC Report – Steve Robson 2007 has seen considerable changes for the Association including a move away from the single rally concept and culminating a change of name to the Light Aircraft Association. Mode S and EASA have dominated the political scene and again, considerable progress has been made in these areas.

- 1 Political / lobbying, mode S, fuel degradation, green tax, future of avgas / mogas, pan European recreational Pilots Licence, Over flight, Europe Air Sports, EFLEVA, aircraft moved out of annex 2 and onto the LAA register (see below).
- 2 Internal processes, EC Sub Committee structure is working very effectively and a review of the NC is taking place at present, brand change to LAA was successful although some bugs have to be worked out of the web site. The Membership survey – fantastic results, ca 20% response rate, 93k words written. Data is being processed into a readable format and will be published in LA along with an action plan for improvements.
- 3 Engineering – review of procedures and improvements in service, greater for renewal and mods.
- 4 Increase in the LAA fleet (Jodels and Austers) with others to follow. The need to recruit another engineer to deal with the increase in workload and provide more overall capacity within the dept
- 5 PFAET, now established
- 6 Events Education and Activities, 3 RR plus collaborative and commercial events. Establishment of a training centre for building and flying skills (PCS)

The future looks very positive for the Association as we continue to grow and develop membership benefits within our capabilities and resources.
