

DEVON STRUT NEWS

The Newsletter of the Devon Strut of the Popular Flying Association. March 2006.

CO-ORDINATOR'S COMMENTS

by Christopher Howell

Spring is in the air!! Well it is March and the sap is rising. My little domestic engineer maybe short but boy has she got powerful lungs as I found out again this month! My latest wheeze is to display the Devon Strut website homepage as the opening display when we log on with our computer. That move went well and I was very pleased with the result; much better than the Google home page. The very slight drawback was no direct reference point to a search engine! Mike Mold came to the rescue and sent me the link to the Google toolbar download. Now peace has returned to our domestic haven. I have an interesting homepage www.devonstrut.co.uk combined with a Google toolbar for searching and reference requirements.

PFA Chairman Roger Hopkinson was our guest speaker on 15th February. We had received quite a build-up from Jim Gale, reporting from an NC meeting where Roger gave his presentation. Three dozen strut members and guests were not to be disappointed. Roger is an experienced engineer and business manager who has built an RV6a and is preparing to start an RV10 project.



He gave a very detailed and inspiring presentation describing where he sees the future of the PFA. He revealed many interesting statistics, not least the fact that 40-50% of the PFA membership is made up of aircraft enthusiasts that do not own aircraft or a pilot's license. 22,000 aircraft are on the GA register. Granted, not all hold a current airworthiness certificate but this compares with between only 1,000 and 4,000 airline passenger-carrying aircraft. Roger's point was that GA has a big part to play in UK aviation and to this end he sits on the GA Alliance Board <http://www.gaalliance.org.uk> formed to give everyday pilots a say in UK and European aviation, through consultation and representation by the Alliance's constituent organisations. With 25 European member states to appease, a lot of hard work is going on behind the scenes over issues arising from the formation of EASA. There was also a list of safety matters and as we know, there needs to be a clear focus in this direction to ensure all pilots are competent and well practised. Hence, Roger's review and promotion of the PFA Coaching Scheme. It was also interesting to note that there are in excess of 37,000 modeller's in the UK and members spoke of how their interest in all things flying began with building and flying model aircraft. There is also a drive to promote flying to youngsters through the Education Strut and Roger spoke of the need to harness and direct the good work being carried out by Stewart Luck. I know from my own experience with the ATC cadets how difficult the powers-that-be can affect our progress in that direction. I continue to strive to create a vehicle by which we can invite ATC Cadets to our events to share the pleasure of flying. The Devon Strut has already organised a date for the 2006 Scout Camp and hopefully we can organise another date for the ATC cadets. Roger's PowerPoint file will be placed on the Strut's website so members who were not able to be present can get a feel for the breadth and depth of the challenges facing the UK Sport & Recreational flying

community, the values and vision that Roger has for the PFA, its role in providing the engineering & support services to members and its lobbying to protect and improve our privileges. All in all, we thank Roger for taking the time and trouble to travel down to Devon and share his vision with us.

Plymouth Airport has a new flying school, the Plymouth School of Flying, following Richard Bristow's departure. At the moment they are located in the GAMA hangar with plans to erect new buildings at the eastern side of the main terminal. Lynn from Plymouth School of Flying told me they welcome all Strut members to drop in for a coffee or tea and that the windows in the new buildings will afford a perfect view of all departing and arriving aircraft.

With the recent announcements that some of the main banks are showing massive profits, though they do say as much as 50% of their profits are from foreign business, it always fascinates me to see queues of bedraggled bank customers waiting patiently in the pouring rain to attempt to draw their hard earned money from a hole in the wall. At the same time they have to keep a beady eye out for muggers and a nice scanner stuck to the wall skimming all their bank account details. I suppose it harks back to the days of soup kitchen queues where you would have seen a similar long trailing mass of bedraggled souls. Good old banks, we love you!!!!

Now, whilst on the subject of the Empire, our March guest speaker is Peter Vacher and he will relate the story about finding a Hawker Hurricane abandoned at a university in India. If you think bureaucracy has gone mad in the UK then wait until you hear about Peter's years of wrestling with the Indian Government. It is interesting that this aircraft was rotting away but when Peter spotted it and expressed an interest, how fast it became a monument of national importance, with negotiations taking years to resolve. The aircraft is now back in the UK, fully restored to flying condition and will be flown down for the Branscombe Air Day. Peter's talk will be on Thursday March 9th 7.30 for 8.00 at the Stowey Arms.

Best wishes, Christopher

Nicholsons in the USA

by Nigel Nicholson

Dear Members

Chris Howell asked me to write up a recent trip to USA which included a bit of flying. I do not possess Chris' colourful writing wit, so I won't try to compete. I had 'use them or lose them' benefits with Thai Airways of the Star Alliance network, so decided to take a trip to San Diego and Las Vegas. Brother Robert did not take a lot of persuading to join me so we booked 8-23 January with United Airlines.

Since returning to UK in 2004, I have been flying on my Australian licence, which I gained in Western Australia in January 2003. Attempts to take my UK skills test here have been foiled by one reason or another, including low cloud and frost. By the way, before I could take my UK test I had to take 4 of the usual exams, being Air Law, Human Performance, RT written and RT practical. I had done these at Exeter Flying Club. I looked into taking my UK skills test in USA, and through adverts in Pilot magazine I got in touch with Andy at Anglo-American Aviation International, www.flyaaa.com based at Gillespie field, a Class D airfield a few miles east of San Diego International. Andy told me I could take my UK test at Gillespie, provided I attended to certain paperwork. I had to take with me evidence of my eligibility for the test in the form of documentation of my exams supplied by Exeter Flying Club, plus of course, log book and Australian licence, medical etc.

To fly solo in USA on my Australian licence needed a different approach. I downloaded a 'Verification of Authenticity of Foreign Licence' form from the Federal Aviation Administration and I faxed it to them from http://www.faa.gov/licenses_certificates/airmen_certification/foreign_license_verification/. The FAA then got in touch with CASA, the Civil Aviation Safety Authority in Australia <http://www.casa.gov.au> who kindly responded to FAA and confirmed to them that I do have a licence. The process obviously takes time and 60 days prior to arrival in USA is recommended, although my verification copy letter was through a lot quicker than that. UK pilots wanting to do the same have an

extra fax to send. They have to confirm to CAA in UK www.caa.co.uk that they do indeed request the CAA to confirm the authenticity of the pilot's UK licence to the FAA. It's to do with data protection, I understand, and there is a modest fee payable.

We arrived at San Diego International on an internal flight after immigration clearance and change of planes at Chicago. The total flying time was around 12 hours. The U.S. Weather Bureau describes San Diego's climate as the most nearly perfect in America! It has been characterized as Mediterranean-like, with warm winters and cool summers. See <http://www.hribar.com/san-diego-weather.html> if you want to visit some day.

We had an overnight stay in San Diego and next day took a budget flight with Southwest Airlines to Las Vegas. What a place! Where else in the world can you visualize the Statue of Liberty and New York Skyline, the canals of Venice, the pyramids of Egypt, the Eiffel Tower and the Roman era all in a day?



The last time I was there, also with my brother Robert, was 1981. So many of the 'huge' hotels we remembered have been demolished to make way for even bigger ones. The MGM Grand has 5,500 rooms. Las Vegas has about 8 of the 10 largest hotels in the world. Our stay there included yours truly seeing Celine Dion at Caesar's Palace, a couple of other shows, and a teeny-weeny bit of gambling. We took a short helicopter trip at night over the strip, which must rate as one the most exhilarating flights I have been on. Robert and I went to North Las Vegas Air Terminal, and went to First Flight Aviation <http://www.pintoaviation.us/> and enquired about a flight. The only aircraft available was a near new (under 80 hours!) C172 with full glass cockpit, in excess of \$200,000 value (shame!). So with an instructor/safety pilot in the right hand seat, I took the controls for a flight to Grand Canyon West (about 1 hour), and Robert took the controls in similar fashion on the way back. We ensured our path took us over the Hoover Dam. During the 2 hours or so on the ground at Grand Canyon West we took a local bus tour out to the rim of the Canyon. There were also traditional Indian houses built nearby, for visitors to walk around and view. A meal was included so it was an enjoyable afternoon.



On the Sunday 15th January we went back to San Diego. The 16th saw yet another birthday roll by, and we spent it at San Diego Zoo. The 17th was the big day of my intended test. We had hardly seen a cloud since we arrived, with beautiful days of CAVOK. Fortunately this day was no different, and I arrived at

Gillespie Field in good time to prepare for the mornings pre-test flight. I had booked a 'long lesson' in the morning, to allow plenty time to hopefully polish up my C172 skills, as for the past year Robert and I have been flying our own 2-seater Eurostar. I was given navigation legs out towards the North-East to an airstrip in Borrego Valley about 40 miles away and a route leading north of that. I studied the maps and procedures as much as time allowed prior to the flight as I wanted to try and accomplish as much as I could unaided during the flight.

After being introduced to my instructor Martin, (a CFI at Anglo American International), we were cleared for takeoff on 27 right and departed from the downwind leg by keeping the climb going and taking up the track. The calculated drift and ground speed was kind to me, and I could see the landmarks appearing on cue. I had to keep lowering the nose for visibility and cooling as we headed for 7,500 feet (hemispherical rules apply, not the quadrantal rules that UK pilots are used to). After arrival at Borrego Valley I headed pretty much north, and then the general handling routine started. This entailed fairly minimal under-hood work followed by the usual array of general handling tests including steep turns etc. I did not do too well on my first Practice Forced Landing, but the next was better. Then back to the airfield for a number of circuits, including flapless, short field etc. My glide approach was okay too, which may have redeemed the earlier PFL attempt.

After a full stop circuit and parking we had lunch and I anxiously waited for the route for my afternoon flight. Again, I wanted as much time to prepare as possible. Then Martin said, "Bad news and good news. You won't be taking your test with Andy this afternoon. The good news is, I was there during the flight as an examiner and, based upon your flight this morning, I am pleased to tell you that you have passed your UK PPL skills test!" Well, as you can imagine, yours truly was well and truly chuffed. We chatted a bit more about the detail of the flight but above all he was happy I had demonstrated I was a 'safe' pilot' by keeping my log up to date, generally handling the aircraft well and keeping a good lookout etc. Needless to say I had no idea the flight was indeed the flight test and I know they all had a chuckle about it. If I had not prepared enough I assume he would not have mentioned it and after a de-brief I would have taken my test in the afternoon as planned, or worse, not at all! By coincidence, the date, January 17, was three years to the day since I first took my Australian PPL. When I first met Martin the CFI earlier in the day, he held his left hand out from his wheelchair to shake hands. His right arm was of limited use and needed a support brace. Then I noticed he had no left leg. At the plane he loaded his lightweight wheelchair into the Cessna. Later on he told me that he had been a commercial pilot for several years before a motor cycle accident 8 years before had cost him his career and loss of limb. His left leg was removed at the hip so he had no partial leg upon which to wear any prosthetic device. I was in wonderment. After his long period of rehabilitation he had managed to regain a career in aviation. For landings and rudder control, he quoted "I dance from one pedal to the other, and turn my foot sideways for even braking". If you get to read this Martin, like many others I have much admiration for you and long may you enjoy your life in aviation.

The next day, January 18th, I had booked an appointment with the FSDO (Flight Standards District Office) to pick up their documentation to allow me to operate as a solo PIC in USA territory. Flight Standards District Offices conduct certification and surveillance of air operators, air agencies, and airmen in the United States and its territories. FSDO personnel promote aviation education and training on behalf of the FAA's Aviation Safety program. The FSDO office is at Montgomery Field, only a few miles from Gillespie. The FSDO issued me a 'Temporary Airman Certificate' pending the issue of a full USA Private Pilot Licence. I was informed by the issuing officer that before I could fly PIC solo, I would have to comply with Part 91 FAR, Operating Procedures Review 61.56, and an endorsement to confirm this must be in my log book. Those interested in flying in USA might wish to log on to the FAA site www.faa.gov and do a search for "Part 91 FAR 61.56". Basically it refers to undertaking a Flight Review with a USA examiner. This is not a full test, but a skills check, with duration to be not less than an hour.

While at Montgomery Field, I was aware that Kings Schools have their offices here. I do not know how many of you know of John and Martha King. You'll see the adverts in Pilot Magazines referring to their products. As I understand it, some 60% or more of USA private pilots will use Kings Schools learning materials. See <http://www.kingschools.com>

Robert and I went to their premises. It turned out to be the main offices for the mail order business and not available to the public to browse the actual products. I told the secretary we were from UK and much to our delight and surprise, a short time later John and Martha King came out of the offices to greet us and chat for a few minutes. They seem a great couple and have a very interesting life story. From early problems in a different business they took up pilot training in the early 1970's. Eventually their first training video was produced. Their business has gone from strength to strength and they now own their own Jet Falcon after upgrading from an earlier Cessna Citation. If you'd like to read more about this very interesting couple who have made a great contribution to general aviation worldwide, log on to the <http://www.kingschools.com> site and take the 'Meet John and Martha' link on the top menu bar.

That night we spent in Hollywood, outside Los Angeles, around a 2 hours drive north depending on traffic. We walked the 'Walk of Fame' and visited the Chinese Theatre with the footprints and handprints of celebrities in the concrete paving outside. Next day was spent at Disneyland Anaheim, and Robert and I were footsore at the end of the day as we tried to get around the whole site without missing too much.

On Saturday 21st we headed down the Freeway to the Mexican Border. We parked up and took a bus the short distance across the border to Tijuana in Mexico. There was no passport inspection on the way out of the USA but the border crossing on the way back was exceptionally busy, as you would expect from one of, if not, the busiest border crossings on the planet.

Sunday 22nd, the day before departure, I had wanted to do one last flight before leaving the USA. The aircraft was already booked and I had plotted a route from Gillespie Field. The booked aircraft was out of commission when we arrived so the only alternative was a Piper Cherokee. All my training had been done in Cessnas so I was not familiar with the Piper. With a safety pilot / instructor on board we departed Gillespie, and headed due SSW to Brown Airfield, situated just over 1 mile from the Mexican Border.



From there we tracked west to the southern end of San Diego Bay. Our route north from there was intended to follow a route over San Diego International Airport. To quote from the San Diego VFR terminal Chart "When transiting the VFR corridor over San Diego International, above 3,300 feet and below 4,700 feet, pilots are encouraged to remain right of a North West / South East line extending across the San Diego International 27 Runway approach end. No communications or clearances with ATC are required while transiting the VFR corridor, however frequency 126.05 is provided for exchange of information between those pilots using the corridor". So flying almost directly over San Diego International and witnessing the jets flying both above and below us was as simple as a radio frequency change and location reports.

We routed about 30 mile north of there before turning back South East, passing lakes and small peaks en route. We obtained Class D transition clearance at Ramona airfield, and shortly after that gave our

inbound call to Gillespie for Class D entry for landing. In total 1.7 hours on the hour meter and surely one on my most memorable flights. The next day January 23rd required us to be at San Diego International by 6:30 a.m. for check-in for the flight home.

All-in-all, it proved to be a memorable 2 weeks and a much needed respite from the tedious over-long UK winter. Happy landings, everyone. Robert and I look forward to seeing you all, out and about, when the flying season is in full swing.
Nigel

James Gilbert RIP

James Gilbert was an aviator and journalist who prized the freedom of the skies and loved confronting officialdom. He was born on April 28, 1935 and died of cancer on February 14, 2006, aged 70.

He was a towering figure in aviation journalism, a rebel who campaigned against the bureaucrats he saw strangling the freedom of the skies. A stunt pilot, performing in films and air shows, he flew well over 100 types of aircraft and wrote about each. As editor and publisher of *Pilot* magazine, which he bought as a nearly defunct publication in 1972 and turned into the market leader, he encouraged a generation of writers to convey the thrill of flying. He was never daunted by articles of 6,000 or 7,000 words about flying the latest supersonic military jet or a humble vintage biplane. He combined a passion for aviation with a shrewd commercial judgment that made *Pilot* a lucrative property before he sold it five years ago.

As editor he pursued several campaigns to redress unfair prosecutions of pilots by the Civil Aviation Authority and to resist what he saw as the erosion of individual freedom to fly light aircraft by the ever-encroaching health and safety mindset of officialdom. In a celebrated case, he challenged the official findings of the inquiry into the crash of an RAF Chinook helicopter on the Mull of Kintyre in 1994, which blamed the dead pilots for “negligence”, a very serious charge which the evidence laid before the investigators did not, he felt, bear out beyond reasonable doubt. He forever after believed it to be a cover-up by the MoD.

James Champion Gilbert was born in Croydon in 1935, not far from what was then London’s principal airport. His father was a prosperous insurance broker at Lloyds. He hated his time at Radley, although rowing was a consolation. One day when the river burst its banks he ignored the school’s evacuation plan, borrowed a scull and rowed away across the flooded fields.



During National Service in the RAF he was turned down for pilot training because of poor eyesight, despite having learnt to fly on a Tiger Moth at the age of 17 on an RAF scholarship. He nevertheless went on to become Britain's runner-up national aerobatic champion in 1964, as well as a display pilot and stunt pilot in such films as the First World War flying drama *Aces High* (1976) and the Second World War action movie *The Eagle Has Landed* (1976).

As a flyer he rejoiced in a particularly audacious manoeuvre in his Bücker Jungmeister, complete with swastikas, in which he would touch down on the hard side, bounce off his springy undercarriage and complete a flick roll before setting it down again gently on the runway. To complete the performance, in which there was no room for error, he would give a Nazi salute as he taxied past the crowd. (*Very non-PC!*)

He learnt his trade as a publisher in New York in the 1960s on the editorial staff of *Flying Magazine*. There he started to "test fly" dozens of old planes, catching the enthusiasm of their owners and admirers and leading to his first bestseller, *The Great Planes* (1970) (*to which he contributed many of the contemporary photographs*). He followed this with *The World's Worst Aircraft* (1975), a hilarious account of aerial catastrophe and engineering folly, which became a cult classic.

A quiet family man with an impish sense of humour and a sharp intellect, Gilbert embodied old-fashioned British values. A free-thinking spirit within a conservative mould, he bristled at any sign of bureaucratic meddling or pomposity. He eschewed personal honours but delighted in seeing his contributors in *Pilot* win distinctions at the annual award celebrations during his long, enlightened editorship. He is survived by his wife, Gena, and two sons and two daughters, the elder son and daughter from a previous marriage.

(with acknowledgement to *The Times* 16/02/06 upon which this was based)

Update on Our Activities Celebrating the PFA's 60th Anniversary by Pete White

60th Anniversary Hangar Dance

As most of you know, the Strut is organising a hangar dance at Bodmin to celebrate the PFA's 60th anniversary and we are sharing this event with the Cornwall Flying Club. Our Strut fly-in on Saturday 1st July at Bodmin will be extended to the evening and this will include a 40's theme hangar bash with a forties style band and food from the same era (better check the sell-by date!). The MG car club and DH Chipmunk Club have also been invited. After a formation flypast by a flight of 40's aeroplanes, the event will begin and the music & drink will flow into the night whilst the crowds mooch around the dance (hangar) floor, having been fed by the NAAFI kitchen. **Remember, 40's style clothing, military or civvies.** To miss this important event with all the fun that could be had, would be criminal!

Tickets are £20.00 each which includes the meal, one free bottle wine per table, the band, and endless fun. (*Please make cheques payable to Cornwall Flying Club and contact Pete White for tickets*). For those not wishing to camp at Bodmin the following B&B is recommended: Mrs Cann 01208-73408. Info is also available from Bodmin Tourist Office 01208-76616 and will be posted on the Strut website.

60 Aerosites Challenge

Devon Strut's celebration of the PFA's 60th year also includes an airfield challenge to be set within the geographical catchment area of our Strut. Research has found over 90 sites that have been used or are still active for most forms of aviation. The sites range from small fields used by Henri Salmet in his Bleriot in 1913, WW1 Airship Stations, between the wars joy-riding and early passenger carrying airfields to WW2 Fighter and Coastal Patrol aerodromes. Added to the old sites are active airports of today and the many airstrips that have developed since the end of WW2. Altogether, a very interesting project and something that has been of great interest to me for many years.

Now what happens next?

The inaugural flight to open the Challenge will be on the first flyable weekend in late April/ early May by three Devon Strut pilots flying their Aeronca Chief aircraft. Once this has been completed the Challenge is open to all registered applicants and the closing date is 31st December, so please fly safely and take the time that suits your ability and comfort zone. Remember that this can be completed a bit at a time and no risks should be taken in any way.

What do we have to do?

The 90 plus aerosites will be disclosed to the registered applicants detailing location by grid reference (OS 1: 50,000) and co-ordinates (GPS) plus a short description and history of the site. Plan your route to include the 60 preferred aerosites and be prepared to record each one by photograph and a short description. A record (log) book would be an excellent way of presenting your challenge once completed and this could win you a prize for the best entrant's log. All successful entrants will receive a signed certificate. To cover the costs involved we have to make a charge of £10.00 to each entrant and once the event is over the remaining moneys will be donated to a local charity.

This fascinating Aerosite Challenge will not only help us celebrate the PFA's 60th anniversary but it will provide some very enjoyable planning and flying, giving us a purpose and a sense of achievement. Remember, as I always say, 'Have fun, fly an Aeronca' but if you don't have an Aeronca just have **fun** whilst wishing you had one!

Pete White

Chasing the Morning Sun

After 3 years of trials and tribulations, Worcestershire pilot, cancer survivor and recent grandad, **Manuel Queiroz**, (who visited the Devon Strut in 2003) is finally ready to take on the challenge of a lifetime to win for Britain a world speed record for solo circumnavigation of the globe - over 24,000 miles in less than 23 days in his RV6a. This can truly be said to be a supreme solo effort. As an engineer, working alone, Manuel has been responsible for carrying out all the preparation of the aircraft. As a pilot he has had to undergo all the additional training to equip himself for the many challenges involved with such a long distance endurance flight. At last all is ready, and the flight will start and finish at Gloucester Airport. Take off is scheduled for the early hours of Tuesday morning the 28th February. For full details on the flight visit www.chasingthemorningsun.com

Members' News

New Member

A warm welcome to **Peter Warren** of Fordgate, Bridgewater. Peter flies his Quantum G-CBBP from Dunkeswell and is building a Kolb Twister Mk111 Extra.

Pete White

Not content with impressing the G-VFWE organisers of his merits last year and winning a special prize for services to vintage flying, Pete White has also had a similar effect on the committee of the Vintage Aircraft Club, who have decided to award him the George Davidson Cup, "for outstanding achievement or contribution to vintage light aviation". This is in recognition of Pete's work over the years in running the Aeronca Club UK. The citation reads "Your enthusiasm has brought the vintage aircraft world to the attention of a much larger audience and encouraged others to join our select group." Congratulations all round from the Strut, Pete. Thoroughly deserved!

Chris Bazeley is a commercial artist based in the Cotswolds and is better known for his classic cars but will tackle anything (*obviously!*). The painting was a surprise birthday present from Pete's family some years ago, and Chris had minimal info to work on. His website: <http://thedrawingoffice.co.uk/index.htm>



Mike Wells.

After many years of pleasurable and entertaining flying (*not least, for the spectating crowds on one memorable day at Sandown!*), Mike has parted company with his Woody Pusher. The lucky new owner is John Cooke who is based at Nayland, just north of Colchester in East Anglia.

Holiday Cottage close to Bolt Head. Excellent accommodation in cottage located to the western end of the runway, within easy walking distance of the strip. <http://www.soarfarmhouse.co.uk/Details.htm>

Gites in the Dordogne. Friends of Chris Howell run a series of gites in Aquitaine; see website for details: <http://www.nieudegat.com> Nearest airfield is Sarlet (LFDS), 13km to west from where cars can be hired or it's a 20 Euro taxi ride away.



CAA Safety Evenings

Members have two CAA Safety Evenings in Devon during March. The venue on 21st March is the Fox & Hounds at Eggesford c/o Nigel Skinner and two days later, on 23rd, the meeting will be in the Air Centre Restaurant at Dunkeswell. The evenings start at 7.30 pm and will cover all aspects of air safety including weather recognition, ATC and airspace. Entrance is free and pilots can bring their log books along and have them stamped as evidence of their attendance.

Major causes of death per year (avg)

Tobacco	420,000
Medical Errors	180,000
Alcohol	105,000
Second-hand Smoke	54,000
AIDS	35,000
Suicide	30,000
Car Accidents	24,000
Homicide	22,000

So tell me again, *why* are people *so* concerned about flying?????? – *Ernie Hoblyn*

News bulletin

Prescott 'sneakily sought to build homes on rural airfields'

John Prescott was accused last night of trying to sneak through new rules allowing housing estates to be built in the heart of the countryside.

The row centres on special protection to prevent airfields, many of which are in rural areas, from being redeveloped as 'brownfield' sites. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister admitted last night that proposed new housing planning guidance failed to make specific reference to that protection.

A spokesman told *The Daily Telegraph* that the policy had not changed and that the ODPM would now "happily consider reinstating" the missing wording in the draft guidance, which is now out to consultation. "For purely editing reasons, that statement was not in the draft document," he said.

But last night, the Conservatives accused Mr Prescott of trying to introduce on the quiet planning changes which could have a disastrous effect on rural areas.

Gerald Howarth, the shadow defence minister and chairman of the all-party parliamentary aviation group, said: "Prescott's department's tried to sneak this through surreptitiously."

He warned that the omission would have been seized upon by planners as a change in policy.

Currently airfields receive protection from development, although the sites of airport buildings can be redeveloped.

March Free Landings

Pilot: Cromer, Eshott, Full Sutton, Huddersfield, Lands End, White Waltham.

Flyer: Enstone, Popham, Newtownards & Sandtoft. Plus, the [Pajala](#) offer is valid until August!

Today's Pilot: Campbeltown, Elstree, Manchester Barton, Sherburn in Elmet

Next Meeting (Stowey Arms, Exminster, 7.30 for 8.00 p.m.)

March 9th Peter Vacher - the recovery and restoration of Hawker Hurricane R4118.

Future Meetings, 2006

March 21st CAA Safety Evening, Fox & Hounds, Eggesford.

“ 23rd CAA Safety Evening, Dunkeswell.

April 13th Ted Lawrence will show a film about Light Aviation at Brooklands.

Free landings at Dunkeswell

Brendan Procter has again benefited the Strut by offering free landings at Dunkeswell to members with permit a/c who purchase 25 or more litres of 100LL and show their strut membership card. Thanks, Brendan.
