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## DEVON STRUT NEWS, SEPTEMBER 2006.

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### CO-ORDINATOR'S COMMENTS

by Christopher Howell

In the words of Martin Luther King, "I have a dream". The weather is sunny and predictable, year round temperatures, summer 25 degrees C, winter no lower than 12 degrees C. By the way, these are New Zealand, North Island temperatures as relayed to me by Strut member Andy Milton who has recently moved there lock, stock, Min, and Monty the dog. My dream also has me living in a sprawling rural bungalow, with a hangar next door, a bowling green 600mtr runway, friendly neighbours who love flying and welcome the hum of aero engines. Adventurous trips around the UK and Europe without a care in the world. I also travel to the places I plan for! Ahh! Then I wake up!!!! Mode S, letters of protest, heckling neighbours, real unpredictable weather with Met forecasts which would not help you climb out of your bath. CAA? run a mile! They are after you; get in the trenches lads, beware the Hun in the Sun!! Oh no, not another AD, whatever that is?? Enough rambling, I hear a Wasp approaching! I know because it's flashing up on my TCAS Lightning Radar Transponder Deflector which, by the way, has just frazzled the little tinsy wincey bit of brain that I was told I still have by a reputable CAA AME.

On to a very cheery note, I must say, from my own perspective, the Rally was a totally enjoyable, very interesting and stimulating experience. The Branscombe Mafia met at Joe's HQ and sure enough all around us lay low cloud and fog. The destination: Kemble, time en-route 2 hours, day: Saturday. Lucky for us Mike King has a very comfy four seater and we were cleared low level to the M5. Jenny King was in the back navigating on her Garmin 496 of course, and with all colour terrain images and new batteries we had no problem routing up the M5, M4, and A429. Joe Thomas was P2 and radio man. A very efficient call on 121.50, and a low level "run and break" saw us parked and forty five quid lighter.

Jim Gale beamed at us and there was the 60<sup>th</sup> Vintage Homebuilt Display supported by many crew from the Devon Strut. What a welcome for us Devonshire Pasty Clan. I found the ambience excellent and free access to look at the static aircraft welcome, rather than being hassled by wasp-like marshals. I felt the general atmosphere similar to an oversized fly-in. There is much debate that the Rally should be more family-oriented and I guess Sun 'n' Fun in America is a good example of all round family appeal. Other voices advocate a move back to a traditional oversized fly-in. Many of these areas have been explored and I can only say from my own experience in organizing events for the Devon Strut over the past 8 years that a vast amount of ground work has to go in with a very willing organising team, a very pointed focus and a dictator at the helm. Terry Booker has run an event at Dunkeswell this year and it would be very useful to view his notes and learn from them. He hired a large airfield, put on a full air display, invited vintage aircraft to fly in and opened the gates to the paying public. This, from a stone cold sober, totally new event with no track record. *[other than Terry's considerable experience in running the G-VFWE]*. Many have asked "Why not do a three-day Branscombe?" This event has a seventeen year track record and has raised close to £100,000 for local charities, organised by a very tight group of not more than six people, each with very specific tasks and with father time at the helm! We all love him really!!

All I can say is that attending the Rally was a great day out for me, very sociable and I came away much inspired with the mad idea I can build an aircraft. Look out for early fireworks in South Devon!

Happy Flying, Chris Howell.

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## Flying Fun in Fantastic France

by Richard Reeves

With the altimeter showing over 7000 ft. and the colour map GPS showing all the ground under us at between 5000 and 9000 ft., I'm flying in the Pyrenees in southern France in my Tecnam P92, with my wife Cindy and pal Jeremy in his Tecnam. It is mid June, 30 degrees C and we are above the snow line. Not that there is enough snow to ski on but we are having so much fun. The ski resorts look strangely out of place in this warm and pleasant land.

This was our fourth annual trip to France and we had had planned it back in March when we were feeling rather sorry for ourselves and the thermometer was struggling to rise above freezing. Since we had three previous flying trips to France under our belts and each of these had been 'tres bon', we decided to concentrate on maximising our enjoyment by combining some of the good bits of the previous trips with as much quality flying as we could fit in and a good helping of the brilliant French cuisine we had experienced over many years of flying and driving in France.

Flying in France could not be easier but, as with most things, there are matters that should be attended to in the planning and whilst flying. More on this later. Unlike previous trips, when we moved on to a new destination each day, this time we decided to fly to and base ourselves at Sadournin in the foot hills of the Pyrenees. Sadournin is a delightful 670 meters private grass airstrip owned and operated by Julien Vidou. It was built by his father some 14 years ago but sadly Julien's father is no longer alive. Since taking over the airfield Julien has constructed three very comfortable chalets that are available for rent by the day. Our plan was to base ourselves at Sadournin and fly out each day to different locations for lunch and return in the evening in time to shower and head out for an evening meal.

Our trip started with a straight forward two hour flight to Headcorn in Kent from our home base at Dunkeswell. En route we had to dodge air racing at Compton Abbas and several parachuting events but these had been NOTAMed so were easy to avoid. On arrival at Headcorn we refueled, filed our flight plans and tucked into lunch. Within the duration of lunch our flight plan was cleared and we headed off to Abbeville via Dover. This route was chosen as it gave us plenty of time to gain altitude and the shortest channel crossing of 18 miles. We were equipped with life jackets and an EPIRB although Jeremy, who flew a different channel crossing, wore a survival suit. The survival suit is probably the best option, although weight and cost have to be taken into account, along with survival time in the water, which, even in the summer, will not be long without a suit or raft. At 4000 to 5000 ft there is only a short time in mid channel when it is not possible to glide to land in the event of an engine failure. But of course, this depends on height, wind direction, the glide ratio of the aircraft and the skill of the pilot. These are all matters that can be thought through and, if necessary, measured in the planning stage.

Abbeville was one and a half hours from Headcorn and is an excellent airfield to make land fall in France. Why so many pilots insist on going to Le Touquet I can't imagine? This year Abbeville is sporting a superb new tarmac surface to their hard runway which is great as it can be seen from miles away. They also have grass runways. They can handle all of the paperwork for both arrivals into and departures from France, have fuel and, best of all, have a great hotel and restaurant on the airfield, from which you can eat a meal and lie in bed and look at your aircraft parked 25 yards (sorry meters) away.

Day one was easy and we could have flown on south to Blois. However we had planned to visit St Valery, a few miles west of Abbeville, for lunch and to meet Jeremy on our second day. Jeremy had planned to make the 50 miles crossing across the channel from the Isle of Wight (hence the survival suit) making land fall at Cherbourg. St Valery is, in the opinion of all of us that have flown there over the years, the most delightful and one of the best-kept secrets, because of its restaurant. Again you park a few meters from your dining table, where Madam Marie serves a superb three or four-course lunch and that is why we have returned on so many occasions. It's a set menu, varying from day to day, that has never failed to thrill all of us who have eaten there. Interestingly, on this visit, the French Airport Police were at St Valery and Sadournin, not for any apparent reason but it did remind us that one must ensure that all the paperwork is in good order. Ours was not checked but I understand that if it was and found to be deficient, they might impose a heavy fine or worse. The same caution applies to busting the restricted zones around the numerous French nuclear power stations. The conclusion we have drawn is, don't break their rules and they will leave you alone to enjoy your flying. I don't have any problem with that since we never fly without dotting all the i's and crossing all the t's.

In the afternoon we flew to Blois for an overnight stop. Nothing was pre booked as we generally rely on the taxi driver to find us a hotel but at Blois this was unnecessary as the airfield manager, Patrick, befriended us, arranged a B&B in a beautiful farm house, drove us there and offered to collect us in the morning, ate lunch with us the following day and invited us to be his guests for the September air show. And all this was not because we are anything special. We are ordinary Brits out for a bit of fun and willing to 'go with the flow' and the reason we do that is, it has never let us down. Every time and everywhere we go in France we have had the locals falling over themselves to help, advise, recommend and on many occasions take us to and collect us from our overnight accommodation. And they never accept the payments we offer. The French are pro flying and pro flying Brits and they have airfield facilities, generally owned by the town, we can only dream of. They know if they provide the facilities, folk will fly in and spend money in their towns and how refreshing is that?

On our third day, we arrived at Sadournin via Libourne (with another fantastic restaurant on the airfield) to be met by Julien Vidou's grandfather. The airfield is in the middle of nowhere and he was waiting for us with a coolbag of cold drinks, the broadest smile you have ever seen and the keys to our chalets. The chalets were only 100 meters from where we parked our aircraft but grandpa insisted on driving us to save us carrying our luggage, not that we had much, and then he departed leaving us with the car for no extra charge for the duration of our stay. The chalets were fully serviced with hot and cold running water, air conditioning, shower room with w.c., fully equipped kitchen, bedroom and an up the ladder sleeping gallery for the third, fourth and fifth guests. All of this and unlimited use of the airfield for around 50 Euros per chalet per night.

Fuel is available, by arrangement, at Castlenau some 10 minutes flight away but we generally refueled at the airfields we flew to each day. Sadournin is centrally located in the foothills of the Pyrenees 80 miles from the Atlantic, 100 miles from the Med and 35 miles from the Spanish border, making it one of the most interesting areas to fly in. Being a private airstrip, French law requires visitors to be club members and Julien presented us with membership cards (Carte De Membre Honoraire). Just as well as we had a visit from the Airport Police, not that they checked any of our papers but, as I said before, had they and had they been deficient, I'm sure they would have been less that impressed.



Whilst not flying or sleeping we made good use of the loan car to visit the local towns to shop and eat but one of the gastronomic highlights was a recommendation by Julien to dine at La Ferme Auberge du Lac, a delightful eatery, hosted by Thierry Dubarry and serving a choice of local produce, served in the semi covered courtyard of the farmhouse where most of the food was produced. We could have sat inside but in June it was more comfortable sitting outside. So local and fresh was their produce that if you wanted to eat chicken they needed 48 hours notice in order to do what ever it they do to chickens...!

During our stay at Sadournin we saw many birds of prey including eagles, and kites, hares scampering all over and deer and on two occasions the new A380 Airbus made a low pass from nearby Toulouse. We flew in the mountains for several hours after taking detailed advice from local aviators about the hazards we might encounter and the experience provided us with some of the best flying we have ever encountered. The northern Pyrenees has wide, finger like, rising valleys with small farms and roads leading up to villages high in the mountains. We found we could fly up one valley, join an offshoot valley and then

climb over a ridge to fly into the neighbouring valley. The sights were spectacular and surprisingly we found several small alpine airfields high in the mountains, but in general, a mountain rating was required in order to land. (next year's project?)



*Flying high up in the Pyrenees, much to the surprise of those on the ground*

All too soon we were heading north back to the UK via Libourne and Abbeville to Dunkeswell taking a tad over 9 hours, two lunches and one evening meal. The total trip involved about £10 in landing fees (in France) and we found the price of Avgas was similar to prices in the UK. And, by the way, none of us speak good French. You really can get by with very rudimentary French and lots of gesticulations!

We wish flying in the UK was as good. Sadly it is not and this is probably because the UK is not 'aviation friendly' whereas France is. Ours was a straightforward trip, very enjoyable and will be hard to beat unless we decided to venture much further a field.

If this article has whetted your appetite and you would like more, Julien has two web sites, one for the chalets and another for the airfield: <http://home.tele2.fr/chalets> and <http://sadournin.ampe.free.fr>

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## Recent Events

*Our busy summer calendar has included several fly-ins and air days and I'm grateful to the various Strut members who've submitted photos –Ed.*

### Branscombe Air Day 30<sup>th</sup> July – Chris Bailey





**Hayrish Auster Fly-In, Eggesford, 5<sup>th</sup> August - Maurice Wickstead**



*Charlie Huke's BA Swallow G-AFGE*



*Eggesford Austers*

**Dunkeswell Air Day, Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> August – Mike Mold**



*Dave Silsbury & Brendan Procter's Currie Wot / Se5a*



*Plane Sailing's Catalina*



*Strut stand manned by Richard Plowman & Chris Howell*



*Dave Silsbury's Jodel DR1050M in one piece again !*

## **PFA Rally, Kemble**

Despite an unstable weather pattern that saw a succession of frontal troughs blow through the country over the weekend and restricted the numbers of visitors both by air and road, the atmosphere at the rally was terrific and many compared it with the days of Cranfield. Under the capable leadership of Jim Gale, the Strut organised and manned the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary static homebuilt display. Owners of approximately 20 examples of aircraft that were pivotal to the UK homebuilt movement, from Flying Flea to RV6, were contacted and agreed to attend but the weather restricted the display to just 10. Nevertheless, the interest in those that did get through the weather was considerable and Strut members who manned the display on an hourly rota throughout the weekend were kept occupied with questions about the aircraft (and requests for directions to the toilets, accommodation tent and hot soup kitchen!) Many thanks to all the a/c owners and strutters who helped



*Peter Gristwood, Chris DeVerenne, Tug Wilson & Mike Wells at the homebuilt display, keeping an eye on Richard Mole's D18, Mike Hayman's Currie Wot, Mike Mold's D9 and Barry Plumb's BGP1 Biplane*

## **Awards**

Congratulations to Strut members Dave Silsbury and John Brady. Dave's work on Piper Cub G-BHXY won him 3 awards: the Jim Empson Trophy for the Best Piper J-Cub; a Commendation Certificate for Best Vintage Aircraft and the John Walker Trophy for Best Restoration. John won the Lois Parker Trophy for Services to the Association, typified by co-ordination of the PFA responses to the CAA's complex consultation documents.



Congratulations to the Shobdon Strut for winning the Best Strut award this year. (It's only temporary, guys!)

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## PFA Members to the Rescue of Uwe Malter

by Mike Mold

Soon after Mike Wells and I had landed at Kemble on the Thursday afternoon we learnt that the south-easterly crosswind had caught out German visitor Uwe Malter in his beautiful Jodel Ambassador D-EAKM. His tailwheel had failed to lock, had shimmied on the hard runway and the ensuing slow speed ground loop had wiped out his u/c, bent one tip of his Rattier prop and damaged the bottom members of dihedral rib on the left wing. Fortunately, neither Uwe, his girlfriend Elke nor companion Lutz were injured and the Jodel was removed by fork-lift truck to a private maintenance hangar.

Brian Hope, John Crabb, Mike Wells and I met Uwe in the PFA marquee and were concerned to learn that, although he is an engineer and can sign out his own work (and completed the restoration of his a/c a few years ago) he was being denied access to work on his pride and joy by the maintenance company. Not wishing to be in the same situation ourselves when flying foreign and feeling acutely embarrassed by this attitude to a Jodel Club friend and foreign guest at our showcase event, we did a bit of head-scratching. I made a few calls and we met up with old friend David Hunter (local engineer & owner of Taylor Monoplane G-BEVS) in the AV8 restaurant.

David personally introduced us to Richard Glover, owner of one of the largest hangars on the airfield, who didn't hesitate to offer space for the Jodel and lend us his Range Rover with 20 ft flatbed trailer to move the Jodel. With additional muscle from Martin Snelling and Keith Wingate, the aircraft was transferred at walking pace from one side of the airfield to the other and Uwe started the repairs there and then. A friend of Uwe's back in Germany rented a C152 to bring over two spare undercarriage legs and a new prop blade. Ceconite, dope, spruce, ply, glue, hardware and tools were provided by Tony Young (Aircraft Coverings), Dudley Patterson, David Hunter and Light Aero.

By Sunday afternoon the temporary repairs were all but complete and the C152 returned to Germany carrying the written request for approval to fly the Jodel home. The documentation was personally delivered to the German authorities who duly obliged and the approval came by return post. Not so obliging was the UK weather but on Wednesday Uwe got the meteorological clearance for the return flight to his base at Herzogenaurach near Nuremberg.

*“Yesterday morning we left Kemble just before the incoming weather. Had a beautiful flight back through France and Belgium and landed safely at Herzogenaurach. I would like to take the opportunity here to thank everybody from Kemble airfield, the PFA and from the Jodel list for their help and words of encouragement during the last weekend. Everybody went out of their way to help us get back home as soon as possible, and this was a great experience despite the circumstances. Best Regards, Uwe, Elke & Lutz, as well as D-EAKM”*



Uwe's Malter's beautiful Ambassador, with bent u/c, carefully balanced on trailer



Uwe (right) discusses his options with Elke & Lutz

I attended a Mode S workshop at the CAA on August 15<sup>th</sup>, two weeks before the deadline for comments on their consultation document entitled Partial Regulatory Impact Assessment. I took the trouble to go because it seemed to me that, of all the things that come out of the woodwork to make our lives as aviators more difficult, complex and costly than they need to be, this has to be a big one, with its threatened implementation date of March 2008.

I cannot, in the space your editor will tolerate, give you here a blow by blow account of either the consultation document or the workshop. Some of the technical exchanges went right over my head, anyway. So I will try and draw out a few key features.

The first is that neither the PFA nor - relevant for me if not for most of you - the BMAA was represented among the 22 participants at the workshop. One might ask why not. The BGA and BHGA were there in force, arguing their corner eloquently. So was the CEO of AOPA. Fortunately, many of their concerns and special pleading echo ours – but not all.

The CAA is clear that they want SSR Mode S and nothing else. Or rather they want it “future proofed” with ADS-B “out” capability with a 1090MHz “extended squitter”. You see what I mean about it going over my head. Where do they get these terms from? An extended squitter sounds like something nasty, copious and brown...but perhaps we had better not go there. They were therefore inclined to trash the alternative (such as GPS-based) in and between-aircraft solutions advanced.

Of 800 submissions received by CAA to date, 600 came from the gliding and hang-gliding fraternity. We in microlighting and GA, collectively, are not doing very well! You just have to hope that the quality of GA submissions makes up for lack of quantity.

There are those who say that the whole consultation exercise is a sham. On the other hand, results that indicate 80% of GA want equipping to be voluntary, 77% believing it will not improve safety and 17% saying they would rather have segregated skies than undergo Mode S pain, cannot be wholly ignored. Or can they? While all want to improve collision avoidance (unsurprisingly), 45% of GA respondents support the do nothing option and 35% ticked “no opinion”. CAA inferred from that that the proposals in the RIA were not what was wanted!

75% of small business respondents (presumably aviation related) saw a negative impact for them and 25% thought it would drive them out of business. Some pretty fancy 5-figure numbers were quoted for the costs of aircraft modification, including EASA charges. CAA had used a range of £500-£1,700 for sub-750kg machines.

Our salvation – well, for some of us, anyway – lies in the recognition that a low power transponder (LPST) may be appropriate for, e.g. the sub-750kg category. So far, there isn't one available, although it is said to be under development. CAA does not intend to mandate LPSTs until they are available and proven for lighter aircraft with lower performance/weight and power tolerance.

The 2008 dateline was defended. It's cloud cuckoo, and there will be all sorts of exemptions and derogations. The RIA won't go to the Minister for the approval process to begin until 1Q2007. The idea that the bureaucracy can be completed, the ANO revised and promulgated, appropriate Mode S transponders made freely available, installed and signed-off, all within a year is fanciful. Offline, 2008 was acknowledged as scaremongering and the RIA was seen as a basis for negotiation with interested parties. But that does mean PFA and others have to knuckle down to some tough talking in smoke-filled rooms. It won't just go away.

I made a particular plea for “horses for courses” for microlighters, the vintage boys and the light end of GA. It wasn't just cost, although that was a big issue. It was also weight, electrical power consumption and the general business of more fiddling in the cockpit being incompatible with what we should be doing in VFR – seeing and avoiding. (CAA is dismissive of pilots' ability to see and avoid, even among the low-speed GA fleet.)

Finally, CAA is helpfully wedded to the idea of beneficiaries paying. Unfortunately, of course, they think we all benefit! I suggested it would be highly unlikely that the government would pick up the tab. I also said that to assume commercial/IFR traffic would increase as a continuation of recent rates was simplistic. The future could rarely be projected from the past and there were plenty of counter-influences appearing. Interference and radiation were briefly mentioned. CAA thought an aerial would be required to minimise engine-transponder interference. They really didn't care if there were transponder-radio/GPS interference and clearly regard GPS as the devil's work. They didn't think our brains would be fried by transponder watts pounding out, but no convincing evidence was forthcoming.

*[Peter Gristwood has made a comprehensive response to the CAA on behalf of the Strut and links to his documents will be posted on our web homepage –Ed].*

N.B. In a clearly written and refreshingly straight forward document, an EASA steering group, including PFA's Graham Newby and Barry Plumb, has produced a review of European GA / light a/c (MDM-032) intended to simplify the regulation of airworthiness, air operations and pilot licensing. The document can be accessed via <http://www.pfa.org.uk/easa.asp> and responses sent to EASA by 16<sup>th</sup> October.

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Dear Mike:

### **Perranporth Fly-In**

From time to time I like to browse the PFA spots on the web and enjoyed reading the report in the June newsletter on the Perranporth fly-in. In the late 50's I designed and installed in Perranporth a very large audio amplifier for the Admiralty, this in a Coastguard building located on the cliffs just to the south of that magnificent beach. And of course when I had time to spare would walk up to the airfield to watch the gliders soaring over the cliffs, (no powered aircraft were based there at that time). However, I did get to fly in there once in a Proctor on a liaison visit. At that time there was a chap building a tailless foot launched glider and I was rather surprised to see model airplane 1/16 inch sheet balsa wood being used in places! This when there were no foot launched machines around to my knowledge. I often wonder if he finished and flew it. The photographs in the newsletter evoked some nostalgic memories for me and it is good to know that the PFA folks are so strong in the area. As an aside, I did manage to black out the town for a while when I tripped the main breakers on the 11kV service into the village but that is another story! Dinner was late at the Perranporth Hotel that evening!

Best wished to all in the Devon Strut,

Frank Parker - Now in South Florida, based at KHOW Hollywood / N. Perry (AA5 N5894L)

*[Frank was PFA Chairman in the 1960s and owned Luton G-AFIR and Turbulent G-ASSY. His late wife is commemorated by the Lois Parker Trophy, awarded annually for Services to the PFA. This year's recipient was Strut & Exec member, John Brady - Ed].*

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Dear Mike,

### **Farway & Branscombe Thanks**

The Farway 2-day event in June raised £145 which was presented by Terry Case to the hospice at Sidmouth. I would also like to thank all those who assisted with marshalling at the Branscombe Air Day on Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> July. That it was done safely and efficiently was in no small measure due to the way everyone worked so well together, particularly at the time of departure when 119 aircraft were dispatched in about one and a half hours. Thanks, John Havers.

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### **Welcome to New Members**

Bob Finnis of Guildford, Surrey. Bob has a share in Cessna 150 G-BOTP

Mark Weatherlake of Watchet. Mark owns PA34 N21381 and Treborough strip.

Bill Parkhouse of Exmouth.

Robin Flowerday of Ottery St Mary. Rans S6 ESD G-MYMP

Martin Waters, Shaftesbury. Luscombe 8F G-KENM

Simon Dee of Exeter Renegade G-MYCO

Alister Smith of Redruth. Alister is a member of the SW Aeronca Group i.e. Aeronca 11AC G-IVOR

## Members' News

Congratulations to Dave Silsbury and John Brady for their awards at the rally, described above.

Congratulations to David Millin who, having flown microlights whilst working in the United Arab Emirates, has just completed his UK PPL at Dunkeswell and has re-permitted his Rans S6 in time to enjoy the last few events of our fly-in season. David has also become an active member of the strut team, working at the Plymouth fly-in, the Scout Camp and our homebuilt exhibition at the Kemble rally.

Mike Hanley and Michael Whitaker are making good progress with their Mk 26 Spitfire. The fuselage is finished and the engine has run and sounds fantastic. The wings are being painted now and Mike is waiting for Francis at PFA to get back to them to answer some long outstanding questions so they can complete.



Richard Walker has bought Jodel D120 G-BHXS from Scotland and is offering group shares at Plymouth.

Best wishes to Andy & Min Milton who have just emigrated to New Zealand. With Jon and Lynette Pote now resident near Auckland and other contacts being established in South Island with the SAANZ, we can anticipate an NZ branch of the Strut!

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### Provisional Programme of Autumn /Winter Evening Meetings:

Stowey Arms, Exminster, Exeter, 7.30 for 8.00 p.m.

Oct 12	John Evans, pilot & author
Nov 9	Eric "Winkle" Brown, test pilot
Dec 14	CAA Safety Evening, David Cockburn
Jan 11	AGM & slideshow by Derek Boyce
Feb 8	Melvyn Hiscock, author & publisher
Mar 8	Mike Cross, Notams
Apr 12	tbc

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**"Hello, Francis?" "Ernie here. I want to discuss testing my latest project!"**



<http://www.ronpatrickstuff.com>