

DEVON STRUT NEWS

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

CO-ORDINATOR'S COMMENTS

by Christopher Howell

The Merry Month of May!! The Aeronca Club Picnic at Bodmin was highly successful with eight Aeronca's on the flight line. The Devon Strut Scout Camp at Belle Vue, held over the weekend of 7th and 8th of May 2005 was also a completely happy and successful weekend for all involved. Twenty-five Scouts were tutored for their aviation badges and Strut pilots flew over seventy flights. Jim Gale and Mike Mold have produced a full report for this Newsletter. Terry Wilson and Jon Pote have scooped a CAA Safety Award in London for their brave and decisive reaction to the plight of a fellow pilot at Lundy last summer. All thanks to your huge efforts, we have a very active Strut down here in Devon and are blessed with a massive range of talent and characters.

Numerous issues continue to roll on; insurance is a hot potato with the onset of new mandatory legislation and so far most of us have coughed up the extra premium to be over-insured. Most companies have set the level in Pounds even though the SDR rate is somewhat lower. The PFA Insurance scheme through Hall & Clarke has been introduced and early feedback indicates that lower premiums have been offered by rival companies.

N registration is highlighted in the latest Flyer Magazine and publisher Ian Seager writes a very enlightening article about the subversive UK powers at work. AOPA has challenged the CAA over their proposed increases in charges which affect all aspects of general aviation and currently appear to have them on the back foot! Martin Robinson, Chief Executive of AOPA, will be our guest speaker in October so we await developments with close interest.

Plymouth Airport continues to attract new residents but the general feeling among Strut members is that there is underlying hanky-panky; lets hope it's unfounded. It would be pleasant to find one large airport that didn't have wobbly morals. The continued press from Exeter Airport would make a good remake of the Godfather movies.

Folk these days seem to jump rather quickly to false assumptions based on poor knowledge. Many politicians pivot very well on poor memories and to a large degree we all read or see something in the media that, in our eyes, becomes fact. In our flying community, when we fly to an airfield, what we see is what we get. There is often some landing charge which can generate a Pele-like quality to the way we walk. I have to say, since becoming a resident at Branscombe, I have experienced first-hand the time and expense involved in the simple matter of keeping the grass short. Yes, many strips have owners that fly and they do it firstly for their own use and convenience. We also have strips owned and maintained by owners that have never flown or no longer fly but never the less keep a strip of grass mown for the pleasure of the occasional visitor. Very, very few of them are in it to make a buck. Some strips have better facilities than others and one of the intentions this summer is to build up useful data that can be displayed on our website to enhance your visit to new strips with regard to local amenities, local transport, good food, places to stay and so on. All feedback is very welcome and stories that relate to any of the strips in the West Country or, for that matter, continental travels, would be a welcome encouragement for the novice flyer.

Fly Happy.

Christopher Howell.

Bodmin Aeronca Picnic – 30 April 05

by Derek Boyce

The first weekend after being checked out in my Aeronca 7AC Champion and the world is my oyster. I scanned the fly-in calendar and noticed that the Aeronca Club was holding a picnic at...Bodmin. Now, at this point I should mention that any sane person would arrange to go off and do something that's not weather-dependant. Pete White's track record of arranging fine weather for the event has not been very good to date. I have since learnt that it takes a lot to put off an Aeronca aviator, so I joined the certified insane that were starting to gather at Bodmin in eager anticipation.

I went for a local flight in surprisingly good conditions in the morning and parked out on the field in the hope that my Aeronca would soon have some company. Plans to fly up to Plymouth and rendezvous with others were soon thwarted by the weather taking a turn for the worst. But at least we have four Aeroncas based at Bodmin and that would be a record attendance most years!

News came through that Alan Crutcher had arrived at Plymouth having flown his Aeronca 11AC Chief from Cardiff, joining Reg McComish who had temporarily based his Aeronca 11BC Super Chief at the Airport. They were soon heading for Bodmin so Pete White set off in IVOR to intercept them en-route and shepherd them home. Together with John and Trish Kempton's resident Aeronca 65CA Chief there were now four Chiefs parked out on the field, my Champion feeling a little out numbered at this point.

At 18.30 two aircraft appeared in the circuit, Nic Orchard had made it from Dover in her Aeronca 7BC Champion accompanied by Richard Warriner in a Rans S6. This was Nic's first long distance trip since buying the Champion and she was later awarded a regulation Aeronca hip flask for her efforts.

We then heard that two more Aeroncas were en-route so a number of us set off to intercept them and although there were reports of several Messerschmitts being shot down, the Aeroncas proved a little more evasive! As we were landing we were joined in the circuit by Les Richardson who had flown his Aeronca 11AC Chief down from Oxford and Rich Valler with his Aeronca 7BC Champion from Goodwood.



During the day I had taken my first three passengers up in the Champion. Although the first was Martin Pengelly, who will fly in anything, the second was French and the third had drunk a half of bottle of wine beforehand! Cornwall Flying Club member Dave Hobson put on an excellent barbeque for us in the evening and after the aircraft were tied down and the tents were pitched everyone retired to the bar in the time-honoured fashion.

Plans to visit a few Devon strips the following day were cancelled due to the weather conditions, a higher priority being for our visitors to get themselves home, which they all safely achieved and so ended my first weekend with the Aeronca Champion. Thanks to everyone who took part and made it an enjoyable event and to the Cornwall Flying Club for hosting the event and making everyone feel so welcome.

PFA Devon Strut - Scout Aerocamp 6/7/8th May 2005

by Jim Gale

Early Friday evening - a cold wind was blowing across the deserted airfield; not an auspicious start to a weekend of anticipated high activity. At least the sun was shining. Was I the first on the field to start setting up for our “Youth and Education” weekend? No, there in the corner was one Auster, one tent and one pilot next to it. Then another tent and a car; were they marshalling bats I could see? Yes, the first two members of a twenty-man crew had beaten me to it.

Here we were at Belle Vue airfield near Great Torrington in North Devon setting up for the PFA Devon Strut’s Scout Aerocamp. First things first, pull the metal aircraft out of the hangars to make room for the tables and chairs that would allow the Scouts to study the ground subjects: Aeronautics, Meteorology and Navigation. Make sure the notice boards were up and ready for the safety announcements, program of events poster and general airfield data. Then liaise with the crew of the Devon Air Ambulance helicopter (it’s only recently become based at Belle Vue) regarding procedures, radio and safety as they would be active over the weekend (this proved to be a further dynamic interest throughout the Saturday and Sunday as they had no less than seven call-outs including a running refuel – quite some excitement for the Scouts).

Slowly Scouts and helpers arrived throughout the evening; various safety meetings were set up and held, tea and coffee making facilities arranged (constant five gallons of hot water on the go all the time) and finally the full blown safety brief and “Access to Airfields” talk for all participants, and the issuing of high visibility vests. The Scouts then set up their tents and at about 22.00 hrs we all got together in one of the hangars for a nightcap of hot chocolate and biscuits. The Scouters were responsible for all catering for the weekend. By 23.00 hrs it was all lights out.

On Saturday, breakfast was at 07.00 hrs, during which planes and pilots started to arrive. A 15kt, gusting 20kt nor’north-westerly crosswind looked like being a problem until we realised that take-offs could be straight down the runway (26, grass) and landings could be in the part of the field to the south of the runway, albeit only 200 metres but more importantly uphill and directly into wind. Ideal for the taildraggers in the party. At 08.00 hrs a further airfield and aircraft briefing took place to ensure the Scouts knew the necessary constraints for absolute safety. As there were 25 youngsters they were divided into four groups Alpha, Bravo, Charlie, Delta (yes, they had to learn their phonetic alphabet). Then a pilots’ briefing regarding conduct with the children; the way they should introduce the students to the aircraft and the expectations we required of them regarding the navex to be flown. (The Scouts were going to be led to believe throughout the navex that it was their sole responsibility to ensure that the pilot followed the route/flight-plan plotted.) At 08.45 hrs the ground subjects began with four separate classes -Nav, Met, Instruments, and Controls & Handling each of between 1 hr and 1hr 30 minutes duration.



Paul & Mary Aston lecture on navigation.



Derek Boyce demonstrates the effects of controls



Jon Pote talks met.



PA28 is pre-flighted whilst Martin Pengelly supervises Scouts waiting for their navex.

The C&H aspects were demonstrated using a radio controlled aircraft on the ground and a walk-about, looking at the different types of aircraft present – 4 Aeronca Chiefs & a Champ, a Jodel D112, Rollason Condor, an Auster AOP6, a C172, PA28, Robin DR400, Eurostar and a Cessna Bird Dog). The subject matters taught were to the syllabi required by the Scouting Association as laid down in their website www.scoutbase.co.uk. Following a short break, the flying commenced, and starting with each pilot demonstrating the pre-flight checks and walk-around, the first six aircraft launched off in succession with their nervous navigators. We had given them a triangular 28 nm course to plot with the instruction that they were responsible for ensuring that the aircraft flew the course and made it back to Belle Vue.



A great start - a first flight in a Jodel!



Reg McComish taxis for a navex

The exercise routed 6 nm northwest to Instow at the mouth of the Taw-Torrige estuary, then 12 nm eastwards & south abeam Barnstaple to a Little Chef roundabout on the A361 North Devon link-road near South Molton and then returning the 10 nm to Belle Vue via Umberleigh in the Taw Valley, but with the 650' high TV/radio mast adjacent to the airfield clearly visible from the second turning point! 25 minutes later the first aircraft arrived back and out stepped the biggest smile with a Scout attached to it that you've ever seen!

And so the day went on. We flew 25 Scouts and 10 Scout leaders throughout the day, basically in batches of six, with ground subjects interspersed between the flying. Further subjects were added to include R/T and aircraft marshalling, finishing at 18.30 with dinner at 19.00.



John Holden's Eurostar takes off



Steve Robson & navigator – mission accomplished

In the evening we gathered round to mull over the day's events and have a general debrief. Had the weather been calmer we would have entertained the Scouts with a model flying demonstration but unfortunately the wind was too high. By 22.00 hrs all had gone quiet – the Scouts had had a long hard day, as had the pilots. By 22.30 all lights were out and peace reigned, the Scouts in their tents, me in the comfort of my caravan, some pilots on cushions in the small clubhouse whilst others who were also camping were coming to terms with the night-time temperatures that barely hovered above a ground frost!

Sunday saw a slightly later start with breakfast at 08.00 hrs, followed by a further safety meeting as we had decided to fly circuits and bumps for every Scout and Scout leader. Our programme had listed "passenger flying" for the Sunday morning with the intention that if there had been any weather-related postponements to the programme, then we'd fly any outstanding navexes or flights for the Scouters on the Sunday. However, this had not gone un-noticed by a delegation from the youngsters who, without exception, declared that they wanted more! Hence, we agreed to an engines-running continuous shuttle and this worked very well with all passengers being escorted to and from the aircraft, getting a quick 10 minute flight and resulting in lots more smiling faces. Most of the "passengers" asked for hands-on practise as the word had obviously got round over-night that some had actually flown the navex course as well as navigating it!

From 11.00 – 12.00hrs 75 badges and 25 Young Eagles certificates were issued with thanks all round, both to the Strut and the Scouts. Strut pilots had flown impeccably (as acknowledged by the Air Ambulance crew) and the Scouts could not be faulted on their attentiveness and safety conduct. To cap it all, at exactly noon the Air Sea Rescue Sea King helicopter from Chivenor arrived overhead and proceeded to give a short demonstration of its flying agility.



One of 2 Grob 109s to fly-by from Chivenor



Chivenor Sea King displays for the watching crowd

Lunch was then served followed by a full debrief between Strut instructors, pilots and the two senior Scouters. After this, decamping took place and by 16.00hrs we were back to a windy, empty airfield but this time there were 25 young people who had learned a lot more about flying light aircraft and there were 20 PFA strut members who had that inner glow of a job well done.

You will read more (PF, PFA Today etc) about the success of the Scout Aerocamp and I've already thanked all concerned. However I would especially like to thank Mike Mold, (Planning & flying), Steve Robson (Safety, Security & flying) and Pete White (Personnel & flying) for the amount of work they put into organising the event prior to the weekend. Their planning made this a most enjoyable and more importantly, a safe Aerocamp.

Others that I should mention who also put a lot of time and hard work into their part as lecturers, were Paul & Mary Aston (Navigation), Dave Silsbury & John Crabb (Instrumentation), Jon Pote (Meteorology), Derek Boyce & Graham Smith (Effects of Controls & Handling) and Martin Pengelly who did a splendidly safe marshalling job, ably assisted by John Kempton. Additional help came from John McNab, Maurice Brush, Barry Enock, Chris Howell, Barry Edwards and Peter Gristwood [*and not forgetting Jim himself, who provided the R/T & GPS lectures, and stage-managed the event – Ed*]. Also to Don & Gill Easterbrook for the use of Belle Vue and all its facilities. As to the pilots, they know that it was a job well done.

Thank you everybody.

Jim Gale.

Aircraft flown

Aeroncas (Chiefs: Pete White, Reg McComish, Alan Crutcher, John Kempton; Champ: Derek Boyce), Auster AOP9 (Jon Pote), C172 (Chris Bosher), Cessna Bird Dog (Ray Trute), Eurostar (John Holden), D112 (Mike Mold), PA28 (Jeremy Ferguson), DR400 (Chris deVerenne), Rollason Condor (Steve Robson).

Bodmin Fly-in – Sun 15 May 05

by Derek Boyce

Another weekend and I am still not getting to fly very far in the Champion, they keep coming to me! Or at least they were trying too! The Weather conditions particularly close to Bodmin kept the visitors down to 11.



First arrival was a L18C Super Cub from Defford there were two Europa, one from Shobdon and a second from Bidford. Ian Quinn flew his Cessna 180 from Franklyns Field, followed by Martin Ryan with the Stinson Voyager from Garston Farm and Jon Pote in the Auster AOP9 from Eggesford. There was a Rans S6 from Weston Zoyland and a Banbi all the way from Derbyshire. Dermot Richardson and Derrick Ryall

flew a couple of Robin DR400s down from Exeter via Eggesford returning via Eaglescott, with the J5 Cub following behind at a more sedate pace.



Thanks to everyone at the Cornwall Flying Club for their hospitality. Many thanks to Martin Penegelly for co-ordinating the event and to his parents for stepping in and running the refreshments as Michelle is still recovering from breaking her wrist. Thanks also to Dave Hobson who would have fired up the barbeque had the weather been more agreeable.

In typical fashion the weather turned out so nice in the evening that I pulled the Champion back out of the hanger and did a couple of trips with Martin and Matt (the Duty Airfield Manager).

G-VFWE, 20-22 May 2005 – Devon Strut Makes The Show

by Pete White

Expectant flyers all over Britain spent Friday 20th May in readiness, awaiting a favourable weather forecast so they could journey to what has become the premier vintage aircraft meet in Europe, the G-VFWE at Hullavington. I was at Bodmin with Derek Boyce and Terry Wilson waiting with our mounts for the expectant clearance. The weather window arrived at about 18.00 and we ‘scrambled’ our 2 Aeroncas and a Pietenpol into the blustery, autumn-like skies following a Chinook with under slung howitzer, along the A30. The Chinook disappeared quicker than I anticipated! Reg McComish in his Aeronca Super Chief climbed out of Eaglescott and joined us and we met the last of our party, Alan Crutcher, also Aeronca mounted, at the Severn Bridges. After our customary ‘dog fight’ greeting we formed up into a fairly tight ‘Vic’ formation for the remainder of our flight to Hullavington. Our wheels had stopped rolling and we were in our line-up sometime after 20.10 and parked opposite us were a line of assorted Austers from Eggesford with their Cessna 182 ‘hack’ positioned a little way down the field.



Saturday morning blustered in with plenty of rain after a frost during the night but after we had greeted and chatted to old friends and new, the skies cleared sufficiently to allow the arrival of a number of aerial visitors, including the superb Air Atlantique collection. The intrepid John Crabb arrived from Dunkeswell in his Jodel, swelling the Devon Strut contingent to almost 20. Saturday evening had the usual fun and frolics, fuelled by good food and a moderate dose of fine ales. The Saturday night forecast of 45 knot gale force winds were fortunately over-estimated and we woke to a better day on the Sunday which encouraged more visitors, mostly vintage but some more modern.



Terry Booker and Peter Campbell with all their helpers have worked so hard over the years and it was great to see people making an effort to support them despite the bad weather conditions. The atmosphere was of unity and every body seemed to pull together for the one common aim of success and having fun. The West Country crews had to wait until 18.00 for the fronts to clear before they could return to Eggesford, Halwell and Bodmin, respectively. Three Aeroncas and a Pietenpol decided to take the shorter route between Bath and Bristol due to 25 knot headwinds and wanting to conserve fuel whilst the others took the less weather-harassed route along the Severn. After a fuel stop at ‘Austerfield’ Derek, Terry and I arrived at Bodmin to be greeted by the moon sometime after 21.00. Headwinds and showers certainly slowed us up but I also think the extra load of trophies we carried west must have had an effect!

Best Auster:	Dave Colclough.
Best Auster (runner-up):	Jon Pote.
Best Homebuilt:	Terry (Tug) Wilson (Pietenpol Air Camper).
Best Aeronca:	Pete White. (G-IVOR)
VAC/Fortis:	Pete White

The latter was a Special Award of a Fortis Pilot Watch for “Achievement and enthusiasm over the years in the world of Vintage and Classic aircraft”. *[Not Pete’s words but the citation –Ed]*

Strut Members Receive CAA Safety Awards

by Pete White

On Tuesday 10th May 2005 a representation from the Devon Strut; Terry Wilson, Jon Pote, Reg McComish and I, with our respective wives, travelled to the RAF Club in Piccadilly for the presentation of the CAA Safety Awards. As we all remember, our last Lundy Island Fly-in was blighted with two unfortunate accidents, the second of which was extremely serious and if it was not for the quick thinking and fast reaction of Terry Wilson and Jon Pote the day would almost certainly have ended with the loss of a life. I proposed and Reg seconded this act of bravery to the CAA Safety Board last July and now we sat with the others in this grand old establishment amongst the aeronautical dignitaries of our country awaiting the results of the panel, (having enjoyed an exceedingly good lunch with charming company, I'll add). Our two modest heroes collected their awards, cheered on by us all, and they joined the ranks of previous Devon Strut winners Paul and Mary Aston, who also received a CAA safety award in 2001 for their narrow escape in landing their Europa on the Isle of Sark after an engine failure.



Terry Wilson, Martin Robinson (of AOPA) and Jon Pote

In Brief

Sad to relate, Jodel D112 G-BIVB, so carefully restored by Dave Silsbury for Paul Dowell and more recently owned by Brendon Procter, has been written off by its latest owner. No further details at present but there's always the chance it will be resurrected again.

LAS Aerospace, our local suppliers of materials and parts in Okehampton, will be the UK & Europe agents for Aircraft Spruce & Speciality with effect from 1st June.

Free Landings – June

Pilot: Cromer, Fife, Kirkwall, Land's End, Sheffield City and Shipdham

Flyer: Derby, Donegal, Enstone and White Waltham

Heard on the Frequency

A student became lost during a solo cross-country flight. While attempting to locate the aircraft on radar, ATC asked, "What was your last known position?" Student: "When I was number one for takeoff."

A DC-10 had come in a little hot and thus had an exceedingly long roll out after touching down. San Jose Tower Noted: "American 751, make a hard right turn at the end of the runway, if you are able. If you are not able, take the Guadeloupe exit off Highway 101, make a right at the lights and return to the airport."
