

DEVON STRUT NEWS

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

CO-ORDINATOR'S COMMENTS

by Christopher Howell

Martin Robinson, CEO of AOPA UK was our guest speaker at the first winter meeting at our new venue, the Stowey Arms at Exminster on October 13th. Martin has been in AOPA for 15 years and has a wealth of experience dealing with matters of aviation-related legislation at UK and European level. The depth of his knowledge is quite staggering and he gave us a very good overview of AOPA lobbying activities and member services, aimed at ensuring GA, recreational pilots and flying schools alike, have a two-way route of information as to what's going on with aviation rule makers and legislation in general. Martin's PowerPoint presentation is available via link on our website News page.

Autumn is blowing its way upon us and good flying days have been rather precious during the last month. I have to say Wind has been a prominent feature of the flying season this fine summer. I am not that keen on a bumpy ride as it usually signals a buttock-clenching approach and landing to get your wheels safely on the ground. Launching from a cliff top strip often means a glimpse of the cold sea down below and a lot of turbulent disruption just when you least need it; a nice smooth 500ft a minute suits me fine. The roller coaster going from 1,000ft a minute up, followed sharply by 500ft a minute down without any pilot input can be somewhat worrisome, particularly when the runway disappears behind that massive hill that has just sprung into view from the side window of said aircraft. Ah now, there is a stinky cross wind to contend with and the wind sock is ram rod straight out the wrong way! Oh, why could not the wind be straight down the runway? Here goes: bump, clatter, rattle, I look out the side window and much to my surprise the wheels are still in the right place. I exit the cabin that smells like pig farm and crawl off to have a nice warm, safe cup of tea. Oh well, last year I was moaning about haze so hey ho!

I have been reading two books this month, yes two, with words and pictures! I can recommend both as very entertaining. The first is 'Only Angels Have Wings' by John Evans. (ISBN 0-9548820-0-8 and good value at £14.99). John. H. Evans is a commercial pilot with over 10,000 hours, who began flying back in the early 60's around the west of England and from this viewpoint the book makes for very interesting reading. Dragon Rapides were still in use and landing on St Mary's hump was a novel challenge. He was chief pilot with Bill Bryce when Brymon first took to the air from those grass runways at Plymouth. He flew a Piper Tripacer as an air taxi and gave air experience flights from Swansea where customers had to be helped over the fence with a large stepladder. He went on to fly John Lennon and Yoko Ono when they were trying to abduct Yoko's daughter and he was approached to fly Ronnie Biggs out of the U.K. John was heavily involved in setting up the original Air Wales and subsequently enjoyed extensive flying in the Caribbean and USA. This is a really great read and John has agreed to give a talk at a Strut meeting in the New Year.

My second read was 'Hurricane R4118' by Peter Vacher (ISBN 1-904943-07-1). This story has received much press in the aviation magazines this summer. My first impression of this book was the stunning photography; the pictures alone make this book a worthwhile buy. Whilst travelling around India, Peter spotted R4118 in the grounds of a university, where it had been since 1944. A rare early MK1 Hurricane, R4118 was shipped to Bombay for the Indian Air force as part of the defence of India against the Japanese who had invaded Burma and were advancing towards India. The war then went in the Allies' favour and the aircraft remained in their crates. From 1996 it took Peter six years of very delicate negotiations to purchase the Hurricane. The book details the progress from India through to the first post restoration flight in 2004. This is a superb read and we hope Peter Vacher and Hawker Restorations will accept our invitation to talk to the Strut in 2006.

Farway Fly-in – Sat 20 & Sun 21 August

by Derek Boyce

Saturday saw me with Martin Pengelly (in my Aeronca Champ), Terry and Sandra Wilson (Pietenpol Aircamper) and Geoff and Jenny Dalton (Jabiru) waiting around as usual at Bodmin for the conditions to improve for us to fly to Farway. We finally got away at 14.30 and I had an enjoyable, but turbulent flight over Dartmoor arriving at Farway after most people had left. John and Trish Kempton (Aeronca Chief) and Chris Howell (Luscombe Silvaire) were still there. Other latecomers were Norman Evans (Murphy Rebel) and Alan Grimsley with David Cottingham (Skyranger), both making it all the way from Branscombe!



As usual Terry Case had his strip prepared to a very high standard and we spent a pleasant couple of hours relaxing in the sunshine and enjoying the hospitality. There had been about 35 aircraft visiting during the day including a large contingent of microlights from Weston Zoyland. Strut Members flying in included Dermot Richardson (Piper J5 and Robin DR400), Roy Young (Europa), Ian Quinn (Cessna 180), Ron Perry (Binder Smaragd), Chris Fitton (Jodel DR1051) and Peter Gristwood (Robin DR220). Other aircraft included a Super Cub (Defford), Europa (Bath), Kitfox (Newton Peveril), Binder Smaragd (Garston Farm), Falconar F-11 (Chilbolton), Condor (Lower Upham) and Slingsby T67 (Middle Wallop).



Sunday saw me making the return trip to Farway somewhat earlier. This time I had French student Julien Prangere as passenger and the L4 Cub of Mike Bennett and Pat Crawford followed behind; it made a change not to be overtaken! Strut members attending included John Holden (Eurostar), Mike Hanley (C42), Pete Gibbs (Kitfox), John Flisher (Banbi), Ernie Hoblyn (Emeraude) and Keith Wingate (Taylor Titch). Other visitors included two Piper Vagabonds (Reading and Popham), Cessna 170 (Bourne Park), Kitfox (Swanborough Farm), Thorpe T18 (Popham), Zenair 601 (Popham) and a number of Banbi's were arriving as I was heading back to Bodmin. *[The Watchford contingent of*

Wells, Robson, Dray and Mold arrived late in the day, en-route home from the IoW Strut's fly-in at Bembridge – Ed].

It was pleasant to spend the afternoon talking “Champ” with Graham Horn who is currently rebuilding one up near Henstridge and Andy Amor who flew his Champ down from a strip near Southampton. Many thanks go to Terry Case for allowing us to invade his strip, and to everyone who helped out over the weekend.

(photos by Maurice Wickstead and Derek Boyce)

Appreciation of Farway Fund-Raising from Sidmouth Hospiscare.

Dear Mr Case,

My apologies for the long delay in writing but as I mentioned when I telephoned I have been away and ever since have been endeavouring to catch up! Many thanks for the two donations of £144.74 and £170.20 – yet another wonderful effort by everyone involved with the PFA Devon Strut and yourself. We do appreciate that there is a lot of hard work involved in organising these events and we are most grateful for your ongoing support of our work here in the Sid valley. Please pass on a very big Thank You to everyone. Any time you have a few minutes to spare in Sidmouth do pop in for a cup of coffee and a chat – I am here Tuesdays and Thursdays (a.m. only) and the nurses are in and out! With all good wishes to everyone and again many thanks for your splendid efforts.

Yours sincerely,

Dorothy Reid (Secretary)

Belle Vue Fly-in – Sat 3 Sept

by Derek Boyce

With a fresh breeze blowing down the main runway at Bodmin it was inevitable there would be a crosswind at Belle Vue, although a slightly rosier picture was being portrayed on the phone in an effort to encourage people to attend. But as there would be no problem with landing into wind back at Bodmin, I decided to go and have a look anyway. With some wind on the nose the Champ will land on a pocket-handkerchief, so it was a fairly straightforward procedure to angle my touchdown as into wind as possible. The only difficulty came when trying to taxi on the ground and then being reluctant to get out in case the Champ blew away! I quickly had the Champ tied down and looked around to find that I was not the only one to be mad enough to fly in these conditions.

A total of sixteen aircraft flew in, including the Luscombe Silvaires of Betty & Roger Lanary, Max Robinson and Martin Waters. Dave Stokes (Jodel D112) arrived from his strip at East Pennard, from Watchford Farm was John Pearce (RAF2000), Dermot Richardson (Robin DR400) flew in from Exeter, Mike Claydon (Easy Raider) made the short trip from Mount Farm and fellow fearless Aeronca aviator Steve Waddy flew IVOR (Aeronca Chief) up from Bodmin.



Other visitors included two Shadows from Henstridge, a Jodel from Popham, Glastar from Croft Farm and from Boscombe Down a Wittman Tailwind and Tecnam Super Echo. A few others like Trevor Reed (Jungman) came and had a look but decided that the conditions were outside the limits of man and machine.



Our host Don Easterbrook and the guys from the Wingnuts Flying Club were there to greet everyone and Martin Pengelly was on hand to carry out his marshalling duties. Gill Easterbrook ensured that everyone was well nourished with her usual excellent refreshments. Many thanks to everyone who helped out or took part.

MEMBERS' NEWS

Welcome to New Members

David Williams of Stoodleigh, Tiverton. David has introduced himself to several of us at the Treborough and Watchford fly-ins and is considering building a Rans S7.

Dave Thomas, Bishopsteignton, Teignmouth. Dave is an electrical engineer and hopes to start a PPL course in the near future.

Ray Sweet from South Molton

Literary Award for Devon Strut Member

Reg McComish has that rare quality of being able to write as he speaks, expressing the same clarity and humour on the page as he does in person. This talent has just won him the nationally acclaimed 'Line Trophy' which is awarded annually by the Norfolk and Suffolk Aviation Museum of Flixton in Norfolk. The piece in question relays Reg's thoughts on his first journey from two dimensions to the now familiar three dimensions. Most of us who read this journal have experienced this same wonderful fulfilment but few of us can put it to paper as well as our Reg. Well done Reg and congratulations from all of Devon Strut.

(Pete White)

That First Flight

by Reg McComish

The early evenings of August 1948 were wonderful; clear, balmy and above all fresh. The sweet odour of fresh-mown grass at RAF Old Sarum was made sweeter by moisture that remained from an earlier light shower. An Avro 'Annie' curled lazily around the base leg to final and made a gently whistling

arrival to touch down in a perfect 'three-pointer'. The pilot that disembarked seemed old to me but on reflection could have been little more than 21 or 22 years old. I looked at him in total admiration bordering on reverence for I had watched 'chaps' like him at work a few years earlier as they left their cotton wool vapour trails high in the blue sky appearing like macabre aerial ice dances silently performing as I lay on my back twenty thousand feet below. Occasionally there would be smoke and flame as one of the players tripped and fell from the game. Silk mushrooms if the player was lucky, no wreaths and little sympathy if he was not for the game had to be played on!

I was trembling nervously as I waited at 'brief' but it was from anticipation not fear. I could hardly contain the feeling of sheer excitement at the thought of flying; it was something I wanted to do more than anything else. Service contacts had diminished to next to none after my father was killed yet somehow, here I was with a dream about to be fulfilled. I was presented to the instructor who was to fly the Tiger Moth, a veteran of many years and a full career man about to be relegated to the inevitable 'Mahogany Bomber', he was already attired in 'Irvine' with helmet in hand.

"Station's down for leave so there's no intercom for you, - you'll have to shout!" He grunted and smiled as he tossed a small Irvine on to the back of a chair. "Put this on and buckle up as tight as you can", he added. The jacket was two hundred sizes too big for me but I puffed with pride at having it on, I thought of the pilots that must have worn it before me. He briefed me gruffly on the airplane and emergency drills but excitement had me in its relentless grip and I didn't hoist in one single detail, not one! He handed me the usual leather helmet and goggles and I almost fainted. Sat in the front, I could just see out if I stuck my head right over to the side so that's what I did and that was the first mistake, for had I heeded the brief I would have known that the grass at 'Sarum' was pretty lumpy stuff. The side of my head was given a not inconsiderable biff just above the helmet ear-piece which set that ear singing roundly to say little of it! By the time I'd stopped rubbing out the pain we were well and truly airborne so when I plucked up courage and stuck my head out again I was shocked to find the ground so far away, I looked and looked again. The earth had taken on a new appearance entirely and the experience was indescribably wonderful, the steam trains that constantly snorted protestingly in and out of Salisbury station that had seemed so incomparably mighty were now reduced to crawling, hissing insects doomed to follow skinny little sticks on the ground! We were free to move in any direction, could see in all directions and were not bound by earthly things!

A lot of shouting came from behind me so, turning to see what was afoot, I perceived a large leather-gloved thumb sticking up so I nodded, smiled and looked over the side again. This proved the second mistake for the airplane jerked violently to the left through ninety degrees then stopped as quickly as it had started, I had just forced my senses to adjust to this new attitude when the plane jerked through another ninety to full inverted, now, it was at this point that I first decided I would listen to briefings. When I was strapped in, the pilot instructed me to continue to tension the harness until I was sure it was tight, - I didn't! Now we were inverted I fell into the slackness of the harness, a distance of probably less than an inch but the human mind being what it is I was catapulting out of the aircraft to certain doom!! I heard a fearful ear-splitting scream that I was sure must have been the pilot when I noticed my mouth was wide open and a lot of much needed air was issuing from it at extreme velocity. My head was now well out of the canopy and had been noticed by the pilot who flicked the Tiger through the remaining one-eighty to re-seat me with a thump! I turned to him again and with supreme effort produced a wan smile and a nervous 'thumbs-up', he was laughing large sections of his nether anatomy off!! There followed loops and barrel-rolls and by the time I returned to Terra-Firma I was well and truly hooked - I would fly myself one day!

I was eleven years old when that flight took place. For a few summers now I have been returning the joy of my first moment to youngsters with a desire to fly and have often wished that I could tell them of the total joy that flying has been for me in the fifty plus years since my first moment but it has always been plain to me that in their excitement, like mine all those years ago, there would have been little attention afforded my tale! As I approach the fiftieth anniversary of being a qualified pilot perhaps some of them may have recovered enough to read this instead! Who knows? If just one of the

young people I have flown felt as I did on my day the whole thing will have been worth it but from my own observations there were many more than one in which I recognised the expression of anticipation and delight that I had once worn myself!

60th Anniversary Photo-Shoot, Dunkeswell, 2nd October



We've had some pretty successful fly-ins over the years but never have we had so many strut members' aircraft (51) in the same place at the same time as we did on Sunday 2nd October for our PFA 60th anniversary photo session at Dunkeswell. From an idea hatched by Dave Silsbury and Pete White the event was orchestrated by Dave, Pete, John McNab and Ian Walsh with the blessing of Dunkeswell's Brendan Procter. The ground crew (of just about all the members present) marshalled the aircraft into position to describe a large "60" on the grass to the east of the runway intersection. Jim Greenshields of Somerset Microlights piloted photographer Derek Boyce in the club's Icarus for the air to ground sortie, the results of which are terrific - but confidential until the New Year, when we will celebrate the Association's anniversary!



Icarus C42 photo-ship



Messrs Robson, Procter, McComish, White, Walsh, Silsbury & Dray

Class D Airspace Proposals for Exeter

As revealed here last month, Exeter airport is proposing Class D airspace and has started consultation with local organizations. The committee of the Devon and Somerset Gliding Club has already been approached for its views, as the freedom to soar the skies to the north of Exeter around the North Hill site would be most in jeopardy. Next in line for consultation is Dunkeswell although Joe Thomas at Branscombe and Terry Case at Farway have not been consulted.

The plans include a hub of 10nm diameter centred on the airport and encompassing the 'EX' to the east, Woodbury Common and Lymptone to the south and Exeter city to the west, extending from the surface up to FL65. Stubs aligned on the axis of the centre-lines of runways 08/26 extend to the west and east, with bases of 1,000 ft for 3nm and then a further 4-5 nm up to 2,000 ft altitude. Farway and Branscombe will be under the latter area with approximately 1,200 ft and 1,500 ft of clear air respectively. The controlled airspace will also be tiered up to meet the airway N864 to the south at Dawlish (base 3,500 ft) and to Berry Head (base 4,500ft). To the north the intermediate block will

extend from the west of Crediton across Cullompton to North Hill and Dunkeswell, base 2,500ft and then further out to the north of Cullompton with a base at 3,500ft to Uplowman. This area to the north of Exeter clearly has implications for the gliding and parachuting clubs and the airspace designers have conceded to further split this northern area into discretionary boxes which would be accessible subject to commercial traffic routing requirements.



Initial feedback from discussions so far suggest that the ATC planners have been amenable to local recreational flying requirements but Martin Robinson of AOPA recently warned against complacency and quoted instances at other locations where discretionary arrangements for access to CAS have been managed in an ad hoc way by duty controllers. His advice was to fight the proposals all the way!

Sonex in the U.K.

Mike Moulai of Silver Fern Microlights, importers of the Kolb Range of kit planes operating from Sandtoft Airfield between Scunthorpe and Doncaster, has become the sole U.K. importer of the all-metal Sonex aircraft and Aero Vee engines. He has formally lodged his intents with PFA Engineering and the initial response is promising. Already the load testing and FAA 51% compliance has been done. He hopes to have the prototype completed by the end of 2005 and flying by early in 2006. There will be nose or tail wheel options and engines from the Aero Vee 80 hp, Jabiru 2200 or Jabiru 3300. He's looking for feedback from prospective customers on the preferred options. The kit manufacturers in the USA lean towards the nosewheel and Aero Vee combination although Mike's

preference is the tailwheel and Jabiru 3300. Plans will also be available for those builders wanting to start from scratch. Tel. 01724-734614 for more information or see <http://www.sonex-ltd.com/specs.html>



Young Navigators Competition

For those of you who are involved / have contact with young people either in Schools/ATC/Scouts etc., this annual competition organised by the Royal Institute of Navigation is aimed at young people and has lots of excellent top prizes, including flying/gliding/sailing etc. experiences. Details are to be found at http://www.rin.org.uk/POOLED/articles/bf_newsart/view.asp?Q=bf_newsart_72517 . Entries close at the end of December. Do please get this information out to as many young members and also the rest of your Strut - I'm sure that other members may be grateful for the information.
Chris Shaw

November's Free Landings

Pilot: Eaglescott, Isle of Gigha, Leicester, Peterborough Conington, Wolverhampton, Weston (Ireland).
Flyer: Cumbernauld, Fishburn, Sandtoft, and Tatenhill

The first set of flying rules, c. 1920

(found painted on the hangar wall in the mid 1960's on the site of the Richard Fairey aerodrome)

- Don't take the machine into the air unless you are satisfied it will fly
- Never leave the ground with the motor leaking
- Don't turn sharply when taxiing. Instead of turning short, have someone lift the tail around
- In taking off, look at the ground and the air
- Never get out of the machine with the motor turning until the pilot relieving you can reach the motor controls
- Pilots should carry hankies in a handy position to wipe off goggles (*they get twisted round your head.*)
- Riding on the step, wings or tail of a machine is prohibited
- In case the engine fails on take-off, land straight ahead regardless of obstacles
- No machine must taxi faster than a man can walk
- Do not trust altitude instruments
- Learn to gauge altitude especially on landing

With acknowledgement to the NW Strut NL

Next Meeting

Martin Collins, Avro Lancaster 'Just Jane'

Nov. 10th, Stowey Arms, Exminster, 7.30- 8pm start.

Martin was a member of the Historic Aircraft Preservation Society in 1965 when it became heavily involved with Avro Lancaster NX611. This Lanc was built in 1945 and spent many years in storage before ending up in Australia. She was brought back to the UK in 1965 and this was when Martin began his affair. Two very interesting articles written by him were published in the October and November 2004 editions of Fly Past magazine and in his talk to the Strut, Martin will describe keeping the 1945 Avro Lancaster flying in the 1960's. The aircraft 'Just Jane' is now owned by the Panton brothers and is resident at the Lincolnshire Aviation Heritage Centre, East Kirkby, where the Lanc is still displayed taxiing down the runway. Books 'Just Jane' and 'Two Farmers and A Lancaster' and videos of the aircraft have been published. If any member wants copies of the two articles from Fly Past magazine, Christopher Howell will be ordering some back numbers of the magazine so please let him know.

Future Meetings

Dec. 8 th	John Beattie, RN Historic Flight
Jan. 12 th	AGM.
Feb. 9 th	John Evans, Author and Commercial Pilot,
March 9 th	to be confirmed.
April 13 th	"

Based in an African republic, another start-up airline, TsetseFly, has been announced. Online bookings can be made via TsetseFly.CON, giving both your bank and credit card details!
