

DEVON STRUT NEWS

The Newsletter of the Devon Strut of the Popular Flying Association. Sept 2003.

CO-ORDINATOR'S COMMENTS. By Christopher Howell.

*Co-Ordinators Comments.
Christopher Howell.*

August started with a heat wave, thankfully by mid month temperatures had returned closer to the average and the air was a little fresher.

I was moaning away to my little domestic bee about my aches and pains at forty something and I sharply realised when I awoke at 6am that Les Dray at seventy something may well be flying off on the first leg of his dawn to dusk marathon.

My thoughts very much lingered on the effort, both physical and the amount of brain power required to pilot an aircraft for so many hours from sunrise to sunset, I felt very humble indeed. Les has set a fine example to us young blades!

The Lundy Fly In seemed to inspire Strut members to set off far and wide. The approach and landing at Lundy can be quite daunting, with this successfully completed confidence and experience rise. There are many reports thumping in of members travelling further to foreign lands.

MEMBERS NEWS.

John Crabb in his Jodel has since returned for another visit to Lundy and plans trips to the Scilly Isles and a Jodel jolly to the South of France. We look forward to news of his travels.

It appears there are some benefits for holding so many fly in events around the West Country. Devon Strut members are venturing far and wide. Yes they fly off to foreign lands, they also support our home events, and consequently we do a lot of flying!

Richard Horner and Dave Berger in their Cubs travelled down to the Swiss Alps, Richard remarked "Dave did not get there any quicker, but used twice as much fuel and oil". Dave owns the Super Cub 150hp and Richard the Super Cub PA18 with a 95hp. It is interesting to note what benefits the extra hp gives and also how much can be achieved with fewer horses under the bonnet.

I met Jon Pote at Dunkeswell who with his partner was enjoying a tour of the West of England in their Eaglescott based Chipmunk. I had never flown in a Chipmunk and Jon very kindly offered me a flight around Dunkeswell. Not being very adept at describing aircraft handling and performance, I can say it was an interesting experience in this classic old RAF training aircraft which I felt glowed with nostalgia!

The Aeronca Squadron broke out across the channel to commemorate 100 years of flight. The destination Le Plessis Belleville, with en-route stops at Headcorn, Lydd and Abbeville. Pete White and Terry Wilson battled all week to repair the fuel tank of G-IVOR and on Friday evening fellow SWAG member John O'Brien waved them off from Dunkeswell. Further reports are filtering back that the Aeronca group enjoyed a highly successful mission and all returned safely.

Mike Hanley of Cornwall is building a Supermarine Spitfire MK 26. This is the Australian designed replica to be fitted with the eight-cylinder Jabiru engine. The fuselage is largely complete, including the undercarriage, work continues on the tailplane. When complete the test flying will be carried out at Bodmin by Stefan Heale. Mike has said that any members wishing to visit his workshops would be made very welcome, please contact Mike on 01872-560771

Before the Farway fly in I popped in to see Terry Case for a cup of tea and I can report that Terry is on fine form and well on the way to regaining his pilots licence.

Terry still has the Cessna 172, all dismantled and complete. The aircraft is already stripped back to bare metal and is in need of an engine! Terry has sold some land but still retains the runway 10/28 and 18/36 both in immaculate condition. Give him a call and pop in.

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MEMBERS NEWS by Mike Mold

Warmest congratulations to Pete White, Terry Wilson and the members of the IVOR group for the two awards they won at Kemble: Best Amateur Restoration and a Commendation Certificate – Classic Aircraft.

And to Les Dray – what a hero ! He completed more than 7 hours flying in his Condor on Sunday 17th August and raised over £2,000 for the Macmillan Nurses. I hope a full account of the day will be contributed for a future issue.

New Members

Welcome to new members :-

Mik Sansom from Seaton shares a Kitfox Mk4.

Jonathan Pote from Ilfracombe who shares Chipmunk G-BXGP

Dennis Gosling Sidmouth who is a member of a glider syndicate.

The Hitch-Hikers Guide to Lundy! – by John McGwyne

1 – The plan

My cunning plan started on a whim but gradually gained momentum of its own as my desire to visit the “rock” a few miles off the north Devon coast got stronger and stronger. Five years had drifted by since I first had the idea; now that my advanced flight training and studies were complete I was running out of excuses (and money). Mention of the word “Lundy” seemed to strike fear into flying clubs who looked at me as if I must be mad to even suggest such a thing (how rough could it be?). Not able to find a suitable club aircraft and not having my own presented me with a challenge but I decided that it was now or never!

On the plus side the weather was great and my long-suffering wife Hazel realised that I had that strange look in my eyes – I was a man with a mission! The Devon strut fly in to Lundy was my best chance of getting there and Eggesford seemed to be the best place to “thumb” a lift. I decided that a quick dash to Exeter to rent a lifejacket would be a good idea so off I went. Next followed a drive through the beautiful Devon countryside to the very scenic strip of Eggesford (otherwise known as “Auster International”). I was welcomed at Eggesford by Chris Howell who was co-ordinating arrivals and providing a link between Lundy and Eggesford via his earpiece and mobile phone. John was dealing with arrivals and managing the refuelling and Roger was concentrating on getting the flaps set on his Auster.

2 – I am not alone

I soon realised that there were other aerial hitchhikers with cunningly similar plans, (great - there were others with similar “demons” to myself). We quickly formed a “support group” around the teapot! Brian was a retired teacher who had always been hooked on aviation and he told me that most of his family’s holiday snaps had aircraft in the background, which was testimony to his lifelong addiction. Rodney told us all about his involvement with Austers and the rigorous “interview” that he had passed in order to prove he was a worthy custodian of the marque.

3 – The long wait

Chris eyed us all with a concerned but knowing look in his eyes and made the occasional comment such as “It’s not looking good, you will just have to buy your own aircraft”. After about 3 hours of waiting I phoned home to Hazel and told her that it was not looking very promising, I would wait until mid day and then abandon my mission in favour of a warm Sunday roast. At 12:45 I was still at Eggesford much to Hazel’s surprise! (I was so close I could almost smell Lundy so decided to stick it out). Breakthrough at about 1pm, Chris found Brian a spare seat in an Aeronca Champ and he was off. I was next in line so might strike lucky! After another 10 minutes Chris shouted out “Hey John, how do you fancy going to Lundy in an Xair?” Quick as a flash I replied - “I would love to go to Lundy in an Xair” (what’s an Xair I wondered to myself?).

4– The moment of truth

I was quickly introduced to “Bunny” who had kindly offered to take me off Chris’ list for the afternoon. I looked around the field for our trusty steed and was slightly taken aback when I realised that I would be flying over the sea in a bright orange microlight aircraft (I had never flown in a microlight so felt some trepidation which I did my best to hide). People told me that microlights were a lot of fun but I had also heard a few “horror” stories over the years. This one looked like a traditional fixed wing design and it was ultra modern so fingers crossed.

My fears turned to a wide grin as we blasted off from Eggesford and rapidly climbed away in a strong climb after using what seemed like 20ft of runway – WOW ! We cruised along at about 65kts with a brilliant view of the Devon landscape unfolding beneath us. Bunny explained that he has been involved in micro-lights for many years and things had come a long way. After a short “detour” to take in the view over Okehampton we set course for Lundy, which was clearly visible off Hartland point. Churchyards and Village greens drifted by beneath us with men in white, battling for all they were worth. The Celtic crosses in the churchyards were a poignant reminder of past residents now slumbering beneath the same glorious Devon sky that we effortlessly glided across. Cows grazed, horses galloped and rivers meandered lazily to the sea. I woke from my dream-like trance when I saw the ocean ahead (I could have sworn that strange noises suddenly started as we coasted out and my eyes fixated on the engine temperature gauges, which looked normal despite my imagined rumblings).

5 – Island Life

Lundy appeared like a granite “aircraft carrier” ready and waiting for our imminent landing. By now my confidence level was high and I suspected that of all the aircraft visiting Lundy today ours was probably one of the best aircraft for such a mission. I was soon proved right when Bunny set us up for the postage stamp sized field (I won’t call it a runway) and slipped us down rapidly on to terra -firma. Our landing made the strip at Lundy seem overly generous in length as we stopped in front of the admiring onlookers. I was immediately struck by the fact that the majority of aircraft were tail-draggers or microlights, now I knew why they were called “real” aircraft. We soon met up with fellow travellers Jim and Andy who had flown across in an Auster and off we headed for the pub! Lundy was bathed in sunshine and appeared to be a couple of degrees warmer than the mainland. Rodney, one of my fellow aerial hitchers, made it across in a Cessna 180 so his intrepid plan was coming good as well. As we made our way across the island I began to see that Bunny was well known and respected among the flying community and his aircraft and engines were generating a great deal of

interest. We tucked into some “nosh” and mugs of tea in the Marisco Tavern and chatted to Chris who had made the trip in his trusty Cessna 150 (who says that tri-cycle gear aircraft can’t cope with Lundy). Chris took the view that as his nosewheel had survived 10,000 hours of student training it was probably indestructible! Andy advised that a visit to the top of the lighthouse was mandatory so after winding our way up the granite stairs we were afforded a fantastic panoramic view of the sea in all directions. The island seemed to be frozen in time but for this one magnificent day it had been invaded by an intrepid army of flyers, along with their flying machines (some from bygone days, others - like ours, brand new). The island has a strong aviation heritage and the fly-in was a fantastic celebration and continuation of that heritage (and long may it continue). Time sped by and soon it was time for a last walk among the aircraft and final cheerios to new-found friends.

6 – Homeward Bound

We strapped in and taxied effortlessly across what seemed like trenches in the rough ground. We couldn’t distinguish the “runway” so headed right of the lighthouse and leaped into the air after another minuscule ground run. I couldn’t stop grinning like a Cheshire cat and waving at the impressed crowd of onlookers. Bunny decided on a final tour of the island and so another chance to drift off into my surreal, dream-like state. Bunny told me that he enjoyed introducing fellow flyers to the seemingly elusive dream of affordable, safe and fun flying. From my experiences so far his “product” spoke for itself. Hartland Point passed underneath and the engine seemed suddenly quieter again (despite any change on the gauges). People gazed up at us from the benches around the tea hut as we sped past overhead. The white radar dome at Eaglescott soon came into view as we followed the power lines which would lead us to back to Eggesford. Abeam the numbers on the downwind power was chopped and down we went for another textbook landing.

7 – Mission accomplished

The now familiar faces were all around and had contented grins of their own. Bunny and I shook hands, said farewell and went our separate

ways again. Chris was still on the mobile providing support and advice to arrivals and departures; John was busy refuelling aircraft. Most of my fellow hitchers made it to Lundy thanks to Chris’ selfless and and persistent “touting”. It was a fantastic day and one that I will carry with me forever. I am sure that my fellow hikers and flyers will also remember their trip to the island. Lundy is a fantastic destination but needs to be treated with caution and respect. It is definitely not for all aircraft or pilots but if you are competent, current and have the right type and good weather then it is fantastic fun.

Next time you are heading for Lundy and you see a small group of people eagerly watching your arrival (and you have a spare seat), please put one of them out of their “misery”, you will make a friend for life who will happily contribute to lunch, landings or fuel (or a combination of all three). You might also have as much fun as we did.

Many thanks to Chris, “Bunny” and everybody who kindly helped me on my way. If you are looking for fun, cheap and safe flying then I would thoroughly recommend the *Xair*.

Threat to Bellevue (Letter from Jim Gale)

I wonder if any of you can help as we have a possible threat to Belle Vue.

Apparently Devon Waste Management have lodged a planning application with Devon County Council to extend Deepmoor landfill site to cover the land on the 08 approach / 26 departure. (The Deepmoor tip is at present to the southwest of Belle Vue, about half mile from the runway centreline. Masses of Gulls congregate on the site at present but so far have not affected the operation of the airfield.) Obviously if the tip extends to directly under the flightpath then this could lead to severe operational problems, particularly an increased danger of a bird strike. This will cause a real danger of a fatal accident. It is also proposed to build a high screening embankment which may be situated just the other side of the lane bordering 08 with consequential turbulence and obstruction effects.

The Wingnuts Flying Club will be presenting an objection but the more

individuals who write an objection to the council, the better chance we have of modifying the proposed development. Please take the time to write to the following address;

Mr Andrew Bowman,
Development Control Manager,
The County Environment Directorate,
Luscombe House,
County Hall,
Exeter, EX2 4QE email abowman@devon.gov.uk

We really don't want to lose this lovely airfield in North Devon, so I hope you can stir the ink and put pen to paper or finger(s) to keyboard.

Happy flying!

Jim Gale. 😊

Roserrow Fly-in – Sun 10 August

by Derek Boyce

For the third year running the weather put paid to our efforts to hold a fly-in at Roserrow. A small gathering did take place at Bodmin, with several attempts made by various aircraft to see if the cloud had lifted, but you could not get out of the circuit towards the North Coast all day. A Dutch Tecnam Echo did make it as far as Bodmin and a Cherokee Arrow from Blackbushe got as far as Plymouth before calling it a day. Ho-hum!

Farway Fly-in - Sat 16 & Sun 17 August

by Derek Boyce

Favourable conditions at Farway over the weekend saw 39 aircraft fly in on the Saturday and 43 on Sunday. There are now just two runways at Farway and Terry had done an excellent job of preparing the strip for the weekend.

Saturday got off to a slow start with most of the early arrivals travelling the longest distance. First in was a Super Cub 150 from a strip in West Sussex, flown by an Uncle and Nephew (probably one of the youngest

pilot's to fly in to one of our events). They had both recently learnt to fly in the Cub and were making their first long flight since qualifying.

Fourteen aircraft were flown in by Strut members including, a Chipmunk from Eaglescott (John Pote), RAF 2000 Autogyro from Watchford Farm (John Pearce), Auster AOP9 from Eggesford (Martin Robinson/John Cooke) and Tecnam Echo from Dunkeswell (Richard Reeves). Whilst competing to be the last to arrive were Keith Wingate (Topsy Nipper), Chris Pidler (Fournier RF6) and Richard Hulls (Piper Tripacer).

Homebuilt arrivals from further a field included a Thorp T18 and Zenair CH601 taildragger both from White Waltham, Colibri from Hinton-in-the-Hedges, and two Banbi's from Old Sarum and Shobdon. Whilst staying overnight was a VFM 16 Tandem Autogyro. Older types included a Cessna 140 from Rush Green, Cessna Bird Dog from Belle Vue, L-4 Cub from Bodmin and a pair of Piper Vagabonds from Wellesborne and White Waltham.

Sunday also got off to a slow start, Trevor Reed was an early arrival flying his Jungman from Watchford Farm. Trevor very kindly flew one of our marshallers, Martin Pengelly, before disappearing off to Dunkeswell to meet up with Les Dray and act as safety pilot on his later Dawn to Dusk trips. Les flew the Condor into Farway on route to Sandown later in the day. *(And what a brilliant contribution to the Macmillan Nurses – over 7 hours flying on the day and at least £2,000 raised in donations - Ed)* In total, fifteen aircraft were flown in by Strut members including, Champion Traveller (Brian Anning) and Jodel D9 (Mike Mold) both from Watchford Farm, X'Air (Colin Wood), Super Cub (Brendan Procter) and three Topsy Nippers (Keith Wingate, Chris Pidler and Dave Silsbury) all from Dunkeswell.

Homebuilt types from outside the area included a very smart looking Jabiru powered Avid Flyer from Garston Farm, Steve Stride in a Corby Starlet, a previous Cranfield “best homebuilt” winner from Droitwich, a Turbulent from Swindon and Barry Plumb in his the Jabiru-powered Plumb Biplane from Hinton-in-the-Hedges *(congratulations to Barry - best new design winner at Kemble, 10 years on!)*. Older types included,

a Porterfield CP-50 Collegiate, which looks a bit like a Cub, but gets away with only having a 50hp engine by virtue of a very

narrow fuselage. Also an L4 Cub in RAF markings and Luscombe 8E Silvaire both from Old Sarum, Aeronca Chief from Cardiff and Fairtravel Linnet from Swanborough, which is an Emeraude, that was licence built in the UK by Doug Bianchi.

Many thanks go to Terry Case for providing an excellent well-kept strip for the fly-in. Thanks also to John Havers for marshalling on Saturday and Martin Pengelly and Josh Sinnett for marshalling on Sunday. Thanks to Betty and John Havers for stepping in at the last minute to take charge of the catering. Betty worked very hard on both days serving up sandwiches, cakes and hot and cold drinks to everyone, ably assisted by Mary Aston on the Saturday and Arthur Tynan on the Sunday.

Bodmin Fly-in – Sun 24 August by Derek Boyce

Most people arriving at Bodmin could not believe the good weather over the field compared with the poor visibility encountered on route from the North and East. No doubt this helped keep the numbers down to 33, with most of the aircraft coming from within Devon and Cornwall.

A Jabiru from Leicester and Glastar from Croft Farm had arrived the day before. An early arrival was a Zenair CH601UL all the way from a strip near Newark, Notts, whilst coming from the other direction was a Jodel D120A and Cherokee from the Scillies and two Kitfoxes, an X'Air and a Thruster, from Roche,

From Watchford Farm we saw Ernie Hoblyn (Emeraude), Les Dray (Condor) and John Mansell (Jodel D112). From Eggesford were Richard Webber (Terrier), Bryn Andrews (Terrier) and John Cooke (Super Cub). Coming from Halwell were Keith Wingate (Nipper) and Pete Callis (Pegasus Quantum). John McNab flew in with Barry Enoch (Jodel DR1050) from Sheepwash. We also saw Phil Hatton (Jabiru), Michael Barrett (Chevron) from Eaglescott and Steve Wells brought in Ray Trute's Birddog.

Dermot Richardson, Peter Gristwood and other group members from Exeter flew in with the Turbulent, Cub Cruiser, Steen Skybolt and their

latest acquisition, a Wassmer WA41 Baladou. Apparently they had called into Eggesford on the way but had failed miserably when it came to lighting the cooker to make the tea. As many of you will know, it's quite easy when you know how, but has in the past baffled many, even the most experienced Auster pilots!

Thanks to everyone at Bodmin for making it an enjoyable day, especially Mark Taylor (Airfield Manager) and Michelle Mordue (Catering). Once again Martin Pengelly and Josh Sinnett did an excellent job with the marshalling, for which we are very grateful. A few Strut members have already given them flights as a thank you for their efforts, and a few others have promised to do so, to which we are very grateful. A few more would be good, so when you see them please approach them and make the offer.

Events

- 30/8 PFA AGM, Turweston
- 31/8 Brimpton Fly-In, Aldermaston 01635-866088 or 0118-971-3824 on the day.
- 6/9 Bellevue
- 6-7/9 St Omer Jodel Fly-In, France
- 14/9 Watchford Farm (raffle to add to Les Dray's Macmillan Nurses appeal)
- 20/9 Yeovilton air day
- 20/9 Aeronca Club camping weekend, Caernarfon
- 21/9 Popham, Solent Aviation Society, Luscombe, Autogyro and Pietenpol Fly-In
- 28/9 Popham – Aero / Auto-jumble, wings & wheels fly-in.

BRANSCOMBE (pictures too late for last month)



Pitts S1



Harvard



A Mustang needs no label!



One of Vic Norman's Stearmans



A Yak C11

FARWAY



Exeter Sqn Turbulent



Jabiru powered Avid



Trevor Reed's Jungman



Jon Pote's Chipmunk



Dave Silsburys Nipper



Thorpe T18 from Waltham



Porterfield G-AFZL

VPM 16 G-YFLY