

Welcome to the 30th Anniversary of the Strut AGM.

Yes, it is 30 years since that small band of enthusiasts started the Devon Strut and one of the original members from those distant days, Dave Silsbury, has organised celebratory cakes which we will distribute to you all at the end of the AGM and before the Derek Boyce slide show. (That should keep you on your seats)

Our SW Rally at Dunkeswell this year will be dedicated to 30 years of Strut flying in the West Country and I appeal to our members for any old photos, newsletters or memorabilia from that era to highlight our anniversary. Perhaps even an 'old' aircraft park by the Strut tent?

Now back to 2008 and my report, to help my aging mind I re-read our excellent monthly newsletters for last year and find that they are a great record of what we get up to as a Strut. The articles cover so many subjects including aircraft projects some of which came to fruition last year, like Dave Silsbury's Jodel DR1050M, Alec Janaway's Escapade and the almost finished Barry Enoch's Menestrel, Brian Murray's RV plus longer term projects like Ian Law's superb Boredom Fighter. There are other projects out there and we welcome articles on the builder's progress for our future newsletters.

A matter of discussion early last year was, 'What do we call ourselves, A Wing or a Strut'. **How do you all feel about that now?**

Running through 2008 in a monthly order I have highlighted events and items of interest that constitute my report.

January 10th The AGM, and SW Rally planning.

February 14th Our guest speaker was the delightful Polly Vacher who enthralled us all with her story of flying from pole to pole. This was very well attended and Polly signed copies of her books afterwards.

March 13th Bill Leary waxed lyrically about his love affair with a mammoth biplane The Antonov AN2

April 10th Rob Midgeley from Shell Oils kept us all up to speed with the latest in the aviation oil market with advice on what to use and when.

May 3rd marked the first of our fly-ins for 2008 and this was at Bodmin coupled with the Aeronca Club meeting and a SAH1/Sprite fly-in. Attendance was not too bad considering the strong winds.

May 4th Bolt Head was the venue, organised by John Kempton, Chris Howell and team, which was a great success with many road visitors, some of which were exhibiting their classic/vintage vehicles.

May 10th Was the chosen date for our contribution towards the national YA day and our young guests were from the N Devon children's hospice. It was a heart-warming success.

May 31st – June 1st 'Didn't we do well!' Our SW Regional Rally was a 'cracking' event despite all the rain leading up to it which prevented the grass from being cut and generally poor weather either side of the event. Announced by many as a highly acclaimed, very successful and satisfying Rally. Well done all of you.

June 7th & 8th Our 4th Scout Aerocamp at Belle Vue with even more success than before and topped this year with the certificate and awards being presented by our special guest, Polly Vacher.

June 29th Halwell was a delight although the weather did deter some visitors, those that attended were very happy. Thanks go to all the hard work put in by Paul & Mary Aston and the team.

July 12th & 13th RIAT, Saw Jim Gale, Steve Robson and our team with the Ba'P2 on the line but the event was cancelled due to a waterlogged airfield!

July 27th Branscombe had to be cancelled due to matters beyond the control of airfield owner, David Hayman. 2007, bad weather. 2008, bad vibes! We are all looking forward to the 2009 Classic event.

July 27th We were challenged by Wessex Strut to a 'Brunch Patrol' and our 'wing' leader Peter Gristwood, was successful in getting 10 out of the 14 aircraft down at Henstridge with out being spotted. Well done men, this year we are throwing down the gauntlet to *them* so watch this space.

August 10th Lundy, my favourite little event and the weather gods won!

August 16th Farway Common, rain stopped play.

August 17th Treborough, Waterlogged.

August 31st Plymouth, masterminded by John Kempton and Chris Howell, were also affected by our un-seasonal weather with only a few aircraft getting through.

September 6th Belle Vue was still churned up and covered in marquees from the N Devon show so that was another cancellation for 2008!

September 14th Watchford Farm. Traditionally our last fly-in of the season and Brian Anning had to declare that the pitch was unsuitable to play!

October 4th Dunkeswell Jodel fly-In and this was another weather flop!

What a year.....this is when I started to think about '**Strut Scrambles**'.

Back to our evening meetings knowing that the Ley Arms was unlikely to be cancelled due to bad weather.

October 9th Club night for the members.

October 12th Our first Strut Scramble, to Bodmin, is this a way to beat the weather gods? Well it went very well indeed and then I started to compile a list of future destinations.

November 13th The new LAA CEO Peter Harvey briefed us on the workings of the LAA and its future plans. I was very impressed with Peter's enthusiasm and professionalism.

November 22nd The LAA AGM at Turweston, which was well attended by the Devon Strut.

November 29th & 30th Our Ba'P2 team attended SPLASH at the NEC with the 'Spirit of Devon Youth'. Aply assisted as usual by our scouting contacts and new Strut members, Chris and Sharon Noble.

December 7th Strut Scramble to Old Sarum. About 20 + Strut aircraft.

December 11th Our guest speaker was John Webster who enthralled us with his story 'ATC and all that' Also we were presented with our latest Strut award , 'The Mike Claydon Trophy' by Sharon Claydon.

December 27th Strut Scramble to Perranporth. Again about 20 + machines and fun had by all.

Although not technically in 2008 we also had another excellent Strut Scramble to Eaglescott on January 3rd 2009.

Now some notices to pass on to you all,

Don't forget to put yourselves down on the non-flying members flight list, which will be distributed to all pilots soon.

Subscription charges have been stable for some while at £15.00 and to operate with the safety margin to cover our costs we are proposing a permanent new rate of £18.00 from 1st March 2009 with authority granted to the committee to reduce to £15.00 for early payers. VOTE

Please could you fill in all the spaces in the membership form, as HQ requires this information for our annual Strut return, which in turn, is a prerequisite for LAA insurance? Will you add your a/c base location with you're a/c details? We can then add this information to the membership list. We hope the 2009 subs form will make the LAA membership (Y/N) question easier and clearer. Also let us know of any changes of circumstances during the year.

-LAA membership promotion for non-LAA Strut members.

These members get benefits accrued from the LAA by virtue of being strut members. Jim raised this anomaly on our behalf with Peter Harvey who agreed to offer them a deal in line with the membership offer at Splash (for £40). You might want to talk to Jim about how the details will work (presumably just for the Full Member category), but I find it difficult to reconcile that we've got 201 members and only about 130 are in the LAA. We need to stress the benefits of LAA membership and all the work that the HQ, EC and sub groups are doing for all of the UK light aviation community, to the benefit of these Devon Strut, non-LAA members. We've made full Strut membership a benefit to them in contrast to the previous version of the rules that defined Associate membership and we should encourage them to support the Association via this specific offer.

The world about us is in a turmoil at present and I appreciate that many of us will have to watch our spending this year but we must all be thankful that we have the facility to use our hobby as a retreat to carry us away from the harsh realities of life if only for a half hour flying around the coast. We also have the camaraderie of like souls all joined by our quest to get airborne in whatever form turns us on. I wish you all a peaceful year and one oozing with FUN.

Pete White