

Young Eagles 2003 - The report



You have to be aware that you don't overload the aircraft, because if it is too heavy, it will not be able to oppose gravity!" Rhys Thomas

"Filton Tower, Golf Bravo Sierra Victor Echo inbound to you from Halesland, request joining instructions..." Thus the first aircraft arrived for what we would probably rate as the best ever Bristol Strut Young Eagle Day, on Saturday 5th April. Shortly after, the others started to fill Apron 2 and our prospective Eagles began to arrive at the check-in desk.



As is our custom in Bristol Strut, we had offered free flights to any youngsters at selected local schools who wished to complete a short research project on aviation.

By the preceding weekend we had received over 30 replies, and the weather looked fair for the event so expectations were high. As usual, we had an enormous response from local pilots who had volunteered to participate, and we now had the green light from flight operations at Filton.

The jigsaw puzzle pieces of field, and all those different shades of green. Loads and loads of white dots, what are they? They're sheep! Hectic roads are long strips of black cardboard, with holographic moving sequins that are cars." Tamara Mason

Since the event is entirely dependent upon our volunteer pilots and ground crew, we thought this year it would be nice if they could collectively write the report. For instance, Jerome Mostyn reported the following:



"William was a delightful person to take up as he so thoroughly enjoyed every minute, from the pre-flight walk around to starting up, radio procedures, take off -- with a loud "WOW!"-- to an 'interesting' cross-wind landing. As you know Austers (not their pilots, I hasten to add!) aren't particularly fond of cross-winds on tarmac. William had shown me on the map where his home was (somewhere between Yate and the M4) but, on the climb out and before I could retrieve said map

from the back seat, William settled into authentic Dambuster mode with a series of "Right a bit, left a bit, steady, steady....." instructions which brought us right to his doorstep! Considering this was the first time he had ever been in a light aircraft, a quite remarkable

piece of navigation. I hadn't a clue where I was! I then let him handle the controls as we joined downwind and, again, he demonstrated a natural flair so that I only took over again on finals. I think William particularly enjoyed going up in the only aircraft at Filton that day in warpaint. Pointing to the button on the top of the joystick he asked if this was to release the bombs or fire the machine guns!"

In a similar vein, David Joyce writes as follows:

"I flew three 10 year olds who were simply thrilled - 'wicked' was the modal adjective! Their arms were not really long enough to make a real fist of actually flying the plane, but they still managed to follow through on the controls and get the feel of how the plane is controlled. The 13 year old girl I flew, Lizzie, however actually flew the plane 3/4 of the way round, finding no difficulty with straight and level or turns. In fact I rate her as the best, most promising beginner of the hundred or so of all ages I have flown previously!"



And Mike Fortescue reported:

"...I was able to tell my passenger that his flight and project could help him to a Scout badge and his Duke of Edinburgh's Bronze award, which he had not realised."

Some of our pilots enjoyed the occasion so much that they expressed a wish to keep in touch with their young passengers and follow up the experience. One of these is Sue Aherne:



"I had a brilliant time on Saturday. I normally run the ground side & have never actually flown a YE before, so James was my first. He seemed really keen & wants to be a pilot, so I would like to send him a book. Could you let me have his address or shall I send it to him via you? His father was keen on learning to fly too.

Thanks again, it is the most important task the PFA has ever taken on."

"I like seeing the sheep looking like clouds and the cows looking like zebra crossings."

Sam Moss

As well as the pilots, several of our magnificent ground-crew had a memorable experience or two. Since we had such a good turnout of aircraft, Apron2 was often filled to capacity and incoming traffic was diverted to Apron1, (north side), to relieve congestion. This occasionally caused a little confusion for our escorts, but undaunted they always managed to sort it out! Malcolm Carlisle was acting as Escort for the Hockney family, and had this to report:

"...Pilot Graham Kehily from Kemble with his C172 spent a lot of time explaining the workings of the A/C inside and out with many photos being taken, even I was moved in for group shots; for young Joe this was his first ever flying experience. On landing, the

Cessna was directed to the North Apron, and it was some time before a bus was ready to make the trip across with me clutching the certificates. We couldn't find the passengers, so returned on the bus, only to find they had returned by car. As a result I had only a few minutes for certificate signing before they were away; my Young Eagle proudly proclaimed he had flown the aeroplane! The family were full of praise for the pilot and very much admired their certificates."

Several of our Young Eagles this year were from the Oncology unit in Bristol. They were brought along by Amy Vincent as part of their rehabilitation process, and thoroughly enjoyed their experience. Another of our gallant team of Escorts was Evelyn Rowand, who mentioned this to us afterwards:

"I heard back that one of the hospital lads, (Tom) who didn't say boo to a goose on the ground, was very animated and chatty and full of the joys when he was "aloft" much to everyone else's surprise. Flying can have such a wonderful effect on people!"



A significant aspect of Young Eagles at Bristol is the opportunity for Mums and Dads to fly as well. If an interest in flying is expressed, and a four-seat aircraft is available, we will occasionally put an 'Older Eagle' in the back seat to share the flight with their offspring. This experience usually results in reinforced support for our type of flying, and encouragement for the youngster in the front seat should they choose to pursue the hobby in later years. Alan George discovered this when he flew two families in the PA28:

"Having a 4-seater, what I found most interesting was having Mum in the back. In one case someone experienced in flying was enjoying the trip and would no doubt encourage her kids into light aviation in the future. The other, I found after landing, had just flown for the very first time in anything. She had a good trip despite hiding nervousness beforehand. Since I flew them both over their homes in the Berkeley area I think there are two GA supporters in that area now."

A Young Eagle poem:

*Aeroplane whizzes in the skies
through the clouds when it flies.
The people in the plane like to be
somewhere in the world just like me.*

*Up up and away it goes
clinging fingers and wiggly toes.
We love to go in an aeroplane;
in the car it's not the same!*

Victoria Butcher (aged 8)

The poem above was included within one of the many projects we received prior to the event. We have taken the liberty of extracting a few quotes before the Eagles

reclaimed their work, and reproduced them throughout this report. The projects are often entertaining, usually revealing, and sometimes indicate a natural tendency towards aviation.



If I could fly through the cotton wool clouds and see the view down below, it would be a dream come true. The cars would look like little multi-coloured ants crawling along. My house would be like a tiny model. If I flew over London all the buildings would look like a small dolls house with miniature people in. The river Thames looks like a blue ribbon winding its way through the town. The London eye could be a hamster wheel going round and round."

Kelly Witts

We have always believed that this simple 'filter' process results in the most deserving youngsters coming forward, and our pilots appreciate the enthusiasm that ensues.

This enthusiasm is frequently followed through by e-mail after the event. Here are a couple of nice thank-you letters we received:



Thank you so much for inviting me to join the PFA at Filton on Saturday 5th, and truly experience flying.

I hope I made the most of the day as I don't think I'll get another opportunity like this again, I'm just glad you allow people to take part in this unique experience.

Please could you also thank Jerome for me, for being so interesting about his hobby and his wonderful Auster 5, I hope to see him at

Kemble this year as I will certainly be going again.

We were also wondering if we get a photo of me and Jerome next to his Auster 5, with my Young Eagle certificate.

Thank you again,
William.

Thank you for a fantastic day. I had a really great time flying. The best bit was when I took over the controls of the plane. The view was lovely and it was a day I will never forget.

Please also say a big thank you to the pilot of the plane (Aeronca 11BC Super-Chief No 366) in which I flew.

From Daniel.



PS> Dad also had a good time.

During the afternoon we were approached by the pilots from Capital Trading Aviation, a local charter company based at Filton. (Full details on their website www.air-charters.co.uk). They were here to

offer us a couple of rides in their magnificent King Air 200, and suggested we round up any spare Eagles and any ground crew who may be released from duty. In addition, they had invited a reporter from the Press along to take a few pictures and see how the Young Eagles day operates. Thus it was that the day concluded with everyone having a flight; even a couple of our volunteer pilots became passengers for a short time! The full-time results showed that a total of 38 Young Eagles had their first flights that day, and eight mums and dads accompanied them. We had a magnificent 19 aircraft on the field, including the locally based King Air, and 25 pilots to fly them. The pilots taking part on Saturday were:

Name	Reg	Aircraft Type		Name	Reg	Aircraft Type
John Charters	G-BPPF	PA38 Tomahawk		Jerome Mostyn	TW511	Auster 5
Charles Milne	G-BLFW	Grumman AA5		Brian Oke	F-GFRD	Robin ATL
Dudley Pattison	G-DUDZ	Robin 400		Mike Fortescue	G-BVMM	Robin 200
Martin Ryan Fran Snell	G-BPTA	Stinson 108-2		David Joyce	G-XSDJ	Europa XS
Alan Crutcher	G-BRWR	Aeronca Chief		Hugh Pearson	G-BXBUR	Cap 10
Reg McComish	G-BRCW	Aeronca Super Chief		Bernard Newton Adrian Court	G-OBAL	Mooney M20
Geoff Roe	G-DENS	CP301 Smaragd		Mike Aherne Kaz Ale	G-ATHR	PA28
Ron Perry	G-BSVE	CP301 Smaragd		Sue Aherne Simon Boynett	G-BTNT	PA28
Alan George	G-BASJ	Cherokee 180		Jason Cairnie Malcolm Stratford	G-KVIP	Beech King Air 200
Graham Kehily Graham Blower	G-BUAN	Cessna 172				

Our thanks have already been extended to each and every one for donating their time and fuel to our cause. The generosity of our volunteer pilots is always second to none, and we are hugely grateful to them all. Special thanks are also due to Dave Hall and Bob Swan for their wonderful photographic record, a small sample of which appears on this report; both complete photo galleries can be viewed by clicking the button below. Also, of course, we are indebted to BAe Systems for not charging us any landing fees, to Gavin Hodge in Flight Operations for all his support, not forgetting Chris (Kiwi) for marshalling the aircraft and Air Traffic controllers Ian Gould and Keith Flint for their patience in looking after our aircraft so well. Full details of all the facilities available at Filton Airfield can be found on their website www.bristolfilton.co.uk

BAE SYSTEMS



With the Young Eagles programme technically concluding this year, we don't know if Bristol Strut will be doing it again. It is rumored that the PFA might develop a similar scheme to continue the good work, but even if we choose not to get involved again, Eagles 2003 was a heck of a high to finish on!

Ian & Mary Leader
PFA Bristol Strut

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