

December 2001




---

Strut Coordinator:	Ed Hicks	( 01454 613620 e-mail: <a href="mailto:EdHicks@compuserve.com">EdHicks@compuserve.com</a>
Treasurer/Membership Sec:	Gordon Pritt	( 01934 511908 e-mail: <a href="mailto:gordon.pritt@virgin.net">gordon.pritt@virgin.net</a>
New sletter distribution:	Ian & Mary Leader	( 01275 541572 e-mail: <a href="mailto:ian@pfabristol.flyer.co.uk">ian@pfabristol.flyer.co.uk</a>

---

**This month's meeting: 13th December 2001**

Traditionally this is our Christmas Quiz and bring-along-supper evening. Ed will be setting this up for us as before, so jot it down in your diary now!

**Last month's meeting:**

At the November meeting we were treated once again to a selection of Ed's now very extensive collection of transparencies. His trip to Van's aircraft in the 'States this year featured strongly as expected, but there was an assortment of other commissions he has undertaken during the year, including some aircraft not actually made of metal! We were all impressed at the clarity and high quality of Ed's pictures, and wish him well in his future business as an aviation photographer.

**Coming up next month:** Polly Vacher will be returning to talk to us about her epic trip around the world. Readers will remember back to last May when Polly completed her marathon Round-the-World trip in G-FRGN her Piper Dakota. She will have many a tale to tell about her exploits, so this will be a meeting not to be missed.



Polly will also be telling us about the charity she supports:

***The Royal International Air Tattoo flying scholarships for the disabled.***

Why Flying Scholarships?

The purpose of the scheme is to help disabled people rebuild their lives. Typically a person's life has fallen apart after becoming severely disabled from an accident in the prime of their life, or perhaps they have under-achieved due to a disability from birth. Through a flying scholarship, they face an intellectual and physical challenge at which they never remotely believed they could succeed. They gain in confidence and self-esteem. This can lead to them acquiring a job, maybe for the first time.

If you want to review the background of Polly's trip, the [WorldWings](http://www.worldwings.com) website is still on-line to those with web access. Click on the link and select 'diary' for the whole story.

*There are not very many items in the events calendar for December, in fact, none. So here are a few suggestions for the New Year:*

<b><u>Places to go in January</u></b>			
Jan 1st	New Years Day Fly-in	Compton Abbas	01747 811767
Jan 1st	New Year's Day Fly-in	Popham	01256 397733
Jan 5th	First Footers Fly-in	Kemble Be the first to visit the Cotswold Aviation Centre in 2002 and sample our hospitality. £5 for singles; £10 twins, plus a free cup of tea	01285 771076 <a href="#">website</a>
Jan 6th	New Year's Fly-in	North Weald PPR essential	01992 524510
Jan 6th	Brass Monkey Fly in	North Coates Flying Club Our popular winter event. 450m grass PPR essential	01472 388850 <a href="#">website</a>
Jan 13th	Breakfast Patrol	Leicestershire Aero Club. Free breakfast from 1000 to 1200 local for any aircraft evading our defences and calling overhead at 2000ag!	0116 2592360

### Around the World by balloon

Our friends at the Wessex Strut extended us an invitation recently to join with them for a talk by Brian Jones, co-pilot on the epic round-the-world balloon flight. Brian described in words and pictures how he and Bertrand Piccard guided their hi-tech yet vulnerable Breitling Orbiter 3 balloon through freezing temperatures and jet-stream winds to achieve no less than three World records; first balloon around the world, distance and duration!

Several members of Bristol Strut took up the offer, and were rewarded with a memorable lecture and the opportunity to chat informally with Brian afterwards.

His wife Jo came along to the meeting as well; she was herself an integral member of the team operating in the control centre at Geneva Airport. The ground crew were kept busy throughout the 19-day voyage, predicting weather and wind conditions, and negotiating passage with numerous foreign states along the way.



After the presentation, Brian introduced the charitable Trust called 'Winds of Hope' which they established with the prize money from Budweiser. A hat was passed around and a generous collection was donated to the fund. Thanks to Dave Stokes and John Porter for setting up the meeting and inviting us along.

Brian and Bertrand have assembled their story in a wonderful hardback called 'The Greatest Adventure', available from most book shops - and Christmas is coming!

#### Free Diversion to MoD Fields

Genuine diversions to Ministry of Defence airfields are being accepted without charging for landing or parking for a trial period of one year, to the end of April 2002.

*From Pilot Magazine, July 2001*

## Local Lights

A review of the early days of Bristol Aviation  
by John Shufflebottom.

In this day and age we take it for granted that, in exchange for a reasonable amount of cash, we can jump into a light aircraft and fly, but a hundred years ago no one had flown and most people thought it impossible. Then, in 1903, two American bicycle makers Wilbur and Orville Wright proved the doubters wrong with their home built aeroplane, the Flyer. Within seven years you could go out and buy an aeroplane.

In 1910, Sir George White was Chairman of the Bristol Tramways and Carriage Company. On a visit to France he became convinced that the future lay in flying, and obtained a licence to build the Farman pattern biplane, later to be known as the Boxkite. Within three months the British and Colonial Aeroplane Company Limited factory had been opened and equipped in the Tramway Company maintenance sheds at Filton, and by June, the first

successful designs, from the M1c monoplane which, despite official disinterest in monoplanes saw limited use, to the Breamar, a four engined heavy triplane bomber which first flew in the summer of 1918, but with the end of hostilities it was deemed un-necessary and was cancelled.

With the end of the war, Bristol's needed to find work to keep their large workforce occupied, and successfully produced a passenger carrying version of the fighter, and converted the Breamar into what could rightly be called a "giant" airliner although it was never used commercially.

The most far-sighted of the designer's efforts at this time was the Babe type 30, an ultra-light single seat biplane, and the smallest machine ever built at Filton. The idea behind it was simple, to provide an aeroplane for the private pilot of moderate means, inexpensive

Bristol Boxkite had been built and entered in the Bourmouth Aviation Meeting. Two were entered in the Lanark Meeting the following month, and September saw the first aeroplane to fly at the British Army Maneuvers when a Bristol Boxkite was demonstrated.

**B**ristol's built aircraft throughout the first world war, and first to make an impact was the Scout, known in the services as the Bullet. It was a single seat biplane with an air-cooled 80hp Gnome rotary engine capable of 95mph. It had the distinction of being the first single seat military aeroplane to be put into quantity production in March 1914 and was one of the first allied aeroplanes to be fitted with a synchronized machine gun firing through the airscrew, though most of the early versions were either unarmed or armed with a rifle.

**I**n 1917 the famous Bristol Fighter was introduced, powered by the 250hp Rolls Royce Falcon III giving it a top speed of 125mph. It was armed with a synchronized Vickers gun for the pilot and one or two Lewis guns mounted in the rear cockpit for the observer, and could carry twelve 20lb Cooper bombs on racks under the wings.

**T**hroughout the war, Bristol's produced other less

#### SPECIFICATIONS - Bristol Babe type 30

##### POWER

The MK I was fitted with a Vaile five cylinder air-cooled radial engine.

The final version the MK III had the 60hp Le-Rhone seven cylinder air-cooled rotary engine.

##### DIMENSIONS

Upper span 19ft 8ins (5.9mtr)  
Lower span 18ft 8ins (5.4mtr)  
Height 5ft 6ins (1.7mtr)  
Empty weight 460lb. (208kg.)  
Loaded weight 683 lb. (309kg.)

to maintain, and able to operate from small fields. The forerunner of the P.F.A. aeroplanes of today, this little machine attracted considerable interest at the first post war Aero Show at Olympia.

**T**he Babe was a biplane with a span of 19ft 8ins and a length of 14ft 11ins, and was fitted with a Vaile 5 cylinder engine. The first flight was made by Captain Cyril Uwins on the 28th November 1919, when, during taxiing trials a flock of sheep necessitated the machine being taken into the air. However, flight tests proved that the engine was just not powerful enough, and while giving a reasonable performance left nothing in reserve for an emergency. The Babe was modified through three marks; the final version sported a 60hp Le Rhone rotary engine and three were produced. Captain Uwins was of the opinion that this particular engine was incapable of producing more than 40hp and so the actual performance figures may have been even better than those finally recorded.

**S**o why were only three produced? Well, it was just after the war and the government was selling off large numbers of surplus aircraft and spares at knockdown prices; had it been introduced during the light aeroplane trials of 1923-24, or the late twenties when interest in light aircraft was thoroughly roused, the Babe would have secured a wide market.

##### CONSTRUCTION

The fuselage was a ply-covered box of wooden members and was not internally braced by wires. The wooden wings were fabric covered, and the fin and rudder formed of light steel tubing were of thin flat section.

##### PERFORMANCE

Speed 85 mph. (136.7 kph.)  
Landing speed 40 mph (64.3 kph.)  
Ceiling 10,000 ft (3,050mtr.)

*NOTE. -Weights and performance refer to MK.III.*

#### News from the Web

Thanks to PILOT Magazine's PilotWeb on-line for the following snippets...

Blackbushe Airport will continue to offer reduced landing fees at weekends for the foreseeable future, £5 singles and £8 twins up to 2,700 kg, including VAT. It has also frozen weekday landing fees at £10 for visiting singles up to 3,500 lb if uploading fuel or on production of a current flying club/school membership card.

Like many UK airfields, Shoreham Airport has suffered weather-related problems throughout the winter and spring, its grass parking area "resembles a paddy field, with reeds growing in places never seen before" reports the management. As a result, some restrictions on parking

have had to be enforced, with PPR applied on occasions to ensure that when aircraft have landed on the hard runway, there was somewhere safe and relatively dry to park. "Unless we adopted the 'aircraft carrier' approach of pushing the occasional one over the edge, we were actually going to face the situation of having nowhere to park, especially twins and heavy singles which require a reasonable surface," says the operator. Subject to budget, Shoreham hopes to provide additional hard surfaces, and in the meantime is looking for some respite in the weather.

*And from FLYER internet:*

In the November issue, there are no less than six free landing fee vouchers. These will give one free landing at Beccles, Caernarfon, Eddsfield, Fishburn, Sandtoft, and Sherburn-in-Elmet.

#### **And Finally..**

*Dot.com millionaire to be space tourist*

A South African internet millionaire is set to become the second paying space tourist. The Russian space agency announced on Wednesday that it will fly Mark Shuttleworth, 27, to the International Space Station (ISS) next April. He has already undergone initial space training in Star City outside Moscow - the heart of the Russian space programme.

Californian businessman Dennis Tito became the first person to go into space as a paying passenger earlier this year, over the objections of the United States space agency Nasa. The head of the Russian Aerospace Agency, Yuri Koptev, said the terms agreed with Mr Shuttleworth were "no worse" than Mr Tito's.

The American billionaire is estimated to have paid \$20m for his eight-day trip into space.

A Soyuz craft will take Mr Shuttleworth into orbit. "I hope it will inspire many of my fellow Africans of all ages to believe in the power of their dreams," he said of his planned trip into space.

The perhaps appropriately named Mr Shuttleworth is a native of Cape Town, South Africa. Mr Shuttleworth said the training he underwent over the summer was intense and challenging and added: "When you are totally inspired it's not work."

Mr Shuttleworth will join Roberto Vittori of Italy and a Russian cosmonaut aboard a Soyuz shuttle for the flight to the ISS.

*Thanks to the BBC News team for this report. Thursday, 6 December, 2001*

· *Don't forget that all newsletter contributions (big or small) are gratefully received.*

Ian & Mary



© PFA Bristol Str ut December 2001

---

Last month's Newsletter

Click [HERE](#) to open the November "Strutter".

Top...

---