



December 2003



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Last meeting - 13th November

Last month John Lewis treated us to a fascinating presentation about a little-known rarity, the Granger Archaeopteryx G-ABXL. This strange aircraft, John told us, was so unpredictable that only he and a chosen few were able to fly it when it first arrived in the Shuttleworth Collection. It took many months of trial and error development to get the machine airworthy enough for their air displays, but eventually the risks were considered too great and it is no longer permitted to fly. John, who spent many years as chief test pilot for the Shuttleworth Trust, described the Archaeopteryx in great detail, and conveyed his admiration for the Granger Brothers' achievement, since they had no aeronautical experience prior to embarking on this project.

If you wish to see this remarkable aircraft, and indeed any others in the Collection, why not visit Old Warden on one of the Trust's open days? Details of the 2004 events can be found on their website www.shuttleworth.org including a good briefing for those wishing to arrive by air.

This month – 11th December – The Quiz!

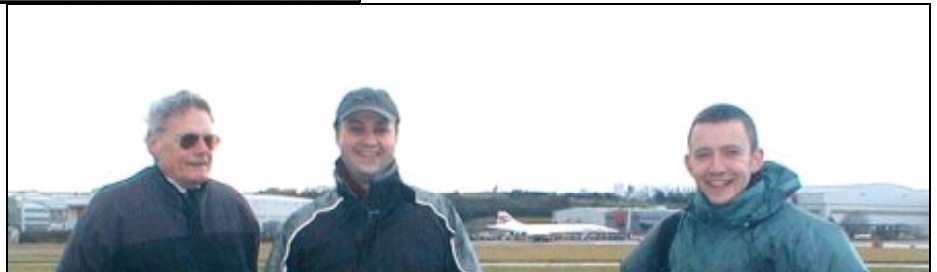
If you can attend only a few meetings throughout the year, do try to make this one! The traditional Christmas quiz, made famous by Ed over the past few years, will be presented this year by Spike Parker. To add a little more challenge, Alan has invited both Wessex and Gloucester Struts to submit teams, so our honour will be on the line! As always, there will be food and drink throughout the evening to stimulate the thought process; please bring along some of your favourite nibblers to share with others. Spike has asked us to remind members to swot up on Gallons to Litres and Inches to Poles conversions, also time/distance/speed formulae. Hmmm.

Concorde comes Home




CONCORDE
BRITISH AIRWAYS

When Concorde Alpha Fox landed at Filton last week, a small delegation from Bristol Strut was among the vast crowd that gathered to witness the event. All due to Alan's generosity (helped by the fact that he works for Airbus) there were three tickets available for Strut members, and a simple draw was made to decide



who could use them. The lucky three were John Charters, Neville Kilford, and Rob Grainger, pictured here with the star of the show in the background.

Other Strutters known to have made it to the event were Alan George, Roger Holman, Dave Hall, Pete and Ed Hicks and Ian and Mary Leader.



Next Meeting

For January 8th 2004 we will have David Willmott giving an illustrated talk titled "A Life in Aviation". He was a competitive aeromodeller in his teens and entered the RAF as a cadet pilot for his National Service. In the following 45 years he flew for more than 25 airlines and companies flying 53 different types of aircraft. These varied from Avro Tudors to glass cockpit MD-83. He lived in various parts of Africa for a total of 7 years and his adventures included being hijacked. He retired in 1999 with a logbook total of close to 26,000 hours, as Chief Pilot of a UK airline, a CAA Type and Instrument Rating examiner and is still flying privately as he approaches his 70th year.

David does this talk on behalf of the Royal British Legion so there will be a charitable collection for them. As the talk is of general aviation interest I intend to invite the Bristol Aero Club from Filton to make a good turnout.

A Few Notes from Alan

Dave Hall has suggested a slides evening showing members photos/slides. I am wondering if any Strut member has a laptop computer (and projector) to enable digital pictures to be shown. If you do have either or both of these items and are prepared to bring them along on a Strut evening in Spring please let me know.

I have had a request from a Paula Simms who is trying to trace a friend of her late husband Roger. Roger worked in communications for Reuters and the friend Mike (?) worked for Siemens. Mike flew and possibly owned his own light aircraft in the Bristol area, hence her request to the Strut. The attached photo is apparently at Filton and the plane is a PA28 G-BM???. There is a G-BMTR that belongs to Aeros so possibly he was a pupil there. Any info to me to be passed on.

The collection at the last meeting for the Shuttleworth Trust raised a creditable £44.46 which the Strut has made up to £50 which is on its way to Old Warden. Also, as mentioned above, the January talk by David Willmott will be done in aid of the Royal British Legion do expect the hat to be passed around again.

Places to go during December

A new series of Aviation Lectures starts this month at AV8 restaurant on Kemble Airfield:-

Coming soon - Wednesday 10th December

John Farley (Harrier test pilot) "From Science Museum to Joint Strike Fighter".

Free landings for December in:

PILOT magazine: Bodmin, Cromer, Enstone, Es hott, Old Buckenham, and Popham.

FLYER Magazine: Beccles, Old Sarum, Peterborough, Sheffield

Centenary fly-out to Kemble

In the September newsletter we announced the initiative by AOPA to get airborne as many people as possible on December 17th to celebrate the centenary of powered flight. There has been quite a lot of interest in the Kemble flyout idea, and we will firm this up at our meeting on the 11th. In the meantime, if you are intending to fly anywhere on the 17th, don't forget to pre-register on the AOPA website: www.aopa.co.uk/celebratory_flyout and subsequently update your details after the event.

Santa's Base Check

It is a little known fact that Santa has to keep his pilot's licence current in order to make his deliveries every year and so the old man wasn't too surprised when he got a letter from the CAA informing him that an examiner would be appearing shortly to run him through the usual re-certification procedures.

A detail of elves were dispatched to wash and polish the sleigh, another group assigned to inspect service and repair the tack and a third squad started grooming the reindeer. Santa himself got out his logbook and the rest of the paperwork and made sure that it was all up to date and in order.

On the appointed day the examiner arrived and after the ritual cup of coffee he went over Santa's log and the paperwork then followed Santa outside. After a meticulous review of Santa's weight and balance calculations, the examiner watched Santa do the pre-flight checks, then followed closely behind him,

looking carefully at everything from the bells to Rudolph's nose. When finished, he turned to Santa and said: "It looks pretty good so far. Let me get one thing out of my bags and then we'll take her up".

When the examiner got back, Santa was in the sleigh and ready to taxi. As the examiner climbed into the sleigh, Santa noticed that he was carrying a shotgun. "What's that for?" he asked. The examiner looked at him, then winked: " I really shouldn't tell you this, but you're going to lose an engine on take-off".

(Source unknown, via the internet)

**Best wishes for Christmas and the New Year to all our readers,
near and far.**

Ian & Mary

