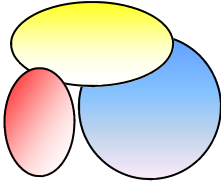




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Bristol Wings



Newsletter of the LAA Bristol Wing

December 2008

NEXT MEETING - ANNUAL FRIENDLY QUIZ NIGHT



Christmas comes but once a year - but doesn't it come around quickly!

It's time again for our traditional aeronautical orientated quiz evening when Spike Parker sets a series of questions to get our little grey cells working and keep us warm in these cold winter evenings.

It's a very 'laid-back' friendly evening, when we have a chance to pit our wits against each other, in little groups, and of course there's the nibbles which are passed around to keep our brains working.

A little bird has told us that this year's format will be quite different and also that it may well be the last year that Spike will be challenging us, so do come along and see what he has in store - you're guaranteed a fun evening. Don't forget to bring along a bit of food to put into the middle of the table to share around, and let's get ourselves into the festive mood by ending the evening with a paper aeroplane competition to land on our aircraft carrier deck.



LAST MEETING - GLIDER AWARENESS



Last month we welcomed Julian Rees from Bristol & Gloucestershire Gliding Club. Julian gave us an excellent talk on the sport and why so many become addicted to it.

By explaining where gliders are likely to be found and what they are likely to do in various weather conditions he also helped us in our lookout for them when airborne. If you are ever flying over high ground and feel an up-draught, beware, there is probably a glider not too far away. And where there's one, don't forget to look for his friend! The thought of flying for a whole afternoon from a £8 winch launch also has a certain appeal at the moment.

Our thanks to Julian for coming to visit us.

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Where to go in December

Free landing vouchers for December in:

Flyer Magazine: Panshanger, Sherburn, Sturgate and White Waltham

Pilot Magazine: Conington (1/2 price), Netherthorpe, Sturgate, North Coates, Shipdham and Wickenby

Today's Pilot: Andrewsfield, Campbeltown, Islay, North Weald, Sibson and Tayside

Light Aviation (LAA Mag): Bagby, Popham, Roserrow

Local RAEs Event details

Date: 16th December 2008

Title: Storms, Floods and Microwaves

Speaker: Ian Cluckie, Professor of Hydrology and Water Management, University of Bristol

You haven't seen a
tree until you've seen
its shadow from the
sky.

— Amelia Earhart

Future Dates for your diary

Thursday 8th January 2009 - ATSOCAS - Bristol Talk Conference Room 1 (new building-upstairs)

Colin Gill who is the Chair of the ATSOCAS Procedures Working Group and editor of CAP774 will tell us all about the forthcoming changes to ATC procedures. Julian Andrews (NATS Bristol) who has spoken to us before will also be present at the meeting to answer any locally-related questions on this or any other air-traffic subject.

Member's Wings - A Sonerai Story by Sam Edwards

When I turned 45 years old, kind soul at work pointed out that in another 45 years I will be 90. With that thought in mind I decided not to delay any longer and to go get my PPL. I had started training when I was at university, but finishing college and working overseas got in the way of completing it. Sometimes I had the money, and sometimes I had the time, but never seemed to have both together.

I started looking around for an aeroplane, as I didn't want to end up with a licence and nothing to fly. The Sonerai caught my attention; it was cheap, small, agile and fast. I noticed that of the 15 or so on the UK register hardly any were still flying – not a very reassuring fact. I posted a message on the PFA bulletin board "**Where have all the Sonerai's gone?**". It proved to be a stimulating subject as the thread ran for months and only finished when the board was wiped.

Because of that note on the BB, someone emailed me to say he had recently bought a Sonerai, it was at Kemble and did I want to see it? We arranged to meet and whilst looking around it he mentioned that he was a little tall for it and altering it was going to be far more difficult than he had anticipated, and if I was interested it was for sale. The price was right and I wrote a cheque there and then.

I went to Florida, did my licence, and some tail wheeling, and came back ready to fly the Sonerai. But some how I had ended up with a licence and nothing to fly.

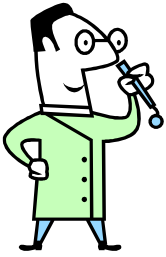
The Sonerai was indeed almost ready to fly. But being so close can also be oh so far. I appreciated my inspectors' thoroughness and attention to detail, but it all takes time. I found an engineer to help with the technical aspects of getting it ready to fly, such as making sure that the wings are bolted on correctly! Dave Hunter was a tremendous help and became my test pilot. However, after the first flight he looked somewhat ashen. After about the fourth flight he declined to continue the test flying. Things did not look good.

After some more work and a few more red herrings, I found another test pilot. He was ex-military, flies with Ultimate High and owns a Pitts. He landed with a big grin and loved it. Things were looking up. He signed off the permit and bingo; after 2 years of me being ready but the Sonerai not, we switched and the Sonerai was ready to be flown but my licence was not current any more. I had a check ride in a Bulldog but after 2 years no meaningful flying I was way off the mark.

This coincided with expanding the business where the workload quadrupled and the profits vanished. A year later I renewed the permit on the Sonerai but I was still not flying. In July this year though I bit the bullet and decided to renew my licence before the permit and insurance ran out in September. I called Ultimate High as I knew that doing it with them would be quick and decisive. Unfortunately the summer is a very busy time for them and they could not book me in in the foreseeable future. So I contacted the Flying Club Kemble, and began training with an excellent instructor from Israel. We got through the syllabus very quickly and I booked my test: rained off! I booked another: rained off. Unfortunately the examiner they use is not local and is not very flexible, so it was about a month between booked tests. This entailed refresher flights each time, and the test was rained off at least 3 times. In October I rang Ultimate High again and in 3 flights over 2 days had my licence back.

Now of course the Sonerai has no permit so I have to renew that, and fork out for another year's insurance just to see if flying a Sonerai is for me, and it may not be. It certainly is not going to be like any training aircraft. Whilst I have something like 20 hrs tailwheel time, it is not going to be like any of the taildraggers I have flown either.

The reason the first test pilot hated it is that it is inherently unstable; it is designed to be so. But if you are not used to Pitts-style instability it can come as a bit of a shock. It is an aircraft which needs to be flown the whole time with constant inputs and corrections. It will take a lot of getting used to. I know it won't be easy and I am not expecting it to be fun to start with. But I want to give it a go before deciding what to do with it. Although it would be cheap flying on 15 1/hr at up to 140kt cruise, with nearly 5 years of hangarage and insurance costs I will never be able to average the cost down to cheap flying; I would have to fly 1000 hrs over the next 10 years to do that, but hindsight is a wonderful thing.



CAA Medical Requirements - Beware!

The Civil Aviation Authority requires everyone to report invasive treatment to its Medical Enforcement Executive, and I fell foul of this. I had some very minor surgery, and reported it to my AME, but the enforcers at Gatwick found out about it and had an attack of the grumpies.

As the fuss subsided, I was told that ALL invasive treatment has to be reported to the CAA, and reminded that after a local anaesthetic one is unfit to fly for 24 hours, and then only if no adverse symptoms persist. So one is fit to drive to the airfield after dental treatment, but not to fly.

Experience at a state-owned university had provided some experience of over-enthusiastic bureaucrats, and I had learned that the best way to deal with them is to take them extremely seriously. So I decided to try it out on the CAA.

I went to the dentist, and required some fillings and a cap. My teeth are now little more than lumps of amalgam with a veneer of enamel. I used to think of Stonehenge as a model, but now Avebury is more appropriate. Anyway, a tooth filling is an invasive treatment, so I found out all the postnomial letters that the dentist was entitled to, and wrote to the CAA stating that on a particular date I would have invasive treatment at the surgery of Mr XXXX plus lots of letters, specifically a filling, and a local anaesthetic was likely. As the appointment was at whenever, I proposed, subject to CAA orders to the contrary, to consider myself fit to fly from (time) unless adverse symptoms were apparent. I received a courteous reply.

I wrote again shortly afterwards (copy to the AME of course) stating that adverse symptoms had not been observed and I was exercising the privileges graciously accorded me by HM Government. A little while later I had another appointment and went through the whole rigmarole again. It's quite easy with a word processor!

The ploy worked. After a while I received a nice letter from the CAA stating that while I was actually correct in regarding dental treatment as invasive, they did not want to know about it unless I were to suffer an extraction or some interesting condition were to be found.

What I learned.

1. The rules are too strictly worded, as is often the case. Hair cuts, shaving and clipping finger nails are probably invasive, being the excision of undesirable tissue. Cutting oneself when shaving is a wound, so does not have to be reported automatically. Plucking eyebrows is almost certainly invasive, being amputation.

2. If one suffers a piece of fussy bureaucracy, it may be easier to take the matter extremely seriously, looking for excuses for zeal and inflicting that on the fusspots rather than arguing for good sense.

Tom Geake



Snippets

[Visit to Bristol ATC](#)

Steve is in discussion with Julian Andrews at Bristol ATC and they are organising a couple of visits to give Bristol Wing members who were unable last time, a chance to see the Air Traffic Controllers at work in their 'Tower'. Members of the BMAA will also be invited to join one of these very interesting visits - watch this space.

[Re-launch of the Bristol and Wessex Aeroplane Club](#)

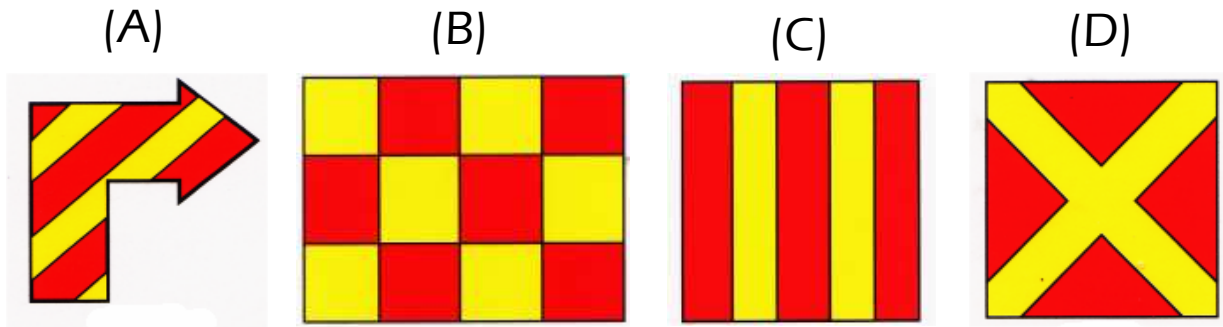
Many of us in the Bristol area had connections with the Bristol & Wessex Club in the past. It is good to hear that they are back and invite everyone to their Christmas bash on Friday 19th December. Tickets are a mere £5 to cover the food and entertainment. Also their Social Evenings are back and will happen on the First Tuesday of every month.

[Bodmin Runway & Taxiing Information](#) (courtesy of Derek Boyce and the November issue of the Bodmin Flyer)

The runways at Bodmin have been cut double width to allow more options when the field is wet. We can all do our bit by using the outside edges of the runways rather than always punishing the centreline. This will help reduce the number of times the airfield has to be closed during the wet weather.

Now all the grass on the airfield has been cut it is essential that all pilots help spread the load by using all areas for taxiing. This means you can turn off the runway anywhere. However, do not make tight turns, do not backtrack on the runway or use the non-active runway as a taxiway. Always land at the advised threshold speed and near to the 'numbers'. If you need to use brakes please do so gently and do not use excessive braking to turn.

Another little teaser to get you ready for Spike's quiz this week:



These days we have little necessity to use the official ground signals when we visit an airfield, so we can get out of practise.

How many of you can explain easily (and quickly) what these four signals mean?

Answers to the little teaser set last month:

Trevor Wilcock was the only person to submit the correct answers - well done Trevor.



Lockheed TU-25
With a centre wheel only, when the aircraft lands the outrigger wheel is attached for taxiing.



1982 Rutan Grizzly N80RA
A proof-of-concept prototype to establish feasibility of STOL and amphibious capability with canard/tandem wing configuration. Can sleep two.



Bell 47G
The ubiquitous 'MASH' Helicopter
Three of these were giving rides at Oshkosh this year.

Hawkeye 2000.
These are based on American Aircraft carriers and the radar equipment monitors the airspace and gives early warning of an attack

