



January 2002

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

This month's meeting: Thursday 10th January 2002



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*, and in traditional fashion a hat will be passed around afterwards to help this worthy cause.

If you want to review the background of Polly's trip, the WorldWings website is still on-line to those with web access. Look up www.worldwings.org and click on 'diary' for the whole story.

Last month's meeting:

The annual Strut quiznight was arranged as usual by Ed Hicks, who managed to put together a selection of posers and mind-benders which were of just the right difficulty level to make the evening thoroughly enjoyable. Everyone brought with them a plate or two of nibblers to maintain the party atmosphere, and frequent interjections from various sides of the room kept the discussions somewhat less than serious! The announcement that the final task would be a paper aeroplane competition was greeted with mixed reaction, as not all those present held a Pilot's licence, but in the end no one actually managed to land their creation on the carrier deck, so it was voted a draw!

Thanks to Ed for helping us to finish the year on a high, and for setting a standard which will be a challenge to maintain through the coming year.

Coming up next month:

At the time of writing, there is nothing arranged for the February meeting. Details will be announced later.

In this issue:

Following on is the annual report from the National Council Meeting, by our representative Nigel Hitchman. We also have an item sent to us by Strut member Dave Hall, a letter written by his father in 1941 after a grueling 7-hour sortie flying a Hampden on active duty. We expect to receive others like this for the 'back page' in future issues.

Congratulations!

Well done to Ed Hicks for being awarded the President's Joystick at the PFA AGM in September. He was chosen to receive this award for his contribution to the PF and the PFA rallies through his skills as an aviation photographer. Although there was no rally this year, several awards such as this were made to recognise those like Ed who have given much to support recreational flying. More details are published in the latest 'Popular Flying.'

PFA National Council Meeting Dec 2001 - Report by Nigel Hitchman

This meeting must have been the shortest ever, as we finished before lunch. Perhaps this says something of the running of the PFA that there are fewer contentious issues these days!

Long Marston is progressing slowly. There now seems to be a consensus of agreement of what the landowners are going to do before PFA take over the site and an agreement on how the site will be managed once PFA establish the HQ here. With this progress having been made and an agreement of what needs to be done signed, planning permission is being applied for. This sees the PFA HQ being built in the area where the old control tower is. The hangars on the cross runway being all removed and

the runway put back into use, a new runway built parallel with the existing main runway/drag strip, on the old taxiway.

The microlight clubs and based aircraft will relocate to the land West of the runway where there are currently a few individual hangars, this area will be under control of the existing owners. A new parallel taxiway is also planned, together with a taxiway from the end of the new runway around towards the PFA HQ area and another from the other end of the runway, behind the end of the drag strip where the high mounds of earth are and out onto the grass. This would mean that aircraft arriving for a future PFA rally could easily vacate either end of the runway towards the large parking area on the east side of the field. The current Sunday market site will remain and be outside of the airfield development.

Progress is going at a slow pace to ensure everything is in place for each step before we proceed any further. It is still by no means cut and dry that PFA will move to Long Marston, if developments do not proceed in our favour.

PFA membership continues to grow, despite the loss of some members due to the cancellation of the Rally. Membership now stands at 8500. The number of permit renewals increased by 100 this year to around 1600. PFA HQ are concerned that of the 8500 members only 1200 are strut members and would like struts to try to recruit more local members. Struts can ask for a listing of PFA members by post code to help their recruitment.

Engineering have been approving various new designs, all covered in PF magazine. They have also been holding Inspector courses, which have proved popular and have been successful, except for the Inspector who went to the Rans course, expecting to learn about Vans aircraft! (No, it wasn't our inspector...)

A noise booklet is available from engineering for £10 to members, although there is one free to each strut on request- sounds like a good book for the strut library.

The treasurer reported that this year, PFA should have a surplus of £40,000 although most of this comes from interest on funds in the bank. Canceling the 2001 Rally so far cost us £22,000, far more than the loss incurred on any of the previous rallies, including the very wet Wroughton. All very well to look at it with hindsight, the F+M reasons for canceling would have had very little impact, with all airfields and most farm strips open again, as seen by the record turnouts at Popham, Wroughton and North Weald in May. But the weather on the weekend was awful, with the flying display at Duxford even stopped after 1 hour on the Saturday. So who knows if we would have lost more or less had it gone ahead?

Anyway, now let's look forward to 2002! As has already been well publicised, the **2002 Rally** will be at Cranfield Friday June 21 - Sunday June 23. Dates changed due to the British Grand Prix again! The new dates have one big disadvantage in that it's term time and the rooms at the College are all booked, although some space is available Sat/Sun nights. See the message in PF regarding other Hotel availability.

The layout is quite changed in an effort to save money and be on the airfield for less time before and after. The exhibition area will now be behind the Kennet Aviation hangars at the Western end, towards the Nissan building. This means that all the set up/tear down can be done without going on the operational part of the airfield, except for marking the parking lines! Pilots Booking in/out will now be at the base of the control tower, arrivals by road will now be via car parks at the other end of the college campus, approximately where it was some years ago. The members/public campsite will be in the same place as recent years, open from Thursday. There will be no airshow, so leaving more time to fly in or out or go for local flights and not bunching up the traffic so much into busy periods. PFA will operate the airfield from 7pm Thursday evening, we expect there to be concessionary landing fees again from mid-day Thursday.

Admission prices have been fixed as follows:

Members: £5 in advance £6 on the day, for the whole 3 days.

Non Members: Daily £13 in advance, £15 on the day.

All 3 days: £22 in advance, £25 on the day.

Camping will be £18 per unit

It is expected that we will again get sponsorship, so that members arriving by air as P1 will be free.

Cheers

Nigel

The BZRV story continues:



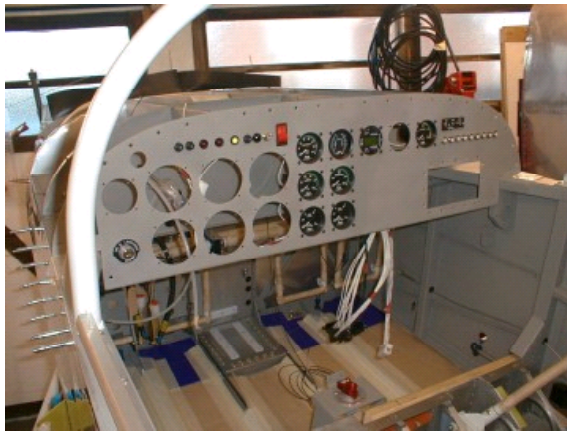
Nigel, Ed and Pete are progressing well with the RV6 project, and I went up to visit the workshop just after Christmas. Ed reported that practically every major module has now been completed, and are ready for the final



assembly. Several skins are still to be riveted in place, and this task can now proceed following the recent sign-off by their inspector.

The brand new Lycoming

engine is now fully plumbed-in and wired, and only minor jobs are now pending in the engine bay. Wiring for the instrument panel is well advanced now, and the harness is looking neat and professional.



The job of cutting and fitting the perspex canopy is now behind them, as described in the PF, and the boys are greatly relieved that no major

disaster occurred in the process!

It was hoped that the aircraft might have been ready for its debut at Cranfield, but a realistic target would be nearer the autumn 2002.



Sam

Wanted:

Wanted by embarrassed Christmas Quiz team member just taking up the hobby, anything related to light aircraft and flying them, eg magazines, books, surplus air-band receiver, etc to help expand flying knowledge and procedures; buy/borrow. Simple as you like! Could collect/purchase at next Strut meeting. E-mail dave@hallw.clara.co.uk or phone 01761-490653 (Pensford). Thanks, Dave Hall.

News from FLYER internet:

GA News

Last updated: Fri 07, Dec 2001

France may ban weekend VFR

We have heard a rumour that French authorities are considering curtailing GA activities in France at weekends. The proposals, made by the Conseil National du Bruit (National Noise Council), are that French Aeroclubs would not be allowed to fly between 1100 and 1500 on Saturdays and Sundays.

A similar ban is in place in Germany and, considering the percentage of flying carried out through French aeroclubs, a similar move in France would effectively ground VFR flying in that

period.

Skystar launches Kitfox 7

Skystar Aircraft Corporation, creators of the Kitfox series of homebuilts, has announced the arrival of the Kitfox Series 7.

The new type promises higher speeds (150mph+), quicker build times (500-700 hours), a ceiling of up to 20,000ft, longer range, better short field handling, lower stall speed and better handling.

The new series builds on the series 6, adding (among other things) a Rotax 914 Turbo, a Hoffman constant speed prop and redesigned flaperons.

For more see the Skystar site at www.skystar.com/aircraft/series7/index.htm

Diamond flies first production diesel

Diamond Aircraft Industries of Austria has flown the first example of a diesel aero engine in a current production aircraft. The flight was described as 'faultless', and the company is now preparing for certification and production of the aircraft.

The aircraft used is a modified DA40 Star (classified the DA40 Star TDI), and the engine a Thielert 135, similar to the one reviewed in *FLYER's* November issue. Diamond engineers have been working on installing the engine for six months, and presumably feel that the effort has been worthwhile - the company is claiming fuel bills of one quarter of the equivalent Avgas-powered version, and speeds of up to 150kt.

The DA40 Star TDI is aiming for certification in the middle of 2002. It will initially be aimed at the European market rather than the US one, since Avgas costs are higher here.

FLYER will bring more news of this advance in its next issue - due out just before Christmas. Don't miss it.

Diamond's website is at www.diamondair.com

Places to go in January / February			
Jan 13th	Leicester	Leicestershire Aero Club Breakfast Patrol. Free breakfast from 1000 to 1200 local for any aircraft evading our defences and calling overhead at 2000agl	0116 2592360 website: http://www.leicestershireaeroclub.com
Jan 19th	Turweston	VAC Snow ball Fly-in	01280 705400 / 01327 858138
Feb 3rd	Sturgate	Lincs AC Breakfast Patrol	01522 794623 / 01427 838305
Feb 17th	Turweston	VAC Valentine Fly-in	01280 705400 / 01327 858138

The Royal Aeronautical Society has a couple of interesting meetings planned this month at BAWA:	
Wednesday 16th January Battle of Britain Memorial Flight Sqn Ldr Paul Day OBE AFC RAF	Tuesday 29th January Brieting Orbiter Global Balloon How it was made safe and reliable (Joint lecture with the Reliability and Safety Society) Mr Mel James, Advantage Business

And Finally..

We have recently received several items for the newsletter and are very grateful to those contributing members. We will be including them over the next few editions, please keep them coming. Meanwhile...

On the back page this month we have reproduced a wartime letter which will no doubt generate a twinge of nostalgia for those contemporary with the time who have a military background. Dave Hall has uncovered several items like this, preserved by his Mother and forgotten until now. This letter was written by Dave's father in 1941, and is a graphic description of the drama experienced by bomber crews in the front line; P/O Geoffrey Hall was with No.61 Squadron, flying Hampden bombers.

Read on...



ROYAL AIR FORCE, HEMSWELL, LINCOLN. TEL. HEMSWELL 256 & 257 Thursday 6th Feb. '41

My Dear Mother,

Thank you so much for the long letter I received the other day, giving all the latest "gen" from Berks and London.

I am very glad you liked the photos – I am enclosing a couple of the best ones autographed by the crew – hope you will like them as well. We are organising a Squadron photograph soon, so I hope to be able to point out all the chaps I speak about. These things will be extremely interesting after the war, don't you think? Have you seen Dorothy's family album? I am glad she is keeping one, so that, when I am ninety, I will be able to show my grandchildren and great grandchildren what I looked like when I was 21!

I suppose the weather your end of the country is just as bad as ours. We have had a heavy fall of snow since last night, and have had to clear runways on the aerodrome. I managed to get a trip in on Sunday – a very bad one. [1]. We flew in cloud most of the time, and could scarcely see anything. Added to this we got badly iced up, and, at one point, both engines cut out for about ten seconds, due to ice forming in the carburetors. We were perilously near the ground when they recovered. Altogether, it was a shaky trip, and I wasn't sorry to be back on the ground again after seven and a quarter hours of it. When we had landed I broke a thick coating of ice from the tail plane and rudders.

One quite harmless, but none the less scaring thing was the static electricity encountered in most of the cloud. The whole aircraft is lit by a most brilliant blue light – seems as though the aeroplane is on fire – and sparks fly from all parts of the fuselage. I had sparks jump off my nose onto the oxygen mask, and a rainbow halo formed around the airscrews. At the same time as this was going on, while over the target area, it was accompanied by blinding flashes from the ground below, so that I was very glad to emerge from the clouds into a more healthy atmosphere over the sea – although it looked much too rough to be pleasant.

The other evening we gave a dinner for the ground crews – I found that I could carry three plates of soup without spilling any, or putting my thumb in it! However after the party had been disbanded, we found we were 147 bottles short! The fellows had slipped out to their billets with them under their coats, and they still can't be traced – no wonder we ran short of beer halfway through the evening!

Well, I must go to bed now – it's 11.25 or should I say 2325 hours?

Goodnight, and best love
from Geoffrey.

P.S. Am becoming the Squadron authority on ice accretion, having had more experience in ice-flying than anyone else!

P.P.S. 128 hours (on operations).

[1] Hampden AD727 P/O Geoffrey Hall, with Sgt Potter-Irwin, Sgt Keates and P/O Lewis; duration 7h 10m (night)

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

Ian & Mary

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Last month's Newsletter

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

Top...
