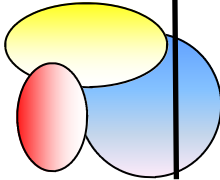




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Bristol Wings



Newsletter of the LAA Bristol Wing

June 2008

NEXT MEETING - GLIDING AT NYMPSFIELD



The June meeting has now been re-located to Nympsfield Aerodrome on the Cotswolds for a session of gliding experience, courtesy of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Gliding Club. Steve has been collecting names for this and has around 11 so far. That is sufficient for the event to go ahead, but if anyone has been away while we have been talking about it and would like to come along, Trevor says we can accommodate one or two more. If anyone would like to come to the event just to watch and soak up the atmosphere on a summer evening, you are more than welcome. Contact Steve or Trevor for

directions how to get there, or if you have internet, browse the BGGC web site on www.bggc.co.uk to read all about it. The only thing we can't guarantee is the weather! If it's not suitable for gliding on the day, all those on the list will be contacted by Trevor to re-schedule. If you want to come and watch and the weather looks suspect, do contact us during the afternoon to check.

A note for the rest of the year...

It is the Wing tradition not to meet at BAWA during July or August because members are often away on holiday or flying. Therefore our next get-together will be on Thursday September 11th; we have a speaker lined up for this, but not yet confirmed, so watch the Bristol Wings for the latest news!

LAST MONTH - A LOST LANCASTER

John Stennard came to talk to us last month about his uncle's bombing missions in Lancaster PD388 during the second world war. John's uncle was flight engineer and John has carried out meticulous research into both the fate of that aircraft and his uncle that perished when the aircraft crashed in Germany. We were moved by the personal account offered and sheer stamina of these brave men. Unlike the films we all know and love there was little romance here. These Lancasters often flew two missions a day sometimes 6-8 hours at a time. The crews must have been exhausted.

Not knowing if you would survive each flight must have been mind numbing. Many of the crew members, John's uncle included, were still in their teens yet they were seasoned airmen when a German night fighter got them. It was a humbling account that reminded us how much we owe to all those who fought for our freedom. Thanks John.



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Where to go in June

Free landing vouchers in:

Flyer Magazine: Barton, Bourn, Gloucester and Sturgate.

Pilot Magazine: Andrewsfield, Beverley, Gigha Island, Lashenden, Panshanger and Sturgate.

Today's Pilot Mag: Beverley, Kilkenny, North Coates and Sibson.

8th - Vans RV Fly-in - Popham

13-15th - AeroExpo 2008 - Wycombe Air Park - www.expo.aero/london/flying.asp to register your arrival.

14th/15th - Air Activities Camp (Air Scouts) - Wiltshire Flyers are looking for pilots, please call Peter Anthony on peter.anthony2@ntlworld.com

15th - LAA Breckland Strut fly-in & BBQ - Tibenham see: www.brecklandstrut.co.uk

15th - Kemble Air Day - see www.kembleairday.com for Advance tickets and to book your landing slot.

21st - French Connection Fly-in - Compton Abbas

29th - Charles Church Memorial Fly-in - Popham

29th - Devon Strut Fly-in - Halwell - Keith Wingate 01548 857531

Flying is not dangerous;

crashing is dangerous

anon

Advance dates

5-6th July - LAA Regional Rally - Popham. See www.laa.uk.com

2008 SPORT AND LEISURE AVIATION SHOW - NEC Birmingham

29-30th November 2008 - website: www.theflyingshow.co.uk

Member's Wings

This month we spotlight G-CDMF owned by Steve Neale and Terry Donovan.

Mike Foxtrot is a Vans RV-9A. The aircraft was built from a kit and first flew in 2006. It's made just like a Cessna from Alclad and rivets. Over 5000 RV's are flying around the world. MF is fitted with a 160hp Lycoming turning a wood prop custom made for the aircraft. It is not possible to load the aircraft outside of its CofG limits within its MTOW of 1750lbs. Useful load is 690lbs. That's two podgy old gits, 100lbs of baggage and full fuel. Take off is a non event in 400ft at Oaksey Park our home base (grass). Lift off happens about 10 seconds after opening the throttle. 8 seconds on tarmac. In RV's it is necessary to reduce the rate of climb to stay below cross wind traffic in the circuit at places like Gloucester so we tend to climb out at 110kts. The aircraft is a pussy cat in the air, trims out easily and will cruise at 160kts (TAS) at 8000ft (75% power). Low down we tend to cruise for economy between 125 and 135 knots when it will burn 22-24lbs an hour. At that speed duration is a bladder bursting 5 hours (well we are getting on you know). MF needs good flare technique when landing as it's Whitman style spring steel undercarriage will return whatever energy you impart to it with interest. Land soft or land twice! Differential brakes for steering and a castoring nosewheel mean the rudder is not a footrest and we treat MF like a tailwheel aircraft on the ground.

MF is a rounded package, not twitchy and rewarding to fly. Perfect? well not quite; it's NOISY in the cockpit. Lots of bare metal, a bit like a Lotus 7. We are looking at ANR headset upgrades at the moment, perhaps some soundproofing too before we go deaf. Wassat you say?

Steve and Terry

Bristol Aero Collection

The date of our visit to Kemble has now been set for Thursday 10th July. The museum will be opened specially for the Wing from 6:30-9:00pm and the entrance fee will be a £3 per person donation to the Collection. Aero Collection officials will be there to chat to and answer questions. Bristol Microlight Aero Club members are also welcome so this is an opportunity for Wing members to meet BMAC members. The more who turn up the merrier.

Full details will be published in the newsletter next month.

A DATE FOR THE DIARY - LE WEEKEND EN FRANCE?

The Aéro-club de Saint-Omer have just announced September 6-7th for their annual Jodel fly-in. In fact they welcome all types and a small contingent of various marques from Bristol Wing regularly attend. As St Omer is only 18 miles south East of Calais for those that have yet to venture into France it is a super way to get "blooded". They have special customs arrangements at the strip during the fly-in so aircraft can fly straight there without stopping at Calais. A 20 minute walk or 5 minute taxi ride from the strip takes one to the pavement cafes in the centre of the town for a real taste of France.

Paperwork is minimal. You just need to file a flight plan and off you go. On the way back you need to fill out a form for UK immigration (GAR - available on the Brissle website) too but it's just one extra form and stalwarts like Ron, Graham and Ian will be available to advise anyone thinking of going. It's in my diary again this year for sure.

Let's see how many Wing aircraft and members we can get over this year. Steve.



MY FIRST OSHKOSH Oshkosh 2007

By Trevor Jackson

Part 1

The word 'Oshkosh' probably means absolutely nothing to the average man (or woman) in the street, however, to aviation enthusiasts, it bears the name of the worlds biggest fly in, the MECCA of the flying year. The Experimental Aircraft Association Annual Convention, Oshkosh, Wisconsin, USA.

I had been longing to go for twenty years or more, but work, home and family had always taken priority. What changed this dream into reality began with a chance encounter with a South African guy, who was visiting the UK on business. He arrived at our farm strip one Sunday morning just as the Microlight flying group were preparing for a day fly out. He is a flyer in South Africa and flies GA aircraft as well as weight shift and three axis Microlights. As our departure was imminent, I asked him if he wanted to come along, to which he eagerly accepted. I asked him if he wanted to do some of the flying but strangely, he wanted to navigate, oh well, why not, it takes some of the load off. A good flying day was had by all and afterwards he thanked me profusely and offered some cash for fuel, I couldn't accept as I was going anyway and besides, I had enjoyed his company.



The happiest Dakota in the world !

About a month later he turned up again, on a Sunday morning, just as we were preparing to go on another jaunt. Once again I offered a seat and again he accepted. He seemed particularly impressed on the ease of navigation in the UK, well, I suppose it is reasonably easy but one can still get into trouble if complacency or neglect rear their ugly heads. On our return, he asked me if I would like to fly with him some time, in South Africa! Well, I'm always up for a new challenge, so I agreed to organise a date, after all, how often do you meet a guy who purports to

- a) have access to a low rental Cessna 172,
- b) owns a share in a Microlight school
- c) has contacts in the Game Ranging business?

Yes, we have all met them at one time or another, guys who claim they are everything except an Astronaut (Sky pilots more like!). However, the following April found me stepping off a Boeing 747 at Johannesburg International Airport, to be met and hosted by my new South African friend. There followed the most amazing week of Bush flying, wildlife tracking and game driving I could ever have imagined!

On my departure at the end of this amazing trip he said "why don't you bring your family next time?" So I did, it happened to coincide with my wife's 50th birthday and she had said she 'wanted to do something dramatic', so she did. We flew to Cape Town and after four days of touristy stuff, flew up to Johannesburg to be hosted by my South African friend once again. We spent a fantastic week doing Safari Camps and game drives. On our departure from Johannesburg the following week, Gavin casually asked if I would like to come to Oshkosh the following July, well, not being one to refuse a challenge, I pondered long and hard, well, about six seconds actually and accepted the invite.



Hamilton H-47 Metalplane

OSHKOSH 2007.

The date was set, flights booked and arrangements made with our American contacts, who had been attending the convention for many years. They have the organisation down to a fine art. On July 22nd I arrived at Minneapolis/St Paul International Airport to be met by my American contact's wife and son. She drove me to their home where I was to be their house guest, until our departure for Oshkosh. I had forgotten just how BIG everything is in America! My hosts live in a beautiful house in the Minneapolis suburb of Chaska. Eventually my American host Paul arrived with my South African friend, Gavin and we caught up on the plans for the forthcoming trip. They had already spent a couple of days visiting the Black Hills of North Dakota, flying a Piper Cub. I was told that as far as the Oshkosh trip was concerned, the one certainty was that things would change, regardless of the meticulous planning, it's what we call

'flexibility' Before long 'jet lag' eventually caught up with me, well, it was 3am according to my body clock! I suffer very badly from jet lag, it gets me when I travel to America and also when I travel back. The next morning I was awake at 3am (American time) but dozed until I heard the family stirring.

After breakfast the three men folk drove across to the airfield at St Paul (South), where amongst other aviation companies, Eriksson Aviation run a business buying and selling aeroplanes. The Company is run by Jon Eriksson, who, not surprisingly, has roots in Sweden. The hangar the Company operates from accommodates aircraft 'in transit', i.e awaiting purchasers collection, as well as housing a Boeing Metalplane which has been lovingly restored to its original condition.

Incidentally, this airport used to be where the US Army Air Force trained George Bush Senior to fly Boeing Stearman during World War II. It is also where BRS have their base, manufacturing ballistic recovery systems for aircraft. Eriksson Aviation buy and sell all aircraft types but specialise in Cessna Caravans and the De Havilland Beaver, with either piston or gas turbine engines. There is also a superb example of a 1936 Piper PA 12 Super Cruiser, of which more later...



Preparing the Piper PA12 Supercruiser

Monday was spent with preparation activities, one of which was collecting one of the two trailers (caravans to us Brits) and loading it with all the equipment we would need for the trip, ie Barbie, 'fartsacks' (sleeping bags), booze etc. Once done, we got back to Paul's house for a shower and change of clothes. That evening was spent at John Hornbrook's trailer (caravan) park, where a pre Oshkosh 'meet and greet' Barbie was being held. I was very impressed by how friendly and welcoming everyone was, all with the common objective of having fun.

The next morning we towed the trailer across to St Paul (South) airport where final travel arrangements would be made. The plan was for half the participants to travel up to Oshkosh in the trucks towing the trailers, while the others flew various aircraft to the convention. And so, as seats were being allocated my name came up as flying to the show with Paul in the PA12 Supercruiser. For my very first convention, I would be flying into Oshkosh! Once the vehicles had departed I collected a chart and did some hasty flight planning. The route would be fairly straight forward with no shortage of diversions, should we need one. The distance would be just over 180 nautical miles and I estimated just over two hours flight duration. After topping off the fuel tanks, Paul and I strapped in and departed St Paul (South) Airport. We climbed up to our cruising altitude and life became comfortable once again, having left 30 degrees Celsius and 84% humidity at ground level. The scenery was breathtaking with forests and lakes sliding beneath the wings.

We seemed to be experiencing radio problems, so Paul handed over control to me in the back seat, while he had a play with the radio. Eventually we were able to get a passable signal and so were able to continue to our first reporting point, Ripon, before entering the traffic stream for Oshkosh. After 90 minutes bum ache began to set in. Apparently Mr Piper's idea of luxury touring did not meet up to our 21st Century idea of comfort!

Another impressive feature of Oshkosh is the minimum radio work that is involved in joining the inbound traffic stream. As we arrived overhead Ripon, we were asked to waggle our wings for identification, before being instructed to proceed to the next check point, no call signs or complication involved, just "RED PA 12 waggle your wings" – we waggled. Soon we were joining left hand for runway 36 at Wittman Regional Airport (Oshkosh) and Paul made a perfect three point landing, before expediting to the Vintage Aircraft Park. As we shut down, the heat and humidity at ground level became immediately apparent. Screwing in the tie down became a nightmare as the earth was bone dry after months without rain. Eventually we managed to achieve a reasonable level of security for the aircraft and with our flying kit, made for the bus park. Our American friends had arranged pitches for the trailers (caravans) on the lawns of a local hotel.



Camp Hawthorn

The hotel manager was a personal friend of a member of our group, Russell, who had actually project managed the building of the hotel. Once the trailers had been sited and levelled, we all celebrated our safe arrival with a very welcome cold beer, or two. That evening we carried on the celebration in the hotel restaurant and enjoyed a superb meal, all paid for by Eriksson Aviation. Trailer accommodation was on a 'fluid basis', two rooms had also been booked in the hotel, for those who required a little more privacy. I located an 'Englishman size' bunk and settled in. The air conditioning was very welcome but noisy when it kicked in, till I remembered I had packed ear plugs and after fitting these, my nights were undisturbed. Breakfasts were taken in the hotel restaurant and again the bill was waived! Brian, the hotel manager called round to our camp site, now christened 'Camp Hawthorn', after the hotel grounds we were parked in.

He was looking for donations to a local charity and to make it worth while, he was distributing FREE week-long show tickets! He was not short of contributors and those who made a donation got into the EAA convention for about half the normal price. A great deal! The first day of the show (for us) was spent looking around the static exhibits and carrying out a recce of the four hangars, each full of traders, selling everything from 'doggy defs', (ear defenders for dogs) to avionics, back massage chairs (which I thoroughly recommend) through to whole aircraft.

It was all so BIG but incredibly well organised and run entirely by volunteers. Why anyone would want to spend their annual vacation doing traffic control or empty waste bins is beyond me, but they do, and for it they deserve the utmost respect and gratitude, because without this army of volunteers, Oshkosh would not happen. The afternoons are dedicated to the airshow and what a show! Everything from modern hi tech combat jets, even a couple of F22 Raptors, to composite aerobatic aircraft, to Warbirds consisting of B17's, B24's, Harvards, Mustangs, Grumman Avenger, Bearcat, Hellcat, Hawker Sea Fury. At one time my friend counted 87 aircraft in the sky at one time, all brilliantly choreographed for the enjoyment of the spectators.

One segment of the airshow is devoted to a recreation of the Reno Air races, with high performance warbirds racing between imaginary pylons at either end of the runway. A superb display of pushing thoroughbred aircraft to the limit of their performance but without the aggression of a real race. The sound of high performance aero engines still raises the hairs on the back of my neck! On completion of this segment of the show, on what I believe was the Thursday, tragedy struck when two Mustangs collided during landing, killing one pilot and seriously injuring the other. I didn't see the accident, I didn't need to, to feel what everyone else felt – a sense of sadness and loss for both man and machine.



Doggy ear defenders



Glacier Girl – P38 Lightning



Oshkosh Museum

I could not go to Oshkosh without visiting the famous museum so, using one of the myriad courtesy (school) buses, I took a ride out of the main show ground. Not only does the Museum house a huge variety of historic aircraft but during convention week, a series of lectures are given (voluntarily) by the great names of aviation. I was privileged to listen to a lecture given by Dick Rutan, as he described his epic non stop flight around the world with Jeana Yeager. In another hall I happened upon an elderly gentleman describing his experiences of 'flying chase' for Chuck Yeager during the X plane program. He was of course, one of the icons of aviation history, Bob Hoover.

I sat there enthralled as he recalled dire emergencies, in the easy going American drawl, which captured the whole audience. There is a theme which runs through all of these 'symposiums', or maybe it's an American thing, and it is that the lecturer, no matter how talented or famous, never talks down to his audience. So every listener, no matter what they fly, whether it be a Warbird, Ultralight or even nothing, all feel included. One lecture was being held by no less than three ex SR71 pilots; these guys are up there with Astronauts but again, their replies to even the most banal questions were respectful, accurate and informative.

Leaving the museum building, I had a walk out to the static aircraft park. Amongst the exhibits, I was surprised to find a Mosquito! Although not, I am sure, in flying condition. In the middle of all this, Bell 47 helicopters were doing joy rides for \$35 dollars a go (17:50 GBP!). I was tempted till I saw a hangar full of folks patiently waiting for a ride. I also spotted a static C47 Dakota, complete with a group of WWII paratroopers posing for photographs in front of it!

Unfortunately they had dispersed and loaded onto a fleet of jeeps before I got within normal camera range. It seemed that everywhere one turned, something amazing was happening! I made my way, by the shuttle bus, back to the main show ground. As I arrived, the loudspeakers announced the imminent arrival of a pair of F22 Raptors, this was going to be the highlight of the show, as many of the key design features are still considered secret. Spectators were informed that frontal photographs were OK but no pictures were to be taken of the rear (variable angle nozzles). Of course there is always one who either does not hear the broadcast or just ignores it, one lady was corralled by security almost as soon as she lifted the camera to her eye. No doubt any pictures she took were erased or if it was a conventional camera, the film would have been confiscated.



'Hollywood' packs his L39 to go home

One element of the display was a parachute drop. This consisted of several parachutists descending with flags suspended from their ankle. The difference with this drop was that there were a couple of T6 Texans (Harvards to you and I) circling the parachutes and trailing smoke during their descent, which made the whole thing even more spectacular. The last parachutist had a HUGE Stars and Stripes suspended and in a well rehearsed manner, spectators were asked to 'remove your covers' while the National Anthem was sung over the PA system. The amazing bit was that just as the anthem came to a close, the parachutist's foot touched terra firma! Incredible timing and worthy of the roar of applause which followed.



Changing the battery

The following day, we loaded up into the minibus at 'Camp Hawthorn' and drove across to the show ground. Various members made their way to their voluntary tasks, this is a case of 'everyone putting in – everyone getting something out' of the show. One member of our group, 'Hollywood' had flown up from Chicago in his privately owned jet, an ex Russian Air Force L39. He had to leave, so we helped him prepare the aircraft. Soon afterwards we saw him roar down the runway of Wittman Regional Airport and climb into the overcast.

Another member of our crowd, Mike Hahn, had flown in to Oshkosh in his own T6 Texan. He had been having trouble with his radio and we were on our way to do some trouble shooting. After confirming the problem was still apparent, I attracted the attention of some of the volunteer ground staff. They soon arranged to have an avionics man at the aircraft. Within a few minutes our 'radio guy' had arrived and soon diagnosed a failed cell in the aircraft battery. There was

nothing for it but to remove the battery and get it checked out at the battery shop. Manhandling a T6 aircraft battery is definitely a two man job, which is quite understandable considering the function it has to perform, rotating a huge Pratt & Whitney radial engine up to starting speed. Before long Mike had returned with a replacement battery and we got stuck into installing it in the aircraft. There followed a short engine run to prove all was well and we stopped for a clean up and lunch.

Trevor's adventures continue next month - watch this space!
Eds

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