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Bristol Strutter

Newsletter of the PFA Bristol Strut

March 2007

NEXT MEETING - CAA SAFETY EVENING

Anyone actively involved in general aviation and sport flying is invited to this evening at BAWA, introduced by David Cockburn who is responsible for safety promotion at the CAA's Flight Operations Inspectorate Department.

Attendees will be able to discuss with David and other specialists such topics as:

- aircraft accidents involving aircraft handling;
- decision making, including weather recognition;
- aircraft maintenance; and
- air traffic control services and airspace matters.

They will also have the chance to win a selection of prizes donated by sponsors from the aviation industry.

The evening forms part of the CAA's commitment to working with the aviation industry to continue to improve air safety.

David Cockburn said: "Although private aviation in the UK has a good safety record, all pilots, from trainees to experienced instructors, whatever their aircraft type, should be continually seeking to refresh and refine their skills and knowledge. These evenings provide an excellent opportunity for that, and for sharing experience with others.

"The CAA has been running these Safety Evenings for many years and, although they continue to be very popular, we want to reach out to as many people as possible. I know that many pilots have busy schedules, but would encourage anyone who is involved in any form of general and sport aviation to attend. *Pilots should bring their personal logbook and we will arrange to mark it with a CAA Safety Endorsement.*

Admission is free to all pilots. The Safety Evening starts at 7.30 pm sharp in Room 1 at the BAWA Centre on Southmead Road which is close to Filton Airfield, within one mile of the M4/M5 Almondsbury interchange.

LAST MONTH - GPS CHAT EVENING

Roy Amor started the discussions by giving an interesting description of his SkyMap IIIc moving map GPS device. Using the strut's digital projector, he was able to demonstrate the various functions of the unit on the big screen for all to see, and many questions were asked about it. Roy uses the GPS in his Rans S6 and finds it an invaluable navigation tool when used in conjunction with his standard chart and compass.

Following Roy's presentation, Ian Leader demonstrated the Pocket FMS software as mounted on the Strut's new laptop, and it's associated application running on his PDA. Until two days after the meeting, all this software was free to download, and paid for by voluntary contribution, but last month the Pocket FMS Foundation announced that the free software was being discontinued and the new version would be payware only. Since then, due to immense outcry from their fans, they have agreed that the original freeware would remain supported, but we still have to pay for the new version. This change in marketing brings professional software like Memory-Map more cost-effective, so people will probably go that way instead. Details on www.pocketfms.com

It had been suggested that it would be interesting to see some older models of GPS and a fun competition would be run to see who had the most ancient. Pete Turner's Garmin was nominated the oldest.



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Henstridge Airfield

We flew down to Henstridge a couple of weekends ago for lunch, and bumped into Ian Fraser who is the Wessex Strut Co-ordinator. He told us all about the brand new hangars recently built Northside, and offered to show us around. Each 'unit' in the hangar is generous in volume and capable of parking two PFA type aeroplanes (three in some cases!) or an aeroplane and full workshop facilities if you want. Ian keeps his RV6 G-EYOR and a substantial motor-home in his space. All the spaces are currently taken, but enquiries are welcomed at Airfield Ops if you want to discuss basing your aircraft there. Joe Williams says that although the current club room is serviceable (just) they have plans to build a new facility Northside along with a new control tower, sometime in 2008/9. Wessex Strut is thriving at Henstridge, and at least 10 strut aircraft are hangared there. Ian says they are drawing new members all the time from the other residents and visitors that the new dynamic airfield attracts. On a good weekend Henstridge is a hive of Strut activity, and even if it's wet you can always find strut members around to talk to. They have a good menu in the clubhouse and food is served from 9:30 weekends and bank holidays, but there are always snacks available when the kitchen is closed.

Wessex Strut have organised a fly-in on Easter day (8th April) and welcome all visitors.

To get the background on Henstridge Airfield look up www.henstridgeairfield.com

Members news

Change of address. Our treasurer / membership secretary Gordon Pritt has recently moved house; still in Weston though, his new address is: 23 ADDISCOMBE ROAD, WESTON-SUPER-MARE, SOMERSET, BS23 4LT
Gordon's new phone number is on the front of this newsletter. We wish him well in his new home.

Where to go in March

Free landing vouchers valid this month are available in:

Flyer magazine: Eaglescott, Panshanger, Redhill and Wycombe Air Park

Pilot magazine: Cromer, Eshott, Newtownards, Santoft, Seething and Tatenhill

Today's Pilot magazine: Old Buckenham, Old Sarum, Popham and White Waltham

**IFR:
A method of flying by needle
and ripcord.**

ANON

Going Foreign

In April, some Bristol Strut members will be presenting our first 'Spread your Wings' event which hopefully will encourage low -hours PPLs not to give up flying and join the PFA instead. We will tell them about the benefits of group ownership, and the places they could visit when not constrained to get the aeroplane back for the next hire. A classic example of this is the trip that Ron and Lyn along with Ian & Mary undertook last May bank holiday, when they took the two Smaragds across the channel to Le Touquet and beyond. Mary has jotted down a few lines about the weekend, which will be familiar to many PFA pilots but will make interesting reading for those who have not yet ventured abroad.



Read all about it on pages 4-6.

Future meetings

April 12th - Francis Donaldson.

April 21st - Now... Spread Your Wings event.

May 10th - Shell Aviation

May 12/13th - PFA Young Aviator weekend
(contact Devon or Gloucester Strut)

Your starter for ten



The answer to this little poser is:

This canopy was fitted to the **GAL 49 Hamilcar Glider**, and the photograph was taken at the Bovington Tank Museum.



The prototype GAL 49 Hamilcar first flew in 1942. Although designed by General Aircraft Ltd of Feltham, Middlesex the gliders were actually built by various woodworking firms in Britain since it was almost entirely of wood construction.

The Hamilcar was designed to handle an 8-ton payload, which in practice, worked out at one Tetrarch Light Tank, two Universal Carriers or a self-propelled Bofors gun. The load was strapped down in the fuselage and the crew travelled with it; the aircrew, two men of the Glider Pilot Regiment, sat in tandem in a cockpit above the fuselage.

Towing aircraft could be the Stirling, Lancaster or Halifax bombers but on D-Day the Handley-Page Halifax III was used. Towing speed for the Hamilcar was 240 km/h and the maximum diving speed 300 km/h. The glider could be lowered onto its belly to load or unload and had skids beneath the fuselage for landing without the undercarriage.

On D-Day the Hamilcars were towed by Halifaxes of 298 and 644 Squadrons, Royal Air Force, lifting off from the Dorset airfield of Tarrant Rushton. Designated Operation Mallard it involved thirty Halifax-Hamilcar combinations taking off at 21:00hr bound for Normandy.

If you think a £10.00 landing fee is expensive, read on...

ARRIVE IN STYLE TO THE AIR TATTOO

Charter aircraft operators, private pilots and aviation enthusiasts are being given the rare opportunity to touch down at one of the UK's leading military airfields during Europe's largest airshow.

Organisers of the Royal International Air Tattoo at RAF Fairford in Gloucestershire are inviting light aircraft and larger passenger aircraft the opportunity to arrive at the airshow in style on Saturday July 14 and Sunday July 15.

Last year, around 20 charter aircraft offered passengers the chance to arrive in style from countries such as Switzerland, Denmark and Holland to a US Air Force airfield usually reserved for B-52s and B-2s.

On arrival, visitors will be processed via a purpose-built charter terminal, with full immigration and customs facilities, ensuring swift and easy access to the airshow itself.

Landing fees for light aircraft start at around £250. For details about larger aircraft and charter flights, contact the Royal International Air Tattoo's aircraft operations department at aircraft.ops@rafcte.com

The summer's Air Tattoo will be staging Europe's largest tribute to the US Air Force on its 60th anniversary and will include a rare UK-appearance by the USAF Thunderbirds display team.

Aircraft Participation Manager David Walton said: "Many people think it is not possible to fly into the show but it is. You actually get a real sense of being part of the event as you touch down centre stage on the 10,000ft runway. It a great way to see the airshow."

Abroad at last!

By Mary Leader

For quite a few years now, since we've owned G-DENS, we have planned many trips overseas only to have them thwarted by either bad weather or family circumstances. Ian has managed to achieve a few trips but we've never yet made it together. This time we broke the curse and managed to fly over the channel to France.

Anticipating good luck this time the Euros were exchanged at the Post Office; life jackets, sleeping bags and tent dusted off from the loft, and bag (weight & balance only allowed one bag!) packed all ready on Thursday evening.

We completed the necessary paperwork: informing customs of our expected dates of departure and return by submitting the duly completed General Declaration form, and filing the Flight Plan on the phone just before leaving home gave the required 2 hours notice. Leaving from Garston Farm at 9 am in close company with Ron & Lyn in G-BSVE the two

Smaragds flew off into the early morning sun and arrived overhead the Lydd VOR at 10.35. The visibility was fantastic, we could see the French coast from 10 miles before Lydd so knew that we were going to make the crossing. It was a bit disconcerting when, having reported mid-channel, Lydd Radio signed us off but when we changed to Le Touquet Approach we could hear the French controller's reassuring voice giving directions to their traffic. He was very friendly, invited us to 'pass your message' and within 20 minutes we were on finals to the easily identified airport.



Final approach at Le Touquet



Red brick pavements in Le Touquet town centre

On entering the terminal building we were presented with a long row of bicyclettes, our transport for the day! Once checked in, we were free to choose one each, and off we went on the 'wrong' side of the road to find our hotel, which the very helpful staff at check-in had just arranged for us. Le Touquet is a delightful little community, and the town is quite unique in its construction. Set out in a grid of one-way streets, all the pavements are an attractive red-brick and the intersections are raised to create a pedestrian-friendly feature. En-route to the hotel we called into the Grandmarche for a few provisions and thus armed made for the beach to have a DIY lunch. Just along from

where we settled down was the wind-yacht centre, but because the tide was high, the local kite-surfing club were out in force and members of all ages were expertly utilising the wind in pursuit of their sport.

L'hotel was perfect, comfortable rooms with all facilities, and once settled in we locked the bikes to the railing outside and set off on foot to explore the town and find a restaurant for dinner. Ron and Lyn had found a nice little place on a previous visit, so we eventually tracked down L'Harlequin and had a delightful French style meal in leisurely surroundings.

Next morning, the hotel buffet breakfast was laid out, and we enjoyed croissants, boiled eggs, yoghurt and coffee, as much as we could eat. Over breakfast, we planned the day's activity which involved cycling along La Plage and back, with a visit to the bird sanctuary on the northerly point of the Paris Plage on the Canche



Jogging around L'hippodrome

estuary. After that we headed across the bridge to Etaples, an old-world community in total contrast to the modern feel of Le Touquet, by which time it was time for a welcome cup of café. Later we meandered our way back along the estuary, passing the now empty fish stalls, but we could visualize the hubbub when the boats had just come in and the smell of fresh fish on the marble slabs.

We arrived back at L'aérodrome around mid-day and pre-flighted for the short trip to Saint Omer, our intended stop-over for Saturday night. Although DENS had taken part in the Fly-in last year, this was my first visit to the old wartime airfield, and I looked forward to

the opportunity eagerly. There was no one around when we landed, so we parked up and watched the horse and traps jogging around L'hippodrome adjacent to the field. Very soon, the club Robin arrived overhead and on landing taxied to the pumps for fuel. We made ourselves known, and were invited to top up our tanks for a mere 50 euros (cash in hand) more than enough to get home. The club members were most welcoming, and offered directions along the woodland path into town to get our lunch.

Saint Omer is a quaint little town, typically French with chairs and tables outside each café and impressive architecture. We chose a café with a suitable menu displayed, and enjoyed a splendid omelette and chips, washed down with good French beer as we were not flying again until tomorrow. Afterwards, we walked it off exploring the shops in town, La Gare and a saunter along the canal arriving back at the airfield before dark so that the tents could be pitched with ease. There is a small restaurant just beside the airfield entrance called L'Envol and we had already established they would be open, so once camp was set up, we spent the evening in comfortable surroundings enjoying a good French salade with local wine.

While relaxing after the meal, we were able to call home on the mobile phone and get a weather forecast which indicated bad weather approaching over the next couple of days. Our intention had been to stay away another night on the Isle of Wight and return home on Bank holiday Monday, but our plan was now duly modified to go straight home tomorrow instead.

Sunday dawned a bit hazy, but it very soon burnt off and we launched off on course for Calais to file a flight plan for the short crossing to Lydd. On arrival, we were invited (tongue in French cheek) to find a place to park on the apron - it was deserted! In fact so empty that the fire engine was out being tested and the very friendly 'officer' came over to talk to us and offered to take our photo. When we went inside to book-in, lo and behold, there was the same friendly official with another hat on!



The deserted apron at Calais airport

A last cup of real café, while the flight plan cleared, before setting off along the Northern French coast, past the exit/entrance to the Channel Tunnel and then turning at Cap Gris Nez to cross the calm blue waters to Lydd. After lunch and, during another quick check around the plane, in beautiful sunny conditions, we were thinking 'Do we really want to go home yet?' but as we progressed on the journey west we were

surprised at how quickly the conditions changed quite dramatically. We had planned to turn northwards at Midhurst but at about 10 miles away the visibility was deteriorating so much that we diverted to Chichester (Goodwood), joined by G-BSVE very soon after. Over the radio we could hear pilots saying that they were returning from abandoned trips to the Isle of Wight so we were pleased we had altered our plans - the timing of the weather report proved to be a bit flexible! After an hour or so conditions improved enough to enable us to return to the Farm safely, and so concluded my first flight abroad.

Mary

PS: Our small 2 seater really is a magic carpet and since the trip described above we have made more visits to France enabling us to 'get away from it', all at a very reasonable price.

Some of our holiday snaps - to fill up the back page!



On the apron at Le Touquet



The fish stalls and Café at Etaples

