



October 2001

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Another year has passed and it's time again for the Strut AGM! Important decisions must be made, so do try to attend if at all possible.

This month's meeting: 11th October 2001

The A G M

This month's meeting will be important, yes, but hopefully informal enough to avoid extreme boredom! We do need to find a new Strut co-ordinator. Ed Hicks has done a wonderful job as co-ordinator for the past 2 years and now feels it is time for him to move on and for new blood to take the leading role. At present we do not have any nominations, so if you feel at all inclined, please consider putting your name forward. Remember that you will have the support of a good team of willing helpers, so the work-load will not be too heavy! We just need someone to pull it all together...

Thoughts from our Treasurer

Gordon has been busy lately preparing a new database of the Bristol Strut membership. His intention is to collect details such as those members who fly and those who would like to, what aeroplanes are owned by members who do, as well as contact numbers and e-mail addresses. Apparently there are 52 members paid-up at the moment, including several family memberships. Gordon reports that our bank balance is very healthy, and he will be making suggestions at the AGM as to how we should spend some of it. All ideas will be considered when you come to the meeting!

Last month's meeting: 13th September 2001

A day in the life of PFA Engineering - Ken Craigie

It was good to see Ken again in Bristol, and on his usual good form. He brought along many interesting slides to illustrate the talk, which everyone agreed was most revealing. If we do nothing else in the world of aviation, we must take heed and learn from the mistakes of others. The contribution to air safety made by our friends at PFA engineering and the AAIB at Farnborough cannot be underestimated, and their work benefits us all in one way or another, whether we fly aeroplanes ourselves or just ride in them. Thanks to Ken for making this, his second, trip to Bristol, and for answering so eloquently the many questions fired at him after the presentation.

Safety equipment available for loan.

Although the holiday season is pretty much behind us now, some of us may still be planning to fly over the water. Graham Clark has advised us he has three life-jackets, a 4-place dinghy, some flares and an ELT which he has generously offered to loan to pilot members of Bristol Strut if required. All items are fully serviceable, and so far, unused!

Graham can be contacted on tel: 01454 618216, or by e-mail on: 100525.3076@compuserve.com

Places to go in October			
6th	Finmere	VAC Autumn Fly-in (PPR)	01280-840864 /07074-2444537
7th	Old Warden	Shuttleworth Autumn Display	01767-627442
7th	Popham	End of Season Fly-in	01256-397733

7th	Brighton	Fly-in	01757-289065/ 01302-890633
7th	Old Sarum	Gyro Fly-in	
14th	Duxford	IWM Duxford Autumn Display	01223-835000
14th	Weston-s-Mare	Helicopter Museum Open Cockpit Day	01934-635227
21th	North Coates	Autumn Fly-in	01652-618808
28th	North Weald	Squadron Halloween Fly-in (PPR)	01992-524510

As usual, always check before setting out.

News from the Web.

Our website hosts at Flyer Internet publish frequent news items of an aeronautical nature. This week (2/10/01) we gleaned the following snippets:

Concorde timetable unchanged

British Airways has said that it is planning to go ahead with the reintroduction of its London-New York service in October, in spite of the events of the last ten days. The airline says that the terrorist attacks last week and the job cuts announced today will not divert it from the reintroduction of a regular transatlantic supersonic service.

Air France yesterday flew its modified Concorde with 'passengers' for the first time since the disaster over a year ago. The 'passengers' were actually volunteer employees who were being thanked for their time and efforts in getting the aircraft airborne again (BA has already carried out a similar flight, making a similar thank you gesture to its staff). The flight left from and returned to Charles de Gaulle (do you think they booked out as a 'local flight?'), took three and a half hours and went supersonic. The idea was to test the boarding, announcement and flight procedures, and all apparently went well. De Gaulle was, of course, the scene of the tragedy last July.

One change has had to be made following the attacks on the US - British Airways had commissioned a set of cutlery for use on Concorde from Terence Conran. Now, however, it and all other metal implements have been banned, so it's back to supersonic plastic.

BA to lose 7000 jobs

Not unexpectedly, British Airways is making major job cuts in the wake of last week's terror attacks in the US. This morning's announcement of 5200 job losses brings the total number of jobs to be cut by BA to 7000 (1800 were announced earlier in the month). The plan is to withdraw 20 aircraft from operation and reduce flying by 10%; in the job breakdowns, it is being reported that 400 pilots and 2300 cabin staff. In all, the cuts represent around an eighth of the work force.

In addition, the European airline industry was dealt another blow this morning when EADS (defence giant European Aeronautic Defence and Space, which owns the majority of shares in Airbus Industries) announced that it was putting expansion plans on hold. However, it says that plans for the A380 Super Jumbo are going ahead.

Free landing fees

The airfield vouchers on offer in the October issue of FLYER magazine are for one free landing at Andrewsfield, Goodwood (Chichester), Nottingham and Sleaf.

PFA BRISTOL STRUT

Minutes of Annual General Meeting held at
8pm on Thursday 14th September 2000 at BAWA, Filton, Bristol

There were 12 members present, including Strut Co-ordinator, Ed Hicks. (the small number attending probably due to petrol crisis!) Apologies received from Treasurer - Gordon Pritt, Nigel Hitchman, Pete Turner, Edwin Shackleton, Brian Osley, Geoff Church. (Brian & Geoff both in hospital but doing well)

Ed Hicks had only just arrived back from the USA the previous day and was therefore slightly jet-lagged.

Treasurer's accounts had been received in advance and were circulated. It was noted that expenditure was down on last year probably due to Newsletter being distributed via e-mail to approx half the circulation, and also the lack of expenses claimed from speakers (collections had been taken at the meetings and donated to the Speakers' charitable cause). There was no Insurance premium due for Young Eagles because the PFA had now changed their policy to include £7M Crown Indemnity which satisfied Filton/Bae. Balance in Hand £961.91 and as this was healthy it was agreed that the annual subs should remain at £13 single (£16 Family) ie unchanged for the next year. The accounts were accepted by the members present. Thanks to Gordon for keeping the books and maintaining membership records/subs so well.

It was suggested that a note was included in the next newsletter asking if any more members had e-mail and were willing to accept their newsletter via this method and therefore reduce expenses further.

The website has been very well accepted and thanks were given to Ian Leader who has kept it up to date. Ian asked for any further contributions or suggestions to maintain freshness and interest.

One item which had arisen as a direct result of the Website was a very well conducted and informative interview between Ed Hicks and Chris Serle of BBC Radio Bristol. Ed had managed to promote the PFA and its aims and also the Young Eagles programme.

Discussion took place about the organization of the Young Eagles Day due to take place on the following Saturday.

The election of officers followed with Ed Hicks agreeing to stand again as Co-ordinator and, in a letter received today, Gordon Pritt had offered to continue as Treasurer. Both posts were unanimously accepted by the members present.

Suggested future programme: October Talk on aircraft recovery at Kai Tak; November Slides on Ed's visit to USA and Vans factory (probably with update on the building of his and Nigel's RV6); December Quiz with American Supper. January to June to be filled.

Suggestions included a Curio evening (when anyone with any interesting aviation curio brings it along for discussion). Could Andy Sephton be asked to give another talk?

And Finally..

Malcolm Carlisle concludes his nostalgic article this month, describing his early days in the aircraft industry. Thanks Malcolm! If, for any reason, you missed part 1 last month, you can view our last newsletter by clicking on the link at the bottom of the page.

Bye for now

Ian & Mary



Royal Aeronautical Society

Bristol Branch

Programme of Events 2001-2002

Room 1, BAWA Leisure Centre, Southmead Road, Filton

Usual start 6.30 pm (unless otherwise stated)

To give members and visitors an opportunity to meet and converse, coffee and biscuits will be available for half an hour before the lectures commence.

Wednesday 17th October <i>Martin-Baker Ejection Seats</i> Mr Eric Thomas, Product Support Manager, M B Aircraft Co	Wednesday 20th February <i>6 pm AGM</i> <i>6.30 pm Lecture: Concorde - "The Manufacturer's View"</i> Dr Jeff Jupp, Director Technical Airbus UK
Wednesday 21st November <i>Europa Kit Aircraft</i> Mr Keith Wilson, Europa Aircraft Co	Wednesday 20th March <i>Presidents Evening: "Concorde Operations and Re-Introduction to Service"</i> Captain Jock Lowe, British Airways
Wednesday 12th December <i>UK Aerospace in a Global Context</i> Professor Keith Hayward, SBAC	Wednesday 17th April <i>Airbus Wing Aerodynamics - Old and New</i> Dr Jeff Jupp, Director Technical Airbus UK
Wednesday 16th January <i>Battle of Britain Memorial Flight</i> Sqn Ldr Paul Day OBE AFC RAF	Wednesday 15th May <i>Barnwell Lecture and Dinner</i> MoD Abbey Wood, Bristol Lecture free although places are limited Dinner by ticket only
Tuesday 29th January <i>Brietling Orbiter Global Balloon</i> <i>How it was made safe and reliable</i> (Joint lecture with the Reliability and Safety Society) Mr Mel James, Advantage Business	Wednesday 19th June <i>N E Rowe Competition</i> For more information contact Lectures Secretary: Jan

Life in the Swinging 30s and 40s

Described by Malcolm Carlisle - Part 2

Right: 14 EF TS at RAF Elmdon, now Birmingham Airport, trained pilots for the Fleet Air Arm. This group photograph was taken on June 16, 1943

The story continues...

In September 1939, Civil Aviation came to an end for the duration of the war. Airwork Ltd, with their considerable experience of aerodrome management plus a large staff of engineers was immediately assigned the care and maintenance of several R.A.F Flying Schools, thereby releasing airmen for operational duties.

My posting was to No 6 Air Observer navigation School, Staverton, with Rapides and Ansons. Arriving in Britain were many Polish pilots and ground personnel; of the number who arrived at Staverton two airmen were allocated to assist myself. The advice from my Chief was to carefully monitor their work until I was assured of their ability. One Pole was about my age and the other man somewhere in his forties. We commenced a service on a Rapide and I was only too pleased to pass on to them all the grubby jobs that were necessary. It soon became apparent that the senior Pole was equal to all the tasks set him.

When their interpreter paid us a visit I commented on the proficiency of my top assistant; this amused him considerably and I was duly informed that my man was the Warrant Officer in charge of all Polish Ground Staff, and before the war he was production manager of a large aero engine factory.

During another Rapide service, and needing to turn the engine over for tappet adjustments, I entered the cockpit to ensure that all was "off", so it came as quite a shock when on turning the propeller it fired first time with a burst of some half a dozen revs. Marking the engine with an on-contact label, I left for a cup of tea to soothe my nerves. Subsequent investigation showed the cause to be a loose fitting lead into the contact breaker earthing cap. Herewith the first lesson. At all times obey the golden rule and consider the engine always on contact, says the Lad who got smacked by a Dragon.

After a year at Staverton I was transferred to 14 E.F.T.S Elmdon, Birmingham, a Tiger Moth School. What a time to arrive! For the first few days I was kept busy stitching and patching mainplanes, for somewhere a Tiger had disintegrated in flight due to a form of rot, no doubt caused by it being picketed out in all weathers. All Tigers were grounded until inspected.

It was at Elmdon that I made my first solo flight, but unfortunately this milestone did not count



We soon became dab hands at high speed taxiing and after a number of such trips we had our tails up and ran on wheels only. We then progressed further by lifting the aircraft slightly off the ground. Our unorthodox taxiing seemed to go unobserved except for one instance when we tried a return in Vee formation and that manoeuvre earned us a blast from our Chief, unjustified we thought, as it was a very loose formation.

One low flying raider managed to escape detection in our area and his bomb made impact with the tarmac, in front of our open hangar. Fortunately for those of us within, it had not had sufficient height to obtain fully nose down, and instead of the firing mechanism making contact it was the casing that struck first ricocheting into the flying field to cause only a hole in the ground. An engineer next to me commented on our near squeak, and that by the grace of God we had been spared for more days of stitching and patching our Tigers. I admired his patriotism.

The Duty Officer made an impressive figure as he marched to the centre of the tarmac armed with a flare gun.

A pause to gain maximum exposure, he then raised the pistol and fired, many eyes watching this colourful ball of flame as it soared skyward. Descending, still blazing strongly, it unerringly entered the rear cockpit of a parked aircraft. Good shot sir, a sitting duck becomes a flaming Tiger.

In May 1941 I was moved to 21 E.F.T.S Booker, Tiger Moths and Miles Magisters. Apart from R.A.F. pupils, under training were Army personnel destined to become glider pilots.

Of the host of civilian Moth pilots in the world, just how many take to the air in mid winter? Providing the weather is fair, no doubt quite a number. But now consider the war time winters of the 1940's when flying training was an urgent necessity. Like so many other Tiger schools, the ground staff of 21 E.F.T.S. Booker would carry out their daily inspections in an unheated hangar, muffled up to their eyebrows in layers of clothing. Opening the hangar doors would reveal a Christmas card scene, trees, grass and the ground glistening white with frost.



towards obtaining wings, firstly because I was a civilian in a service aircraft, and secondly, the Tiger's wheels ought to have been in touch with the ground, not airborne...

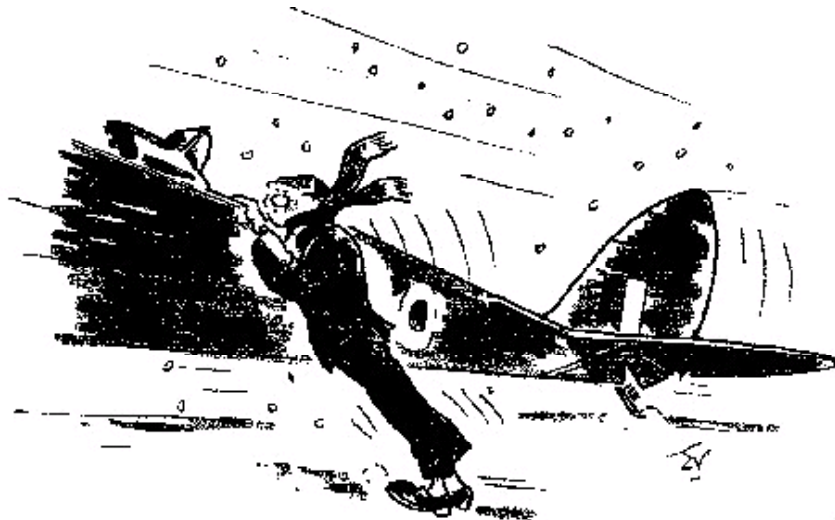
At this early period of the war, Germany was sending over single low flying bombers which were dubbed nuisance raiders; the alert meant factory workers downing tools and taking cover. Myself and a few colleagues, instructors and senior pupils would scramble the parked Tigers to disperse them around the aerodrome boundary.



The Duty Officer made an impressive figure...

The aircraft would be trundled out and lined up on the main tarmac, chocked and ready for their engine run up. The cold got into the engines and it required a lot of effort to drag the props over.

The chap on the switches was not seated in the cockpit but stood alongside with head and shoulders tucked inside. The moment the engine fired and began running he would adjust and tighten the throttle to a fast tickover and then stand well clear of the freezing slipstream. The eventual run up would be carried out in double quick time.



The chap on the switches stood with his head and shoulders tucked inside the cockpit...

Called over to investigate a non starter which would not produce even the slightest cough, I assumed the cold had caused one of the two usual possibles to stick open. Placing a balaclava clad head into the engine, the healthy click heard when the prop was turned over ruled out one likely snag, which was a pity because the other possibility meant a lot more work.

Removing the contact breaker earthing cap, the closed points scrubbed that out as a cause. After a stare at the contact breaker, the cold watering eyes finally spotted the not-so-mechanical reason for the unwillingness of this engine to start: a fibre, no doubt from a hairy glove, was stretched across the points. I thought I really must have a word with my colleagues about such carelessness. Well, perhaps not, as I glanced at my own woolley mitts.

Occasionally an instructor bored stiff with circuits and bumps, would seek an aircraft that required a test flight. We could usually oblige and away he would go to let off steam. One such joy rider returned with a slightly damaged leading edge; he apologised and claimed that he had clipped the top of a tree. When he met later I presented him with some grains of corn taken from the damaged wing. I suggested that in future he should avoid wheat sheaves when shooting up Land Army girls.

I was posted to R.A.F. Hednesford for a six months' course on aero engines. Came the final week and we were informed that real aeroplanes would be worked on, and for our first task we would be required to start an engine by swinging the propeller, a Tiger Moth no less!

I smirked to myself at this information for Carlisle was going to be top boy at this session. It was not to be - in fact, I probably put up the worst showing of all and earned a rebuke from the Sergeant. "Don't be frightened of it Lad". The Lad was not frightened but he certainly was troubled by the difference of this Gipsy Major from all others throughout the world. The prop was incorrectly positioned with the blade tip pointing at five o'clock instead of at two o'clock. When I mentioned this to the sergeant he just shrugged and said he knew little about those piddley little engines. He had a point there, for compared with the Merlin and Pegasus, the Gipsy Major was very small beer!

The following day I again incurred the displeasure of my Instructor for when he commanded the Tiger Moth to be returned to the hangar, I marched to the tail unit and hoisted it onto my shoulder, only to be stopped by a bellow from the Sergeant - "Put it down Lad, you'll have it on it's nose!". So I had to stagger into the hangar carrying the dead weight of the fuselage at arm's length with no help from Bods tugging at the wing tips creating an erratic course. Well it served me right for showing off.

Returning to civilian life at the end of the war in

It was a fine summer's day when I walked into my garden and was instantly stopped in my tracks by sighting a U.F.I., (Unidentified Flying Insect) about the size of a Bumble Bee and with distinctive markings: the rear upper half of it's fuselage was black with white spots, the front half a light furry green, the wings had a slight orange tinge to them, and the tongue was as long as its body.

It did not settle on a flower but hovered as it inserted its tongue into a blossom. Not one person I asked to identify it could do so. Eventually I wrote to the British Natural History Museum and back came the answer; the insect I had sighted was a Humming Bird Hawk Moth, an immigrant from Southern Europe unlikely to survive a British winter. No wonder Sir Geoffrey de Havilland named his aeroplanes after such beautiful creatures.

To the fortunate pilots and engineers who are still starting their aircraft by hand swinging, I issue the following instruction: Raise your right hands and repeat after me, 'I do solemnly swear that in fifty years from now I will write to the D.H. Moth Club and relate my experiences of life in the swinging Nineties, so help me'. Be sure you do, for I will be keeping a watching brief from maximum ceiling. Switches off.

Following a posting to No. 1. ADS at Wigtown in Scotland, using Ansons, in May 1942 I returned to 21 E.F.T.S. Booker for another year of keeping Tiger Moths airborne, and this included a few months at Denham with its much enlarged flying field. An instructor entering the hangar gazed for a long moment at our efforts to fit a bomb rack onto a Tiger and then expressed his opinion: "You have to be joking!"

Not happy with being a civilian in wartime I badgered my Company to release me from my reserved occupation, and in May 1943 they kindly agreed to let me go. I rushed into the Fleet Air Arm as a potential Air Fitter.

1946, I went back to Booker and uncomplicated Tiger Moths.

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Thanks to Malcolm for sharing this article with us. We shall hear from him again in the near future, but in the meantime if you have anything similar to offer please let us know.

Acknowledgement: The above article was first published in 'The Moth', the magazine of The de Havilland Moth Club Limited.

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

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Last month's Newsletter

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