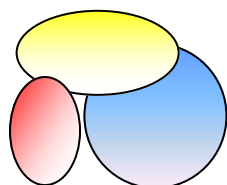




Brissle Strutter



bristolstrut.uk

SEPTEMBER 2021

Next Meeting— AGM

The Strutter is back from its summer break and it's Strut AGM time again - *face to face!* You should already have received a calling notice for the meeting, so you know that we will gather at **BAWA Room 4** (note change from calling notice) This will allow plenty of space to exercise social distancing. We'll meet at **19:30 on Tuesday 7th September for an AGM start at 19:45**. As usual we will try to keep the formalities of the AGM to a minimum and allow time to hear how you have been benefitting from the lifting of flying restrictions. If you know of any speakers/topics you'd like us to arrange then this meeting is an opportunity to mention it.

But of course before then it is **75th Anniversary Rally time!** Make sure you are fully aware of all **procedures for flying in**, including the **AIC and supplementary instructions [here](#)** which cover the change from **Sywell Info to Sywell Radio**. If you are fully familiar with the procedure from previous years - read it in any case: *there are significant changes*. (Just in case the above link doesn't work here's the link:)
<http://www.lightaircraftassociation.co.uk/Rally/2021/flying-in.html>

June Meeting— RAES Bedford

Barry Tomlinson of the Bedford Aeronautical Heritage Group described the work of the Royal Aircraft Establishment Bedford from its origins in 1947 to its closure twenty years ago. The two Bedford sites, airfield and wind tunnel, played a major role in projects such as Concorde, blind landing, carrier operations, advanced rotor aerodynamics and, more recently, advanced civil flight management systems and flight control research for V/STOL aircraft leading to the control laws in the Lockheed Martin F35B.



As the meeting closed, we learned that **Neville and Hannah Parton** had just completed their **Pooley's Dawn to Dusk flight** in G-DENS:

- *overflight of or landing at 28 RAF stations at which 4 generations of the Parton family had served;*
- *over 14 hours from start to finish, over 10 hours airborne;*
- *over £2000 raised for the RAF Benevolent Fund*

A Jolly Good Show! We'll be looking for an account at a future meeting.

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October Meeting

Mike Fortescue will be talking to us about "Bush flying in Labrador in the 1960s" on Tuesday 5th October.

Here's a taster of his photos and talk.

More information next month.



Sad news

We have just heard the sad news that Geoff Roe has very recently died. Some readers will remember him as an original co-owner of G-DENS (together with Ian Leader) but, in recent years, Geoff has attended, many fly-ins with his wife Liz, in his distinctive yellow Jodel D18 G-OLEM. Our sincere condolences are sent to Liz and the family.

Where to go in September?

Flyer : Barton, Fenland, Holmbeck, Kingsmuir, North Coates

Light Aviation : Crosland Moor, East Kirkby, Elstree (reduced to £10.00 + VAT), Kirkbride

LAA Rally—3/4/5 September Sywell - See page one and poster on page last page for details

Cornwall Strut Fly in—11th September—see poster on page 8 for details

CAA ETC UPDATES

France on an NPPL or LAPL with just a Pilot Medical Declaration!

The French Civil Aviation Authority (DGAC) has agreed that UK-registered non-Part 21 aircraft (e.g. micro-lights, amateur built, historic*) may be flown VFR in French airspace, for periods not exceeding 28 consecutive days, by pilots holding valid UK-issued licences which include such privileges. This includes pilots holding a valid Pilot Medical Declaration.

*Annex I aircraft referred to in Article 2(3)-point (d), of UK Regulation (EU) 2018/1139

This agreement does not include operation of UK-registered Part 21 aircraft in France, for which a PPL with a valid Class 2 medical remains the minimum requirement.

OK for the right non-Part 21 aircraft - see [here](#)

Or click <https://mailchi.mp/caa/operation-of-non-part-21-uk-registered-aircraft-in-france?e=3edf2eff83>

CHIRP Articles

There are quite a few things of interest in the latest CHIRP report. If you are not already registered to receive CHIRP, we suggest that you do so. In any case, read [this one!](#)

Picture Quiz

Last picture:

From Alan, Continuing the Biplane theme:

Another innovative biplane. What is its unique feature?

Ron's Perry answered very quickly with the following:

...It's a M15 Belphegor crop duster. I've just checked my log book and I haven't flown one yet!...



For this month:

This month we have a good-looking 4-seat tailwheel tourer. The aircraft shown has recently undergone a post-Brexit transfer to the UK register. Name the type, and identify its origins from WW2 years.



Photo by Alan Brown; used under terms of free GNU documentation license.

Bodmin Eco Airfield

We have received the following from Pete White at Bodmin:

Now for something completely different...Bodmin Airfield has become recognised as probably the largest natural meadow in the SW.

We have frequent visits from the Farming Wildlife Advisory Group, Exeter University and others who now look upon our site as an extremely valuable resource for natural growth, insects and wildlife. So I thought that this AeroEco Airfield could be of great newsworthy value to people not only in the SW but in the UK.

Please read the attached (*following Ed*) article by our Airfield Manager, Jay Gates.

If you are curious and wish to know more please contact our manager Jay on 01208 821419.

By the way we still fly aeroplanes from the airfield.

Pete

PRESERVING A DISAPPEARING ENVIRONMENT – WHEN GA AIRFIELDS DON'T KNOW WHAT THEY'VE GOT

More often than not, General Aviation airfields, irrespective of them being formal aerodromes, informal private strips or simple farm strips are not aware that what they are the guardians of may well be something that is disappearing at an alarming rate from our countryside surroundings.

Since the end of the second world war over 95% of what was known as a traditional hay meadow has disappeared from the rural British landscape as a result of modern farming methods, land drainage, industrial development and the increased need to build ever more and more homes out in the country for 'townies' to achieve the rural idyll they have always dreamt of. The loss of the traditional hay meadow has had a dramatic effect on the survival of our pollinators, namely bees, without which we will not have the fruits, vegetables and other associated foodstuffs that we all crave.

Bodmin Airfield in Cornwall has recognised what they have, a traditional hay meadow that is not only rich in flora and fauna, but also quite possibly one of the largest traditional hay meadows in the Southwest of England. It is an outcome completely arrived at by accident, rather than by design. The reason for this is that for the past few decades it has had no herbicides, pesticides or harmful fertilisers spread across it, and other than the runways and taxiways, the outfield is only cut once a year with the cuttings all baled and removed from the site by a local farmer for use as silage and fodder for his cattle.

To add to the ethos of duty of care towards our community, something that we hold dear at Bodmin, we also carry out a thorough removal of ragwort from our airfield every year. The reason we do this is that we are surrounded on all four sides by sheep farms, cattle farms, common grazing lands and mapped bridlepaths. Ragwort has the potential to be lethal to sheep, cattle and horses if ingested, and there is even a law that expects landowners to ensure that ragwort does not pass to neighbouring land and create issues for other landowners. We therefore follow the guidance and recommendations, and the result is better community relations and our farmers receive hay that is ragwort free.

It is this sequence of historical and annual events that has given the airfield the look that it has. Just over two years ago Ian Benallick, who is the Botanical Recorder for Cornwall and co-author of the red book for Cornish Wild Flowers, was walking past the airfield when he spotted an Orchid in the airfield verge. He rang the Bodmin Airfield Manager, Jay Gates, to ask if he could come inside the airfield and conduct a quick survey of the airfield, which of course we were delighted to arrange for him. His 'quick' two hour survey turned up an astonishing list of over 150 species of wild flowers, grasses and ferns and which included an estimate of over 3,000 orchids of three distinct species in the outfield. It was at this point that he told us that what we were the stewards for was slightly more important than merely a pleasant GA airfield on the side of Bodmin Moor. This discovery has led to us building relationships with many interested organisations and academics to allow them to look at ways to protect the airfield, learn from it and for us to let others benefit from what we have.

It is this new knowledge that has made us realise that General Aviation, and airfields, may unwittingly be sitting on land that is more important to the nation than you would have previously thought. From being a scourge of NIMBY complainers, and those who think aviation is harmful to the environment, it may well be that you have something to cherish, protect and share with your local community and something that bathes your airfield in a good light to those who live around you. Obviously, an airfield that follows the CAA anti-bird 'long grass' policy and conducts regular cuts of the outfield throughout the year will find they do not have a traditional hay meadow in their outfield, for those small aerodromes and farm strips where crops are grown in the outfield will find the same, and airfields that have irregular cuts but do not remove their cut grass will also find they may not have a meadow either. Our untouched outfield also means we have a large and healthy Skylark population, living and breeding, in the outfield.

Yet, Bodmin cannot possibly be alone in this discovery, and there must be numbers of GA airfields throughout the land who carry out the same land management regime that we do without realising they have something that is nationally special and environmentally important. The surveys that have carried out here have resulted in a list of almost 170 species of flora, and our soil samples have shown that we are what the National Vegetation Classification lists as an MG5 Grassland landscape, i.e. a traditional hay meadow, of which there is now less than 6,000

hectares remaining in the whole of England. It would appear that Bodmin may have the largest traditional hay meadow in the whole Southwest of England. The effect on our pollinators on the loss of this critically important landscape is devastating, hence the national drive to plant bee bombs in your gardens and for the councils to seed the road verges with wild flowers. Of course it is not only bees that we need to protect, as pollinators also include wasps, hover flies, beetles, flies, moths and butterflies. If your airfield turns out to be MG5 land, you are unknowingly helping to arrest this decline, and it would not hurt your GA reputation if your community was made aware of your positive input to a national debate on saving our treasured pollinators.



Marsh Orchid and Heath Spotted Orchid



Collecting Yellow Rattle seeds for FWAGSW

We have built up a relationship with our local University Ecology department whose NERC researchers are conducting studies of the land, and who are sending students to us to conduct pollinator surveys. We have developed a great relationship with the local Farmers Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAGSW) who assist farmers who wish to change their land from non-organic to organic and create natural hay meadows for pollinators, and thus help them with their own crops. So far we have donated two swathes of our cut hay to local farming estates to allow them the process of improving their own environments, and this is only the beginning. The FWAGSW people tell us our airfield has enough grass to fulfill their whole county programme if we were able to donate it to them. We have also donated seeds from our airfield to conservationists, as these seeds represent the important species that accelerate the change of an ordinary grass field to that of a traditional hay meadow.

On top of this is the fact that MG5 grassland may mean the airfield is able to seek land stewardship grants to allow the airfield to manage the grassland and protect the environment. In some cases, Natural England may afford greater protection to your airfield that stops any future opportunity for property developers to eye your land for building purposes. And, of course, you have an educational asset not just for university students and researchers, but also for local schools, botanical clubs and other community interested parties. Your community will help you protect what you may have.

Darren Fern, the Cornwall Flying Club chairman, summed it all up when he said "Bodmin Airfield has been working with Exeter University and other environmental groups over the past couple of years. We have an outstanding example of a native English hay meadow, and the seeds from the grasses are highly sought after by farmers wishing to return their fields to their natural state. We have over 3000 orchids of various species. We have the resource because for the past 40 odd years, we've never used fertiliser, we've removed invasive and non-native plants, and all we have done is cut the grass runways, leaving nature to look after the rest of the site. By encouraging links with the University, CLA and Natural England etc., we have become a beacon of conservation in the country. Botanists from all over the country now ask to visit our site."

He went on to say "I'm sure every other airfield in the country has similar 'out-field' areas that will have the same natural diversity and environmentally valuable resources that exist BECAUSE we are an airfield, and not despite it being an airfield. There is an opportunity for all airfields to be recognised as being environmental heroes, and not the villains, for a change. I encourage all airfield owners to contact their local university ecology departments and farming organisations, so that we can share our resource and be viewed in a positive light. We have a great opportunity to safeguard our airfields. Use it."

Jay Gates

August 2021

Many thanks to Alan George for this write-up he has done about an interesting flight as part of his coming out of lockdown

Farm Strip Flying at Bosbury International 2021

Those with long memories will remember that I did my tailwheel conversion on a farmstrip flying course in Piper Super Cubs from Clacton Aero Club. I wrote about it in the Bristol Strutter but I cannot remember which edition now. Coming out of lockdown in May 2021 I had not flown since before Christmas 2020 so did a flight with Phil Mathews of the Cotswold Aero Club in one of their Robin DR400s just to show I had not forgotten everything. However I felt I needed some tailwheel refresher training especially as my own aircraft is a Pitts Special S-1S that is not known for its forgiving behaviour on landing and takeoff. The answer was James Peplow of Aircraft Differences Training who, amongst other things, does tailwheel conversions in his Piper Super Cub from Gloucestershire Airport, or Staverton. However in this case I was going to fly with him from his home strip just North of Ledbury in Worcestershire, usually known as Bosbury International.



Piper Super Cub outside the hangar

It was a drive into the countryside to get there, just to the West of the Malvern Hills, even the A roads were winding but then I got onto minor B roads and eventually narrow country lanes to reach this farm strip. Walking down the hill past the farm buildings James was waiting for me with his Super Cub sitting outside the hangar that was at the bottom of the slope. The strip was lower than the farm buildings and to their left as I looked up the slope that was really noticeable given my usual flying is done from the flat expanse of Staverton. Also it was surrounded by tree lines, surprisingly these were also at the end of the strip leaving only a small gap after the threshold. Listening to the Staverton ATIS we set their QNH and were at around 400 feet.

As I was familiar with the aircraft there was little briefing required on it, the thing to know was how to get into it past the wing struts. I favour standing on the tyre and sliding my backside into the front seat and this reminded me of the height and width

of the tyres, they are clearly intended for rough surface operation. We started up and after some time to allow the engine to warm we taxied up to the top of the strip for power and pre-takeoff checks. Although the wind was from the South West we were going to take off downhill towards the East with one stage of flap set. Accelerating quickly down the slope the aircraft was cleanly off and flying at just above an indicated 50 mph. I was expecting to hold it down and accelerate but because of the rising ground beyond the strip James prompted me to start a turn to the left and we passed between the hangar and the trees at the end of the strip. All the time we were climbing and accelerating so that after raising the flap a few hundred feet up we settled into a clean climb at 70 mph turning to the West as we did so. But not for long, as this was to be a short transit we levelled out at around 1800 feet. We passed from Worcestershire into Herefordshire flying over the green fields and farms and then over the South of Hereford city with the River Wye winding around some industrial estates. We picked up the railway line heading South West, I presume towards Abergavenny, and flew on with Madley with its satellite dishes between the two danger areas off to our right.

Before the southern danger area we came to our first farm strip and that was exactly what it was, a narrow strip mown in a Southerly direction across a field of longer grass and ending at another field that contained large round hay bales wrapped in plastic. We turned onto a left downwind at an estimated 1000 feet and did our checks that were short given the fixed gear and gravity feed of fuel from the wing tanks. At the end of downwind we selected full flap and reduced power to begin a descent at just over 60 mph. There was a house on the edge of a plant nursery that should not be overflown so we flew an angled base towards the strip aiming to turn final just before a large solitary tree in the preceding field that was only slightly offset to the right of the final track. I was controlling descent rate with power to arrive at the start of the strip a few feet up and begin the round out. As we entered the flare with power off we settled into the 3 point attitude as normal but this was followed by an unexpected thump as we reached the grass. I believe we touched down onto a rising piece of ground so then jumped back into the air before settling again. The ground was very uneven but the bungee suspension and particularly those large tyres soaked up the bumps and we came to a stop without needing brakes. We turned around, cleaned up the flaps and backtracked the strip, lined up, gave full power and launched ourselves down this uneven strip. But this was only for a short while as soon we were back in the air and climbing away, turning back to the East to take us South of Hereford again. I was disappointed with the bounce on landing but overall was very pleased piloting a Super Cub

into a farm strip, the aircraft was in its natural element there. We headed East almost back to Ledbury and James pointed out a strip East- West on our left hand side so we were perfectly positioned for downwind left hand. Again we selected full flaps at the end of downwind and commenced our descent on the base leg. This time a row of trees diagonally across the final track meant we turned early to parallel them before lining up with the strip in a Westerly direction. The strip has trees to the South and West with a mown taxiway leading off I presume to the house but it was hidden from me. What I did notice was that the aircraft was dropping, probably due to a curl over or shielding from the trees given the wind direction, and a sustained power increase was required to stop the descent. This meant we arrived at the threshold with too much power and a little fast. James was prepared for this and at his instruction I just pointed the nose at the runway and then in the flare the speed just bled away and we landed smoothly onto the well kept grass. I felt I was landing on someone's lawn, the grass was cut short and rolled flat with a sprinkling of white daisies. I had a little time to admire the view because we taxied back to the mown turning circle and changed tanks with a power check before lining up again. It was a perfect flying picture with a fine aircraft on an immaculate grass strip. After this idyllic moment we took off and with a left hand turn out we were back downwind again. Forewarned this time I kept on more power on final and rode through the sink without problem, again pointing the nose at the threshold to complete a smooth landing. No hanging around this time we took off again and climbed out to the right heading North East back towards the challenge of Bosbury International.



Looking up the strip with the farm buildings

We would be landing in the opposite direction to our takeoff, this time uphill and into wind and the circuit was right hand so we positioned to the North of the strip. At circuit height I lost sight of the runway as it was below the farm buildings, and that was disconcerting, heading for a runway I knew was there but I could not see.

The downwind leg ended at a pond that feeds a small river heading off to the South, this river marks the base leg with rising ground off to the left as we descended, again with full flap already selected. Looking to the right for the runway all I could see was trees but the aiming point ahead was a bare, dead tree on the rising ground off the end of the strip. Whilst watching this 'middle marker' James told me to look again towards the right and there I could see the strip appearing as the trees ended and the hangar and farm buildings came into view. Without hesitation we turned onto final and the wisdom of already being configured for landing was apparent. There was little time, enough to line up with the strip, then we crossed the threshold and entered the flare as the ground came up to meet us. The incline meant we came to a halt quickly and before we lost momentum we turned around and headed back to the concrete pad outside the hangar to shutdown before putting the aircraft back into the hangar and saying hello to James' dog who came out to meet us.

This had been an enjoyable flight with some beautiful countryside to enjoy and some challenging strips to refresh my tailwheel and farm strip skills. The Super Cub is the perfect aircraft for the job and James has a wealth of experience as an instructor. He prompted me when I could use the advice but generally let me fly the aircraft and make my own decisions, an excellent learning experience.



Back at the hangar



Should you wish to try some tailwheel or farm strip flying James Peplow can be contacted on 07855 409512 and www.AircraftDifferencesTraining.co.uk



Rally happening this weekend.

Please use the link on the first page of this newsletter to ensure you are fully up to date with the new procedures this year.

Let's make this the best rally yet!

And

.... how about supporting the Cornwall Strut the following weekend.



LAA 75th PHOTOSHOOT

Many thanks to David Millin for coordinating the photoshoot to commemorate the 75 Years of the LAA (PFA/ULA). Various LAA members gathered at Dunkeswell airfield on a murky Saturday in August and were very well organised into position to represent the numbers 7 and 5—a tricky task as fewer aircraft than expected had arrived due to the conditions. The final result will be seen in a future edition of Light Aviation but here are couple of shots taken on the ground by Sophia Smith.

