

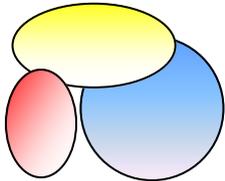


Brissle Strutter

Newsletter of the LAA Bristol Strut

bristolstrut.uk

March 2020



Inside this issue:

Next Meeting — Sharpen up your RT

This month our meeting will be the pertinent to us all and is to be held on **Tuesday 3rd March** in our usual Room 4 at BAWA starting at 7.30.

The speaker will be David Chambers who says:

Time for some de-rusting prior to the start of another flying season. This month's focus provides a quick refresher on R/T, not just the words to use but what they mean.

What to say if you can't comply or want something different?

Are you clear on the difference between Air/Ground, FISO and full ATC?

David will takes you on a tour of the different levels of R/T interactions from unmanned grass strips to regional airports. Check your own understanding and walk away confident to request that next zone transit or self-announced arrival.

There is a bar on the premises and directions to BAWA can be found on our website: bristolstrut.uk where you can also find out more about us and read the archive of our newsletters going back many years.

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Forthcoming Meetings:

28th March—skittles evening

7th April—Aerial sight seeing in OZ with Angus and Fiona Macaskill

5th May—"Bristol Aeroplane Co in WW2"- Chris Bigg

2 June—visit to Rolls-Royce Heritage Trust (Limited numbers)

Last Month's Meeting

We had a good turnout of local pilots for our GASCo Safety Evening.

Michael Benson presented this year's theme of "Perception vs Reality", and quickly demonstrated that the gap between them existed even for experienced pilots. He thoughtfully covered such topics as human factors/pilot attitudes, threat and error management, loss of control (the highest threat), airspace incursion and mid-air collision.

Attendees were rewarded with a stamp in their logbooks and a GASCo water bottle.

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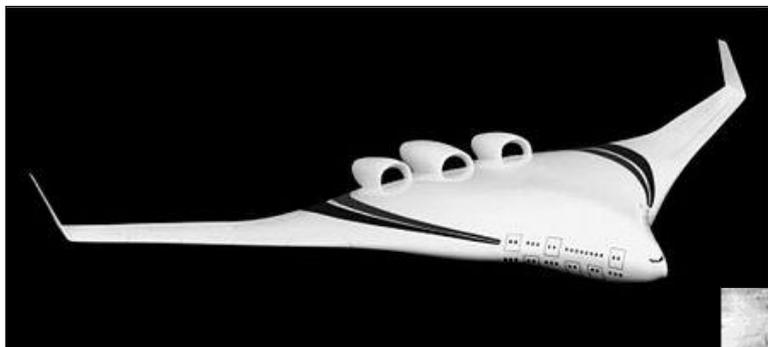
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Picture Quiz

We had one reader who was (sort of) caught out last month, they understandably thought it was a Bebe/D9 but was aware that it could be incorrect –only just—very close!

Trevor says: Last month's picture is a Falconar F-9, a variant of the Jodel D9 (with a little more cockpit space, I understand), currently based at Garston Farm.



For this month I thought it would be interesting to compare current aircraft design interests with the past - it could be the first of a series! Research on the internet is allowed.

BWB (blended wing body) designs are attracting interest at the moment because of the advantages

of allowing the entire craft to generate lift and thus reducing the size and drag of the wings. Above is a computer-generated image of the Boeing X-48.



Go back 70 years and someone was already thinking along these lines. Here is his 1945 design:

More of a lifting fuselage than a BWB.

But what is the aircraft and who was the designer?

Suggestions to the editor please—you won't be named and shamed if you get it wrong, but it is interesting to see other possible answers to the question.

Only correct answers will be named and congratulated!

Kemble CAS(T) trial

While this trial has already taken place, it is worth noting should this revised procedure be used in future:

<https://mailchi.mp/caa/kemble-cast-airspace-trial-22-february-2020?e=3edf2eff83>

SKITTLES EVENING, Saturday 28 March, 19:00, BAWA

We have held occasional Skittles matches against the Bristol Aero Club - unfortunately, all of which we have lost! Now is the chance to reverse our fortunes. We have been looking for a suitable venue, for so long that BAWA have had time to build one!

We have the alley for the evening - a more salubrious venue than any we have used in the past. And there will be a buffet supper to go with it. £5 per head, partners welcomed. Please let Trevor know at Chairman@bristolstrut.uk by 18 March that you plan to attend so that we can arrange sufficient catering.

And please practice beforehand!



LAA COURSES

All the courses get booked up very quickly so do check the LAA website: <http://www.lightaircraftassociation.co.uk/Courses/courses.html> regularly if you are interested in attending any of them. This newsletter only comes out monthly and often it's too late as by then they are fully booked.

CAA UPDATES

The CAA has renewed a couple of UK-specific permissions and authorisations within SERA relating to **VFR day and night** which were due to expire on 25 March. The renewals are valid until revoked.

<http://publicapps.caa.co.uk/docs/33/1341.pdf>

<http://publicapps.caa.co.uk/docs/33/1342.pdf>

Let's hope the permission relating to flying EASA aircraft on a Pilot Medical Declaration, due to expire on 8 April, will also be renewed shortly!

Unfortunately **ORS4 General Exemption No. 1312** is not being renewed, so from 26 March full SERA rules apply to flight in Class D, ie for Day VMC it will no longer be "*Clear of cloud and surface in sight*", but **separation from cloud of 1500m horizontally, 1000ft vertically, and 6km visibility**. See http://publicapps.caa.co.uk/modalapplication.aspx?catid=1&pagetype=65&appid=11&mode=detail&id=9363&mc_cid=6d2a6f5550&mc_eid=3edf2eff83

There is of course the option of requesting a SVFR clearance.

CAA Skywise has offered a guide to **avoiding infringements of Farnborough controlled airspace**: <https://airspace.safety.com/updates/> Read it and weep! There was a much simpler way of avoiding such infringements but unfortunately the CAA did not accept that.

Where to go...

Free/reduced Landings March 2020 in:

Flyer: Bagby, Bourn, Brighton, Fenland, Ince, Sackville.

Light Aviation: Crosland Moor, Elstree (reduced to £10.00 – Monday to Friday only) Haverfordwest (reduced to £10.00) , Lydd free with 35 litres of fuel pickup

And for **April:**

Flyer: Bourne Park, Brimpton, Chiltern Park, Shipdham (weekends/Bank Holidays), Sittles, Sutton Bank

Bristol AERO TALKS

On **Friday February 28th** *Group Captain (ret) Jock Heron OBE* will describe the conception of the **Hawker P1127**, its evolution into the Kestrel, the birth and operational use of the Harrier family and finally its premature retirement

The talks will be held, as usual, at BAWA and will normally be organised at 7:15 pm on a Friday evening. There will be no charge for entry to these talks. However, as these talks are being run independently, we will ask for a voluntary contribution of one pound per person to cover the room rental and associated costs. In the event there is an accrued surplus at the end of the season of talks it will be

AEROEXPO UK

Early Bird Tickets available online NOW!

https://www.aeroexpo.co.uk/tickets/?utm_source=AeroExpo+UK&utm_campaign=f2633b03d0-AeroExpo+UK+Ticketing+13+02+2020&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_e3200fa98a-f2633b03d

Buy your tickets online and receive discounted entry to AeroExpo UK at Wycombe Air Park, 11 - 13 June 2020

Continuing Chapter 11 of Fournier's autobiography. We left him last month having arrived in America but running out of height, speed and luck, all at the same time. He then decided that he would once again cross the North Atlantic, but this time in the opposite direction. Translation from French by Graham Clark

CHAPTER 11 OF ADVENTURES AND MEN PART 2.

Though the American press and television gave huge coverage to the exploits of Mira Slovak – recognised as exceptional in spite of his tragic arrival, both for the pilot and the aircraft – in May 1968 French newspapers had other things to report than this fabulous story. The French were letting off steam and a disoriented society was looking for a new way forward, and this was much more important than this extraordinary flight.

A year passed and the surprise was total when Mira Slovak landed before our very eyes at Le Bourget Airport right in the middle of the June 1969 Paris Air Show. Both Mira Slovak and his RF-4 were repaired and back on form. He had quietly begun to fly from New York To London, and had just crossed the North Atlantic in two stages via Iceland, repeating the most difficult part of the flight. We were both astounded and full of admiration.

He was asked how he had managed to carry so much fuel. Smilingly, he showed me how he had removed the skin and ribs forward of the main spar up to mid-span, and had replaced them with two large fuel tanks with the same shape as the leading edge profile. Intrigued, I took hold of the wingtip and found that I could flex it up and down without any difficulty. I said to myself, that there can't be any Veritas experts in the USA, or they are seriously in need of new glasses. The original structure of ribs and skin forms a D-box whose task is to add torsional strength to the wing, but his modification considerably reduced the strength. But this didn't seem to bother Mira Slovak, who was in no way concerned. Confident in his guiding star, there he was with us, smiling, happy, and it was a true pleasure for us.

Having completed two epic journeys, his aeroplane was de-rigged in Paris and transported by air cargo to its ultimate destination, the Museum of Flight, Everett, in the State of Washington.

There it hangs** from the ceiling on the main hall, reminding those who view it of two amazing journeys which have gone down the history of aviation; made by one of the smallest aircraft in the world, by a pilot who was perhaps a bit mad, but extraordinary and courageous*.

During those years when the RF-4 was sold to international customers, some of our customers – far from having the professionalism of Mira Slovak – nevertheless distinguished themselves by the 'exploits', but of another order. I did not keep a record of the names of all the pilots during this era, but I have a perfect recollection of their stories, as told me by Alfons Pützer in detail.

The first is of a German pilot who had owned his aircraft for just one month, and who departed from Sportavia after having fitted one of the first radios designed for use in light aircraft. It was the month of September, which was usually pleasant and sunny enough but sometimes showed the onset of the first autumnal fogs. The aircraft was ready about four o'clock in the afternoon, and the customer thought this left him sufficient time to make it home to Bavaria. Alfons thought otherwise, and did everything he could to dissuade the customer, but in vain! Just one hour later a blanket of fog started to form over the land. Emboldened by the availability of a radio set, the pilot put out a first call, but heard no answer. A little later, he succeeded in raising Frankfurt, but seemed not to understand what he was told. Even so, he simply followed his compass heading as the fog descended, gradually obscuring the ground as the sun sunk to the horizon. The weather got worse and not knowing what to do, he continued. A little later, still not having understood the messages he had heard over the radio – which was working perfectly – he realised he had lost all contact with the ground and was now flying over a uniform fog mattress, with the occasional glimpse of a hill or tree. Slowly, night began to fall and he had been flying for three hours. The fuel gauge was indicating empty and even though he thought his track was good, he didn't know where he was. Even so, he continued. What else could he do? He couldn't see the ground. Suddenly, the engine coughed, the prop became visible, rotated a few more times and then stopped. The fuel tank was empty. Slowly and in agonising silence, the aircraft began a steady descent towards the foggy mattress, which did nothing to slow his fall. It got increasingly dark and then all at once enormous fir trees came into view left and right. Before he had taken on board that he was over a forest, a green raft, almost black, opened before him and he was thrust forward into the straps by a violent jolt and arrested amidst an enormous racket, cracking of branches and breaking noises. Then there was nothing other than an immense silence.

Restrained in his seat by his harness, stunned and with shoulders bruised, there he was, immobilised in his broken RF-4, stuck at the top of a huge fir tree. Night fell on the forest but the sky was clear, with the moon a faint lantern illuminating his sad destiny. But he was not afraid, a miracle! He undid the harness, opened the canopy, climbed out of the cockpit and proceeded to climb down the tree branches. His clothes were torn but he was uninjured so he then walked for about two hours until – another miracle – he saw the lights of a hamlet. He knocked on the door of a house, which was opened to him and asked to use the telephone. And whom did he call? His wife, who without doubt, was dying of fear wouldn't you think? But no! He called Alfons who was asleep, to order another RF-4! It was midnight!

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*This flight was conducted at an engine cruise setting of 3,200 rpm, i.e. 27.5 hp at a speed of 165-170 km/h. Fuel consumption average 9.4 litres/hr.

**Translator's Note: At the time of writing (July 2013) RF-4 N 1700 is undergoing restoration

The second story is about a doctor from Frankfurt who arrived at the Sportavia factory to order an RF-4. It was summer, and Alfons was wearing a short-sleeved shirt. While he was filling out the purchase contract, this curious doctor took the kit from his medical case and proceeded to measure Alfons' blood pressure saying, "I want to be sure you are in perfect condition to fill out all details of the contract."

This same curious doctor was back three weeks later to take possession of his new aeroplane, which he had asked to be equipped with a radio. But on the evening of his flight home he was unable to find his own private airfield. Completely lost and with night falling, he found himself without lights over Frankfurt Airport, in the middle of long-range commercial traffic. But before the tower could give him any instructions, he announced to the frightened controllers that he had already landed. A thundering voice told him that he would be intercepted by a Follow Me truck and that he must, repeat must, follow it. He followed it, but thinking that this taxi trip was taking too long and seeing a large illuminated hangar over there to the left, without hesitation he left the taxiway and stopped his aeroplane near a group of flabbergasted airport workers. Today, such breaches of air law would undoubtedly be followed by the loss of licence, but back in 1969, the authorities still showed a modicum of pity on errant airmen. He got off with a serious warning and a few cases of champagne that evening for the hangar crew.

But it was not just German pilots who found themselves in breach of air law. In France, even my friend Etienne d'Halluin was a regular. He used to fly rather like a homing pigeon and his little trip to Greece was not the sole example. I remember his flight to Portugal to take part in the Fatima pilgrimage when he was caught up in bad weather over the Pyrenees. Following his guiding star, he wound his way through the valleys and in spite of everything managed to cross the mountains. On arrival in Portugal, over to the right he saw a big aerodrome, which happened to be a big NATO military airfield, strictly forbidden to civil aircraft. So what? The weather was awful, and the visibility lousy, he was in a hurry, and Etienne had a predilection for bending the rules. So he did not hesitate for a moment, but landed. Adopting a naïve air – a skill of which he had total command – he explained he had become lost in the bad weather and had no other choice than to land. Because he spoke no Portuguese, he constantly repeated the word 'Fatima', and it produced miraculous results. They put him on a military bus that enabled him to join the pilgrimage from which he returned two days later. He found his RF-4 in remarkable condition; the military had given it a thorough clean and filled the fuel tank. They nevertheless indicated quite clearly that although they had all been happy to welcome him, they would be even happier if he never came back. Another true story from the annals of Etienne d'Halluin in Portugal, dated 2 May 1967.

Some time later, he had purchased an RF-5 and set off on another adventure. He came to see me one morning in the office to announce quite simply: "Tomorrow, Nelly and I are going to take the RF-5 to the Canary Islands." This statement left me rather puzzled because, although I knew that on account of his genes Etienne had been born with a GPS, I was rather more worried about his ability to cope with the bureaucracy regulating aerodromes and the sky. Not doubting that he would encounter some issues of this kind I flagged up the problems. The huge fright he had got the previous winter, when he found himself inside an ice-packed cloud over the Alps, seemed to have done nothing to improve his airmanship.

On the morning of 4 April 1971 he took off towards the south with his wife and baggage. After several tourist stopovers at Biarritz, Saragossa, Carthage, Malaga, Tangiers and Casablanca, he arrived at Agadir on 9 April. From here, he decided to head for Cap Juby, which had once been a refuelling base for French airmail flights, a simple fishing village which the Moroccans have since renamed Tarfaia. This is the point of departure for the shortest over water flight to the Canaries. Believing that he might be short on fuel, he obtained a jerrycan with 20 litres which he placed on the floor and his wife stoically retained this between her knees during the flight; an enormous risk in an accident.

He landed not without problems at Cap Juby after 2 hr 40 min flying, where Etienne found the airfield abandoned. The old runway, or what remained of it, was covered in sand and was used more by the dromedaries than aircraft. In reality, donkeys had grazed an area about 20 degrees off to the left, about 300 metres further down the runway.

Plainly, the take-off would not be easy, but Etienne had a plan. Having transferred fuel from the jerrycan into the tanks, he prepared his departure. This was to be spectacular, precise and decisive. After an initial take-off run greatly slowed by the sand, the aircraft had still not taken off. So on reaching a speed of 40 km/h when the aircraft was horizontal and in perfect equilibrium on the single main wheel and just at the point where the runway curves, Etienne dropped the left wing to continue his take-off run along the area grazed by the donkeys. A hundred metres further on, the RF-5 was airborne. Success!

One problem had been mastered, but another awaited: over the sea, navigation became approximate. Visibility was poor and the horizon uncertain. However, ahead he could see two large clouds and one of these concealed the islands, but which one? However, Etienne had access to supernatural navigational techniques, which no doubt synchronise perfectly with those of providence. Out of his flying overalls he fetched a coin: head or tails? And it worked! A few minutes later a little white triangle hove into view, the snow-covered summit of Mount Teide, the highest point (3,750 m) in Tenerife. A short while later, the RF-5 and crew flew over the rocky island of Fuerteventura from which they reached Lanzarote, the nearest aerodrome, with joyful hearts. Over the following days, after visits around Tenerife and Las Palmas, they began their return via El Aioun and from there direct to Agadir in 3 hr 30 minutes. On return to Nitray I checked over the aeroplane and heard an unusual sound from the engine, which had continued to function with sand picked up in the Spanish Sahara!

As the years went by, we heard other similar stories from around the world, and new customers joined 'the family', like an English pilot who arrived one day at the Sportavia factory. His name was Brian Stevens, who had served in the Royal Air Force. His plan was to set up a flying school at the famous airfield of Biggin Hill and use our aeroplanes. He ordered two RF-4s and two RF-5s. He was an excellent airman and found we had the perfect aircraft to turn out good pilots; we hoped to acquire many customers with the same objective. He collected his four aeroplanes two months later and we quickly heard good things about his flying school, which was doing well. He came to see us from time to time, sometimes at the German factory, sometimes at Paris or Nitray.

One day, he told us there had been a serious accident: two aircraft were on the runway, ready for take-off. One was an RF-5 with Brian Stevens and a student pilot in the front, and just behind was an RF-4 with another student pilot, a giant of a man, who had been instructed to follow in formation.

One nautical mile out over the English Channel, with a beautiful clear sky, Brian Stevens instructed his students to execute a 180° turn and return to base. The two aircraft banked left almost vertically, and were very close to each other; too close, because the RF-4 pilot discovered that he was right under the RF-5 and they collided. The noise was terrible. The RF-5 propeller cut into the RF-4 fuselage from which the motor detached and fell away into the sea. Under this shock, the engineless RF-4 and pilot inverted and spun into the sea 200 metres away. The RF-5 with no propeller blades was vibrating horribly. The student pilot was terrified but Brian Stevens kept his cool. He cut the master switch and put out a Mayday call. Now in gliding flight, he landed the RF-5 on the water as close as possible to the RF-4. He only had one thing in mind: to find the body of the unfortunate pilot. Lying on the wing, he rowed with his hands as best he could and slowly approached and was just a few metres from the RF-4. Suddenly, he was amazed: there was his student pilot in the water, alive and swimming in spite of a badly injured leg, almost cut off.

The helicopter soon arrived and picked them up. The two aircraft were recovered and five months later I received an invitation to go to the flying school annual party. So I went to London and when the participants arrived I saw 'the giant' approaching us using a stick, slightly trailing his left leg. With a large smile, offered me his hand and crushed my fingers, saying "Good Aircraft! Good Aircraft".

"Yes", I replied, "the RF-4 is perhaps a good aircraft, as you say. But don't expect too much of it. Generally, a miracle like that only happens once!"

Although it is true that miracles of the same kind rarely happen twice, sometimes they nevertheless make the news again, which was so for Brian Stevens.

On another occasion he had just sent off a student pilot for his first solo in an RF-5. The take-off, circuit and landing, were all perfect. Brian signalled the student to do it again. As the aircraft was gathering speed, it suddenly swung to one side and took off at an angle of about 30 degrees from the runway centreline, heading towards a little copse on the edge of the aerodrome. Dumbfounded, Brian and other onlookers watched as the aircraft scraped the tops of the trees, scattering leaves and unusual objects everywhere, then nothing! The fire truck, first aid crew and the whole team headed for the site. Under the trees they found some branches, bits of plywood and pieces of fabric, but of the aircraft itself there was no sign. It had completely disappeared and everybody thought it must have crashed behind the copse into a little valley. They hurried there but found nothing, and certainly no aeroplane. A few minutes later, while everyone was asking themselves what could have happened, they suddenly heard the purr of an engine. About 200 metres overhead there appeared a strange-looking RF-5, slipping through the sky. Although the wings looked to be intact, the tailplane had been reduced to half-size. On the right, only the fixed section had survived; the elevator had completely gone. On the left it was the other way round: the fixed section was tattered, while only the spar supported the elevator. As for the trim tab* it was rotating at the end of its control cable like a windmill.

When the aircraft had landed, which it did without further problem, they rushed over to ask the pilot what had happened. With typical British understatement he said: "something is not quite right with the elevator." There was a huge burst of laughter and the adventure, which by any normal logic should have ended sadly, was concluded by a huge celebration in the bar. The next day, a report was carried in one of the big London dailies, which concluded with the journalist's remark: "These French, are always the same! Every time we buy something off them, there is either too much or not enough. In this instance we have proof that the tailplane is too big!"

Brian Stevens, who one day flew me home from the Hannover Air Show to Nitrav in France, was an interesting chap. He had no fear of long-distance flights and proved it one day by ferrying an RF-5 from Bonn to Kenya. The new owner was an Englishman resident in Kenya and I subsequently learned that he later made the return trip between Kenya and London several times. As for Brian Stevens, he continued his business for a number of years, but when the UK was hit by a major recession, he found life there unacceptable. He sold up, bought a boat and left with his family to sail around the world. He now lives in South Africa.

During those years we had already sold 25 aircraft to Finland. One of our agents, Seppo Ratenen, came to see me a number of times. He was a pleasant chap and owned an RF-4 in which, he told me one day, he used to go fishing. Seeing my curious face, he explained that during the depths of winter he would take off in the RF-4 and land on a frozen lake. There, after an interminable slide-landing, he would secure the aeroplane. Then he would get a pickaxe and some fishing lines from his bag and walk away from the aeroplane to cut a hole in the ice. He would throw in the bait and after a short time, would haul out about ten kilos of fish.

He told me several stories about Finnish pilots. One had rolled off the end of a landing strip that, curiously enough, was located between two arms of the River Kumijoki. In other words, if you landed short or too long, you ended up in the water. Such was the fate of a young pilot who bounced his RF-4 several times and ended up floating in the river, totally amazed to find that it did not sink. Thanks to its residual speed, the aircraft skimmed along the water just like a boat and beached on the opposite river bank a few hundred metres further on. The pilot got no more than a fright. As for the aeroplane, it was intact and removed to the airstrip. They changed the fuel and oil and the next day, out it flew.

This was the first time an RF-4 had landed up in the water and was found to float. If Mira Slovak had known that, no doubt he would not have been so worried about the possibility of a splashdown in the North Atlantic during his audacious crossing.

*Footnote Page 201

The trim tab is a small control surface attached to the elevator. It reduces the effort needed by the pilot when operating the elevator.