

So, for Turweston, Hinton and everything else North of Finmere the UKBA Central Region contact details are as follows: GAR's - to ncu@hmrc.gsi.gov.uk & additional copies if possible to:

LutonSPOCTargetsandAlerts@Homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk Any other GA related correspondence to; LutonSPOCTargetsandAlerts@Homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk.

General Queries: 01582 878716 and anything out of hours, unusual or out of the ordinary please call the National GA Intel Team's 24hr On-Call number: 07017 400146."

They also included a GAR form, which Colin or I can supply a copy of if required.

Flying Show - NEC

A very successful event held at the NEC over the weekend of the 26 - 27th November. The BMAA CEO said: "The Flying Show was a great success with an increase in visitor numbers in a difficult economic climate. Member associations have reported higher than normal new memberships taken up at the show. Several aircraft manufacturers went home with orders for aircraft and at least one display aircraft was sold on the day."

The provisional dates for next year are the 1st and 2nd December at the NEC.



Meetings are held on the 2nd Wednesday of each month at the Foxcombe Lodge Hotel, Boars Hill, Oxford, OX1 5DP. Tel: 01865 326326; www.foxcombelodge.com
LAA Oxford Branch website: www.laaoxford.co.uk; LAA www.lightaircraftassociation.co.uk

Olympic Airspace

It is important that you keep up to date with the latest information about the Olympic Airspace restrictions and to do so only requires that you view the ASI website at: <http://olympics.airspacesafety.com/downloads> where the download will provide you with a PowerPoint presentation to self brief. Note that the GPS companies will all be updating their charts with the Olympic Restrictions data and members should ensure they update their kit.

Places to go & things to do 2012

LAA Oxford Branch meetings for 2012:-
11th January, 8th February, 14th March, 11th April, 9th May, 13th June, 11th July, 8th August, 12th September, 10th October, 14th November and the 12th December.

Ideas for speakers to the committee ASAP!

21st Jan - VAC Snowball Rally, Sywell
28th Jan - LAA National Council Meeting
12th Feb - VAC Valentine Rally, Old Sarum
10th Mar - VAC Annual Dinner
17th Mar - HAA Flying Forum, Old Warden
25th Mar - VAC Spring Rally, Turweston
14th Apr - VAC Daffodil Rally, Fenland

LAA Educational Trust Dates

To ensure you keep up to date with the courses available, monitor the website at: http://www.lightaircraftassociation.co.uk/2011/Courses/courses_2011.html

Wooden Aircraft Structures are fully booked but put your name down for the next one run by our friend Dudley Pattison.

Electrics course - 14th January 2012
Aluminium - 18th & 19th February 2012
Avionics - 10th Dec & 18th Feb
Propellers - 14th January 2012
Jabiru engines - 3rd Dec & 28th Jan

Committee

Chairman - Pete Smoothy
Vice Chairman - Rob Stobo
Secretary - Barbara Rose
Barbara.Rose1@hotmail.co.uk
Treasurer - David Brooks
Evening Events - John Bean
Social Events - Colin Hughes
Safety Officer, NC Rep, Newsletter editor & web moderator - John Broad
john.broad85@talktalk.net



Oxford



Newsletter December 2011



November meeting report

Peter Smoothy

Pete started by thanking the strut for inviting him to speak about his travels! As he said, he has been ducking and diving to avoid doing this for ages but couldn't get out of it any more.

The title of the talk was called 'The Highs and Lows of 2,500 hours of Flying' but Pete pointed out that he has a total of some 40 years in all forms of aviation.

As with most aviators, Pete began by making model aircraft and his first was a Super 60, radio controlled with single channel McGregor gear. Over time the equipment and range of machines expanded with Pete dabbling in competition aerobatics. His comment that the skill of the pilot being judged by someone else's opinion with the 'halo' effect for some made him turn away from this form of competition. To help pay for the rebuilds of the damaged aircraft he started writing articles for a magazine. The sport of Pylon Racing appealed to him as this was against a stopwatch and not someone's opinion. With radio controlled aircraft flying four at a time round four pylons with speeds of around 130 mph, this proved to be very exciting. The aircraft were hand launched and used a spotter to determine when the aircraft had passed the pylon to allow for the turn. Pete's spotter was a man called Sid King, who had a

stammer - but he forgot the stammer whilst the events ran. Competitions took place across Europe and Pete became quite good at it. Sponsorship for the aircraft, engines and electronics helped but the travel costs were still high. He then wrote articles for a French magazine and later was sponsored by BT with their logos on his aircraft. Having succeeded in this sport, Pete needed another challenge and took up full size flying. He obtained his PPL with an outfit based at Cranfield called the Osprey Flying Club and Pete said he dare not repeat any of the details of the operation! A trip to Larbruck for a fly in with Dudley Pattison in his Piper Cub introduced him to the fun of touring. Pete realised he should have an aircraft to go with his PPL and the opportunity came to purchase G-AZFF from John Newbold at Enstone. With only 60 hours on a Cessna 152, a tail dragger conversion with John took place and Pete became the new owner in October 1986. The need for a hangar resulted in the rebuild of the front of a "shed" at Finmere rented from Bill Knapton. Even though they used reclaimed materials, they obviously did a good job as it is still standing. They even managed to remove the old paint and respray the aircraft in that hangar but, as Pete pointed out, it was not easy. Pete reckoned this was a highlight of the Oxford Strut as many trips to Europe were made by Strut members. It proved you don't

need 180 hp and 130 knots to go touring. Pete had 65 hp and a maximum of 80 knots and the strut could have up to six aircraft on a tour in those days!

Pete reckoned this was possibly one of the best times for the VAC when they used Finmere as the fixed base. Both Pete and Ann ran the sales stall at events after setting out the hangar early in the morning as a sort of cafe. Pru Knapton and the ladies used to make cakes and sell teas, coffee etc. VAC Members would drive to these events if the weather was bad.

Although Pete said most of his aviation career was good, there had been some downsides as well. A photograph of his friend Andy Cameron coming in high, fast and long to land, which resulted in a crash but luckily, Andy was OK. The aircraft was a mess though. The second incident at Badminton was a combined landing and taxiing issue resulting in Dudley Pattison being badly injured, but mostly recovered today. The last incident occurred whilst en-route to Copenhagen in 1983 when Rob Stobo's Auster had a piston break off the conrod just after takeoff from Tonder. He pulled off a superb forced landing back on the airfield from the downwind position. Organising the recovery of the aircraft cost Rob around £1500 and took more than a week!

One of the highlights of owning the aircraft was to be able to celebrate his 40th wedding anniversary by taking Ann to Le Touquet for lunch. The aircraft did have limitations of range though and when Chris Parker in 1989 told Pete of a nice Jodel D120 for sale at Stoke Bruern they went to have a look. It turned out not to be as good as first thought but G-BMID could be made



good. With the wing and engine removed the fuselage was transported back to Pete's garage for refurbishment. After a repair of the woodwork, a rebuilt dash panel and a

repaint, the aircraft was assembled back at Finmere. Working on the aircraft in the snow and minus 10 made Pete determined to have a warm, heated hangar in future! Many interesting journeys were made with the aircraft and the PFA Oxford members. Finmere was threatened with a new bypass and a friend, Ken Jarman offered to share his hangar at Hinton and the aircraft was relocated. By 1998 they agreed to sell their aircraft and purchased G-BSYU from a relative of the designer of the Desoutter Monoplane, an example of which is at Old Warden.



Pete has used this Robin Regent DR400 for many trips across Europe. He said one of his most memorable was amongst the first when they travelled up to the North Cape and the Land of the Midnight Sun. Apart from some murky weather when they set off, the weather turned out to be very good with superb views all the way up the Norwegian coast to land at Hammerfest. They wanted to carry on to Valen, the most northerly airfield in the world. Despite dire warnings the landing proved uneventful. Pete showed a number of photographs taken at midnight, without a flash, showing the eerie nature of the area. On the return they stopped at Copenhagen before crossing back to the UK.

Each year since owning Yankee Uniform, Pete has made a trip with the North Cape or Majorca being the longest. For this year Pete's aviating friend and navigator, Dave said he wanted to go to Transylvania. Romania turned out to be a bit of a challenge with obtaining information being the biggest. The AIP for example said Avgas was available at many airfields whereas there is no Avgas available at any of the airfields!

The planned route took them to Luxembourg, Prague and Budapest and to a place called Brasov, just down the road from the castle of the legendary Dracula! With no Avgas though the route had to go to Cluj Napoca and Debrecen in Hungary first to get fuel and then by car to the castle.



The return trip was planned via Germany to make it a good holiday; if the weather behaved. Although the trip to Budapest and on to Cluj wasn't too bad and the car journey didn't matter, getting back proved more interesting. They got back to Budapest in a heavy rainstorm and Pete sent Ann ahead by Easyjet, leaving Dave Sentence and Pete to fly when possible. A short hop to Brno but it took a further three days for the weather to clear enough to continue. When it did clear, they had a following wind and a stop at Eglesbach for lunch before returning to the UK.

Pete commented that the trip was still very enjoyable with lots of interesting sites and friendly people. Out of all the trips, this was the only one where they had been delayed in returning to the UK.

Pete normally thanks the speaker but through the medium of this newsletter I can pass on the thanks from all the Oxford members for a very interesting and entertaining evening; many thanks Pete.

National Council Meeting

19th November 2011

A very constructive meeting with the new NC chairman, Graham Newby keeping the meeting to order. A number of actions are to be taken.

Roger Hopkinson had recently returned from a trip to the USA where he evaluated the ways of the EAA to learn lessons for the

LAA. A task group is to be established to make recommendations to the NC regarding governance based on the EAA experience for the next NC meeting. All NC members and Clubs have been asked to bring forward ideas and initiatives for NC to develop and promote. A possible new and one off discounted membership fee of something like £20 is likely to be made to non members of clubs as an enticement to get them to join. There is a navigation competition planned for 2012 in conjunction with GAPAN and NATS to be coordinated by Jon Cooke. Anyone willing to assist in the planning or running of this please contact Harry Hopkins or Stewart Jackson.

The Club Charter documents are continually being reviewed to ensure they are as clear as possible; this work is planned to be completed by February 2012.

Biennial Reviews can be completed with the LAA PCS Coaches free of charge from January 2012. Note that this includes members operating C of A types of aircraft in their own aircraft.

The issue of the carriage of third party passengers - typically the Young Aviators - is planned to be resolved by May 2012.

Good news on the Rally this year as a surplus of around £12.5k is in the coffers. The IT project continues with the work to include all the Engineering material on the new web site. I recommend you view the website on a regular basis as many more items of news and general interest are being added to entertain and inform the members.

See the events list for the date of the next NC meeting. Please pass any comments to me before then. Note that the minutes can be viewed on the members section of the website.

UK Border Agency - more information

Further to the information in last month's newsletter, Colin Hughes has received the following details for those airfields to the north:

"Sorry to take so long getting back to you, but it took quite a while to get the appropriate office to decide what & where they wanted everything to go.