

## Airport closures

**Plymouth** - Sutton Harbour Holdings plc announced that it intends to cease the operation of Plymouth City Airport by the end of 2011. The airport has been loss making for some time and there is no prospect of trade improving in the near future. They have 143 years to run on a peppercorn lease with Plymouth City Council.

**Bristol Filton** - Having been in constant use since 1911, the airfield is to close in 2012. So many important aspects of aviation have taken place at this site over the years; the Bristol Brabazon airliner and of course Concorde. Efforts to make it into a commercial airport lost out to nearby Bristol-Lulsgate and Filton has steadily declined. Airbus lost out when BAe sold much of the land to the north side. Bae closed it at weekends from August 2010, forcing the private owners away.

## Biggles BE2c Flies again

There was a grand roll out of the newly restored Biggles BE2c Biplane at Sywell on the 31st May. This aircraft was constructed by David Boddington for a film called "Biggles sweeps the skies" but the film was never completed. The aircraft ended up with a flying circus in the USA and crashed near Oshkosh in 1977. Matthew Boddington, David's son, along with Steve Slater purchased and restored the aircraft back to flying condition.



## Photographs

When we have an organised event and some of you take photographs, can you send me a copy to add to the website please?

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](http://www.foxcombelodge.com)  
LAA Oxford Branch website: [www.laaoxford.co.uk](http://www.laaoxford.co.uk); LAA [www.lightaircraftassociation.co.uk](http://www.lightaircraftassociation.co.uk)

## Hectopascal

CAA Information notice IN-2011/43 lets us all know that the measurement of atmospheric pressure from the 17th November 2011 will be the Hectopascal. This replaces the good old millibar that we have all been using so far. The reason is to comply with the ICAO Annex 5 & 3 that details the standard for QNH and QFE to be computed and reported in hectopascals. The millibar is directly equivalent to the hectopascal; no conversion factor is required as the only difference is the nomenclature. This reminds me of an incident many years ago at Wycombe Air Centre when this was first suggested as being changed. Some wag had written on the booking board: "Milli Bar is dead, long live Hecto Pascal"! If you've flown in Ireland you will have heard this on the radio for some time.

## Places to go & things to do

17th to 19th June - Aero-Expo, Sywell

18th June - LAA Party in the Park, Old Warden

26th June - VAC / LAA Vintage home built aircraft Rally at Leicester Airport.

13th July - LAA Oxford Branch BBQ. See Barbara for tickets - £11 per person.

7th August - Devon Strut 10th Lundy Fly-in

10th August - Irv Lee, Fly-on-Track

TBC - Dinner, Oxford Greyhound Track. See Colin Hughes to book (£25 per seat)

2nd, 3rd & 4th September - LAA Rally & LAA AGM, Sywell

11th Sept - Narrow Boat Jolly, See D Brooks to book - £155 for the boat with a max of 10.

18th September - Turweston Wings & Wheels

26 - 27th November - Flying Show, NEC

## Committee

Chairman - Pete Smoothy  
Vice Chairman - Rob Stobo  
Secretary - Barbara Rose  
[Barbara.Rose1@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:Barbara.Rose1@hotmail.co.uk)  
Treasurer - David Brooks  
Evening Events - John Bean  
Social Events - Colin Hughes  
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Light Aircraft Association

# Oxford

# Newsletter June 2011

## May 2011 meeting report

### Enstone Spitfires!

Paul Fowler, from the Enstone Flying Club was introduced by John Been as a "benevolent dictator" who runs a very good club and has some great ideas! John keeps his Europa there as well. Paul, more affectionately known as "Skipper", started by saying he had always been involved in aviation since his first tentative steps off the shed roof with pieces of Corn Flake cardboard strapped to his back! He took up parachuting at the age of 16, joined the parachute regiment at 18, flew the early Rogallo hang gliders and the early micro-lights - when they were really dangerous! He undertook a whole range of different flying from paramotoring, para-gliding and culminating in a PPL about 20 years ago. Since then he has flown aircraft of all types in many countries. About 10 years ago the Mk 26 Spitfire attracted him and he wanted one. With a bit of calculating he realised that there was



no way he could build one or purchase one, but the idea still appealed to him.

A number of things happened to make the idea of constructing 12 Spitfires a reality. Enstone became unlicensed but could still train PPLs, the LAA and Francis Donaldson are extremely helpful. Paul had noticed for many years the enthusiasts who appear and wander round making notes. These

people have a great deal of knowledge and would like to touch the aircraft, but aren't; Paul wishes to break this barrier. Trying to find out how long it would take to construct one of these Spitfires produced any number of answers up to 2000 hours. Data suggests that the average time taken to build an aircraft is 12 years; Paul thought if I can get 12 people to build it, it will only take one year. With more people, the team will be more likely to work together to complete an aircraft. The other aspect is the cost; a 20th share in a Mk26 would be around £12,000, still a lot of money but it is a lot of aeroplane. The engine was going to be an American Chevvy V8 but that is very heavy and so they are planning on using the V6. The plan is to build the aircraft in groups of three and to finish all 12 by 2012. All aircraft will be the same apart from one which will be fitted with hand controls. Those who are to fly the aircraft can be trained at Enstone starting with a Super Cub, then the Chipmunk and finally the Extra to complete at least 25 hours on tail wheel. There is great interest from all round the World on this project with many TV companies being keen on making programmes about it. Paul is keen to get all the families involved, especially when the completed aircraft are at air shows. The idea is to set up a camp around the aircraft with people in period dress and equipment from the era being used. The military vehicle enthusiasts can set up their machines and the public will be invited to be involved. Paul has already been invited to appear at the 2012 RIAT show. The first 12 people are ready and keen and he expects the first aircraft to be completed by September. In answer to a question on the future of Enstone, Paul has been in discussion with the District Council over any possible developments and has been assured that this will not happen. Paul hopes to get all

those operating from the site to work together in future to take the airfield forward as a centre of excellence for engineering and aviation. The airfield is currently owned by five groups and is possibly the last 2nd World War airfield in private hands.

Paul has a great deal of enthusiasm that rubs off on all who meet him and we wish him well in this endeavour. We also thank him for taking the time to explain the project to us all. If you wish to read more on this go to the website at: [http://www.enstoneflyingclub.co.uk/files/s\\_pitfire\\_squadron\\_2\\_doc.pdf](http://www.enstoneflyingclub.co.uk/files/s_pitfire_squadron_2_doc.pdf)

### LAA Oxford BBQ & Fly-in to Enstone - 14th May

Paul Fowler and his wife, Fiona really looked after us all over at Enstone for this fly-in by providing space for the aircraft and, very importantly, some excellent food! The only part we could not arrange was the weather which turned out very windy with gusts up to 26kts and a rather cool temperature of 14.5 C. This didn't stop a Mr Oakley and Mr Clark from flying a Eurostar from Kemble; a shame they didn't

man AA-5B Tiger owned by Mark Stevens. Everyone else decided that the wind was not conducive to flying and arrived by surface transport. A fine gentleman called Hugo did sterling work mowing the grass before we arrived and set up the BBQ and gazebo shelter. Paul was the excellent Chef with some superb burgers and



know the fly-in was on but we made them very welcome anyway. The aircraft that intentionally flew in for the BBQ were: G-CETX, a Pioneer 300 from Brimpton flown by Jerry Ree. G-BKXR, a Druine Turbulent D31A owned by Mr Mervyn Hill and flown from Draycott Farm. G-AYEW, a Jodel DR1050 Ambassadeur flown by John Hope again from Draycot Farm. G-BXTT, a Grum-

sausages. I couldn't help smiling at the explanation John Been gave for the sign alongside the eggs for sale that said 'C Flight'. 'A' Flight is 'Aeroplanes', 'B' Flight is for honey and 'C' Flight is for 'Chickens'. Obvious really I suppose!

Those who didn't make it missed some good food and good company; maybe next year we can get some good weather as well!

### LAA Oxford Bald Eagles BBQ

#### Pete's hangar on Sunday 5th June

After a scorching hot and sunny Saturday, Sunday turned out to be overcast and a bit chilly but the atmosphere in the hangar was warm and cheery! The early arrivals caught Pete vacuuming the hangar carpet after he had moved the aircraft out and set up tables and chairs ready for the hordes to arrive. The story of the BBQ being almost brand new you will have to talk to Pete about but it worked really well with



Dave Brooks at the controls.

Whilst many members of the Oxford Branch enjoyed the day, it was also good to meet up with Paul, Pete's IT expert, Pete's next door neighbours and many of



the Hinton Pilots. It was also very good to meet up with Laura, who had guided the group on the Diamond Light tour some months ago, with her family.

When the weather cleared up a bit, Pete managed to take them for a fly round the local area, which they thought was brilliant.

Pete had also purchased some superb sausages and burgers, which Dave expertly cooked ably assisted by Ann.



Barbara Rose arrived with her daughter Charlotte, husband and the twins who had a great time. Colin Hughes managed to keep them entertained by

banging his head with an aluminium tray; I'm sure the pain will subside soon Colin!

For afters, Barbara had made some superb

cakes and Pete had purchased a couple of huge gateaux! With loads of soft drinks and tea and coffee an excellent time was had by all.

Those feeling they should repay Pete for his generosity can do so by sending a donation to the "Willen House Hospice",



in Milton Keynes. You can learn more about this organisation by looking on the web at: <http://www.willen-hospice.org.uk/>. Donations can be made by various means as shown on the website at: <http://www.willen-hospice.org.uk/Support-Us/Donate/Donations> and don't forget to gitaidd it.

