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Bristol Strutter

Newsletter of the PFA Bristol Strut

April 2007

NEXT MEETING - FRANCIS DONALDSON

At this month's meeting on Thursday 12th April we are pleased to announce that our guest speaker will be Francis Donaldson B.Tech, C. Eng, FRAes.

Francis has been the Chief Engineer for the PFA for sixteen years. If you are building a PFA aircraft then Francis is the man who recommends a Permit to be issued. During his time, he has evaluated over a hundred new types of homebuilt aircraft and has flown an example of virtually all the aircraft approved by the PFA. A big part of his job is to ensure builders get the technical support they need to get off the ground.

We are grateful to Francis for agreeing to meet with us next Thursday, as he has a full diary and his time is precious. After his presentation, there should be limited time for asking questions, but he will be grateful if they could be kept brief and to the point as engineering is such a complex subject. We aim to start prompt at 19:30 and extra chairs have been ordered for the occasion!



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Contact Information

Strut Co-ordinator:

Steve Neale
01454 326745
E-mail:
srneale@yahoo.co.uk

Treasurer/Membership Sec:

Gordon Pritt
01934-622795
e-mail:
gordon.pritt@virgin.net

Newsletter distribution:

Ian & Mary Leader
01275 541572
e-mail:
ian@pfabristol.flyer.co.uk
Editorial address:
7, Cantell Grove
Stockwood, BRISTOL
BS14 8TP



LAST MONTH - CAA SAFETY EVENING

I think it would be fair to say the Bristol CAA meeting was well attended. More than 100 pilots turned up to hear David Cockburn talk about all those things that can turn a pleasant flight into a bad hair day.

His talk was followed by Gavin Turnbull from DAP who talked about his responsibilities for temporary airspace restrictions for events like air shows and Red Arrows displays. It is fair to say we were a little disappointed he was not the man to discuss either the status of Mode S or the CAA's GA review but he was well received anyway.

David signed all log books presented, a significant task after which he mentioned (in passing) that a few pilots may like to check the date of their last BFR. The CAA were again generous in handing out draw prizes including flight guides and charts. Our own draw for a Lockyear's Farm strip guide also appeared to hit the spot for one lucky pilot.

We only do these Safety Evenings once every three years so I'm sure like me, many attending went away a little wiser. Our thanks to David and his team for coming to talk to us at Bristol.

Steve

Following on the engineering theme this month, we thought you may be amused by these gems sent in by Frank Bond, (authors unknown):

Understanding Engineers - Take One

Two engineering students were walking across a university campus when one said, "Where did you get such a great bike?"

The second engineer replied, "Well, I was walking along yesterday, minding my own business, when a beautiful woman rode up on this bike, threw it to the ground, took off all her clothes and said, "Take what you want."

The second engineer nodded approvingly and said, "Good choice; the clothes probably wouldn't have fitted you anyway."



Understanding Engineers - Take Two

To the optimist, the glass is half full.

To the pessimist, the glass is half empty.

To the engineer, the glass is twice as big as it needs to be.



Understanding Engineers - Take Three

A priest, a doctor, and an engineer were waiting one morning for a particularly slow group of golfers. The engineer fumed, "What's with those blokes? We must have been waiting for fifteen minutes!"

The doctor chimed in, "I don't know, but I've never seen such inept golf!"

The priest said, "Here comes the greens keeper. Let's have a word with him." He said, "Hello, George! What's wrong with that group ahead of us? They're rather slow, aren't they?"

The greens keeper replied, "Oh, yes. That's a group of blind fire-fighters. They lost their sight saving our clubhouse from a fire last year, so we always let them play for free anytime."

The group fell silent for a moment. The priest said, "That's so sad. I think I will say a special prayer for them tonight."

The doctor said, "Good idea. I'm going to contact my ophthalmologist colleague and see if there's anything he can do for them."

The engineer said, "Why can't they play at night?"

Understanding Engineers - Take Four

What is the difference between mechanical engineers and civil engineers?

Mechanical engineers build weapons and civil engineers build targets.



Understanding Engineers - Take Five

Normal people believe that if it ain't broke, don't fix it.

Engineers believe that if it ain't broke, it doesn't have enough features yet.

Handley Page Lecture

The Royal Aeronautical Society is pleased to invite you to the following Lecture: *Recollections of a Pioneer- Comments on the Development of Aviation by Igor Sikorsky* Thursday 26th April 2007 presented by Sergei I. Sikorsky

This lecture traces the development of aviation from the legends of prehistoric mankind to the present day. It is also the story of one of the great aviation pioneers of Europe and America, Igor Sikorsky.

The lecture will take place in the Bill Boeing Theatre at No.4 Hamilton Place, London. Commencing at 18:00hrs, refreshments will be served from 17:30hrs.

RSVP to Conference & Events Department (conference@raes.org.uk) or phone Kirstie Eaton on 020 7670 4345

Fuel Contamination Update

(Extract from the PFA website)

PFA's Airworthiness Engineer, Kerry Ashcroft, has researched the reports about the contaminated batch of unleaded fuel that was causing all sorts of problems for car owners a week or two back, and looked into whether it has any impact for the MOGAS operators on the PFA fleet.

It seems we can rest easy. The fault in the fuel was traced to it containing silicone. This was causing the exhaust sensors in automotive engines to give the engine management systems false readings, making the engines run rough, falter and stall. It only appeared to affect vehicles from certain manufacturers.

Unless your engine is fitted with an exhaust sensor (Lambda sensor) then the small amount of silicone concerned is not an issue for normal engine operation. We are not aware of any engines in PFA aircraft which are cleared to use unleaded Mogas and are fitted with Lambda sensors.

Nigel Beale at Skysport has independently confirmed that the silicone contamination should pose no problems at all for Rotax engines.

Where to go in April / May

Free landing vouchers valid this month are available in:

Flyer magazine: Bodmin, Popham, Sherburn-in-Elmet and Wolverhampton.

Pilot magazine: Donegal (Eire), Enstone, Kemble, Lashenden (Headcorn), North Coates and Swansea.

Today's Pilot magazine: Brimpton, Campbeltown, Old Sarum and Panshangar.

April

8th - PFA Wessex strut fly-in - Henstridge - 01963 364231

8th - Jodel Club fly-in - Popham - 01256 397733

22nd - Wiltshire PFA Flyers Fly-in - Inglesham Farm (Swindon) - 01793 321974

29th - Devon strut fly-in - Plymouth - 01752 785452 or 01548 842057

May

5th/6th - PFA Regional Rally - Sywell - 01604 644917

5th/6th - Microlight Trade Fair - Popham - 01256 397733

5th - Devon strut fly-in - Bodmin - 01752 406660

6th - Spring Fly-in - Brimpton

6th - Air Show & Country Fayre - Abingdon - 01235 529142

7th - Aerojumble and Classic vehicle rally / fly-in - Popham - 01256 397733

"Keep the aeroplane in such an attitude that the air pressure is directly in the pilot's face"

Horatio C. Barber, 1916

Future meetings

April 21st - Spread Your Wings event.

May 10th - Shell Aviation

May 12/13th - PFA Young Aviator weekend

June 14th - Visit to ATC Bristol

Members news

Visit to ATC Bristol. Strut members have received an invitation from Julian Andrews (ATC Watch Manager, NATS Bristol) to visit the Air Traffic Control team, and look over the new control tower at Bristol International Airport. The proposed date is our June meeting, Thursday 14th, meeting at about 19:00 in the car park. Visitors will be shown the equipment and procedures in place to control incoming and departing traffic, and the visit will include the Radar room which monitors most of Gloucestershire and Wiltshire offering the LARS service which local pilots find so helpful. A maximum of 15 persons can be accommodated, but if interest is greater than that we can organise a follow-up visit. Please let us know soon if you are coming along, so we can build up a list.

PFA Young Aviator weekend

May 12th/13th has been identified by the PFA as a national weekend for flying youngsters and introducing them to the joys of aviation. Bristol strut have done this for several years (when the EAA called them Young Eagles), but this time we have been invited to join Gloucester strut on Saturday 12th, to assist in making it a real success.

If you are prepared to bring your aeroplane to Gloucester and make a couple of youngsters happy, please let us know in good time to help in planning the event. Also, if you are able to help on the ground we need marshallers and escorts (we have hi-viz jackets available), and even someone to just talk to our visitors about aeroplanes will be welcome to come along. Full details will be available nearer the date.

Your starter for ten

Following our popular series of quiz pictures, see what you think of this one. No points for guessing it's Concorde, but what is the strange device indicated?

Answer next month.

Airport Watch at Bristol

Many of you will have noticed the news item on local telly recently about aircraft spotters being invited to contribute to the security arrangements at Bristol Airport, by reporting any suspicious activity noticed around the site. Richard Ward went along to the meeting last month, and here describes what happened:

On Saturday 24th March I attended an open meeting at Bristol International Airport the purpose of which was to tell aviation enthusiasts and any other interested parties about the airport's new 'Airport Watch' scheme. The meeting was held in the conference room at the old terminal with pre-commencement free coffee and snacks available; in my case a definite plus as I was still trying to wake up and had missed my breakfast trying to get there early so I could meet and chat with a few people I knew. In fact just as I arrived I bumped into our esteemed member Jack Thomas who many will know because he organises the Enthusiast Fair at the BAWA twice a year. Though he was unable to do the recent autumn and spring ones, he is now in negotiation with BIA to hold it in the same conference room as this meeting!

Our host was Inspector Chris Ware who is the senior officer at the airport and incidentally is an aviation enthusiast himself and is also responsible for setting up the local police helicopter support unit some years ago, the current version of which is now based at Filton airfield. Chris told us about the idea to 'integrate' the spotters and enthusiasts into the airport security set-up whereby we could help by using our eyes and ears and our knowledge of airport ops and procedures and then report anything we felt was unusual or seemingly out-of place.

This type of scheme is also being put in place at various other airport and airfield locations in the country, and is essentially an extension of The Aviation Enthusiasts Security Scheme (TAESS) originally created and organised by the LAAS aviation club.

Chris then handed us over to Mike Littleton the Community Liaison Manager who gave us a potted history of the airport and some snippets of local aviation history. Mike also told us that there is a possibility of an area on the south-west side of the airport being set up as a viewing area for spotters and spectators- however, this is of course dependent on funds being available. "Time will tell, and watch this space" were his closing words before he later returned for a Q&A session.

We were then given an insight into the type of weapons which might be used by terrorists to attack an airport, including shoulder-launched and ground-launched varieties; this talk being given by Sergeant Tim O'Neill of the Avon & Somerset Police Firearms Unit. I for one earnestly hope we never have anything like this happen anywhere....

The Q&A session threw up an interesting item or two, one of which was the litter situation along Cooks Bridle Path! Mike and Chris then finished by telling us that the details of the meeting were to be passed to other aviation establishments in the south-west including Yeovilton.

This was a thoroughly enjoyable occasion given it's solemnity, and given the current status of the security situation after 9/11, once again brought about some hope of being able to continue my occasional walk-about around airfield boundaries.

On the issue of the viewing area, my personal view is that there is probably very little chance of it happening and this was backed up by other enthusiasts I spoke to on leaving the meeting. Time will tell, as the man said....

Richard

