



Light Aircraft Association

The Gloster Strut

LAA Gloster Strut Newsletter, November 2023

Please send newsletter articles and any feedback to GlosStrutEd@yahoo.com



CHAIRMAN'S CHAT

Great news , we are now fully up and running with John Cooper as our new newsletter editor, having taken over the post from Pat Thody, we have enjoyed his first edition with the October issue. A few suggestions have been put forward and we are falling into line to implement them, namely, to make the monthly newsletter a bit easier to get into your mailbox in good time. A list of additional features has been incorporated to expand the areas of interest within the membership. "Meet the Members" / "My Day in Aviation to Remember" / "I learnt about Flying from That" / "Sales and Wants" etc., so quite a mixed bag for us all to enjoy! NOW this is where YOU can add your two pennies worth , let John have YOUR memories of flying adventures or experiences, PLEASE add to your newsletter, it's your Strut, so get the stories coming in, good, bad or ugly, we want to add them in to keep the newsletter relevant and interesting for us all. Thank you in advance.

This month we have Tim Houlihan kicking off as a "Meet the Member" feature, well done Tim. I'm sure you have lots of interesting stories to deliver!

The Sales and Wanted area should prove to be a popular addition too, how many of us have left over bits and pieces cluttering up the workshop from the build project completed some years ago, always meaning to clear the space, it's a job for another day, and so it goes on. Now is your chance to make space!, feels good when the job is done and the space is free again. The Wanted adverts can sometimes come up with that special, difficult to find item you have been searching for over months, so give it a go.

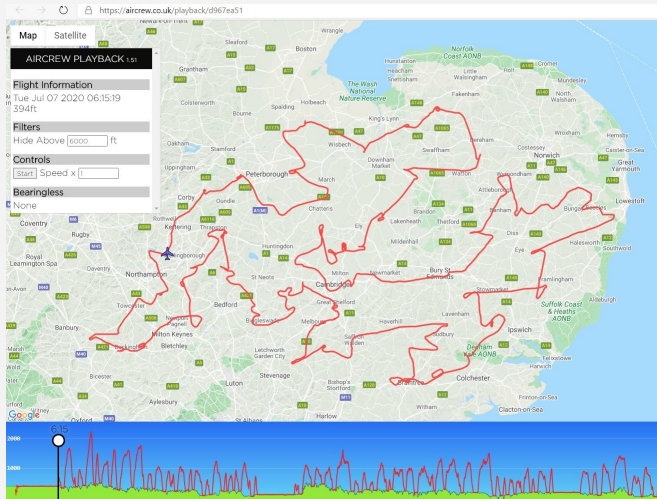
Well that's the Chairman's Chat bit from me , now it's over to YOU.

Mike Waldron

Last Month

Mr & Mrs Macaskill's Record Breaking Air Adventure

At October's meeting it was Fiona's turn to sing for Team Macaskill's supper, and she gave us a splendid presentation on how they set about simultaneously getting into The Guinness Book of Records, setting a World record and taking part in a Dawn to Dusk Challenge event. All was inspired when they bought a tea towel purportedly showing all the airfields in East Anglia; I say 'purportedly' because eagle-eyed Rowland Carson spotted an omission: Ipswich Airfield, from which the first RAF bombing raid of WW2 was launched wasn't shown!



Pilot Aware Track

This error notwithstanding, said tea towel did show over 80 airfields, closely spaced and seemingly offering a golden opportunity for airfield hopping.

There already existed a record of 94 airfields visited in a 24 hour period, held by an American. The Macaskills therefore set out to take the record for 12 hours. The requirements were stringent and included writing a 1000 word account, having an official starter, observers, and photographic evidence to back up their claim. It required proof of a full stop landing at each airfield, so no touch and go landings.

However, the permutations were endless and the scheme required extensive and careful research, comprehensive planning to determine an optimum route and considerable other preparation. I should mention now that, as if not already

complicated enough, this was all to be a charitable fund-raising mission.

Angus was responsible for the equipment (i.e. GPS receivers, cameras, tracking records, power banks, thermos flasks et al) while Fiona took on the task of telephoning the airfield owners/operators for permissions. Some airfields were no longer available, very few owners said NO, and all, on hearing it was all being done to raise funds for Air Ambulance services, waived their landing fees.

A short trial run was made to double-check how long it took to carry out full stop landings at successive airfields. Sod's Law ensured that the prevailing wind on the big day was in the opposite direction to that obtaining for the trial!

Thus it was that their Monson aircraft was parked, fully fuelled overnight at Sywell and that 6 am on 7th July 2020 found our intrepid aviators going through all the Guinness checks before a 7.15 take off. Some airfields had runways long enough to allow take off straight ahead after a full stop landing; others required taxiing back to the threshold to have a long enough take off run. 3 fuel stops were planned and inevitably at one the bowser wouldn't start, causing a short delay.



Mr & Mrs



Forward view when we decided against a 24 hour record

Personal refuelling was intended but in the excitement was confined to lots of short drinks.

After 11 hours, of the 12 available, they had succeeded in landing at 71 airfields and called it a day in the face of deteriorating weather. The post flight documentation took considerable time but the record was theirs and they were awarded 2 of that year's Dawn-to-Dusk prizes. Happily, to gild the lily they were also awarded a Royal Aero Club Certificate of Merit. Over £3,000 went to the air ambulance and Fiona was keen to thank the small army of volunteers (quite a few from our strut) who generously gave time to be official witnesses as well as a good share of the donated funds

Our congratulations to them both and our thanks to Fiona and her visual aids operator, Angus, for a most entertaining Strut evening.

Harry Hopkin



A&F with 71 Notice



Congratulations



To Mike Waldron, this year's winner of the Roderick Turner Trophy, the LAA's service award to the member who has done most to contribute to Flying for Fun. In Mike's case it was largely for his work at the Cheltenham 'No Child Left Behind' event for which he built

a large scale model aircraft which the youngsters could dismantle and reassemble using simple tools. Well done Mike.

Harry Hopkins

The Wit & Wisdom of Aviation

Q. What is the worst thing that can happen when you are flying?

A. Running out of airspeed, altitude and ideas all at the same time.

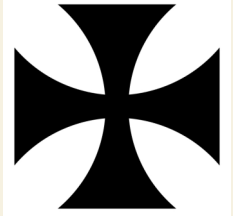
Harry Hopkins





My Day in Aviation to Remember

Mick Mannock v The Red Baron



There are days that you remember for a lifetime, vivid memories that are embedded into your brain forever. If you are a fly fisherman, it's catching that salmon on a beautiful stretch of river on a summer evening. If golf is your game, it's that round when the swing was flowing easily and the putts were dropping in from all angles, a winning score of course!

My day to remember came as an invitation to fly the SE5a to a Mick Mannock commemoration day at Sywell when a new book was being launched detailing the Life and Death of the great fighter pilot from World War One, Major Edward Mannock VC . DSO. MC. RAF to give him his full title and awarded medals .

The telephone rang, it was Des Biggs, one of the first members of the Great War Display Team. I got to know Des during the period of time I spent building my SE5a replica, always generous with his advice, he was a source of much needed inspiration along the long journey of the build process. "Mike , I've been asked to take my SE up to Sywell for the Mannock commemoration day, but I can't make it, can you get yours up there?". There was to be an unveiling of plaque at Wellingborough near Sywell where Mick Mannock had lodgings just before the outbreak of WW1, that's all I knew . I didn't realise at the time that the event was to be a grand affair and the SE was going to be centre stage!! "Yes Des , I can do that", not know any other details.

Now, the SE5 is an aircraft requiring ground crew in attendance, helping hands with re fuelling, prop swinging and chock pulling are basic requirements (from someone experienced in the act), giving piece of mind to the pilot , safety first of course! A quick phone call to my good friend Dave, "fancy a day up at Sywell Dave, something to do with Mick Mannock", yes, it all sounded like a good day out, we arranged meet up details (2000ft over the M5 / M50 motorway junction at 10.30) we would fly in loose formation with Safety Com dialled in. The day dawned bright and clear as forecast, visibility forever, just what we wanted, a perfect flying day to come. A 1 hour 15 minutes flight had us joining overhead Sywell, descending "dead side "and onto a long downwind for the grass, keeping a respectful distance behind Dave in his Mono, allowing him to clear the runway before I landed behind. Hey , nice three point onto the grass, makes a change! I taxied in to a rather busy flight line to find a crowd of people all busy scurrying about with jobs to do, I wonder what this is all about? I hadn't had time to undo my Sutton harness before Ben arrive with a cup of tea, "hi Mike, great you could make it, get this down you, you will be

flying in about half an hour". WHAT!!, not what I was expecting to hear, I had anticipated a lazy day with lunch laid on while the book launch took place, no , I had been scheduled in to fly a formation fly past with Manfred Von Richthofen in his red Fokker DR1 Triplane (Matt Boddington with Paul Ford's replica). A quick briefing and we taxied out for take off. 1000ft and we would dive in from the south, flying wires humming under the strain, we levelled at 500ft paralled with the crowd line, one time, back and land for the ceremony to begin.

The Lady Mayor delivered the dedication, a marching brass band did their stuff, Air Cadets all very smartly turned out strutted about and the book launch went into action with appropriate speeches, all very impressive!

I fuelled up again with a tank full, compliments of the Sywell airfield, thank you very much, said my farewells to Manfred and the rest of the gang and taxied out for take off with Dave in his Taylor Monoplane. We had just the best day! Heading west in a clear and calm summer evening at 2000ft, air smooth as silk, the Malvern Hills loomed up in the distance within a few minutes, 2100 rpm on the tacho, oil on 40 psi, I was on track for Croft Farm. Not sure why we had planned a BBQ for that evening but I was looking forwards to a few cold ones and a burger back at the hanger. I was soon peeling off with a wave and a "thank you" to Dave, he headed for his strip near Tetbury and I turned finals for 27 into Croft, another nice landing, must be my lucky day!! I parked up, sat down in the grass with a smile on my face, feeling slightly shattered from the long day and all the excitement that

went with it, days don't come much better than that. Jill arrived with an ice cold San Miguel which didn't touch the edges on the way down, swiftly followed by a second. Still lying on the grass, Clive arrived, "fancy giving us a fly past Mike?". So sorry Clive, I've just had a couple of beers, so no can do.

We all enjoyed the rest of the evening together , great friends , good food and a few more drinks , we departed late for home having had a special day , it doesn't get much better.



DAY TO REMEMBER..

Mike Waldron

Meet The Member

In this new section we'll meet (or for many, get to know better) Tim Houlihan.

This is one of a number of new sections that I'd like to launch with members' assistance, for which please see the next section (Ed.)



Tim Houlihan

Gloster Strut Member Since: Foundation

How and why did you get into aviation?

Being born as WW2 ended, the RAF and aircraft must have been influential to my young self. I was in the Air Training Corps and joined the RAF straight from secondary school as a "Boy Entrant" and trained as an airborne radar technician.

What was your first flight and first solo?

My first flight was an air experience flight in a DH Chipmunk at Cosford in 1962 or 63.

My first solo was in a RAF Gliding and Soaring Association "Grunau Baby" glider No 220 (that had been requisitioned/ "stolen!" from Germany after WW2).

My first powered solo was in a DH Chipmunk at Squires Gate airfield, Blackpool.

Which aircraft have you flown?

Gliders as P1: Grunau Baby, Olympia 2b

A very limited number of types of powered aircraft (nothing very exciting) including.

Chipmunk, Cessna 152, Cessna 172, Piper PA28 and Europa

(Mono wheel and Trigear) [Ed. — *it's the way you fly them that counts! Read on for Tim's exciting airborne experiences...*].



Grunau Baby

What was your best and worst moment in aviation?

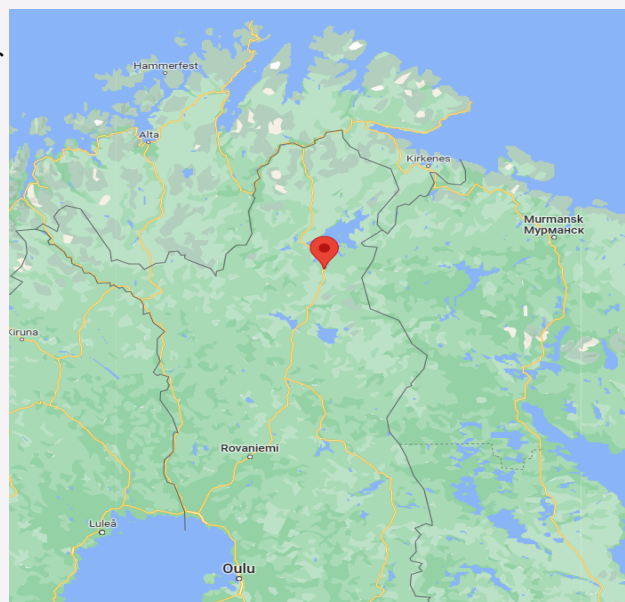
Best moments: not including first solos etc., it must be flying in an aircraft you have spent about ten years building and being told "don't change anything; it flies well, just as it is" [Ed.— *the aircraft was Europa 'Tango Hotel' — see below*].

Worst moments! My worst moment was having to make an "off airfield" landing in a field that turned out to have a ridge and furrow surface. This surface caused "significant damage" (a quote from my log book) to Tango Hotel. The aircraft was written off, though my love of Europas was such that I acquired another, this time purchasing rather than building.



Europa G-BZTH. Built by Tim. Alas no longer flying in one piece, but parts survived in another Europa.

An earlier worst moment that ended well was flying Tango Hotel in Northern Finland, about 120 miles north of the arctic circle. My aircraft was one of three flying as part of a Europa group members' trip, whereby we independently flew to the same destinations. However, heading for Ivalo airport, the weather quickly turned poor. The options were limited as the weather behind us had also closed in, the Russian border was 30 miles to our east and Ivalo was 40 miles further on. We persisted through quite poor weather and limited visibility with, in one part, snow going past the windows. With GPS assistance and helpfully flat Finnish terrain, we were practically in the circuit before we made out the airport in low cloud and rain. We were most relieved to arrive safely! It was very useful to have the experience of strut member David as co-pilot on that trip.



Ivalo (and land to the east that may not be a natural choice for a diversion)!

Are there any other aviation-related experiences that you found particularly satisfying?

Three come to mind:

- Being a founding member of the Gloster Strut. Seeing a message via what we know as the Light Aircraft Association (LAA) from a Mr Harry Hopkins (now membership secretary, of course), who wanted to found the Gloster Strut. I jumped at the opportunity to join (especially as I'd already bought a Europa kit), became the group's first newsletter printer (and later editor), and the rest is history.

- Speaking of my Europa kit, building ‘Tango Hotel’ was a lengthy but ultimately a highly rewarding experience. Though having never flown in a Europa, I was sufficiently enticed by the advertising that I bought kit 10 and spent weekends over the next 10 years building it. I’d never before built an aircraft, but thanks to good plans, help from my wife and advice from other builders, I found it to be a manageable, if lengthy, experience. It first flew in 2002 and, thanks to a combination of its economy and high cruising speed, it’s literally taken me to places I wouldn’t have visited in other aircraft (Venice, Berlin-Tempelhof, and Quiberon in Brittany, to name but three).



Tim at Berlin-Tempelhof

- Giving scouts their first ever flights is another highlight. Contrasting the trepidation with which they boarded the aircraft with the elation they showed on exit (always safely on the ground), also provided moments to remember at Croft Farm, for them and me.

Which aircraft have you most and least liked flying?

I have not had much experience with other aircraft, but obviously my Europas are my most liked. Least liked, I flew as a passenger in a Zenith 601 aircraft and found it okay, but unrewarding! Otherwise, any plane that is safe will do. The Chipmunk is still very much at the top of my “loved” list after the Europa, of course.

Do you have any unfulfilled ambitions in aviation?

I’ve fulfilled many ambitions, having flown my Europa aircraft to all western European countries as far east as Poland with the singular exception of Austria, which requires a noise certificate, though that didn’t stop me flying through the Brenner pass via overhead Innsbruck, from Italy to Germany. I recently returned from a Gloster Strut trip to Croatia, traveling through France, Switzerland (through the Simplon pass), Italy, Slovenia and Croatia. Stopping in Venice for a day trip and staying in Bol on the island of Brac in the Adriatic I feel happy with things as they are. I am content!

So, my ambition is to retain my class 2 medical for a little while yet!



Finishing the article where it started, with a Grunau baby

Future News Sections: Contributions Wanted Please!

As Mike mentioned in his chairman's chat, I'd like to add new sections to the newsletter, for which I would need members' contributions. Tim and Mike have got us off to an excellent start with their articles above. Please let me know if you can provide material for any of the sections below.

John Cooper (Ed.)

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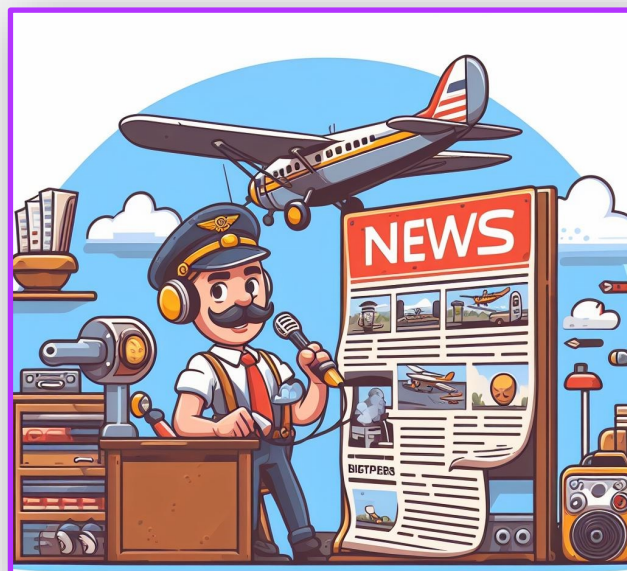
I learnt About Flying From That

Members would describe a first-hand incident, near miss or other memorable aviation happening from which others can learn a lesson.

This would be published anonymously, unless the author were to indicate otherwise.

I learnt About Aircraft Building & Maintenance from that

Similar to 'I learnt About Flying From That', but on the above.



Meet the Member

Whether a professional or amateur flyer, a member would describe his or her life in aviation by answering the questions below. I would be happy to interview members or take written submissions.

Questions:

1. How and why did you get into aviation?
2. What was your first flight and first solo?
3. Which aircraft have you flown?
4. What was your best and worst moment in aviation?
5. Are there any other aviation-related experiences that you found particularly satisfying?
6. Which aircraft have you most and least liked flying?
7. Do you have any unfulfilled ambitions in aviation?

My Day in Aviation to Remember

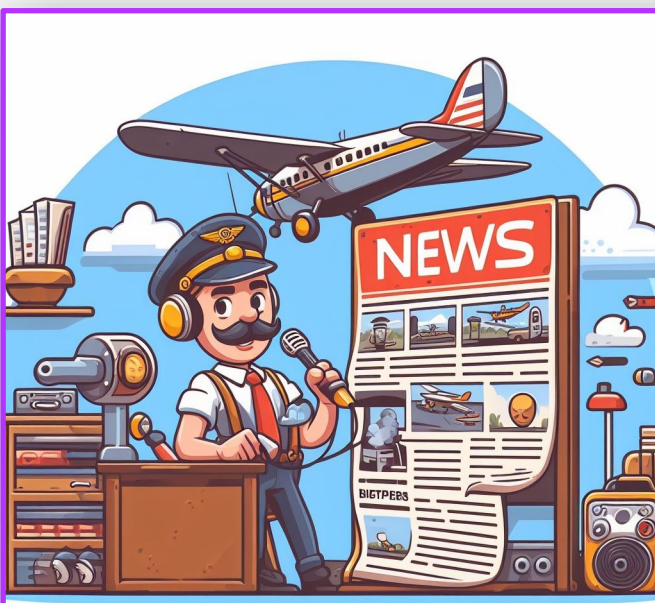
A day that was significant to you. You may have been at the controls of an aircraft or involved in events in some other capacity.

Sales & Wants

Self-explanatory

Useful Sources of Goods & Services for Pilots & Builders

A link to sources that may not be well-known to members, together with a brief explanation



Next Meet

Tuesday 14th November

1930 (doors open 1900)

The Victory Club

Burlington House, Lypiatt Road, Cheltenham

GL50 2SY

Arthur Williams, Broadcaster & Pilot

arthur-williams.co.uk

Arthur's TV programmes include *'The Plane That Saved Britain'* (on the De Havilland Mosquito), *'Flying to the Ends of the Earth'* & *'Flying Across Britain'*

Given his pedigree, his talk will be one not to be missed!

As usual, please feel free to bring a friend.