

February 2025 Newsletter

Welcome to The Gloster Strut Newsletter. We hope you enjoy reading it. Please send any contributions, letters and comments to editor@glosterstrut.co.uk directly.

Photo of the Month

A Stearman taken at Peasemore International airport, better known as Priors Farm near Newbury.



Chairmans Chat

The benefits of being a member of the Gloster Strut are numerous and far reaching, at least they are for me, having a wide variety of friends and acquaintances is a bonus for most people I would think.

The Strut can only function by virtue of the fact that so many people are willing to lend a hand when help is required. I remember on many occasions lifting and shifting aircraft parts when several pairs of hands are in demand, wing attachment etc., everyone happy to be involved in getting the job done. Of course we also have a heavy demand on good people helping out during our Summer events too!

Our outside catering events rely heavily on those who turn up to make it all happen. I thank you all, it would not be possible without your input.

The latest news coming over the horizon is the formation of our junior pilots club, we now have three new members and increasing rapidly (all under 8 years) arriving with Mums and Dads to discover how the little flying bug can get into the system at such an early age.

Introducing these little guys to a whole new world of flying machines, fresh air activities and topping it off with a free BBQ, what's not to like! It is up to us to support their enthusiasm, so bring your little family members along to the Summer events, they will enjoy themselves.

There are also rumours surfacing that there will be a new hanger arriving for the Struts use (all subject to confirmation), but it will require a working party to be formed for disassembly and erection and this is where you can sign up to help out, "have socket set, will travel", your Strut needs YOU. Please contact me to volunteer your services for +/- end of February. Free flowing soup and sandwiches.

Best wishes and thanks for what you do – Mike

The last meeting

AGM Report

THE GLOSTER STRUT'S 2024 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

HELD ON TUESDAY 14th JANUARY 2025

About 25 members attended.

Chairman's report. Mike said the Strut had had another very successful year, ending it with 103 members, including our first junior member. He reminded members that under 25 membership is free and that we welcome visitors to a 'try before you buy' visit.

We have enjoyed the comfort and convenience of The Victory Club as our winter venue, and, courtesy of Clive and Michael Porter, the setting of Croft Farm, Defford for our summer meetings. He expressed his thanks to Clive and Michael for their generous hospitality and encouragement. He also thanked Anne Houlihan, Claire Towers and Avril Badham who have each helped with pre-meeting suppers.

We had a very successful trip to the RAF Museum at Cosford and we hope to arrange a similar visit to a different aviation museum in 2025.

Sadly, we had lost 2 of our stalwart members this year with the deaths of Mike Tuck and Trevor Bailey; we continue to miss them. Happily, Julie Tuck has taken over Mike's membership and continues to fly his aircraft.

Members had been kind enough to say that they had enjoyed the varied programme of talks and show and tells organised for 2024. We welcome members' suggestions for suitable programme items, even more so when a member was able to give an aviation related talk or cajole someone he or she knew to do so.

Treasurer's Report

Total income £1861.00

Total expenses £1669.58

The Treasurers full report, which was sent out with the invitation to the AGM, showed a healthy bank balance and the accounts were approved.

Charity Donations: Fly to Help £50; Armstrong-Isaacs Scholarship £1000; GASCO £200

Given the healthy bank balance, it was proposed and accepted that the subscription would remain the same as 2024. With that in mind, an invitation to renew was subsequently sent out and it gratifying to see so many members responding very quickly with their renewals.

Elections

The Chairman and committee is were re-elected unanimously, it now comprises:

Role	Member
Chairman	Mike Waldron
Secretary	Harry Hopkins
Treasurer	Bruce Morris
Safety Officer/Sommelier	David Joyce
Webmaster/Newsletter	Mick Peakman
Technical Adviser	Tim Houlihan
Photographer	Tim Badham

The Chairman's Trophy was this year awarded to Dr David Joyce for many years work as safety officer, flying programme organiser and sommelier, work much appreciated by all members.

AOB Several members asked for Strut information, currently posted on the website, to be sent out as emails so that they didn't miss a message if they had not recently looked at the Strut's website. The Chairman said he'd discuss this issue in committee.

Anniversary Celebration

Before the main event members enjoyed a glass of sparkling wine and a slice of Christmas cake to celebrate the 32nd anniversary of our formation.

The main event

The main event was the video 'Glacier Girl' the recovery of a lost P-38 Lockheed Lightning from hundreds of feet below a Greenland iceberg. During WWII a flight of 6 P-38s with a B-17 escort had force-landed on the iceberg due to bad weather at their destination. A wealthy American aviation enthusiast had funded an expedition to locate, recover and rebuild one. It is now flying again.

The Strut is looking to replace its rather outdated laptop computer so if anyone has access to 'deals' we would be very interested to hear from you. In the first instance, contact editor@glosterstrut.co.uk.

The Wit & Wisdom of Aviation



Qantas Engineering Reports

Alleged reports filed by Qantas Airline Pilots and the Engineering Responses - A short series.

Pilot: *Dead bugs on windshield.*

Engineer: *Live bugs on back-order.*

Harry: I'm at the age when I realize the best thing about flying in military aircraft was the free oxygen.

Anon: Always be nice to anyone who has access to your toothbrush

In the News



On Friday 28 February there is an evening shindig, dinner optional, for current and former staff and former Cadets of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Wing of the ATC and local VGS; RAFA Club, Westbury on Trym. Mike Fortescue would be happy to provide further details; fortesm14@gmail.com

Struts youngest member

The Strut's membership reached 101 when we enrolled 6 year-old Arthur Tonge, seen here in his Grandpa's Pietenpol Air Camper. Arthur, who gives his address as No7 Devon, can't wait to fly in it. Grandpa, Mike Waldron, says it's 95% complete, with only 25% remaining to be done, so Arthur shouldn't have too long to wait.



Scuba Diving aircraft wrecks

There's something odd about scuba diving onto an aircraft wreck. With boats and ships, it's almost expected to see them at the bottom of the sea, but an aircraft is a different matter.

When I lived on Malta, working as a scuba diving instructor, we regularly dived two particular aircraft: A Blenheim Bomber and a Beaufighter.

The Bristol Blenheim Bomber is an airplane wreck off the coast of Malta from World War II. It was originally built by the Bristol Aeroplane Company where it served in the British Royal Air Force. With a twin-engine it carried a maximum of three people. It was a light bomber aircraft of about 13m in length and 17.2m in wingspan. While on a mission to Kefalonia in Greece, this Bristol Blenheim Bomber was hit by an Italian enemy aircraft, damaging the port engine. The Blenheim then turned back to land on Malta for safety. However the pilot had to ditch the plane in the nearby sea. Luckily the crew suffered only minor injuries and survived the landing. The location of the Blenheim Bomber wreck is around 500m off Xrobb l-Ghagin which is on the East Coast of Malta.



The Bomber is at a depth of 42m on the seabed with sand and small reefs surrounding it, and came to rest upside down. The wreck itself is in poor good condition with only the wings and radial engines more or less intact. The port engine propeller is missing however the starboard engine propeller is still there but bent.



When I first dived it in 2004, the seats were still there, but by 2008 they had disappeared, probably deteriorated due the number of divers sitting in them! Due to the depth, it is only for advanced divers and even then, the 'bottom' time is less than fifteen minutes without additional decompression requirements. It is reached by boat in around twenty minutes and divers descent the shot or anchor line usually within a few metres of the wreck. Details of the dive techniques are beyond this report but if you are interested, I am always happy to talk diving.

There is a video here, the interesting bits get going at around 3 minutes:

<https://maltadives.com/sites/bristolblenheimbomber/en>

and the 3-D model is here:

<https://underwatermalta.org/discover/blenheim-bomber/>

The second wreck, at a similar depth is the Beaufighter.

The Bristol Beaufighter is another World War II casualty. The Beaufighter was built by the Bristol Aeroplane Company and it served in the Royal Air Force. The plane was a twin-engine two-seat heavy fighter, about 12.6m in length with 17.6m wingspan. On 17th March 1943 soon after take-off, this Beaufighter experienced mechanical problems, and the crew had to ditch the plane in the sea. Both the pilot and the observer survived.



The Bristol Beaufighter wreck is located about 900m offshore St. Julian's Point in Sliema. The airplane wreck lies upside down at a depth of 38m on a sandy seabed. Most of the plane is buried in the sand, the wings and the main fuselage are intact, both undercarriage frames stick out behind the radial engines, and port side propeller still attached to the engine. Again it is reached by boat and shot line and comes into view at around 15-20m depth.

There is a video of the aircraft here:

<https://maltadives.com/sites/bristolbeaufighter/en>

and a 3-D model here:

<https://underwatermalta.org/discover/beaufighter/>

And finally, if you've ever wondered what a diving instructor does for a living, here's a short video of me leading a client on a shipwreck that was actually sunk purely for divers:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jb2Ht_j1uvg

I'd like to pretend it was hard work, and some days it was, that particular day it was anything but.

Downloads from the CAA and others

Lots of courses run by the LAA. These are the titles and summaries. At the time of writing there were one or two spaces left on each. Contact the LAA for more details. All courses are at the LAA HQ (Turweston) and generally cost around £200 for LAA members and slightly more for non-members for the course.

ROTAX FUEL INJECTED 912iS/915iS INSTALLATION & OPERATION COURSE (08/02/25)

This course has been developed by John Barrott to provide help and advice on the installation and operation of this new generation of aero engines. The course is classroom (not workshop) based.

CARING FOR YOUR GIPSY MAJOR (15/02/25)

This popular workshop explains the ins and outs of these vintage aircraft engines and will help to solve those starting difficulties.

FLIGHT RADIO TELEPHONY OPERATOR LICENCE PREP COURSE (01/03/25)

*This course offers delegates the opportunity to develop the skills, knowledge & understanding of radiotelephony procedures to ensure both confidence when using the radio as a PPL Pilot and support meeting requirements of the SRG1171. **THIS DOES NOT INCLUDE THE FRTOL EXAM***

AIRCRAFT FABRIC COVERING COURSE (05/03/25)

This is a hands-on course, not a lecture, so you will be working with the tools and materials, learning the required skills!

JABIRU ENGINE COURSE - 2 spaces left! (08/03/25)

The aim of the course is to give Jabiru engine operators sufficient knowledge to maintain and operate their engines.

AIR TO GROUND RADIO OPERATORS COURSE (08-09/03/25 & 26-27/04/25)

This course provides both the theoretical and practical training required to sit the examinations for the CAA Radio Operator's Certificate of Competence (ROCC) qualification required by operators of ground-based radio equipment at flying sites and events where an air-to-ground radio service is provided.

BASIC ELECTRICS FOR PERMIT AIRCRAFT (15/03/25)

ADVANCED ELECTRICS FOR PERMIT AIRCRAFT (16/03/25)

WORKING WITH ALUMINIUM BASIC COURSE (16/03/25)

PERMIT AIRCRAFT AVIONICS (22/03/25)

This course is an introduction to permit aircraft avionics.

WORKING WITH COMPOSITES (26/04/25)

This course offers plenty of hands-on practice as you learn the skills of working with epoxy resin and the correct use of a variety of woven cloths and mats.

From Gloucestershire Airport:

Gloucestershire Airport (EGBJ) have released an updated version of the Aerodrome Chart. It's here

<https://www.airmate.aero/download/charts/EG/EGBJ/400000000882928.pdf>

The CAA have updated Safety Sense Leaflets on Winter Flying:

<https://www.caa.co.uk/media/3hwj223x/safety-sense-03-winter-flying-version-9.pdf>

Also, Care of Passengers in General Aviation operations.:

<https://www.caa.co.uk/media/ovwcto24/safety-sense-ss002-care-of-passengers-version-8.pdf>

Key changes include reference to the Carbon Monoxide sensor requirements:

<https://www.caa.co.uk/general-aviation/safety-topics/carbon-monoxide-in-general-aviation/>

Since 1st January 2025 that operators of specified piston engine aircraft must carry an active carbon monoxide detector whenever there are passengers onboard the aircraft who are not qualified pilots.

CAA Public Consultation on Draft CAP1724 Edition 7

We are working on the new edition of CAP1724 Flying Display Pilot Authorisation and Evaluation: Requirements and Guidance (Edition 7), aiming to publish in the first quarter of 2025. We invite stakeholders to give us their views, the consultation will close 12 February 2025.

<https://consultations.caa.co.uk/ga/public-consultation-on-draft-cap1724/>

Sales and Wants

For Sale SE5a replica 85% scale .

Trophy winning aircraft / C90 / Low engine, airframe , prop hours, long Permit to Fly.

Contact : Mike 07787 123941 or chairman@glosterstrut.co.uk

Take a look at the Sales and Wants page (<http://www.glosterstrut.co.uk/sales.php>) of the website and grab yourself a bargain. Don't forget, this is a free service to any of our members.

Simply contact the editor (editor@glosterstrut.co.uk) with a photo and some words and the magic will happen. It would greatly help if the editor is updated when the item is sold or withdrawn so we can keep the page fresh and up to date.

The next meeting

The February meeting will be held on Tuesday 11th February at The Victory Club, (Lypiat Rd, Cheltenham GL50 2SY).

The speaker will be Mike Bromfield talking about 'The Flying Classroom'