

September 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

DC3 - A pilots view



Chairmans Chat

Time flies they say and so has Summer passed by with some of the best flying weather we have had for many years, so I do hope that many of you got a few hours in visiting destinations further afield, favourable forecasts for a few days ahead has us planning some long held "must go" trips.

We were fortunate to have beautiful conditions for all of our Summer evenings at Croft Farm, they remain as popular as ever, adding to that, our kids evening grew in numbers as the months rolled by. We should double our efforts in that direction for next year, building on the experience as we go.

The LAA Rally is again at Leicester this year, so hope to see some of you there, always nice to meet up with friends and talk aeroplanes!

I ventured out across the big pond last month to Brodhead, situated some 100 miles north of Chicago it hosts the Pietenpol and Hatz clubs of America for their annual gathering on the beautiful grass field. Organised by Chapter 431, they pull out all the stops to make everybody welcome, the fish boil suppers and pork chop evenings being served up to a 100+ members and visitors, great fun and a real treat to meet up with so many like-minded people. The volunteers turning out by the dozen to make it happen was truly impressive!!

Over the years we have had several talks on the Oshkosh visits, but I do not remember ever hearing a talk on the Brodhead event, much smaller of course, but an amazing few days, a few surprises for sure, quite unexpected, never to be forgotten!

I will deliver the my experiences at the September Strut evening which is back at The Victory Club on Sept 9th, 7.30pm start. Doors open 7pm

Blue Skies – Mike

The last meeting

Many of you will remember Stjohn Youngman from the Strut's visit to Electroflight when we were given a presentation of their work on their record breaking electrically powered aircraft which went on to establish a speed record. Last month he bought his Laser aerobatic light aircraft for us to drool over.

Stjohn had bought it to rebuild following a quite severe crash and was lucky enough to find a wing for sale in eastern Europe. I say 'lucky enough' because the wing has a massive one-piece spar - Wingspan: 28 ft 8 in (8.74 m); not only would it have been difficult to source the timber but its construction would have involved many hours of tricky woodwork.

Stjohn works in the aerospace industry and fortunately has considerable experience and skill in the use of composite materials. In his rebuild he managed a most useful reduction in the aircraft's weight.



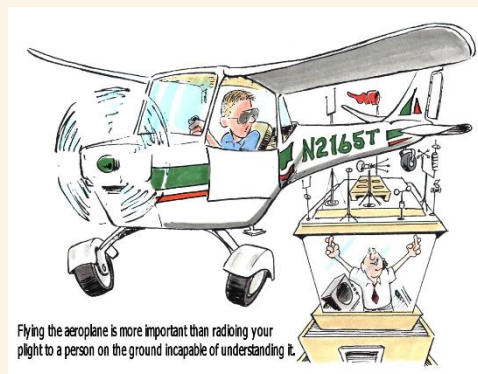
The aircraft is powered by an ex-Bulldog IO-360 engine but uses a composite propeller with a considerable chord, necessary for producing thrust during low-speed manoeuvres.

The wing has no Dihedral so, although it can be trimmed for hands off cruise, it has to be flown at all times. Elevator loads are very light but the ailerons are heavy.

Stjohn's aircraft has a high standard of finish and is a credit to his skill and patience in its extensive rebuild.

Many thanks for a most interesting evening Stjohn.

The Wit & Wisdom of Aviation



Qantas Engineering Reports

Alleged reports filed by Qantas Airline Pilots and the Engineering Responses.

Pilot: Suspected crack in windshield.

Engineer: Suspect you're right.

Quote of the Month

"Roger" - a term used by pilots when they can't figure out what else to say.

The Hunt for a Thunder Chicken - by Noel Baker

Part 2

Policy in Canada at that time allowed several days to pass before civil operation managers declared aeroplanes missing. It had become common practice for pilots to alight on suitable bodies of water when marginal weather forced them to 'wait it out'.

Four days after instructing staff to check fuel caches and stay alert for a downed aircraft, at the beginning of September, Mont Laurier manager Terry Coghlan notified the RCAF's Atlantic Area Rescue Coordination Centre in Halifax, Nova Scotia. His order galvanised a response that mobilised 33 military and ten civilian aircraft to search for the Norseman, under 'Operation Chimo'.

Sqn Ldr J, Cowie of 103 Rescue Unit assumed the lead role and soon started dispatching search assets from RCAF Station Bagotville, 120 miles north of Quebec City. Lancasters of 103 Search and Rescue Detachment, flew along the Norseman's presumed path, through rain, cloud and fog, above the maze of lakes, pine trees and bogs.

Green-edged marshes swept below the belly of searching planes and a Lancaster from RCAF Station Summerside, Prince Edward Island, joined the increasing number of aeroplanes undertaking the largest search and rescue mission since World War Two.

Eventually the RCAF and its civil counterparts agreed that following the supposed tracks, and checking the fuel caches, had given no clues to the whereabouts of the men or the aeroplane. On mutual agreement, they halted search operations on September 10.

However, Mont Laurier Aviation began hearing weak radio signals with the word 'Roberval' across several outposts.

Following high-level conferences, Operation Chimo resumed and a USAF Douglas deployed from Ernest Harmon Air Force Base in Newfoundland.

The search operation gained momentum with the arrival of seven Maritime Patrol Squadron Lancasters. Despite the efforts and increased number of participating aircraft, the Norseman still couldn't be found; for the second time, on September 14th, the search was called off.



On September 30th, after a well-publicised campaign by Mullin's wife, public outcry and concern across various RCAF commands, Operation Chimo was reactivated.

This time more civil aircraft were commandeered under a federal law found in RCAF search and rescue manuals.

An array of types and variants again scoured the bush - including DC-3s from Maritime Central Airways and Quebec Air, an RCAF Beechcraft Expeditor, several de Havilland Beavers and two Cessnas. Three Norsemen like the missing aeroplane were also used, as was a photo-survey Boeing B-17. However the Lancaster remained the most efficient search and rescue platform.

While hundreds of men and women worked to locate the miniscule floatplane in the vast territory, the lost passengers and crew did not idly bask in the great outdoors. Mullin, described as a "take-charge type" by his pilot peers, oversaw the group who together built and manned, round-the-clock, fires to act as signals. The group kept these going for the first 30 days.

To their anger, the Norseman's survival kit contained just two-man rations - for seven days instead of the advertised 30 days' worth. To make matters worse, someone had already pilfered most of the foodstuffs apart from a few tins of canned beef and beans. Cooking pots, a crosscut saw, a rifle, an axe and a compact tent were all that were left.

To try and alleviate the food problem. Mullin walked miles to try snaring rabbits, hunting for game and fishing the nearby Emmanuel Lake.

Despite his efforts, the group's health deteriorated. Mullin was also suffering from exhaustion due to his excessive self-imposed roles. For the most part, the only available food source was caribou moss... boiled, dried or powdered.

Look out for the final Part in the October issue.

A Quick Win

I'm sure, like me, you heard that Compton Abbas airfield was recently purchased by Guy Richie and that all sorts of rumours flew (pun intended) about regarding its future. As it turned out, he's keen on aviation and took steps (and money) to improve the airfield. So did he succeed?

It's a forty five minute flight from Gloucestershire by the nearest thing to a straight line. There are a few bobs and weaves to avoid Kemble, Bristol airspace and the Danger area of Salisbury plain but otherwise straight flying.

My first observation was the runway itself, now sporting a white line outline making spotting it easy. It's at just over 800' high and the controller only gives out QNH so you've two choices, get it into your head that touchdown is '8' on the altimeter or do the math for QFE (subtract 28). I have two altimeters so left one at QNH and set the other to QFE.

On final I was told there was a 20kt wind! That scared me until they qualified it with the direction - almost head on. Phew!

The runway is concave and I have to admit to a small bounce but landed okay on the second touchdown.

Parking is easy in allocated spots with tie-down options. Yes, it gets that windy!



Part of my trip was to climb another Marilyn so out came the bike and after signing in and paying my landing fee, I headed off for the short ride and walk to Win Hill. At just over 900 feet it felt a bit like cheating as I'd landed at 800 feet, but its swings and roundabouts with hills, some are an easy bag, others a full day out.

Back at the airport I enquired about lunch - full on or nothing! I didn't want a full burger and chips so went for a coffee and cake. At £9 it's not cheap. I found a table that seemed to be free, many were marked as 'reserved' but soon got moved as in fact it was also reserved. I was pointed to another table but within minutes, told that one was reserved too, but I was allowed to stay as was 30 minutes before the booking was due to arrive.

So is it better? Well, as a pilot I would say yes, the runway is more obvious, the facilities good and the ATC and staff helpful and friendly. As a diner, No. A simple sandwich or bacon roll was not available. If not pre-booked, then you're outside. Even with pedal power there's few if any sensible alternatives.



For my return journey, I decided to go South of Bristol, past Cheddar Gorge, under the Bristol and Cardiff radar, then across the Severn Estuary at 1,500 feet to pass overhead of Newport City airfield, climb to 3,000 feet, West of the power stations and bird sanctuary over the Forest of Dean and past Eastbach airfield, then finally a direct onto 09 from May Hill, steadily losing height for the ten mile 'final', my favourite way into Gloucester.

Dates for your diary

06/09/25

Bodmin: Cornwall Strut Fly In

13/09/25

Barton: Friends of Barton Fly In

13/09/25

Shobdon: Biplane and Triplane Fly In

13/09/25

Brooklands: Museum Fly In

20/09/25

Brighton: Last Night of the Proms Concert

20/09/25

Sywell: Pistons and Props

20/09/25

Oaksey Park: Bristol Strut Fly In

21/09/25

Cardiff charity Fly In

27/09/25

Swansea airport Defence of Gower exhibition and Fly In

Downloads from the CAA and others

Insight

June UKAB INSIGHT newsletter now available

The June edition of AIRPROX INSIGHT is based around an Airprox between a glider and a PA28 over Long Mynd Glider Site. The article highlights the risks involved with direct overflight of a glider site – not just the likelihood of encountering gliders but also the potential hazard presented by the winch cable (or, in this case, cables). It offers some advice to pilots planning to fly in the vicinity of glider sites, including actions that can be taken at the pre-flight planning stage as well as in-flight.

<https://www.airproxboard.org.uk/media/edicldtt/june-2025.pdf>

July UKAB INSIGHT newsletter now available

The July edition of AIRPROX INSIGHT looks at an Airprox between a drone and a PA28 over the former Boreham airfield in Essex. The article discusses where the majority of drone activity can be expected to take place, the problems associated with the notification of drone activity and the difficulties in seeing drones (from the perspective of the crewed aircraft). It also highlights some occasions where both drones and crewed aircraft can legitimately operate in the same height band.

<https://www.airproxboard.org.uk/media/bcnnsjpe/july-2025.pdf>



CAA Stuff

Airspace Infringement Prevention in the vicinity of North Weald Aerodrome

The Airspace Infringements Team has worked closely with the North Weald Airport (Epping Forest Council) Team to share an Aeronautical Information Circular (AIC) for enhanced awareness to the General Aviation community of the flight procedures and airspace construct at and in the vicinity of North Weald Airport to help reduce the risk of Airspace Infringements which can significantly impact Flight Safety and Airport Operations.

This PINK (Safety related matters) AIC P 127/2025 will be published in the next release of Aeronautical Information Circulars & AIP Supplements 23 July 2025.

https://nats-uk.ead-it.com/cms-nats/opencms/en/Publications/aip-supplements/EG_Circ_2025_P_127_en.pdf

CAP 1430 – UK Air Traffic Management Vocabulary Edition 5

CAP 1430 UK Air Traffic Management Vocabulary Edition 5 is now available.

<https://www.caa.co.uk/our-work/publications/documents/content/cap1430/>

The effective date is 30 September 2025.

Publication of 2024 Annual Safety Review

Our Annual Safety Review 2024 is a summary of serious incidents and accidents that have been reported to the CAA. It includes those involving UK registered aircraft that have occurred in or outside the United Kingdom, and non-UK registered aircraft in UK airspace.

<https://www.caa.co.uk/our-work/publications/documents/content/cap3146/>

CHIRP General Aviation FEEDBACK Edition 105

Edition 105 of CHIRP General Aviation FEEDBACK explores how good airmanship, preparation and adaptability can turn potential threats into safe outcomes. With a new focus on the Safety-II approach, CHIRP highlights lessons not only from when things go wrong, but also when they go right.

<https://chirp.co.uk/aviation/safety-resources/general-aviation/>

This edition covers frequency overlap issues, parachuting conflicts, paramotoring over built-up areas and NOTAM complexity. Plus, two powerful I Learned About Human Factors From That (ILAHFFT) stories offer honest reflections on the value of planning, instincts and shared experience.

Airspace Safety: Restricted Area (Temporary) or RA(T)

Any airspace infringement brings with it a risk of airborne conflict. This risk may be higher within a RA(T) due to the nature of operations and limited barriers available to mitigate airborne conflict.

In 2024 there were 10 RA(T) infringements; to the end July 2025 the number has already reached 15.

To prevent Airspace Infringements of a RA(T), pilots are encouraged to carry out detailed pre-flight planning to include:

NOTAM briefing using the NATS Internet Briefing System at NATS Aeronautical Information Service (AIS) Website

<https://nats-uk.ead-it.com/cms-nats/opencms/en/home/>

Reference to the AIC or Briefing Sheet referred to in the NOTAM at NATS AIS.

<https://nats-uk.ead-it.com/cms-nats/opencms/en/Publications/aip-supplements/>

Call the NATS AIS Information Line prior to flight on 08085-354802 or +44(0)1489-887515.

Use a VFR Moving Map and apply the Take 2 guidance.

<https://airspacesafety.com/take2/>

Gloucestershire Airport

Airside movements

Over the last year or so I have issued several AAN's in regards the need to follow published procedures in regards moving around airside. Over the last 8 months the number of reports (SSE's) has increased to a level that is not acceptable. Examples are as follows:

- (a) Moving around airside with no Hi-Viz.
- (b) Not following driving rules and regulations.
- (c) Excessive speeds – vehicles and aircraft.
- (d) Vehicles accessing airside without permission.

Can I please remind everyone that these procedures are in place for safety and control on operational areas of the airfield.

Moving forward the Airport Authority cannot accept repeated infractions of these rules and regulations and will take appropriate actions against any individual or operator to

ensure safety. This could involve restrictions or removal of privileges to access or move airside.

I would be grateful if you could review your relevant procedures and disseminate accordingly to all concerned.

Many thanks for your time and consideration.

Brian Rawlings

Head of Operations

Gloucestershire ILS System

Most will be aware, the aircraft accident earlier this year caused significant damage to the ILS Localiser aerals including supports and cabling. All of these parts require manufacture from abroad and are subject to a substantial lead time as 'special orders' and not 'off the shelf' items. I have been advised that the contractor is expecting to receive the items and commence work on the repair the week commencing 13/10/25. It is expected the repair work will likely take up to 10 days to complete. At the end of the rectification, the ILS will require a full re-commissioning (not just a standard flight check). I am in discussion with the relevant companies to secure that check as soon as to the completion of the rectification works as possible. I will update further as soon as I possibly can.

Some very sad news

Bill Bell recently asked me to advertise his Europa part-built aircraft for sale, which I was, of course, happy to do. Literally within a few days, I received an email telling me that due to a very unfortunate accident, the plane was involved in a fire. No one was hurt thankfully, but obviously Bill is very disappointed that his build ended this way. A brief note from Bill sums it up:



I'm not sure I want to linger over it, but it may help someone. As you can see there is so little left it is hard to recognise -it burned so hot that some of the aluminium parts are just unrecognisable puddles of metal. Two lessons learnt- how vulnerable to fire composite planes can be- a wooden glider was also written off, and in hindsight it would be good to insure the airframe during the build....

Sales and Wants

SKY ARROW 650TC & EUROPA TRIGEAR

Yes, you lucky Strut members I have an aircraft for sale.

My lovely carbon-fibre Sky Arrow- Based at Croft Farm, Airframe about 600 hours, 912 engine with around 300 Hours, Hangared, covers, full panel, fantastic views, fresh Annual. There is a possibility of continuing the hangarage at Croft.



The Afors advert with more details is here:

<https://afors.com/aircraftView/64971/Sky-Arrow-650TC-912>

Advertised at £62K but mention Gloster Strut and I'll knock off £5K just like that!

I also have a brand-new unfitted Rotax 914 engine.

Contact Bill Bell. 07768 028899 or GSKYT@billbell.co.uk



The next meeting

The September Strut meeting will be held on Tuesday 9th September at the Victory Club in Cheltenham. Mike Waldron will tell us of his adventures at Brodhead for the annual gathering of Pietenpol and Hatz clubs of America.