

HAMPSHIRE HEDGEHOPPER

January 2017

The Official Newsletter of the LAA Andover Strut

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Chairman's Chatter.....

Well here we are, 2017. I hope you all had a good Christmas and Happy New Year.

With the poorer weather recently I suspect not many have flown much but on the odd day when the weather has co-operated it has been very good. I managed a trip to the Cerne Abbas Giant on the 2nd followed by a lunch at a very busy Henstridge who had extended their New years Day Fly-in to the 2nd due to poor weather. It was good to see them busy but nowhere near Popham levels as regards aircraft numbers.

Our summer program is being drawn up and should be available in the next month or so, so look out and reserve those dates when help may be needed to run YOUR strut.

Strut Winter Programme

A quick summary of the program for our winter season.

We enter 2017 with an insight into the Great War Display team seen through the eyes of Richie Piper. Richie is well known within Popham fraternity as the guy who flies an L13 look-a-like Bosche machine with that grumpy old bugger in the back waving a deadly looking machine gun around. Richie's title for the evening will be 'Hans' adventures with GWDT'

February – a change of plan for our February evening, Watch this space for more details when known.

In March we will be having an insight into Airships of the 21st Century. Paul, fellow strut member has arranged that his friend Robin Hexhouse come down and talk to us about the new airships that we may see in the skies in the future. Robin works on the Airlander project currently at Cardington.

April's title will be Biggles Bi-plane. A second visit from Steve Slater, this time without his CEO hat on. Steve will give us a talk on his involvement on the rebuilding of the BE-2 look-alike.

And then we come to the AGM. Nuff said!

Inevitably as the winter progresses this list gets shorter. We are already considering summer 2017 activities but if you'd like something in particular or just have a good idea please let us know.

British GA Airfields

In reply to our recent comms on the subject of British airfields under increasing threat from property developers since airfield categorisation as 'brown field' sites, de Havilland Moth Club member John Gilder has provided the following in his capacity as Vice-Chairman (Planning) of the General Aviation Awareness Council.

"Seeing the comments with a petition link for Sibson I thought this note to deHMC members would give an inkling of what is happening in regards to General Aviation airfields at a national level and the role in the General Aviation Awareness Council (GAAC), the organisation representing our mutual interests to the Government.

Through Steve Slater I was recruited into the GAAC in 2012 and, on the basis of my planning experience, the Board invited me to succeed him as the Vice-Chairman dealing with Town Planning issues following his move to the LAA. The GAAC is an 'umbrella' organisation representing the spectrum of active GA organisations in discussions with Government. Our members include the LAA, AOPA, BGA (Gliders), BBAG (Business), AOA (airfield owners), Balloonists, Micro-lighters, Farmers, Aeromodellers and many others. Our Board meets quarterly with our next meeting at the end of February 2017.

Together with my GAAC colleagues, Steve Slater (LAA) and John Walker (AOPA) we are monitoring the situation with almost every airfield currently or imminently under threat. Our Chairman, Charles Henry, and I are also progressing discussions with the Department for Communities & Local Government (DCLG) to address the "brownfield" issue, among others. We met the DCLG on 6 December and a follow up is scheduled for late February, so this is very much a live situation and, they are listening.

The DCLG response on the issue of Airfields being Brownfield merits a special mention as a few key points have already emerged:

1. The land must be redundant (i.e. unused) for inclusion in Local Authority lists of 'Land suitable for development', by definition active airfields are, therefore, not subject to the presumption that development should be allowed.
2. The Minister, Gavin Barwell, responded to an enquiry by Nick Hird MP explaining that airfields are not 'designated' as brownfield, they are 'described', which appears to mark a change in DCLG thinking.
3. The DCLG restated that any application relating to an existing airfield should be treated the same as any other application and all relevant evidence should be considered. This means amenity value, community use and wildlife habitat can be included - airfields should not be in a lesser situation than any other user.
4. A concern was raised with the DCLG that planners do not always consider the requirements of 'the third dimension' when reviewing planning applications. Airfields need space beyond the boundary for emergencies, tall obstructions close to airfields can be a hazard. This was accepted and will be discussed again at our next meeting.

Moving to the specifics at Sibson, the proposal has met with strong local objections and the current application is expected to fail. However, it is only the start as the landowner is behind the application and has both the resources and incentive to keep pressing. The plan is for a self contained community scheme (cf Wellesbourne), which are not now generally favoured by Local Authorities who see them as socially divisive traffic generators that leave the LA with the cost of provision, and continuation, of services. We will support the LA when the time comes, just as we already have at Panshanger.

Among others being monitored, RAF Halton is a very big site and our focus is the airfield, which is largely separate from the main buildings. These are easier to

develop as the site services already exist and the area is substantially developed. We are not aware of any applications but are monitoring the situation closely and are aware of interest from airfield operators who believe it could be commercially viable.

The timings in the recent announcements apparently took the RAF by surprise and it seems that even those on a short timetable (Henlow, Colerne and Chalgrove) may struggle to close by 2020 as the relocation sites are unlikely to be ready. Henlow is of particular interest to GA and positive initial discussions have been held with several interest groups including Sport England and the Shuttleworth Collection. The Local Authority has the site allocated for airfield use in its current plan. We intend to meet with both the Flying Club and LA early in 2017 to discuss possible options. Manston is also a very current situation with an American-led challenge creating a tricky issue for the Local Authority. Again we are due to meet the local Supporters Group in January.

One final note, we are still seeing applications for wind farms or single turbines and one of the supporting arguments is that they are a 'green' solution. This is not necessarily true; the largest windfarmer in the UK stated several years ago that all the viable sites had already been developed. In some instances the cost of removing the turbines has not been factored in to the 'green' calculations and, more recently, we have heard that turbines in Scotland are gradually shaking loose from their plinths necessitating replacement far more quickly than anticipated and effectively negating the 'green' argument offered in their planning application.

The New Year is likely to be a busy one; we are making progress with the DCLG who now understand that the uncertainty caused by the "Brownfield" confusion is deterring investment in aviation facilities and encouraging speculation by voracious developers. They have also reaffirmed the policy that GA is the critically important starting point for those aspiring to the larger Commercial Aviation sector and needs to be protected.

If anyone wishes to raise any aspect of this, or any other airfield situation, with me or my colleagues please feel free to email.

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8.33 Update

As you're all probably aware by now, other than the rare non-radio machine, all our aircraft must be equipped with 8.33 Khz-spaced VHF radios by the end of this year and the CAA have even recently stated that it will be illegal to transmit on a 25 Khz spaced set after 1 Jan '18. Having said that, there will be an exemption for just about half a dozen stated frequencies, but this will only be a for a temporary period. The LAA have all the necessary information on their website regarding installation/approval of the new radios in the aircraft that they support, but a recent question from one of our members who has a Vintage Piper that has its airworthiness regulated by the CAA, an Annex II aircraft, has recently posed a question that was raised by his radio engineer regarding approval of a new 8.33

wireless in his aircraft. Well, this prompted me to contact my own avionics man and he did agree that, as things stand, the regulations are somewhat hazy and at first sight, it appeared that a process would be needed that could cost £600 in order to gain CAA approval for a new 8.33 approval/installation!

Well, since my own radio man was away on hols I got in touch with Trig Avionics up in Scotland who, of course, manufacture many of the new 8.33 radios that many of us will be installing in our vintage Annex II Pipers. I was able to quickly speak to their Customer Support Engineer, a very nice lady who agreed that, as far as Annex II machines went, the regulations were unclear and that she would make enquiries and get back to me which she did after a couple of days. This is what she said:

Having spoken with our favourite CAA contact, I can confirm that you will soon be able to use CS-STAN for Annex 2 Minor Mods. He expects this to be made public 'early 2017'. CS-STAN is free and requires very little paperwork – a simple form to fill out, and an entry in your logbook. We have actually created a template Form 123 and 'How to use CS-STAN' Instruction, which will be available on the Trig website very soon.

So, this is good news, especially the bit about it being simple and free so I reckon that we and our radio engineers will have no problems with this. By the way, the service and friendliness that I received from Trig was excellent and this seemed to confirm what I have heard from others about this firm. I now know exactly from where I'll be purchasing my own 8.33 radio, especially since it appears that their products' guarantees are excellent and they have very good after sales service.

Cheers

Richard (Bird)

A Glorious Day on the 2nd, spot the 'Giant' if you can.... bit of a disappointment really!



The Strut Committee or Who's Who

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