



A Merry Christmas to all our readers

December 2007

This Month's Meeting - Wednesday 19th December

Our meeting this month will be the annual Christmas get together. There will be no speaker but plenty to keep you occupied. There will be five photographic competitions - Air to air, air to ground, ground to air, ground only and the Club Photographer of the Year chosen by you from photos submitted for Airscrew during the year by members. JH will also be challenging your "little grey cells" with airfield recognition. There will also be a buffet (with mince pies this year!).

Only two rules govern the evening and they are; i) all photos submitted **must have been taken by a Club member** and ii) **everyone attending should bring a prize** (wrapping in festive paper optional) which will be exchanged for a draw ticket for the Grand Draw later in the evening.

Quote of the Month

To most people, the sky is the limit. To those who love aviation, the sky is home."— *anon.*

Colin Davies Remembered - By Bruce Fowler

As many of you will now know, Colin passed away after suffering from lymphatic leukaemia. He died one day before his birthday - 28th November.

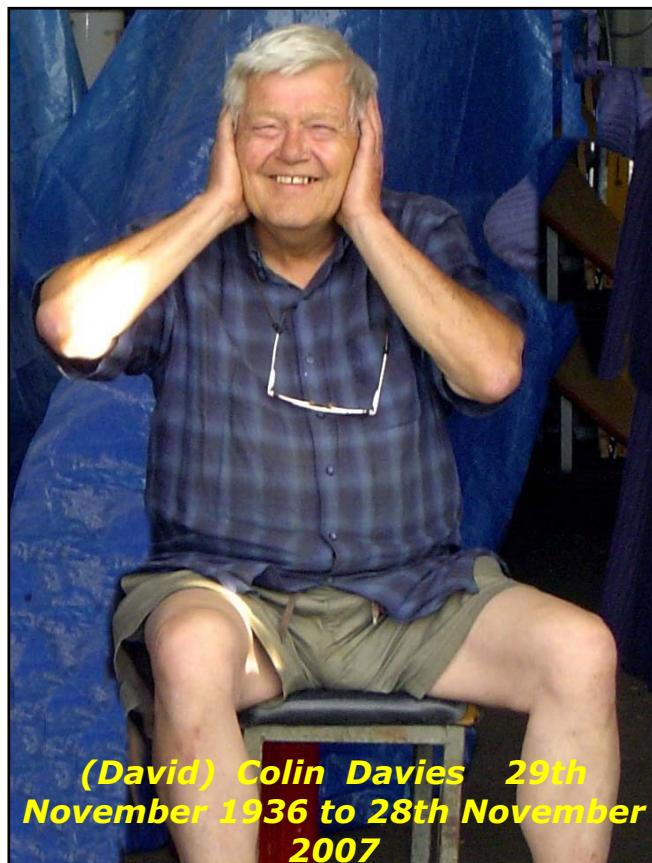
I know from comments made by members after his death that many of you were not aware of his past aviation "glories" such as piling a hang glider into the side of the Malverns many years ago that left him in hospital for some time. Perhaps this, along with his attempt more recently to dig a hole in my field using his MW6, will make many realise that he was a true aviator who "got back in the saddle" after every mishap - and he was usually the stronger for it. He was indeed a very courageous man and passed some of this on to me over recent years.

Whilst Colin used his microlights purely for travel rather than show, it is surprising to know that he found perfection in shooting which he proved to me on many occasions in the evenings over a glass of wine using an air rifle -

even after a few glasses, he was still a class shot. Add all these qualities to his large character and we have lost quite a friend, aviator and story-teller.

Colin leaves behind his wife, Janet, two children and one grandchild, Callum. Whilst they will not miss his endless discussions on flying (!), his death will leave a huge hole in their lives.

It may not be my place to say this, but the turn-out of SVMC members at his funeral was truly a credit.



disappointment for at least two Club members!

It was noticeable that the majority of microlights on show were three axis and very expensive! As far as flexwings were concerned, there were some new small single-seaters in the de-regulated category available. In order to keep within the weight limit they all had small engines. In the three axis deregulated class there was the single seat Kolb Firefly which attracted quite a lot of attention. It looked very basic and simple with folding wings and a single cylinder engine. Someone remarked that they were not happy with the engine particularly that it was single cylinder. What the relevance of that remark was I fail to see since we all know that a twin cylinder engine that fails on one cylinder does not perform as a single cylinder of half the capacity - an engine failure is an engine failure! With wings folded it was just 4ft 9ins wide - a definite benefit when considering hangarage and transport.



SPLASH 2007

Well, that's it for another year. At least £13 lighter in the wallet before being allowed into the hall, what did we see for the money when we stepped over the threshold? Certainly there was a lot of paragliding and paramotor equipment on sale. Yes, there were lots of stands selling tools but no second hand/used bits and pieces stand. The latter was a

Another exhibit which had crowds around it most of the time was Ben Ashman's new Dragonfly - a single seat flexwing with a retractable undercarriage. We saw the prototype at Popham earlier in the year. This aircraft looked very neat and

compact with a small wing. No doubt the retracted undercarriage reduces drag but will dyed in the wool flexwing pilots remember to lower it before landing?



The Dragonfly

Price range was stunning. One small single seat de-regulated aircraft offered for £7995 for the first five aircraft - if there was enough interest - and production scheduled for March 2008 up to a C42 fully equipped for £49500. The choice was that wide!



Just dreaming and wishing!!

Conair Sports exhibited a number of small, single cylinder engines particularly with deregulated aircraft in mind. They looked interesting but after being used to seeing Rotax 912's they did look small and weak! It was noticeable that even the large manufacturers this year had much reduced exhibition areas with less aircraft on display - an indication of the cost of exhibiting perhaps.

Surprisingly there were very few instruments or GPS's in evidence. It seems that the emphasis of the show is changing despite the fact that a number of aircraft are available as kits and builders might want to shop around. Presumably a lot of people now shop online so do not need to go to shows such as this for their requirements.

Looking around at the faces present it was noticeable that the majority were in the "upper" age bracket with very few being from the "next generation". One comment heard was that there are a number of GA pilots now "downgrading" to microlights because the performance is comparable or better, the bureaucracy is rather less and costs are much reduced. It seems as if the microlighter of the future will be an ex "Spam Can" driver.

The overall impression was that although there were aircraft available most people were just looking - the scratch of pens signing up for a new aircraft and the sight of crisp new notes changing hands was not in evidence. Somehow the show on the Saturday seemed to lack



Yours for £49500!

atmosphere, pazazz, call it what you like but it was not there.

(Note the above report and comments are purely a personal impression)

BMAA AGM Saturday 24th November 2007 at the NEC by Andrew John

The event was hardly a sell out but it was nevertheless well supported.

Chairman, Keith Negal, gave his report in his usual thorough and professional manner. He highlighted the vast improvement over the last ten years in Microlight flying with the introduction of Paramotors, their deregulation together with the latest sub 110kgs category, and the raising of the MAUW to 450 kgs together with highly innovative designs using the latest in technology and materials. Membership is now over 4000 with a similar number of aircraft on the register, only half of which are actually permitted. One of the most successful achievements during the year was the trip to Australia undertaken by the blind pilot Miles Hilton-Barbour, assisted by Richard Meredith Hardy and Brian Milton. The issue of continuing airspace infringements by all pilots was a very serious matter and every Microlight pilot must help to reduce the risk. He left us in no doubt about the erosion of our future liberties from the mandatory introduction of Transponders for Microlights post 2012

Negotiations continue together with the PFA (to be LAA post Jan 08) over the introduction of the LSA category but he anticipates that the new regulations are unlikely to be as relaxed as at present. There are potentially very serious consequences arising over the pending G-STIKS accident prosecution, with the possibility of the BMAA being sued. As a consequence, "...the effect on the BMAA could be terminal." A sobering thought. Next year's insurance premium has

already risen by £20K. With this situation in mind, and also several others, it is high time the BMAA became a professional organisation, reducing our vulnerability and increasing our authority.

Areas of conflict between the BMAA, PFA(LAA), BGA and BHPAA still need to be resolved, and his vision for the future of the BMAA is as an independent body supporting a unique interest in flying yet closely linked by cooperation with the other flying organisations to negotiate as a united body.

The Treasurer, John Moore, reported an increase in membership renewals but new members had dropped to 500 in the year. He encouraged everyone to find new members urgently. Permit renewals were at a high of 2000. The BMAA will have to face big liabilities in the future with a capital reserve of a modest £500K which is required for fluctuating cash flow funds and operating with no overdraft. Part of the reserves are invested in the BMAA headquarters building. Due to increased costs, an increase of £2 in the membership fee was approved. Net Profit after taxation was £9794. The accounts were approved

The CEO, Geoff Weighell, referred to the Inspection system and individual personal responsibility. Pilots are reminded that they are required to maintain their aircraft in a fit condition to fly safely and to present their aircraft for its annual inspection likewise. A review of the Inspection system was underway with Inspectors' Seminars, review of responsibilities including ensuring that the standards required are made clear and are carried out. He referred to the trend towards a "Claim culture developing" which is regrettable as greater individual responsibility is needed. He too referred to a heavy increase in the insurance premium. He is working hard to represent the BMAA in all negotiations with some success (as reported by the Chairman). Transfer of all

details of members and their aircraft to electronic data is now up to speed. The BMAA shop can now be accessed on the Web.

Chief Technical Officer, John Viner, reported a busy year during which the number of Major and Minor mods completed increased, the number of home builds declined and there seemed to be a tailing off of projects. Response time to queries was down to 5 days, with advice on the fitting of transponders increasing. Inspection procedures for VLA aircraft have been approved and are close to being in place

Chief Inspector/Safety Officer, Rob Hill, reported that the Technical Office procedures have been reviewed and are now available. With 120 Inspectors, instruction seminars have continued. A review of Risk Assessment for Club events is under way.

2007 has been a poor safety year with 11% of all reportable accidents being Microlights resulting in 5 fatalities. Within Microlight accidents now 52% were attributable to three axis, 45% to flex wing and 3% to PHG's. He reminded members that the AAIB should be contacted immediately in the event of an accident resulting in injury to the crew and or significant damage to the aircraft or property. He also emphasised that alcohol and flying is a fatal mixture and is illegal. Anyone witnessing a pilot consuming alcohol should remind them at the time or report the incident to a responsible person. Not easy to do, but it could save lives.

Awards

It was great to see Reece Keene collect the **John Holloway Trophy** for the Best Organised round of the Nationals on behalf of his father Robbie.

Other winners included:

Council Award – for the most outstanding Microlight achievement

given to Miles Hilton-Barbour for his trip to Australia as a blind pilot.

Ashley Doubtfire Trophy – for services to Microlight aviation given to Richard Godding of Whitehill Farm. A popular grass strip owner/operator.

Brian Cosgrove Award – for the Sport's most unsung hero to Peter Scott. The Marshaller at Spamfield.

Seasonal Humour

Why did the pilot land his plane on a house?
Because the landing lights were on!

What did Adam say on the day before Christmas?
It's Christmas, Eve!

For Sale

SkyRanger 912, (Colin Davis' plane)
Xlam coverings, 30 hours. Offers in the region of £20000 to Jim Taylor 07976 818566. NOTE: Jim is handling the sale on behalf of Colin's family.

Acknowledgements

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