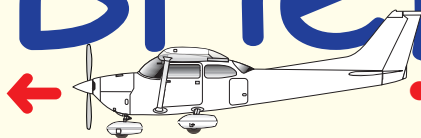


# Briefings



## ATA pilots honoured

The surviving airmen and women of the wartime Air Transport Auxiliary were finally honoured with a special badge of recognition at a ceremony attended by Prime Minister Gordon Brown at No 10 Downing Street in September.

More than 100 survivors and descendents of ATA pilots gathered for a ceremony in which aviation minister Jim Fitzpatrick handed over ATA Veterans Badges before the Prime Minister made a speech thanking them for their invaluable efforts during the Second World War. "Their dedication and

efforts during the Second World War can not be overestimated," Mr Brown said. "They can be rightly proud of their contribution to defending this country during its darkest hours. It is a great privilege to meet so many of them today and to hear of the work they undertook and their sacrifice they made to ensure the delivery of aircraft for the front line."

Also present at the ceremony was Nigel Griffiths MP, who is responsible for the honouring of the men and women who delivered fighters and bombers to operational squadrons, often at great risk – some 173 ATA pilots were killed during the war. Mr Griffiths, a helicopter pilot and AOPA member, read about the ATA in a book he'd been given for Christmas by his wife Sally – Spitfire Women, by Giles Whittell. He was surprised to learn that no formal recognition had been accorded to ATA pilots.

"Many of them, particularly the women, were simply sent home at war's end without so much as a thank you," he said. "Even making allowances for the chauvinism of the times, it was an omission that cried out to be rectified, and given the age of the people involved, it had to be done quickly."

Mr Griffiths, a close friend and informal spokesman for Gordon Brown, urged the Prime Minister to act, and with lightning speed by Whitehall standards it was decided that a special honour should be conferred. In February, Transport Secretary Ruth Kelly announced that a Veterans Badge would be awarded to surviving members of the ATA in recognition of their work. The ATA was responsible for ferrying over 300,000 aircraft



**Above: Nigel Griffiths MP, Prime Minister Gordon Brown and Aviation Minister Jim Fitzpatrick at the ATA Veterans Badge ceremony**

between factories and front-line airfields, freeing RAF pilots for operational duty. By the end of the war some 650 ATA pilots, men and women, delivered 147 different types of aircraft including Spitfires, Hurricanes, Lancasters, Stirlings, Mosquitos and Barracudas. They flew in all weather conditions but had a relatively low accident rate.

The badges were presented to ATA pilots on September 9th.

Nigel Griffiths said: "Some of the best-known pilots like Lettice Curtis were unable to attend, but many others did so, and it was an enormous privilege to meet them. We all owe them a debt of gratitude, and it's never too late to say thank you." ■

### A salute to the ATA, 60 years on



**AOPA member Nigel Griffiths MP** writes about the successful campaign to honour the wartime pilots of the Air Transport Auxiliary, men and women

and James Douglas Hamilton has one of the most remarkable... having served...

## Wings, women and GPS

The British Women Pilots' Association is holding a GPS Day at Cranfield on November 22nd to explain everything you wanted to know about GPS. Attendance counts towards upgrading your AOPA Wings, too.

Dave Broughton of the Royal Institute of Navigation and David Cockburn from the CAA will be among the speakers explaining how GPS works and how to get the best out of your kit. Manufacturers and retailers will be bringing along kit for a detailed show-and-tell. Questions to be addressed are:

- How does GPS work?
- Do I need a GPS?
- What type of GPS should I have?
- How should I use a GPS?
- How does a GPS relate to conventional navigation techniques?
- What safety factors must I be aware of when using a GPS?



**Above: GPS will be demonstrated at Cranfield**

The day starts at 10:30am, and there will be coffee and a buffet lunch. Cost to members is £10, to guests £15. They expect to finish around 3:30pm.

For more details contact Angie Anderson on 01873 856011. ■

## PiperJet flies

**Piper's first jet took to the skies at the end of July and has since made several test flights, with the company devoting the first 50 hours to proving that the PiperJet will do what it says on the tin – 360 knots, a range of 1,300 nm and a ceiling of 35,000 feet.**

The aircraft is powered by a Williams FJ44-3AP engine rated at 3,000 pounds of thrust, but de-rated in the PiperJet to 2,400 pounds. The prototype is close enough to the production model to derive performance numbers from, although it wears the nose of a Piper Meridian, which will be changed.

The first deliveries are scheduled for the end of 2011, and Piper says it has 200 committed orders for the jet, which comes with a \$2.2 million price tag. Two more prototypes will be completed next year for use in certification flying. Piper President Jim Bass says there's a lot riding on the PiperJet. "With this major milestone in the PiperJet's development, we are witnessing our future – one that is built on a strong and lasting heritage and reputation for innovation and excellence," he said.

Piper is continuing to build the Arrow, Archer and Warrior aircraft, but only on demand – they will not be built for dealer stock. The company is also seeing a resurgence in demand for the four-seater twin-engined Seminole, which had been suffering at the hands of the Diamond DA42.



## The Dunkirk spirit

By Steve Copeland



For a number of years I have been among a small group of British aviators invited to participate in the Dunkirk Air Show. This is an annual event sponsored by the local chamber of commerce and coincides with the Dunes of Flanders celebration over the August bank holiday.

Each year we fly in to the event and provide our aircraft for display in the air show, some doing airborne displays and others as static aircraft. In return we experience French style hospitality with wine, food and song.

Other invited participants include the Team Guinot wing walkers with their unique blend of airmanship and showmanship, the Belgian Air Force search and rescue Sea King, the French Marines emergency response helicopter and a host of private aircraft ranging from a Focke Wulf to a Noord, with a few Austers, Pipers and Cessnas thrown in for good measure.

On the first day of the show, as part of the Dunes Festival we participated in a low-level flypast along the beach as a convoy. This naturally required a comprehensive briefing covering heights, distances from the crowd line, aircraft separation distances and routing. I flew in the first group, climbing out to 500ft before turning north towards the beach. Once over the sea I descended to 300ft and reduced my speed to 100kts for my flight along the display line, at the end turning to climb to 1000ft and return to the airfield, the entire flight lasting just 25 minutes. The evening saw us enjoying the pleasant company of our hosts and watching a cabaret.

Sunday morning brought a miserable overcast that seemed to doom the show, which was due to open at 1400 local time, but in late morning the skies started to clear and the flying started. First to perform were the Team

Guinot wing walkers, with their amazing formation aerobatics and crowd-pleasing showmanship. They were followed by displays from the French Marines, the Belgian Air Force and the Cap 232. At the close of the day the rain returned and we filed an airways flight plan, climbed to FL90 over the incoming warm front and arrived back home 90 minutes later in bright sunshine.

One of the things that has struck me over the years of attending European fly-ins and air shows is that we seem to offer nothing similar, in the way of inviting foreign visitors to our events. In an era of increasing integration with Europe and at a time when general aviation needs to present a united front perhaps it is time to start returning these invites? ■

## Flying south for Helitech

If you're suffering withdrawal symptoms in the off-year for Helitech at Duxford, then book your flight to Lisbon for the southern European version of the event, held this year in Portugal from October 14th to 16th.

Eurocopter, the world's largest manufacturer of helicopters, is the latest company to sign up for Helitech 2008, joining such industry stalwarts as Bristow, Pratt & Whitney, European Air Crane and L-3 Communications Wescam. The show takes place at Cascais (LPCS), a GA airfield about ten miles from Lisbon's main airport (LPPT).

European Air Crane is a subdivision of Erickson, who hold the type certificate for the Sikorsky S64 and have turned it into the spidery 10,000 horsepower monster we often see fighting fires or carrying extraordinary loads – up to 11 tonnes. Aerial firefighting is a central theme of Helitech 08; not big business in the UK, it is vital in southern Europe where forest fires are a perennial problem and helicopter water-bombers are often the best tool in the armoury when the terrain gets rugged. Eurocopter is offering a version of the EC725 Cougar as a firefighter.

A vast array of new technology will be on show, most of it aimed at the commercial and military market. Showpieces include terrain-following systems that emit no giveaway electronic signals, surveillance systems and battery analysers. You'll meet many friends and acquaintances there; Hayward Aviation is going, and Adams Aviation and Martin Baker are among the English contingent.

Many visitors are expected from the former Soviet bloc, where the European helicopter industry is doing particularly well. Better technology is the main reason, but there's another side to the coin – many Russian and Polish helicopters are astoundingly rugged and can be fixed in the field if you have a shifting spanner and a twelve-pound hammer. Western manufacturers have been rushing to cement partnerships with eastern bloc companies. Russia is one of the largest markets for Robinson, partly because of what's known as 'partisan' flying. Because so many people can refuse you permission to fly – even the Met man can stop you – pilots resort to 'stealth' flying for which helicopters are ideally suited, needing no public landing sites. It's dangerous, but bad law has dangerous consequences.

For more information about Helitech in Portugal see [www.helitecheurope.com](http://www.helitecheurope.com) ■

## CAA Safety Evenings

Winter will soon be upon us, and the CAA's David Cockburn will once again be criss-crossing the country spreading the gospel of good airmanship with his Safety Evenings. If you've never been to one, *you owe it to yourself to go*. And if you haven't been to one in recent years, perhaps it's time for a refresher – the information changes all the time, the jokes less often.

In all cases the event starts at 1930 hrs and it's worth calling the organisers ahead of time to say you're coming. Here's the timetable up to February 2009:

Date	Location	Organiser	phone
<b>September</b>			
22	Saltby (Grantham), Gliding Clubhouse	Michael Claxton	01476 860287
24	Isle of Man, The Clubhouse, Derbyhaven	Tony Tomlins	01624 852815
<b>October</b>			
20	Teesside, Cleveland Flying Club Bar	Fiona Erol	01325 337572
21	Dundee, Tayside Aviation	Linda Kircaldy	01382 644372
23	Kirknewton 661 VGS	Chris Wilson	0131 449
<b>November</b>			
17	Enstone Flying Club	Paul Fowler	01608 678204
18	Dunkeswell Aerocentre Restaurant	Brendon Proctor	01404 891643
19	Lands End Airport Terminal	Emily Bliss	01736 785227
24	Tibenham, Norfolk Gliding Club	Tim Davies	01379 677207
<b>December</b>			
08	Tollerton, Truman Clubhouse	Jim Marren	0115 9815050
09	Gloucestershire Airport Terminal	Harry Hopkins	01452857700 x227
10	Wycombe TBA	Caroline Herd	01494 443737
<b>2009</b>			
<b>January</b>			
22	Rochester TBA	Kelvin Carr	01634 869969
<b>February</b>			
23	Halfpenny Green, Bobbington Village Hall	Tony Dring	01384 221106

Additions and amendments will appear on the CAA website [www.caa.co.uk/ga](http://www.caa.co.uk/ga).



## Court upholds laser sentence

Two lowlifes who shone a laser beam at a police helicopter have had their appeals against custodial sentences thrown out by the Court of Appeal.

The pair, Ifikitar Hussain and Dulal Miah, appeared before Judge Tudor Owen at Snaresbrook Crown Court in East London after pleading guilty to charges of recklessly endangering an aircraft. Unfortunately for the defendants, Judge Owen knows what he's about in aviation matters – a helicopter pilot who flies the JetRanger and the Gazelle, he is also a fixed-wing pilot who has flown the Atlantic in a light single. While defendants in similar cases have previously enjoyed raps on the knuckles, Judge Owen banged these two up for six months.

Their lawyers thought this was a bit harsh and appealed against the sentence. The Court of Appeal reviewed the facts – the laser light had been shone at the helicopter at night for a period of several minutes, making it difficult for the pilot to see his instruments and forcing

him to take avoiding action. The Appeal Court noted: "His Honour Judge Owen, who plainly took a great deal of care over this case, had before him evidence from Captain Brian Baldwin, a former test pilot with over 35 years of experience as a professional helicopter pilot. He spoke of the great danger to a pilot when night vision is lost and the risks that this creates, especially to pilots of police helicopters who more often have to work at lower altitudes. It requires little imagination to comprehend how a catastrophe could easily occur. From Captain Baldwin the learned judge learnt that incidents of this sort have increased rapidly in the last three years and that, in particular, the use of the green laser pen causes the most trouble and distraction for pilots. In passing sentence the learned judge said: 'The message should go



Judge Tudor Owen

out that people tempted to target helicopters in this idiotic and dangerous way should expect to receive custodial sentences.'

Both accused had previous convictions for offences ranging from stealing cars to burglary, resisting arrest, deception and criminal damage. In a pleasing coda, the Appeal Court noted: "In our view this offence does pass the custody threshold and cannot be properly dealt with by any lesser penalty. Having regard to their pleas of guilty and the limited previous offending, we conclude that the sentence of six months was the least that could properly have been imposed. Therefore these two applications are rejected."

The decision will come as a relief to helicopter pilots who have previously watched offenders walk away; it will also please His Honour Judge Owen. While nobody is keeping score, successful appeals reflect poorly on a judge while unsuccessful ones add a cubit to his stature. Having stuck his neck out on sentencing, he will be relieved to have had the backing of the Appeal Court. ■



## The fast crowd

Concorde pilots and flight engineers gathered at Brooklands Museum on a wet Saturday evening in September for the annual ball of the Concorde Dining Society, a fairly exclusive club that is not accepting new members.

Some 173 members of the society and their guests attended the ball, 45 of them being supersonic pilots and flight engineers, including the only woman in the world qualified to fly passengers faster than the speed of sound, Senior First Officer Barbara Harmer.

Brooklands is home to Concorde G-BBDG, the first British production aircraft and the first aircraft ever to carry 100 passengers at twice the speed of sound. The Museum also displays the 40 percent scale model that used to guard the entrance to the tunnel at Heathrow.

Only 262 pilots ever qualified to fly Concorde, and 134 of them were British. Of the 113 flight engineers who qualified on Concorde, 57 were British.

## Upside down Pup

After a break of more than ten years, Bournemouth Flying Club has reintroduced aerobatics training, using a Beagle Pup B121 Series II.

The Club has also increased the size of its fleet, expanded the tuition on offer and recruited more staff.

Their first aerobatics student was Martin Cruze, a lapsed PPL who is in the process of regaining his licence. Martin flew for half an hour



Above: CFI Vic Foyle (left) and Martin Cruze pre-flight Beagle Pup G-AZCL

with new CFI Vic Foyle, running through a series of loops and rolls. "Unbelievable," Martin says.

The Pup has a Lycoming O-320 producing 150 hp and is stressed to 4.4G. It's a two-plus-two – although the back seats are, of course, empty for aerobatic flight.

If you're interested in aerobatics at Bournemouth, a 30-minute session costs £95. Have a look at their website [www.bfclub.co.uk](http://www.bfclub.co.uk). ■



## Andrew's museum piece

The Fleet Air Arm museum at Yeovilton is to display the Sea King HAS Mk 6 XZ574 flown by HRH Prince Andrew during the Falklands conflict in 1982. The aircraft was officially handed over by the Defence Equipment & Support Rotary Wing Cluster Leader Commodore David Evans RN, and formally received by the 2nd Sea Lord, Vice Admiral Sir Adrian J Johns KCB CBE ADC RN, Head of Naval Heritage (and a former Sea King pilot) on behalf of the Fleet Air Arm Museum Board of Trustees. XZ574 was built by Westland at Yeovil and entered service with the Royal Navy in October 1976. The aircraft was retired from service in 2004 having flown 9,168 hours. It was held in reserve until it was decided that the aircraft could no longer be returned to active service. The Sea King Integrated Project Team (SKIPT),

working closely with colleagues from the Defence College Aeronautical Engineering (Gosport), have prepared the aircraft to appear as it would have done in 1982. Assistance was provided by Vector Aerospace (formerly the Defence Aviation Repair Agency) Fleetlands, who manufactured the stencils and decals for the markings. Westland has resprayed the aircraft in its 1982 colour scheme. The helicopter is expected to go on display next year.