

Letters to the Editor

Memories of Annie

Sir

My *General Aviation* copy for October contained an interesting article by David Ogilvy on the Anson 19. My experience with Ansons goes back to 1940. I had just finished a two-year course at RAF Halton and emerged as a Group 1 tradesman – namely fitter II (E). My rank was AC 1 which meant that I was qualified to work on aero engines (not the airframe) for about £1.5s.0d (£1.25) per week. On arrival at my squadron I was given the job of spark plug servicing – a bit degrading for a Group 1 tradesman – but the advantage was that I had the workshop to myself and very little interference from anyone.

After about two months I assumed that I must have been doing the job fairly well because I was promoted to Leading Aircraftsman – LAC. At this time the war seemed a long way off and I had a nice dull job – but I really envied the chaps wearing black leather flying boots, white aircrew jerseys and sporting a flying bullet badge on their sleeves. Daily they, as air gunners, flew off on North Sea patrols looking for submarines and other unpleasanties in our Anson Mk 1 aircraft. It was a lovely time, and no-one seemed to get hurt. I was delighted one morning to find on DROs (Daily Routine Orders) a request for Group Tradesmen to train as LAC air gunners operating as fitters/riggers and using the Vickers G/O machine gun.

An interview with the station commander was my next move – he considered it unwise since so much had been spent training me to be an engineer, but promised to consider my request. Obviously not too many were as daft as me – within a few days I was on a short course and learning aircraft recognition, Morse, a bit of radio and learning how to hit a drogue towed by a Hawker Henley with a Vickers G/O. This weapon was in use for years and was about as effective as trying to bring down an elephant with an air gun.

Midsummer 1940 was a lovely warm period, rarely an air raid, and I was really getting along fine – they put a gun in the side of our Annies since its armament was poor. One .303 Browning in front, fired by the pilot, and a VGO in the turret. The turret was not hydraulic or electric – one was chained in with a belt and rotated the turret by slinging oneself from side to side.

We happily patrolled the North Sea looking for submarines and finding none, until one day we spotted a long cigar shape in mid Channel. I opened up as ordered and with the rear turret also firing like mad we made a hell of a row to no effect whatsoever. It was in fact no sub, but an invasion barge adrift from Calais. Until then no-one thought an invasion likely – how wrong can one be?

A few days later I realised what a stupid young man I was, since we were attacked by Me 110s and my friend in the turret was killed, and I got away with shrapnel holes in my thick scarf.

Operationally we were paid an extra one shilling and sixpence (7.5p) a day and believe me, there was no glamour, but somehow I always have happy memories of the old Annie – we always got home.

Bill Ison

Cambridge Flying Group

Anson radio compass

Sir,

The photograph of the Anson cockpit on the letters page of October edition of *General Aviation* caught my eye, not least, because of the prominent position of the radio compass control box in front of the co-pilot's position. I acquired one of these a few years ago from an avionics firm near Heathrow, for demonstration purposes in my radio navigation lectures, but, until now had no idea in which aircraft it was installed. The puzzle has now been solved, although I'm sure other aircraft had similar equipment. One of the characteristics of the Anson was, of course, the prominent loop antenna on top of the fuselage, uncovered in the earlier marks, together with the long sense aerial running from the mast above the cockpit to the tail. Unlike modern ADF receivers, the loop had to be turned manually using the right-hand switch on the control panel. In some of the modern restorations, the loop appears to be missing.

Apart from that, the articles on the Anson brought back pleasant memories of when, as an ATC cadet, scrounging rides in the back of a Communications Flight Mk19 (?) from White Waltham in the 1960's and being allowed to sit up front and handle the controls. One trip was in the company of an Air Vice Marshal up to Shawbury. Unfortunately I can't remember his name, but he was very pleasant to us youngsters and we had a nice chat along the way, in spite of the noise!

David Horton

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Fuel debate

Sir:

I read with great interest your article on avgas in the October GA. I was amazed at the tests and quality checks that Avgas goes through and the reasons why it has to be of such good quality

But given this information I can't help wondering why Mogas is certified for use in several light aircraft, which have standard Lycoming or Continental engines.

I know of a flying school in the USA with Cessna 150s run solely on Mogas and I know a German registered C172 likewise, so why is this if the quality is so critical, please explain.

Keep up the good work and love the magazine

Dave Cockburn (the other one)

AOPA chairman George Done writes: It is true that Mogas is not produced to such a stringent specification as Avgas, but the use of Mogas for particular engine/airframe installations is permitted where a Supplemental Type Certificate (STC) is held. The issue of an STC is only granted to an applicant by the appropriate regulatory authority (e.g. FAA or CAA) following a thorough engineering and/or experimental assessment.

See our follow-up article on fuel in this issue – Ed.

Brantly dampers

Sir

Having owned and restored a brace of Brantlys I was most interested by the piece in the October issue of your excellent organ. I would echo the comments about parts availability and tail rotor authority (mainly when hovering with the wind in an awkward quarter), though for one trained on an Enstrom F-28A the latter seemed unremarkable. As you say, performance hasn't moved on much at all in 40 years and indeed in a number of respects the B-2B was and remains the superior of the R22, since the short mast makes it much more stable in the hover and also because the fuel injection means that one is not reaching for carb heat at a critical moment, say the beginning of a descent into a tight site.

Just one thing. I think you rather fell for a standard Brantly excuse about 'balance being sorted when next a visit is made to the track and balance chap'. Neither tracking nor balance are particularly complex, although it can get quite exciting watching the man holding up the flag if

you use the traditional method. What is just as likely to cause a 'one-per' is a damper mismatch, as these small and seemingly insignificant fellows, located at the joint between inner and outer blades and visible in both of your pix (see right) of this unique arrangement, are notoriously difficult to get right, and their damping characteristics appear to alter with age.

All in all, though, as solid, reliable, entertaining and safe a 1960's machine as

one could wish to fly. Not everyone admires them - when I bought my first, my old and bold Enstrom instructor, sadly later the victim of a fatal JetRanger accident, said he'd not stand under a Brantly, let alone fly in one. We had a lot of fun in ours in the periods when they were serviceable, which maybe only serves to illustrate the old engineer's maxim that it's the pilot rather than the aircraft what causes much of the trouble.

Andrew Dent

Africa calling

Sir,

Your October 2005 edition has just been handed to me for reading, and a good read it is too!

"How to buy an aircraft" was good advice but I would question one point in para (b). I quote "giving time for the turbos to cool down and oil to be scavenged" – is that correct? I don't think so.

The reason you let the turbos run down is to ensure that they are not running when the oil supply is not being supplied to the turbocharger bearings. Maybe you could check this one out and correct me if I am wrong.

C Hughes

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Derrick Ings, who wrote the article, replies:

I may be wrong – I am not an engineer – but on the Textron Lycoming website they say: "Following landing, the minimum necessary taxi power will aid in engine cool down. Extending the ground idle cooling period reduces turbocharger temperature and reduces the tendency of turbo-coking following hot engine shutdown (sic). Ideally, a five-minute minimum cooling period is desirable. Following landing, opting for the second turn off can aid the cool down."

I am aware of the 'coking' phenomenon and always understood that, apart from giving the turbos time to cool down, the oil was 'scavenged' from the turbocharger and it is the oil that, were it not scavenged, sits on hot parts and cokes up. Shut down too quickly and the oil is still sitting on hot bearings, and the resultant coking can lead to both short and long term problems.

Derrick Ings

Principal

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Final word from AOPA Chairman George Done, an aeronautical engineer by training and a CEng (Chartered Engineer):

Both are correct. There are, in fact, two issues. The first is to ensure that the turbine shaft has run down and stopped by the time the engine is turned off, otherwise the bearings may be damaged by lack of oil supply. The second is to ensure that the turbine shaft and centre casing has cooled off enough for there to be no danger of the oil remaining in the bearings getting 'cooked', decomposing and leading to 'coking' once the engine has been turned off (and the turbine stopped, as above). If the turbine has been allowed enough time to spool down fully, then the unit would normally also have cooled off sufficiently to avoid coking. David Lombardo, in his book 'Aircraft Systems – Understanding your Airplane', published by TAB, offers the following advice:

"When shutting down the engine, the oil pressure drops to zero, and so does the lubricating capability of the turbocharger. The typical approach and landing are at low manifold pressure, allowing plenty of time for the unit to spool down. But if high manifold pressure is maintained on the approach or is used during taxi, the turbine will still be spinning after engine shutdown, with no lubrication for it. The prudent pilot should set the engine at idle for several minutes prior to shutdown to assure adequate lubrication and spool-down time." ■



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