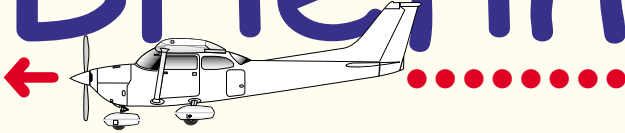


# Briefings



## Cirrus confirms B-N link

As exclusively revealed in *General Aviation* magazine in December, Britten-Norman is to undertake assembly of Cirrus aircraft on the Isle of Wight.

The British company has confirmed it will provide final re-assembly of Cirrus SR20 and SR22 aircraft for delivery to European customers. Britten-Norman may later provide the same service for customers outside Europe.

The work will be done at B-N's facility at Bembridge on the Isle of Wight and post assembly flying will be done there.

Officially announcing the deal, John Bingham, executive vice president for sales and marketing at Cirrus, said: 'We are delighted to have reached this agreement with one of Europe's best known and highly respected aircraft manufacturers. This arrangement brings many new advantages to our European-based customers, the principle feature being that their new airplane will no longer have to endure the rigours of a trans-

Atlantic ferry flight as part of the delivery process."

Ferry flights from the US put some 30 to 40 hours on an aircraft before it reaches the customer.



The recently formulated Aero Composites arm of Britten-Norman is orchestrating the project. Aero Composites is a specialist team who have undergone extensive and training at Cirrus.

Aircraft will still be assembled and given their C of A in Minnesota, but they will then be disassembled and shipped to the Isle of Wight in special containers.

William Hynett, group chief executive of Britten-Norman, said: 'We have already processed the first pilot plane of this joint venture and everything in the re-assembly process worked perfectly. We are projecting 100 planes for the first year.'

Cirrus has delivered some 250 planes to European continent customers, and during 2005 it increased its European sales centres from three to twelve.

## Your name in history?

The year 2006 marks the 75th anniversary of the Schneider Trophy Air Races - why not make it the year you fly for the prize?

The Schneider Trophy is just one of many prestigious air races still held on an annual basis, usually at seven venues in the UK, northern France, the Channel Isles and Ireland.

Today's racing is formulated on the handicap principle and allows any aircraft capable of over a 100mph to compete. An aeroplane's maximum speed is computed against those of the other competitors to handicap the start. The race field is launched in staggered order, slowest first and fastest last. If every pilot flew a perfect race they would all cross the finish line at the same time, but of course (fortunately, some would say) that doesn't happen as skill does come into the equation.

Finishes can, however, be fairly close with the first three or four aircraft coming over the line in five or ten seconds.

This coming season the Royal Aero Club's Records Racing and Rally Association wants to make it a year to remember and is actively seeking new race pilots and navigators. If you aspire to win the Schneider Trophy or the Kings Cup, or better still race for a full season and secure the British or European Race Championship, you can find out everything

## Frequency change

The frequency for Manchester Approach used by pilots on the Manchester low-level route has been changed, effective from January 19th.

The new frequency for a flight information service is 135.0, but Jon Proudlove, general manager of NATS (Manchester), recommends that pilots get the QNH from the ATIS on 128.175, then maintain a listening watch on 135.0.

And keep your eyes peeled.

## Women fly free

The British Women Pilots' Association has arranged 72 free trial lessons as part of its campaign to get more women flying. The lessons, donated by 65 fixed-wing, helicopter, gliding and microlight schools across the UK, were allocated on a competitive basis with 250 women applying for them. The BWPA project also attracted some £3,000 in sponsorship, including a mini-scholarship from Cabair.

The free trial lessons project, part of the BWPA's 50th anniversary celebrations, was run entirely by volunteers and took several hundred woman-hours to achieve. The Association raised some £16,500 during 2005,

which will fund two flying scholarships for disabled women via Flying Scholarships for the Disabled. Round-the-world soloist Polly Vacher received the cheque on behalf of FSD at the BWPA's Christmas party.

Polly says: "It really is an extraordinary

achievement, especially considering that the money has been raised by a group of less than 300 women, all of whom are volunteers."

Fund-raising activities are co-ordinated by the BWPA's Veronica Tanner and included filling Smartie tubes with 20 pence pieces, an auction of promises, raffles, donations and appeals to charities.

- The Amy Johnson memorial Trust is again offering a scholarship worth up to £2,000 to help British women learn to fly. Competition is open to PPLs who want to obtain their CPL/ATPL, but candidates must have passed all ground exams, and the medical, by the closing date for applications - February 28th.

Assistance is also available to holders of a CPL or frozen ATPL towards an instructor rating, multi-engine IR, or CRM rating. Applications are available from Mrs E Tucker, 12, Church lane, Merton Park, London SW19 3PD

**Polly Vacher, left, receives the cheque on behalf of the FDA at the BWPA's Christmas party**



you need to know by attending the Royal Aero Club's one-day Air Race School at North Weald on 30th or 31st March.

The course is designed to equip budding competitors with all the information and documentation required to be a race pilot or navigator, and culminates in a mock air race



flight, either in your own aircraft or one provided by the 3Rs with an experienced race pilot. The system also provides mentor support for the first few races.

The Air Race School costs a modest £30 for pilots and £15 for navigators - plus the cost of aircraft usage. If you can't provide your own machine the 3Rs will supply a Pup 150 or Bulldog race aircraft from SkysportUK, who are helping to organise the event.

For further information contact the Race Training School at 01285 851 311 or via rogerhayes@dial.pipex.com - *Geoffrey Boot*

## Memories of Eastchurch

A group of aviation enthusiasts is planning a multi-million-pound museum project to commemorate Eastchurch airfield on the Isle of Sheppey in Kent.

The Flying Start project is being led by Sheppey Heritage Trust in partnership with Swale Borough Council, local regeneration group Swale Forward and HM Prison Service, which runs a jail on part of the old airfield.

Flying Start plans to acquire 20 acres of land at Eastchurch, including some of the original airfield hangars and buildings, which require major refurbishment. Architects engaged by the consortium have drawn up plans for a "big wing" building as a focal point for the tourist attraction, and an application has been made for additional lottery funds.

The irony of cash being available for a facility to commemorate an airfield when airfields are closing down all over – and neither the money nor the will exists to keep them open – is not lost on Flying Start. Spokesman Stuart Disbrey, who learned to fly on Chipmunks at Manston and was bitterly disappointed when the beautifully-preserved remains of nearby Hawkinge were sold for housing, says: "The idea here is not merely to create a museum. The project has to serve its local community and aid regeneration, so there are plans for conference and educational facilities, training and engineering workshops and so on.

"Unfortunately Eastchurch went out of service in 1947 and was pretty well built on by HM Prisons thereafter. That said, it's largely due to the fact that the early 20th century airfield buildings were put to use as a prison farm that they remain in an original state – which allows for the Flying Start project to have a point from which to begin."



**Above: Alan Flint, Flying Start Project Manager, and Bill Croydon, Secretary of Sheppey Heritage Trust. Inset: architect's sketch of the Eastchurch 'big wing'**

It was from nearby Leysdown that Claude Moore-Brabazon began flying in April 1909. In that year the Wright Brothers visited Sheppey and contracted with Short Brothers, then balloon manufacturers from Battersea, to build Wright Flyers at a new factory which later moved to Eastchurch. Stuart Disbrey says: "It was here that the Royal Naval Air Service set up its first air school, which gave rise to the first British combat squadron. Hence it is effectively the birthplace of the RAF since the RNAS and the RFC combined in 1918 to become the RAF that we know today."

Andrew Bowles, Chairman of Swale Forward, says: "Visitors to Flying Start will be able to participate in a wide variety of live activities in an ultra-modern and innovative environment while walking in the footsteps of the great pioneers who, a hundred years ago, set the foundations of Britain's aviation industry."

They won't be able to fly, though. Says Stuart Disbrey: "Putting the site back to aviation use is not, to the best of my knowledge, currently part of the plan. But

### Chart delay

The CAA has delayed the release of the new Sheet 8 England South VFR quarter mil in order to incorporate minor airspace changes that are still being worked on. Edition 10 of the chart had been due for publication on February 16th but will now be released on April 13th.

never say never – much of the site is being retained by HMP prisons. If and when they decide to dispose of it – who knows?"

If you have any Eastchurch memorabilia you'd like to see at Flying Start, contact Alan Flint at The Flying Start Project, c/o Jarmans Solicitors, Bell House, Bell Road, Sittingbourne, phone 01795 472291.

## Winkle speaks

Captain 'Winkle' Eric Brown CBE DSC AFC FRAeS is giving a talk on his extraordinary life and times in March, and if you don't know his story (or even if you do) it promises to be an entertaining and informative evening.

After World War Two Captain Brown, who is believed to hold the record for the number of types flown, commanded the Enemy Aircraft Flight – an elite group of pilots whose job it was to test-fly captured German aircraft. He also carried on test flying of the DH108 after Geoffrey de Havilland was killed when the original broke up. He was the first man to land a jet on a carrier, and has the distinction of having taught himself to fly a helicopter. These were just a few high points in a truly amazing aviation career. The talk is at Brockham Village Hall, Brockham, Surrey (near Dorking) and starts at 8pm on Wednesday 8th March. There is no admissions charge, but a collection will be made for the charity that Captain Brown has nominated.

If you want to go, please email [andrew-sinclair@btconnect.com](mailto:andrew-sinclair@btconnect.com), as places are limited.

## GAPAN scholarships

The Guild of Air Pilots and Air Navigators is offering several fixed-wing PPL scholarships and a few FI(R) scholarships for fixed and rotary wing in 2006. Courses include two jet orientation scholarships courtesy of EPST, and of course the J. N. Somers scholarship for a full frozen ATP course at a CAA approved school.

Applications can be downloaded from the Guild's website at [www.gapan.org](http://www.gapan.org) – look in the 'career advice' section. Closing date for applications to be received (by post only) is April 6th, and training will be completed during the summer of 2006 at a school of the successful applicants' choice – subject to Guild approval.