

Briefings



Choose your dates for Duxford

Roll up, roll up... do you have Duxford in your diary? For the sixth year they're running a whole series of fly-in Bonus Days, with something for everyone in the programme. The first is just days away, on April 16th – it's the Safety Day, a great way to knock the winter rust off.

The Safety Day will be a mixture of informal presentations and opportunities to chat to the professionals. The presentations will be repeated, so you can arrive and leave when it suits you best. In recognition of the importance of the safety theme, there's no charge for the Safety Day programme and the landing fee is discounted to £7. For the Safety Day only, if the weather is poor or if you can't fly in, you can come in free by car as long as you pre-book.

There's a huge body of expertise available for you to tap throughout the day. Presentations run from 11.30 to 13.15 and will be repeated between 14.00 and 15.45 local time. Speakers include

Jonathan Smith of NATS, on controlled airspace infringements; Martin Smith of the Distress and Diversion cell on how D&D can help you; Andy Sephton on stall-spin accidents; and Ian Simpson from the Met Office on 'weather – five things to spoil your day'. These people will also be available for one-on-one chats in the 'table-top' sessions, where you can just walk up to an expert sitting behind a desk and discuss whatever interests you. The experts include Colin Potter of AIS, who has practical tips on using the Notams system, Chris Royle and Mick Elborn from AOPA, talking about the mentoring scheme, some FISOs from the London area, Jonathan Bolton from NATS, demonstrating the Airbox Aware and playing hair-raising radar replays, Andy McKnight from Farnborough LARS, talking about the service they provide, Carol Cooper, the CFI at Andrewsfield, ready to answer any question you care to ask about instruction, Simon Bennett from NATS who gives AFPEX demonstrations – increasingly

important with the Olympics coming up – and tips on how to file flight plans, Neil Williams from the CAA whose field is GA airworthiness, operations and other CAA topics, and GASCo chief executive Mike O'Donoghue, who can tell you what the accident reports really mean.

Here's the full Bonus Day programme for the year:

April 16th Bonus Safety Day; arrive in any light aircraft (or by car), free Safety Day admission, talks and demos all day.

May 14th Flyer magazine Bonus Day; see Flyer for details

June 11th New PPL fly-out and experience-building Bonus Day; arrive in any aircraft with a more experienced PPL in the right seat to help. (See the article on AOPA's Mentoring Scheme in the 'AOPA Working for You' section.)

July 16th RV Bonus Day; arrive in any RV aircraft.

Sept 10th AOPA Bonus Day; two-way dialogue with AOPA team, talks from guest presenters. (See Chris Royle's article on the AOPA Bonus Day in the 'AOPA Working For You' section of this magazine.)

Call Duxford on 01223 833376 to register your interest, book your landing slot, get your PPR/Briefing, and receive the programme for the day. For more details look at their website <http://duxford.iwm.org.uk>

There may still be pilots out there who haven't visited the museum. If so, you're in for a treat. Duxford was originally a First World War airfield and began the Second World War as an RAF fighter station, home of Douglas Bader's 'big wings'. Later the Americans took over, and now it's home to a huge collection of vintage aircraft, many of which you won't see anywhere else. The fabulous American Air Museum building houses everything from a B-17 Flying Fortress to an SR-71 Blackbird. They also have the new £25m AirSpace hangar, which will be the only place to see British warplanes if we carry on the way we're going. Lancaster, Vulcan, Spitfire, Mosquito, Tornado, Harrier – we used to be quite good at that. Duxford is also home to specialist engineering companies rebuilding and flying historic aircraft. It's not unknown to have a B-17, a Mustang and an F-86 Sabre in the circuit, and you don't get that at Headcorn. ■



Simon Long

Left: give yourself a treat and visit the AirSpace Hangar at the Imperial War Museum

Aircraft sales fraud

There has been an upsurge in fraud involving aircraft sales, with some victims having lost five-figure sums, and buyers are warned that however plausible the seller, however legitimate-seeming the sale, however 'refundable' the deposit, money should only ever be paid into escrow, with a reputable agency chosen by yourself.

The fraud involves mainly helicopters and centres on online sales, which are infested with adverts for aircraft which are not owned by the advertiser and which offer them for sale at prices significantly below their true value. Believed to be originating from Nigeria, this fraud is far removed from the old mis-spelled email scams – it is a sophisticated, multi-level operation which has succeeded in parting some fairly shrewd people from their money.

Things to watch out for include an excessively low offer price – one Bell 407 was priced at \$1 million below its market value – and often, an 0702, 0703 or 0704 phone number, which are a fraudsters dream; known as 'platform numbers', they look like mobile numbers but charge premium rates and connect to the owner's mobile, which is usually outside the UK. The ultimate beneficiary is virtually untraceable.

Similar frauds have been endemic to the car sales industry, particularly online, but have become a particular problem in aircraft sales in the last six months. The economic situation has made matters worse – it's easier to believe there are distressed sellers out there. The international nature of the business also contributes. Some buyers are sucked in in the belief that they are buying from a distressed owner in Europe and can make a good margin shifting the helicopter in Asia or elsewhere.

One such buyer contacted Mark Souster, Managing Director of Patriot Aviation, to get background information on a Robinson R44. Mr Souster says: "This chap is Malaysian, he knew me, and as it happened I knew the R44 he was thinking of buying, I knew the owner and I thought it unlikely that it was for sale because he'd only just bought it. I checked with him, and he confirmed the machine was not on the market.

"The would-be buyer had been told by the fraudulent seller that there was a lot of interest in the helicopter, but that he would take it off the market if he received a refundable deposit. The buyer could then have the machine surveyed, and if he didn't want to buy, he could have his deposit back.

"This time no money was lost, but on a

previous occasion we had a buyer turning up with his engineer to survey an aircraft which was not for sale, and he had already paid a 15 percent deposit."

Patriot sales executive Stuart Metcalf said the fraudsters had often prepared the ground well, held all the technical specifications of the helicopter, and knew the market. One had provided a photostat of the picture page of his passport, which was a forgery. Others have sent purchase agreements, and in some cases escrow details have been provided, but the supposed escrow agency is part of the scam.

"They are bold, sometimes ingenious, they know what they're talking about, and have perhaps posed as buyers of the aircraft themselves in order to gather all the technical specifications," he says. "Most adverts are for helicopters like the R44, where the deposit would be serious but not massive. They also seem to go for the Bell 206, and I know of one JetRanger owner who's been hit twice.

"There are a lot of dodgy adverts online, but most of the websites will take them down as soon as we alert them to them. Some, however, we have real difficulty with – they don't answer emails or acknowledge contact, and clearly fraudulent adverts continue to be posted."

One sales outfit which has not acknowledged contacts is www.aviatorsale.com, where at the time of writing there are several clearly fraudulent sales offers. To see an example, go to the website, click on 'Piston Helicopter' on the right and scroll down to 'Robinson R44 Clipper II w/AC & Pop Out Floats'. This advert is correct in every detail apart from the number of hours the helicopter has flown – the advert claims 90, the true figure is 736. The owner and his address are real, but the phone number, given as '(0)70-2407-3749' is a premium-rate platform number linked to a Nigerian mobile. This helicopter is genuinely advertised elsewhere, with correct details.

Now click on 'Turbine Helicopters' and scroll down to 'Bell 206L-4 Longranger IV' offered at \$1,750,000. The seller 'Eric Henderson' does not exist, but a chap with a very similar name does. The registration on the picture has been Photoshopped out, but this helicopter is genuinely for sale, at £1.9 million. No phone number is provided, but you can make one-way email contact with the 'seller' through the website.

Stuart Metcalfe says: "You might think it looks pretty basic but these fraudsters have answers for almost everything and can be very plausible. Sensible and suspicious people have lost money on these scams."

One final note: if you get as far as paying a deposit into escrow, do not use the escrow agency or legal firm nominated by the 'seller'. Choose your own. ■

Put your nav skills to the test

It's TopNav time again – pit your navigation and airmanship skills against fellow pilots on a handicapped basis, and win prizes! Crews are challenged to navigate a route and test their skills in the arts of flight planning, map reading, and dead reckoning, and no matter what your navigational experience, it'll work for you.

Crews fly around 200nm with eight to ten waypoints, which are fully described as a combination of VOR radials and ranges and lat/longs. For aircraft of limited endurance or low cruising speed there is a shorter route of around 120nm. Handicaps are imposed according to the crews' flying experience and the type and number of nav aids carried. You're encouraged to use the aids that you're happiest with, and the judges will be looking for accurate, efficient and safe navigation combined with good airmanship.

The winners of the competition will be presented with the TopNav trophy and vouchers for £100. There are seven trophies, which are presented at the Royal Institute of Navigation's AGM in July. On several occasions in past years the presentations have been made by their patron, the Duke of Edinburgh.

The 2011 TopNav competitions take place at Gamston on 14 May and at White Waltham on 21 May 2011 and are open to both members and non-members of the RIN. Further details on the competition can be found on the RIN website, www.rin.org.uk (select the competitions flag and then TopNav) or by telephone 0207 591 3130.





Simon Martin

Cambridge Airport has changed its name again and is extending its hours, removing restrictions on training and making a moving to make itself more GA-friendly and attract more European business aviation. The name game has been interesting: two years ago Cambridge City Airport became Marshall Airport Cambridge, but henceforth it will market itself as Cambridge Airport. The airport seems to be positioning itself as a business aviation hub for south east England, with the new Airport Director

Archie Garden stressing that London is only 50 minutes away. The airport has ILS and GPS approaches and can accept flights around the clock. The old restriction which allowed training only before 1800 has been scrapped, and training can now be authorised up to 2100 during the week. The airport is working on extending training hours further, up to 2200.

Cambridge wants to raise its profile in Germany, Holland, France and Ireland. "We have a superb set of facilities for these pilots including full air traffic control,

refuelling, 24 hour security, seven days a week opening, and navigational aids," says Archie Garden. "We also offer a full handling service but this is not compulsory for GA aircraft under four tonnes."

GA inhabitants of Cambridge include Cambridge Flying Group, where ab initio training can still be undertaken on the Tiger Moth, and Cambridge Aero Club, whose fleet includes four Cessna 172SPs, one of which has a Garmin 1000 panel, and an Extra 200. Landing fee for aircraft under two tonnes is £25 for cash, £27 otherwise.

According to the owners Marshalls, Cambridge is a viable option for the City of London, with the drive to Canary Wharf taking 50 minutes. The airport also serves the horse-racing community centred on nearby Newmarket. ■

Rougham gets blessing

Rougham Aerodrome near Bury St Edmunds has been issued with a Certificate of Lawful Use through the good offices of the town planning consultants Kember Loudon Williams, and is now considering the re-erection of a dismantled and stored hangar. The field has permission from St Edmundsbury Borough Council for storage of ten gliders and a tug. It has two runways, one 960 metres long, the other only 400 metres, and can be used during the hours of daylight.



Rougham Aerodrome, From the South East
2pk aerial photograph
K04/037/06 17 Nov 2005

GPS interference

Worries are increasing that fourth generation satellite-based broadband will interfere with GPS signals – so much so that the Federal Communications Commission has forbidden the company involved from transmitting until a full evaluation has been made. LightSquared Satellites has launched one 4G satellite and will launch another next year. The two satellites will transmit in the L-Band spectrum, close enough to the GPS spectrum to cause significant interference concerns with GPS signals.

GPS interference, unintentional or deliberate, would cause chaos and is likely to become of increasing concern. In Europe, the EC has approved the use of Egnos, our equivalent to the American WAAS system, for 'safety-of-life' aviation services. Egnos consists of transponders aboard three geostationary satellites, a ground network of 40 positioning stations and four control centres. It's a precursor to Galileo, Europe's own GPS satellite network, which will apparently be launched when Europe has the money.

Glass Robins

Finch Aircraft, who are now the manufacturers of the DR400 range of Robin aircraft, have announced that from early summer all new aircraft will have, as an option, a glass cockpit based on the Garmin 500. This includes the Lycoming-engined 180hp Regent, the 200hp President, and the Centurion diesel engines Ecoflyer 135 and 155. The Garmin 500 will also be available as a retrofit for UK-based Robins and will be installed here in the UK