



WAYPOINT>

The Priory Farm Aviators' Newsletter – August 2021

Monthly meetings are held on the first Wednesday at 7.30 PM.
Summer venue (May to Sept): Priory Farm; Winter venue (Oct to April): Various

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Light winds and the occasional shower are the forecast – as it now stands – for the early evening of **Wednesday 4 August**, the date of our next BBQ. Hot coals provided; bring your own nosh and cooking/eating tools.

For the record, there was a fair turnout for the last evening cook-out, on 7 July, in spite of a clash with the footie on TV. The Committee elected to give its attention to the latter, so there is no meeting to report upon in this newsletter.

Hope springs eternal for a resumed calendar of Autumn and Winter pub events. Members will be advised when the outlook becomes clearer.

LOST & FOUND

Unless someone has already claimed them, perched atop the key safe in the club hut are two pairs of spectacles and two ratchet screwdrivers, as shown below.



Barry Bucknell meets The Two Ronnies

MONEDDEN Fly-In

On **Sunday, 29 August** Steve Eustace will be holding his Monewden Airfield open-day/fly-in. If you are interested in attending, PPR must be obtained from the Suffolk Strut in the person of Martyn Steggalls.

www.suffolkcoastalstrut.org.uk

General information is available on the event and on airfield procedures at

www.monewdenairfield.co.uk

Seething 'Fast & Slow' Fly-In

Sunday, 8 August

Landing £10; Lunch £7

More at:

seething-airfield.co.uk/events.html

or e-mail: mutford@outlook.com

The Perils of being a PFA Chairman

John Fielding enters the confessional . . .

"A week ago, I received a 'phone call relating to Priory Farm. As my name and number are on the website, this isn't strange—but the conversation was.

The man introduced himself, telling me that he had a couple of Stearman aircraft and operated a wing-walking operation from Headcorn airfield in

Kent. We had a short chat about the business before he asked me whether we had a spa.

My first thought was that he wanted to move his business to an airfield that could offer something more than just wing walking so I explained that we were a small airfield in the middle of nowhere with a tiny club hut and nothing resembling a spa.

I could practically hear him smiling down the 'phone when he pointed out that he was actually looking for a *wing spar*."

However, the PFA does have some Covid grant money to spend . . .



Last edition, we recorded the arrival of Auster G-BLPH and Sherwood Ranger G-

SWAB; this time, it is farewell to Allan Hampson's Groppo Trail **G-OPPO** which has been sold to one John Graham* and departed late June to a private strip near Bath; and Stearman **N75TQ** which left on 7 July on its way to new owner near Arcachon, France.



Farewell, me old 'Oppo. Pictured on 8 June, Allan Hampson demonstrates his Groppo to John Graham a few minutes before the sale is agreed

So, two in; two out. Can anyone spot another connection? *Who's noticed that all four are yellow? What are the chances of that?*

** If I have puzzled younger members with the earlier reference to Barry Bucknell, prepare to be further bamboozled, because Mr Graham lives near Bristol. In fact down Fieldfare Close, K-E-Y-N-S-H-A-M. At No. 17, though; not 208.*

More comings and goings in the closing days of July have seen the departure of Eurostar **G-CFFE** to a new owner in



Cambridgeshire. The aircraft will not be replaced, which means us saying farewell to a long term member of our merry band, **Ray Osborne**, who hangs up his flying helmet after two decades at the

Farm, flying a Coyote, a CT (both with late wife, Anita) and the Eurostar. Don't lose touch, Ray.

Another long-term friend is David Hunter, who took delivery of Skyranger Nynja **G-FIDO** on 29 July. The aircraft, which has a 12-month permit, was built in 2015 and currently has 109 hours to its credit.

Expected soon is a second Chilton DW1A, **G-CDXU**. Also second-hand (it was built in 2007), it might feel as if it were coming home, for the builder and nominal first owner was none other than our own Roger Burrows. Most recently, it has been registered to a two-man partnership in the Home Counties.

Something else: 7 July was the first day for many years that there has not been a Boeing Stearman in the hangars at Priory Farm.



John Fielding captured this moment of history on 7 July as N75TQ departed Priory Farm, leaving us bereft of Stearmen



Two members have comments to make on Adrian Hall-Carpenter's newly-arrived 'Canadian' Auster G-BLPG.

Chris Jefferson writes:

It's good to see the Auster G-BLPG has arrived at Priory Farm, because it's an aeroplane in which I gained some notoriety in my younger years!

In the early 1990s, the aircraft belonged to a chap called Peter Valentine. His wife was a very well-

known psychic medium in the 1960-70s, and I used to fly with Peter on occasions and attended a number of fly-ins with him in the Auster, which was a good example of the marque.

At the time, I was at secondary school and as part of my business studies course I managed to persuade the headteacher and governors that having a 'small' airshow as part of the school's Summer fete would be a good source of income. The Kent Air Ambulance, then in its infancy, being the main beneficiary of the fundraising, was so taken with the idea that their helicopter became the first static display aircraft—joined shortly after by a Rotorway Executive, a Clutton Fred, Luton Minor, CFM Shadow, Thruster TST, and a couple of flex-wing microlights.

I think I jokingly suggested to Peter that his bright yellow Auster would make a great exhibit too, and he agreed. The school field was 500 yards long and had unobstructed approaches.

The schools' governors and local authority were reasonably happy to permit flying from the school field within reason—and what better way to test it than try it out for real. So off we went in the Auster.

We flew a couple of approaches and then committed to the landing, which was all very uneventful. The same, however, couldn't be said for the headteacher who was apoplectic when we appeared shortly before morning break time, because the school office hadn't passed on the message warning of our impending arrival!

Sadly, the day of the air show came and, as is the way with the English summer, it was grey and wet with a cloud base of 300 ft. It improved enough in the afternoon for Pete Kynsey to display his Cosmic Wind 'Ballerina' and Chris Bellhouse in his Harvard.

It was a great shame the weather went sour as we had a great line up totalling eleven aircraft taking part the flying display, the main highlights in the programme being the A-10 solo display from the 81st TFW at Bentwaters and Lindsay Walton's F4U Corsair. The terrible weather prevented both from appearing. Remarkably, the event didn't lose any money. In fact, I think we ended up giving a £500 donation to the Air Ambulance!

I can also shed some light on the reason the registration of the Auster was changed from G-AZIH to G-BLPG: the owners who restored it were Len and Peter Groves so the last three letters are their initials.

Chris Barnes offers the following:

I couldn't resist adding to your account of Adrian's new acquisition, as I am a bit of an Auster nerd! The first aeroplane I owned was J/5P G-AOFM bought in 1977, subsequently replaced with the last "Auster" to be built at Rearsby, Husky OE-DEW for which I managed to obtain the "not to be allocated" period

registration G-AXBF when I repatriated it in 1984. Via the Auster Club I met Al and Dot Mathie over 40 years ago...those were the days.

I have a scan of G-AZIH from *Auster Quarterly*, Summer 1975 and the caption says, "Suitably inscribed 'The Last J/1N' G-AZIH made its first flight at Lee-on-Solent on January 19th, 1975,"

The cutting Chris Barnes provided is of interest, proving my assumption last month (that the aircraft was built by Auster, but then stored for a decade) to be an oversimplification. Despite its official build date of 1959, the aircraft was, according to Les Groves, "built by me at my home from parts remaining on the shelf,"

Its Auster 'pedigree' comes from the fact that its airframe number (3395) is from a batch reserved for latter-day J1Ns but which was not completely used up before the line closed. Consequently, it has never seen the inside of the factory at Rearsby while in one piece. Surely, assigning an unused manufacturer's serial number does not make an aircraft a product of that manufacturer—So, is it really an "Auster" or an "Auster Replica"?

And further: Observant readers will have noted that Adrian's aircraft is described both as a J/1N and a J1N in recent correspondence. Other Auster aircraft are, mostly, referred to in literature as J/1, J/2, J/4 and J/5 types.

However, an extensive search of contemporary documents has failed to reveal a single forward slash in any registration document, type certificate, Pilot's Notes booklet, or advertisement for any Type-J Auster.

The slash seems to be an invention of the aviation press and aircraft enthusiasts—and many of the latter insist it is the 'correct' form of identity (which presumes, therefore, that the idiot manufacturer can't even be trusted to designate his own aeroplanes correctly).

The prototype Type-J was G-AFWN, a conversion of a pre-war Taylorcraft Plus C, which was revealed to the media in late 1945. *Flight* magazine and *Jane's All the World's Aircraft* both described it as a "J.1" (with full-stop) whereas, in reference to the same press launch *The Aeroplane Spotter* said it was a "J/1". Its registration document gives the full designation as "Auster V Series J.1".

Confusion from the beginning; but a very shaky foundation on which to build the case for a forward slash. Full-stop or no punctuation. . . perhaps. But please, nobody mention the hyphen (J-1, etc) which appears in the reference book, *British Civil Aircraft 1919-1959!*

