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Ricardo's Air Cam in action. Photo from Bill Leftwich's presentation

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE EXPERIMENTAL AIRCRAFT ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH AFRICA

During the past month the EAA, and in particular Chapter 322, hosted an honoured guest from Chapter 1514 Savannah USA by the name of Bill 'Lefty' Leftwich.

Bill is a senior airworthiness inspector at Gulfstream and co-designer of the Lockwood Air Cam as flown by Ricardo out of Krugersdorp. In fact Bill helped to build that very airframe and likes to visit from time to time to see that she is being looked after properly. The aviation roots go further back than that, Bill grew up travelling the world as the son of a Pan Am pilot Capt. A. J. 'Lefty' Leftwich who is planning to fly his Quicksilver Sprint ultralight solo to celebrate his 97th birthday on 06 August 2014.

Bill presented the story of his father's flying career at the EAA Auditorium. A story that starts in 1940 with Lefty Snr earning his wings on a Piper Cub and advanced training on a Waco UPF-7, includes highlights such as flying the Boeing 314 Clipper to Hawaii and the Martin Mariner PBM-3R flying boat

across the Pacific to deliver war supplies. Continues with Douglas DC-4 and DC-6 aircraft, as the age of the great flying boats comes to an end, and winds down with him retiring from Pam Am in 1977 as a Boeing 727 Captain and buying a Cessna 172 a few years later.

This is a wonderful story of a flying career and more details will be made available on the newly revamped EAA.org.za website that will soon be going live.

We also intend to showcase our members' aircraft and projects in a regular feature, so it is fitting that this month we look at the Air Cam.

Chris 'Grumpy' Hicks from Chapter 1502 would like to remind the flock that the Chapter is hosting a FREE two-day First Aid course for its members, run by the Red Cross. All you need to do is contact him with your preference of either two days over one weekend or two consecutive Saturdays.
cdmhicks@hotmail.com

Whassup!

Saturday 05 April
ATNS/JLPC (Johannesburg Light Plane Club) Fly-in for breakfast/ lunch at Bara-G
cwatson@stithian.com
&
322 Teddy Project Krugersdorp
marie@takingchargeevents.co.za

Thursday 10 April
EAA Aviation Legends Talk Show
Maj. Gen. Hugh Paine SAAF (Ret)

Friday 11 - 13 April
Zebula SAA Airshow
pdweich@mweb.co.za

Thursday 01 - 04 May
EAA National Convention
&
Aero Club Weekend
Bethlehem

Wednesday 14 May
Chapter 322 Meeting,
Dickie Fritz MOTH Hall
(NB - 2nd week of May)



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EAA National Convention

Bethlehem 01 - 04 May 2014
by Paul Lastrucci, EAA of SA National President



The EAA National Convention 2014 is upon us and, after much discussion with our EAA members over the past six months or so, we have had to re locate from the beloved Margate and a slightly different approach has been adopted for this year's EAA Convention by joining the AeroClub of SA Air week at

the Bethlehem Airfield. Bethlehem has always been a favourite as it is centrally located and is the 'best effort' location-wise to encourage prospective homebuilt pilots and builders to come and visit, and some may even take up the challenge of building or restoring their own aircraft. Or simply put, just to enjoy flying as part of our wonderful EAA fraternity here in South Africa. At the same time we want to extend an invitation to anyone who is interested in aviation to join us and to assure them that a warm welcome awaits them.

This is in keeping with the EAA that was formed some 60 years ago by enthusiasts who wanted to build and fly their own aircraft - we encourage the restoration of vintage aircraft and show old classics and Warbirds. Whatever it may be, if it flies it is welcome. Aircraft judging will take place on the Friday and Saturday so make sure to enter your aircraft. It is astounding how much you can learn from the judging process.

With this year's convention we aim to provide an ideal opportunity to touch and feel and relive the freedom that EAA members enjoy. We aim to cultivate the inclination to design and create an aircraft of own design and fly it amongst our members and visitors, or for anyone attending to just dream about all types of personal flying, from experimental or amateur built aircraft to the vintage or classic beauties or Warbirds. Most of all, to just enjoy aviation for whatever reason you may have.

With these objectives in mind, what can attendees expect from this year's convention? In short, we will be creating an interesting, highly informative show and tell environment, offering our members and friends the opportunity to attend forums and share in discussions with old acquaintances and new friends. It will be a golden opportunity to continue or rekindle the passion for sport aviation.

The Bethlehem area in the eastern Free State is a scenic part of our country and any flights over this area provides exhilarating sightseeing that our pilots and friends can enjoy.

In keeping with the stated objectives of the EAA worldwide, our primary goal in the EAA of SA is to provide a platform for our members to participate in many aspects of personal sport aviation. We need to bear in mind that many EAA members participate in general aviation, but enjoy sharing the passion of being involved in a fraternity that exemplifies exceptional skills and camaraderie with like-minded friends who are usually found in hangars over weekends and where the day almost always concludes with a roaring fire and a beverage of choice as the perfect ending to a perfect day of happy flying and safe landings. Let's all pull together to ensure that the 2014 convention is no less than that. Above all, let's have fun!

Blue skies, Paul



EAA at Hobby-X

06 - 09 March 2014

by Paul Lastrucci

I would like to take this opportunity of thanking all the volunteers and Chapter 322 in particular for once again helping to make Hobby-X such a great success this year. It is fitting to make special mention of Chapter 322 Chairman Karl Jensen, members Rob Nilius, Trixie Heron and Clive King who really went the extra mile to make the most of our EAA stand. A lot of organising goes into this kind of event, and these guys went all out to get things done well and in good time. Also, great thanks and appreciation to Archie Kemp and his Signco team for making up the new banners at literally the eleventh hour, as well as to Jeremy 'Moose' Woods who came specially to help us man the stand on Thursday afternoon despite suffering from painful broken ribs – Moose, thanks a million... now that's what we call real dedication!

Special mention goes to the AeroClub GM Kev Storie, Sandra and Nicole who manned the AeroClub table, and the ever-enthusiastic Mike Blyth, Andrew Pitman, Kyle Beckett, Gareth Bosch, Vaughn Drew and the whole Airplane Factory team for helping us take our display stand to a new level with their impressive Sling display. I also want to thank Bob Skinner of SAMAA, his wife Marietjie and daughter Mariska for complementing the show with the model aircraft display and for so patiently fielding a lot of questions from hordes of visitors. Junior World Model Aircraft Champion Roston Dugmore's aerobatic display in the Dome with his feather-light radio-controlled foam model was a real showstopper. It was great having a Junior World Champion strutting his stuff right there in our midst. Model flying is usually the initial seed-planter in the minds of budding aviation enthusiasts. Many thanks also to Athol Franz who always gives us a multitude of

African Pilot magazines to hand out and help spread the aviation gospel amongst the flying enthusiasts and hobbyists.

Chapter 322's Teddy build graced the stand and prompted a lot of interest from visitors. Members of Chapter 322's Teddy build team were on hand throughout the show to pass on information and advice, thanks to all the technical guys headed up by Kevin Hopper, Neville Du Piesanie, Sid Bottom and Derek Orford.

The outstanding success of the Sling aircraft in South Africa and beyond is always a show-stopper. The round the world video kept many viewers riveted (excuse the pun, haha) on just how well designed, solidly built and thoroughly reliable the Sling really is. Many of the visitors could not comprehend that this feat was done not only once, but twice and then some! They were captivated by being able to see a build in progress right in front of them, which is the best possible way to establish awareness and spark enthusiasm for aviation.

In closing, I just want to say that it's great to be associated with all you guys who always go out of your way to share your passion for Sport Aviation in this country. Equally, to all the volunteers who helped man the stand and all our members who visited Hobby-X and came to support us at the EAA stand, you really did us proud. Of course there are always lessons to be learnt from every one of these events, and we will be sure to put on an even better show next year. Lastly many thanks to Gloria Bastos and her able team for allowing us this opportunity.

Regards
Paul

Clive King - I really enjoyed my EAA experience at Hobby-X! I believe that we should continue to participate at future Hobby-X events, as it represents wonderful exposure for EAA of SA.

Karl on Roston's indoor RC aircraft - It is a Styro-foam fun flyer with an electric motor and aerodynamic abilities that defies logic and accepted scientific principles.

Gazelle Mission

Bateleurs Flight February 2014 by Eugene Couzyn

Objective of the Flight: TO FIND 4 BROWN HYENAS RADIO COLLARED IN THE SOUTPANSBERG MOUNTAINS

LAJUMA RESEARCH CENTRE is situated in the heart of the Soutpansberg Mountains near Louis Trichardt and is home to numerous Research Teams looking for answers to various aspects of South African Wildlife.

Katy Williams is a PhD student from Durham University in the UK, who is focusing on the relationships between humans and brown hyenas in and around the Soutpansberg Mountains with the aim of reducing human-wildlife conflict and implementing better conservation strategies for the species.

During the course of 2013, she collared 4 hyenas near Lajuma Research Centre, but despite numerous attempts, on foot, from a 4 x 4 and from the air, she has been unable to find any of them again. The collars emit a coded VHF signal which identifies the individual animal, but in addition, they are programmed to collect GPS data which is used to map their movements and their interaction with other similarly collared animals.

This data can be downloaded between the hours of 18:00 and midnight, but requires close proximity and line of sight to be possible.

Given that flying in this time frame would be highly dangerous, we sought to find the animals from the air during daylight hours, flying in the late afternoon and again at first light the next day, when the animals are most likely to be active.

It was Katy's intention to home in on any identified hyena locations on foot after dark, in order to download the GPS data from any hyenas identified from the daytime flights.



The search area falls within the Makhado Military airspace, and prior permission to fly in this area was a prerequisite to conducting the mission. This accomplished, I departed Grand Central at 08:00 on 11 February headed for Pietersburg Civil, arriving at 09:40. At Pietersburg I took on fuel so as to arrive at Lajuma with as much as possible at about 11:00.

We then drove to Louis Trichardt to buy the rest of the fuel we would need to complete the mission, and arrived back at Lajuma at about 15:00.

The rest of the afternoon was taken up mounting the VHF antennae to the helicopter and programming my GPS for the transects Katy wished to fly on the first sortie the same evening.

The first mission on Tuesday evening did not produce any results, but was a good exercise in testing the equipment and establishing the best height above ground and speed of flight. We "found" a spare collar we had placed on the ground for the

purpose, as well as a collared leopard we were not looking for. Best speed was about 60 kts and height about 1000 ft AGL which we were able to control with our Radio Altimeter. The terrain is particularly rugged, and given that the collars emit a signal every 5 seconds for each animal, flying too fast we might easily have missed a signal.

Wednesday morning had low cloud on most of the mountain, but we were airborne before 06:30 and by careful selection of



terrain, we were able to keep to VMC and out of trouble.

Amidst great excitement, by 07:00 we had found Bill, one of the collared hyenas. Katy recorded the co-ordinates and we continued to fly the area we had planned for the sortie, keeping to the low ground and out of cloud. By about 08:00 we had found another of the collared hyenas, Chomma, and by this time, Katy was overjoyed.

We continued to fly for a further hour, but surmised that by then, any more contact was unlikely as any animals would in all likelihood be in underground dens, and we would not be able to pick up radio signals.

We headed back towards Lajuma, but were forced to make a precautionary landing to wait for the cloud to lift so we could get back to base.

On getting back to Lajuma, I packed up and returned to Grand Central, arriving about 14:00.



Katy unloading fuel

Conclusion:

Based on the excitement and Katy's expressed desire to find at least one of the hyenas, I would say that the mission was successful and the objectives adequately met.

The EAA Flying Legends

Last Thursday 13 March, a full house at the EAA Auditorium at Rand Airport welcomed Wing Commander Nigel 'Cookie' Cookson RAF who is the Deputy Defence Advisor at the British High Commission in Pretoria. I had heard Cookie talk at a Royal Air Force Officers' Club (RAFOC) lunch last year so I knew the audience was in for a great evening. The Flying Doctor Mike Brown was once again the Master of Ceremonies and, as we have come to expect, Mike had done his homework and was able to smoothly lead the 51 year old Cookie into revealing some great stories from his varied and exciting flying career.

A fast jet navigator with 2400 hours in the training and operational Tornado GR1/4 ground attack role Cookie started in the nuclear deterrent role in 1985. Cookie was an active participant in NATO air operations over Kosovo and Serbia during that dreadful war (aren't all wars?) in 1999 and completed a BAe Hawk T Mk 1 tour as a pilot (navigator) instructor from 1991-1993. Later Cookie commanded the RAF low flying operations at RAFU Goose Bay, North East Canada from 1995-1997.

Before Cookie arrived in Pretoria in 2013, he was sufficiently unimpressed with having to complete a tour of duty with NATO that he took the thrill of a high-threat posting in Tripoli, Libya as a senior RAF advisor to the Chief of the Libyan Air Force. Tripoli, the capital of Libya, is a still a very dangerous place after the uprising during the Arab Spring three years ago when the incumbent dictator Muammar Gaddafi met his grisly end in October 2011.

Cookie's lovely wife Sarah, otherwise known as 'SMac' was the guest speaker at the RAFOC lunch the previous Friday as she had spent many years in the RAF including time as an Air Traffic Controller on the Falklands Islands and was the first

Royal Air Force (RAF) Wing Commander Navigator enthalls the audience by Gordon Dyne

female to serve on a Royal Navy battleship, HMS Leeds Castle. She spoke superbly. Cookie and SMac make a formidable team.

So ended yet another tremendous talk show. Thank you very much Cookie for giving of your time and enthralling the aviation knowledgeable audience with some great stories of navigating at mach 1 plus! Cookie still favours good old-fashioned maps over GPSs! Amazing. I could not fly without a GPS I am ashamed to say! Well done Mike Brown for another very professional performance and bringing the best out of your guest.

Thank you so much Auditorium organiser Jeremy Woods for finding another great guest. It is a hugely time-consuming job organising such an evening. Thank you Clive King and Trixie Heron for manning the gate and thanks to master braaiers Coen Swart and Ronnie Potgieter. The steaks were as succulent as usual. Our sound engineers Jonty Caplan and Kevin Marsden displayed their talents and the sound was perfect. Thank you Steve Theron for helping with running the bar and to Alson Khumalo for as usual doing everything else including cutting the grass outside the auditorium which was almost a metre high after the recent heavy rain.

The next talk show will be Thursday 10 April when the guest will be Major General Hugh Paine SAAF retired. The General spent 42 years flying helicopters with the SAAF. Should be a tremendous evening. Do not miss it.

For more information on The Flying Legends Talk Show please contact eaa.talkshow@icon.co.za. Thank you

322 Chairman's Report



Karl Jensen sharing his expert opinion about flight MH370 on the Today Show

by Karl Jensen, 25 March 2014

We have unfortunately had a spate of tragic aircraft accidents which is most disconcerting to say the least. The most recent fatal accident in our world was the break-up of the Raven at Chapter 1502 East Coast's often frequented Emoyeni airfield near Camperdown. When a fatal accident occurs, the effects are far-reaching. Apart from the obvious loss of life, the misery and disruption to families, friends, colleagues, employees and a host of others is devastating. The only positive outcome from tragedies such as these is that we should all learn from what caused the accidents and hopefully be in a better position to avoid similar traps and errors.

RAASA staged a safety symposium at Rand Airport in mid-February and it was gratifying that at least four of our Chapter 322 members attended. Flight safety is not negotiable. There are hazards in every form of aviation, just as there is in driving a car, riding a bicycle, crossing a street, etc. Hazards and dangers are acceptable if they are managed and understood. In our flying passion and involvement in the many facets of aviation, there are rules and legislation in place to protect those who take part as a pilot or passenger. If one obeys the rules and applies common sense, you are not likely to be hurt, let alone be killed. It is up to every one of us to take a good look at ourselves and ask: do I obey the rules or am I guilty of bending the rules when it suits me?

The Aero Club and the CAA are working hard at trying to lower the aviation accident rate. I am proud to have been involved in these initiatives. Flight safety is a regular item on the agenda at every Chapter 322 meeting, together with subtle safety reminders. None of us are immune to accidents, but top of mind awareness will go a long way towards avoiding accidents and fatalities.

At our Chapter meeting in February we were treated to a sparkling presentation on 'The flight envelope emphasising flutter' by Francois Jordaan, eminent aerodynamicist and member of 322. Although many of us have been involved in aviation for many years, Francois' presentation brought home the implications of structural and aerodynamic limitations of the planes we fly. This kind of refresher is of great value if one is prepared to listen. At the March meeting, we stressed the

caution that is required in the vicinity of propellers whether they are stationary or spinning. Everyone is encouraged to do a dead mag check prior to shutting down your engine after a flight. In the words of 'The General' Brian Stableford, "Reconnaissance is never wasted!"

The EAA Flying Legends Talk Show in February featured John Bassi as guest and in March the guest was Wing Cdr Nigel 'Cookie' Cookson who is an RAF fighter jet navigator now attached as Assistant Military Adviser to the British High Commission. Our 322 Vice Chairman Dr Mike Brown is now the regular interviewer and does a great job. On Saturday afternoon 15 March after the EAA of SA Council meeting, we were entertained by Bill Leftwich whose father flew Boeing Clipper 314s. Bill is part owner of the Lockwood AirCam factory and senior airworthiness inspector at Gulfstream in Savannah GA. The Auditorium operation is convened by Jeremy Woods and is one of the unique benefits offered by the EAA of SA. As usual the talk shows were packed to capacity. EAA Chapter 322 can justifiably take pride in the positive input and contributions to the outstanding success of these talk shows.

Our Pietenpol project has been replaced by the Teddy build project. Kevin Hopper has donated a partially built Teddy fuselage with the promise of more components. The 0-200 Continental engine donated by Peter Lastrucci for the now abandoned Pietenpol project will be an ideal engine for the Teddy. The first Teddy build work party at Kevin Hopper's Skyworx hangar at FAKR on 16 February was given an in-depth rundown of what will be required to complete the project. An amazing amount of hardware was pledged by members. Hannes Botha arrived at the hangar in his Kitfox with a box of



Teddy build project

instruments and electrical equipment that will provide much of what is needed in this line. The regular work parties will be coordinated by Marie Reddy, who can be contacted on marie.reddy@gmail.com Kevin Hopper and daughter Hayley did a fine presentation on the Teddy project at the 05 March 322 meeting, which will no doubt persuade many more members to come on board. We can all learn new skills and many of us will gain a better understanding of what it takes to build a great aeroplane. We ideally need to get more of our younger EAA members involved. At the end of the planning meeting, most of the Teddy workers adjourned to Ricardo De Bonis' hangar on the other side of the airfield for a bring & braai where 'The General' was on top form as braaimaster. By my count, there were 26 Chapter 322 members who enjoyed the get-together and hangar talk. We repeated the bring n braai experience at Ricardo's to mix with Bill Leftwich on Friday 21 March and a gaggle of us flew to Mongena the next day, dragging Bill along for a magnificent breakfast. On the way home some of the members flew in to Fly Inn for refreshments at my pilot's cave and a tour of the estate for Bill. The Teddy fuselage was displayed at Hobby-X with many 322 members in attendance and drew much attention with many visitors intending to visit and hopefully join our dynamic

EAA Chapter 322.

The time has come to refresh and update our EAA of SA website to make it more user-friendly for our existing and prospective members, as well as attracting younger people into the ranks of the EAA. Gus Brown and Marie Reddy have stepped up to the plate to get this done, and they have lots of innovative, practical ideas to make this another exciting work in progress. The upgrade is looking outstanding right now and the elimination of the cumbersome security codes will make it far more user-friendly and encourage all EAAers to visit.

I have made more than 200 membership cards for those people who have already paid their subs for 2014 which can be collected by members when they attend the monthly meetings or at EAA functions where Trixie Heron is present. The cards are printed as our Treasurer advises me of payments. In closing, I am pleased to report that EAA Chapter 322 is alive and well. I would like to express my appreciation to the increasing number of members who are prepared to take on responsibilities. Looking forward, we have great plans in the pipeline to attract more members and especially the younger generation who will eventually be able to take over the reigns and oversee the future growth of the EAA.

Karl



'Lefty' Leftwich

American Bill 'Lefty' Leftwich also graces the EAA Auditorium
by Gordon Dyne

Last Saturday afternoon 15 March another full house at the EAA Auditorium at Rand Airport welcomed Bill 'Lefty' Leftwich.

This was not a talk show and it was left to Lefty (I like that!) to entertain his audience with a talk on his interesting career and that of his father who is still flying solo at nearly 97 years of age. Lefty Senior walks with difficulty, but can drive and fly with ease. 97! Wonderful! Can you believe that! I am 30 years younger and am rapidly falling apart!

Lefty Senior is the only surviving pilot of the pre-World War II Pan Am Boeing 314 Clipper Seaplanes. Lefty Junior had some tremendous pictures of his Dad throughout his long flying career. Amazing stuff!



Our guest is a senior airworthiness inspector at Gulfstream and is a partner in the Lockwood Air Cam Company in the USA. Lefty designed and built the first Air Cams. Lefty is being hosted by popular local pilot Ricardo De Bonis, who is the owner of the only Air Cam in South Africa. Ricardo's hangar at Krugersdorp is always a hive of activity every Saturday morning and Ricardo is always the epitome of hospitality. Lefty taught Ricardo to fly the Air Cam and then gave the 'General' Brian Stableford his conversion onto this very unique aircraft. Thanks to the generosity of both Ricardo and the General I have had the honour and pleasure of flying the Air Cam from both the front and rear seats. Flying this beautiful baby with its open cockpit is a thrilling and unique experience.

Lefty's illustrated talk was fascinating and everyone present was very disappointed when his talk came to an end. Lefty was here in sunny South Africa until the end of March and enjoyed a lot of flying whilst he was here, thanks to the generosity of many EAA pilots.

Thank you Lefty for your superb talk. We trust that you had a wonderful stay in this beautiful country of ours and a comfortable journey back to the good old US of A. God bless America!

My thanks to all those who organised this great day at the EAA Auditorium and to all those who helped give Lefty a day to remember in South Africa.



an Air Cam Story

by Gus Brown

The Air Cam is an unique aircraft with a very interesting history and strong links to Africa.



So its Saturday and I am up uncharacteristically early heading off on a grand tour of Johannesburg. As I am dodging potholes down the N14 I am wondering to myself if it is cheaper and safer to fly around Joburg rather than to drive, etolls and all. Maybe an experiment for another time. For now, first stop is Krugersdorp airfield. Today is one of those days you wish you could have more of, not only was I offered a flip in Ricardo's Air Cam, but I also get to meet one of the aircraft's co-developers and, as I later learned, builder of not only Ricardo's Air Cam but as many as 20 others for customers around the world. This is none other than Bill Leftwich, who is in the country as a guest of Ricardo's - his sixth visit to SA!

Bill started his career as an aircraft mechanic for Eastern Airlines and worked there for 12 years until the company was shut down. During that time he had made contact with Phil Lockwood and so he took his aviation experience and joined him to develop their Air Cam into a marketable product.

Ricardo's Air Cam is the only one of its kind registered in South Africa. It was designed to safely fly low and slow over inhospitable terrain, has twin 100hp Rotax 912 engines positioned close to the centreline so that there is little chance of crashing while operating on one engine. The big wing and ample power means it can take off on one engine and climb out at a respectable rate. With two engines the take-off run and climb rate, even at this altitude, is more than adequate.

The only thing better than having two engines, and the ability to safely fly on one, would be to have two pilots.

I logged the flight on my GPS and was able to get some performance measurements. Hey, I am an engineer, so get over it...

I once went flying with test pilot Gen. Des Barker and tracked his approach at a perfect 6° angle and he was kind enough to declare my tracker as being 'calibrated'.

Take-off was accomplished within 200m and we were 400ft above the ground by the time we had covered ¼ of the runway. That's 1000fpm climb rate two-up at 5,500ft altitude. The stick force was a bit higher than expected, but the aircraft was well behaved even in the stall. Turns were tight and executed in less than 500m. The cruise speed of 85mph means that you will be one of the first to leave and last to arrive, but that just means that you will have more fun

flying time.

The measured performance was a little less than the published figures, but we are at 5,500 ft elevation and Ricardo was not trying to show off.

The flight was amazing, imagine the visibility of a trike combined with the handling of a three axis aircraft and safety and excess power of two Rotax engines and you have a winning combination. I must have felt safe too, since I can't remember once looking for an emergency landing site. The Air Cam cruised comfortably at a surprising low power setting and judging by the lack of, or delayed reaction of the people and animals below us the noise levels were low. Pilots these days are really spoilt with noise reduction headsets.

The fuselage and vertical stabilizer are a traditional rib and skin construction of riveted aluminium sheets, the flying surfaces are tube and fabric. The engines are exposed and mounted in a pusher configuration. When I asked Bill why they don't have engine fairings, he explained that they did originally have, but engine overheating problems and disrupted turbulent flow over the control surfaces caused them to abandon the idea. Anyway the naked look suits the open cockpit and nothing beats a 360° view.

Bill says that there should be a warning displayed on the aircraft,

'Warning: can be Addictive!'

I will have to agree, but unfortunately at \$100K for the kit including engines but without paint and instruments it's a habit that I can't support.

Then to complete my tour of Joburg I was off the EAA Auditorium to listen to Bill's presentation on the flying career of his dad and the history of the Air Cam.



Bill 'Lefty' Leftwich and Air Cam #2

No Air Cam story is complete without a brief history of the development.

The story starts with Phil Lockwood buying the tooling and rights to the Drifter at the Maxair bankruptcy sale, a company that he had previously worked for after graduating. Phil managed to establish a good reputation supporting the Drifter. Then Des and Jen Bartlett, a famous Australian wildlife filming team now living in Namibia, called to ask Phil if he would join them in Namibia and teach them to fly the Drifters that they had bought as wildlife filming platforms. Flying over the wild southern African landscape apparently left a big impression on Phil since that was when he started to consider a twin engine version of the Drifter. It wasn't too long after that when National Geographic requested a new aircraft to film over the Ndoki rain forest in the Congo Basin, Phil's answer was a twin engine aircraft with removable wings and tailboom for easy transport and a fuselage that resembled a dugout canoe. Short take-off capability from a rough airstrip and the ability to fly low and slow over the

treetops while not using too much of the scarce fuel. It was rather aptly christened the Air Cam.

With no real roads to the base of operations, a little village on the banks of the Sangha river, transporting the aircraft there was a mission in itself. Likewise fuel was floated in to the village on dugout canoes.

Apparently there is not much wind in the rain forest and so the locals enjoyed the prop wash from the twin engine flying canoe as quite the novelty.

The design attracted a lot of attention from the sport aviation community and so the Leza-Lockwood company started producing kits for the aircraft.

This was when our guest Bill Leftwich was asked to join the team to add his hard earned experience, from working at Eastern Airlines, to help develop the production version.

The machine designed for National Geographic was powered by twin 64hp Rotax 582s. Later 80hp 912s and 115hp 914s were offered, with the 912 becoming the standard.

The first Air Cam Bill worked on was the no. 2 airframe, a copy of the one produced for National Geographic. He was eventually able to purchase that airframe and now flies it around Savannah, Georgia USA.

I can't find an up-to-date number but in 2010 there were more than 160 Air Cams flying.

600 foot dirt strip in the Ndoki rain forest



Jen & Des Bartlett with Phil Lockwood



Air Cam

Capacity: two
Length: 8.23 m
Wingspan: 10.97 m
Height: 2.54 m
Empty weight: 472 kg
Gross weight: 762 kg
Fuel capacity: 106 litres
Cruise speed: 100 mph
Stall speed: 39 mph
Never exceed speed: 110 mph
Range: 340 mi at 70 mph
Endurance: 6 hours
Rate of climb:
1,500 ft/min (2 engines)
300 fpm (1 engine)



Transporting the Air Cam to the village

Time to spare ...

by Eugene Couzyn

The old adage proved to be correct when I visited friends at their Crocodile River Game lodge recently.

I departed Grand Central early Saturday morning 01 March for a weekend in the bush and after a leisurely 1hr 40min flight in my Gazelle, landed at Mjejane Game Reserve on the banks of the Crocodile River near Marloth Park.

I had no sooner landed than the weather started closing in, and by Sunday, the rain had started falling. We had a fantastic weekend on the reserve with great game sightings and even better company, but by Monday morning, my scheduled departure, the Crocodile River had risen by over 1 metre. The rain had stopped but the sky was overcast.

After a meeting with the Reserve Management about the upcoming Game Census with which I had offered to help, I set sail at about 10:30, with the cloud base still OK for my planned trip back to Johannesburg. However, by the time I reached Malelane, it had become apparent that this would not be an uneventful cruise home.

The rain had started falling again, and after negotiating the Crocodile River Gorge east of Nelspruit, I called Kruger Mpumalanga International for clearance to route through their CTR for FANS. Visibility was OK but I could hear a scheduled flight on the descent for KMI, and I was instructed to hold clear of the CTR whilst the flight landed, expected duration 3 minutes.

The next communication from KMI was that the visibility had reduced to less than 800 metres and I was instructed to remain out of the CTR altogether! This was not what I wanted to hear as I had planned to fly up the Elands River Valley past Ngodwana, which is the most commonly used helicopter route when the weather is 'iffy',

My immediate position was no problem, but in order to get home, I still had to get over the escarpment and this was rapidly becoming impossible. I changed course for the Barberton valley to see whether I could find a route through the mountains south of Nelspruit, but after 30 minutes or so of exploring, I decided to land and to wait for the cloud to burn off. A little patch of lawn appeared in my window and I headed down to wait out developments. I always carry emergency water, a space blanket and warm clothing, so the prospect of spending the night in the chopper, whilst not first prize for comfort, did not pose any risk of exposure.

I had no sooner landed than my phone rang. It was the ATC at

KMI wanting to know if I was OK as they were worried about me. I had presumably disappeared off their radar, and they no doubt had visions of another CFIT.

After shutting down, I was a little anxious to see two women and a gang of dogs running towards me, but I was given a warm welcome and the offer of some hot coffee. I had landed at the Paradors Game Lodge, where I was a very welcome guest. I waited around for a couple of hours, and when the cloud showed signs of lifting, I took off again to see whether I could get over the escarpment.

This was not to be, so I headed back to PARADORS with the realisation that whilst not my own, I would be sleeping in a warm bed that night.

The hospitality offered was tremendous and I was taken into the family home for dinner and after a comfortable night in one of the lodge rooms, I was given breakfast the next morning, again with the entire family.

With all the flying around the previous day, I now had no choice but to head to FANS for fuel before heading for home, so as soon as the clouds lifted, I took off for Nelspruit Civil, 13.9 Nm to the NW.

I fuelled up, but after hanging around at the airfield for a couple of hours and then consulting with the local pilots, I decided to sleep over with friends in White River to await better weather the next day.

Wednesday dawned worse than Tuesday, and I decided that I now HAD to get home.

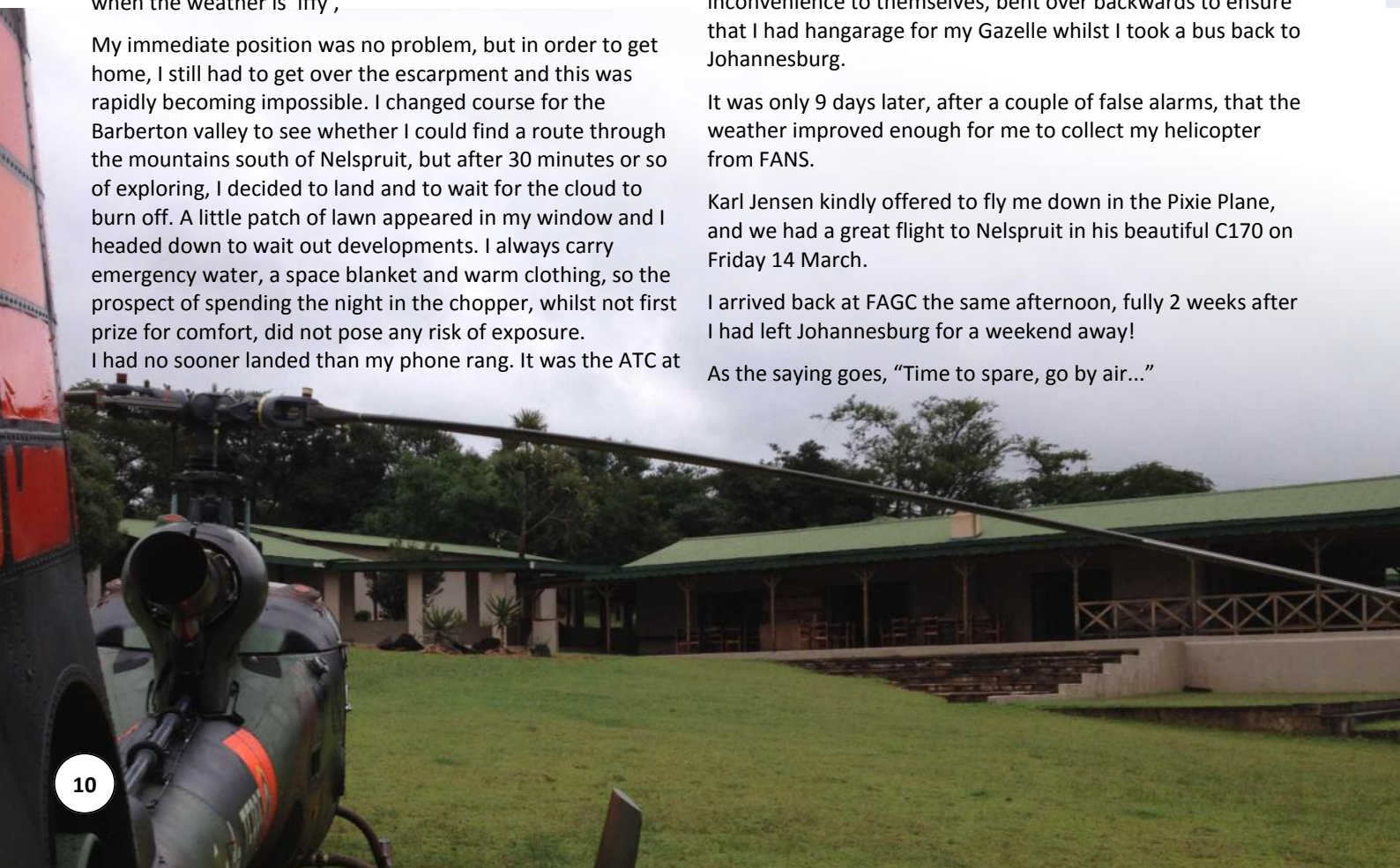
Ryan Vermooten and Mike Pingo, both Nelspruit Airfield locals, were absolutely fantastic and at considerable inconvenience to themselves, bent over backwards to ensure that I had hangarage for my Gazelle whilst I took a bus back to Johannesburg.

It was only 9 days later, after a couple of false alarms, that the weather improved enough for me to collect my helicopter from FANS.

Karl Jensen kindly offered to fly me down in the Pixie Plane, and we had a great flight to Nelspruit in his beautiful C170 on Friday 14 March.

I arrived back at FAGC the same afternoon, fully 2 weeks after I had left Johannesburg for a weekend away!

As the saying goes, "Time to spare, go by air..."



322 Breakfast @ Mongena

Saturday 22 March

What a lovely fly/drive-in to Mongena our Chapter 322 members had. It was a pity that Ricardo's flight was delayed by the heavy mist at Krugersdorp. Bill Leftwich and Ricardo arrived in the Air Cam after the breakfast buffet had ended. With a belly full of steaming coffee and rusks, Bill was able to take a short game drive through the game reserve before he and Ricardo flew over the Cullinan 'groot gat' and had a stop at Fly Inn for a tour of the estate. Eugene Couzyn also graced us with his Gazelle together with happy paxes Gus & Cindy Brown and Trixie. It was my pleasure to provide refreshments for those who were able to pop in at Fly Inn on their way home. - Karl

Karl updating his Facebook status while the rest wait! - Anon

First time into Mongena for me, and with the runway long enough to take the C210, departed from FAWB with 3 up just before 8 with some puffy clouds starting to form, well, hardly 10 minutes later had the field in sight and with wind direction settled on a 11 arrival, and on short finals had a bevy of buck straddle the runway, thus had to call an abort to chase the buck out of the way, much to the amusement of a wayward niece out of Holland being the front seat pax, obviously only in Africa... Second time round at least uneventful getting on the ground. The rest of the gang arrived shortly afterwards, although some were held up with mist, especially the guest of honour Bill Leftwich who was travelling with Ricardo. Nevertheless, we enjoyed a scrumptious breakfast, and unfortunately had to leave just when Ricardo & Bill arrived, but all in all, a really good morning out in the African bush - amazing these gems we have not far from the bustle of the city. - Rob

My wife and I were fortunate enough to catch a lift in Eugene's Gazelle, and what a wonderful experience that was. Thanks - Gus & Cindy Brown

I had a chance to go on a tour of the Mongena game reserve with the Safari Land Cruiser. It was just the driver, me and the tracker in the vehicle. When we stopped to view the two rhino, another Land Cruiser pulled up alongside and it was jammed full of tourists. They were looking over at me, noticing that I was the only person sitting in the vehicle and I was wondering if they thought I had leprosy or something. - Cheers 'Lefty' Leftwich

Letter from Bill 'Lefty' Leftwich



"OK, guys, follow me..."

Hello ya'all, as they say in Savannah...

I wanted to thank everyone for my **very best** vacation to South Africa. It was an incredible two weeks that went by all too fast and I was sorry to have leave so soon. There's always so much more to see and do which I know I will never have enough time for until after I retire in a couple of years. Then, I want to buy one of those *cheap* villas on the side of the lake by the dam...

Having the opportunity to talk about the Air Cam to fellow aviators at the EAA auditorium was exceptional! (I could have talked longer but I didn't want to bore the audience). My father's flying legacy and his resolve to fly again on his 97th birthday this year is something that I always enjoy sharing. I only wish everyone could be there with me to see him fly on 06 August.

At the April 15th meeting of our EAA chapter, I will be showing everyone what it is like to fly in South Africa.

Again, thanks to everyone for the warm welcome and hospitality.

Cheers, Lefty



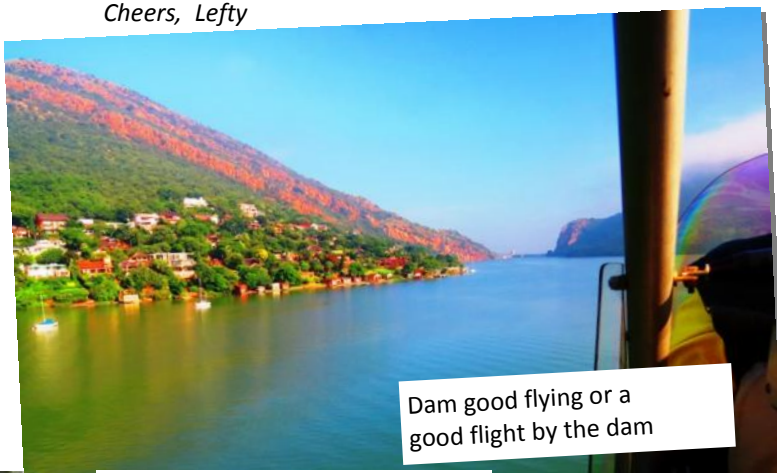
I like the sign on the outside of your EAA Auditorium!

That's Ricardo flying with me in the rear seat.



That was definitely a first for me!

I was trying to take a photo of the egrets, but the darn zebra kept getting in the way...



Dam good flying or a good flight by the dam

'Me and my flying buddy'
Bill Leftwich & Ricardo De Bonis
at Fly Inn Estate



CONTACT! Is the official newsletter of EAA of SA. This edition was compiled by Gus and edited with love and kisses by Trixie Heron. All material is gratefully received from Chapters, members and non-members alike. Remember that this is your newsletter, so please submit material as it happens to Gus (contact@eaa.org.za) or Trixie (editor@afskies.co.za). Our grateful thanks to all those who regularly support our newsletter and our EAA organisation.