



VPAC News

Newsletter of the Vintage Piper Aircraft Club

January 2016 Issue 29



Vagabonds & Clippers



Members' Vagabonds & Clippers



Vagabond G-AWKD / 17-192 at Popham 2015. (Trevor Warne)



G-BSMV / 17-94 at Old Buckenham 2015. (John Allen)



Vagabond NC4531H / 15-305. (Ed Terris)



Vagabond G-CCEE / 15-248 at Hullavington 2007. (Roger Peperell)



Vagabond G-BDVB / 15-229 at Compton Abbas 2012. (Roger Peperell)



Vagabond ZS-VLN / 17-210 under restoration. (Alan Lorimer)



Clipper N5730H / 16-342 at Popham 2012. (Roger Peperell)



Clipper ZU-FGP / 16-231 at Swelldam 2011. (via Graham Cork)



Clipper G-BIAP / 16-732 at Kemble 2006. (Ray Barber)

Editor's Corner

Welcome to our annual VPAC News. I trust you will enjoy this edition which celebrates both the Vagabond and the Clipper. The Vagabond is recognised as the plane that saved Piper in the dark days of 1947. The UK has many Vagabonds, Vagabond Trainers and a few Clippers and many owners are members of VPAC.

We have stories on five Vagabonds (PA-15), five Vagabond Trainers (PA-17) and three Clippers (PA-16) owned by VPAC members and many thanks to those who put pen to paper:

G-FKNH (Mike Mothershaw), G-CCEE (Nick Lomax), G-BRJL (Nye & Keir Williams), G-BDVB (Ted Gardner), NC4531H (Ed Terris), G-BCVB (Tony Nowak), G-BSMV(Tony Cheriton), ZS-VLN (Alan Lorimer), G-AWKD (Darren Legg), G-BDVC (Tony Caveen), G-BAMR (Rod Royce), G-BIAP (Pete Bish), N5730H (John Bailey and Graham Cork) and ZU-FGP (Graham Cork).

I've also included a shortened version of my published history of the Vagabond and Clipper also two adverts from my collection. I've looked through my collection of Vagabond and Clipper photographs from my travels in the USA over the past ten years. Locations included Sentimental Journey at Lock Haven and Air Adventure at Oshkosh and several other events, and they can be seen in the centre pages.

We have reports on the VPAC event at Brighton and U.S. Classics Fly-ins at Shobdon and Old Buckenham. After thinking that Lyle Wheeler had decided to hang up his headsets, he sent me an article which is included. Carl Miller has written about his trip out west in the USA . We have the regular Flight Safety Corner by Richard Keech. Plus we have an article on radio etiquette from an ATC perspective with kind permission from the Guild of Air Traffic Control Officers. Finally we have an inspirational piece on Arthur Williams by Mike Mothershaw.

I'm sorry to have missed, again, the VPAC Fly-ins during 2015. As usual I spent time in the USA last year, at the Piper factory at Vero Beach, at the Piper Aviation Museum and Sentimental Journey at Lock Haven and at Air Adventure, Oshkosh. The events schedule for 2016 is included and is on the website (www.vintagepiper.co.uk) and will also be advised to members of the Email Service during the year. Who knows, maybe I'll get to meet you at an event during 2016?

If any member would like a copy of this magazine in .pdf format, please drop me an email and I'll attach one by return.

Happy flying....Roger Peperell
roger.peperell@btconnect.com

New Members

Stuart Green	G-CFEL	Eurostar
Tony Flynn	G-BOMP	PA-28-181
Roger Manley	G-BGPJ	PA-28-161

John Barnett	G-BNXU	PA-28-161
Ray Taberner	G-AVDV	PA-22 (mod)
Jim Davis	G-AVRZ	PA-28-180
Steve Smith	G-ARNK	PA-22 (mod)
Derrick Bint	vintage Piper enthusiast	
Russell Myles	looking to buy J3/L-4	
Arthur Williams	G-BEDY	J3
Darren Legg	G-AWKD	PA-17
Andy Darke	G-BGPN	PA-18
John James	G-BSWG	PA-17
Stephen Davies	G-ARNE	PA-22
David Harrison	G-AMPG	PA-12
Peter McKay	G-AYAR	PA-28
Nick Lomax	G-CCEE	PA-15
Richard Earl	G-BEDJ	J3/L-4

Cover photographs:

Vagabond G-AWKD (Trevor Warne)
Vagabond G-BRJL (Ed Hicks)
Vagabond NC4531H (via Ed Terris)
Vagabond G-FKNH (Roger Peperell)
Clipper G-BAMR (via Rod Royce)
Clipper G-BIAP (Pete Bish)

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Chairman's Chat

Hello and a Happy New Year from Marj and me. I suppose that by the time you read this the festive period will seem long gone and maybe you will be looking forward to longer days and firmer grass aerodromes; I know that I certainly am. Whether it be for reasons of longer flying days or longer and warmer days for working in the hangar I know that winter isn't the ideal season to pursue our interest in old Pipers and their like, but, despite that, I'm always hoping for that rare calm, clear winter day when those old wings give a satin smooth ride and the only problem is when the low sun shines in my eyes. I'll live in hope!

So, 2015 is now over and before I look forward to the new flying year I'll reflect a little on the past season. It wasn't too bad overall other than the weather that beset the final organised event where we planned to join with our friends in the Vintage Aircraft Club for the combined meeting of balloons and vintage aircraft at Sackville Farm aerodrome one Saturday in September. It was indeed unfortunate that a 20kt crosswind limited the fly-in attendees to around half a dozen brave souls, especially so since the weather on the following day was good. Oh well, these things do happen and thanks are due to our chums in the VAC for including us in their plans for this meeting. Our other meetings at Brighton, Shobdon and Old Buckenham were definitely in the successful category methinks although I do know that for some the en-route weather prevented their attendances and it was a feature of this year's meetings that my mobile would buzz to announce that one of our vintage machines had diverted or turned back home. All I can say is that the relevant pilots are to be congratulated for making the correct and safe decision and thank you for letting me know at the time. You'll be able to read the reports of the 2015 meetings elsewhere in the mag and on behalf of us all I would like to thank the aerodromes' staff and those VPACers who were instrumental in making the meetings work. Thanks guys. Still on the theme of the past year's meets I would also like to take this opportunity to thank fellow club member Nick Houghton for inviting us to fly in to his beautiful Ranksborough Farm airstrip in Rutland where some of us enjoyed a gorgeous flying day and were able to picnic 'neath our wings in the company of our like-minded VPAC chums. Thanks to all who made this a lovely day for all concerned and I do hope for more such short-notice "impromptu" get-togethers in the coming year.

As for the coming flying season we have a full programme of scheduled meetings as you'll be able to see in the calendar elsewhere in this magazine. For these meetings we have continued with the idea of holding two "U.S. Classics" events – the first at Shobdon organised by our friends in the Aeronca Club and the second at Goodwood run by ourselves. In addition, we have also continued with the theme of well-spaced regional meetings so at least one of these venues should be within the range of you and your old steed, even for those who

aren't too keen on flying too far from their home bases. I think all will agree that Sleaford, Fishburn, Heveningham Hall, Shobdon, Goodwood and Dunkeswell are fairly well spaced and, all being well, I'm aiming to get a certain vintage Piper to every one (especially to Sleaford since that's my home base!). Oh, and just before I move on, in case you're wondering, Heveningham Hall is in Suffolk, just 3 miles to the south west of Halesworth, but, of course, full details of our event there will, as ever, be published via the List nearer to the time.

So, there we have a brief synopsis of what's been happening and what is scheduled to happen, but, overall, our Club is about more than mere flying and get-togethers. Of course, these aspects are important, but we're also in the business of supporting the fellow owners/operators of our fine old aircraft and to this end the Club's e-mail list (The List) continues to do good service, we have our website ably managed by Richard Carter and, of course, this very magazine only exists due to the efforts and expertise of Roger Peperell, its editor. Behind the scenes Mike Mothershaw beavers away looking after the accounts and our membership - tasks that rarely attract attention, but are important and essential for a successful club. In addition, long-standing committee members Doug Palmer and Colin Stearn continue to liaise and support us in many ways. As for the VPAC itself, as far as I'm concerned it is in good order, financially sound and very good value for only £10 per year! On the subject of finance the individuals whom I have just mentioned are purely volunteers who receive no financial recompense for making this not-for-profit club exist, purely for the benefit of us all – the members, some 200 of us. On behalf of us all, thank you for your efforts. Just before I go I do have one more thing to say: Many of us in the VPAC are also members of the Light Aircraft Association and, as such, we'll be well aware that this august body has a new CEO – Steve Slater. What some may not be aware of is that Steve, the former President of the Vintage Aircraft Club, is a Cub owner and an active VPAC member so, as you'll now appreciate, we're well represented in high places! Many congratulations Steve and our very best wishes to you in your new post. And to every one else, happy landings, keep 'em flying and, above all, enjoy it all.

Best Wishes,
Richard Keech

Piper Vagabond & Clipper

The 1947 collapse

At the end of 1946 Piper had a 12,000 aircraft, \$26m order back-log. In January and February 1947, 30 aircraft a day were being produced by the Company. Sales started slowing and Piper and its Distributors were storing unsold aircraft. By the second week of March, sales had plummeted to three a day and the market collapsed. At the end of June, 400 unsold aircraft mainly PA-11 Cub Specials and PA-12 Super Cruisers were sitting at Lock Haven together with large stocks of unused components. Production ceased altogether in June at Lock Haven whilst attempts were made to sell the existing stocks and then look to a future programme for the company.

William C. Schriver was brought in by the banks to run the company in July 1947 and most of the members of the Piper Board resigned their posts. Since there was a large stock of components the logical thing to do was to build an aircraft that could make use of the stock and so be cheap in price. The resulting aircraft was the PA-15 Vagabond. Production of Super Cruisers and Cub Specials started again in early 1948. Piper closed its manufacturing plant at Ponca City that year.

PA-15 Vagabond



*Vagabond NC4906M / 15-2 at Lock Haven.
(Roger Peperell collection)*

The Vagabond is acknowledged as the aircraft that saved Piper. It was designed during August and September 1947 as a side-by-side two-seater with a high wing and fabric covering and a rigid suspension. The wing was of reduced span (6 feet shorter than the J3 / PA-11). Tony Piper, Howard Piper and Dave Long led the design work. The design was similar to the P4 design which was developed in 1941, but with a smaller fuselage and only a single door on the starboard side. Dave Long was a key engineer on the P4 and perhaps explains how Piper was able to develop the Vagabond in such a short amount of time. It was powered by a 65hp Lycoming O-145-B2 engine. The prototype was s/n 15-1 registration NX5000H and first flew on 29 October 1947. Information on the new PA-15 was released to the public on 22 January 1948 and it was priced at \$1,990. In order to



*Vagabond NC4123H 15-6 in 1948.
(Roger Peperell collection)*

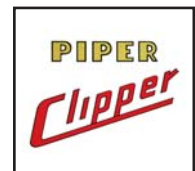
keep the price as low as possible it was available only in yellow with no stripe. Piper received temporary approval for the PA-15 in February 1948 and the first delivery was later that same month. The PA-15 Type Certificate A800 was issued on 1 July 1948.

Production ceased with s/n 15-387 in July 1948, but one more was completed in April 1949 (which was the conversion of a PA-17).

A few unsold examples were stored at Lock Haven by Piper and sold as is at a big discount during 1949. Piper also updated some unsold aircraft into 1949 models. The single stick was retained, but this updated model had standard equipment of shock chord landing gear, moulded plexiglass windshield and windows, hydraulic toe brakes, steerable tailwheel, stainless steel exhaust, carburettor heat and a cabin heater.

In the field many PA-15 aircraft have had shock chord suspension and dual controls fitted. Other modifications include an extra small window on each side (similar to the PA-16).

PA-16 Clipper



*Clipper N5200H 16-2 at Lock Haven in 1949.
(Roger Peperell collection)*

The PA-14 Family Cruiser was a complicated and expensive aircraft and Piper expected it to sell very slowly, so

they took the decision to develop the PA-16 as a low priced four seat version of the PA-15 Vagabond in parallel with the development of the PA-15. It had the same short span wing, but with an extra fuel tank placed in the left wing, dual controls, shock-cord gear suspension and an extra window on each side of the fuselage. Dave Long, Clyde Smith and Bill McNary led the design effort. The prototype was s/n 16-01 registration NX4000H, completed on 23 January 1948 and fitted with an experimental 108 hp Lycoming engine. During development a redesigned wing was fitted and the s/n changed to 16-1. The Approved Type Certificate 1A1 was granted on 18 October.

Piper wasn't sure that the four place Vagabond (now called Clipper) would sell, so commenced production at Lock Haven in January 1949 at a low rate. Production aircraft were fitted with the approved 108 hp Lycoming O-235-C1 engine which had 115 hp available at 2,800 rpm for take-off. It could cruise at 112 mph. Piper need not have been concerned as the PA-16 sold well and the production rate was raised to three a day by the middle of March. It was available in standard form at \$2,995 in a blue with yellow trim (stripe) colour scheme or in deluxe form at \$3,095 in "hand-rubbed" ivory with red trim. The Clipper was available on Edo 88-1650 floats or Federal skis. The wooden Sensenich propeller had been standard fitment but the fixed-pitch metal Sensenich, the Sensenich CS2FM, Aeromatic F-200 or McCauley Met-L were available as accessories at extra cost.

Pan American Airways were unhappy with Piper using the name Clipper. The Pan Am attorneys, W.H. Free, contacted Piper on 28 April 1949 to say they were proceeding to prevent Piper from using the Clipper name. Before the issue reached the law courts, Piper replaced the Clipper with the PA-20 Pacer. Production terminated in early November 1949. A total of 736 were manufactured.

PA-17 Vagabond Trainer



1949 model Vagabond Trainer N4852H / 17-152 at Lock Haven.
(Roger Peperell collection)

By March 1948 Piper had a problem in that it had enough parts, supplies and engines on order to produce 1,400 Cub Special aircraft with the 65 hp Continental

engine, but customers were requesting the more powerful 90 hp version. Continental wouldn't release the higher powered engine to Piper until all the outstanding purchase orders were fulfilled on the 65 hp unit. Piper came up with a solution to put the surplus Continental 65 hp engines into the PA-15, replacing the Lycoming engine. This placated the Continental Motor Company and Piper were able to persuade Lycoming to take back many of the O-145 motors destined for PA-15 production. By April Piper was getting feedback from its Distributors and Dealers that the PA-15 needed dual controls and shock absorbing landing gear for training. Clyde Smith (Senior) told me that when a CAA pilot was testing a PA-15 on skis, he landed heavily off-runway and went over a snow mound, and the resulting drop to the ground was so great that it convinced the CAA and Piper of the need to fit shock absorbing gear.

Piper decided that an alternate version of the PA-15 should be placed in production as soon as possible. A PA-15 s/n 15-36 was converted into the prototype PA-17 s/n 17-1 registration NX4153H, being completed on 4 May 1948. The PA-17 Vagabond (also known as the Vagabond Trainer) was similar to the PA-15 apart from being fitted with dual controls, shock-cord suspension and a 65 hp Continental A65-8 engine with a wooden 72 inch fixed-pitch Sensenich propeller. The gross weight was increased by 50 pounds. Piper received temporary approval for the PA-17 on 1 June 1948. It was priced at \$2,195.

All production took place during 1948 and began in May, and was built alongside the PA-15 Vagabond. The PA-17 Type Certificate A805 was issued on 26 August 1948. Production ceased with s/n 17-214 completed in August, but a few unsold examples were sold later by Piper as 1949 models. (One more was completed in January 1950).

PA-18 (Vagabond)

In the spring of 1948 Piper started to develop a remodelled PA-17 Vagabond with PA-16 wings and lift trusses and extra equipment under the designation PA-18. In May the 1949 model prototype s/n 15-306 registration NC4532H was completed. In August a Continental C90-8F engine and a 72 inch Sensenich propeller were installed in s/n 15-304 registration NX4526H. With both the airframe and engine changes, the gross weight was increased to 1,325 pounds and the top speed increased to 110 mph. Unfortunately in March 1949 NX4526H jumped its blocks on starting and travelled across the Lock Haven Airport pilot-less and hit a telegraph pole and was destroyed by fire. This was to be launched for the 1949 model year but the project was cancelled. It is interesting to note that the last Vagabond to be manufactured, s/n 17-215, was completed in January 1950 with non-standard equipment well after the PA-15 and PA-17 production was finished in 1948. One wonders if this was to be the first production PA-18 Vagabond?

Roger Peperell



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ANNOUNCING THE NEW SIDE-BY-SIDE

V

YEAR after year Piper, the leading personal plane manufacturer, has given you the most for your money! And now, with the new Piper Vagabond priced at only \$1,990, Piper again offers you the outstanding aircraft value of the year.

Dependability—Low Operating Costs—Utility! These were the principal design considerations in the development of the Piper Vagabond. Yes, these three factors plus all the well known Piper safety features make the PA-15 Vagabond a truly fine aircraft.

Standard equipment includes hydraulic brakes, steerable tail wheel, carburetor heater, stainless steel muffler, dual ignition Lycoming 65 hp engine with fixed pitched propeller and all other necessary equipment for safe, comfortable and economical flight. Performance-wise, the Piper Vagabond far exceeds any plane in its price field—top speed 102 mph; cruising speed at 75% power 90 mph; landing speed 45 mph; climb 510 fpm.

Finance and insurance plans are available for the Piper Vagabond at approximately one third down and the balance in convenient monthly installments. So see your Piper dealer now and arrange for a free flight demonstration. Ask him for the popular book "How to Fly a Piper Cub" and remember more people fly Piper than any other personal plane. Piper Aircraft Corporation, Lock Haven, Pennsylvania, U. S. A.

VAGABOND^{\$}1990

PA-15

by

Look to the Leader for World Proven Aircraft
FAMILY CRUISER ★ CUB SPECIAL 65 and 90 ★ VAGABOND

PIPER

Members' Vagabonds & Clippers

*Piper PA-15 Vagabond s/n 15-291 /
Registered G-FKNH 19 March 1997*

I'm sure owners of PA-15s and 17s will understand what I mean when I say that owning a trusty little Vagabond is like having another member of the family. I've owned my Vagabond, but I prefer the term its custodian, since it was imported from Canada in 1996. Piper PA-15 G-FKNH (s/n 15-291) was featured in the 2010 edition of VPAC News, when I alluded to jumping hurdles and passing through hoops purely to get the aircraft issued with C of A and on to the UK register. To this day, "the Canadian Vag" (previously C-FKNH) is still the only Vagabond to be issued with a UK C of A. Just how long that will be the case remains to be seen as the same question hangs over other vintage Pipers such as Colts and Tri-Pacers. Along with many "annex 2" owners, the CAA's decision to shift these types over to LAA permits is anticipated at some stage, but for now, "NH" continues to operate on the National ARC system. However, my experience of operating on a C of A hasn't been too arduous having been very fortunate to find CAA licensed engineers who have taken a pragmatic approach, each regarding the Vagabond, in all its simplicity, as being equivalent to a permit aircraft.

Simplicity is a good description for the Vagabond. Starting is by the Armstrong method; there's no electrical system therefore, there's no generator. A "Lynx" 12v Nickel Metal Hydride battery from A.T.S.I. makes light work of powering both radio and Trig transponder. The Lynx has the same dimensions as a regular 7Ah lead gel acid battery, yet outperforms it in weight, power, reliability and, above all else, safety with a built-in mechanism to prevent the battery from overheating. There's also a built-in voltage indicator at the press of a button. In 2009 she received a new C-85 engine and 760 hours on she's doing fine.

"NH" remains based at RAF Woodvale and has taken me to some extraordinary places, both long and short haul, including three times to the Piper Club of France Rassemblement. The furthest of these was to Arcachon in South West France clocking up 18 hours on that particular sojourn, visiting Abbeville, Mortagne, Le Mans, Amboise, Saintes, Andernos, Fontenay, Laval and Cherbourg. Not to mention the first leg from Woodvale to Headcorn (2hr 30) and final leg from Popham to Woodvale (2hr 15). Both legs happened to be the



*Vagabond CF-KNH / 15-291 in Canada,
now G-FKNH. (via Mike Mothershaw)*



Vagabond G-FKNH at Compton Abbas 2012. (Roger Peperell)

longest of that particular venture, the disadvantage of "going continental" from northern England at 73 knots. The Rassemblement the following year was to Nancy in Northeast France. Being a shorter distance I decided to go for this trip also, once again transiting via Headcorn then onward to Abbeville, Chalons-Ecurey and Nancy-Essey. Having arrived in Nancy the weather forecast for the forthcoming week was not friendly and not wishing to be stranded abroad I elected to head back to base ahead of the weather. This was to be my longest day sitting in the Vag. Battling into increasing headwinds, Abbeville was reached after 3 hrs 35 mins, then following a quick refuel, another 1 hr 25 mins "hop" over the Channel to Headcorn. There was just enough daylight for me to reach base and after 3 hrs 5 mins I landed back at Woodvale. A concentration-sapping 8 hrs 5 mins flying in one day.

"NH" has looked after me over the years and so based in Merseyside, and in the lyrics of Lennon/McCartney, what else could I say.... "And I love her".

Mike Mothershaw

*Piper PA-15 Vagabond s/n 15-248 /
Registered G-CCEE 31 March 2003*



Vagabond G-CCEE at Popham 2012. (Roger Peperell)

I'm really pretty new to the world of Vag's. My experience and knowledge is really quite limited, so I have an awful lot to learn. I have only had EE for a couple of weeks but I absolutely love her. Feel part of her. She quite simply feels just right. However.... A few little glitches have cropped up....

My inspector has just given EE an "interim" inspection upon my request. He is extremely thorough but is getting me to undertake some work on it before I fly her next. A few oversized bolts needed on the gear and



*Vagabond G-VAGA / 15-248 at Cranfield in 1989,
now G-CCEE. (Roger Peperell)*

tailwheel. Flying wires need attention too. Some tail ends have slipped into the nicopress sleeves. May need a lift strut yet too as it looks like paint may be just starting to show signs of blistering on the surface at the fork end....that is a pain in the rear unfortunately! So there is a little work to do but I look at it as "getting to know you"... but....I absolutely love her... Wanted one for a few years now so I think I'm very fortunate to have her and look forward to many years with her.....travelling far and wide!

Look forward to meeting you in the not too distant future!

Nick Lomax

*Piper PA-17 Vagabond s/n 17-94 /
Registered G-BSMV 29 June 1990*



*Vagabond G-BSMV at Little Rissington 2009.
(Roger Peperell)*

Adventures of a happy Vaga

Some time ago my wife, Pam and I flew to a lovely strip in the Southwest. The attraction was a local fly-in, an air display featuring amongst other things WW2 aeroplanes, literally hundreds of classic cars, a craft fare & stalls, brass bands and not to mention blue skies etc. etc.

We arrived well before the air display, joined the seventy or so other little planes parked up, and began wandering around the exhibits. It was a well organised traditional family get together with lots to look at and varied entertainment laid on for everyone. After four hours of sunshine and feeling a touch weary, we started back to fire up the trusty Ol' Vag. (To the uninitiated that's a PA-17 Vagabond). I did a quick run around including the cursory oil check. A little orange light flicked on in my head when I thought that the oil tank filler neck had wobbled when I refitted the dipstick. The orange light turned to red when I spotted the fracture that had travelled three parts around the neck making the cap and stick very close to parting company with the egg shaped tank. So

here we were, in a field full of rapidly departing aircraft 110nm from home at 4:30 in the afternoon with developing prospects that our 'blissful day' was just about to go decidedly pear shaped..... Bl--dy Wonderful.

Naturally, the fracture had developed close to the welded fixing bracket, so that any form of patching up would be near impossible. Everything was pointing towards an unscheduled overnight stay in a B & B somewhere local. Meanwhile, no doubt prompted by the growing look of disbelief on my face, and a 'Thank God he can't blame me for that,' look on Pam's, a fellow flyer came over to see what our problem was. He said that he had some resin type stuff that was hard setting and suggested spreading some on a cloth to wrap around the split. If the crack had been anywhere else this might well have worked, but with the bracket there I wasn't sure. Equally, the thought of a piece of cloth flapping close to an active exhaust pipe didn't exactly turn me on. I never got this guy's name but he was a real star. Seeing the look of apprehension on my face he set off in the hope of finding an engineer or some sheet metal to try to patch it with. While he was away, my co-pilot; the lovely Pamela, suggested that we call the tower to advise them of our problem, which turned out to be a brilliant idea. The owner of the field and incidentally, organiser of the event was, would you believe, an engineer. We were asked where we were parked on the field to direct the recovery vehicle and given instructions to remove the cowlings as soon as we arrived at the workshop. Meanwhile our original Samaritan returned to confirm what we had just heard over the RT. As there was little more he could do we wished each other well and he set off to his plane clutching his toolbox. Almost immediately we noticed a Land Rover weaving its way around the remaining aircraft towards us. It was the organiser's son, with a towrope.

Okay. Hands up all of those who have had the joyful experience of running over a rough grass field alongside a high winged multidirectional tail wheeled aircraft. At speeds up to (at least) 10mph whilst frantically trying to keep it straight, negotiate a minefield of cow pats and avoid a real chance of being shunted up the chuff by its close coupled tailplane. Not many Benny.

The workshop, we were to discover, was about a 'west country' half mile away, and by the time we had sprinted there; John Cleese style, I was fit for flopping. Joe, the engineer, met us outside the hanger had a cursory look and said, "Take it off (the tank) and I'll weld it." And then disappeared back into the hanger. Now I like getting my hands dirty like most people enjoy paying income tax. My first thought was to look really helpless in the hope that someone might take pity and do it for me. This was followed by wild knee jerking thoughts as to where could I get hold of some serviceable Marigolds. Well the helpless look didn't work and even the alternative compromise went out of the window with Joe's reappearance with an arm full of tools. The oil tank took ages to drain, and I mean like, forever. The cooled oil was most reluctant to pass through the drain plug. Eventually the skinny black oil line disappeared into the can and the cowlings removed. As if by magic, Joe materialised with the instructions.

“Right, remove this fuel pipe, that throttle linkage, these nuts, make sure you don’t bend this, shear that.” etc. etc. Surprisingly the tank did come off fairly easily and Joe did a great job seam welding the tear and refitting the bracket. My contribution was to hold the tank steady, until it became too hot to hold, and generally dodge the beautiful pencil flame that seductively swayed from the end of the torch and tried to lick me at every available opportunity. It was now 19:00, four hours on from discovering the fracture. Soon daylight, or rather the lack of it, was going to be a problem. I remember wondering what plonker originally said that time flew when you were having fun, as fun, this was not. After a few adjustments to the bracket position, and manufacturing a new gasket, (I even found the lock nut loose on the throttle cable) the tank was finally refitted, the oil put back and the engine run to check possible leaks. It was now 19:30 and we reckoned a maximum of one and half-hours back and sunset at 21:00. We did our hurried farewells and threw everything into the back of the aircraft, strapped ourselves in and carried out our power checks as we taxied to the runway. Take off was timed at 19:45. During the first 10 minutes my eyes were glued to the T’s & P’s and they remained as steady as a rock. The T’s & P’s that is. The flight itself was beautifully smooth, just like Classic FM. And as dusk began to fall our confidence grew in the emergency repairs. What must have been a slight tail wind brought the home field into view just before nine and with bags more daylight left too. I did my down wind checks and throttled back on the base leg to discover that she wouldn’t go below 1500rpm. I didn’t panic I simply mouthed the magic words Oh S—t and yanked the knob. The effect was immediate and she dropped to 600 (rpm not feet) but then wouldn’t return back up. We had now turned onto final. I lunged at the knob and she responded back up to full throttle but again resisted slowing below 1500. At this point I have to say, in full praise to my now totally bewildered passenger, that during all of this somewhat unconventional approach e.g. descend/climb/descend etc, etc, she never said a word. Foolishly I voiced that the sticking throttle could be due to my tightening the throttle linkage lock nut earlier? This was met with her (another fine mess you’ve got me into) look, that she does so well. So I told her to carry on with her knitting as it really wasn’t so big a problem. And it wasn’t, we landed safely with minutes of daylight to spare.

So what did I learn?

Well double checking the hour of sunset would have helped even if you are as convinced as we were that you knew what it was, and I must say most of the people around us also thought that it was the same time as we did. Had I realised that we had a few more minutes of daylight, I would have carried out a less hurried power check. This would have not only highlighted the sticking throttle but would also have taken the stress out of the first part of a really lovely flight back.

And now the technical bit, courtesy of Martin (Ifya goin’t’-dowit lud, do it rhy’at) Slater. The Continental C85 engine fitted into the Vag, as with most light engines, is of the wet sump variety. Now I’m



Vagabond N4696H / 17-94 at Combe Bissett in 1989, now G-BSMV. (Chris England)

sure that I’m the only one in the UK that didn’t know that. Therefore, in the unlikely event that there is someone else out there, lacking in-depth knowledge of wet sumps, (no sniggering) who might find themselves miles from home with a cracked oil filler tube, and no obliging engineer standing by waving a welding torch, this next paragraph is especially for you. So pay attention.

Underneath your trusty donkey looking a bit like a metal Easter egg, is the oil sump. Now I’m sure that you all knew that. But did you know that nesting inside that egg, dangles a filtered probe that incorporates a clever little suction pump that draws the oil from the reservoir and slops it all around the engine and, depending on your engine’s condition, just about everywhere else as well. Gravity guides the circulating oil back into the egg tank for the process to be continuously repeated thus keeping it (the engine) both lubricated and cool. The pressure inside the tank is therefore minimal and provided the filler tube and dipstick were made secure, the flight home could have been undertaken. The only risk to consider is whether you are prepared to spend the following weekend cleaning off a thin layer of oil coating spread over an area as big as a football pitch. Cos that’s what you’re going to find under the cowlings after the flight.

The other and perhaps most important thing I learned was that there are still a lot of nice people out there that are ready to help without expecting reward. Many thanks to my unknown fellow pilot who offered his help and the use of his resin and, of course, Joe the star. For his expertise and tools, made it possible to get me both very grubby and also down a welcomed pint in my local that night without the prospect of a really messy cleaning job the following weekend. Bless you both.

Tony Cheriton

*Piper PA-15 Vagabond s/n 15-305 /
Registered NC4531H 20 May 1948*

I updated the panel last year with the latest Becker digital VHF radio and Mode S transponder and also the first "certified" digital horizon from Kelly Instruments with whom I have a good relationship. It's a moot point whether you need one at all in a Vagabond, but it goes



Lycoming O-145-B2 engine & Marvel-Schebler MA-2 Carburettor of Vagabond NC4531H. (Ed Terris)



Wind driven alternator & Scott 3000 tail wheel of Vagabond NC4531H (Ed Terris)



well in the panel and I actually use it to keep in trim. It's also far lighter at just over an inch deep and with no motor the current draw is minimal which is well within the output of the wind driven alternator at about 80MPH cruise speed!

Didn't do a great deal of flying last year (health problem), but it's a great little airplane for puttering along at about 1000' on a summer's evening watching all those poor people struggling along and stuck in traffic on the M40.

As you probably know the Vagabond is considered a "light sport" now in the States, so the value of them has gone up considerably, but there are not many with the original Lycomings and most have Continentals.

The Lycomings have not been supported for many years now, but I have a spare engine and enough bits and pieces to see me out, so it won't be a problem as I do all my own work since I went to the States and got an FAA A&P license.

Bill Piper Jr filled me in on his "adventure" with my Vag as Piper's demonstrator and I spoke to him a few times after the initial letter. Keystone Instruments who you probably know at Lock Haven did all the instruments for me and I also did a couple of courses with Clyde Smith Jr and spoke to his father before he passed away.

Jess Hackenburg Sr took all the parts for the O-145-B2 when he left Lycoming and I've also been to see and bought/supplied parts to Jess Jr in Montoursville.

As a lifetime member of the Piper Aviation Museum, who knows, it might even end up there!

Ed Terris

*Piper PA-17 Vagabond s/n 17-210 /
Registered ZS-VLN 04 July 1985*



Panel of Vagabond ZU-VLN. (Alan Lorimer)

Hello from South Africa. My name is Alan Lorimer and I am the current owner of a 1948 PA 17-210 Vagabond. This aircraft was previously owned by Bob and Barbara Ilsley of Durban. Bob was at my airport on a little single seater project I built. I purchased the Vagabond from him shortly before he passed away. Some of you might have met Bob and Barbara in the UK or in RSA.

Bob and Barbara had an engine fail taking off from Pietermaritzburg and managed to put it down on a road with minimal damage, however Barbara suffered a broken hip from the undercarriage collapsing into the cabin. Bob was busy refurbishing, recovering and repairing the undercarriage when he became ill. I asked him for first refusal on VLN as I still had to sell my streak shadow ZU-AIA, serial no. 001 which was signed off by David Cook himself.

Shortly after taking ownership Bob passed away and I moved the A/C to Grass Roots—its current home. Grass Roots is a 440m strip about 40km west of Durban in the farmlands. This is the home of our local EAA chapter 1502 and has a long history of vintage aircraft. At one stage there were 3 Tigermoths, 2 Chipmunks, an Aeronca Chief and 2 Piper Cubs. This was back in the heydays when flying was cheap and the SACAA appeared interested in flying activities. Today we still have the 1939 Aeronca which is the oldest registered a/c in South Africa, a 1942 Auster Mk1 which came from Zimbabwe which has its own epic story to tell, a 1950 Super Cub and a variety of LSA a/c.

VLN PA-17 sn210 is now hangered there. At present the fuselage is painted yellow but I am going to change to a



C85 engine of Vagabond ZU-VLN. (Alan Lorimer)

scheme very similar to G-BRJL-which has to be the best looking Vagabond in the world. The wings are covered but not sprayed yet. The tail feathers will have to be rubbed down and resprayed. The interior will be a dark blue and cream finish which will give it a retro feel. The wings were completely stripped and any ribs were repaired as well as the wooden wing tips and braces. The engine is a continental C85. It was completely stripped and refurbished. The crankcase, spider pistons inlet manifolds were all sent to an AMO for refurb. The engine suffered a prop strike so I had the crank inspected for cracks---which we found, so the crank got tossed. When I purchased the a/c it came with a 0-200 engine in pieces. I used the crank from this motor as there was too much to be done to get the 0-200 to fit the Vagabond. Our exchange rate is pitiful and the costs were too much. As the a/c is registered under non type certified I have had no problems. The crank was reground for the new bearing sizes. The barrels were honed with reconditioned pistons and new rings correctly sized. New seals, gas-kets, main and big end bearings were installed. With the extra throw of the 0-200 crank there was a small amount of machining on the piston crowns and skirts. This was all put together with the help of my AP Len Cormack and Piet De Villiers both multiple a/c builders (+-10 between them). The engine mount has been repaired after the out landing and has also been installed now. The propeller was bent beyond repair so I purchase a prop from our local manufacturer. I have gone for a climb prop as our field is at 2600AGL and on a 30 degree day with density alt. calculations get the field up to over 4000ft, and with a short runway I thought it prudent. Any way the slower you fly the longer you are in the air---isn't that the plan.

I will keep you posted on the balance of the rebuild as thing happen. Best wishes for the festive season and a happy New Year from us all down south.

Alan Lorimer

*Piper PA-16 Clipper s/n 16-342 /
Registered N5730H 16 June 1949 and
Piper Clipper s/n 16-231 /
Registered ZU-FGP 11 December 2009*



Clipper N5730H at Yeatsil Farm. (John Bailey)

N5730H PA 16 Clipper was manufactured in 1949 and the US Navy used it for recording the movements of vessels in the San Diego harbour. It then moved to the US Navy Flying Club. After a complete rebuild it was put up

for sale. Graham Cork (Corky) went to view but the deal was not done, as the paint scheme was still in military colours and it could not be released and rather than be repainted it was recovered and painted white. It arrived in a container during the winter of 1998, having moved in the container there was damage to the tail. After repairing and assembly it was ready for flying. The extra power, long range tanks, disc brakes and starter made it a far more usable tourer than the PA17 Vagabond G-BIHT we were used to (that's another story).

So we could do the Channel Islands in a oner now. June 1999 we won the Best Piper at the Alderney fly in. The same summer we went to Schafen Diest fly in 3 hrs from Coventry. We did many more years doing the annual Alderney fly in and coming back with a trophy which had to be returned the following year. The PFA rally at Cranfield was also an annual event and I don't think we have missed one since. The a/c is a 2+2 but given low-ish fuel and the right wind we have flown 4 up no problem. All in all a delight to fly and economical at 20 Litres a hours.

The engine was starting to show its age and we decided to rebuild it. The valve guides were worn and the cylinders were sent away through a third party who could not guarantee that the job would be successful due to the engineers had to weld an attachment to remove the valve seats, one by one they were all made into scrap. Unbeknown to us at the time that Lycoming do an over-size sodium valve which just meant that the guides did not need replacing but reaming to fit. You never stop learning. Happy Landings.

John Bailey

N5730H Came from San Diego, North Island and was owned by the American Naval Flying Club. The rear door had been removed and a camera was fitted in its place inside the plane. They filmed the movement of ships in and out of the harbour. The original colouring of the aircraft was the American Naval colours: Yellow, white, red, royal blue and had stars. I purchased it in 1998 and had it shipped to England, but kept it on the American Registration.

In 2007 we fitted an oil cooler. The Scott tail wheel was replaced by a Maule tail wheel and the colours to what we see today. N5730H does regular flights to the Channel Islands, Mull in Scotland, Belgium and France. In hard up times it was used to smuggle fags from Belgium. It won all but one Channel Island cups. The last being the "Ravagers of Time" in 2007.

C-FMLZ was bought in 2005 in Lake Ontario Canada where it was used as a float plane. During my 2nd trip to Canada, I flew it with the wheels in the back to Alaska. Landing on various lakes en route. where I sold the floats to some Inuit Indians, put the wheels on the air-plane, took the wings off, put it in a container and shipped it to Cape Town. Cape Town restored the upholstery and refitted the wings. It was then flown to Swellendam (the trim was fitted the wrong way around. Up was down and down was up) It took the full the 3 miles of Cape Town International to get it airborne and home to Swellendam.



Graham Cork & his Clipper C-FMLZ / 16-231 at Swellemdam in 2007. (Roger Peperell)

Climbing to 6000ft to clear the mountains to Swellemdam, the oil temp was off the clock. I realised I had to fit yet another oil cooler with scoop. This was done and then the airplane was tidied up and repainted. A blow up tail wheel was fitted on the back. Miraculously ground handling was improved. It has been re registered to ZU-FGP which is a South African permit to fly and not C of A.

PA-16's handling is universal. It's fast, carries weight and is very responsive. Hugely economical for its 108hp Lycoming 0235C engine. Both engines were built in 1948 and so far so good. Clippers have a lively ground handling.

Graham Cork

Piper PA-16 Clipper s/n 16-732 / Registered G-BIAP 25 June 1980

My first decade with a PPL, gained through my ATCO training programme in 1969, was confined to minimum hours per year and Cessna 150/172s and a lone Rallye. I worked with Ian Callier at Heathrow Tower/Approach in the late 70s and, following a trip to Henstridge in his ex Moroccan Vagabond, expressed a desire to get involved with such an aeroplane. Ian had always wanted a Clipper and a plan formulated to get one and share it. He knew of CN-TTM, again in Morocco, that was airworthy and buyable, but early negotiations resulted in the price going beyond what he thought reasonable. Ian had long been involved with the group at Walkerdridge Farm, Hannington led by Cliff Lovell and Ben Cooper importing and 'doing up' mainly rag and stick Pipers and Jodels from France, with Ian flying many such types back over the Channel or collecting the non flyers with car/trailer on the ferry.



Clipper F-BBGM / 16-732 at Blagrove Drive, Wokingham on 7 October 1979, now G-BIAP. (via Pete Bish)



Clipper 16-732 being readied by Ian Callier for its journey from Wokingham to Rushett Farm. Summer 1980. (via Pete Bish)

Ian had a dismantled Clipper in storage, having roaded it back from Lille-Bondue on 10.7.79, where it had been abandoned, intending to sell it on as a project. He then decided that this would become our aeroplane, with him doing the work under the watchful eye of the late Geoff 'Mastermind' Masterton and me doing the running about to collect bits, provide half the finance and 'point the torch there' and a lot of polishing when required. And so it was that I 'met' F-BBGM a PA-16 c/n 732 (of 736 built) in Ian's Wokingham garage on 7.10.79.

Originally built at Lock Haven in early 1950 at the end of Clipper production as Piper moved on to the very similar PA-20 Pacer, c/n 732 initially became F-OAGS, based at Casablanca, Morocco and had its first 'Grande Visite' on 9.11.50. In this guise it ventured as far North as Le Touquet in 1951. It moved on to France and was reregistered F-BBGM in 1956. There is a nice photo of her in this guise on the ABPIC (Air-Britain) site taken at the Jersey Rally in 1963.

Work progressed quickly at Wokingham until it was time to move her to Geoff's strip at Rushett Farm, Chessington for painting by BA sprayer Mike Drye and assembly. The signwriting was added by my brother Tony. Registered as G-BIAP on 25.6.80 (in sequence registration selected to reflect Ian And Pete !), Geoff and Ian answered many questions from the CAA about the type, only being the 3rd Clipper on the UK register and the first with the smaller 108hp O-235 engine. Ian conducted the maiden flight as 'AP on 11.12.80, but the CAA, still doubting it was a true Clipper only issued a Permit to Fly initially. It was only after Dick Stratton advised them of their error that we progressed to a UK CAA CofA a year or so later!

Based at White Waltham, it was not until April 1981 that I got my first flights totalling 2hr 10 mins with Ian, but only in the right hand seat. The Clipper only has brakes for the left seat and I had no tailwheel experience, so I arranged for instructor Monsieur Jenni at White Waltham to check me out on type, which he did in a single sortie of 50 mins. Having pronounced me as proficient, I immediately went off and did solo circuits which was a tremendous confidence booster after the stories of how difficult it would be to convert to taildraggers. With Waltham's 3 runways I was able to avoid crosswinds and I was cautious in that regard with the places I visited initially. In 1982 Ian flew her to Morocco and back as Rally number 51 so 'AP could again visit her first 'home' !

With just 108hp up front I have never regarded the Clipper as a 4 seater, although Ian has shown me that it can be so in the right hands ! Indeed at bumpy White Waltham, particularly with fuel and baggage 2 up was my preference. Indeed, as a touring aeroplane, 2 up with bags etc and good strip performance she has proved ideal and 34 years later I still cannot name a better type for my purpose and pocket. It is very simple to operate – fixed gear, fixed prop, no flaps – has the odd combination of Vagabond 10 gal front tank, but with a 15 gal left wing tank, the latter requiring a bit of ‘right stick’ when full – but in turn makes crosswinds from the left easier !

Folklore says the Clipper is not easy to land, although I would qualify that by saying that ‘greasers’ to order are difficult. I have found 70 mph approach, 65 over the hedge, don’t hold off too long and it sits down on three points, but takes a few more yards to roll out than a flapped type.

To date it has only seriously ‘bitten’ me once – landing 3 up on 08 at Kemble, and trying to expedite off the runway with the Sea Vixen up my chuff ! The resulting ground loop took me into a full 360, at first onto the intended taxiway, but then onto the grass. Incredibly we hit nothing, didn’t hurt the aeroplane, but dented my pride ! The Sea Vixen went round...

With ‘too many aeroplanes’ Ian sold his share in 1993 to another Heathrow ATCO, our very own Mike Mothershaw, during which time we continued to keep ‘AP at White Waltham. Then Mike himself got his long sought after posting to Manchester, taking the Clipper to Liverpool for the winter of 1996. I then bought Mike’s share in early 1997 and ferried her down to Draycott Farm, Swindon on 4.4.97, thereby halving the White Waltham hangarage bill and getting the aeroplane closer to home. Now much less afraid of crosswinds – you have to be on a N/S strip in the UK –I have been there ever since, with the added freedoms that strip flying offers – no published hours, no wait for donglers, just do it yourself flying from a long, wide smooth but undulating grass strip.

My main use of the aeroplane is to visit fly-ins and rallies and ‘collect’ new airfields in my log book mainly in the UK and Eire, in my pursuit of aeroplane photographs – a 50+ year obsession ! My only Channel jaunt was in 1990 when Ian took his girlfriend in the Vagabond and I took Mike Drye with ‘AP on a 8 day trip to Hungary. The highlights were to land at Budapest (Ferihegy) Airport on 31L for the (then) required customs/immigration check and be parked up for the night on the apron outside the Soviet era Terminal One. This did cost us a lot but looking back... We also visited my favourite ballooning airfield, Ocseny in Hungary’s Southern wine growing region and take part (as ‘The Old Pipers’) in an airshow at Budapest’s light airfield Budaors. No weather or technical delays were encountered on this marathon, which is probably why I have not attempted it again !! It was on this trip that I did my longest ever Clipper sector, 3 hr 23 mins from Strasbourg to Calais. Although the type has an endurance approaching 4 hr 30 mins, using 5.5 gals an hour at 105 MPH, my endurance is less ! There is usual-

ly another airfield to visit, plane to see and a welcome cuppa en route...

More normal tours have included all around Ireland, North and South, to Kirkwall and Lamb Holm in the Orkneys, several of the Western Isles, the Isle of Man and lots of places in between. Being one for statistics, G-BIAP and I have visited 14 airfields on the Hungary trip (France, Germany, Austria and Hungary) 22 in Eire and 223 in the UK (including IOM), total 259. Over the 34+ years I have been involved with ‘AP I have been airborne in her for just shy of 1000 hrs, of which 980 hrs are P1...

With 1715 hours on the clock when we bought her in 1979, ‘AP has now progressed to 3399 hours and still with the original engine and 1980 Grade A Cotton fabric. Whilst this has only been achieved by good hangarage on all but a few days a year, it also pays tribute to Ian and Mike’s covering, doping and painting skills. Technically over the 35 years I have had to replace the lift struts (Piper AD), undercarriage bungees and fuel selector. The one niggling problem which has plagued me over recent years has been keeping the battery charged up, particularly as it is under the front bench seat with no external access for a ‘jump start’ and to access it means taking the seat out (easy) and putting it back (needs 5 hands, luck and gives me backache !) This problem has only been cured this year with first a new voltage regulator but mainly by replacing the several times overhauled ancient generator with a new unit. After the initial rebuild, Geoff looked after the annual for the first few years, then the late ‘Uncle’ Bill Bushell at Turweston and latterly ‘Leo’ Zakhour at Coventry. And Ian, who knows everything ‘Piper’ (and more) keeps a watchful eye on both ‘AP and me... Thanks to you all...

Pete Bish

*Piper PA-16 Clipper s/n 16-392 /
Registered G-BAMR 12 January 1973*

Like all Piper Clippers, ours came out of the Lock Haven factory in 1949 as number 392 of 736 built in the short run. She was shipped straight to France where she wore the registration F-BFMS and, as far as we know, belonged to a flying school near Paris. In 1961 the stock O-235 108hp engine was replaced with a 135hp O-290-D2 taken from a Pacer and teamed up with a Sensenich propeller.

In 1975 she was bought by Cliff Lovell (one of many high wing Pipers he imported) shipped to the UK and re-registered G-BAMR. She was given a full restoration by his company, Light Plane Services, and he then kept her on as his own aircraft for a year or so before selling her to my father, Harold Royce, in 1977. Two years before I was born! Harold flew her for many years, making additions to the panel as technology evolved, but essentially enjoying what had been a very competent restoration. In 2005 I gained my PPL and joined him in flying this charming and capable aeroplane, sometimes using her to commute to work at RAF Valley where I was based as a Fleet Air Arm trainee. The 3 hour trip from Sussex to Anglesey pushed her endurance to the limit.



Clipper F-BFMS / 16-392, now G-BAMR. (Bill Bushell / NA3T)

In 2007 time was finally called on the 70s rebuild when, after 32 years of good service, the fabric on the fuselage failed the punch test. She remained hangar bound until 2010 when Mike and Owen Watts of Classic Air Care near Winchester took on the job of her second restoration. Like so many jobs of this nature, the initial plan to do a basic re-cover evolved into something much bigger. We took the opportunity to remove the 10 gallon fuselage tank and put in a second 15 gallon wing tank to bring her up to Pacer/Super Cub configuration and in the process added 5 gallons to the fuel load. The panel was totally redesigned to improve instrumentation and to include a Mode S; the new panel was made deeper and there is now more space behind it thanks to the removal of the fuel tank. The old lap straps were replaced by Hooker 3-point harnesses. Egyptian cotton gave way to Ceconite and the colour changed very slightly from yellow/white to orange/white. As expected there were several areas in the fuselage where corroded tubing had to be replaced and we also had to replace six ribs that were beyond repair. Less expected was the need to replace the leading edge skins, chin cowl, boot cowl and door skins all of which were found to be more costly to patch up than to replace. One excellent addition with maintenance in mind is a triangular, removable panel on the underside of the fuselage near the tailwheel which gives unparalleled access to the tail plane section and the trim jack. The idea was borrowed from the 'Red Lady' Clipper in the States. All in all it took three years and some considerable extra budget to return her to the skies but the result is a far better, more capable aeroplane which has nonetheless retained its original 1940s charm.

Six months into her first year back with us, my wife and I flew around France for three weeks on our honeymoon; the trip took 19 hours of flying, 1500nm and seven stops in our favourite places including the delectable Belle Ile. Despite her initial life as a school aircraft she is still very low hours for her age: she has about 1250 TTAF although Harold and I have plans to add many more hours in the coming years. She is based at both Bradley's Lawn in East Sussex, her home of 38 years, and RAF Barkston Heath where I am a member of the



Panel of Clipper G-BAMR. (Rod Royce)



Clipper G-BAMR at Old Buckenham. (Mike Mothershaw)

Cranwell Flying Club and still use her to commute from work to home in Sussex when time off allows.

Roderick Royce

*Piper PA-17 Vagabond s/n 17-192 /
Registered G-AWKD 27 May 1968*



Vagabond F-BFMZ / 157-192 at Toussus-le-Noble, France 1958, now G-AWKD. (JSM Larkham)

I was bitten by the vintage Piper bug when completing my tailwheel differences in a lovely 1946 J/3. There's nothing quite like a bumble on a calm summer evening in a Cub with the doors open. At this stage I was renting, so it made sense to take a look around and see what might be on the market of a similar vein. After some looking around, a small group of like-minded friends and I decided that a Vagabond would be an ideal option. So it came to pass that at the end of May 2014 I found myself departing Chilbolton in Kilo Delta having struck a deal with Cliff Lovell – we haven't looked back since!

Though it isn't all blue skies, fair winds and summery fly-ins when it comes to vintage aircraft ownership of course. These old ladies do require looking after and with that in mind I, like many other owners, see our role as much as custodians with a care of duty to not only enjoy them, but to pass them on to the next generation to do the same. These lovely old machines have a history (or some may call it provenance?!) and whilst I know that I have my best times with KD still to come, it's also nice to take a look back at what has happened before and what the previous owners have gotten up to.

KD, or 17-192 as she was then known, rolled off the production line at Lockhaven in 1948 – incidentally, between G-AWOF (191) and G-BLMP (193), two other UK based PA17s. She was assigned F-BFMZ on the French register in February 1950 where she went on to spend the best part of two decades fulfilling her role as a Piper



A. Corran (?), Tony Nowak & Albert Dowie getting ready to transport 'KD to Panshanger. (via Darren Legg)

Vagabond Trainer. She amassed almost 7,500 hours total time in the process. No doubt many French aviators cut their teeth in F-BFMZ and I hope that there are still many with fond memories of her.

Fortunately for me, F-BFMZ was brought over to Booker on 20th April 1968. The logs show that this was a 2h 15m flight, so I sincerely hope that the wing tank (which is now disconnected) was serviceable at the time! At this stage MZ became G-AWKD. Whilst I am still the younger side of 40, I understand that it was a common thing to import light aircraft from France at the time, including many Pipers and no doubt many of us in VPAC are benefiting from that now.

After a few years at Booker with Personal Plane Services, KD went on to live at Broomclose Farm near Warminster with a Mr Trollope from January to October 1970. She then moved on to Stoke Orchard - another airfield lost to time - with pilots R. Savery, H. B. Yardley, M. Payne and M. Lee. Blackbushe was the next home where a Mr Ben Cooper took over ownership just after Christmas in 1972. It certainly looks like Mr Cooper enjoyed KD with no less than 17 airfields visited during a single week in July 1973. These included Ostend, Luxemburg, Saarbrücken, Karlsruhe, Amougies and Namur. You truly can go continental in a Vagabond! Something to aspire to for a young(ish) aviator such as myself. During Mr Cooper's stewardship a familiar name also pops up with a "C. Lovell" having a 30 minute flight from Blackbushe to Shoreham, with B. Cooper flying the return leg. I wonder if Cliff could have guessed that KD would come back to him 40 years later? It looked like Mr Cooper was really trying to get the best use out of KD anyway as following another 3 day trip across the Channel at the end of July 1973, KD changed hands again and was purchased by A Corran and A Dowie. I'm not sure where the aircraft was living now, but I wonder if Mr Corran and Mr Dowie are in the photos here? I suspect so. (Incidentally, I now know that the chap on the right in the 1978 picture with the stripped down KD is Albert Dowie. The guy in the middle is VPAC's own Tony Nowak. He hasn't aged a bit *they were transporting KD to Panshanger for reassembly. It's a small world in aviation!)

Darren Legg

*Piper PA-17 Vagabond s/n 17-190 /
Registered G-BCVB 22 January 1975*



*Vagabond F-BFMT / 17-190 at Tousus-le-Noble, now G-BCVB.
(via Tony Nowak)*

Well, where to start? Perhaps a bit about myself and how I came to own my Vagabond.

Between 1971-1973 I learnt to fly on Aeronca 7AC Champion, G-ATHK, which was owned by PFA Group 272 at Blackbushe. With a fresh new PPL and a desire to own an aeroplane I, with friend Barry Holland, decided to buy the group's Champ when it came up for sale. We got it at a very good price, but the Champ's fuselage did need a recover so that was my first introduction to fabric aircraft maintenance, restoration and expense at the age of 20!

We kept the Champ for a few years then decided to upgrade to something better - Piper Colt G-ARNJ, which is owned now by no other than your Chairman and Safety Officer, Richard Keech. We found the Colt an excellent, easy to fly, touring aeroplane, but didn't enjoy the considerable sum of money we needed to spend on an engine overhaul. Another sharp lesson for us in aircraft ownership!

So, what now? We couldn't afford to keep and run the C of A Colt after its very expensive engine overhaul so we decided to sell. After a few months of no aircraft ownership Piper PA17 Vagabond, G-BCVB, came up for sale. So that was it - back to being a classic Piper owner on the 3rd June 1977!

A bit of history now - my Vagabond, s.n.17-190, was originally exported to France and operated by the Touring Club de France as F-BFMT. On the 18th May 1974 it ground looped at Chartres and sustained damage to the undercarriage and wing. It was purchased by Ben Cooper in the damaged state, who carried out the necessary repairs, and restored it to flying condition in May 1975.

The Vagabond is a cheap to operate and easy to fly aeroplane. Mine is still in its original configuration (A65-8F engine) whereas most others have had engine upgrades to improve climb performance. At MAUW I get around 440 FPM rate of climb which is okay, but not spectacular!

Talking about MAUW, this is one of the Vagabond's issues that one has to be aware of. It is very easy for the

Members' Vagabonds & Clippers



Ed Terris's Vagabond NC4531H / 15-305. (via Ed Terris)



Clipper G-BAMR / 16-392 at Old Buckenham. (John Allen)



Vagabond G-BCVB / 17-190 over France. (via Tony Nowak)



Vagabonds G-BLMP, G-BDVC and G-BCVB at Argenton sur Creuse. (Ted Gardner)

Tony Caveen's Vagabond G-BDVC / 17-140 over North Wales. (Mike Mothershaw)



Keir & Nye Williams's G-BRJL at Compton Abbas. (Roger Peperell)

Vagabonds & Clippers USA (Roger Peperell)



N4367H / 15-152 at Short Wing Piper Convention 2010



C-FYQU / 15-75 at Sentimental Journey 2006



N4411H / 15-196 at Sentimental Journey 2006



N4670H / 15-372 at Sentimental Journey 2010



N4444H / 15-233 at Sentimental Journey 2010



N4554H / 15-327 at Sentimental Journey 2010



NC4654H / 15-366 at Air Adventure 2010



N4469H / 15-257 at Air Adventure 2012



N45580 / 15-332 at Air Adventure 2014



N4675H / 15-374 at Sentimental Journey 2006

Vagabonds & Clippers USA (Roger Peperell)



N5373H / 16-184 at Short Wing Piper Convention 2010



N5246H / 16-50 at Air Adventure 2007



N5216H / 16-18 at Air Adventure 2014



N5675H / 16-290 at Short Wing Piper Convention 2010



N5804H / 16-421 at Sentimental Journey 2010



N5773H / 16-384 at New Holstein tail-draggers flyin 2010



N5949H / 16-573 at Air Adventure 2015



N5610H / 16-217 at Sentimental Journey 2010



N5848H / 16-467 at Air Adventure 2010



N5834H / 16-453 at Air Adventure 2014

Vagabonds & Clippers USA (Roger Peperell)



N4605H / 17-21 at Sentimental Journey 2014



N5337H / 16-143 at Air Adventure 2007



N4610H / 17-27 at Short wing Piper Convention 2010



N4612H / 17-29 at Sentimental Journey 2012



NC4681H / 17-80 at Sun N'Fun 2011



NC4643H / 17-55 at Short Wing Piper Convention 2010



N4898H / 17-148 at Air Adventure 2014



N4821H / 17-119 at Short Wing Piper Convention 2010



N6LF / 17-134 at Air Adventure 2007



N4699H / 17-97 at Air Adventure 2014

Members' Vagabonds & Clippers (continued)



Vagabond G-BCVB at Hullavington 2007. (Roger Peperell)

Vagabond to become a single seater as the MAUW is only 1150 lb, even with a more powerful engine fitted (the MAUW limit is even worse for the PA15 as it is only certified to 1100 lb). I found my Vagabond was quite heavy (empty weight 800 lb) as it had some non-standard changes incorporated by the French. So, over the past 10 years or thereabouts, I have been slowly restoring it back to near original and have reduced the empty weight by around 55 lb. This means I can now go flying with full fuel tank, wife, flight bag and still have some room for some lightweight overnight bags.

I have always enjoyed touring and, upon checking my logbook, see that I have, to date, made two trips to Belgium and thirteen trips to France, including a day trip to Switzerland. The trips to Europe have always been very enjoyable and good fun, even the trip in Aug 1984 where I was stuck (with Ted Gardner and G-BDVB) for over a week in Rouen trying to get home (bad vis over the channel). We eventually left both Vags at Rouen, got a lift home in a Cessna 195, and retrieved them three weeks later. If you have time to spare go by air!!

Maintenance-wise, I have had the wings and tail-plane recovered recently and plan on recovering the fuselage at the end of 2016. I fitted new Univair sealed struts in 2015 and will have fitted Grove disc brakes by the time you read this.

I had an unexpected issue with my engine in 2014 when I decided to get a top overhaul done at 800 Hrs SMOH. I hadn't really experienced any problems up to that point, apart from a slightly low compression on one cylinder, but detailed examination found I had three cracked cylinders! However, I was very fortunate in quickly locating a brand new Superior A65 cylinder kit for sale in USA, so was flying again after only a few months delay.

Regarding equipment, my panel is fairly standard though have installed a radio, AH and Mode S transponder to help with our adventures abroad. To sum up the Vagabond – a great, fun aeroplane to own and fly!

Tony Nowak

*Piper PA-15 Vagabond s/n 15-229 /
Registered G-BDVB 23 April 1976*

Tales from the Slipstream

A couple of us pilots at Popham have now been flying our PA17 Vagabonds for about 40 years so that in this



Vagabonds G-BDVB and G-BCVB at Le Touquet en route UK. (Ted Gardner)

time there have been a few adventures and interesting places visited.

It began for the writer in 1975 when Vagabond 15-229 was purchased as a damaged airframe from the Aero Club de Pithiviers about 50 miles south of Paris. The rebuild completed in 1977 and was soon followed by Tony Nowak acquiring his Vagabond G-BCVB, it having been tailored from Nangis by Ben Cooper who had previously owned G-AWKD.

Early flights abroad with the two Vagabonds, BCVB & BDVB were to places like Annecy in 1978 and 79. On one of these a perforated exhaust muffler and unserviceable coil in the Bendix magneto caused a 3 day delay before a French friend with yet another Vagabond which is now G-BLMP came to the rescue at Lons le Saulnier over the Jura from Annecy.

That trip was to attend the big display and fly-in at Bex in Switzerland and to save time our French friend Claude arranged that we "cleared" customs out of France by the simple expedient of overflying Annemasse aerodrome with three Vags. Upon arrival at the last minute at Bex about a hundred hang gliders launched from the mountains which rise either side of the aerodrome. Another early trip to France involved continuing after Annecy and flying down the Rhone Valley in moderately turbulent conditions caused by the air mass rolling over the Massif Centrale....a bit uncomfortable. Further south we stopped at Carpentras to refuel but were told that the "Camion" would arrive with fuel but in three days so in calm winds the hop over to Avignon Caumont was commenced although in the space of a few minutes the Mistral blew up so we landed, down the runway, in probably 40 knots whereupon the helpful French club members held onto our struts and walked us to the safety of a hangar. The Vags stayed there for a week as the prediction was that the Mistral would blow for nearly that long.

It was on one of these trips that it was decided to stop overnight at Rouen and finish the journey to the UK the next day, however the visibility was just a few hundred meters for several days and one of the passengers decided to go back on the train and Ferry. This is what the Vag pilots did as well after exhausting the tourist possibilities of Rouen for a few days more when the

weather remained static. One Jodel pilot came in and thought it was good enough to depart but after departure landed in a nearby field because the visibility was so bad.

Three weeks went by and there was a good forecast coinciding with days off work so an attempt was made to collect the aeroplanes, but again it was not possible and the Ferry was used once more. However the next attempt was so CAVOK that one could almost see England from overhead Rouen.

In the mid 80's a circular tour was made with three Vagabonds down the west coast of France and across to Annecy again, staying at times in Hotels such as the Hotel Modern in Gueret.....let's hope it has been refurbished! G-BLMP was on that trip with the two Victor Bravo's. Occasionally confusion reigned with two VB's so one could always blame something on the other one!

Quite a few Piper Club France Rassemblement's have been attended and are always great fun. What you do is fly there, usually by a circuitous route that could have been cycled quicker, stay in pleasant towns near small grass airfields and end up at the Rassemblement on the Friday afternoon. Setting off for the return flight to reality on the Sunday afternoon. Two such memorable trips were to Belves somewhere in the Dordogne and Archacon to the south west of Bordeaux. Both of those trips being uneventful although with spectacular flying. At Archachon there were about 50 aeroplanes and on the Saturday there was a briefing to enable all the participants to fly to Andernos across the bay for a seafood lunch. The aircraft took off in turn and flew over the sand dunes (quite high!) and around the edge of the bay and without incident, or hardly anyway, landed for huitres. As many of us didn't fancy huitres one of our number with a Super Cub decided to consume 6 plates of 6 huitres per plate, and without ill effect. Such is the life of a Piper.....

Ted Gardner

Piper PA-17 Vagabond s/n 17-140 /
Registered G-BDVC 29 September 1976



Vagabond F-BFBL / 17-140 at Toussus-le-Noble in May 1961.
(Roger Peperell collection)

On the seventh of August 1948, The Touring Club France, at Toussus-le-Noble, near Paris, took delivery of a brand new Piper PA-17 'Vagabond', direct from the factory at Lock Haven. Registered F-BFBL, it proved to be popular and successful at the Touring Club, where it was used for training and touring over a period of twenty-

six years. During that time, it amassed a total of 10,830 flying hours, and became the first of a further six Vagabonds for the club. It was also flown by the Sens Aero Club at Montereau, where it gained another 239 hours, before being shipped overseas again, in 1976. This time, to a private buyer in England, where it only flew for a total of 100 hours during the next seven years. We, Ken Rylands and I, purchased the aircraft, now registered G-BDVC, in September 1983, and eventually, we made a home for it at Knockin farm-strip, near Oswestry.

After operating the aircraft for a number of years, touring at home and abroad, the old doped-cotton finish was beginning to show its age, and our inspector was becoming increasingly concerned about the condition of those parts of the airframe to which he had no access. It was decision time - wait another year or two, or 'bite the bullet' and get on with a complete 'strip 'n recover'. That was the start of us eventually removing all of the old cotton fabric for a proper inspection of the entire airframe. The only exception to an absolutely clean 'bill of health', was some rusting at the lower end of the door-pillar tube, which was replaced by a coded welder.

The work illustrated in the photographs took place over a total period of about six years.

Tony Caveen



Vagabond G-BDVC fuselage: Sand-blasting the frame, Frame on spit, Frame covered and Frame finished on trailer.
(Tony Caveen)





The panel and seating of Vagabond G-BDVC. (Tony Caveen)

*Piper PA-15 Vagabond s/n 15-157 /
Registered G-BRJL 21 August 1989*



Vagabond G-BRJL / 15-157 at Great Oakley 2009 before restoration. (Roger Peperell)

My Dad and I fly G-BRJL, PA15 #15-157. It is powered by the hand start Continental C85-12F, with a 12 gallon front and 15 gallon wing tank. My Dad originally bought the aircraft as a half share in 1998 when he received his Pilots License, shortly before I was born, and acquired full ownership of the aircraft in 2003. The engine was fully rebuilt in 2007, and in 2010, the aircraft was painstakingly stripped and restored by Miles McCallum of Straight and Level Aircraft Engineering. The aircraft had severe rot and corrosion around the tailpost, and required significant welding as a repair. The restoration and re-cover in Poly-Fiber was completed 20 months later. Subsequently at the 2012 LAA Aircraft Rally at Sywell, Northampton, 'JL won the awards for best Fabric Piper, and best Vintage aircraft (notably an award previously won by R4118, ex-Peter Vacher Hawker Hurricane).



State of the fuselage of Vagabond G-BRJL before restoration. (via Keir Williams)



Restored fuselage of Vagabond G-BRJL.. (via Keir Williams)

We try to fly the aircraft most weekends, and have flown the aircraft to France for Le Piper Club France's annual Rassemblement on two occasions, (<http://www.piper-clubfrance.com>), and obviously to as many VPAC events as we can make. However, most of our flying is done locally, enjoying the beautiful Wiltshire scenery. Some of my personal favourite flying experiences in the Vagabond include a rather interesting flight to Belle Isle on the Rassemblement in 2009, being the first PA15 to brave the 15kt crosswind landing on Tarmac (I'm not sure whether my Dad would say he enjoyed it as much as I did!), and some lovely evening flights back from the Isle of Wight. I would love to make the trip to Glenforsa on Mull (an island well visited by us), although we've never come across a big enough weather window to make it, but I will keep on dreaming !

'JL was the front cover article of September 2014's edition of Flyer magazine and was photographed by Flyer editor, Ed Hicks, who also flies 'JL.

Recently, I made a YouTube video of the Vagabond, which was filmed on our DJI Inspire drone, and it shows some of our flying from a different visual perspective. You can watch it here : <http://bit.ly/1jbv1iJ>

As I have been lucky enough to have so much experience (as a passenger) around small aircraft from a young age, I hope to gain my Pilots license at some point in 2016, and hope to have flown solo by the time this goes to print.

Keir (Age 17) & Nye Williams



Vagabond G-BRJL at Compton Abbas in 2012. (Mike Mothershaw)

Who are you talking to ?

VPAC member Tim McKay, an experienced Air Traffic Controller and private pilot reminds us about VFR RT procedures

This article is written mainly for those who use VHF RT but if you fly non-radio, keep reading, there is something for you too.

There are 3 categories of VHF radio stations that GA pilots commonly use, identifiable by the suffix in the call-sign:-

1 Manned by air traffic controllers: "Tower", "Approach", "Radar", "Control", "Delivery", "Ground", etc.

2 Manned by flight information officers: "Information" - Either FISO at a Control centre or AFISO at an aerodrome

3 Manned by competent persons: "Radio" - Those providing the service must hold as R/T licence and are bound by wireless communications regulations.

Air Traffic Controllers must pass a demanding training regime and once qualified are subject to checks that assure their continuing competence to provide the service. They are in charge and their instructions must be obeyed, yes? No, not quite. The concept of air traffic control is that it is permissive which means that pilots should arrange and manage flights as they see fit. However, this would inevitably create conflicts ranging from six airliners wishing to land at Heathrow at exactly the same time to six GA flights at a 3-strip airfield wanting to fly six different circuits at the same time. Step in the air traffic controller whose job it is to create a safe, orderly and expeditious flow of traffic. However, the orderly flow created may not suit everybody and this is where the pilot in command has the ultimate responsibility for safe conduct of the flight. If the runway in use is out of crosswind limits then it is PIC who must ask to use a suitable alternative when available. It is the pilot who must tell the controller that a radar heading is unacceptable if it would take him into a Cb. This ultimate responsibility for safety is on the pilot's shoulder whether it is his first solo or his nthousandth flight in a lifetime flying career. Non-radio pilot? Yes, this could apply to you too. If the safe conduct of a flight, particularly in emergency, requires it you may have to disregard instructions/advice shown in that signal square.

Our next category is the most recently created and perhaps less well understood: - the **Flight Service Information** Officer who despite his / her stringent training, competency and medical standards not much short of an air traffic controller, may not give instructions to a pilot in the air (however the instructions of a controller may be relayed). At an aerodrome the AFISO does have the authority to pass instructions to aircraft on the ground to create a safe, orderly and expeditious traffic flow and

by providing high quality information to airborne aircraft help them form a similar flow. The scenario in which the AFISO plays a particularly important role is when the aerodrome is host to a large-scale fly-in event. There will be a briefing sheet (on a website or Aeronautical Information Circular) on procedures to be followed and this should be respected as if it were a clearance issued by an air traffic controller. The role of the AFISO is to keep a picture of the continually changing air situation and to advise pilots of other aircraft in the pattern, particularly of any deviations from the published procedures. These procedures normally include details of the calls to be made by pilots and which ones they can expect to be acknowledged by the AFISO. It is very important that pilots understand them before arriving and have the details (perhaps on an abbreviated 'crib sheet') in front of them. Best of all is that they are memorised so that the maximum lookout can be maintained from initial arrival until engine shutdown. Non-radio pilot? It is imperative that you know and follow the published non-radio procedures because the AFISO is unable to ask what you are doing and can only advise other aircraft of the situation as he sees fit. If all pilots follow published arrival and departure procedures carefully, it will give the best chance that these events will be able to continue safely for the enjoyment of all.

Now for the 'humble' **Radio** operator. At most airfields he / she will be someone with good local knowledge and in many cases much flying experience as well. Valuable information and advice can be expected but if a pilot is uncertain of what is meant then the correct course of action, as always, is to ask, using plain language if required. If you are struggling to remember the words/phrases laid out in CAP 413, just remember that excellent document is for guidance. Your responsibility as regards RTF is to obtain information or pass details of your intentions that will maximise the safe conduct of your flight and if that means 'lapsing' into plain language so be it. Many aerodromes are PPO and often this is so that visiting pilots can be briefed on local procedures, especially if a special event is taking place.

Article reprinted courtesy of Guild of Air Traffic Control Officers

Flight Safety Corner

It seemed hugely ironic to me that not many weeks had passed since this column was last published when I attended a meeting of vintage aircraft and was not many yards away when a pilot owner hand-propped his engine and succeeded in removing a good part of his arm. Ironic since a good proportion of the last column was devoted to engine hand-propping safety techniques and, had this pilot (not a VPACer) followed the guidance therein he would still possess two complete arms. OK, one may say that it's easy to be wise after the event....you know...."had I not had the distraction of my passenger throwing-up I would have remembered to put the wheels down," and the individual who was the victim of the prop-swinging accident could legitimately say that had he not had the distraction of the flooded engine he would still have his complete arm. However, the possible safety consequences of such distractions can be fatal...and in the case of hand-swinging, not just for the prop-swinger. Of course, it is because such omissions and distractions can be so dangerous that rigid drills have been developed such as those always performed prior to landing an aircraft, i.e. the pre-landing checks. In the case of hand-starting aero engines we have the, "Fuel On – Brakes On – Throttle Closed – Switches Off" and the "Throttle Set – Switches On – Contact" drills. Remember? If not please do dig out last year's magazine and give the Flight Safety Corner a good read; it could be a life - saver!

And on the subject of saving life the individual referred to above, in all probability, had his life saved by the immediate first aid that he received from an aircraft marshaller. He bled very profusely and it was the immediate action in stemming this blood loss that saved his life. It makes one think doesn't it; how long is it since that last first-aid course and should a refresher be arranged in the near future? Just before I wind up this topic just imagine this accident occurring on a private strip with no help at hand. As I say, it makes you think! So, talking about thinking ahead, on to the first new topic and that is:

Climbing: Best Rate vs Best Angle.

I've found that most pilots well know the best climbing speed for their aircraft and, of course, that is the airspeed at which most climbs are conducted; it's actually the speed for the best rate of climb. At this speed the time to height is minimised, as is the fuel used in the climb. Not only that, the cooling airflow is usually sufficient for those hard working cylinder heads and, for most light aircraft this speed is pretty much the same as the best gliding speed. However, how about the situation when contemplating taking off with some kind of obstacle in the take-off flight path over which the aircraft must pass? So, for example, we're about to get airborne from a strip that is very suitable for our steed, but not so far into the next field there is a large tree and, not only that, due to noise sensitive areas on either side of the initial climb-out path, we're exhorted to climb out straight ahead. In this situation climbing at the airspeed for best rate of climb is inappropriate given that we wish our old steed to pass over that tree with maximum vertical separation;

what we need to do therefore is to climb initially at our aircraft's best angle of climb airspeed and this can often be considerably different to the usual climb speed. For example, at max all up weight my Colt's airspeed for best rate of climb is 75 mph whereas for max angle of climb it's only 61 mph.....quite a difference. In fact, this speed is only 4 mph above the quoted power-off stalling speed at this weight. Does climbing at this speed make a noticeable difference? Well, yes it does as that tree at the end of one of my regularly visited strips can testify. Do you know the best angle of climb speed for your aircraft? In fact if yours is an older vintage Piper, is it even published in its flight manual? However, beware the over-use of this climbing speed since the airflow for engine cooling is much denuded and in the event of an engine failure the aircraft is close to its stalling speed and a good way below its best gliding speed. Something to think about methinks. As is the following topic - we're staying in the vertical plane....

Cruising Beneath Controlled Airspace.

So here you are, on that cross-country flight and cruising beneath the Heathwick TMA that has a base altitude of 2500 ft. You're quite happy since you've done your pre-flight planning and know that you're in the Chatham altimeter setting area, a setting that the last air traffic controller gave you when you left his frequency some 15 minutes ago and you're cruising at exactly 2400 ft on the Chatham regional pressure setting (RPS). OK, it's close to the controlled airspace, but it's normal in this crowded part of the country so as to maintain clear of all that built up area. As I said, you're quite happy with this situation.....but should you be? Well, the answer to that question should be a definite NO. If this is news to you then do please read on. The reason that the answer to the question is NO is that you're flying in controlled airspace, the Heathwick TMA. The reason is that the base of this TMA (and all other similar airspace whose base is given as an altitude) is defined by the relevant airfield's QNH (that gives your altitude – your vertical distance above sea level), something that is easily found by listening to this airfield's ATIS frequency. The regional pressure settings e.g. Chatham, Barnsley, Wessex, Holyhead etc etc are not really altimeter settings at all since they're merely the lowest possible forecast altimeter setting for the relevant RPS and have no connection with the vertical boundaries of controlled airspace. The difference between the RPS and relevant QNHs is often of the order of 6 or 7 millibars with the RPS always being the lower of the two. In our example above setting the QNH (plus 7 mbs) would increase the altimeter reading by about 200 ft and thus put the aircraft in the TMA. So why bother having these RPSs? Well, the answer to that is mostly historic and a hang over from the days when military aircraft would fly long cross-countries and be outside radio range for hours on end. Not only that, there was little controlled airspace in those days. So, in this day and age, why bother with them when such usage could land you in trouble? Good question. No other European country has such a system to my knowledge and unless I was

operating in the distant wilds of, say, northern Scotland, I would always use the nearest airfield's QNH. Nuff said.

In addition to this edition of Flight Safety Corner we have an article written by a professional air traffic controller to whom we're very grateful for giving us the permission to use his thoughts. However, just before I leave you here's something to think about:

So there you are, downwind in the circuit before landing at a busy fly-in. There's one ahead downwind that's not so far away, one on base leg, one at about one mile final and one that's just landed. The AFISO in the tower seems to be working hard even though he can't issue any instructions to aircraft in the air nor to those on the runway. That one ahead looks a bit too close, but, no matter, let's just extend the downwind leg to get additional spacing and all will be well. Sounds familiar? Yes, of course it does and we've all been there, seen and done that....and we've all been WRONG! And it's not just my opinion; the GA Flight Safety Board think the same. The problem in doing what I've just described is that, other than mucking up the circuits of any traffic behind us, extending the downwind leg puts us into a position that is not standard and where other traffic is not expecting us to be. Not only that, another point to consider is that the further we are from the other circuit traffic, the more difficult it is for that traffic to see us, even if it knows where to look. In other words, doing what I've just described is not only bad manners, but it's a definite hazard to flight safety in a busy visual circuit. The ideal thing in that situation is to have the spacing sorted before arriving on the downwind leg, but in this example, given that we're too

close to the one ahead, the solution is to go around from abeam the landing threshold on to the deadside and to start again from there. Oh, and why am I finishing the Flight Safety Corner with this topic? Well, just as I can identify with the hand-propping accident that I opened with because I wasn't too many yards away when it happened, I can certainly relate to the subject of circuit geometry since it was just about when I was establishing on finals at that busy airfield when I came into close proximity with the aircraft that had extended its downwind leg and was consequently flying a very long and flat straight-in approach; I didn't know it was there...didn't expect it to be there...should have seen it...but...!!

As ever, if you have any suggested topics for inclusion in future editions of this column please do let me know.
Happy Flying and Best Wishes.

Richard Keech
VPAC Flight Safety Officer
rkeech@talktalk.net

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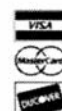
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Letter from America

Losing your first love, outside of your family, sure makes the memory kick in!

THE TRUTH ----- FINALLY!!!

I was not following the normal University of Illinois flight training program. Thus, it was required that I fill in some of the "missing" requirements by flying airplanes other than those at the University. One of these little necessities was the long cross country needed to qualify to take the commercial check ride with the "CAA". It had to be at least 350 miles from point of departure to destination with at least two full stops in route.

In order to accomplish this cross-country, I rented a Taylorcraft from Harry Clugston during a short break in the University schedule. My route of flight was to be from Macomb; to Ottumwa, Iowa; to Des Moines, Iowa; to Sioux City, Iowa; and back to Macomb, Illinois. It was very late winter or very early spring, because there was considerable snow on the ground in some areas, and it was not unusual to find snow squalls passing through. Harry told me very emphatically, that I must stop at Des Moines for fuel, going in both directions, no matter what other stops I had made. I repeat, he was very emphatic about those instructions.

With the idea of being gone only one day, the T-Craft and I were off and flying early in the morning. The weather forecast was not the best in the world, but there was no doubt in my mind that the round-trip could be easily completed in the allotted time. In addition to completing the cross-country requirements for the commercial license, I was convinced that this trip was going to be an easy accomplishment, so why not make a couple of extra stops along the way for the fun of it. We made the ETA at Ottumwa, within a couple of minutes and a quick fill-up of fuel to a full 12 gallons put us back in the air in route to Des Moines.

Again, Des Moines came into view at the proper time on the clock and a quick check of the fuel revealed that I still had plenty to reach another little airport a few miles up the road. After all, Des Moines was just another "big airport" so why not land at the smaller places which were more fun anyway. Yes, I remembered Harry's emphatic statement about landing at Des Moines---no matter what other stops I had made in route. But then on the other hand, I had lots of fuel on board, the weather was holding and according to the chart, the airport I wanted to land on was going to be very easy to find. Besides all of that---what does he know---he isn't here with me and I've been attending the University of Illinois, and am almost ready to take my commercial check ride---so I do know a thing or two about flying!!!!!! (Yeah!! -- Right!! -- Boy was I being stupid!!!) Thus the "command decision" was made NOT to stop at Des Moines. Within another hour, I was to learn why that important stop was mandatory. As I approached the area of "my proposed" stop, I discovered that there was a considerable amount of snow on the ground.

As the airport hangars came into view, I could tell that the airport was obviously closed. Lots of snow covered the whole area and there were no tracks on the runway let alone on the road leading to the airport. In other words---everything was closed due to the snow. A quick calculation of fuel remaining left no doubt that I could not return to Des Moines, so the next best thing to do was to find another airport further along my proposed route. A hurried scan of the sectional chart revealed another airport about 30 miles to the north of my present position. My remaining fuel was very limited---let's say it was something to be very concerned about but was not yet critical. This new destination was not in the direction that I wanted to go, but it did seem that it was reachable with the fuel remaining --- so a heading to the north was established. This new heading produced a very unwelcome fact and that was the ground speed was not as high as it had been before---thus that 30 miles was longer than anticipated---and the rapidity with which the fuel gauge wire approached the bottom of the tank was all it took to convince me that the engine was using more fuel than it should be using.

Anyway, after several minutes---each of which seemed like an hour---and much agonizing about not obeying Harry's orders to stop at Des Moines, my "alternate" airport came into view. (I wish I could remember the names of these last two airports, but I did not put them in my log book as I was so ashamed of my stupid mistake that I wanted to keep it a secret forever. After looking at new sectional charts, I feel certain that these little airports no longer exist.) Back to the problem at hand. When I finally found the airport, I knew I was in deep trouble. First of all, due to the headwind component my fuel supply was at a very critical stage now. I had to land soon!!! Next, it was quite obvious that this airport was just as CLOSED as the last one for the very same reason --- excessive snow. After making a couple of circles and low passes over the airport, I decided that I would try to land on a little "knoll" where it looked like the wind had swept most of the snow away. The ground was still covered; however, it did not appear as deep because of the occasional clump of grass sticking through the surface of the snow. The airplane being on wheels and not skis made this a very important factor. I must admit, that I could make good spot landings, so the touchdown was exactly where I wanted it. As the wings gave up their lift, the weight of the airplane caused the wheels to break through the crust on the surface of the snow and she settled into about 4 inches of snow covered with a crust of ice. Needless to say, we stopped in short order. Using lots of power, I found that I could still taxi so I turned around and went back to the touchdown point on top of the little knoll. When I shut the engine down, the fuel gauge cork was resting on the bottom of the tank.

The place was completely deserted!!! Nothing human or living was in sight. I had observed a well traveled road about 1/2 mile to the East that led into the little town

about 4 miles away. The only place I knew of to obtain gas was at one of the “gas stations” that must exist in that little town. It would be car gas, but it would have to do in this situation. I did not have any tie-down equipment with me and I could see none anywhere that I could reach on the airport. Thus, I would have to leave the little T-Craft untied. Sitting in the snow as she was, I felt it would take a very strong wind to move her anyway.

The walk to the road gave me a lot of time to reflect on my stupidity. Why-oh-why had I not listened to Harry and landed at Des Moines as I had been told??? How would I ever get out of this mess??? I knew I had destroyed my chances of ever becoming an airline pilot!!! All because I thought I was “one hot pilot” and “knew everything”!!!

This being 1951, in a rural area, in the mid-western United States, people could be trusted and were very friendly and helpful. After reaching the “high-way”, the first vehicle, a pick-up truck, stopped and offered me a ride into town. I told the driver what I needed and he said he would stay with me and bring me back to the airport if I could get a couple of 5 gallon cans of gas. We stopped at the first “gas station” and much to our surprise, one of the customers happened to own a Piper Super Cruiser which he kept on his farm a few miles out of town. He also had a supply of aviation gas and he would be happy to let me have all I needed to get back into the air and on to Sioux City.

The “few miles” trip to this farmer’s airplane took almost 30 minutes, due to the snow conditions. Of course he did have plenty of gas and a couple of 5 gallon cans in which to transport it to the T-Craft. He filled the cans, and I thought we were on our way back so that I could be on my way, because the afternoon was departing very rapidly and I needed to get to Sioux City. Besides, my trusty airplane was sitting untied out in the middle of a snow covered field and I was concerned for her safety. No, he was not ready to go back yet. He spent at least another 30 minutes describing the merits of his “pride and joy”. All this time I kept looking at my watch and watching the clouds thicken to the west -- the direction I needed to be going. Finally, we did arrive back at the airport and much to my relief the little Taylorcraft was still parked as I had left her. The fuel was quickly added to the tank and I attempted to pay for the fuel and time that this person had given me. He wanted no part of that---not even pay for the 10 gallons of gas---he was just glad he could help. For this I was, and am very grateful. He gave me a “prop” and after taxiing back and forth a few times to break up the crust on the snow, we were back in the air headed for Sioux City. No damage had been done, but a very important lesson had been learned. I DID NOT KNOW AS MUCH ABOUT THIS FLYING BUSINESS AS I THOUGHT!!!!

The last leg into Sioux City would only take about one hour. As mentioned earlier, the clouds were getting thicker. As we approached our destination, snow showers became more frequent and by the time we landed at Sioux City, it was a constant snow; reducing visibility

down to about 3 or 4 miles. It was very dark and snowing like crazy as the doors of the big hangar closed. The T-Craft was tucked in out of the weather and a quick call back to Illinois was made telling them that all was well and I would be home tomorrow. Nothing was mentioned about our little episode on the plains of western Iowa.

Next morning was an absolute “wonderland” for those of us who like snow. The sun was shining and the new fallen snow made the entire county side a pristine white. About 20 minutes east of Sioux City, we encountered a fog bank that stretched as far as we could see from our altitude of 2000 feet. A quick 180 put us back at Sioux City for a period of waiting. A couple of hours later, this same little maneuver was performed. Finally on the third try, the fog had burned off and we found our way to --- you guessed it --- Des Moines, Iowa!!!

Finally, late in the afternoon, I did arrive back at Macomb, Illinois airport. I guess I should have known I could never pull it off, but I did not intend to tell Harry what had happened on this trip. I was too ashamed of what I had done. Evidently, my actions spoke louder than words, because I had no more than finished with the paper work when Harry ask me what was wrong?? What had I done?? Harry was like my second father and he could read me like a book--just like my real father. I told him the whole story, from start to finish, and he just smiled and asked if I had learned anything. Of course I had!! He further taught me another lesson when he handed me the “Airport Information Manual” and ask me to look up the two airports I had found closed. Again, you guessed it, the current information on these two fields boldly stated that they were CLOSED!!!! If I had bothered to do proper flight planning, I would have known why I must stop at Des Moines!!!

It is interesting to note that years later, on many occasions when I was checking the fuel load before departure on a long ocean crossing, especially if the weather was not good on the other side of the ocean, I would wonder; IS THIS THE TIME I SHOULD STOP AT DES MOINES FOR FUEL???

Lyle Wheeler

Southwest Safari



*Line up of participants
(Carl Miller)*

One of the most enjoyable vacations we have experienced was a guided excursion hosted by Parkwest Air Tours entitled Southwest Safari. In slightly less than 40 hours flying time, we flew from Florida to California visiting nine US states and six National Parks in our Piper Twin Comanche. In addition, we overflowed many National and State Parks taking in some breathtaking views. Two of the airports visited included the highest elevation and lowest elevation airports in the United States. The elevation at Leadville, Colorado is 9,933 feet and Death Valley's Furnace Creek Airport, California, minus 240 feet.

We flew "solo" from Vero Beach Florida to Colorado Springs, Colorado, where we joined the Parkwest tour along with seven aircraft based around the USA. The aircraft included a Cirrus, Mooney, two single-engine Comanches, a Cessna 172, a Cessna 182 and our tour leader's Cessna 210.

Our Parkwest tour began with a mountain flying seminar to become familiar with the updrafts and weather conditions created by the mountains. Several hours of ground instruction was followed by three hours of flying in the mountains to Aspen Co, Leadville and Meeker airports. The following day was a non-flying day while we waited for the group to assemble. We spent the day touring Rocky Mountain State Park followed by a scrumptious dinner at a local restaurant giving us a chance to meet our fellow travelers.

The next morning brought favorable weather and we were off to Lake Powell, overflying Moab UT, Arches and Canyonlands National Parks, and Monument Valley. Dinner was aboard a tour boat as we cruised Lake Powell discussing the day's flight.

After breakfast and a thorough briefing the next day, we departed for the Grand Canyon. This leg of the tour provided stunning flightseeing opportunities. We were met by chartered ground transportation and chauffeured to the IMAX presentation of Grand Canyon: The Hidden Secrets. After lunch, we checked in to Grand Canyon Lodge on the south rim and a fun night was had by all including dinner at the famous El Tovar Lodge. The following day was spent exploring the Grand Canyon on foot and by sightseeing helicopter tour.

From the Grand Canyon, we flew to Twenty-Nine Palms, Joshua Tree National Park for our next overnight. Then, on to Death Valley National Park where the temperature registered 117 degrees Fahrenheit. On the way up to

Death Valley we flew at 100 feet above the desert and that was 100 feet below sea level. Furnace Creek Airport in Death Valley is minus 240 feet elevation!

We left the heat of the desert the next morning and flew east over the Las Vegas area and Zion National Park en route to Bryce Canyon National Park where we stayed overnight at the Bryce Canyon Lodge. Our afternoon included dinner and a rodeo. After our normal breakfast briefing, we returned to Grand Junction, Colorado flying over Utah's spectacular Grand Staircase—Escalante National Monument and Capitol Reef, Canyonlands and Arches National Parks. The tour ended here and culminated with a delightful dinner. We reminisced about our adventure and exchanged contact information with the hopes we could fly together again.

We had clear skies on our way home, and Donna and I decided to make a fuel/lunch stop in Ponca City, OK where Piper once built J-3 Cubs, then proceeded to Vicksburg Mississippi for an overnight. We made it home to Indian River Aerodrome the following day with another stop for lunch and fuel in Ocala Florida.

All flying was done by Visual Flight Rules; no instrument flying was required. During the entire trip we flew approximately 5,200 nautical miles (6,000 statute miles), burned 550 gallons of fuel and averaged 169 kts groundspeed on the cross-country legs. The ground transportation and accommodations were expertly handled which allowed us to enjoy the flying segments that much more. It was a memorable adventure and the trip of a lifetime.

Carl & Donna Miller
owners of Twin Comanche N17CM and J3 Cub N40974



*Group photo: Carl & Donna are second and third right.
(via Carl Miller)*

Never give up !

For those unfamiliar with the name Arthur Williams, he's the guy who featured in a Channel 4 documentary when, following a road accident 8 years ago, he was robbed of his service career and faced the remainder of his life confined to a wheelchair. But with the help of certain individuals and organisations, he learned to fly, bought a Cub and converted it to hand control only. His story is an inspiration to us all.

20 years ago Arthur was a young Royal Marine with the world at his feet but following the accident he was in bad shape and it was game over as far as being a Marine. It was the cruelest of hands to be dealt, resulting in six months in hospital but with his future plans in tatters the mental recovery took much longer. Arthur searched for a new dream to pursue and he found this in his boyhood memories - aeroplanes. He discovered names of disabled pilots like Douglas Bader and Wiley Post. Flying was now Arthur's new horizon and he was even more surprised in discovering Aerobility at Blackbushe for which he is now a proud ambassador.

In January 2009 Arthur had his first flying lesson and after nine months gained his PPL. This is not the end of the story. As well as pursuing aviation, Arthur was heavily involved in sport and, in the build up to the London 2012 Paralympics Games, landed himself a job with Channel 4 as a presenter. This enabled him to integrate aviation and military history into this new career, most notably in the recent mini-series, "Flying to the ends of the Earth". Securing a media career changed Arthur's view of flying where flying vintage aircraft, i.e. tail draggers would be his next challenge. However, access to a suitable example was not easy to come by, most being privately owned and tailored to each individual's needs. The next piece of good fortune was getting to know GA engineer and BA pilot, Matt Pettit. An aeroplane suitable for conversion to hand controls was needed and with Matt's knowledge the decision to choose the J3 Cub didn't take long. The Cub is simple and economical, relatively available, has charisma, vintage charm and is a thing of beauty. But the work needed would be substantial, ruling out any options to join a syndicate and so Arthur decided to buy his own; however, there was no guarantee they'd get the approvals. With an aircraft acquired, Arthur and Matt set about converting G-BEDY, determined to do whatever it took. One of the solutions was to fly the aircraft from the front seat, removing the rudder pedals replacing them with pulleys connecting to a 'stick' mounted on the left side of the cockpit. For right rudder the stick is moved forward and backwards for left rudder. It is also fitted with a 'twist-grip' throttle. Other major improvements included replacing the hand start Continental 65hp with an electrically started 0-200, fitting disc brakes and a new instrument panel. The work took about 18 months, but, with a new lease of life, G-BEDY now looks amazing. Arthur is able to get himself in and out unaided, dismantling his wheelchair that is stowed in the back. When flying solo ballast is added in the rear for balance. The final hurdle was the air testing which thankfully went according to

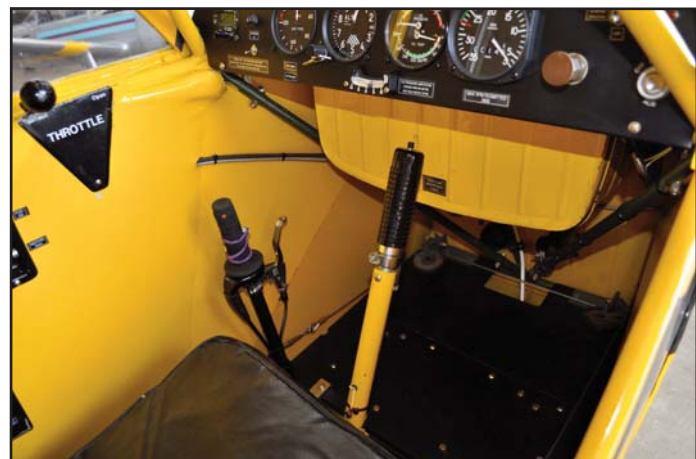


Arthur Williams in Cub G-BEDY.(Brian Hope/LAA)

plan and on 29th December 2014 the work was signed off and, to Arthur's knowledge, G-BEDY is the only Piper Cub so modified.

Arthur's message to us all? "Never give up !"

Mike Mothershaw



The control stick against the fuselage side moves forward for right rudder input and backwards for left rudder input. The brake lever operates the left wheel brake while on the top is a motorbike-style throttle control which twists anti-clockwise to increase power. The purple cord is a small bungee that is used to apply brake when carrying out power checks with the normal throttle (it is too awkward to twist the hand throttle and hold the brake on at the same time).

The central control stick is that fitted to standard Cubs with a brake lever (unfortunately only the clamp is visible in the photo) that operates the right main wheel brake. Note, the rudder pedals have been removed and cable seen makes the rudder system a single loop. The cable does not attach to the rudder stick on the left-hand side, instead it passes between the stick and the fuselage side. The stick is welded to a cross-tube that passes just in front of the seat and then has a lever coming up that is connected to the cable on the right-hand side. This meets the system requirement to enable the rudder stick to push forward for right and back for left.

Rally Rovings

VPAC at Brighton - May 2015

The second event of 2015 was hosted by the VPAC on 23rd May at Brighton, a former Second World War heavy bomber base and cold war nuclear missile launch site. Very much reduced in size, Brighton is now home to the classic aircraft collection of the Real Aeroplane Company (RAC) and Real Aeroplane Club, occupying the area adjacent to the southern perimeter taxiway. Its' members own and operate many unusual classic and ex-military aircraft, perhaps the most charismatic example being the Aeronca 100, G-AEVS affectionately known as "Jeeves". The collection's military types from the 1940s include a Miles Magister and a PT-22. First World War aviation is represented in the form of a Fokker DR1 Triplane replica, similar to the famous Red Baron's and a Sopwith Pup project is also in the pipeline. Many of the RAC's aircraft can often be seen at fly-ins and displays around the country.

The flying club were pleased to make their airfield available to us with locally based VPAC member David Sharp, our man at the field, acting as our liaison officer. The day's weather forecast was good with South Yorkshire expecting long sunny periods however, some regions in the southern part of the country were to expect some low stratus, but this was due to clear by mid morning. As readers will understand, the reality is often quite different, as several members will testify! The low stratus was extensive and didn't clear until after mid-day. Having departed for what should have been a lovely flight, some were forced to concede defeat and return to base. David was on site to greet any early arrivals, first being Richard Keech in his trusty Colt, soon followed by myself in Vagabond G-FKNH. Thankfully, the weather in the Brighton area was super throughout the day, but there was disappointment at not meeting up with some of our "southern brethren". However, G-BIAP from Draycott Farm and Brimpton-based G-PAXX flown by Pete Bish and Charlie Monsell respectfully, did manage to creep under the weather and make a welcome appearance. In all, the day was definitely a success with a steady arrival of 20 U.S. Classic aircraft, 14 of which were vintage Pipers. VPAC member Barry Foulds joined us in his Luscombe and there were several classic Cessnas and Aeroncas also in attendance, including Bob Screen's lovely Cessna 165 from Liverpool.



Vic Holliday, Mike Mothershaw, Mr.Slater Senior, Steve Slater, Paul Latham & Pete Bish at Brighton.(Richard Keech)

Aircraft and VPAC members attending were: -

G-ARNJ	Colt	Richard Keech
G-FKNH	Vagabond	Mike Mothershaw
G-CBEI	Colt	Dave Sharp
G-BRPY	Vagabond	Cliff Whitwell
G-BIAP	Clipper	Pete Bish
G-BTBY	Vagabond	Frank Ward
G-FUZZ	L-18C	Michael Cline
G-AYPM	PA-18	Nick Houghton
G-BROR	L4H Cub	Chris Firth
G-APZX	Pacer	Vic Holliday
G-PAXX	Pacer	Charlie Monsell
G-BSFD	J3 Cub	Paul Latham
G-BULO	Luscombe	Barry Foulds

Also making a welcome appearance were the following US classic aircraft: -

G-BTDE Cessna165; G-AJJS Cessna120; G-BVUZ Cessna120; G-BDBH Citabria; G-IIAC Aeronca Chief.

Locally based, group owned Super Cruiser G-BSYG also joined the ranks of vintage Pipers as did J3C-65 Cub N46779. This aircraft was built in 1943 as an L-4H Grasshopper for the US Army and subsequently saw service in Normandy during 1944. It was imported into the UK in 2008 and has since been restored to its original ex-factory configuration wearing the colours when it first entered US Army service.

Visiting by road, VPACer Steve Slater accompanied by Mr. Slater "Senior" joined the aviation "chattering classes" to enjoy the afternoon sunshine. VPAC members Matthew Cline and Nick Houghton roundly entertained the growing numbers of spectators with a formation display and fly-past in their US Army-liveried Super Cubs. Throughout the day the ladies in the club kitchen worked hard and cheerfully keeping us all happy. Our thanks go to them and all the folk at Brighton who made us so welcome, in particular VPACers Cliff Whitwell who conducted tours of the resident historic aircraft and David Sharp, "our man" at the field who made it all happen.

Mike Mothershaw

US Classics at Shobdon - July 2015

The first scheduled meeting for "U.S. Classic" aircraft, organized by the Aeronca Club at Shobdon in July attracted 20 such machines. Pete White of the Aeronca Club and our own Darren Legg got the ball rolling by landing on Friday afternoon and then camping 'neath their wings on the Friday night. Their early arrival was a fine decision since, following an enjoyable dinner at the pub in the village, they were treated to an evening's live musical entertainment in Shobdon's clubhouse and it wasn't until the wee small hours of Saturday morn that they got to their camp beds!



Pete White (Aeronca Club), Vic Halliday, Jim Alexander & John Colgate (Aeronca Club) at Shobdon. (Richard Keech)

As for Saturday itself we enjoyed nice weather with about 10 kts of breeze blowing down Runway 27 and it wasn't long before a steady stream of U.S. Classic aircraft began to arrive and then all began to enjoy chatting, renewing old friendships, making new ones and enjoying the delights of Shobdon's cafe that was busy all day. Talking to the cafe's proprietor on the Sunday it was very clear that our presence was much appreciated. Those who flew in to Shobdon for the first time were very impressed with the beauty of the surrounding countryside and the warm welcome extended by all there. Not only that, the fund that is being accumulated in order to finance a monument to all those military glider pilots who were trained at Shobdon in WW2 has benefitted since 50% of the landing fees paid by the U.S.C. visitors have been given to this fund. Certainly, the organizer of the event, Pete White of the Aeronca Club was very keen to repeat the meeting in 2016 so, hopefully, we'll aim to see you there. As for the visitors to the event we had 15 vintage Pipers, one member (Paul Clark) and his family who visited by road, 3 old Aeroncas, one Ercoupe and a Porterfield. There was even a Tiger Moth that came to the event and, such is the good nature of we U.S. Classicers, it was allowed to park amongst our aircraft! The attendees that I recorded were:

Vintage Pipers: G-AWKD, G-AWPW, G-AJAD, G-ARNJ, G-BUDE, G-AREL, G-APZX, G-FKNH, G-BCVB, G-CBEI, G-BIAP, G-KURK, G-BSMV, G-NCUB, N5370H

Ercoupe G-HARY, Aeroncas G-IVOR, G-BRWR, G-ATHK, Porterfield G-AFZL

Richard Keech

US Classics at Old Buckenham - August 2015

Due to the building over-runs at Goodwood "our" VPAC-led U.S. Classics meeting was rescheduled to Old



Marj Keech, Richard Carter & Colin Stearn at Old Buckenham. (Richard Keech)

Buckenham where we thoroughly enjoyed the hospitality extended to us by the locally based members Richard Carter and Ian Wood. Many thanks are due to them, the airfield manager Matt Wilkins and to all at the airfield who made our meeting possible. In particular, Sophie and her two guys in the cafe were especially busy with all the additional customers that our event brought, but they coped admirably and very cheerfully the day long. Thank you all.

Regarding the meeting itself I think it fair say that all who flew or drove in (most flew) thoroughly enjoyed the day and this was definitely helped by the lovely weather as you'll see from the photos herein. In total there were 13 U.S. Classics present and the full list of registrations follows, but, a mere list of aircraft doesn't really convey the camaraderie and fun that those of us who were there enjoyed. A marvelous day that was characterized by lovely flying, super weather and the enjoyment of being in the company of friends, the latter aspect continuing into the late evening for some of us who stayed over! Thank you to those who made it all possible, especially given that, at a fairly late stage in the season, they were flexible enough to accept our bringing this meeting forward a whole month as a result the problems at Goodwood.

Pipers: G-ARNE, G-ARNJ, G-FKNH, G-CBEI, G-ARNK, G-FUZZ, G-BECN, G-BSMV, G-BLLO, G-BAMR
Stinson: G-BPTA, Cessna: G-BTDE, Aeronca: G-ATHK

Richard Keech



Frank Snell, Martin Ryan, Bob Screen (Cessna Airmaster owner) & Dave Girling (Skybolt owner) at Old Buckenham. (Richard Keech)

Vintage Piper Aircraft Club - 2016 Events

23rd April (24th back-up): Sleaford (EGCV).

VPAC Pre-Season Get-Together with the added attraction of a collection of visiting vintage vehicles. Sleaford's excellent café is not to be missed. NB: The aerodrome does have an unlicensed non-published grass runway 05/23 just to the south east of 05/23 hard that runs from alongside the 05 hard threshold to the intersection with Rwy 18/36; it's ideal for all the tail-draggers. (Tel 01939 232882)

14th May (15th back-up): Fishburn, County Durham.

VPAC's Northern Area Meeting at this lovely spot with its excellent new club-house/café together with outdoor patio area. A very friendly field where the locals are very keen to welcome us and our old machines. (Tel 01913 770137)

2nd July (3rd back-up): Heveningham Hall, Suffolk.

VPAC's Eastern Area Get-Together at this stately hall's temporary aerodrome that is set up to support the co-incident country fair, vintage wheels and all the entertainment and stalls that go with this charity event.

16th July (17th back-up): The Aeronca Club-led "U.S. Classics" Meeting at Shobdon (EGBS).

Once again the Aeronca club have chosen Shobdon as the venue for their U.S. Classics meeting...and with good reason. It's in lovely part of the world, we're assured a very friendly welcome, static caravan accommodation on the airfield is available as is camping 'neath the wing. The café here is also very good and, not only that, the bar is open late on the Friday eve prior to the event on the Saturday and this is the venue for live music performed by local musicians. (Tel 01568 708369)

6th August (7th back-up): Our VPAC-led U.S. Classics Meeting at Glorious Goodwood (officially Chichester EGHR).

The new-build club-house café/restaurant is now complete and we have been invited back to one of the country's historic aerodromes for our southern area meeting where we enjoyed such a successful event a couple of years ago. (Tel 01243 755061)

10th September (11th back-up): The VPAC western area meeting at Dunkeswell (EGTU).

The final pre-arranged meeting for the season where we're all welcome to enjoy Devon's premier GA field together with its restaurant and café. (Tel 01404 891643)

As ever, there will be more details and reminders via the Club's e-mail list (The List) nearer to the dates of the events, but, in the meantime, should there be any questions please do send them to me at: vintagepipers@talktalk.net. Other events that members may well be interested in attending will be publicised via the List, e.g. those of the Vintage Aircraft Club (VAC) to whom our club is affiliated, but in the meantime here are some to think about, both of which I'm certainly hoping to fly to:

29/30 May: Shobdon's Vintage Wings and Wheels Meeting.

Free landings for all vintage aircraft and a prize of 2 months concessionary fuel for the oldest flying machine that flies in.

17 to 19th June: The Piper Club France's Annual Rassemblement at Chateauroux Villiers (LFEJ).

As ever, we British Piperistes are warmly welcomed to our French friends' social weekend that, this year, is going to be at this grass club aerodrome just within the control zone of the much larger Chateauroux Deols airfield. However, fear not, a very simple joining/departure procedure is in place and, in any case, the Deols controllers do speak English...as is the case with all air traffic controllers in France. More details from me at vintagepipers@talktalk.net and via the List as I receive them.

25/26th June: Shobdon's Food and Flying Festival.

This annual event is firmly established in my own calendar of things to visit since it's a great day out. There are lots of visiting aircraft to see, the food festival is much more than mere food and there is musical entertainment a-plenty in this pretty part of the world.

P.S. As for those landing fees, if you're a VPAC member attending a VPAC event then don't expect to pay anything like the advertised rate!!

P.P.S. All U.S Classic aircraft, as ever, are more than welcome to attend our VPAC-led meets so do please let your friends know as appropriate.

VPAC Page

VPAC Management Committee

Richard Carter, Richard Keech, Mike Mothershaw, Doug Palmer, Roger Peperell and Colin Stearn.

How to join VPAC

Contact Mike Mothershaw, the Club Membership Secretary at White Gable, 2b Brows Lane, Formby, Liverpool, L37 3HZ, UK or via e-mail vpac@btinternet.com to request an application form or from the web site: www.vintagepiper.co.uk

E-mail Service

If you would like to become a subscriber to the VPAC E-Mail "List" all you have to do is to send an e-mail to Marj Keech at vintagepipers@talktalk.net and she will add you to the List and then send you a little guide that suggests possible uses for it. Thereafter, when you have a message to be cascaded just send it to vintagepipers@talktalk.net and then Marj or Richard will send it on to all the other members on the List. Attachments are not allowed to be cascaded, but web-links are.

VPAC Merchandising

The Club has caps, polo shirts, sweat shirts and jackets for sale. These are available from Marj & Richard Keech email: rkeech@talktalk.net, tel: 01244 332517, or at one of the Fly-In events.

Type Co-ordinators

Members may approach Type Coordinators directly either by phone or e-mail without the need to route through a central point. This should enable members to go straight to a knowledgeable contact in the expectation that they can talk to someone who understands the issues and any other relevant factors relating to their problem. Many Type Coordinators have already been available informally in this capacity, so that their inclusion on our list will come as no surprise. It goes without saying that neither the Type Coordinators nor the Vintage Piper Aircraft Club or its Officers will accept any responsibility for any advice or suggestions thus given, and that it is up to members and their Licensed Engineer or PFA Inspector to determine the legality or veracity of any action that the member may subsequently take. Type Coordinators presently available to members are as follows:

J2/J3	Alan Chalkley	01766 523296 and Dick Davison 0151 677 1325
L-4	Ken Wakefield	01446 734995 kenneth.wakefield@virgin.net
J4	Colin Stearn	01353 663450 colin.cws01@btinternet.com
J5/PA-12	John Mead	01446 773269 jemead@tiscali.co.uk
PA-15/PA-17	Ted Gardner	01962 773827 tedgardneryb17@gmail.com
PA-16	TBA	
PA-18/L-18/L-21	Dick Davison and Dicky Bird	0151 677 1325 dickdastardley@btinternet.com 01722 323683 vintagepiper@talktalk.net
PA-20/22	Dicky Bird	01722 323683 vintagepiper@talktalk.net

Objectives and Rules of the VPAC are:

Objectives

The Vintage Piper Aircraft Club is a supporting body for owners, pilots and enthusiasts of vintage Piper aircraft.

1. To promote and encourage the bringing together of people interested in flying, and in the restoration and operation of, veteran, vintage and classic Piper aircraft.
2. To organise flying meetings where the aforesaid aircraft, their owners, pilots and other enthusiasts, can meet.
3. To increase public knowledge, understanding and appreciation of veteran vintage and classic Piper aircraft and Piper aviation history.
4. To establish a central record of vintage Piper aircraft, providing a forum (via newsletters and fly-ins) for advice and for the exchange of information on vintage Piper aircraft and related subjects.
5. To stimulate, help and encourage aviation enthusiasts by providing them with opportunities for learning or improving their knowledge of veteran vintage and classic Piper aircraft operation and history thereof.
6. To provide information on Piper aircraft spare parts, and the location of those people who will repair, restore or inspect vintage Piper aircraft.

Rules

1. The Vintage Piper Aircraft Club shall be run by a Management Committee consisting of a Chairman, Membership Secretary & Treasurer, Newsletter Editor and Technical Co-ordinator.
2. The income of the Club whencesoever derived, shall be applied solely towards the promotion of the objects of the Club as set forth in these Rules and Objectives.
3. The Club is open to people of all ages who share a common interest in vintage and classic Piper aircraft.
4. The Club shall endeavour to publish one Newsletter a year.
5. The subscription rate shall be set by the Management Committee.

PLEASE NOTE

The Vintage Piper Aircraft Club does not project or accept any responsibility for participation by any newsletter reader or Vintage Piper Aircraft Club member at any fly-ins, functions, forums or events that may be publicised by this newsletter. All material published of a technical nature is for reference only and is not necessarily recommended or approved by the editor of this publication or any official of the Vintage Piper Aircraft Club. It is up to the reader and his or her Licensed Engineer or PFA Inspector to determine the legality or veracity of anything technical appearing in these issues. This publication is produced only as a medium of communication among owners/aficionados of Piper aircraft and the opinions expressed therein are those of the individual members and are not necessarily endorsed by the Club.

Rally Rovings



Line up of vintage Pipers and Stinson 108 at Old Buckenham. (Mike Mothershaw)



Pete Bish refuelling his Clipper at Shobdon. (Richard Keech)



Geoff Cline's L-18C G-FUZZ & Nick Houghton's L-18C G-AYPM in formation at Brighton. (Richard Keech)



Vagabond BCVB & Clipper BIAP at Shobdon. (Richard Keech)



Old Buckenham. (Mike Mothershaw)



Line up of vintage Pipers at Brighton. (Mike Mothershaw)



Vagabonds G-BRJL & G-BSMV.
(Mike Mothershaw)

Members' Vagabonds & Clippers



Vagabonds G-BDVC and G-FKNH at Knockin in 2009. (Mike Mothershaw)

Southwest Safari

(via Carl Miller)

