

Website: <http://www.laahighlandstrut.org.uk>, Newsletter email: [laahighlandstrutnews@outlook.com](mailto:laahighlandstrutnews@outlook.com)

Next Strut meeting on Friday 26<sup>th</sup> January 2024, 7:30pm, at Highland Aviation, Inverness Airport.

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**FROM THE CHAIR – December 2023, by Paul Wayman**

**December 1<sup>st</sup> Strut Meeting**

Despite the very frosty weather and difficult travelling conditions, Friday 1<sup>st</sup> December's meeting saw a very good turnout. We were treated to an excellent presentation and talk on Morayvia aviation museum by Strut member Dave Brown. It was very interesting to hear about the history of some of the exhibits, the work being done to preserve them and future plans. It's a very impressive setup and I'm looking forward to visiting when they re-open in the spring. In the meantime, there is plenty of interesting stuff on their website which is well worth a look on these dark nights. The narrated videos are particularly good:

<https://www.morayvia.org.uk/virtual-morayvia-experience>

**Dornoch Airfield**

There has been no news on whether the Council has agreed a lease with anyone. However, we were advised that the overall process would be lengthy. We reported in the last newsletter that the windsock had disappeared, since then our Highland Council contact has asked us to source a new one (at their cost). We're in the process of sorting this out. In the meantime, be careful going in there.

**GASCo Safety Evening**

Still no contact from the GASCo representative for our area.

**Airspace**

Update from Paul Jenkins:

Inverness (ACP-2014-04)

"As all will know I am sure, the LAA and the GA Alliance have had a long-standing objection to this ACP. A significant number of queries and challenges by the LAA and the GA Alliance remain unanswered.

According to the CAA website, HIAL expected a decision by the CAA in November. If approved they were looking at implementation in May 24. However, they have now asked the CAA for a delay in implementation (if approved) until September 24 to allow for Controller training.

There is no indication on the way that the CAA decision is going to go; clearly it did not happen in November. Even if they were to approve, they can expect immediate challenge to that decision which might well delay implementation further.

Clash Gour windfarm (ACP-2021-046)

The main objection that the LAA and the GA Alliance have is to the proposal to create a huge TMZ up to Flight Level 195, just 5 miles to the south-west of the Lossiemouth MATZ. Furthermore, apart from this particular proposal, the concern of the LAA and the GA Alliance is that it will create a precedent for existing and future windfarms across Scotland.

The LAA and the GA Alliance have objected to the ACP. Happily, HIAL and the RAF have also lodged very strong objections. The present status is unknown – the dedicated CAA website has not been populated by them. I shall update the Strut when I find out."

**From the chair (continued):**

### **Strut Website**

As a reminder, our new, revamped Strut website needs your input, as members, to develop it further. Any photos, projects underway, trips planned/completed, lessons learned, anything you think might be of interest, please send it to us: <https://www.laahighlandstrut.org.uk/>



### **Congratulations**

To Paul Jenkins for receiving the Frank Hounslow Trophy for his services to the LAA in Engineering and a significant contribution to Engineering activities in Scotland (see November edition of Light Aviation, page 12).

Also, to Anne Poole, who receives the Ewan Spalding Trophy from the Strut for her support and enthusiasm over many years. In particular, Anne's catering at Strut meetings was first class and greatly appreciated. It is much missed since she hung up her oven gloves. Anne gained her PPL aged 65 and continues to fly regularly, also attending meetings and events whenever possible.



Anne Poole receives the Ewan Spalding Trophy from the Chairman.

Wishing you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Safe flying and see you at an airfield soon.

## Trip to France. Ashley Johnston.

A little over a week after we got back from our trip Alderney, we headed back south, complete with clean clothes and gravel bikes. We stopped for fuel at Old Buckenham (great museum to the USAAF Liberators based here) before overnighing at Elmslett. After sitting at Elmslett for a few hours the next day we finally saw a weather window and made it over the Channel to a deserted but slightly warmer Calais. We had an enjoyable flat, easy cycle into town to find a hotel for the night. Flying into France is no less mired in red tape these days. A flight plan is needed for crossing borders, and a gendec, and a local customs declaration. Skydemon helps with some of this, but the local customs form needs 48 hours notice which combined with weather can be a challenge. Despite submitting all the paperwork in good time, customs were still unaware of our arrival, so we had to wait for them to come up from the port in the morning, in order to have our passports stamped. Next time, they said, just drop us an email to say that you are coming!

Once clear of the border, the red tape vanishes and flying in France is actually very easy. For politeness only, we tended to call/email airfields ahead to advise of our arrival. Other than that, its simply about navigating the airspace. On first glance, French airspace looks daunting, but much of it is permanently reserved for low level military activity, which is activated by NOTAM, and there are a number of places to check for those including website AZBA. If In doubt, Paris Info can help with that too. Generally, the various FIR's (Paris, Bordeaux, etc) will speak English 100% of the time. You can expect to hear local Class D towers speaking both English and French to GA. At local strips in Class G, you are expected to speak French, at least initially.

We had a rough itinerary and were prepared to make it up based on weather. Our trip took us south to Reims for fuel. And lunch supposedly, but sadly on the one day of the week which the café does not serve food! Reims has busy A-roads disconcertingly close to both thresholds. It felt like we were very close to landing on truck roofs. Then it was a short hop to Epernay for a few days in a champagne producer's B&B. Its a nice long, wide, flat, deserted grass strip a few miles from town, with friendly locals.

With blue skies and 25 degrees our next leg took us further south to Dijon Darois where we stayed 5 nights. There is plenty going on a Darois, such as a warbird demonstration team, flying school, engineering, much GA, gliding and of course CEAPR (Robin) whose factory is actually across a busy A-road, complete with pelican crossing for aircraft. Darois is on top of a hill and surrounded by heavily wooded hills, such that an EFATO would be mean certain doom. Our jolly continued on bike, through burgundy vineyards and tastings, with overnight stops at Nuit-St-George, Beaune and Nolay, before catching the train back to Dijon.

Next stop was west to Amboise for 3 nights, a very pretty grass strip in the castle strewn Loire valley. It was a few miles into town but they have lovely cycling lanes there. With our clean clothing running low it was time to start heading home, so we moved north to Rouen for an overnight stop, annoyingly situated a 600 foot bike climb above the city. Rouen is typical of many regional airfields in France, with massive infrastructure, class D airspace, a terminal set up for international flights, full time tower, huge runway/apron, car parks, etc....but no scheduled flights at all, only GA.

After clearing customs at Rouen, it was time to head back over the Channel, dodging weather as usual, to another refuel at Old Buckenham and lunch in the cafe. High winds in Scotland forced a planned overnight stop at Sherburn where a local gave us a lift to the station.

Our trip was 20 hours of flying, with 11 landings, 6 of which were in France, 3 of which were French speaking only. To help with my schoolboy French, we had prepared some crib sheets. We found that having a standard circuit diagram was a great help, with typical French calls annotated at the appropriate points. One for arriving/landing, and another for departing. The hardest part is not actually making the calls, but understanding the rapid French calls from other aircraft in the circuit. You really want to ask them to speak at half the speed!

The trip was my biggest flying challenge yet, and I loved every second of it. Its time to think about how to push it further next summer. If I had any regret.....when we were at Dijon, we could see the Alps from there. Skydemon told me it was 29 minutes to Annemasse, beside Geneva. We should have just cracked on down there!"

Ash



## George Mair

Saturday was a perfect day for flying - calm, clear, snow on hills, no threat of fog. As I flew west, I was told to "Squawk Conspicuity, contact Scottish 127.275". I changed to 7000 but left radio on 122.605, until I heard a Pa38 also told to contact Scottish. Scottish were very busy, and we both got "Stand by".

When the Pa38 got to pass his data, we were in the same area, with 1,800' height separation. Scottish continued to be very busy, and the Tomahawk had to ask Inverness to tell Scottish they had left the frequency.

There is a "Unicom" frequency available. Why is it not suggested to us?

And why is that now different from the Airfield unicom?. David Edes raised this in a letter in the LAA magazine recently.

George Mair. G-ATVX

## For Sale :-

Aeronca 7 AC Champion, G-BTNO. Built in 1946, total airframe hours 3,525, Continental A65 engine hours 1197, last top end overhaul 678 hours ago. 11 gallon fuel tank, uses 3 1/4 gallons per hour, oil consumption negligible, cruising speed 75-80mph, stalls at 38mph, VNE 129mph. Permit until September 2024, The aircraft is hangared at Shempston Airfield, adjacent to RAF Lossiemouth, and the space is available should any local purchaser require it. Maintained to a first class standard by an ex RAF engineer and inspected annually by Paul Jenkins. An iCom A6 radio is installed and the SkyEcho box will be left with the aeroplane. Several spares are included.

The Aeronca 7AC Champion is well researched, recorded and loved. It's an aeroplane for 'the big pilot' and being 6ft1" I can vouch for the excellent comfort and panoramic view. Extremely docile yet very responsive and forgiving tail dragger. The Aeronca Owners Club motto is "Fly slow, fly low and fly often" so, provided you are not in the market for a 'hot ship' the Champ ticks all the boxes.



Offers in excess of £20,000 will be considered.

Phone 07990535162

email [johnmfarquhar@btinternet.com](mailto:johnmfarquhar@btinternet.com)

## Easter Update

David M Edes

Sadly very little to report this month It's been very quiet, not many visitors.

Malcom Talbot who is based at Easter is now available to carry out SEP revalidations.

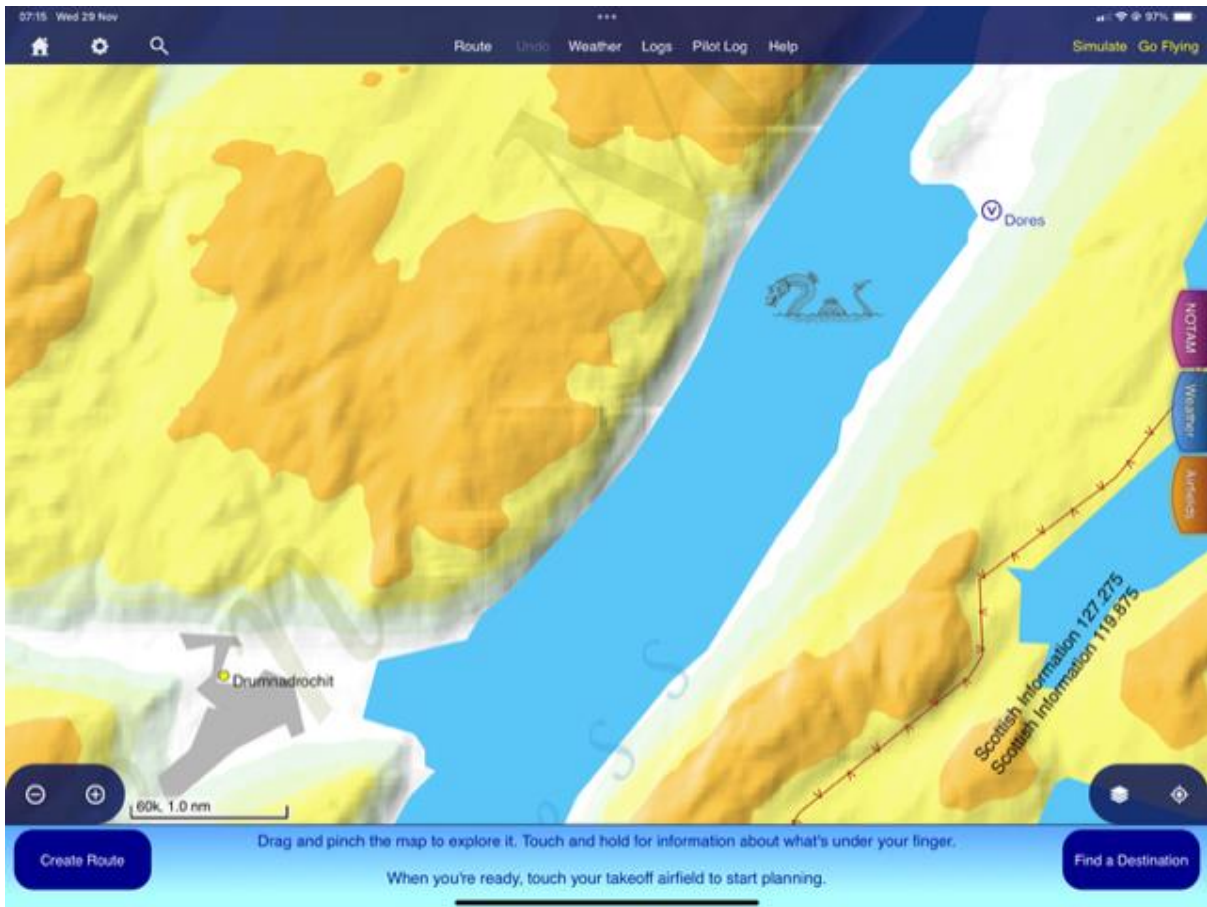
Along with Aitken Paton .

Visitors need to be aware that the water to the airfield cabin & toilets has now been turned off to prevent pipes freezing.

Dornoch is soggy taken by Paul Jenkins on the 1<sup>st</sup> of November 2023



Pilots should be aware of an additional hazard flying up the Great Glen Nessie now showing as a hazard.



## SOLLAS BEACH FLY IN 2024

SAVE THE DATE - Thursday 15th to Saturday 17th AUGUST 2024

Claudine Bloom

## Highland Strut membership renewal for 2024:

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Treasurer:- Chris Haycock/Alister Sutherland



07836 662620

### January 2024

We have once again been able to maintain membership to the paltry level of only £5:00 for the year. Subscriptions due by 28<sup>th</sup> February.

To maintain your membership, please complete and return this form with payment to the treasurer at the address shown above. Cheques should be made payable to **'The Highland Strut'**.

Payments may also be made by BACS. Sort Code: **83-27-35**, Account No: **00665726**, Account Name: **Highlands & Islands Strut of the LAA**

Please use your name or other suitable ID (e.g. Aircraft reg for landing card) in the reference field. Payees' must send an E mail to **janimar.50@btinternet.com** confirming details of the payment made. This is to ensure your payment is recorded accurately against individual members.

Alternatively, come along to the next meeting and pay in person, but please complete the details below which will form the basis of our membership list.

Name:

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LAA

BMA

Address:

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BGA

LAA Membership No.: -----

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Email address: -----

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Telephone: -----

Postcode:

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Mobile: -----