100 YEARS OF BRITISH WOMEN PILOTS

THE FLYING INSTRUCTOR'S COURSE

GAS BALLOON TRAINING IN GERMANY

THE ‘TOPNAV’ EXPERIENCE
## Who’s Who in the BWPA

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THE VIEWS EXPRESSED IN THIS NEWSLETTER ARE NOT NECESSARILY THOSE OF THE BRITISH WOMEN PILOTS’ ASSOCIATION, ITS OFFICERS OR THE EDITOR

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**BWPA aims:**

- To promote practical schemes to assist women to gain flying licences of all types
- To advise women on the training required and the openings available to them in aviation
- To enable women in aviation to meet and exchange information of mutual interest

British Women Pilots’ Association
Brooklands Museum
Brooklands Road
Weybridge, Surrey, KT13 0QN

[www.bwpa.co.uk](http://www.bwpa.co.uk)

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**Editor’s details:**

Editor: Helen Krasner
Design/Print: Prontaprint, Stratford upon Avon

We want your contributions! Please email articles, letters, news, photos etc to helenkrasner2@gmail.com
PLEAS NOTE THIS IS A NEW EMAIL ADDRESS!
or post to:
Helen Krasner,
BWPA Editor,
15 The Hallsteads,
Kniveton
Ashbourne
Derbyshire, DE6 1JT

AND MAKE SURE YOU LABEL YOUR PHOTOS!
Deadline for next newsletter is September 30th.

FRONT COVER PHOTO:
FRONT COVER PHOTO: Amy Chau does run-up checks while Caroline Gough-Cooper manoeuvres her helicopter – taken at the BWPA fly-in at Ebrington Home Farm (see report on page 18)
Greetings to you all, and welcome to another bumper issue of the newsletter. We seem to have just about everything about flying in this issue, from every time and place. There is Caroline Gough-Cooper’s excellent history of British women pilots over the last 100 years, and Allie Dunnington’s account of her training in Germany in order to become the first woman in Britain to get a gas balloon rating – helped out by her funds from a BWPA bursary, I’m sure she’ll want me to mention. Then there’s Sue Tuddenham’s recollections of the accounts given by the ex-ATA pilots at the ‘Spitfire Women’ conference, Mark Batin’s first-hand description of taking part in ‘TopNav’, and Helen Vosper’s blow by blow – or do I mean flight by flight – account of her flight instructor’s course. That last one brought back memories for me, as I’m sure it did for many flying instructors.

As many of you know, I’ll be giving up editing the newsletter at the end of this year. To my knowledge there is no definite successor as yet, so… would you like to have a go? The job involves editing and putting stuff together rather than a great deal of writing, and really isn’t that onerous – though it is a good idea to be a reasonable organiser, as people don’t like it if you lose their articles and photos somewhere on your computer, but with no idea where! But seriously, if this sort of thing might interest you, do contact either me or chairman Caroline Gough-Cooper, and we’ll have a chat with you and let you know more. Meanwhile, I’ll be sorry to go, but other things in life have taken over. And… I’m not leaving the BWPA, just the job of newsletter editor.

I’m just back from holiday – a trip to the Orkneys, Shetlands, Faroes, and Iceland. No, I didn’t fly myself there! But having now seen for myself the type of weather changes you can get in those Northern climes, plus some… errr… ‘interesting’ runways, I have great respect for anyone who has done so. If that applies to you, do tell us about it. And while I’m on that subject, do write something for the next issue, our 100th, and my last. From a purely personal point of view, I’d like to go out with a bang, at least in literary terms.

I hope many of you will make it to our Centenary Celebrations, but Caroline Gough-Cooper has talked of that at length, and there are further details in this newsletter, so I really don’t need to say any more here. Which means that nothing much remains except to say that I really hope you enjoy reading all this as much as I’ve enjoyed putting it together.

Blue skies and tailwinds to you all,

Helen

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**CENTENARY COMPETITION**

To mark the centenary of the issue of the first pilot’s licence to a British woman, the BWPA is running a competition over the course of the year to test your knowledge of that first British aviatrix, Hilda Hewlett. The prize is a flight for you and a friend with BWPA Chairman Caroline Gough-Cooper in her Robinson R44 helicopter.

To enter, make a note of your answers to the two questions posed in each issue of the BWPA newsletter in 2011; then send all eight answers to the address below. The winner will be drawn from the correct answers received by the closing date, and will be announced at the BWPA Christmas lunch on December 4th.

Closing date for entries is Monday November 14th 2011

Send to:
Hilda Hewlett Centenary competition
64 Manchester Road
Macclesfield
SK10 2JP

The next two questions:

5. On what date was Hilda Hewlett’s pilot’s licence issued?
6. What was her licence number?
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Contributions

Your newsletter needs YOU! We want YOU to write to us.

It doesn’t matter how new you are, or how little you’ve written before. We’d still LOVE to hear from you.

The BWPA newsletter has several regular columns, so why not contribute to one of the following...

Jobs in Aviation — from making the tea to flying an Airbus.

My Flying Life/Her Flying Life — whether for six months or sixty years.

Event Reports — if you went, what did you think?

Book Reviews — if you read it, share it.

Aviation Agony Aunts — let us solve your aviation problems and aerial dilemmas.

My Most Memorable Flight — if you remember it, write about it.

Humour — it’s good to laugh; please send contributions.

News — I can’t report it if I don’t know about it.

Letters — drop me a line about… anything.

BWPA Swap Shop — buy, sell, swap, give away… anything aviation related. ‘Small Ads’ are free to BWPA members.

And we always need aviation photos too!
Remember, a picture is worth 1000 words, and I’m always short of good photos.

Or…… Have you flown a new type, done a new rating, or acquired a new qualification? Have you been for a trial lesson, done your first solo, passed your PPL? Have you got back in the air after a long break? Have you flown somewhere new? Have you just had a really nice flying day out? Tell us!

Helen Krasner

DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT NEWSLETTER
— September 30th 2011
THOUGHTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN…

Tempus fugit – time flies…

This oft-quoted expression alluding to the passage of time feels particularly relevant to me right now and not only with reference to the short term, although I am at a bit of a loss to know where this year has gone thus far!

We are now over halfway through the year that marks a century since Hilda Hewlett became the first British woman to gain her pilot’s licence. The BWPA has been very busy promoting the anniversary in a whole host of different ways and the results so far have been fairly mixed. After an initial flurry of interest the national media have moved on to more exciting stories. The aviation press is more enthused with the story and the major GA publications are carrying details of the Educational Weekend at Brooklands and of the ‘Women in the Air’ Day on August Bank Holiday Monday. Much to my surprise the British Airline Pilots’ Association (BALPA) expressed real interest in the centenary when I contacted them in April and commissioned me to write 1,500 words for the August/September issue of their in-house magazine, The Log. I duly set to, but was finding it impossible to do justice to 100 years of British aviation history in just 1,500 words. So I sent them the draft plus my notes with the request that they tell me which bits they would like me to concentrate on. In reply they doubled the word count to 3,000 and told me to get on with it! The whole issue is making a feature of British women in aviation. (The article is reprinted here, starting on page 14… Editor)

Details of the centenary have been written up in the latest RAeC newsletter and AOPA magazine, and GAPAN has asked Clare Walker to write something for the next Guild News. The LAA invited us to publicise the occasion at their Party in the Park at Old Warden; we had also arranged to take part in the static flight line but bad weather on the day prevented our aircraft flying in. However, the welcome address to guests before lunch highlighted the anniversary and there were a number of women there from the CAA and Department of Transport. So I had an excellent opportunity to talk to them individually about the centenary during the course of the day.

As far as planning ahead is concerned, a month is a long time in GA, so we are only now beginning to get information in from Flying Schools and Aero Clubs about their plans for ‘Women in the Air’ Day as they start looking at their diaries for August. Face-to-face communication is always the most effective way of enthusing others, so as you will see later on in this newsletter, we are asking you to ask your particular school, club or airfield how they are proposing to celebrate.

Flying other women is one of the three categories in this year’s Chairwoman’s Challenge so ‘Women in the Air’ Day is a golden opportunity for you to take up the Challenge and clock up some points. New aircraft types is a second and I have managed to add to my own list in recent weeks by taking a flight in a 3-axis microlight from my home airfield, Manchester Barton, and in an autogyro at Aero Expo. Wow – I think I have a new addiction!

Whatever you do to celebrate the centenary this summer, have fun – then tell us about it!

Caroline
Recently, I was lucky enough to be awarded a GAPAN FI scholarship, and one of the best things about receiving such generous financial support was that I could now do a full-time course for the first time. This also meant that Syd - my long-suffering husband and CPL instructor - didn’t have to teach me again! We decided I would do the course with Lovat Fraser at Tayside Aviation in Dundee, which turned out to be a wise decision – just as I started the course, Syd was finally plucked from the Loganair holding pool and went to Sweden for his Saab 340 type rating!

The FI course consists of 30 hours flying, 5 hours of which can be ‘mutual’ – where two trainee instructors fly together as instructor and student. There are 125 hours of ground school, including plenty of opportunity for you to deliver both pre-flight and long briefs. When you consider these figures, the first thing that jumps to mind is that you have only 30 hours in which to learn how to teach a 45 hour minimum PPL. You will not cover every lesson in the PPL syllabus, but you will be given a framework that you can adapt for other lessons. The airborne work consists of a series of ‘give’ and ‘give back’ sessions, whereby the FIC instructor will ‘teach’ the trainee a given lesson. Next time, the trainee will endeavour to repeat the exercise but this time with the student/instructor roles reversed. Initially, the FIC instructor will behave as a high-calibre student, responding to even dreadful instruction with perfect handling. Later on, as your capacity increases, your student will seem to regress, as common errors are introduced, and you explore the limits of latitude that an instructor can safely allow!

At the GAPAN interview I was asked which exercises would be the most difficult to teach. I considered that anxiety would be an issue and so any exercise with an additional ‘fear factor’ might be problematic - and I suspected that stalling (especially in power-on, flapped configurations) might well fall into this category. I also thought that events that happen in a very short time frame would be difficult to teach. Once again, stalling is an example - the actual stall itself is momentary (although, of course, the consequences may not be!). I felt that the actual point of touchdown on landing was similarly momentary and would be difficult to ‘extrude’ sufficiently to teach students. I was also asked if I looked forward to the idea of (hopefully one day) being able to send students on their first solo. I have mixed feelings with regard to this; on one hand, my own first solo was probably the defining moment of my life and it would be wonderful to be instrumental in bringing a student to their own such moment - but it’s a huge responsibility. I once asked my PPL instructor if he liked sending people solo. I don’t know if I caught him off guard, but he said, “God, no! You’ve got everything to lose and nothing to gain.”

I was quite pleased with these answers, but I have never been more wrong about anything in my entire life. I had overlooked the fact that stalling and circuit flying occur later in the programme, when the student has at least basic handling skills. The instructor therefore spends less time on the controls, giving a much greater capacity for teaching. The early lessons, most notably 4.1 (Effects of Controls) and 6.1 (Straight and Level) require the instructor to do almost all of the flying as well as teach. Now, my basic flying skills are OK, and as for talking, well I’m probably Olympic level at that! But... flying and talking? At the same time? With the talking matching the picture out of the window? Not so much! After my first attempt at 4.1 I contemplated leaving the course! When I spoke to Syd that night, he said he’d thought about writing me a letter, marked “not to be opened until after Ex 4.1”. He claimed that he’d seen grown men cry at this point. But he added that it usually got better after that.
The main problem is trying to break the teaching down into digestible chunks. You need to decide the minimum you have to communicate to a trainee to enable them to pick up the skill; then use this to develop your own ‘ patter’ – the actual words you will use in the cockpit. I imagine that this will be slightly different for each instructor, but it is useful to have a script to begin with, and we were helped enormously by recordings of Lovat’s patter. For the duration of the course, these replaced my 1980s back catalogue on my iPod!

On Test Day, we were given a lesson to teach, and you are expected to produce a pre-flight brief for this as well. All FI candidates also have to demonstrate the ability to teach stalling, a PFL, a selection of circuits, and spinning. Your test lesson may involve one of these exercises, which can be an efficient use of time. However, I got the PFL – the one exercise I wasn’t really happy about teaching. The pre-flight brief went well, but I found the airborne exercise hard, mainly because the cloud base close to the airfield was a bit low, so I didn’t feel able to use the perfect fields we’d been practising on. I was almost in Glasgow by the time I found a field that would do! On debrief the examiner pointed out that your chances of finding a perfect field are slim (especially if it’s a real emergency) so it’s OK to choose a less than perfect field so long as you discuss with the student afterwards why it may not be the best choice. I also found it difficult to role-play; pretending the examiner is a student is not easy!

Another mistake I made was that I began the session with a revision glide circuit, which I asked the student to fly. I was told that it would have been better to have flown this myself as a demonstration, partly because this is good practice but also it would have shortened my session back in the circuit. Next was teaching stalling in the landing configuration, which was the best part of the test for me – by the end of the course stalling had become my favourite lesson. We then returned to the circuit, where normal, flapless and glide circuits were patterned, as was an engine failure after take-off. Finally the examiner – as the student – flew a circuit and I had to decide whether or not to send him solo. I made the correct decision not to allow this, but I think I was too harsh in the delivery of my verdict and also started to debrief before we had got the aircraft safely back to the club.

This left the spinning to complete in a C152. By this point I was exhausted, and I seemed to have forgotten how to fly! Having patterned the spin recovery, we then did a short burst of aerobatics. I had noticed that most examiners seemed to do this. Naively, I thought that it was a light-hearted diversion, but on reflection, I think it is more about seeing how comfortable you are in the aircraft. Unfortunately, I have a lot of trouble with exam nerves and I always feel physically ill during test situations. I thought I might die, despite the fact that I normally enjoy this sort of thing!

The classroom work was very straightforward, although this may have reflected the fact that I had the same examiner about four months previously for my Ground Instructor exam. It is worth mentioning that a lot of questions were asked about aircraft documentation, probably reflecting the fact that maintenance and engineering have already been subject to changes under EASA. After that, there was a bit of paperwork to fill out and then…….. finally I had an FI rating!

Looking back on the course, it was a brilliant experience. Lovat is an excellent FIC instructor and I could not recommend him highly enough. In addition, the support at Tayside was superb: ground instruction is delivered primarily by Ken Welsh, an ex-royal navy test pilot with a phenomenal aviation knowledge and a real enthusiasm for teaching. The presence of the cadets also means there is always someone prepared to listen to a long brief!

The course is usually done on the PA28, which allows you to ‘backseat’ with a fellow student, but I found this tiring sometimes, and it also reduces time for long brief preparation. I also found that having to do two separate flights turns a long test day into a bit of a marathon. All in all it was a great experience and by the time you read this, I will hopefully have started work as a part-time FI!
HILDA HEWLETT CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS

Brooklands Educational Weekend, August 20th-21st

This weekend has been organised in conjunction with the Brooklands Museum. Because of the significance of this year’s centenary it has been scheduled to take place during the period between Hilda passing her flying test (August 18th) and receiving her licence (August 29th).

The programme will start at 10.40 on the Saturday when Penelope Keith opens the event. Gates are open from 10.00 -17.00 and admission prices are:
Adults £10, Senior Citizens & Students £9, Children 5-16 £5.50, Under 5s free. This includes admission to all items on the programme.

The timetable is the same on both days and will enable everybody to attend every talk and workshop should they wish to. These talks will be held in the Chequered Flag Room on the first floor of the main building:

Gail Hewlett on Hilda and her achievements 11.00 and 14.00
Aviation from a Personal Perspective 12.00 and 15.00
Careers in Aviation 13.00 and 16.00

Next door in the Bluebird Room there will be displays of aviation careers.

Introduction to Meteorology and Navigation Workshops will run on the half hour from 11.30 in the Education Centre, with a Pre-flight Inspection demonstration to be conducted on an aircraft between the morning and afternoon sessions. There will also be a children’s trail, vintage aircraft engine runs and Women in Aviation tours throughout the day. Allie Dunnington is planning to have a balloon along for the weekend and is hoping to get CAA approval to make a flight from Brooklands. There will also be the BWPA stand in the Wellington Hangar and special Centenary Teas in the Bluebird café.

Many thanks to all the BWPA members who have volunteered their services!

Women in the Air Day, August 29th, Bank Holiday Monday

This is THE event to celebrate Hilda’s achievement in 1911 and we’d like to see as many of you airborne on the day as possible.

Over 260 Flying Schools and Aero Clubs have been invited to take part in this event and we would really like you, our members, to help your local school or club make the most of the occasion. As an incentive we are running a ‘Women in the Air’ Day Challenge for all GA organisations to see who can fly the most women on the day. The organisation that flies the most will win a free advert on the back of all four of next year’s newsletters. Challenge entry forms have been sent to all the organisations that have been invited to participate, and extra forms are available to download from the BWPA website, as are posters to advertise the day.

A number of organisations have already told us what they will be doing to celebrate:

- Aerosaurus Balloons Ltd - www.ballooning.co.uk
  A spread of hot air balloon flights across the South West.
- Manchester Barton www.cityairportltd.com
  Free landings for women on the day, including home-based students
- North London Flying Club, Panshanger - www.northlondonflyingschool.com
  Free landings for women on the day
- Real Aeroplane Club, Brighton www.realae.com
  Fly-in to Brighton Airfield on the day with free landings for women
- Sherburn Aero Club, Sherburn in Elmet - www.sherburn-aero-club.org.uk
  ‘Hilda Hewlett Day’ — British Women Fliers Celebration
  Free landings for women on the day
  Free t-shirts and meal vouchers
  Various competitions
- West London Aero Club, White Waltham - www.wlac.co.uk
  Free landings for women throughout August
- Wiltshire Microlight Centre, Yatesbury - www.wiltshiremicrolights.com
  Free landings for women on the day — Microlights only
  Free refreshments

If your School, Club, Flying Group or Airfield is not on the list above, invite them to take part in the Challenge or get involved in some other way on August 29th. Email details to info@bwpa.co.uk

Centenary Talk at White Waltham

Past BWPA Chairman Clare Walker will be giving a talk about this year’s centenary of British women pilots at White Waltham on Wednesday October 5th.

RAeS Women in Aviation and Aerospace group

The title of the autumn conference hosted by the RAeS Women in Aviation and Aerospace group is ‘From Pioneers to Presidents: Celebrating a Century of Women in Flight’, which will take place on Friday October 14th at RAeS HQ, 4 Hamilton Place, London W1.

BWPA Christmas Lunch and Awards at Brooklands

Our Christmas Lunch and Awards presentation this year will be at Brooklands, the place where it all happened 100 years ago! Red Arrows pilot Kirsty Moore was delighted to be asked to be our speaker this year. Gail Hewlett, author of Hilda’s biography, “Old Bird — the irrepressible Mrs Hewlett” and her husband Tony, Hilda’s grandson
Joy Lofthouse began with the lines; “The ATA had the ‘IT’ girls, like Diana Barnato Walker and the ‘Head’ girls, like Lettice Curtice, but I felt I didn’t fall into either of those. I was just a country bumpkin who left school at 16 and went to work in a bank.” Joy recounted being surrounded by RAF bases as a child growing up in the Cotswolds, and later on working for a bank cashing the pay cheques of the RAF officers. It was learning about the RAF from these experiences that spurred her on to fly. When the ATA started training ab initio pilots the requirements were to be at least 5’6” and to get through a strict medical. Joy was keen to follow her older sister into the ATA. At first, her manager refused to release her into service, claiming that she’d be ‘taking men’s jobs’, but after a few months he came round to the idea and Joy was at last free to join. Reporting for nine days of technical training, Joy recalled, “it wasn’t very technical” and she remembered clearly telling the engineers, “if a red light comes on, I’ll just land and ask someone”. Joy practised spin recovery in Tiger Moths and went solo in a Magister after 24 cross-country flights. As for navigation, it was as vague as, “just keep Salisbury cathedral on your left”, and after a few circuits on a Spitfire she was off to the all girls ferry pool at Hamble to be a part of the ATA.

Joy described the challenge of moving from a Spitfire with a Merlin engine to one with a Griffin engine. The extra horsepower took her completely by surprise, but she managed to maintain control of the more powerful fighter by the time she was airborne. She also described losing a canopy, when the hood suddenly and abruptly flew away.

Mary Ellis was also based at Hamble and escaped from two crash landings. She joined the ATA in 1941 and went on a series of short courses over two years. During the course of the war she flew 400 Spitfires, 76 different types and delivered aircraft to over 200 different airfields. Recounting her experiences in the ATA, Mary said, “I loved flying Spitfires and Hurricanes but I wasn’t so keen on a rather cold three day trip in the open cockpit of a Tiger Moth to Scotland and the long train journey back carrying my parachute.”

One of the more poignant moments was when Mary recounted the sadness she felt when she saw names being rubbed off the board after a mission but “there was no time to mourn and the task required total concentration”.

Mary even flew a jet aircraft and remembers thinking, “this aircraft has no propellers”. When she asked the test pilot for any information he could give her, he simply said, “I can’t give you any information, but the tanks drop from full to empty so make sure you’re on the ground within 30 minutes”.

Another story saw her landing after engine failure in a down-sloping field where she went through a hedge and out the other side. Unfortunately this turned the plane over and she found herself hanging by her straps. Two RAF officers had to eventually come and wait with the plane to protect its military secrets, and as there was a party that night in the officers mess she joked that this made her quite unpopular!

Molly Rose, who was at one stage the only female engineer in the ATA, flew 486 deliveries and 274 Spitfires. She told us that airfields were often camouflaged to hide them from the enemy which sometimes made them difficult to spot. Molly once had to interrupt a cricket match on an airfield so she could land and as soon as she had taxied away they went back to their game.

Molly and Joy didn’t continue to fly after the war, as they felt the excitement of flying military aircraft couldn’t be replaced. But Margaret went on to join the RAF volunteer reserves and flew Chipmunks and Tiger Moths. Mary became personal pilot to a private businessman and later managed an airfield on the Isle of Wight.

It was an honour and a privilege to meet these four amazing women, and they couldn’t have been more matter-of-fact and down-to-earth about their experiences. Clearly they were incredibly brave, not something they seemed to appreciate. I suppose this shows the calibre of ATA pilots during the war - incredibly brave, incredibly talented and incredibly modest.
I have taken part in the TOPNAV competition on a number of occasions using a variety of mounts, including a Slingsby T67 Firefly, a PA28-180 Archer and a Thruster Sprint 600N Microlight. On that last outing I managed to persuade my daughter Sophie to do the navigation; I introduced her to the basic principles and we even undertook a training flight to idyllic Eddsfield in Yorkshire by way of preparation. This proved to be excellent training, with poor visibility and a diversion to the very welcoming Beverley, due to unpredicted low cloud at our destination – typical English summer flying! So with my trainee navigator’s “you’re not expecting to win anything, right?” ringing in my ears we set off to White Waltham to mix with the serious competition.

What is TOPNAV?

TOPNAV was conceived by wartime aviator and great character Gordon Wansbrough-White to promote improved navigational standards amongst General Aviation pilots through friendly competition. Gordon, who died a couple of years ago, based the competition around his GNav navigation system, and each competitor was issued with this item in the competition pack. The event is now organised by the General Aviation Navigation Group at The Royal Institute of Navigation, a learned society dedicated to the study and development of all forms of navigation. It takes place annually in May, which adds to the pressure in the cockpit either due to thermal stress or the vagaries of our spring weather. Originally there was a single competition in the south of England in July, but it was felt that many potential competitors were put off by the logistics of getting to White Waltham, competing, and getting home. There are now separate competition days for participants in the north and south, imaginatively named TOPNAV North and TOPNAV South. However, the results are considered together for the award of prizes, giving an overall order of merit for TOPNAV as a whole.

The competition consists of an unseen cross-country visual navigation exercise of about two hours duration (there is a shorter course for light helicopters and slower aeroplanes) with turning points defined by various means, including range and/or bearing from beacons or latitude/longitude positions. The points are mainly plotted in the 30 minutes between issue and engine start, a feat in itself, with marks awarded for accuracy of plotting, log keeping and precision of navigation. Compliance with the route is verified by carrying a GPS logging device backed up by photographs of the turning points and manual log keeping. There are penalty points for sophisticated equipment, such as satellite navigation, and experienced crews. That’s the theory, but how does it work in practice? It’s not quite as simple as it sounds…

Competition Day

TOPNAV North is mounted from Sherburn-in-Elmet and TOPNAV South from White Waltham; the event is generously hosted by the Sherburn and West London clubs, with competitors and organisers able to take advantage of the fine briefing and refreshment facilities in the historic club-houses. There are usually between 20 and 30 crews taking part on the nominated days, with one or two registered to fly the course later; the competition rules allow for participants to fly up to three weeks after the event – a contingency for bad weather, unserviceability or, in the case of the author a few years ago, bad holiday planning! Each day is limited to 30 aircraft because there are only 30 loggers (and the judging has to be complete by the end of May in time for the prize giving). The competitors were a true cross-section of GA, with aircraft ranging from state-of-the-art modern aircraft, through standard club mounts, including Cessnas and Pipers of varied types, a RAF Puma, an Air Cadet Vigilant, veterans such as the Tiger Moth, and a Robinson R22 – and our lone Thruster. We were made to feel very much at home and a relieved Tiger Moth crew were moved to comment on how pleased they were to see us as they were no longer the slowest aircraft! A respectable turnout gives a healthy body of competition for the eight prizes on offer, and the recent expansion to TOPNAV North opens the competition to those put off by long transit times to White Waltham. The prizes go to the Top Navigators, regardless of which venue they flew from.
So, what is it like to take part in TOPNAV? In a couple of words, great fun! Rather frantic fun... but nonetheless fun. For some of the crews it was their first time in any competition and this was true for half of my crew: however, she was showing great promise, not least by getting us to White Waltham in good order despite strong winds and turbulence. The arrival at White Waltham on a glorious - if bumpy - day was routine, apart from taxiing a hard suspension microlight over the sun-baked surface. After a swift and efficient registration process, it was into the clubhouse for some of their excellent coffee and back outside to enjoy the sunshine, eye up the competition and do what pilots do best – regale others with aviation tales. The pre-flight briefing was filled with useful information; almost an overload. Many of the pilots confess to filtering out the navigational detail, whilst the navigators focus on this, leaving joining procedures and such to the pilots. First mistake! A nice hot day means high thermal activity and a rough ride in a small aeroplane. As I found out in 2004, if your navigator has gone green and silent by the first turning point there will be rapid reallocation of roles as the navigator takes the controls and the view of the horizon. We didn’t take any prizes that year.

Lunch is the next event, generally held to be splendid (for anyone wondering about taking part, it’s worth it just for the chocolate brownies at the West London Aero Club) and just the thing to induce a post-prandial torpor – a cunning move by the organisers for, instead of a siesta, it was time for a brain-bruising two hours of plotting and calculation in a hot cockpit! Crews then pick up their competition pack of paperwork and are allocated a start time before getting down to some frenzied plotting of way points and planned tracks. The more ‘clerking’ that can be done at this stage the better: it reduces the cockpit paper storm to marginally less than biblical proportions. We managed to get most of the way points and the first few tracks done, which allowed us to walk jauntily to our aircraft exuding an air of casual, if not entirely justified, confidence. One might ask: “why don’t people simply follow the aircraft ahead?” That would be the second mistake... it presupposes that the other crew know where they’re going. Actually, it is amazing how few other aircraft one sees and those that are seen are always heading the wrong way. Luckily, in a microlight, we were on the short course and so nobody was tempted to join us on what might have been a mystery tour. As it turned out, Sophie surprised herself by discovering she has a bit of a natural flair for air navigation and the way points started to come up regularly in the right place and on time. The strong wind turned out to be something of a boon as it tended to be constant and once we had a good idea of the vector the rest was just maths and geometry, at least allegedly. Of course, a strong wind can be a mixed blessing when it’s a headwind: low groundspeed (our GPS logger showed 25 knots on one leg) gives plenty of time for accurate navigation and recording but plenty of time means more fuel burnt! The last legs were downwind and my worried frown gave way to the devil-may-care nonchalance of a pilot with a groundspeed in excess of his airspeed and his destination on the nose. Having completed the course and obtained photographs of places that we thought were the required turning points, we landed at White Waltham to search for more brownies and coffee whilst being relieved of our completed paperwork. Tales of the day’s adventures were swapped with the other crews. Then, light on fuel but heavy on cake, we headed back to our home base feeling satisfied that we’d had a fair stab at getting it right and a great day out regardless of the eventual result. Finally, we dispatched the suitably annotated way point photographs to the marking team and sat back to await the results.

There then followed some weeks of hard work behind the scenes by the judges, allowing the results to be published in time for the major RIN event in July. The winners are invited to attend this event but are not told which prize they have won until just before the moment of presentation by HRH The Duke of Edinburgh. We were slightly surprised and very pleased to be invited to the event as prize winners and we were even more surprised and delighted to find that we had won the very generous Transair Prize.

TOPNAV is an excellent day’s flying that exercises basic navigation skills little used in these days of GPS. It is also a fun day out in the company of fellow aviators with an edge of good-humoured competition. The competition is constantly evolving and the 34th TOPNAV, scheduled for 12 May 2012 at Retford (Gamston) and 19 May 2012 at White Waltham, will feature a new set of challenges. Be warned: it is addictive – we already have our aeroplane booked for TOPNAV 2012. See you there!
GAS BALLOON TRAINING IN GERMANY

By Allie Dunnington

To any non-balloonist it can be quite confusing - here I am flying in a ‘gas’ balloon filled with hydrogen, but a ‘hot-air’ balloon uses propane. How can it be that a gas balloon is totally silent and hot-air makes quite a bit of noise? Indeed the terminology is confusing.

The big difference is that once a gas balloon is filled, it won’t make any further noise during the entire period of your flight, which can be up to three or four days and nights if you push your luck. Whereas in a hot-air balloon you will have to keep burning, ie adding propane, every now and then to keep your aircraft in the air for a few hours. The great advantage of a gas balloon is that once it has found its equilibrium (I will explain this in more detail later) it will just float without you having to do anything. You can have a picnic, a doze, a chat, read a book, whatever. Flying a hot-air balloon you must constantly monitor your altitude, burn or rip, check the gauges of your tanks, etc. A common teasing joke therefore between the two lobbies of balloonists is, “Oh gosh, so much noise and hot air!” versus “On for another 12 hours of sleep?”

Prejudices are interesting because they always contain some truth. I have heard many balloonists comment that they would find gas ballooning boring. How can you possibly stand there in a tiny basket for 12 hours and even overnight? And why fly at night after all, since you won’t see anything? It will be terribly cold and tedious, the preparations will take forever and it will cost a fortune.

With these comments in mind I set out for Stuttgart, Germany for my very first gas balloon experience – kindly supported by the flying bursary of the Air League and the BWPA…..

The Stuttgarter Ballonsport-Verein is one of the oldest Balloon clubs in Germany, founded in October 1950 only a few years after the end of the Second World War. On the 17th of May 1953 the club launched their first gas balloon. The filling with ‘town’ or ‘coalgas’ took a tedious 13 hours, it needed at least 12 helpers and the balloon only flew for two hours! This time though, nearly 60 years later, the balloon was ready to lift off in only an hour.

To share the costs of this expedition I had linked up with Matt Nicolson, BA pilot and keen balloonist, and Pete Bish, former air-traffic controller. Our instructor was Tomas Hora, a very experienced gas and hot-air pilot. Tomas gave us four hours of intense pre-flight MET and air traffic instructions. Unlike in hot-air ballooning where you normally only fly within a small radius, with gas balloons you look at greater distances and therefore your MET assessment and airspace planning should be very thorough and careful. Our trajectory showed easterly winds that would take us in about 12 hours to somewhere near Nancy in France. With my biggest worry still in my head (What do I do if I need a pee?), we went to fetch the balloon. My mind was put to rest: out of a box came the ‘on-board toilet’, a foldable seat with a proper ring to sit on, and plastic bags underneath. In the end, to my surprise, I didn’t have to use it for the entire 12 hours on board.

With a shovel in my hand, Tomas let me control the take off. When you do it the first time, it’s hard to believe, but only half a shovel of sand can stop a moderate descent and make the balloon go up again. After a few ups and downs, our balloon D-OSTZ with the name ‘Graf Zeppelin’ finally found its equilibrium at around 1000 feet above the city. Tomas called Stuttgart to open the flight plan with a VFR request for night flying, and then there was nothing else to do for a while except to take in the surreal atmosphere - gently drifting over the illuminated city, cruising right over the central train station, the old and new castle, the main pedestrian street ‘Koenigsstrasse’ and behind us a nearly full moon lighting the sky. Incredible!

With a speed of 15-18 knots on average, we were now cruising at around 2800 feet and heading straight for the Black Forest. A challenge, as Tomas called it. Now, weren’t we wondering whether we’d see anything at night? We saw lots, but you hear even more - from people singing and shouting as they sat around their campfires in the forest, cars and motor bikes accelerating up and down the hills, banging noises from discos and parties, to the deep roaring of a wild boar and the wind blowing over the trees.
“Sand bags up”, came the command from Tomas. “We might encounter some severe wind shear over these mountains and valleys”. And indeed we did. Suddenly our floating was disturbed, the balloon thrown into a steep descent. Ballast over board; three bags out! That keeps you awake at 2am! We then climbed to our maximum altitude of 1777m (ca 6000ft) to avoid more of this. Heading now for the Rhine valley, we anticipated more turbulence coming over the last ridge, but instead we were suddenly stopped a few miles before the ridge and sucked up into the sky. It was all really odd, and even Tomas admitted that he had never experienced this kind of situation. For about an hour, we were stuck going up, going down, the balloon just playing with us. There wasn’t much we could do, just keep an eye on it. Finally we came out into the plains and changed frequency to Strasbourg.

Airmanship is fundamental to the success and safety of a long-distance gas balloon flight. Unfortunately not many air traffic controllers know much about balloons. One asked us whether we had any lights. As we confirmed that we did, he wondered whether we had fixed them to the top of the balloon. “No, they hang underneath otherwise it might make a big bang”, we told him. “Ah I see”, the German controller said in surprise. The poor French man in Strasbourg was disturbed from his night’s rest as he didn’t expect any night traffic. We apologized and flew on across the beautiful Rhine River into France. As Phalsbourg Military zone came up on our GPS, we called the controller again to ask whether the danger zone was active. His reply was, “No wars on weekends” and with that - peace between Germany and France being guaranteed at least a weekend - we unpacked our picnic and tea. Would you call any of this boring?

As dawn gradually approached, we reached Nancy. It was time to practise a few approaches. Tomas explained that the rip line works in three steps. A first gentle pull releases a little bit of gas and you hear just a soft hissing sound. By pulling slightly harder you hear it flapping and that releases an equivalent of two sandbags or approximately 30 kg. One tiny pull further, and you reach the red danger zone of deflation. This pull releases 40 kg, and you’ll find yourself in a seriously fast descent or, when landing, the balloon will very quickly deflate and stop. A very effective system, but handle with care!

We all had a go at pulling and trying to level out again. Levelling out is done by throwing out sand. This can be compared with burning and venting at the same time when descending in a hot air balloon. In the end, once you get it right, you can fly perfectly at low level over tree tops, fields, or rivers, as in any other balloon.

With the sun rising and the temperature increasing, the balloon started to climb naturally to its float height of around 6000 feet. We flew over the beautiful medieval town of Toul, a last chance for pictures before we came down - a steep approach enhanced by strong curl-over from quarry ridge and the beginning of thermals. Then back to mother earth, and with a good pull on the rip the balloon didn’t bounce a bit. The retrieve took only around four hours on the road, not too bad compared with the often relatively long drives back after only a short flight in hot-air balloons.

A lot of people, including the air traffic controllers, are shocked when they heard that gas balloons are filled with hydrogen. “Isn’t that terribly dangerous?” they ask. “I thought they’d stopped using it after the Hindenburg explosion.” But if you adhere to a few important safety rules, then even this highly explosive gas can be relatively safe. Smoking or wearing synthetic clothes that could create static sparks, or even having your camera or mobile phone close to the parachute when letting out hydrogen after the flight, are definitely out. But as hydrogen rises extremely fast at 60 m/s, it disperses very quickly as well. Flying into thunderstorms or power lines can be deadly, so you must watch out for those – but you would in any form of aircraft.

So now that I have discovered a new passion, where could I do more gas balloon flying and how can I afford it? Calculated per hour, the costs are actually not all that bad. It depends of course where you fly. But divided between several people, it can be quite reasonable - and a great experience!

Don Cameron, who has just invented a new version of a gas balloon, reckons that gas ballooning should become possible and affordable in the near future even here in the UK. Hydrogen is becoming more widely available and is seen as a new power source for cars and transportation.

So is the future a lot of hot-air or a real gas?
Hilda Hewlett
Book Cover

On August 18th 1911 Hilda B Hewlett, a 47-year old mother of two, became the first British woman to pass her flying test; she received Pilot’s Certificate no. 122 from the Royal Aero Club eleven days later on August 29th.

Hilda’s introduction to aviation came in October 1909 when she motored up to Blackpool for Britain’s first international flying meeting. There she watched an aircraft take to the skies for the first time and was instantly smitten:

“A great white thing was slowly pushed out of a shed, so big and strange. Paulhan (the French pilot) climbed up somehow, men twisted something round and round behind, when suddenly there was a roar which got louder and louder. The white thing moved – slowly – then faster and faster, till as it passed in front of me I saw one foot of space between it and the dirty muddy grass. That one foot of space which grew more and more made everything within me stop still. I wanted to cry, or laugh, but I could not move or think, I could only look with all my other faculties dead and useless. Something inside me felt it must burst. I had seen a reality as big as a storm at sea, or Vesuvius throwing up fire and rocks – it made more impression than either of these. There seemed to be no limit to its future. I was rooted to the spot in thick mud and wonder and did not want to move. I wanted to feel that power under my own hand and understand about why and how. The whole trend of life seemed altered, somehow, lots of important things were forgotten, a new future of vague wonder and power was opened.”

At that time the place to go to learn to fly was France, which was an early investor in heavier-than-air craft and consequently had the machines and flying schools. Although there were a number of routes that could be followed, Hilda only had one real option – buy a French machine, which automatically entitled her to lessons at the manufacturer’s school. Her husband Maurice, a well-known writer, did not believe that aviation had a future and had no desire to share in his wife’s new-found passion, so Hilda turned to her family to help finance her ambition and adopted the pseudonym Grace Bird as a cover for her adventures in France.

She chose to buy a Henri Farman aircraft of the type that had fired her desire at Blackpool but for various reasons she was unable to get airborne as more than a passenger in France. Her business partner Gustave Blondeau was more successful, and in the summer of 1910 the aircraft was shipped to England where they set up a flying school at the Brooklands motor racing circuit in Surrey. Tommy Sopwith had his first flying lesson with Gustave shortly after, but Hilda deferred to (much-needed) fee-paying pupils until July 1911, passing her test the following month. By then Maurice Hewlett was left in no doubt that there was most definitely a future for aviation!

Aviation was perceived as glamorous right from the start and in the early years many of the pioneers, both men and women, were household names as records were set then broken almost monthly, as people took to the skies to experience the thrill of flight. Today, people unconnected with aviation might mention Amy Johnson as a famous British woman pilot, or Kirsty Moore, the RAF’s first female display pilot with the Red Arrows, but from Hilda onwards British women played a prominent role in pushing the boundaries.

In many respects the period between the two world wars was aviation’s heyday, particularly for women. Those with the means to pursue their interest encountered no restrictions and found no obstacles in their way. Mary Russell, the Duchess of Bedford, became interested in aviation in her 60s and made two record-breaking flights in her single-engined Fokker F VIII G-EBTS, accompanied by her personal pilot C D Barnard. The first, in 1929, was a 10,000 mile trip from Lympne to Karachi then back to Croydon in eight days; the second, from Lympne to Cape Town in 1930, covered 9,000 miles in 100 flying hours over 10 days. She died in 1937 at the age of 71 after leaving Woburn Abbey in DH.60GIII Moth Major G-AGUR that crashed in the North Sea off Great Yarmouth; her body was never recovered.

Aviation attracted many motoring enthusiasts and Mildred, the Hon. Mrs Victor Bruce was one. Mildred and her husband were well-known in motor racing circles, so when she dropped into the Automobile Association Map Department to order maps for her planned round-the-world trip they were very interested and wanted to know when she had learnt to fly. To this she replied, “Oh, to tell the truth, I haven’t learnt yet, but I will before I go”. Earlier that month she had spotted a Blackburn Bluebird
in a London showroom, on which was hung a ticket saying, ‘Ready to go anywhere’. Rising to the challenge, she pored over her atlas that evening to plan which route she would take to circumnavigate the world; then returned to purchase the aircraft the following morning. On September 25th, 1930, just twelve weeks later, she set off for Tokyo. An engineer working late on her aircraft just before she left was asked what the callsign G-ABDS stood for. “A B***** Daft Stunt”, came the reply!

By the time Mildred arrived back to Croydon on February 20th, 1931 she had become the first woman to fly around the world alone - albeit crossing the oceans by ship, the first person to fly from England to Japan, and the first person to fly across the Yellow Sea.

The 1930s saw a myriad of aviation firsts. Amy Johnson gained worldwide recognition in May 1930 when she became the first woman to fly solo from England to Australia in her Gypsy Moth, ‘Jason’, now on display in the Science Museum in London. This was the main reason why Mildred Bruce decided to head for Japan instead! Amy set a number of distance records, both solo and with her husband, Jim Mollison. He became the first person to cross the Atlantic solo non-stop from east to west (Dublin to Canada) in 1932, the first woman to achieve the same feat being Beryl Markham in a Vega Gull in 1936, who in so doing also claimed the record for becoming the first person to cross from England to North America. The American, Amelia Earhart had become the first woman to cross solo west to east in 1932.

At the outbreak of World War II many women pilots were keen to help the war effort by joining the Air Transport Auxiliary, but entrenched prejudices against women taking on such a serious task meant there was much initial resistance to the idea. Eventually necessity prevailed, and it fell to Pauline Gower, pilot and civil defence commissioner, to establish the women’s section. The first eight women were appointed on 1st January 1940 and by the time the ATA was disbanded in 1945, 166 women from across the free world had passed through its ranks. The following are just a handful of the many British women who flew for the ATA.

Amy Johnson signed up and became the first ATA pilot to die in service when she ditched in the Thames estuary during a ferry flight and drowned in 1941. Joan Hughes and Jean Lennox Bird both qualified as pilots in 1930 at the age of eighteen, and once taken on by the ATA Joan became the only woman cleared to instruct on all types of military aircraft then in service. Lettice Curtis was another pre-war pilot to join the ATA and became the first woman to be cleared to fly four-engine bombers. Ann Welch gained her licence in 1934, a month after her 17th birthday; Diana Barnato Walker learned to fly in 1938 aged 20 and joined the ATA in 1941. Already the holder of a private pilot’s licence, Jackie Moggridge was training for her commercial licence when war broke out. She transferred to the ATA from the WAAF once the women’s section was up and running and eventually ferried over 1500 aircraft, more than any other ATA pilot, male or female. Freydis Sharland, future founding chairman of the BWPA learned to fly after becoming ‘air-minded’ following a flight at an air display in 1941, and joined the ATA in 1942.

Diana Barnato Walker

After the war the opportunities for women to continue flying in anything other than a private capacity were greatly limited but a number managed to do so. Of those mentioned above, Joan Hughes had a very successful post-ATA flying career and was a highly-regarded instructor with the Airways Aero Association for many years. Initially at White Waltham then at Booker, she retired in 1985 with some 11,800 hours in her logbook. Jean Lennox Bird continued as a member of the WRAF Volunteer Reserve and in 1952, with over 3,100 hours experience on more than 90 aircraft types, became the first woman pilot to gain her RAF wings. She subsequently became a commercial pilot and died when the Aerovan she was piloting for an aerial survey crashed on take-off from Ringway Airport in April 1957.

Lettice Curtis initially joined the Aeroplane and Armament Experimental Establishment at Boscombe Down as a technician and flight test observer. She later moved to Fairey Aviation as a flight development engineer before joining the Ministry of Aviation in the 1960s. Lettice qualified to fly helicopters in 1992 at the age of 76 before voluntarily grounding herself three years later.
Ann Welch returned to gliding in the postwar years, re-establishing the Surrey Gliding Club that she had started at Redhill in 1938 and which subsequently relocated to Lasham. Ann played a significant role in the British Gliding Association (BGA) for many years, but a need for change within the BGA and her desire to encourage more young people into aviation saw her move away from gliding and become closely involved in the development of hang gliding and paragliding. In her time Ann was president of the British Hang Gliding Association, the British Hang Gliding & Paragliding Association and the British Microlight Aircraft Association.

Following the disbandment of the ATA, Diana Barnato Walker gained her commercial pilot’s licence and shortly after was appointed as a Corps Pilot with the Women’s Junior Air Corps (WJAC), later the Girls’ Venture Corps. She flew with the WJAC until the late 1960s, training cadets and giving flights to air-minded teenage girls to encourage them to enter the aviation industry. In 1963 Diana was invited to fly the new English Electric Lightning T4 and after clearance from the Ministry of Defence established a world air speed record for women and became the first British woman to break the sound barrier when she flew to Mach 1.65 with Squadron Leader Ken Goodwin as her check pilot.

Jackie Moggridge joined the WRAF Volunteer Reserve after a short period out of aviation, which enabled her to keep flying, and she eventually converted to Meteor and Vampire jets. After the WRAFVR closed its flying training schools, Jackie found a job ferrying ex-RAF Spitfires from Cyprus to Rangoon for the Burmese Air Force. She joined Channel Airways in 1957 where she became an airline captain, operating short-haul passenger services in such aircraft as de Havilland Doves and Douglas Dakotas from Southsea on domestic routes, to the Channel Islands and to the Continent.

After the war Freydis Sharland became a pilot with the WJAC and in 1953 delivered a plane on her own to Pakistan as a freelance commercial pilot.

Although the majority of ex-ATA women pilots who continued to fly did so purely recreationally, a number of them wanted to promote opportunities for women to work in the aviation industry as well as to encourage the participation of women in aviation at a recreational level. It was a group of these who founded the BWPA in 1955 to further these aims under the Chairmanship of Freydis Sharland. By coincidence, the first honorary member of the BWPA and great supporter of the association was Lord Brabazon of Tara, Britain’s first licensed pilot, who gained his licence on March 8th 1910, the same day that Frenchwoman Baroness Raymonde de Laroche became the first woman to receive a pilot’s licence.

A student pilot by the name of Sheila Scott joined the BWPA just after her first solo in 1959. Qualifying a year later Sheila was soon entering rallies and air races in her Jackaroo, ‘Myth’. She later upgraded to a single-engined Piper Comanche named ‘Myth Too’ and it was in this aircraft that she set over 100 long distance flight records, including a 34,000-mile ‘world and a half’ flight in 1971 that saw her become the first person to fly over the North Pole in a small aircraft. The aircraft, G-ATOY, is currently on display at the National Museum of Flight at East Fortune Airfield, Scotland.

Women continued to make progress in the aviation world, albeit in a more low-key way, and in 1960 two BWPA members, Yvonne Pope (Sintes) and Frankie O’Kane (Spray) were accepted by the Ministry of Aviation as the first women to train as Air Traffic Controllers. Women continued to be employed as airline pilots in increasing numbers but it wasn’t until as recently as 1987 that the national carrier, British Airways, employed its first female pilot, Lynne Barton. Lynne joined as a First Officer on the Boeing 747 fleet and within a year 60 of BA’s 3000 pilots were women. Lynne holds the added distinction of having captained the first BA flight into Heathrow’s T5. Another first came in 1992 when Barbara Harmer, who started her working life as hairdresser, completed her training to join the Concorde fleet, the only woman to fly the supersonic airliner as a line pilot.

By the end of the 1980s women pilots could be found in every quarter of British aviation except one – the military. Jean Lennox Bird had gained her RAF wings in 1952 but only in the WRAFVR. This was about to change. The blanket ban on women flying in the military was lifted and in May 1990 Flt Lts Sally Cox and Julie Ann Gibson flew their first solos at RAF Linton-on-Ouse. Julie completed her training the following year and went on to fly Andovers with 32 Squadron at RAF Northolt before promotion to Captain on the Hercules fleet at RAF Lyneham.

The lifting of restrictions on women flying jets came in 1992, and in April that year Flt Lt Jo Salter was awarded her fast jet wings. Jo joined 617 Squadron at RAF Lossiemouth in 1994 and was declared combat ready in February 1995, the first female operational Tornado GR1 pilot in the UK. She flew missions to protect the No-fly zone in Iraq in the late 1990s, but left the RAF in 2000 after returning to work following maternity leave.

By now women were employed as both fixed-wing and rotary pilots throughout the military, and in 2008 Flt Lt Michelle Goodman achieved the distinction of becoming the first woman to be awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross. The captain of an Incident...
Reaction Team Merlin helicopter, she had flown her crew into Basra at night under heavy fire to evacuate a casualty critically wounded by a mortar attack.

The advent of combat ready female fast jet pilots in the RAF meant that with the passage of time women would eventually meet all the criteria necessary for consideration for a place in the Royal Air Force Aerobatics Team – the Red Arrows. Flt Lt Kirsty Moore was the first successful applicant when she was selected for the Team in 2010 and is the most high-profile winner of the BWPA’s flying scholarship to date. Administered by the Air League, the BWPA scholarship is awarded annually and provides a young woman with up to 15 hours’ flying instruction towards the issue of an NPPL. As an Air Cadet Kirsty was the recipient in 1998.

Kirsty Moore

Jennifer Murray

The civilian world, meanwhile, has continued to see its share of British successes. Despite the increased difficulties and complexity of planning long-distance flights today, BWPA members Jennifer Murray and Polly Vacher, both relative late-comers to aviation, have followed in the slipstreams of earlier record-setters.

Jennifer is the first woman to have circumnavigated the world in a helicopter, firstly with her instructor in 1997 then solo three years later, both trips in a Robinson 44. In 2007 she and her co-pilot, Colin Bodill, then completed a polar circumnavigation in a Bell B407 helicopter after surviving a near-fatal crash in Antarctica during an earlier attempt.

Polly has circumnavigated the globe solo twice to raise funds for Flying Scholarships for the Disabled (FSD). Her Wings Around the World Challenge in 2001 was an eastbound circumnavigation of the world in her single-engine Piper PA-28 Dakota G-FRGN, the smallest aircraft flown solo by a woman around the world via Australia. The trip included a 16-hour segment from Hawaii to California. In 2003 she set off again, this time on a Voyage to the Ice for the same charity. Flying over the North Pole, Antarctica and all seven continents, Polly became the first solo woman to fly over the polar regions. Her third fund-raising flight for FSD, the Wings Around Britain Challenge in 2007, saw her land at all 221 airfields in the Jeppesen VFR Manual on a journey that took 158 flying hours to cover 19,000 nautical miles over a 72-day period.

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BWPA Fly-in to Ebrington Home Farm, Gloucestershire

First Report – from a flyer

A little while ago I was browsing the BWPA event calendar and the May Fly-in to a farm near Stratford-Upon-Avon caught my eye. I started by dropping an email to William and Veronica Stanley, checking out if places were still available and some information on the joining procedures etc. William raised the subject of Short Field Landing and recommended flying with a mentor. So I did some reading about it and thought I should do some practice. However, I only had a few days left and I could not find time to practise before the visit. While I was doing some research on the location, I got into a muddle with another Home Farm just north of Ebrington. I could not tie up the co-ordinates and the local village names etc. William sorted me out by confirming our Fly-in was Ebrington Farm and the other one in Lockyear guide referred to Admington Farm.

Due to my late decision, I could not find a flying partner. So I took the opportunity to do some solo flying. I selected a route which would take me to Princes Risborough where I had done some cycling before, and then Silverstone where I had a 4x4 adventure ride with a couple of fellow pilots on a birthday celebration. The other main reason for the route was that I wanted some peace and quiet rather than going through the busy Brize Norton zone.

The plan was done and the plane was booked. However the long term weather forecast during the early part of the week was not too good. It was still uncertain on Saturday, so I sent another email to William, who confirmed that they planned to go ahead. On Saturday night the TAF for Sunday had improved but it was still slightly windy with possible showers. There was indeed a sharp shower at 07.30 but the sky turned clear after that. The TAF also mentioned about showers at around 1600, so I thought I should try to get there early and leave a bit sooner.

The outbound route was very sporty, as it was gusty and there was still cloud lingering around when I started. There were a few big bumps when I was over the built-up areas and the woods, so I had to hold on tight and abandon any photography attempts. It got better further west. After having a good look at Bovington VOR and the disused airfield, Princes Risborough and Silverstone, my mind then switched to looking out for the destination farm. Farnborough kindly covered me all the way till I had 10 nm to go and the signal just dropped off abruptly. Rather than switching to London Info, I went to the safety com frequency. While I was trying to look out for Ebrington, I unintentionally deviated slightly to the south. As a result the strip was just off the starboard side so I could not identify it. After two attempts, I finally managed to move north enough to see the strip. As I was still not completely certain, it was a comfort to see the windsocks when I turned downwind. I took a rather short base and final before I touched down. What I did not realise was that I was rather early so spectators had been waiting to see an aircraft land. I was rewarded with a nice short video of my final and landing taken by a fellow pilot.

It was pleasant to see Charlie (our honorary golden retriever member) waiting patiently near the barbecue for some treats. Then a fleet of cars and tractors started to roll over one side of the runway while a big herd of sheep were grazing on the other side of it. A few kids were also zooming pass on the tractors too. It was a very relaxing and welcoming atmosphere indeed.

Next, I went for a well-deserved barbequed chicken and caught up with a few BWPA members whom I knew from previous events including the Christmas dinner and ‘Body Flight’. After a few more photo shots, I sadly had to leave while other visitors, who had driven in by car, could stay around for the cream tea and quiz.

The return journey was calmer and provided a much better view of Silverstone, so I managed to take a decent photo with the better visibility at that time of the day. Farnborough was again very helpful and warned me a few times of traffic nearby. The landing at my home ground was rather low profile and smooth, giving a nice finish to the day.

Amy Chau

Second Report – from the organiser

In the early hours of Sunday May 8th there was heavy rain and thunder and very gusty winds blowing, and by 9.30 am we wondered whether we would have to cancel the BWPA fly-in. However, we decided to go ahead and informed various interested parties of our decision. As it turned out, many proposed participants could not fly in such severe cross winds, but they decided to make the journey by car.

Amy Chau
Good decision. It turned out to be a very sunny, if windy, day.

Amongst four intrepid pilots, we personally take our hats off to Amy Chau. What a performance! Out of her comfort zone completely, she managed to fly in solo in quite blustery conditions and with the aid of our marshalls talking her down, made a magical landing. Superb airmanship under the circumstances!

Caroline brought her helicopter down from Manchester with Alan and Kate, and as usual made a very controlled and perfect entrance and was such a help in raising our total amount of money we raised by giving several people a taster of a flight in a helicopter. We have had no end of emails and phone calls from happy guests of hers. Thank you so much for this, Caroline.

Although only three planes and a helicopter turned up, everyone had a jolly time talking about flying. We also had Lyndon Griffiths, a fellow pilot/photographer, make up a quiz which was flying orientated. I also ran a photographic competition for the best photo taken on the day.

Gill Ash, on behalf of Midland Air Ambulance, set a table up with gifts etc to buy and collecting buckets, and we raised an amazing £600.20 for the MAA. Thanks to everyone for their wonderful generosity.

I would also like to thank my grandson Ollie (who had his first flying lesson at the end of June for his 14th birthday), and his friend Jack, for their sterling work using quad bikes to control walkers and vehicles when planes were approaching.

Also, many thanks to Gill and Carol (non-members) who helped me with the BBQ and cream teas, and Charlie (Andy’s dog), who helped clean up all the leftovers without our help!

It was a lovely day and we have been asked to repeat it another time. Well, who knows?...

Veronica Stanley

LAA Bodmin ‘A Century of Lady Aviators’ Fly-In & Hog Roast

Last year heavy showers down the middle of the country affected attendance at the LAA’s Bodmin Fly-In and this year it was the wind! Unseasonably strong winds deterred a number of potential participants from trying to reach an event that had already been downgraded from Hangar Dance to Hog Roast. Nevertheless, more that 30 aircraft flew in during the course of the day and over 60 people stayed on to enjoy the hospitality of the Cornwall Flying Club in the convivial atmosphere of the clubhouse.

Caroline Gough-Cooper, Alan Brown and Kate Moran flew down from Manchester Barton in an R44, while Rachel and Ben Ellis drove over from Perranporth and Lesley and Ian Runnalls arrived by train. Zita Morris, a new member who flies from Bodmin and is a gliding instructor at Predannack, manned the bar.

While the hog was roasting Caroline took the opportunity to take Ian and a couple of friends from Exeter up for a quick tour of the local area, and Justin, who had flown down for the weekend having heard about the event the previous week at Veronica Stanley’s Home Farm Fly-In, took Kate for a ride in his Emeraude. The Aeronca Club was there in force and four of their aircraft conducted a tight formation fly-by before flying finished for the day.

By the time the hog was ready a local 40s swing band had arrived and set up for the evening and the beer and conversation was flowing freely. The food was excellent – congratulations to Michele, the resident caterer and student pilot, and Zita who ensured that no-one lacked for anything all evening – and the dancing and chatting went on till late.

A number of hardy souls had brought their tents to camp beneath the wings of their aircraft, but the BWPA contingent headed off-airfield for a bit more comfort in a nearby hotel and B&B. The hospitality continued the following morning with enormous bacon butties and gallons of tea and coffee on tap at the airfield before the flyers left for home.

Many thanks go to Pete White - Cornwall Flying Club, LAA Devon Strut and Aeronca Club member - who organised the event and to all his able assistants.

Caroline Gough-Cooper

Federation of European Women Pilots (FEWP) Annual Congress

The first weekend in June saw women pilots from 10 countries gather in Rome for the annual meeting of the Federation of European Women Pilots (FEWP). As Tricia Nelmes was unable to attend, I stepped in as the UK delegate and Secretary.

This was the 17th AGM since a small group of us, Fiorenza de Bernardi, Brigitte Gaal, Ingelo Hovels and myself got together for the inaugural meeting on the 23 September 1995 in Rome. This time 27 overseas delegates plus 10 from Italy registered for the event – fewer than usual. There seemed to be two main reasons for this. The first was the high cost of Registration – 230 Euros (previously 130).
The second reason was a clash with the German event in Ciemsee the following weekend. The weekend began with us all meeting up on Friday evening for the welcome dinner at Casa Dell’Aviatore (Officers Club of the Italian Air Force). An early start on Saturday saw us at the beautiful Bracciano Lake – home of the first Italian seaplane base and now the Air Force Historical Museum. Following our AGM we toured the four enormous hangars with their amazing collection of aircraft and visited the excellent exhibition ‘Women Pilots from Pioneers to Astronauts’ set up by our FEWP delegates from France. In the afternoon we had tour of Rome followed by dinner - at a typical Italian restaurant. Saturday was a really full and very successful day.

There was quite a lot of discussion at the Board meeting about the wider role of the FEWP in Europe – the issue was raised by the Swiss Women Pilots Association in a letter to the Board. We agreed that, for now, we should continue as per the Aims in our Statutes – we do not have the resources to play a more ‘political’ role and our member Associations do this in their own countries anyway. I have agreed to draw up a response to the Swiss Association.

Next year we will go to either Slovenia or Austria. Jasna Jerman – the Slovenian delegate - has agreed to come back to the Board within 40 days. If it is not possible to hold the event there Brigitte Gaal will organise it in Austria. Both were reminded that cost is an issue and that the end of May is the preferred time.

Aileen Egan

Aero Expo

Aero Expo relocated to Sywell this year and there were plenty of positive comments about the move from Wycombe Air Park; notably, more central geographically and much more room! Unfortunately the weather left a lot to be desired and was generally windy with frequent showers over the entire weekend, which put many potential visitors off. The BWPA has historically assisted GASCo to run the Spot the Defects challenge at various annual events and this year Lesley Runnalls and Caroline Gough-Cooper were our representatives. A Piper Cub was this year’s aircraft and eight reasonably obvious defects were rigged up and visitors invited to identify them. As usual, more obscure potential problems came to light over the three days, which increased the opportunities to discuss flight safety issues – the main point of the exercise.

New BWPA member Catherine Woods came and introduced herself. Catherine is converting from an FAA licence and is currently flying Diamonds, the aircraft she learned on, at Cranfield. She is exploring the possibility of flying from Wycombe or Denham and would like to hear from anyone who regularly flies from either airfield. Please email info@bwpa.co.uk if you would like to be put in touch.

Another potential new member, Linda Claydon from Sudbury in Suffolk, came up to say she is looking to form a flying group on a Zenair 801 HD from a local farm strip. Again, if you would like to be put in touch send an email to info@bwpa.co.uk.

Caroline Gough-Cooper

LAA Party in the Park

Caroline Gough-Cooper attended the LAA’s Party in the Park on behalf of the BWPA to help promote this year’s centenary of British women pilots. Unfortunately due to strong winds, heavy showers and thunderstorms, pilots Pauline Vahey and Cathy Stokes were unable to fly in as planned to represent the BWPA on the aircraft static display line. New member Clare Tector, the first woman to be selected to display aircraft from the Shuttleworth Collection based at Old Warden, had put together an excellent display programme but this too was severely disrupted because of the weather. However, some display flying did eventually go ahead, starting with Helen Hollingworth displaying an RV6.

The centenary was given a special mention in the LAA President’s opening address to guests, among whom was HRH Prince Michael of Kent as well as a number of representatives from the Department of Transport and from the CAA, several of whom were women. All went away with one of the new BWPA information leaflets and details about the Women in the Air day on August 29th.

Special thanks go to the event organiser, John Broad who gave the BWPA such a wonderful opportunity to promote the centenary to the LAA and its guests on the day.

Caroline Gough-Cooper
CONGRATULATIONS TO....

ALLIE DUNNINGTON, who gained her Gas Balloon Rating, the training for which was part-funded with the BWPA bursary she was awarded last year. This is an achievement of particular note as it is currently impossible to undergo training for this rating in the UK and Allie had to go to Germany to achieve her goal.

JENNY DODMAN, who was awarded this year’s BWPA bursary, which she will use towards gaining an Aerobatic Rating

DIANA GREEN, who is to marry fellow GAPAN member John Davy in September

LESLEY RUNNALLS, who is to be Clothed as a Liveryman of GAPAN at the annual Trophies & Awards banquet at the Guildhall in London in October

CAROLINE GOUGH-COOPER, who has been awarded her AOPA Platinum Wings.

GEORGIA EHRMANN, who obtained her PPL in December 2010…but we only just heard about it!

AMANDA LYONS, who recently gained her PPL.

JACQUELINE CLARKE who was married on 21st May 2011 and is now Mrs Jacqueline Sephton

JANE JAMES, former BWPA Treasurer, who was ordained a Deacon in June.

NEW MEMBERS

The following members have joined the BWPA since the last newsletter. We extend a warm welcome to:-

Dee Bayly - Rochester Kent
Francesca Welch - Southport, Merseyside
Veronica Fawkes - Bodmin, Cornwall
Clare Tector - Leicester
Gerald Smith - Felcourt, Surrey
Sally Byers - Baldock, Herts
Catherine Woods – London
Deborah McKellar – Beverley, Yorkshire
Michelle Parker – Blewbury, Oxon
Nicola Walters – Woking, Surrey

UPCOMING EVENTS

Women’s Ballooning Weekend

BWPA member and balloon pilot Allie Dunnington is organising another women’s balloon weekend, from 7th – 9th October, at Heythrop Park Hotel in Oxfordshire. It is open to everyone, and Allie has specifically incited BWPA members to attend. For further details, contact Allie at balloonjourneys@alliedunnington.co.uk.

RAF Cranwell Club Fly-In, Sunday August 7th

The Flying Club at RAF Cranwell has issued an informal invitation to BWPA members to join them for their annual Fly-In on Sunday August 7th. Landing fee is £10 (usual military charge is around £40) and there will be refreshments available. Details of what else will be on offer are still to be confirmed but last year there were a few stalls, a raffle (two of the prizes were a flight in a member’s Tiger Moth and a flight with one of the Blades), 40s style entertainments as well as an air display by some of the members. A member who is one of the Blades performed and the CFI displayed a Hurricane.

If you would like more details to be sent to you when they become available please register your interest at info@bwpa.co.uk.

Brooklands Educational Weekend, August 20th-21st

The programme for the weekend has been finalised and will kick off at 10.40 on the Saturday when Penelope Keith opens the event. Gates are open from 10.00-17.00 and standard admission prices apply: Adults £10, Senior Citizens & Students £9, Children 5-16 £5.50, Under 5s free. This price includes admission to all items on the programme.

The timetable is the same on both days and will enable everybody to attend every talk and workshop should they wish to. Talks by Gail Hewlett on Hilda and her achievements will be at 11.00 and 14.00, Aviation from a Personal Perspective at 12.00 and 15.00, with Careers in Aviation at 13.00 and 16.00. Introduction to Meteorology and Navigation Workshops will run on the half hour from 11.30 and there will be a children’s trail, vintage aircraft engine runs and Women in Aviation tours throughout the day. Members will be manning the BWPA stand in the Wellington Hangar and special Centenary Teas will be on sale in the Bluebird café.

GASCo Ditching and Sea Survival Seminar

The General Aviation Safety Council (GASCo) have confirmed the date for their Ditching and Sea Survival Seminar, at The Lifeboat College, as Thursday 4th August 2011. To book your place on this very popular seminar contact the GASCo office http://www.gasco.org.uk/pages/contact.asp?i_ToolbarID=5&i_PageID=5.

OTHER NEWS

Updated Careers Booklet

BALPA have now put their career booklet is now on the internet and it has been updated. Since any career information needs to be updated almost as soon as it is written, this is a good idea. See http://www.balpa.org/Become-A-Pilot.aspx

Service for Barbara Harmer

Lesley Runnalls represented the BWPA at the Service of Thanksgiving for the Life of Captain Barbara Harmer 1953-2011, which was held at Chichester Cathedral on Thursday 19 May 2011.
Aviation Women Calendar

The editor recently received the following email:

“I’m writing from Compton Abbas Airfield in Dorset. We have seen an increase in the numbers of female pilots this last year - and have some lady pilots with some great achievements under their belts. We did a (decent!) calendar with lots of the girls and noted their achievements on each page. We now hope to sell at least .500 of them and make £10,000 for the Dorset and Somerset Air Ambulance. If I sent a little something through to you would you pop it in your next newsletter as something of interest to your members and also to help with our fundraising?

Look forward to hearing from you!
Emma.”

Emma never sent any further details, but anyone wanting to contribute to this good cause should be able to find out more from the airfield.

Education

The observant amongst you will have seen a recent CAA Information Notice notifying us that as of 17 November 2011 the hectopascal (hPa) will become the unit of measurement for atmospheric pressure in the UK instead of the millibar (mb). This will bring the UK in line with the rest of Europe. Fortunately the millibar is directly equivalent to the hectopascal so no conversion factor is required, the only difference being the name.

SITUATION VACANT

For personal reasons, your current editor will be giving up putting together the BWPA newsletter at the end of 2011, after Issue No 100. Would YOU like to have a go? The job isn’t all that complicated, and it can be quite a lot of fun. If you would be interested in becoming the BWPA Newsletter Editor, or would just like an informal chat to find out more about what it involves, please contact Helen Krasner at the email address at the front of this publication (or the email address below), or contact Caroline Gough-Cooper.

THE IDEAL GIFT

If you are looking for an unusual yet practical birthday gift for any women pilots or women student pilots who are not yet members of BWPA, then consider a BWPA Membership Gift Voucher. The recipient can exchange the Voucher for one year’s full or associate membership (usual qualifications apply), at the end of which they will be invited to renew at the current pro-rata rate. The vouchers cost £36.00 (the current membership subscription of £35.00 plus the card and postage) and can be obtained by downloading an order form from the website or by emailing carol.bwpawedgecar.net to have an order form sent to you. Note that the vouchers are not exchangeable for cash or anything other than membership of the BWPA.

BWPA CLOTHING

A new range of BWPA fleeces and tops are now available in a range of sizes, as are centenary T-shirts. Photographs and an order form can be found on the website, www.bwpa.co.uk

MEMBERSHIP DISCOUNT FOR OLDER MEMBERS

Just a reminder that if you are over 80 years old, you are entitled to a reduced rate for your BWPA membership. However, this will not happen automatically; you will need to contact the Membership Secretary and let her know - membership@bwpa.co.uk

FROM THE EDITOR

Desperately needed! Action photos for the front and back covers of the newsletter. If you have any photos taken in an aircraft, please send them, with a short note explaining when and where the picture was taken. Email to helenkrasner2@gmail.com.

BWPA EMAIL ADDRESSES

As well as our official email address, info@bwpa.co.uk, we have expanded the range of our email addresses to include the following:-

careers@bwpa.co.uk
membership@bwpa.co.uk
awards@bwpa.co.uk
regions@bwpa.co.uk
newsletter@bwpa.co.uk
pr.publicity@bwpa.co.uk

If you send emails to any of these addresses, they will be automatically forwarded directly to the appropriate person.

LIST OF BWPA MEMBERS

A reminder that a list of names, addresses, phone numbers and email addresses is available and can be emailed to you by contacting the editor - contact details on page 2. You can have the list arranged alphabetically or by country or both.

FINALLY…

Please let me know of ANY news items, about yourself, another BWPA member, the organisation, or of aviation interest in general. Photos are also extremely welcome. Email everything to helenkrasner2@gmail.com, or write to the address on page 2... Editor

BWPA COMMITTEE DATES

Meetings are held on Saturdays at Cranfield, 10.00 for a 10.30 start. Lunch is provided for attendees and we aim to be finished by 15.00.

September 24th
October 9th AGM

BWPA members are very welcome to attend a committee meeting to see how the Association is run. If you are interested in coming along to one, contact the Chairman Caroline Gough-Cooper at info@bwpa.co.uk for more information.
OTHER AVIATION ORGANISATIONS

The BWPA is associated with or affiliated to a number of other aviation organisations.

Air League – www.airleague.co.uk
The Air League aims to ‘promote air-mindedness in the young by encouraging and assisting them to follow careers in aviation and the aerospace industry’. It does this by offering a significant number of flying and engineering scholarships which are presented annually at St James’ Palace, and it administers the BWPA scholarship and bursary on the Association’s behalf.

Amy Johnson Memorial Trust (AJMT)
A member of the BWPA committee sits on the board of Trustees of the AJMT, which raises funds for and awards a scholarship annually to assist British women to gain professional flying qualifications. For more information contact the Trust secretary Muriel Tucker at murieltucker@supernet.com

Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA) – www.aopa.co.uk
The BWPA is a Corporate member of AOPA, a not-for-profit organisation that ‘exists to serve the interests of its members as aircraft owners and pilots, promoting the economy, safety, utility, and popularity of flight in general aviation aircraft’. AOPA runs the Wings Scheme, which is actively promoted by the BWPA and available free to non-AOPA BWPA members up to Silver level through our Corporate membership. AOPA offers Student Pilots up to 2 years’ FREE membership - see their website for details

Federation of European Women Pilots (FEWP) – www.fewp.info
The FEWP was founded in 1993 and is an umbrella organisation for women pilots across Europe. Past BWPA Chairman Aileen Egan was the Founding President, so the BWPA has had close ties with the FEWP right from the beginning. The current BWPA delegate to the FEWP is Tricia Nelmes. The AGM weekend is hosted by a different member country each year and is a very social occasion.

Flying Scholarships for the Disabled (FSD) – www.toreachforthesky.org.uk
The BWPA’s charity of choice, FSD is dedicated to helping disabled people to discover their true potential through the mental and physical stimulation of learning to fly a light aircraft. The Association has raised money for a number of full and mini scholarships to date and several FSD scholars are members of the Association.

Guild of Air Pilots and Air Navigators (GAPAN) – www.gapan.org
GAPAN is committed to ensuring the highest standards of training at all levels of aviation and at professional level in particular. The Guild offers a number of flying scholarships annually and provides a comprehensive careers guide that the BWPA uses as part of its careers advice service. A number of BWPA members belong to GAPAN and there is currently BWPA representation on the Guild’s Education & Training, Scholarships, and Trophies & Awards Committees, and the Instructors Sub-Committee. Member Dorothy Pooley is a Warden of the Guild and due to become the first female Master in 2014.

General Aviation Safety Council (GASCo) – www.gasco.org.uk
The BWPA has been a member of GASCo for many years, most visibly supporting the organisation by helping run the Spot the Defects challenge at various annual events including AeroExpo. Past BWPA Chairman Tricia Nelmes is currently a Board Member.

Light Aircraft Association (LAA) – www.lightaircraftassociation.co.uk
The LAA is the UK’s principal representative body for amateur-built and vintage light aircraft. The BWPA actively supports the LAA’s Youth and Education Support Group and the Boeing Build-a-Plane project. The BWPA’s stand is a fixture at the annual LAA Rally. This year the LAA Rally will be at Sywell from September 2nd-4th.

Royal Aero Club (RAeC) – www.royal aeroclub.org
The BWPA is an Associate member of the RAeC, the national co-ordinating body for Air Sport in the United Kingdom. As such, one of the BWPA’s annual awards is often selected to be re-presented to the winner at the annual RAeC awards.

Royal Aeronautical Society (RAeS) – www.raes.org.uk
The RAeS is the world’s only professional body dedicated to the entire aerospace community. Past BWPA Chairman Clare Walker chairs the RAeS Women in Aviation and Aerospace (WAA) Committee and BWPA member Lara Small is a committee member. The BWPA has exhibited at the annual WAA Conference since its inception four years ago. The 2011 WAA Conference ‘From Pioneers to Presidents: Celebrating a Century of Flight’, will be held on Friday 14th October.

Royal Institute of Navigation (RIN) – www.rin.org.uk
The BWPA is an Affiliate Member of RIN and as such works with RIN to spread the message of safe, effective, fun navigation to the wider world. BWPA members are encouraged to enter TopNav, a RIN competition held annually, and the BWPA worked with the RIN GA Navigation Group to host a GPS Training Day in 2009.

Women in Aviation International (WAI) – www.wai.org
WAI is an American-based not-for-profit organisation dedicated to the encouragement and advancement of women in all aviation career fields and interests. The Southern England Chapter has hosted the European Women in Aviation Regional Conference for the last three years to which a number of BWPA members have gone. President of the Chapter Jane Middleton is a past member of the BWPA
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REMEMBER, THE DEADLINE FOR CONTRIBUTIONS FOR AUTUMN NEWSLETTER IS 30TH SEPTEMBER …but please send contributions earlier if possible.

BWPA member and balloon pilot Allie Dunnington takes to the skies in a gas balloon