

News

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Blenheim and Lysander passenger rides planned

Christmas came early for those wishing to get airborne in something a little bit different on 5 December, with an announcement from the recently formed, Duxford-based Aerial Collective that it is planning to offer passenger rides in the Aircraft Restoration Company (ARC) Bristol Blenheim and Westland Lysander. It is hoped that flights will be available in the course of 2019, with 10 passenger sorties expected in each aircraft during the season.

Hannah Juggins from the Aerial Collective says, "We are currently working with the Civil Aviation Authority on the Safety Standards Acknowledgement and Consent approvals for these premium flight experiences."

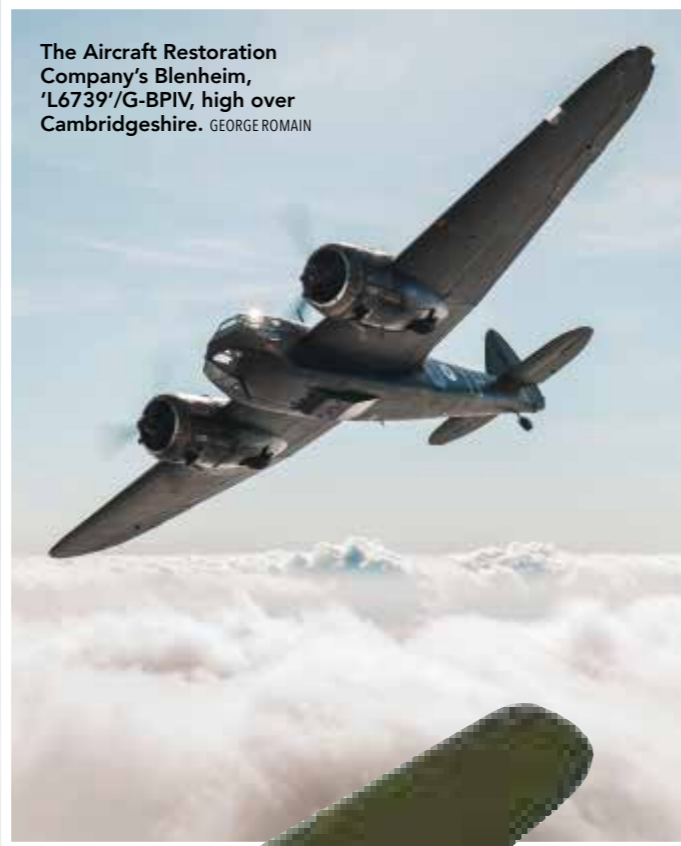
Display pilot and ARC boss John Romain adds, "The Blenheim and the 'Lizzie' are two aircraft that are extremely close to my heart and restoring them was a passion for me. I look forward to what the future brings as they join Aerial Collective; it will be a great way to raise the profile of these two unsung heroes of World War Two."

For availability notification on flights in these fabled, Bristol Mercury-powered aircraft or to book flights in two-seat Spitfires and P-51D Mustangs, either 'phone 01223 653830 or go to www.aerialcollective.co.uk

John Romain in Lysander V9312/G-COM. It flew again on 28 August 2018, and is due to have bomb carrier winglets fitted to the undercarriage fairings soon.

GEORGE ROMAIN

The Aircraft Restoration Company's Blenheim, 'L6739'/G-BPIV, high over Cambridgeshire. GEORGE ROMAIN



British Eagle DC-6 heading to Wales



One of the most significant propliners to have survived, Douglas DC-6A G-APSA is pictured at Coventry recently, wearing its glorious British Eagle livery, which it has now sported for a decade.

The former British Eagle Douglas DC-6A G-APSA, which was threatened with scrapping at Coventry during 2018, has been acquired by aircraft relocation and restoration specialists GJD Services and is scheduled to be moved by road to St Athan, south Wales, during the summer. It will then become one of the star exhibits in the

South Wales Aviation Museum, which is being set up by GJD in conjunction with Horizon, a Cardiff and St Athan-based flight training and aircraft engineering company.

GJD founder Gary Spoors says, "We have already been to Coventry and started to prepare the DC-6 for the move, taking out the floor and disconnecting all the engine controls. We will go back in April and start dismantling it for the move, which is dependent on finding the funding."

Among the aircraft previously moved by GJD is the RAF Museum's BAC VC10 C1K, XR808, from Bruntingthorpe to

Cosford during the summer of 2015. GJD also owns VC10 K3 ZA147, which made the last ever flight of the type from Brize Norton to Bruntingthorpe on 25 September 2013. It is hoped that this will also move to St Athan, funding permitting, along with Avro Shackleton MR3 WR447, which is owned by GJD and currently located at Bruntingthorpe.

The museum complex, at the Picketston Aerospace Business Park at the former RAF St Athan, will include education and training centres, the latter providing an

opportunity for one-year post-GCSE and A-level placements, and a conservation centre for aircraft restoration. A visitor centre will display the history of RAF St Athan and aviation in Wales, and will incorporate a range of interactive displays.

Already at the Picketston site are a wide range of post-war RAF and Fleet Air Arm types, including de Havilland Sea Devon C20 XK895, Panavia Tornado GR1P ZA326, McDonnell Douglas Phantom

FG1 XV582 'Black Mike', Hawker Hunter T7 XL573, and Fairey Gannet AEW3 XL500/G-KAEW, which is being restored to flying condition.

Gary continues, "There is plenty of land to accommodate these aircraft at St Athan. We would like this to develop into a national museum sometime in the future."

The GJD DC-6 was rolled out at the Douglas plant at Santa Monica, California in June 1958, and acquired by Eagle Airways in September of that year. It went on to fly with Cunard Eagle Airways from 1960-63, before Eagle founder Harold Bamberg bought back control from Cunard in the spring of 1963, forming British Eagle International Airlines.

Sold in Saudi Arabia in February 1964, G-APSA took up its original registration again in early 1987 when it was ferried back to the UK and put into service with Air Atlantique. Following use on freight and pollution control work, the machine was to become a popular sight on the airshow circuit, and in early 2008 was repainted in British Eagle colours. During July of that year, Harold Bamberg was reunited with G-APSA at Blackbushe Airport, the old Eagle Airways maintenance base. Sadly, the 'Big Doug' was grounded at the end of the 2008 season after corrosion was found in the tail, repairs proving too costly to proceed with.



Tornado GR1P ZA326 and Phantom FG1 XV582 in one of the three hangars currently occupied by GJD/Horizon at the Picketston Aerospace Business Park at St Athan.



Jaguar GR1A XX741 being made ready for taxiing at Bentwaters on 15 December. GRAHAM HAYNES

BENTWATERS JAGUAR FIRES UP

SEPECAT Jaguar GR1A XX741 moved under its own power for the first time in 24 years at the Bentwaters Cold War Museum in Suffolk on 15 December, following a nine-year restoration. During brakes-on ground runs both Rolls-Royce/Turbomeca Adour 104 engines ran up to maximum reheat, after which XX741 made a short run to prove the aircraft's braking and nosewheel steering systems. The next stage of the project will be to refit all panels and install pylons and drop tanks.

Built at Warton, XX741 made its first flight on 4 October 1974 and was delivered to the RAF the following month. It initially flew with No 226 Operational Conversion Unit at Lossiemouth, and then moved to the operational Jaguar force

with No 54 Squadron at Coltishall. After transfer to No 6 Squadron, it arrived at Thumrait, Oman on 11 August 1990 as part of the initial deployment for the Gulf War, although it was soon to return to Coltishall and did not fly any missions during the conflict. It subsequently went back to the Lossiemouth-based OCU in its No 16 (Reserve) Squadron guise, participating in the first Malta International Airshow during September 1993.

This proved to be something of a 'last hurrah' for the machine, as on 31 January 1994 it flew from Lossiemouth to Shawbury where it went into storage with 4,260 hours on the clock. Sold to Everett Aero at Sproughton, Suffolk in November 2005, it was acquired by the Bentwaters museum in October 2009.

CWHM Avenger to fly soon

Nine years after it was acquired by the Canadian Warplane Heritage Museum, Grumman TBM-3E Avenger BuNo 53858/C-GCWG is due to fly again from Hamilton, Ontario early in the new year.

The former fire-bomber has been restored as an Avenger AS3, one of 98 examples that were modified by the Eastern Passage, Nova Scotia-based Fairey Aviation Company of Canada for the Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) for anti-submarine duties with the dorsal gun turret removed.

The type went into service with 880 and 881 Squadrons at Shearwater, Nova Scotia in 1951, and operated from the aircraft carriers HMCS *Magnificent* and HMCS *Bonaventure*. The last of the RCN Avengers were retired in 1960, re-equipment with the



TBM-3E Avenger BuNo 53858/C-GCWG has been restored to represent a Royal Canadian Navy Avenger AS3, with the distinctive sloping rear canopy to aid visibility in the anti-submarine role. CWHM

Grumman Tracker having begun four years earlier. The aircraft is a replacement for the organisation's original TBM-3, also registered C-GCWG, which was lost in the disastrous hangar fire at Hamilton in February 1993. It is due to be painted in the

attractive two-tone scheme of gloss dark grey for the upper third of the fuselage, upper wing surfaces and tailplane, with the remainder of the fuselage and under-surfaces in gloss sky blue.

The museum's TBM-3E was built by General Motors'

Eastern Aircraft Division during 1945 and flew with the US Navy until the early 1950s, when it went into storage. After conversion to sprayer configuration it went into service with Hemet Valley Flying Service at Hemet, California, in 1963, as N3357G. During 1976 it was bought by Forest Protection of New Brunswick and flown as C-GFPR before being retired from fire-bombing work in 1992. Eight years later it was sold to Didier Chable of the Association des Mécaniciens Pilotes d'Aéronefs Anciens at Melun-Villaroche near Paris, and gained the registration F-WQON. However, it remained parked at Fredericton, New Brunswick until being acquired by the CWH, with the help of a generous donor, in late 2009, and was moved to Hamilton by road that November.



Following the fitting of engines and undercarriage, C-47A Skytrain *Night Fright* was rolled out of Hangar 6 at Coventry for pictures on 12 December. CHARLIE WALKER

Combat C-47 forging ahead

The project to get D-Day veteran Douglas C-47A Skytrain 42-100521/N308SF *Night Fright* airworthy for the D-Day 75th anniversary commemorations in Normandy during June of this year

reached a major milestone in Hangar 6 at Coventry Airport, Warwickshire, during early December with the installation of the aircraft's undercarriage, and its two overhauled Pratt & Whitney R-1830 Twin Wasp engines.

The team of 10 men at Heritage Air Services is led by Ben Cox, who gained many years of experience working on DC-3s with Air Atlantique at Coventry. The aircraft is owned by commercial pilot Charlie Walker. His family's firm, Walker Logistics, owns Membury airfield near Hungerford, Berkshire, from where *Night Fright* — then in service with the 79th Troop Carrier Squadron, part of the 9th Air Force's 436th Troop Carrier Group — took off at 23.00hrs on 5 June 1944, heading for Normandy. The machine is destined to be based at Membury, where a Troop Carrier Museum will be established.

The historic C-47 was moved as surface transport from Shell Creek, Florida to Coventry during the summer of 2017. Charlie Walker says, "The wings that came with the aircraft had some corrosion, and the paint on the inside was very flaky, so the team has fitted wings that Ben had in storage at Coventry to keep us on target for June. The control surfaces are away being covered. The cockpit is currently stripped out, and the avionics will start to go in during January."

EUROPEAN DC-3 OPERATOR SYMPOSIUM HELD IN SWEDEN

A European Douglas DC-3 symposium was held at Arlandastad, north of Stockholm, during the weekend of 23-25 November. Organised by the Swedish Flygande Veteraner (Flying Veterans) society, operator of DC-3 SE-CFP, the event attracted more than 50 participants, including representatives from DC-3 operators in Finland, France, Germany, Great Britain, Iceland, the Netherlands, Norway, Russia, Sweden and Switzerland. Issues discussed included operational procedures, engine and airframe maintenance schedules as well as pilot training and the introduction of new avionics. The relationship with civilian aviation authorities is another important aspect of future DC-3 operations.

A new European DC-3 Society is also being formed, open to all the continent's DC-3 operators and museums which have DC-3s/C-47s on display. There are currently 23 DC-3s flying in Europe, a number which, it is hoped, will rise to 25 during 2019.

The plan is for as many as 40 examples to be present over Normandy on 6 June for the 75th anniversary of the D-Day landings, dropping parachutes over the invasion beaches. Several aircraft are scheduled to be making the trip from the USA for what will probably be the last big commemoration of Operation 'Overlord'.

NEWS IN BRIEF

ATAC HUNTER CRASHES

Hawker Hunter F58 N323AX from the Airborne Tactical Advantage Company (ATAC) crashed into the sea off Honolulu on 12 December while supporting the 'Sentry Aloha' military exercise. The 47-year-old pilot ejected at low level, sustaining serious injuries. N323AX had been serial J-4101 with the Swiss Air Force.

VAMPIRES DESTROYED AT MELUN

Former Swiss Air Force de Havilland Vampire FB6s F-AZIK and F-AZOO were written off in a hangar fire at Melun-Villaroche aerodrome, France, on 8 December. The aircraft were operated by the Cercle de Chasse de Melun.

MORE HUNTERS LEAVE FOR CANADA

Hawker Hunter T7A WV318/G-FFOX (below), previously registered to Swift Composites, was sold to a new owner in Canada during early December. The black-painted aircraft had been at Västerås, Sweden, since 2014. The Västerås Flygmuseum's T7A XL616/SE-DXH will also soon leave its Swedish home for Canada.



JOHN DUNNELL

WINGS TO COME OFF SWISS 'CONNIE'?

The Super Constellation Flyers Association's Lockheed L-1049G Super Constellation, HB-RSC *Star of Switzerland*, is facing the prospect of having its wings removed to check for possible inter-granular corrosion in the spars. The Swiss Federal Office of Civil Aviation has mandated additional checks on all vintage aircraft operating in Switzerland since corrosion was found in the wreckage of Ju-Air's Junkers Ju 52/3m HB-HOT, which crashed on 6 August, although corrosion was not a contributory factor in the accident.

GREENWOOD 'BANANA' GOES ON SHOW

Following a four-year restoration, Piasecki/Vertol H-44A RCAF 9592 went on display at the Greenwood Military Aviation Museum in Nova Scotia during mid-November.

One of six metal-bladed H-44A versions of the H-21 'Flying Banana' series of helicopters to be acquired by the Royal Canadian Air Force for search and rescue duties, 9592 was originally delivered to 103 Rescue Unit at RCAF Base Greenwood on 8 May 1961, and was based there until being reassigned to RCAF Station Chatham, New Brunswick, in October 1964. While operating in northern Canada during the mid-1970s, the nose of 9592 was destroyed when it was hit by a snowplough. The remains of the Piasecki ended up in storage with the Reynolds Heritage Foundation in Wetaskiwin, Alberta, and were donated to the Greenwood museum in 2012. The nose section of a former US Army H-21C variant of the type was acquired to replace it, and has been converted to H-44 standard. Six H-21As and nine H-21Bs also served with the RCAF.



H-44A RCAF 9592 is now exhibited at the Greenwood Military Aviation Museum in Nova Scotia.

On 14 December, former RCAF Beech C-45 Expeditor AF662 moved into the workshop recently vacated by the Piasecki. The restoration of Bristol Bolingbroke IVT RCAF 9997 is also under way; once finished, it will represent a type that served at Greenwood training bomb aimers as part of the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan and flying as target tugs.

Work to convert Lancaster KB839 from post-war Mk10AR (arctic reconnaissance) configuration to original Mk10 standard continues, fabrication of a fairing for the mid-upper turret having been completed. It has been painted as JB226 from No 405 (Vancouver) Pathfinder Squadron, although it was actually operated by No 419 Squadron from Middleton St George, flying 26 combat operations.



Boeing 747-121 N747GE taxis in at Davis-Monthan AFB on delivery for the Pima Air and Space Museum on 15 November.

Pima receives historic 747

The world's last airworthy Boeing 747-100 — the oldest flying example of the 'Jumbo' — was retired to the Pima Air and Space Museum in Tucson, Arizona on 15 November, making its final landing at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base and being towed from there to the adjacent museum site.

N747GE, constructor's number 19651, served latterly with General Electric/GE Aviation as an engine testbed, but the 747-121 model had made its maiden flight on 3 March 1970 and entered service with Pan American as N744PA. Following Pan Am's

bankruptcy it was acquired by GE in 1992, re-registered and converted for its new role, in which the company says the 747 "provided critical flight data on more than

11 distinct engine models and 39 engine builds."

“In service with GE the 747 'provided critical flight data on more than 11 distinct engine models and 39 engine builds'”

The aircraft's final test flight with GE was performed on 25 January 2017. It was then stored at its Victorville, California, base prior to the ferry flight to Davis-Monthan, at which point it had notched up 90,000

flying hours and 19,251 cycles. GE has replaced the 747-100 with an ex-Japan Airlines 747-400 model, N747GF.

Ben Dunnell



The Pima Air and Space Museum's Ilyushin Il-2 in early December.

II-2 PROGRESSES AT PIMA

Restoration of an Ilyushin Il-2 Shturmovik, recovered from Russia by Canadian Jeet Mahal in 1992, is progressing well at the Pima Air and Space Museum. The restoration team believes it has identified the airframe's identity through a thorough forensic analysis of numbers found on the components. It appears that it was operated by a Soviet Naval Aviation unit in support of the Battle of Leningrad. The rear fuselage and wings have been built from new wood to replace the rotted originals.

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Building work gets under way at DHAM

A ceremony was held at the de Havilland Aircraft Museum at Salisbury Hall on 28 November to mark the start of work on a new, £3.2-million hangar project. Hertsmere mayor Brenda Batten was welcomed to the event by museum chairman Alan Brackley, who said, "It had taken five years to get the new hangar project from initial planning to the start of construction. The hangar is important because it will not only enable us to get more of our historic aircraft under cover and protected from the weather but also enable us to become much more involved

in the local community'. Brenda Batten added, "This is the oldest aviation museum in Britain and is unique. It is a valuable asset to the community and will offer many more facilities to both the community and educational establishments. Importantly, it will continue to ensure that the de Havilland heritage is further

enshrined in the community where it employed many thousands of people and led the world in many aviation techniques."

The new hangar, which was given the go-ahead following a £1.9-million grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund, is due to be completed by August 2019. Despite the ongoing building work, Alan Brackley stressed that the museum will continue to be open to visitors during the 2019 season, saying, "All of our museum will be accessible for visitors to get close to and into several of our military aircraft and civil airliners". The museum is currently closed for the winter, and will reopen on 17 February.



Hertsmere mayor Brenda Batten shakes hands with museum chairman Alan Brackley as building work gets under way at the Salisbury Hall site on 28 November.

Mirage double debut made at Toulouse

Over the weekend of 17-18 November, Ailes Anciennes at Toulouse presented its latest acquisitions, bomber and fighter variants of the Dassault Mirage line, to the public for the first time. Assembly of Mirage F1CT serial 261 had

been completed just a couple of days earlier, the fighter having arrived at the museum during October. Mirage IVP serial 26 had been moved from storage at Châteaudun, south-west of Paris, by a team of Ailes Anciennes volunteers

in July. With two examples of the Mirage III already on display, the only Armée de l'Air Mirage now not represented at Toulouse is the Mirage 2000.

The Ailes Anciennes Mirage IV made its maiden flight on 7

May 1965 and served with Escadron de Bombardement 1/91 'Gascogne' and later EB 2/91 'Bretagne'. Upgraded to Mirage IVP standard in 1984-85, it was able to carry the ASMP air-launched nuclear missile. It was retired in 1996.

Mirage F1 261 first flew in June 1981, originally as an F1C-200 variant. It later became one of 55 airframes which were upgraded to F1CT standard, this being a ground attack version with upgraded radar and the capability to deliver a variety of weapons, including rockets and laser-guided bombs. The aircraft served with Escadron de Chasse 2/30 'Normandie-Niemen' and was deployed to Chad and Kuwait. Retired in July 2008, it too went into storage at Châteaudun and is in excellent condition.

Ailes Anciennes now hopes to increase its available hangar space in order to bring a bigger part of its collection of primarily post-war French types under cover.



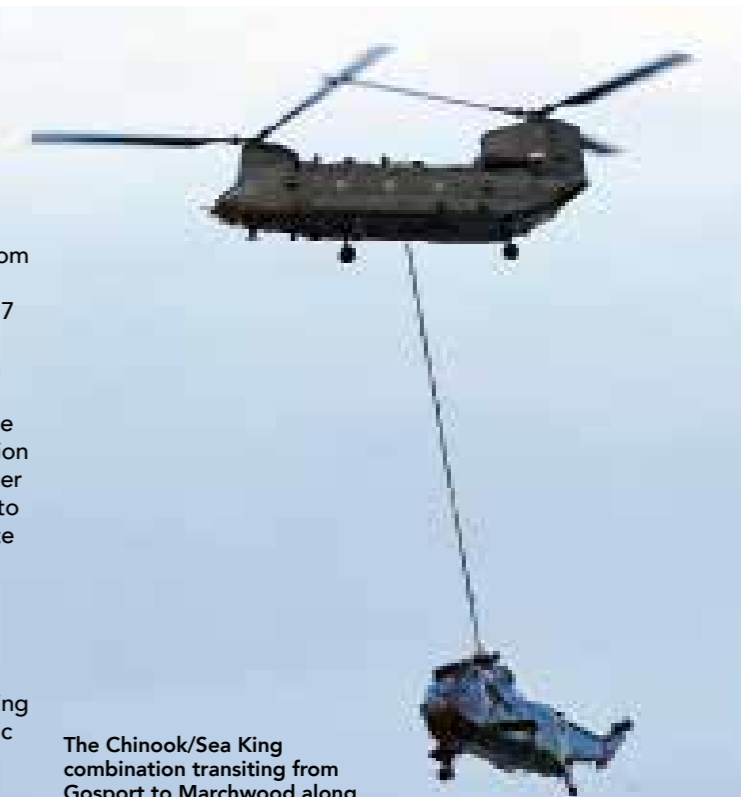
Mirage F1CT 261 being assembled in the Ailes Anciennes hangar at Toulouse on 12 November. MAXIMILIAN MEIND

SEA KING SLUNG FOR MOVE TO NORWAY

Ex-Royal Navy Westland Sea King HC4 ZE427 was flown from Gosport to Marchwood Military Port, Southampton as an underslung load beneath an No 18 Squadron Chinook on 17 December, the first leg of a journey that will eventually see the former Commando Helicopter Force machine going on display at Bardufoss air base in northern Norway.

The Sea King will be exhibited there to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Exercise 'Clockwork' resupply mission from Bardufoss, which sees helicopters from Joint Helicopter Command delivering supplies 18 miles into the mountains to the Norwegian Trekking Association log cabin at the remote location of Lappjord. It would take Ski-Doo snowmobiles seven days to resupply the cabin, and the missions present the perfect opportunity for aircrews to prove vital skills learned during their annual winter training detachment.

It was during the winter of 1968 that Flag Officer Naval Flying Training ordered 846 Naval Air Squadron — then flying Westland Wessex HU5s — to undertake training in an Arctic environment, the aim being to improve airborne combat support for the Royal Marines. The Sea King HC4 has now been superseded on 'Clockwork' duties by the AgustaWestland Merlin HC3.



The Chinook/Sea King combination transiting from Gosport to Marchwood along Southampton Water on 17 December. IAN HARDING

Welcome revival for Solent Sky SUMPAC

At the Solent Sky museum in Southampton, new displays are being constructed to better tell the story of the Southampton University Man Powered Aircraft, or SUMPAC, which, on 9 November 1961 became the first human-powered aeroplane to make an officially authenticated take-off and flight.

Designed and built by a team of postgraduate students from Southampton University with funding from the Royal Aeronautical Society, the machine made its maiden flight at Lasham airfield, Hampshire with the legendary glider pilot Derek Piggott at the controls of the pedal-powered pusher. The first flight covered a distance of 70 yards at a maximum altitude of 6ft. A total of 40 flights were made, the longest covering 650 yards, during which Piggott achieved an altitude of 15ft. Following damage to the fragile structure in a crash during 1963, the SUMPAC was repaired, but a decision was soon made to retire it.

Although the SUMPAC went on show, hanging from the ceiling at the Southampton Hall of Aviation (now Solent Sky) in 1984, the accompanying

displays did little to inform visitors of the significance of the machine. That is now being addressed by the SUMPAC Legacy Project, which is being headed up by the last surviving member of the original design team, Cdr Raymond Hale RN (retired). A man-powered aircraft simulator is being constructed, and an interactive display unit is being set up on the balcony at the museum, immediately beneath the nose of the SUMPAC. As well as providing visitors with the opportunity to investigate the story in more detail, it will include guidance on how to design and build a human-powered aeroplane, and be a source of information on the work of the British Human Powered Flying Club.

Raymond says, "The project aims to provide a high-quality display to explain the achievement and the subsequent development of human-powered flying as an international sport. The simulator will be set up on the balcony using a SUMPAC pedal frame with power sensors. The aim is to let visitors try and pedal hard enough to take off and fly an



Now almost 60 years old, the SUMPAC human-powered aircraft hanging from the ceiling at Solent Sky. Note the large pylon for the pusher propeller.

HPA. This high-quality facility will also be made available to help train pilots and athletes to fly a range of different HPA in competition conditions.

"Students from the Southampton University Human Powered Aircraft Society (SUHPA) recently visited and tried it out. They are constructing a transparent nosecone and cockpit cover for the simulator before it can be

set up at the museum landing for use by visitors or by trainee HPA pilots. They are also working on improving their own HPA project at the university and, I understand, hope to fly it in the ICARUS cup competition to be run by the British Human Powered Flight Club next year."

It is intended to complete the project and stage an opening event during early 2019.