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FLIGHT TRAINING NEWS

Where have all the instructors gone?

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Aero Expo 2007

This year's Aero Expo event took place once again at Wycombe Air Park in Buckinghamshire. The June event experienced mixed weather, but still attracted significant crowds by road and air. As per last year's event the show was divided into two hangars and an outside static display. The general buzz was that the show was an improvement on the previous year, with more exhibitors and more hardware on display and larger numbers of visitors.

Rather than bore you with a blow-by-blow account of who was and who wasn't there, and who said what about whom (the gossip was rather good this year, but far too libellous for reproduction here), we thought we'd provide a photo shoot of some of the more interesting training and leisure aircraft our photographer managed to capture.



The Redwing, launched at Aero Expo by British Light Aircraft Company Ltd (BLAC), is aimed squarely at the training market. It will be familiar to regular visitors to British light aviation events successively as the Trago Mills SAH-1, the Brooklands Venture, the Orca SAH-1 and the FLS Sprint. This all-metal two-seater was praised for its classic handling by the assessors at Boscombe Down when it originally appeared in 1983. BLAC is now established at Henstridge in the west country where a new hangar is under construction and the Redwing 160 will be marketed either as a fully complete certificated aircraft priced at £113,673 (plus VAT) or in kit form, excluding engine and instruments, for £38,441 (plus VAT). In both cases, the Redwing will be powered by a 160hp Lycoming AE10-320 engine. BLAC plans to sub-contract manufacture the Redwing airframe to the Romanian factory of RomAero at Bucharest and handle final assembly at Henstridge. In the meanwhile, the company has a couple of spare airframes available for sale to homebuilders following the earlier manufacturing effort by FLS Aerospace.



The Lambert Mission 4-seat kit aircraft from Belgium was the joint winner of the Light Aircraft Design Competition organised by the Royal Aeronautical Society back-in 1994 and is available with either 200hp diesel or 180hp avgas power plant.



This Extra 200 was recently acquired by Cambridge Aero Club for aerobatic training.



A new arrival on the British training scene is the Aquila which attracted many interested visitors at Aero Expo. The first British aircraft is owned by Sport Aeroplanes LLP, based at Headcorn and led by Guy Sutton. The German-built Aquila is an all-composite aircraft with a comfortably wide 1.2 metre (47-inch) cabin and a large 18 cu.ft. rear baggage area which makes the aircraft very suitable as a two-seat personal tourer. It is nicely trimmed with stick controls and is powered by a 100hp Rotax 912S engine which gives it a respectable cruising speed of 121 kts and a modest fuel burn of 21.5 lit. (5.7 gal) per hour. Like the Diamond Katana, it has a noticeably high aspect ratio wing. As a long-distance machine it has a range of 535nm and useful load is 250 kg (551 lb). With a marked scarcity of new 2-seat trainers on the market, the Aquila may be a good choice for British clubs and schools.



Need a new aircraft? This ex-Belgian military Islander has had a recent refurb and is up for sale.



The Cessna 182 float plane attracted a fair amount of interest from the visitors and is apparently on its way to the Channel Islands having been refurbished by Airtime Aviation based in Bournemouth.



FTN got to flight-test this impressive two-seat trainer last year. Our prognosis at the time was positive and remains so. This aircraft can now be flown at a number of flight schools in the US and with a proven track record across the pond may well be seen at a flight school near you soon.



The DA42 Twin Star, as used by increasing number of commercial flight schools in the UK. The FADEC system is supposed to be helping students achieve an unprecedented level of first time passes in the dreaded instrument rating and if fast becoming a firm favourite among instructors as well.



This brand new Super Decathlon, owned by Les Wallen Manufacturing, drew envious glances from the crowds, not least us!



We think there's something missing on this Escapade, but haven't quite figured it out yet...

Finally, we couldn't miss out on the opportunity of showing you just how skilled Cabair marketing manager Marty White is at the controls of a heli. The picture was taken shortly after his impressive display of loops, rolls, and stall turns which wowed a packed crowd of four ardent admirers (pictured).



With thanks to Rod Simpson for the photos



Cirrus Design had a large stand at the show head-lining their new Generation 3 aircraft. Cirrus say their team of engineers have spent over two years designing and testing the new aircraft, which incorporates nearly 700 changes and systems improvements. Among the list of innovations included is an airbag seatbelt, dual Garmin 430Ws, S-TEC 55X Autopilot (incorporating altitude pre-select, GPS steering and ILS glidescope coupling), factory installed air conditioning, ice protection, recognition lights (providing enhanced visibility at night, during taxi and take off and landing phases of flight), a single power lever incorporating propeller governor with throttle lever, large gull-wing doors, a fuel-injected six cylinder engine with tuned exhaust system, roll cage, dual side yoke and cuffed wings for safer slow speed flight - to name but 12 of them.