

PORTSMOUTH AEROCAR TALK (continued)

Following his talk and as a key member of the Britten Norman Aircraft preservation Society Bob brought us up to date on progress of the rebuild of the first production aircraft G-AVCN. A video of work in progress gave us a good look at the high standard of work going into the project. On 13th June the Islander 50 event was held at Bembridge to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the first flight of the prototype Islander G-ATCT. Comment was also made re the Trislander G-JOEY which has been taken out of service and resides in Guernsey awaiting its fate. Hopefully money will be found to display it as a whole aeroplane at Guernsey airport.



BIRD IN A BIPLANE



Tracey Curtis-Taylor set off on 1st October in her 1942 Boeing Stearman named 'Spirit of Artemis' from Farnborough Airport to fly 14,000 miles to Australia across 23 countries in a flight to remember Amy Johnson's achievement in 1930. By 10th November she had reached Dubai. (Boeing Stearman shown)

"JANET" FOR FARNBOROUGH 2016

There was an announcement this week that the world's last airworthy Fairey Gannet T5, XT752 has been invited to appear at the Farnborough airshow in 2016. One slight problem is that it resides in the USA! The operators of XT752, the Wings of Steel foundation, based at New Richmond airport in Wisconsin are going to finance the trip (in the back of an Antonov An-124) through corporate sponsorship, public donations and possibly additional airshow appearances in the UK next year. XT752 known in the USA as "Janet" was built at Hayes in 1954, the first dual control T2 "Gannet" prototype, as WN365, and appeared at the Farnborough airshow soon afterwards. If you would like more information on how to make a donation to the project, there is a Facebook page, **Fairey Gannet XT752** or a website, www.wingsofsteelfoundation.org/donations/



The last Fairey Gannet I saw was in April 2014 at the superb aviation museum at Hermeskeil, Germany. The example on display there, XL450 is an ex 849 Sqn AEW.3 version which served on HMS "Ark Royal" in the 1960's and 1970's. The AEW.3 prototype first flew in August 1958 and 44 were built. Gannets first embarked onto "Ark Royal" in 1960. A Gannet was the last aircraft to be recovered by the "Ark Royal" in November 1978 before it was decommissioned and scrapped. The canopy on XL450 doesn't look quite right; I seem to remember a rather more bulbous canopy, more on keeping with all the other bulges (check out that radome underneath) on an AEW3. Not quite sure how all those propeller blades on the front decide who will be spinning first either?

There are plans for another AEW.3 Gannet, XL500, owned by Horizon Aircraft Services at St Athan, to be restored to fly.



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