



Ruby Star Airways Antonov An-12 EW-338TI (c/n 1340106) is seen at her Minsk base on July 17 2015. (Andreas Rohde)



Antonov An-2 ES-CAC is in store at Hyvinkää Airfield, Finland, where she is pictured on July 6 2015. (Antti Hyvärinen)



Scillonian Airways de Havilland DH.89A Dragon Rapide G-AHAG (c/n 6926) was test flown at Membury on March 14 after winter maintenance. Her most adventurous trip of 2015 was her participation in the Orkney Aviation Festival at Kirkwall between September 10 and 13 2015. Prospective dates for 2016 include Bidford Wings & Wheels on May 30, Goodwood on June 4/5 and 11/12, and Wellesbourne on June 19.



The world's second-oldest Lockheed C-130A Hercules, N121TG (c/n 3119) in action at Cardiff Airport on January 22 2016. Under contract to Oil Spill Response of Southampton, the aircraft has conducted several training missions since her arrival on September 8 2014, but no slick dispersant spraying operations have been required. The aircraft was expected to return to Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport in Arizona for maintenance at the end of March 2016. (Geoffrey P Jones)

BALLOON ON THE BEECH

Report by Peter J Bish

As long ago as August 4 1981, three Beech 18s owned by Capital Air Surveys of Canada arrived at Prestwick having been engaged in survey work in North Africa. All former RCAF navigation trainers, they comprised CF-DTN (c/n CA-75), CF-QPD (c/n CA-164) and CF-SUQ (c/n CA-203) and after languishing for nearly a year at Scottish Aviation, the latter two were registered to Graham Warner as G-BKGL and G-BKGM. Having been flown by Anthony Hutton and Andy Foan of Skyblue Aviation in a variety of military liveries, G-BKGM was bought by well known balloonists Phil and Allie Dunnington and registered to them on April 23 2015. Phil is already undisputed world leader in the number of countries in which he has flown a balloon - his current total is 112 countries. Loading a lightweight hot-air balloon aboard the Beech, the couple hope to fill some of the gap's in Phil's atlas, with the aircraft given Bristol Airways titling and nose art courtesy of the author's brother, Tony Bish, making it a civil aeroplane once again! Phil is not himself a fixed-wing pilot, so each adventure will be joined by an experienced 'round engine' cost-sharing pilot.

A 'tester' mission was flown in late July 2015, when complete with Phil's new one-man balloon G-CIPD, pilot John Dodd (part time British Airways and well known 'warbird' pilot), Phil and the author took

Former Air Atlantique Douglas DC-3 G-AMSV (c/n 32820) returned to Coventry from Kemble during 2015 to continue work on her transformation to Indian Air Force configuration as KN397, the serial under which she flew during her Royal Air Force service in South east Asia during the closing months of the Second World War. She is pictured here at Coventry on August 29 2015. (Keith Burton)



Beech D18S G-BKGM sporting Bristol Airways titling passing through Le Touquet on July 30 2015. (Peter J Bish)

the Beech to Chambley Airfield near Metz, in eastern France, where the largest gathering of balloons at any venue outside the United States takes place every two years. The outbound flight was made from Dunkeswell by way of Goodwood, where John flies the famous Boulton Paul Spitfires, Le Touquet, last visited by the author with Phil and his Mini aboard Bristol Superfreighter F-BPIM in 1968, and thence direct to Chambley, with just a small deviation to fly by the War Graves Memorial at Verdun. Cameron Balloons were keen to get some publicity photographs of the balloon being unloaded at the meet. The return trip, now joined by Allie, was made via Le Touquet, coinciding with what becomes a Sunday lunchtime fly-in for North European light aircraft when the weather behaves. This involved ten minutes holding to join the visual circuit, and thence to White Waltham for our own late lunch. Here the balloon was unloaded and taken to Bristol by road, while the Beech made her way to Dunkeswell, with the crew now joined by Tony Bish and fellow balloonist Celia Kunert. The weather had behaved, the Beech had behaved and the first adventure was rated a success, with 6 hours 25 minutes added to the log book.

At the time of writing, G-BKGM is at RGV, Staverton, undergoing maintenance and some interior refurbishment in preparation for 'The Big Adventure', when later this summer the Beech will head back across the Atlantic Ocean for a spot of 'country collecting' around the Caribbean. "Proliner" wishes Phil and Allie well on this tremendous odyssey and congratulates them for the huge effort and expense in creating a classic 'proliner', in civil guise - so much better than what seems an insatiable demand these days for warbirds, camouflage and roundels!