



Graham taking part in the Women in Flight Centenary event at Bodmin last year with passenger Michelle Culverhouse, Manager of Bodmin Airfield's restaurant

MEET THE MEMBERS

Everybody has a story to tell and in this new column, which will form the tailpiece of each issue, we plan to relate the stories of both the noted and the as yet unknown. We start with **Graham Newby**, former CEO and current LAA Board member.

Current job/past career?
My career, if you can call it that, has always revolved around engines. When I left school I went to college with the idea of becoming a civil engineer. I've always had a fascination with bridges. However, cars, specifically rallying, became my passion so I decided to work in a garage, eventually ending up owning one. Ten years on, I was made an offer I couldn't refuse, so sold up.

A friend who managed Penske Cars in Poole, producers of Indy Cars for the US car-racing world, then offered me a job helping build the cars; this was a fantastic opportunity for a petrolhead! Whilst working there I used to take a week of my holiday each year helping to set up the then PFA Rally, and during this time I got to know the 'hierarchy' of the PFA. I realised that whilst not rudderless, it was certainly very disjointed in its management and my suggestions to improve matters were taken on board, eventually leading to me becoming the Association's first CEO. I held the job for seven years until retiring in 2008.

Why aviation? What fired your interest?

Like most of us I suppose, I had long held a desire to fly. I can remember looking skywards in those long hot lazy summers that we always had and thinking one day I'd like to be up there to experience it.

However, life got in the way until, in the early eighties, I decided to learn to fly and that was it – I was hooked and simply had to find the means to carry on. I soon realised that the only way I was going to do that was to build my own aircraft. Looking through various magazines I came across an RV-6 on the front

cover of the EAA magazine and simply had to build one.

Your first flight – in what, where and when?

My first real flight was in an Auster. I can't remember which model. My partner in the garage kept an aircraft in the field out the back and when things got a bit too much we used to go up and blow the cobwebs away, flying under the power lines and avoiding the various trees as we came back in to land. Those were the days!

How many hours and different types in your logbook?

Having a look through my logbook, I haven't actually flown that many different types, only about 15. My total hours amount to just over 300.

Is there a favourite and worst type flown?

My favourite has to be the RV, I now have an RV-7A. For what I want from my flying, it fits the bill perfectly. The worst I think was the ARV Super 2; they had one on the fleet at Interair at Bournemouth when I was learning to fly and, because it was significantly cheaper to hire than the Cessna 150s and very few other people flew it, I tended to take that to save money. It was very cramped and, not being a fan of two-strokes, I was always waiting for the engine to stop. I suppose it instilled in me to always be on the lookout for that forced landing field.

Your best aviation moment and flight?

Working for the LAA there were a few 'jollies' that I got invited on and one was to go on a refuelling exercise over the North Sea. We left Brize Norton in a VC10 and once over the North Sea entered a racetrack pattern while

the fast jets joined the umbilical refuelling tubes. To be able to just look out of the window and watch all this happen only metres away was quite special.

Do you have other non-aviation hobbies/interests?

I'm still very keen on rallying. I spent 18 years competing at all levels, culminating in the European rounds of the World Rally Championship. And if I get the opportunity to attend an international event as a spectator I still do so.

Any aviation heroes? Who and why?

I think my aviation heroes are those pilots who can fly naturally. There are some people that you go flying with who are instantly in tune with the plane. I have to work at it and concentrate all the time.

Any hairy aviation moments? If so, any lessons learnt?

I had an engine failure on take-off in my second RV and ended up writing it off quite comprehensively. Luckily I was knocked out so I have no memory of it.

Aircraft Wish List to fly or own?

For me it has to be a Hercules. Whenever one flies over I look up longingly at it, so if anybody has any contacts, please let me know!

Any advice for fellow pilots?

I think to just enjoy the privilege we have at being able to get up in the sky. It is easy to get complacent and take it for granted but we have the freedoms we have because associations like the LAA continue the work of our predecessors in representing our interests. ■