

# SHOREHAM AIRPORT NEWS

ISSUE NUMBER 6



JUNE 1999

## SUSSEX POLICE at SHOREHAM



Photo shows from Left to Right: PC Roland Rustemeyer, Pilot John Sutherland, Paramedics Mike Crockford & Sean Mitchell, PC Steve Cleghorn

Again we continue our look at the services on the Airport. This month it is the turn of the Sussex Police Helicopter Unit. The Unit has been operating from Shoreham since 1989 and the present Officer in Charge is Inspector Cliff Gale, he has been with the Unit for about 12 months. Pilots are provided by

the Police Aviation Services and are permanently attached to the Shoreham Unit. The hangar in which the Unit is housed also provides accommodation for the Underwater Diving Unit with all its vehicles and equipment. Recently the old blue and white "chopper" was changed to a more up to date blue and yellow

job, the McDonnell Douglas MD 902 Explorer. This is a state of the art helicopter, so much so that those who have seen it will notice one omission to the aircraft--it doesn't have a tail rotor! This is unique to helicopters and is known as NOTAR (No Tail Anti-torque Rotor) technology. The blue and yellow paint scheme is designed to give higher visibility and the stretcher arrangement is a permanent one giving access through 52-inch doors. The new helicopter also provides quicker start-up and

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## Police at Shoreham Cont.

shut down giving better response times and providing effective operational efficiency. Safety is a main feature and by providing a safety cage type construction and energy absorbing seats survival of the crew in the unlikely event of a crash is greatly increased.

The Helicopter Unit can respond to any task, police or medical related which the Operations Room or the Unit decides the helicopter could be of use. The helicopter carries infra red camera equipment used for searching, amongst other tasks, missing persons. For those who watch Police, Camera, Action or similar TV programmes the Sussex Unit carries out similar tasks. As Inspector Gale said, it is better to control high-speed traffic situations from the helicopter it is safer for both the public and the traffic patrols.

With regard to medical emergencies the helicopter can land at any hospital with sufficient room to land during daylight hours but only three hospitals are available during the dark hours – Chichester, Haywards Heath and Eastbourne.

Inspector Gale has 16 personnel attached to his Unit, half of these are seconded from the Sussex Ambulance Service and are fully trained paramedics. Of the remainder 3 are full time police observers, 2 are part time observers and there are 3 pilots. Even though this is a police aircraft the pilot still remains in command, just as in a civilian aircraft, and in any police situation where action is considered likely to jeopardise the safety of the helicopter or crew the pilot's decision is final.

The Chipmunk was the replacement trainer for the famous Tiger Moth. Developed by the Canadian subsidiary of De Havilland in 1946 the Royal Air Force decided to use them as basic trainers in 1948. After

## DH Chipmunk T.10

1950. Eventually 740 were in use by all the RAF Flying Schools in Britain. In addition to use as a trainer by the RAF the Army Air Corps also used the Chipmunk until recently.



some changes they were designated as the T.10 and the first planes went into service with the RAF at the beginning of

The Chipmunk is powered by a Gypsy Major 8 which is a 4 cylinder inline air-cooled engine, developing 145HP. The aeroplane has a wingspan of 34ft

4ins (10.46m) and a total length of 25ft 8ins (7.82m) with the height being 7ft 1ins (2.16m). The loaded weight of the aircraft is 2000lbs (907kg) and the maximum speed achievable at sea level is 138mph (222km/h). The plane has a ceiling of 16000ft (4.8m) with a range of 300miles (480km).

The aeroplane is joy to fly and is extremely stable in flight, of course the forward vision is not good once on the ground, a peculiarity of all tail wheel aircraft especially to those of us used to tricycle undercarriages! Our picture shows Ex RAF Chipmunk T.10 operated by Southern Air, this aeroplane is available for self fly hire for tail wheel qualified pilots or may be hired for a local pleasure flight - for full details contact Southern Air (see advert on front page).



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