

# SHOREHAM AIRPORT NEWS

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## COMMEMORATION OF FIRST EVER FLIGHT from SHOREHAM



Wally Pack Presents Ian with a "case" of champagne

A plaque commemorating the first flight ever made from Shoreham by Harold Piffard in 1910 was unveiled at the Sussex Pad Hotel on Saturday 18th September 1999.

Harold Piffard taught himself to fly and also built his own aeroplane, in a shed at the SE corner of the airfield near the railway bridge. Alfred Evans, the then landlord of the Sussex Pad Inn, told Piffard he would give him a case of champagne if he flew over to collect it. Piffard made many attempts but the short journey required that he execute a half left turn, something he found very difficult. After many crashes and failed attempts he eventually managed the flight 89 years ago to the date(as far as can be ascertained).

On the 18th September Ian McGregor senior pilot and instructor with FAST Helicopters, flew a Robinson 22 helicopter G-DEER along the exact route and in the same time, 40 seconds, that Piffard took. On landing at the Sussex Pad Hotel car park he was met by Wally

Pack, the present landlord, who presented him with six bottles of champagne kindly donated by The House of JAQUART. Ian was allowed to keep one bottle for his skill in piloting the helicopter in what can only be described as very wild and windy conditions. Perhaps Ian experienced some of the problems that Harold Piffard experienced 89 years ago! Later at the champagne reception Councillor Ian Elliott, chairman of West Sussex County Council unveiled the commemorative plaque and spoke a little about what Harold Piffard was like. He was by profession an artist and magazine illustrator and was, what could be described as, a bit of an eccentric. It seems that he used to disport himself, naked, on the railway bridge spanning the river by the cement works, this was removed when the branch line between Shoreham and Steyning was closed. He would await the arrival of a train and after waving at the engine crew and bemused passengers he would drop down through a hole on the bridge into the river. Amongst those present at the ceremony were the Airport General Manger, John Haffenden, Captain Bedggood of the Shoreham Airport Society and Mrs Janet Pennington, Lancing College Archivist (Piffard was a pupil at the college).

The ceremony was arranged not only to coincide with the Piffard flight but also with the launch of the book SHOREHAM AIRPORT SUSSEX by Tim Webb and Dennis Bird. The authors having provided the commemorative plaque. This is the second edition of a book which can be described as the definitive history of Shoreham Airport. Full of photographs past and present the book is MUST for anyone interested in the history of the Airport. Also to commemorate the historic flight SIVCRAFT ENGINEERING have a permit application to erect a new building on the site of Piffard's shed which will be named "The Harold Piffard Building". The site is presently indicated by a sign, adjacent to the steps up to the river bank, in the SE corner of the airfield.

The book SHOREHAM AIRPORT SUSSEX can be purchased through the SAN book page on the Internet at [www.shorehamairportnews.cwc.net](http://www.shorehamairportnews.cwc.net), just click "book page" in the index and order it directly.

Tim Webb with Piffard Plaque



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## Need aviation legal advice? We have an expert at Shoreham!

I recently met, during my travels around the airport, Dorothy Hockings who is currently an instructor with Sky Leisure Aviation. Now why you may ask is this of interest to Shoreham Airport News readers. Well during my recent conversation with Dorothy I discovered that not only is she an instructor/examiner but also a fully qualified and experienced solicitor. She combines more than 14 years legal practice and 11 years aviation experience and is at present an independent consultant specialising and advising on legal and insurance issues affecting aviation. Her particular experience is in the general aviation field, licensing and training of pilots and problems arising out of aircraft maintenance. Dorothy qualified as a solicitor in 1982 with



Slaughter and May and as a Commercial Pilot in 1992. She is also a member of the Guild of Air Pilots and Navigators Education and Training Committee.

This short article cannot include all of Dorothy's expertise but suffice it to say if you have a legal aviation problem you should have a word with Dorothy. She is available on a daily or hourly basis as an on-going consultant or for specific projects. Contact her without obligation on 01435 862142 or FAX 01435 868836.

### CLOCK APPEAL

The clock appeal currently stands at £883. Thanks to all who have contributed so far. We still need £1117!

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## Death of Ben Gunn & George Miles

Shoreham Airport News is sad to announce the death of two of the most well known people associated with the airport. "Ben" Gunn, a former airport manager, died at his home in Worthing on the 22nd September aged 76. A funeral service was held at Worthing crematorium on 1st October.

George Miles died aged 88 on the 18th September. George was managing director of Miles Aviation and Transport. With his brother Frederick they built and flew aircraft from Shoreham. Our sympathy goes to their



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## New Kid on the Block

A new flying group has appeared at Shoreham Airport: "The Flying Oddballs" and they operate a Slingsby T67C, which

I am sure you know, is fully aerobatic and currently the only example of its type on the airfield. I asked Merv Young, the

founder of the group, what it was all about. "The Oddballs is a group for qualified PPL holders, who want to move on to something a little different from the standard training fleet. We started off with the Slingsby because it is the only one of its type here and because it is a delightful aeroplane to fly". So you will be touting for training business along with all the other groups

then? "No. The Oddballs is strictly a non training group. It is a group for pilots already qualified, who want to fly an aircraft that is different from the training fleet, with good availability and support. But it is more than that, its also a social group. During the year social events will be organised for group members and their partners, we want it to be more than just the usual arrive-fly-leave affair" So is this going to be a one aeroplane group? "No, the idea is to grow the group, but it is a balance between members and aircraft; as always. As the membership grows then we will bring more aircraft on line".

Well there you have it. If you are a qualified PPL and want to fly something a little different give Merv a call on 0378210587 or FAX him on 01903 771401. Happy flying

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