

Morane-Saulnier Paris

The very first Very Light Jet



Think the VLJ is a modern phenomenon? They've been around for almost 60 years, says Mike Jerram

Which was the first business jet? North American Sabreliner? Lockheed JetStar? Lear Jet 23? de Havilland DH.125?

None of those. It was the little M.S.760 Paris from French manufacturer Morane-Saulnier, a company founded in 1911 by the brothers Leon and Robert Morane and Raymond Saulnier and steeped in French aviation history.

The Paris started out as the M.S.755 Fleuret, a two-seat, side-by-side seating military jet trainer first flown in January 1953. It was Morane-Saulnier's bid for a French Government contract that was won by the V-tail, tandem-seating Fouga Magister, the first 100 of which, ironically, were manufactured by Morane-Saulnier as Fouga then lacked



Top: The prototype Paris, bearing the French capital's coat arms beneath the cockpit
Above: Twin Turboméca Marboré IIC engine installation is clearly seen here
Below: The prototype was crated, shipped to New York and reassembled at New Jersey's Teterboro Airport for an extensive U.S. marketing tour on behalf of Beech Aircraft





manufacturing capability.

The Fleuret was redesigned by Morane-Saulnier's chief engineer René Gauthier and his team as the four-seat M.S.760. The prototype, converted from the second Fleuret and initially called Fleuret II, first flew on 29 July 1954 in the hands of test pilot Jean Cliquet. Initial flight-testing confirmed that none of the Fleuret's excellent handling qualities had been lost. To demonstrate its potential, Raymond Saulnier suggested that the then newly-appointed French Air Minister, Diomède Catroux, should fly in it to NATO exercises at Bitburg, Germany. On the morning of the flight the Fleuret II was informally dubbed 'Paris' when a sticker bearing the French capital's coat of arms was stuck beneath its cabin. Like the sticker, the name

Above: Prototype F-BGVO pictured over New York's Bronx-Whitestone Bridge
Right: The Paris briefly headed Beechcraft's range, shown here with Bonanza, Twin Bonanza and Super 18 in a contemporary advertisement

Below: Morane-Saulnier test pilot Jean Cliquet (with headset) flew more than 2,100 passengers during the Paris's U.S. demonstration tour, including an evidently delighted Eva Gabor

stuck. Next day, Jean Cliquet took the Paris on a return trip to Algiers to mark the 41st anniversary of pioneer French aviator Roland Garros's first ever aerial crossing of the Mediterranean.

Powered by two 880 lb st Turboméca



Marboré IIC turbojets, the Paris had a four-seat, 2+2 cabin with rearward sliding canopy, pressurised to maintain an 11,800-foot environment to its maximum operating ceiling of 23,000 feet. No other production business aircraft offered pressurisation at that time. It had a maximum speed of 355 mph, and range sufficient to fly New York-Chicago, St. Louis-Washington D.C. or Seattle-San Francisco nonstop. The Marboré engine would later become better known as the Continental J69-T-9 that powered the Cessna T-37 'Tweet' two-seat military trainer, of which Cessna planned a four-seat version, the Model 407, that might have rivalled the Paris in the marketplace, but got no further than a full-scale mockup.

Among those attracted by the Paris was Beech Aircraft Corporation, which took on North American marketing and manufacturing rights, believing that U.S. business aircraft operators would seize the chance to fly a jet. "With this modern jet, executive flying is released from traditional patterns. The past is left far behind. New horizons open. Nowhere in the world is there another airplane of its type... an amazingly fast, four-seat airplane, something that has never been offered before," crowed a 1955 publicity puff. And it was true.

That year, hosted by Teterboro, New Jersey-

based Beechcraft distributor Atlantic Aviation, the prototype Paris was shipped to New York, reassembled and taken on a 40-city, four-and-a-half-month demonstration tour, during which Jean Cliquet conducted 851 flights and logged 443 flight hours with not a single flight cancelled for unscheduled maintenance.

The Paris covered the USA from New York City in the east to Oakland in the west, Minneapolis in the north to San Antonio in the south, and also demonstrated at Montreal, Ottawa and Toronto in Canada. Among the first of 2,126 passengers carried were Beechcraft President Olive Anne Beech, singer Frank Sinatra and actress Eva Gabor. The Paris was also flown by many corporate pilots and business aircraft operators, including the Rockefellers' personal pilot Najeeb 'Jeeb' Hallaby, later to become Federal Aviation Agency Administrator, and famous U.S. radio and TV personality Arthur Godfrey.

All who flew in the Paris were reportedly impressed. FAA certification was achieved in July 1958, and Beech geared up for an initial production batch of 50 aircraft. In the event, very few of those potential

buyers who had flown in the aircraft had been impressed enough to put their money down. Beech sold just two (one of them to Henry and Louise Timken of Timken Roller Bearing, who were later to become launch customers for the

Lear Jet 23 and Aero Jet Commander), and abandoned plans for mass production.

The Paris enjoyed greater sales success elsewhere. Buyers included the Shah of Iran, Venezuelan billionaire Napoléon Dupuoy, Morocco's future king Prince Moulay El Hassan, Harold Quandt, heir to the German BMW car empire, and Enrico Mattei, chief executive of the Italian national oil company AGIP. Mattei, along with his pilot and an American journalist, died in the Paris when it crashed in Lombardy during a storm. It was later alleged that there had been a bomb aboard. Britain's College of Aeronautics took delivery of a Paris in 1959, and flew it from Cranfield on various research tasks for more



Above and Left: Beech Aircraft conducted an extensive demonstration and advertising campaign for the Paris, but the business aircraft market was not yet ready for a jet, and only two were sold in the U.S.

than a quarter of a century.

The bulk of the 157 Paris built went to the military — 36 to France's l'Armée de l'Air, 14 to l'Aéronavalé, 48 to Argentina, of which 36 were manufactured locally under licence, and 24 to Brazil. The uprated 1,058 lb st Marboré VI turbojet was introduced on the 1960 M.S.760B Paris II, many earlier aircraft being retrofitted with the more powerful engines. A stretched Paris III model was developed by Morane Saulnier's then newly appointed chief designer Joseph Rostaing. It had a six-seat cabin with

'porthole' windows, a conventional door replacing the sliding canopy, uprated pressurisation, integral fuel tanks which dispensed with the Paris's trademark tiptanks, and many systems improvements. The Paris III made its public debut at the 1964 Salon at Le Bourget, but never went into production, and manufacture of the four-seater ended that year too.

But the Paris is not yet dead. Georgia-based MS760 Sales Corporation has acquired the Type Certificate and assembled a large stock of mostly ex-military airframes that it plans to refurbish, re-engine with modern Pratt & Whitney or Williams turbofans, equip with 'glass' cockpits, and sell for around \$450,000 each.

And the company Raymond Saulnier and the Morane brothers founded nearly a century ago? It was absorbed by Socata in 1966, and is now DAHER-Socata, part of the EADS consortium and manufacturer of the jet-quick TBM 850 single-engined turboprop. *With thanks to DAHER-Socata's Philippe de Segovia for his assistance with this article.* ■



Above right: The much-revised, six-seat 'cabin class' Paris III appeared in 1964, but never went into production This photo: A French-registered Paris II makes a low-level pass at Duxford during the 1984 Christie's sale

CLASSIFIED

FOR SALE

TB20GT Share for sale



Share for sale N Registered TB20GT based at Biggin Hill - £43,000. In excellent condition well equipped to include TCAS; STORMSCOPE; GARMIN 530 etc; seats 5. Monthly £400 inclusive, dry hourly rate £43. For more details please email N20AG@me.com.

Piper Cherokee 180F



based Old Buckenham, 1/8th share TT 1960 hrs TTE 385 hrs Millennium Lycoming. Full IFR, RNAV, GPS Hangared, professionally maintained Web booking. £2950, £120pm, £70/hr wet Contact Mike 07836-363 686 mgh@me.com

Lancair 320



Lost medical! 250 hours, 0 STOH. Cruises at 200mph @ 8 gph! Fully equipped panel. Interchangeable wing tips, Permit and spares. Mafoop5@aol.com or +44(0)1923 269170 £70,000 + VAT

Auster D4/108



1/6 share Auster D4/108. Lycoming O-235 Classic taildragger, under-utilised. Hangared Bourne Park, Andover. Long-established group, includes instructor. Group-maintained, on LAA Permit to Fly. £2,900, £55 per month, £45 per hour wet. Phone Robin on 0118 978 1821

AVIAMILANO F14 NIBBIO 180hp

Rare 4-seat Falco. 140kt eco-cruise. Owned last 6+ yrs. Always hangared. Work of Art, signed by artist. Much TLC applied. Other projects prompt sale. £39,500 NO VAT Email: robin.nash@sky.com Tel: +44 (0)7956 141833

Rockwell Commander 114



IFR Avionics + Garmin 530. Excellent condition, equipped for touring Europe. Hangared Wycombe. 5th share - £9,750 Contact Alan Tipper 07887 556 557

SOCATA TRINIDAD



5 seats general aviation aircraft Full IFR equipment including 2 horizons Sfenax, COM/NAV Becker, DME King, autopilot STEC50, mode S transponder and emergency system PLB 406 Engine LYCOMING (250HP) 10-540-C4D5D with 600h potential New propeller with full potential Produced 1985 (serial N°438), refurbished in 2006 Based near Toulouse - Immediately available. €65 000 Contact: Nicolas Warinsko 04 84 803 747 nicolas.warinsko@orange.fr

Beagle Pup B121 150



1/6th Share Based Redhill, well maintained, Cleveland brake conversion. New prop fitted. Friendly group, online bookings and excellent availability, £135 monthly + £65/ Hr wet. OIRO £4,500. Visit www.gbakw.co.uk or call Mark 07779 727767 for details

PIPER PA28R200 1/6th Share

IMC equipped: ARC Feb 2010. Private airstrip N.Suffolk. Internet booking: Excellent availability: Healthy engine fund. Share £6,000, £97.00/month, £90.00/hr wet Visit http://sales.flyer.co.uk/G-AYAC/ Contact peter@kesdale.com or tel 01284 706222

Group flying 6-seat PA32R

No capital. 150kt IFR equipped. Friendly professional group. Min 100 hrs P1 and IMC. Hangared Retford Gamston. Details www.mikesierra.co.uk or Neil Rathbone 01664 852614

PA28 Warrior 11 G-BIUW



TT 2500hrs, new top end 1840hrs, One owner pilot 22 years, always hangared, King airways, Mode S, Auto Control 111B Coupled. Factory corrosion and sound proof. New Annual £45,000 No Vat. Email: digbys@live.co.uk Call: 07715498179

Cessna 172



Biggin Hill based C172 1/7th share £6000, £100 per month, £65.00 per hour wet, Airframe 4400, 250 STOH, King ADF, D.M.E, 2x VOR, Transponder Mode C, Skynan GPS, 2x Comms, 2x altimeters, Ian Minett 07956 276062 www.triplexflyinggroup.co.uk

AEROBATIC JURCA TEMPETE

£16,995 ono. Rolls Royce Continental 0-200 with McCuley aluminium prop. Large cockpit and good short field performer. Comes with Icom radio. See www.afors.com for a full write up. Contact Roy on 0121 523 8400 or 07836 348 945 e-mail: roy@hydraulic-pneumatic-cylinders.co.uk for full details.

Arrow 4 Turbo PA28 RT-201T

Year 1980 Airframe hrs 3937 Engine hrs874. GPS GNS 430 Transponder GTX 330 Rnav KNS 80 Radio KX197 ADF K 86 Audio+Marker KMA20. Brand new Hartzell prop fitted. £55,000 tel 01746783413 email ronsuebaderger3@googlemail.com

Piper Arrow 2 one fifth shares



2 1/5th shares for sale in friendly 1973 Piper Arrow 2 group based Denham. Fully IFR. £8,000 More details at: http://n747mm.heliohost.org/ad/ Contact 07956 282940 or andrewflyboy1@aol.com

Aviation supplies

proviation - Pilot Shop
AOPA 10% Discount: Quote AOPA 1555 during checkout
All you need for the flights ahead
Professional, Efficient Services to Aviation
www.proviation.com - 0800 280 0577

sportys.com
your single source for quality educational aviation products—always at a good price
Sporty's courses have subtitles to aid comprehension of the American accent heard on the DVDs
16 USA 1512388 1666 USA 1512388
Clement County/Surry's Airport, Beavertown, OH 43002

Aircraft protection

Aeroplane Covers
VELAS
Tel: 01277 343347
www.velas.co.uk

Technical services

Planeweighs Limited
Aircraft weighing & technical services
PIPER CUB to BOEING 747
Load/Trim sheet design
CAA approval A1/8538/79
Engineers throughout the UK
Tel: 44+ (0) 1792 310566 Fax 310584
Mobile: 07798 662 939
email: info@planeweighs.com
www.planeweighs.com

PORTABLE, LIGHTWEIGHT, COLLAPSIBLE AIRCRAFT MOVING SYSTEM



www.Aero-Pac.com is producer of aircraft powered tow bars – powersupplies – helicopter platforms and track and trace systems. www.aero-pac.com or info@aero-pac.com