

Briefings



Student hits birthday goal



A student at Stapleford Flight Centre has completed his ATPL exams, CPL, ME and IR by his 18th birthday – the earliest possible date for the issue of professional licenses. Milan Tomasevic, whose father Antoine is an airline pilot, got through the courses in the minimum number of hours and achieved first-time passes in all his Licence Skills Tests, which is all the more impressive as he was born in Belgium and educated in Moscow, and his first language is Russian – he was studying English at the same time as talking his flying courses.

Milan got his PPL in Florida when he was 17 years and 3 days. His father coached him from the beginning of the training, mostly at a distance through lengthy internet conversations. In June, Milan began doing some hours-building around the south-east of England in readiness for his CPL, IR and ME training at Stapleford.

Antoine says: "The professional and instrument training was accomplished at a sustained pace, always looking at the possibility that he would be able to finish everything before the age of 18. Everybody, starting with the weather, played the game. Thanks to the concentration of a dedicated team of instructors, and the coordinated help of Colin Dobney, head of flight training at Stapleford Flight Centre, and Lisa Green, these good ingredients made it happen. Milan (*left*) is now going back to Moscow to have a holiday and celebrate his birthday before returning to the UK for Multi Crew Co-operation Training." ■

No Red Bull Races in 2011

The Red Bull Air Races will be having a year off in 2011, the organisers have decided. The break is needed to develop stronger host city partnerships and secure a long-term race calendar, according to Red Bull. The series was disrupted this year by some late venue changes and cancellations. And a couple of close calls excited the interest of the safety industry. Brazilian pilot Adilson Kindlemann flew into the Swan River

in Perth, Australia in April, and Australian pilot Matt Hall hit the Detroit River in the Windsor race, although he stayed in the air. Neither man was injured.

In a statement, Red Bull said the organisation will spend the next year working to 'fast track the technological advances currently in the making which would further improve the already high levels of safety.'

There are understandable concerns that the year off will lead to the demise of the series, but Red Bull indicated that it will continue.

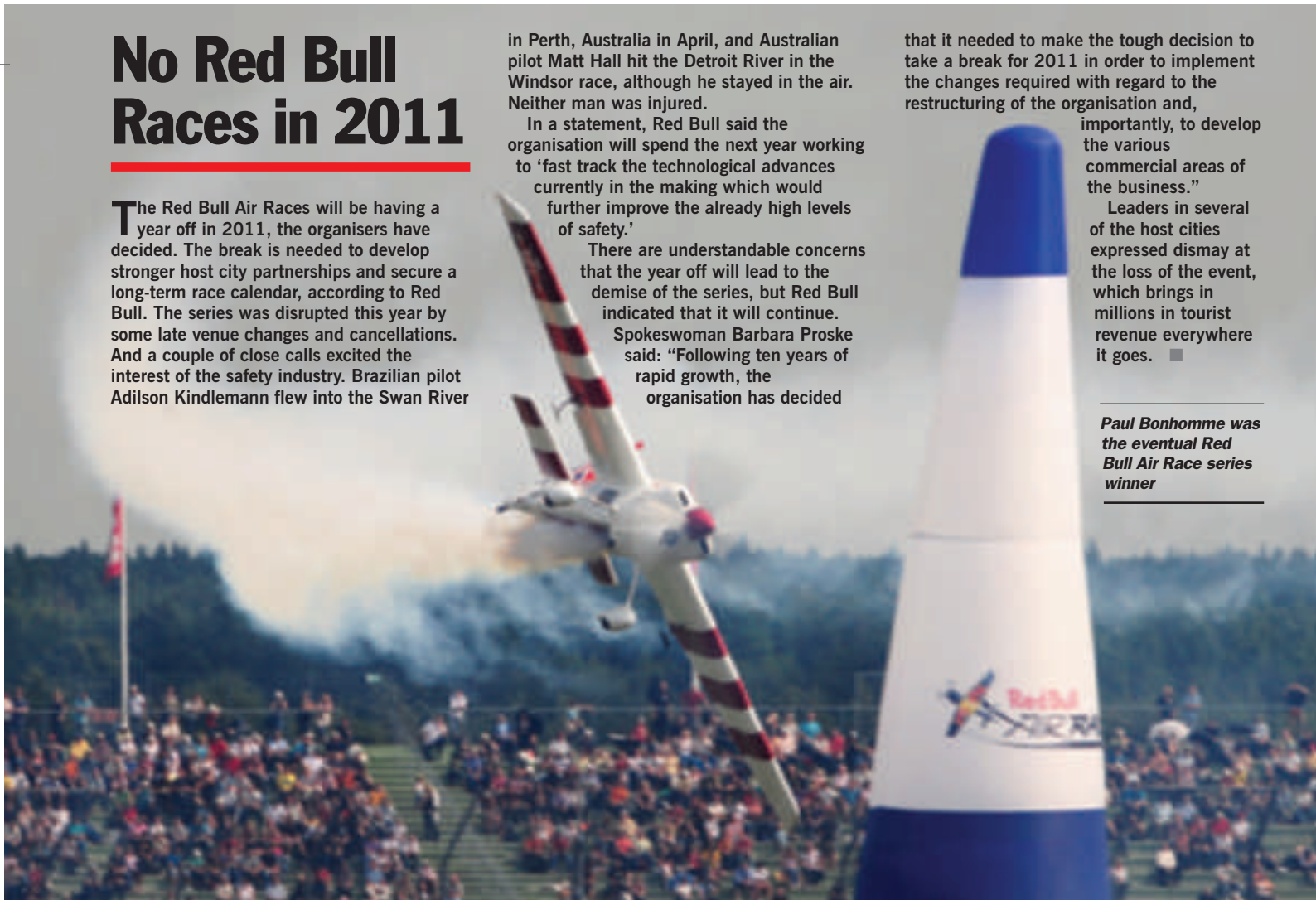
Spokeswoman Barbara Proske said: "Following ten years of rapid growth, the organisation has decided

that it needed to make the tough decision to take a break for 2011 in order to implement the changes required with regard to the restructuring of the organisation and,

importantly, to develop the various commercial areas of the business."

Leaders in several of the host cities expressed dismay at the loss of the event, which brings in millions in tourist revenue everywhere it goes. ■

Paul Bonhomme was the eventual Red Bull Air Race series winner



Frank calls it a day



Frank Robinson, designer and builder of the world's best-selling helicopters, has announced his retirement at the age of 80. His son Kurt, who has worked for his father's company since 1987, took over as President and Chairman of Robinson Helicopter Company from August 10th.

Frank had intended to retire on his 80th birthday in January but decided to stay in charge until the final design of Robinson's new R66 turbine helicopter was complete. With R66 production under way and FAA certification imminent, Robinson decided to make his retirement official.

Despite the fact that the founder and driving force has gone, the company says nothing will change; RHC's upper management team remains in place and they do not anticipate any disruption.

Frank Robinson founded the company, based in Torrance, south of Los Angeles, in 1973 having worked for most American helicopter companies. After failing to interest any of them in his concept of a relatively simple low-cost personal helicopter, he remortgaged his house and struck out on his own. The going was far tougher than he had expected, and he was to say later that had he known how bad it would be, he would never have got started. It took six years with no revenue to get the first R22 certificated, but in time it became the world's top selling helicopter. Its sales were eclipsed by the four-seat R44, which continues to lead the sales league worldwide. Advance sales for the R66 are strong and the company's success looks likely to continue.

On his father's retirement Kurt Robinson said: "While there is no one person that can replace Frank, we have a very strong team of managers who have been with the company for more than 20 years. We are looking forward to a smooth transition and an exciting future."

Frank Robinson is coming to London to deliver the Cierva Lecture at the Royal Aeronautical Society on October 5th; see www.raes.org.uk

*Flying the R66 – see page 30 ■

CAA Chair at Women in Aviation Conference

Dame Deirdre Hutton, the first woman to chair the Civil Aviation Authority, will be the keynote speaker at the Royal Aeronautical Society's Fourth Women in Aviation and Aerospace Conference on Friday October 15th. In her address, Dame Deirdre will outline the opportunities arising from the challenges facing aviation and aerospace in the second decade of the 21st century. Flight safety will also be on the agenda for another speaker, Hazel Courteney, Head of Safety Strategy and Performance at NATS, formerly National Air Traffic Services.

The theme of the conference is 'Expanding Our Opportunities'. RAeS Council member Jenny Body, Head of Business Development at Airbus UK, will tackle the challenges and opportunities facing today's aerospace engineers, while Rolls-Royce apprentice Cassandra Leicester, who works at the company's NGV turbine facility, will explain



the life of an apprentice and her work promoting the industry to young people.

The military are also represented on the programme with talks scheduled by Merlin helicopter pilot Flt Lt Joanna Watkinson, who has completed two tours of duty in Iraq and is

combat-ready for deployment to Afghanistan, and by Lt Hazel Davies, who will speak about air engineering in the Royal Navy.

Other speakers include Simonetta di Pippo, Director of Human Spaceflight at EASA and President of Women in Aerospace – Europe, who will discuss the future for human spaceflight.

Clare Walker, Chair of the RAeS Women in Aviation and Aerospace Committee said: "We are delighted that Dame Deirdre has agreed to speak. The participation of one of the most important women in aviation and aerospace today adds considerable weight to an already strong conference programme and helps us to fulfil one of our key objectives – to cover serious issues while, at the same time, enabling like-minded people to meet and network."

For more information please visit www.aerosociety.com/conference. ■

Wings over White Waltham

Maidenhead Heritage Centre is marking White Waltham airfield's 75th anniversary with a special exhibition tracing the airfield's history, opening on November 5th.

"Few airfields in Britain can boast as varied a history as White Waltham," says Richard Poad MBE, Chairman of Maidenhead Heritage Centre, which is mounting the exhibition called 'Wings over White Waltham'.

The exhibition, which runs until December 18th, will trace the airfield's history from its first beginnings up to the present day. Richard says: "de Havilland ran a training school at White Waltham for the RAFVR, and flying training has been a continuous feature at White Waltham ever since. The Air Transport Auxiliary had its wartime headquarters here, and later famous names such as Fairey Aviation, Fairey Air Surveys, ML Aviation and Doug Bianchi were based on the airfield. West London Aero Club, founded in 1946, now operates the airfield, which remains one of the largest grass fields in the UK."

Entry to the exhibition is free. Maidenhead Heritage Centre is on Park Street, a bit too far to walk from the airfield but a short taxi ride. The Museum is open from 10am to 4pm, Tuesdays to Saturdays and also on the second Sunday of each month from 10am to 12.30pm. See www.maidenheadheritage.org.uk

The Fairey Rotordyne made its first flight from White Waltham in 1957



Better luck next year

Norman Surplus has put his attempt to fly around the world in a gyrocopter on hold because of the likelihood of extreme weather in the Bering Strait and across the North Atlantic. With winter coming on, the prospects of safe flying in an open-cockpit gyro are not good, and Surplus now intends to resume the attempt in spring of next year. Delays during the first half of the flight mean that Surplus was due to arrive in far northern latitudes later in the year than first planned. He has flown almost 10,000 miles across mountains, desert, forest fires, sandstorms and open sea and has set a record for the longest distance flown across the globe by a gyrocopter.



Norman Surplus and gyrocopter at the start of his round-the-world flight attempt



100 landings in 24 hours

AOPA France has taken part in a unique challenge designed to impress upon the French people the versatility of general aviation. France has more than 450 airfields and airports opened to all aircraft, not including private airfields, farm strips and ultralight fields, and AOPA France is fighting to keep all fields open to all pilots. In order to demonstrate that nowhere in France is more than 15 minutes from an airfield, teams of pilots set out to land at more than 100 airfields in a day. The AOPA team comprised Jacques Callies, founder of the largest French aviation magazine, *Aviation & Pilote*, Patrick Charrier, CFI and AOPA France President, Pierre Beria, AOPA France treasurer, Simon Auffret, Erick Stemmler and Emmanuel Davidson, AOPA France executive vice-president. They flew a 1974 Cessna Skylane fitted with an SMA diesel engine and glass cockpit and landed at 108 airfields, covering 1,914 nm between 10:15am and 10:12 am next day. Of the 11 teams involved, six achieved the 100-airfield target. Emmanuel Davidson says: "It's probably the toughest thing we have done in the plane. All felt the fatigue and the stress; sometimes you had less than five minutes between take-off, cruise and entering a new pattern." ■

Above: Members of AOPA France who took part in the 100 landings challenge

Dustin Rabe 1981 - 2010



Ferry pilot Dustin Rabe, who has appeared several times in these pages in reports of transatlantic flights in light singles with fellow pilot David Plange, was killed in an as-yet unexplained landing accident in South Carolina in July. He was 29.

Dustin, who had 1,600 hours of ferry flying experience and had made at least 20 Atlantic and one Pacific crossing, was on the first leg of a delivery flight to Holland in an experimental turbine powered Comp Air 8.

The aircraft crashed at East Cooper Regional Airport near Mount Pleasant, SC. It came to rest inverted and was consumed by fire. "He was a great pilot, a good friend and he'll be sadly missed," Plange said. ■

Above: Dustin Rabe (left) and David Plange ferrying a Mooney across the Atlantic

Air traffic flat

Statistics from NATS show that air traffic in July 2010 declined by 0.6% over the same month in 2009, which was itself disturbingly quiet. NATS says that while there are some positive statistics – for example, a 3.3% increase in transatlantic overflights – the overall picture for UK flights is still negative. NATS handled its millionth flight on 1st July, just under two weeks later than 2009 when it was on 19th June.

Italy VFR guide in English

Massimo Levi of AOPA Italy reports that Mr Guido Medici of Avioportolano Italia has published an English-language version of his general aviation manual for Italy, providing not only the necessary aeronautical information required to fly to Italian airstrips but giving useful information on hotels, restaurants and tourist sites in all areas of the country. The guide describes the entire network of landing points throughout the whole of Italy, including airports, airstrips, ULM airfields and helicopter landing pads. It also includes basic information on Italian airports, as well as previously unpublished information about more than 500 airstrips that are open to GA and ULM traffic, but are not included in the AIP Italia guide. It also describes Italian aviation in terms of its history, its museums, its records and its art, providing a complete and exhaustive compendium of everything you'll need to fly in Italy. The guide is available through Transair at £39 – see www.transair.co.uk