



# BNAPS News January 2015

BNAPS News Vol 5 Iss 1 – January 2015

## VCN Restoration Work Enters Next Phase

Following a fresh look at the way ahead, the restoration workshop has now been organised such that work on fitting out the fuselage can continue in parallel with work to re-construct VCN's original wing.

Having established that most of the wing work will be done with the wing in its vertical stands, the workshop had just sufficient width to allow access to both sides of the wing and fuselage at the same time.



See pages 5 to 10 for an illustrated progress report covering the last period.

## B-N Islander First Flight 50<sup>th</sup> Commemoration

On 13 June 2015 Bembridge Airport and The Propeller Inn will provide the historic backdrop for events that will commemorate the first flight of the Britten-Norman BN-2 that took place from here 50 years ago.

History was in the making when the prototype BN-2, G-ATCT, built in just 9 months and not yet given the name Islander, took off from Bembridge Airport at 1418 on 13 June, 1965, and made its 70 minute maiden flight with Desmond Norman at the controls and John Britten in the seat alongside him.



BNAPS is co-ordinating "Islander 50" as a community event starting with the commemoration on 13 June and ending with a celebratory weekend on 20/21 June, the highlight of which will be the roll out of the fully fitted out and painted fuselage of B-N Islander G-AVCN.

See more about "Islander 50" on page 19.

## Front Fuselage of Islander VQ-SAC Donated to BNAPS

Retired British Transport Police Officer, Frank Matthews, of East Preston West Sussex has kindly donated the front fuselage section of Islander VQ-SAC to BNAPS. Frank had acquired the fuselage section as a hobby restoration project. Parts of the damaged structure were repaired and replacement doors and an avionics bay cover made. For ease of handling Frank fitted the fuselage onto a wheeled support frame. He wants to see his project continue and has decided to hand it over to BNAPS to undertake further work and initially to turn the fuselage into a "sit in" exhibit – for a more detailed report see page 4.

## David French 1940-2014

Sadly we bid farewell to David French who has died aged 74. He was a well known personality in Island aviation circles and will be remembered by many for his no nonsense approach to life. A lifelong engineer with a love of the aviation industry and motorbikes, David or Dave French, known to his friends as Frenchy, was born in Newport on January 11, 1940. He started work in the building trade and completed a seven year stonemasonry apprenticeship. But his real passion lay in becoming an aircraft engineer, with his appetite first whetted as a young air cadet. His interest in mechanics led him to run a garage in Wroxall when he was 25. He then went on to work for Britten-Norman Ltd as a foreman in the experimental workshop, later travelling around the world as a service engineer.



Dave secured his private pilot's licence flying Tiger Moths at Thruxton airfield and also gained an aircraft maintenance licence. A skilled hand, he once worked on the rebuild of a Spitfire and a Messerschmitt 109.

For many years he worked at the IW Airport, Sandown and ran his own business, Vectis Aviation Services (VAS), also working with a flight school and the Vectis Gliding Club. After the great storm in 1987, he was instrumental in keeping the gliding club in the air, helping to fix the damaged craft.

Whilst with B-N in 1969, Dave was part of B-N's experimental shop team engaged on building the BN-3 Nymph light aircraft, G-AXFB. He was to be reunited with this aircraft some years later when Dave undertook the rebuild of fire damaged NAC Freelance, G-NACI, at Sandown, this aircraft being the original Nymph prototype that he had worked on in 1969 and which Desmond Norman had later acquired and used as the basis of the Freelance prototype.

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*BN-3 Nymph, G-AXFB, on an early test flight in 1969*



*NAC Freelance, G-NACI, at Sandown Airport c 1992 following rebuild by Dave French*

Aside from his aviation interests, Dave French had a love of motorcycles and classic cars. He married Patricia Ann at Wroxall Church in January, 1965. Around three years ago, the couple moved to Torquay to be closer to their grandchildren. Dave French died on December 17, 2014, leaving two daughters, Natalie and Tracy, and three grandchildren. Sincere condolences go to Dave's family and friends with regard to their sad loss.

## Channel Islands Air Search News

Recent sightings indicate that the Channel Islands Air Search organisation based in Guernsey will be using B-N Islander G-BEXJ, c/n 2020, to take over from Islander G-AWNT as their longer term temporary replacement aircraft. G-BEXJ had returned to the UK in 2014 after service with the German operator LFH as D-IORF.



*CIAS longer term replacement Islander, G-BEXJ, seen at Daedalus Airfield December 2014. It appears that the fin, rudder, tail plane, elevators and wing tips of Islander G-CIAS have been installed – photo courtesy of Richard Goman.*



*G-BEXJ is seen here on final approach to Daedalus Airfield after a test flight in January, 2015 – photo courtesy of Richard Davies.*

In the morning of 29 January, 2015, Islander, G-AWNT, that had been on temporary assignment with CIAS, returned to Daedalus Airfield, Lee-on-the-Solent. After completing the necessary formalities, the CIAS crew took over Islander, G-BEXJ, and set off on their return flight to Guernsey.



*CIAS longer term replacement Islander, G-BEXJ, departing from Daedalus Airfield's 023 runway, on 29 January, 2015, for the flight back to Guernsey.*

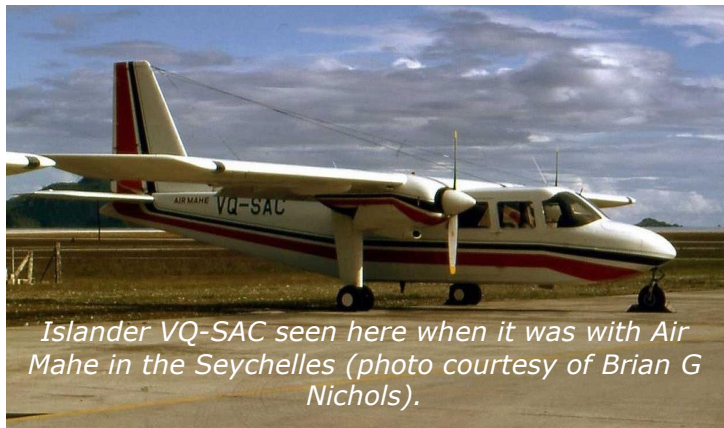
## CIAS Fund Raising for New Build Replacement Islander

Should anyone wish to make a donation to this worthy cause more information about the CIAS organisation, fund raising for a new replacement aircraft and contact details, then go to: [www.ci-airsearch.com](http://www.ci-airsearch.com)

## Islander VQ-SAC Front Fuselage Donated to BNAPS

The front part of the fuselage of Islander VQ-SAC (c/n 287) has been donated to BNAPS by Frank Matthews. The aircraft was written off in an accident in the Seychelles in 1976, and parts were moved to the UK in 1977 as part of the Dowty G-FANS Islander Ducted Fan Propulsor project undertaken by Miles Dufon at Shoreham Airport.

Following the run down of the G-FANS project the fuselage section was then used for several years by aeronautical engineering students at Chelsea College, Shoreham, West Sussex.



*Islander VQ-SAC seen here when it was with Air Mahe in the Seychelles (photo courtesy of Brian G Nichols).*

As part of his work as a British Transport Police officer, Frank Matthews often had to visit Shoreham Airport from time to time and on one such visit spotted the Islander fuselage lying disused near the college. Seeing the Islander fuselage as the makings of a retirement project Frank was able to acquire the forward fuselage in May 1991 and he recovered it to his home in nearby East Preston, West Sussex. Frank set to and constructed replacement doors, repaired some of the damage that had resulted from the accident in 1976 and acquired a number of missing parts. Frank received invaluable help and encouragement from B-N's Publicity Officer, Sheila Dewart, and Frank cannot speak too highly of Sheila's interest in helping him with his project. However, as time passed ill health prevented Frank carrying out further work and in early 2014 he had decided that perhaps a new home should be found for his project. Frank made contact with Allan Wright at BN Historians about their interest in Islander VQ-SAC; subsequently Allan passed on the request to BNAPS.

As it happened BNAPS was looking at further projects beyond the restoration of Islander G-AVCN and one possibility under consideration was an Islander flight simulator. BNAPS had already made a fact finding visit to the Tangmere Military Aviation Museum in May 2013 to gain an insight into how the museum's Lightning fighter simulator had been designed and constructed. This visit was of great benefit and showed BNAPS what could be achieved by using available flight simulator and display generation software together with engineering aspects of the controls and displays to give the right look and feel for a flight simulator.



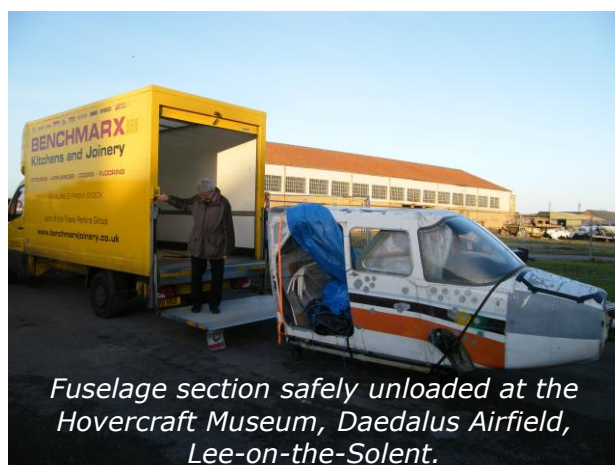
*Frank Matthews with Hovercraft Museum helpers – Kara Blatchford and Chris Desmond (left) and Rob Hiseman, Hovercraft Museum Trustee (right).*



*Frank Matthews hands over the fuselage section to BNAPS Chairman, Bob Wealthy.*

On Saturday 24 January, 2015, it all came together and with the help of Allan Wright and Andy Clancey of BN Historians, a team of volunteers from the Hovercraft Museum and use of a van kindly provided by Allan Wright's employer, Benchmark Kitchens & Joinery, the fuselage was moved to the Hovercraft Museum at Lee-on-Solent where it will be in temporary storage until a more permanent home is arranged.

BNAPS is indebted to Frank Matthews for his generosity and an undertaking has been given to keep him fully informed of all future developments involving the Islander fuselage when it is initially turned into a representative "sit in" exhibit and, hopefully, evolves into an Islander flight simulator.



*Fuselage section safely unloaded at the Hovercraft Museum, Daedalus Airfield, Lee-on-the-Solent.*

## **VCN Restoration Progress Report December 2014 – January 2015**

After the fuselage spray painting exercise the team took another look at the way ahead and the original plan to put the fuselage into temporary storage. The outcome of this review was that the most beneficial approach for the project would be to be able to work on fitting out the fuselage alongside the work of rebuilding the wing. Since a major part of the wing rebuild will have to be done with the wing in the vertical stands the floor space required is about half the workshop width, leaving sufficient room to continue work on the fuselage fitting out with access to both sides of the fuselage.

Before the Christmas break the fuselage was moved over to one side, making use of the new wheels attached to the fuselage frame. Prior to moving the wing into position a concerted effort has been made to de-clutter the workshop by removing all surplus material etc and having a general "square up".

### **Fuselage** (now fully painted in yellow):

- The fuselage cradle has been fitted with wheels to aid moving and has been moved closer to the outside wall to make room to work on the wing.
- The rear fuselage is complete to the point that little else can be done until assembly of the fin, rudder, and tail-plane can start.
- The recently acquired tail Bumper came without tether point holes or mountings. These have now been added/made and the bumper is in place and painted.
- The doors are now fitted but some finishing work is still required on the handles and fitting of seals.
- The missing rear port side window was purchased from Saywells but was oversize so a template was made by Bryan Groves and the window trimmed to the correct size. All windows (not the windscreens) are now in place but sealing of the plastic seals between the windows and structure is still in work.
- Several access panels for the under-side of the fuselage have now been sprayed yellow and once all control system work is finished they can be replaced.
- Nose avionics/Battery Bay cover is in work first coats of the Aurigny red have been sprayed. The missing Camlock fasteners and receptors have at last arrived from Skycraft via the US. Keith Winter can now complete his repair to the fuselage avionics bay surround for which we needed a special length Camlock receptor.
- Patrick Gallagher completed repairs to the badly damaged roof members that "guide" rudder trim and aileron cable and support trim panels.
- Control Wheels now fitted (Bryan made an alignment jig) Installation of Throttle quadrant controls (Propeller Pitch, Throttles and Fuel Mixture 90%), cover and labelling needed.
- Bryan Groves is making a jig to temporarily locate the rudder trim jack to allow the rudder trim cables to be secured pending installation of the fin, rudder and tail plane.
- Bryan Groves and Paul Brooks continued making good progress with the electrics, instruments and avionics all of which we now have.

### **Other Items In Work:**

- Having moved the fuselage and generally reorganised the workshop we have also moved the wing has been positioned so that there is now sufficient access to work on the wing, de-corrosion work has been started.
- The Tail-plane is primed and ready for top coat spraying when the weather improves.
- The Fin and Rudder are in work – paint stripping and de-corrosion. Due to the extent of the damage and corrosion to the Fin leading edge, it was necessary to manufacture a new section. This has now been made and formed, courtesy of Airframe assemblies, and is awaiting fitting.

### **Major fuselage restoration tasks ongoing are:**

- A trim kit is in the pipeline and will be fitted together with floor carpeting.
- Restore the seat upholstery and seat frames, priority is to get the pilot's seating in place.
- Complete restoration of Baggage Bay Door. This, together with the tail cone, is presently with Bill Mason, who is doing our spray painting, for finishing and painting. These items will be fitted in due course.
- Complete restoration of Windscreens ready for refit
- Source the remaining items for the central console – structure and carb heat knobs plus labels.
- Source/have made all placards and labels. A possible source has been found for the labels and for the Lion Logo and "cheat lines".

The following series of photographs illustrate the work that has been undertaken during the current period:

## VCN Restoration Progress Report December 2014 –January 2015 (Continued)



*The completed tail bumper has been painted and is now installed.*



*A new Perspex window acquired for the port rear passenger door was found to be oversize.*

*Bryan Groves made a template and trimmed the window to size. The door is seen here with the window installed.*



*Finishing strips for the windscreen surround have had all the original paint cleaned off and then de-corroded. The strips will then be painted ready for when the windscreens are re-fitted.*

**VCN Restoration Progress Report December 2014 – January 2015 (Continued)**



*Painting the avionics bay cover to obtain the required high quality finish turned out to be a labour of love for Bob Wilson*



*Closure panel and part of the dorsal fairing have been painted and are now ready for installation.*



*Patrick Gallagher making use of the propane heater to cure the paint on some detail parts.*



*Bob Ward is seen here working on the starboard side front passenger door lock/unlock mechanism.*

## VCN Restoration Progress Report Dec 2014 – January 2015 (Continued)



*Thanks to the efforts of Bryan Groves, a pair of Nav Com receivers and associated ILS capability were obtained from the USA as used/non-working items.*



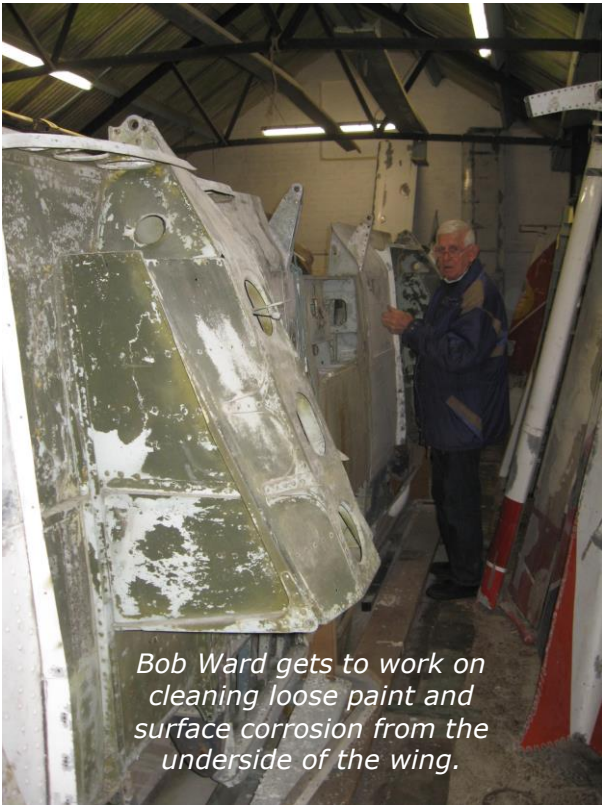
*The workshop is seen here after it had been re-arranged to enable work on the fuselage and wing to be undertaken in parallel. This resulted in somewhat restricted access alongside the work benches and space had also to be found to store items ready for top coat painting, such as the tail plane that is seen here stowed under the rear of the fuselage.*



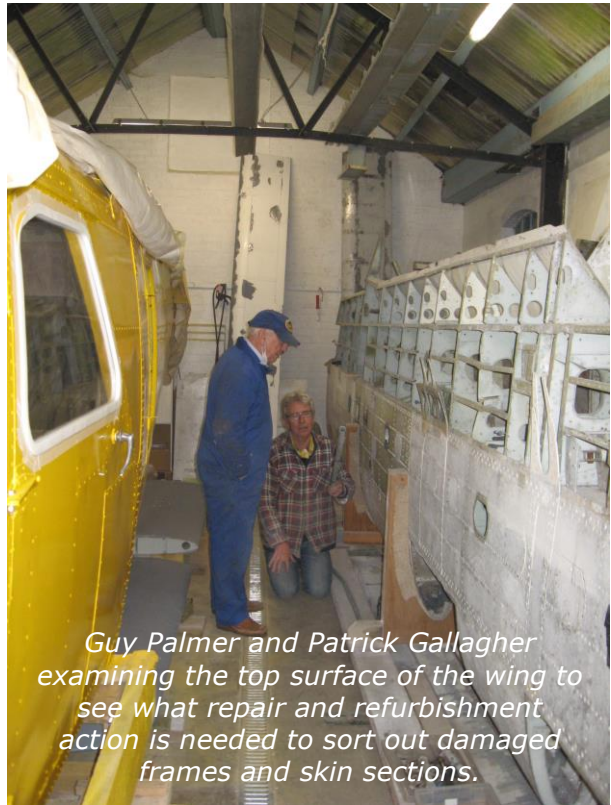
*View of the workshop with Charles Shiveral in the background keeping calm and carrying on regardless.*



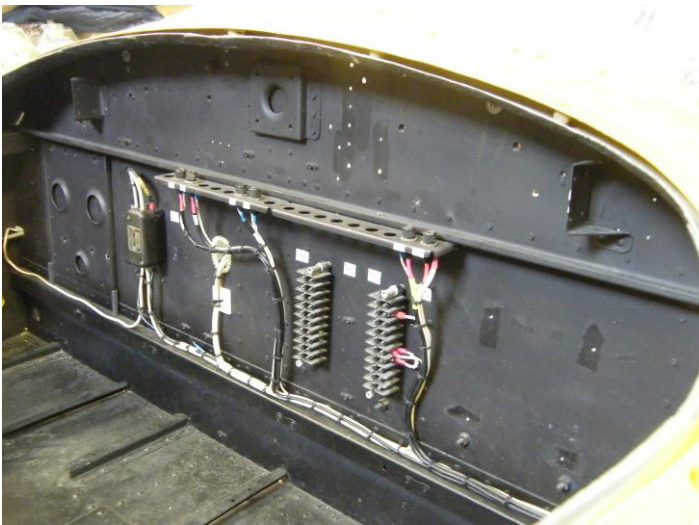
**VCN Restoration Progress Report December 2014 – January 2015 (Continued)**



*Bob Ward gets to work on cleaning loose paint and surface corrosion from the underside of the wing.*



*Guy Palmer and Patrick Gallagher examining the top surface of the wing to see what repair and refurbishment action is needed to sort out damaged frames and skin sections.*



*Electrical wiring harness and terminal blocks have been assembled and installed in the avionics bay by Paul Brook ready for application of electrical power.*



*Paul Brook is seen here working on the electrical connections for the "eyebrow" panels.*

**VCN Restoration Progress Report December 2014 – January 2015 (Continued)**



*Left to right, Bob Ward, Guy Palmer and Bryan Groves examining some of installation details associated with the instruments and controls.*



*The pilot's and co-pilot's control wheels have now been installed. Bryan Groves has rigged a spring loaded pulley system for the aileron cables so that the control wheels can be operated in a representative way.*

**Cylinders Needed for "Non-functional" Lycoming O-540 Engines-**

Norvic Aero Engines' Jon Howard needs eight more cylinders for the "non-functional" Lycoming O-540 engines. The cylinders are used on O-360 and O-540 engines, cylinder part number is as follows "The assembly part number required is 05k21102, this is identified with a cylinder head/barrel part no of LW 12425, there are other older cylinder head/barrel part numbers that will do the job listed in the following link <http://www.eci.aero/pdf/crm08.pdf>. Use the ECI cylinder class no 10 as reference." If anyone knows of something suitable that might be available please get in touch with BNAPS in the first instance.

**Supporting BNAPS & Islander VCN's Restoration**



## Pete Jenness and SVG Air's Caribbean Islander

BNAPS Supporter and BA 777 pilot, Pete Jenness, with colourful Islander J8-VBI operated by SVG Air on the ramp in Grenada. The BA Boeing 777 and the Islander make an interesting contrast.



Pete had the opportunity to take photographs of this smart looking Islander's cockpit and passenger accommodation as below:



## Tiger Moth to the Sudan by John Freeman

(Adapted from articles appearing in AgAir Update in 2005)

*Introductory note: The BN-2 Islander was funded by investing profits from Crop Culture (Aerial) Limited operations. This company was formed by John Britten, Desmond Norman and Frank Mann in April, 1956, to exploit design and development work done by Britten-Norman Limited on Ultra Low Volume spraying using what they called 'Micronair rotary atomisers'. Later Jim McMahon became an equal shareholder. It therefore seems wholly appropriate to include the occasional Crop Culture story in BNAPS News. I hope our readers agree,*

*Peter Graham, BNAPS Trustee, 19 January, 2015*

Over forty-seven years ago, I made an interesting flight by Tiger Moth from England to the Sudan. At the time, I had been engaged in ag-operations for two years and had recently travelled to England where I joined Crop Culture (Aerial) Ltd., a branch of Britten-Norman Ltd., the designer of the B-N Islander aircraft. After a summer season of spraying potatoes in England using Tiger Moth aircraft, Jim McMahon, the manager for Crop Culture, asked me if I would like a season spraying cotton in the Sudan. All I knew about the Sudan was that it was somewhere south of Egypt and the prospect did not really seem attractive to me. However, when Jim mentioned the money I should make – tax-free in the Sudan – I changed my mind.



*Part of Crop Culture's large fleet of converted Tiger Moths at Bembridge Airport c 1958*

*(Peter Gatrell)*

On September 27, 1957 we were ready to leave the base at Bembridge Airport on the Isle of Wight in England. The fleet was two Tiger Moths (G-ADGT and G-AMVF) with the normal 19-gallon fuel system. Additionally, each aircraft was outfitted with a 60-gallon rubber bag installed in the spray hopper. From here, fuel could be pumped into the aircraft's fuel tank every hour, adding about ten flight hours. A third aircraft in the fleet was an Auster high-wing (G-APCY) with the same Gypsy Major 130 horsepower engine as the Tiger Moth. The fuel system was a nose tank that held 12 gallons, a belly tank with 17 gallons and an extra tank behind the pilot's seat that held 45 gallons. The 45-gallon tank was used to top off the belly tank hourly, by turning on a valve behind the pilot's seat. The pilot knew the belly tank was full when he could feel the overflow. He felt for the overflow by putting his hand out of the pilot's door and placing it by the belly tank cap. Once the belly tank was full, the valve was turned off.

I was given the Auster to fly. Flying alongside the Tiger Moths, the Auster only used 50% of the normal fuel consumption, which meant that I could have stayed airborne for almost 20 hours! Jim McMahon and Peter Charles flew the Tiger Moths.

We started to taxi at Bembridge early on the morning of September 27 and then we saw Desmond Norman's wife running after us with three empty milk bottles, one per aircraft to be used for obvious reasons on six to eight-hour legs! We took off, flew to the Customs' aerodrome at Lympne, then left to cross the English Channel to Calais, mindful of all the lost aircraft and crews beneath the waves below us. We flew past Abbeville Aerodrome in France where the Luftwaffe Me-109s called the "Abbeville Kids" used to leave to intercept B-17 Fortresses. We flew over Paris with its Eiffel Tower and on via Lyon to Marseille by the end of the first day. I was quite comfortable in the Auster, but I could only see straight-ahead and 90 degrees to my left,

since the aircraft was packed with gear. The next day our flight took us to Rome and the following day to Palermo, Sicily - Mafia country.

It was beautiful flying along the French and Italian Riviera at 2000 to 3000ft MSL. The weather was excellent. On the fourth day we crossed Sicily, leaving the south coast to cross 100 miles of the Mediterranean Sea - at 75 knots! I was told that pilots only worried whilst in sight of land and this was true. We saw not a single ship compared to earlier in 1956, the time of the Suez crisis, when pilots could have landed on an aircraft carrier most of the way across!

We were slightly off track on landfall, arriving in the Bay of Tunis, adding another 20 miles. After refuelling at Tunis, we left in formation with a flight of rocket-carrying French Air Force B-25 Mitchells, who were off to hassle some Tunisian opposition soldiers. Our small fleet continued to fly west to Bone, Algeria, where we carried out a spraying demonstration. Our spray gear was the early model Micronair A700 atomiser, with two per aircraft. When the demonstration was completed, we returned to Tunis. Flying along the North African coastline, I eased down to low level along the beach, until I saw Jim wagging his wings. I climbed up next to him to see him giving a cutthroat indication. Apparently, I was in hostile territory and could have received some lead in my pants!

From Tunis on October 1, we flew in daily single legs to Tripoli, Benghazi, El Adem (Tobruk) and Cairo. It was incredible to see piles of tins and other gear along the way, remaining from the War, 14 years beforehand. The tracks of army tanks over the stony ground were still showing like wide freeways.

At Cairo we went by taxi to our hotel and the driver, an Egyptian, told us the story that during the Suez crisis, the BBC advised which area was to be bombed that night, allowing civilians to evacuate. On one particular night, the target was the Egyptian Air Force Base at Cairo. The driver said all the occupants left quickly, but the RAF did not arrive. Realizing this, the local citizens went to the aerodrome and stripped it of all the furniture, carpets, food, etc. He said, then to add insult to injury, the RAF came the next night and bombed the aerodrome. He laughed more than we did in telling the story.

The next day, we departed from Cairo, passing the Pyramids, following the Nile, past the Aswan Dam, then being constructed, and finally arrived at Wadi Halfa. That flight was nearly eight hours. The following day, we flew across the Nubian Desert with its black rocks and sand, following the railway line built by the British years before in +50° C temperatures, to Khartoum in the Sudan. The total flight time from England was 61.5 tach hours. On arrival at Khartoum on October 7, 1957, we had a couple of days off whilst the two Tiger Moths and the Auster were converted back for spraying operations. On October 11, I climbed into Tiger Moth G-ADGT and in company with Peter Charles in Tiger Moth G-AMVF, we headed south on a two-hour ferry flight to Sennar, where the Blue Nile is dammed to provide water to irrigate cotton.



*Crop Culture (Aerial) Tiger Moths G-ADGT and G-AMVF with Auster Alpha G-APCY*

After calibrating the aircraft, we were off to work initially using a ULV formulation of DDT applied at three pints per acre through the early model belt driven A700 Micronairs. This meant we could treat 120 acres with one load! This was a big thing for a Tiger Moth that was carrying only 45 gallons of material. Typically, with spray bars the Tiger Moth had sprayed at two gallons per acre, with a 22.5-acre load. This went on day after day, flying at an altitude 1000 feet MSL with air temperatures +35° C, until December 2. We logged 105 hours, with me covering about 10,000 acres in the Tiger Moth.

We worked the cotton fields near the Blue Nile River at Sennar and Singa. We also treated cotton

around the White Nile River at Kosti. Usually, the work was straightforward, but we did have a number of interesting events.

One morning we flew to Singa in the company of Jim McMahon who was flying the Auster. Jim landed first and taxied past Sudanese people in wooden beds lying in the open. We saw Jim's propeller waving a white flag as he taxied. After landing, we discovered, much to our surprise, he had taxied through a bed and the white flag was its sheet. Fortunately, the woman in the bed vacated before Jim joined her! The propeller was slightly bent, but was restored by the correct use of a big hammer.



*Crop Culture's Auster Alpha G-APCY about to start its crop spraying run*

We had an engineer, Ted Cheal, working with us. He often went with me to various airfields in the Tiger Moth. Its hopper had a seat installed. With the lid removed and hopper cleaned, it was a good way to travel. On many occasions I had another passenger, a Rhesus monkey that we called "Contact". (The Sudanese caught monkeys by leaving a bowl of wine at the bottom of the monkeys' tree. The monkeys would come down and drink the wine, then pass out.)

Little Contact was given to us one morning with a bad headache after his capture. He was put on a chain and was given to Ted, who was seated in the hopper. On engine start-up, Contact took fright, jumping onto the top wing. Ted pulled him down and was bitten for his effort. Therefore, Contact was relegated to the rear locker, emerging upon arrival somewhat subdued. He soon learned his place was in the aircraft's locker on ferry flights. He would hop in quite happily, ready to go. At the season's end, Contact joined the zoo at Khartoum.

The Sudan is a bird's paradise. Because of this, we had many bird strikes. I once hit a Nile goose, which lodged itself in the wing of the Tiger Moth. When I landed, the Sudanese crew gathered it from the wing and cooked it for dinner. A couple of days later the performance was repeated with an Ibis. I gave this bird to the crew and suggested they cook it for dinner. I got some very dirty looks. Peter Charles nudged me and said, "Ibis and crescent beaks to Muslims are sacred." I left feeling rather stupid.

At Kosti we stayed in a village with a large wooden fence around the perimeter. It had a gate that was shut at sundown. This was to keep the lions out. We could hear them roaring quite close after dark and were pleased to have the fence.

Toilets consisted of a hole in the ground with an encircling fence. I was busy on one occasion, looking down into the hole, when I saw movement. I mentioned this to our Sudanese manager, who said that the hole was full of bats. They would stream out of the hole as night fell. We made sure toilet visits were daytime only!

One day, working off the strip where Jim had demolished the lady's bed, Peter said, "One more trip and then we'll stop for lunch". I followed shortly, flying back to the base strip for lunch. No Peter! I flew back to the main operating strip to look for him, but still no Peter. I now had to find him. I flew all over the area we had been treating, but could not see him. Finally, just outside of the spraying area, I saw a red rudder sticking out of the elephant grass. Peter was on the fuel tank jumping up and down and waving like a madman. I returned to the airstrip. When we reached Peter, he said, "I pranged into the grass over an hour ago. I watched you flying by, spraying, then off for bloody lunch. I thought you would never come back!" He had hit a bird with his propeller, breaking it. He landed straight-ahead in the bamboos without too much trouble. Sixteen Sudanese men picked up the Tiger Moth and carried it 200 yards to a road where it was dismantled and towed back to base. Peter, being an aircraft engineer, set to

repairing the aircraft in time for our trip to West Africa at the end of the season.



*Sorting out Tiger Moth G-AMVF after a forced landing following a bird strike*

Good, working airstrips were a problem at times. One morning I ferried the Tiger Moth across from the Blue Nile River to Kosti on the White Nile River with Ted Cheal riding in the hopper seat. When we arrived, we found the irrigation system had cut the airstrip in half, leaving only about 250 yards useable. I decided to land towards the mud, rather than towards the canal bank. We touched down without any problem, but with the hard ground and no brakes, we roared into the mud. I yelled, "Hang on, Ted!" We stopped in a great splash of muddy water, fortunately not flipping over the aircraft. We had to remove all of the atomizers, etc. to reduce enough weight for me to takeoff. We then decided to work off a road with a flagman stopping the traffic for takeoffs and landings.

By December 10, the season drew to a close and we ferried the three aircraft back to Khartoum and replaced the ferry flight rubber bag tanks in the Tiger Moth hoppers, after much cleaning. We were off to Crop Culture's base at Tiko in the British Cameroons, West Africa. I again flew the Auster. Departing on December 13, we flew to El Obied, El Fasher and El Geniener in the Western Sudan, where so much horror has been happening in recent years. The next day took us to Fort Lamy in French Equatorial Africa via Abeche, where we stopped for fuel and found the Auster's tailwheel was flat. I taxied off the runway, followed by the Tiger Moths, shutting down the engines. While checking the tailwheel, an Air France DC-4 landed and rolled past us with its crew waving.

Once the DC-4 unloaded, the crew came over to see what two Tiger Moths and an Auster were doing in the middle of Africa. After a nice chat, they returned to their aircraft started up and took off past us. We returned to changing the tailwheel, only to hear a change in engine note from the DC-4. We looked up to see it at 200 feet carrying out a procedure turn followed by a fly-by past us at 20 feet with passengers looking terrified out of the windows. The crew gave us the "thumbs up" prior to climbing steeply away, wagging the wings. We called it "the fly-by of the century". With the tailwheel repaired, we continued to Fort Lamy for an overnight where we enjoyed oysters flown in from Paris earlier that day.

Finally, we were on to Tiko on December 16 after a total of 25.5 tach hours of ferry flying. The aircraft were left at Tiko. We flew airline as passengers to Lagos, Nigeria and from there via a BOAC Argonaut (The Argonaut was a DC-4 with Rolls Royce Merlin engines) to London just in time for Christmas.

Finally, my adventure in the Sudan was over. I am so glad that I went there to spray cotton. It was one of my great lifetime aviation experiences.

John Freeman

*For those interested in the history of some of the aircraft mentioned, Tiger Moth G-ADGT was flying with the Tiger Club at Headcorn until the 18 July, 2010 when a crosswind landing went wrong and it ended up in a hedge, G-AMVF was sold to Australia in 1959 to Agricultural Aviation but only lasted to January, 1960 when it spun in at Gylanda Station, Queensland and was written off and Alpha G-APCY followed it to Australia in 1984 and is still extant there.*

**Issue No. 7 of Britten-Norman News in 1969 carried a headline report about the remarkable success of Aurigny Air Services since it started operations in March 1968.**



# ISLANDER COMMUTER SUCCESS



*G-AVCN is on the left*

## **100,000 passengers carried in less than 18 months by Aurigny Air Services with five Islanders**

"By the end of August, 1969, Aurigny Air Services had carried more than 100,000 passengers in the 18 months since they started operating with Britten-Norman Islanders in March, 1968. In that time the five B -2 Islanders have made more than 23,000 landings in 6,700 flying hours.

In June, 1969, the Islanders carried over 10,000 passengers and 25 tons of freight.

In July, Aurigny were scheduling 76 sectors per day offering over 600 seats; running 27 return flights daily between Jersey and Guernsey, eight return flights between Alderney and Guernsey and three return flights daily on the Alderney to Jersey route.

On July 11, 331 passengers and 804 kilos of freight were carried on the Jersey to Guernsey route alone, and on July 30 the Islanders carried 632 passengers on all routes-a load factor of 93%.

Aurigny increased their schedules in August to 84 sectors offering a total of 672 seats daily, mainly on the Jersey-Guernsey route. During this month the five Britten-Norman Islanders were carrying an average of 500 passengers every day.

In addition, the Islanders are adding to their reputation for profitable versatility by regularly carrying more than 25 tons of freight every month. Fresh fruit and vegetables, tinned food, groceries, daily papers, machine parts, outboard motors, 9ft. surf boards, motor exhaust pipes, computer cards, etc., are all typical of the loads carried in the Islander's large 168.5 cu. ft. cabin.

The inter-Channel Island routes now operated by Aurigny with the BN-2A Islanders have previously proved uneconomical for other operators with a variety of larger and more costly aircraft. With five of the ten-seat Britten-Norman Islanders, *which together cost less than one 18-seat turbo-prop twin*, the Aurigny formula of reliable high frequency schedules has proved to be not only a commercially viable answer but has also given the community a frequency of service which has generated a steady increase in traffic."

*The popularity of the services offered by Aurigny Air Services was such that rather than buy more Islanders a higher capacity aircraft was needed to meet passenger demands. John Britten and Desmond Norman were consulted by Aurigny's founder Sir Derrick Bailey over the need for a 16 seat aircraft that still retained the rugged dependability and "no frills" of the Islander.*

*Thus the concept was developed for a three- engine Islander, designated the BN-2A Mk.III, having a high degree of airframe and engine commonality with the standard BN-2 Islander type. The aircraft offered extremely good economy of operation in terms of horse power per passenger and also enjoyed around 80% commonality with the Islander airframe and engines. Sir Derrick Bailey had played a key role in the evolution of the "Mk.III Islander" concept and adopted the same "You build it I'll buy it" approach as he had with the Islander 2 years earlier. In October 1971 Aurigny's first Trislander G-AYWI was put into service - remarkably the type is still operating with Aurigny some 44 years on.*



## Aurigny Air Services' Trislander Fleet News



*Aurigny Air Services Trislander, G-RLON, at East Midlands Airport, 5 January, 2015.*

In the November issue of BNAPS News we reported that Trislander G-BDTO had been flown to Cumbernauld for major overhaul and its SB190 strip-down and corrosion check with Cormack Aircraft Services.

On 5 January, 2015, Aurigny Air Services' long serving Trislander, G-RLON, was flown to Cumbernauld for similar work, again routing via East Midlands Airport for refuelling.

Trislander, G-JOEY is scheduled to go for its major overhaul and SB190 check after G-RLON returns.

Over the coming year Aurigny Air Services is expected to be transitioning from their Trislander operations with the introduction of the Dornier 228s on the Guernsey to Alderney and Alderney to Southampton routes.

It appears that with their remaining three Trislanders cleared for another two years of operation, Aurigny Air Services will have an easier time during the transition period.



*View of the Pennines from Trislander, G-RLON, en route to Cumbernauld, 5 January, 2015.*

Photographs courtesy of Michael Owen

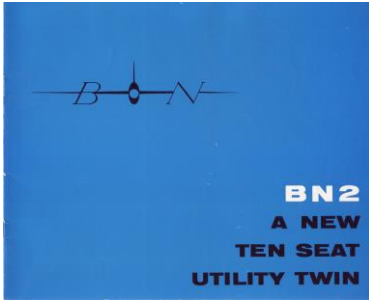
## Retired Aurigny Air Service Trislander G-FTSE Takes on a New Role



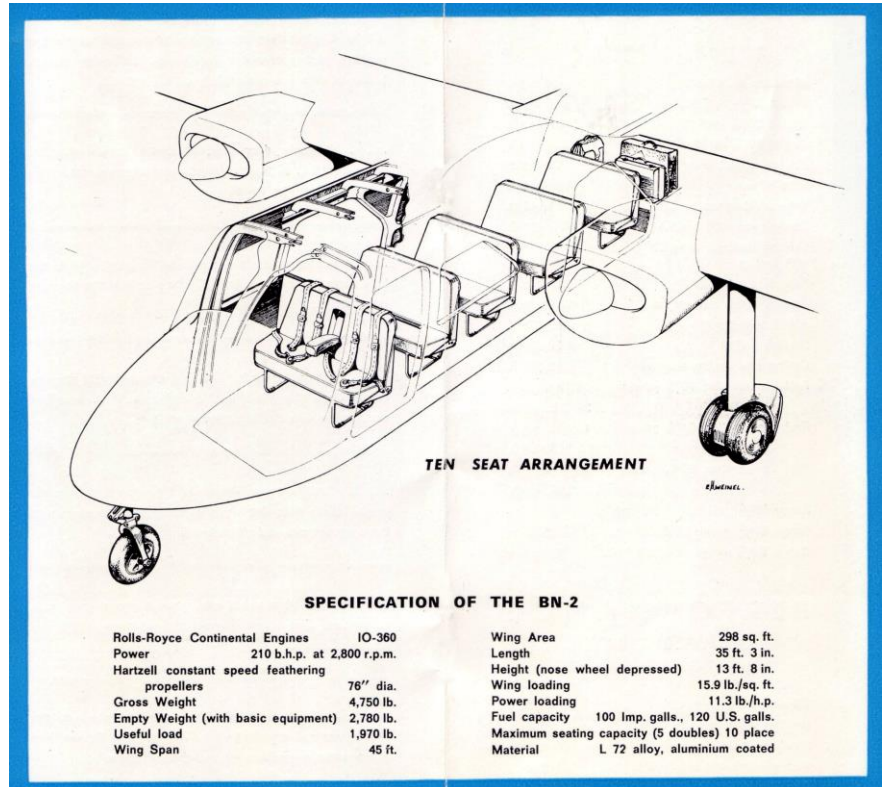
*Front fuselage of Trislander, G-FTSE, that is being converted into an exhibit, photograph courtesy of Tim Osborne.*

Aurigny Air Services Trislander, G-FTSE, was withdrawn from use in 2014 and later on dismantled. Whilst this is a bit of a sad end for an aircraft that had provided many years of faithful service, it is some compensation to report that all is not lost as the front fuselage has been retained and will be spray painted in yellow and taken around as an exhibit to local schools. and fetes.

## 50 Years Ago – First BN-2 Brochure Issued



Known initially as just the BN-2 this early brochure clearly presented the practical and beneficial features of the new British aircraft design that was soon to emerge as the "BN-2 Islander" in June, 1965. Note that British Westpoint faded from the scene before the BN-2's first flight and the main wheel fairings were not adopted for the prototype or production aircraft.

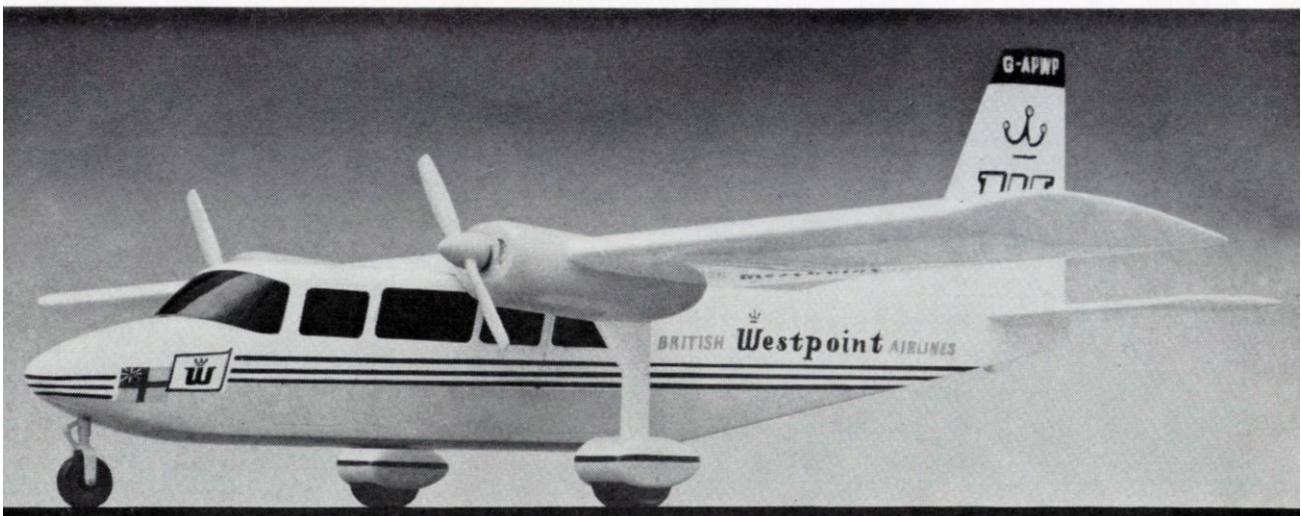


**The BN-2** is a completely new aircraft developed specifically for the commercial short haul operator. It is a twin-engined utility with a passenger capacity that makes possible drastic reductions in seat-mile costs. Every part of the BN-2 has been designed with the sole aim of creating a safe, efficient and exceptionally economic twin at a price within reach of every commercial light aircraft operator in the world.

Steady advance in aircraft and engine design has made possible a plane that provides ten-seat capacity for the same order of horsepower found in today's smaller executives. The large cabin of the BN-2 with wide doors on both sides gives unequalled flexibility for passenger, freight or mixed operations. The walk-in floor height is a boon to passengers and freight handlers. It is not necessary to climb past cargo to reach the seats; three doors disposed along the length of the cabin provide direct access to all parts including the cockpit.

The BN-2's excellent power-to-weight ratio and generous wing area provide far better field performance than any other aircraft in its class together with the single-engine climb demanded today for public transport operations. This performance comes hand in hand with extremely low maintenance costs because there are no complicated gimmicks in the BN-2 to waste mechanic hours and cause costly down time. Simplicity with strength and accessibility is the keynote.

The BN-2's clean lines, large wing set high and long tail arm provide the steady flying qualities that allow pilots to operate with complete confidence under all conditions.



The exact release date of this brochure is not known at present but is believed to be in late 1964 or early 1965. It appears that there was not much advance publicity for the BN-2 project, if anyone can help with background information regarding this aspect please get in touch.

## "Islander 50" June, 2015 – Preliminary Notice



*BNAPS/BN Historians  
"Islander 50"  
badge design*

More information about the events schedule and details of "Islander 50" events and celebrations will be presented at the BNAPS social meeting on 26 March, 2015

"Islander 50" will start when the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first flight of the prototype BN-2 Islander, G-ATCT, is commemorated on Saturday 13 June, 2015, at Bembridge Airport.

The 13 June commemoration day will include dedication of a commemorative plaque and a re-enactment of the first flight. This will be supported by a heritage exhibition and unveiling of two specially commissioned paintings produced by local artist Ivan Berryman. This will lead on to a weekend of celebration on 20/21 June, 2015 that will include roll out of the fully fitted out fuselage of Islander, G-AVCN.

BNAPS is in contact with the owners of Bembridge Airport, the Propeller Inn, Vectis Gliding Club, Bembridge Heritage Society and other local interests to ensure that "Islander 50" pays a full and well deserved tribute to the achievements of John Britten, Desmond Norman and all those who worked with them to create the BN-2 Islander - a classic design at the outset and later to become Britain's best-selling civil transport aircraft.

"Islander 50" also provides an opportunity to look ahead to the future when BNAPS has completed the restoration work and Islander G-AVCN, is fully assembled and on public display and to thank all those individuals and organisations that have given the project their valuable support over the years.

Also recognised is the fact that 50 years on BN-2 Islanders and Defenders continue to be in production and of the 1250+ aircraft delivered by Britten-Norman to date around 600 or more are still in service around the world.

**Can you help?** – In reports of the first flight of G-ATCT that appeared in Flight magazine and the Isle of Wight County Press in June 1965 it was stated that Andy Coombe was on board as flight test observer. Some doubts have been raised as to whether this was in fact the case based on recollections of those who were there at the time. If anyone can help unravel the mystery then BNAPS would be pleased to hear from you.

### VCN Model Proposal



Thanks to the efforts of our BNAPS Supporter Berend Weerda based in Belgium a sample has been made of a model of Islander G-AVCN for evaluation. Once some detail points are sorted out, such as the need for straight wingtips, it is proposed that the model will be available in a definitive form. When sufficient orders are received it will be possible to get a batch of the models manufactured. This initiative will get under way in the run up to "Islander 50".

The model has a span of about 380mm (15 inches) and is mounted on a hardwood display stand.

### BNAPS Christmas Meal at The Propeller Inn

Twenty nine BNAPS supporters and guests had an enjoyable evening at the Propeller Inn on 12 December, 2014, on the occasion of the BNAPS Christmas meal. The evening's entertainment was provided by Dave "The Hobbit" when he conducted a rendering of the Twelve Days of Christmas. A good time was had by all and thanks go to Helen Blake and her staff at the Propeller Inn for making this a memorable occasion.

## BNAPS Items for Sale

BNAPS Ltd is the sales arm of BNAPS and in selling books and memorabilia etc. makes a significant contribution to our restoration funds. These items can be purchased direct from BNAPS Ltd, at BNAPS events and sales stands and by mail order. If you need a current price list or wish to purchase specific items please contact Rita Edgcumbe on 01983 875790 or by e mail: [m\\_edgcumbe@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:m_edgcumbe@yahoo.co.uk)



**BNAPS mug** decorated with a striking image of G-AVCN and is dish washer proof. Price for BNAPS Supporters is £5.00 and for non-members £6.00, UK p&p is £2.00.



**VCN Postcard Set**  
8 cards in a presentation folder  
£5.00/set including UK p&p



**BNAPS fridge magnets and key rings-**  
Price for members is £2.00, for non-members £2.50  
UK p&p is £1.00

**BNAPS on the Internet** - information about BNAPS, including back issues of BNAPS News, can now be found on Ivan Berryman's website: [ivanberrymandirect.com/bnaps.htm](http://ivanberrymandirect.com/bnaps.htm)

### More BNAPS Supporters Needed

If any BNAPS Supporters Club member knows of someone who would be interested in joining please pass on contact details to our BNAPS Membership Secretary, Rita Edgcumbe.

The principal aims of the BNAPS Supporters Club are:  
"to assist BNAPS to preserve the history and aircraft of Britten-Norman through member donations and to provide assistance with the day-to-day operations of the charity"

Anyone with an interest in local aviation heritage is welcome.

As a point of clarification, whilst BNAPS has contact with B-N Group from time to time, as a charitable trust BNAPS is an independent organisation.

### **Forthcoming BNAPS Events**

Our next BNAPS Social Evening will be held at the Propeller Inn, Bembridge Airport on Thursday, 26 March, 2015 (to be confirmed). Please attend at 1900 for a 1930 start, no entry charge, all are welcome, donations will be gratefully received. There will be a raffle and the opportunity to purchase BNAPS merchandise.

This evening will include a briefing on the planned "Islander 50" events over the period 13 June to 21 June to commemorate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first flight of the BN-2 prototype, G-ATCT together with a presentation about the origins of the B-N Islander

### **BNAPS Trust**

BNAPS is a Registered Charity, No. 1100735, set up to "preserve the history and aircraft of Britten-Norman with the support of members' subscriptions, sponsorship and donations"

BNAPS registered address is:  
The Great Barn,  
Five Bells Lane,  
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Stockbridge,  
Hampshire,  
SO20 8EN.

Trustees are Peter Graham, Bob Wilson, Guy Palmer and Bob Wealthy. Bob Wealthy is now Chairman of the Board of Trustees effective from 13 November, 2013.

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