



# BNAPS News

## July 2019

BNAPS News Vol 9 Iss 4 – July 2019

### Islander G-AVCN On Show at BNAPS Workshop Open Day 29 June, 2019

BNAPS opened its workshop to visitors on Saturday 29 June where Islander G-AVCN was on show with the wing and fuselage joined and standing on its wheels, a sight that had not been seen for nearly 20 years. Visitors were able to view the various other parts of the aircraft awaiting installation and took advantage of the excellent tea coffee and cakes organised by Rita Edgcumbe and Jeni Gallagher.

Members of the restoration team were on hand to assist visitors and all in all we had a good day. Many thanks go to all those who helped to make the day a success.



*Views from  
the  
Workshop  
Open  
Day*



*Above – BNAPS  
helpers on the  
day  
Left – Rita and  
Jeni organised  
the catering  
Right – Part of  
the exhibition  
items on show*



**In this issue of BNAPS News:**  
**G-AVCN final assembly progress;**  
**Recovery of VCN from Puerto Rico in 2000**  
**Plus more news of Islanders and Trislanders around the World**

## BNAPS Supporters Fund Raising Appeal – July 2019



Dear BNAPS Supporter,

Restoration B-N Islander G-AVCN has reached the stage where the wing lift has been successfully achieved and with the wing and fuselage joined such that we can now see the emergence of the complete aircraft nearly 10 years after the dismantled aircraft was recovered and brought under cover for safekeeping and restoration in 2010. The restoration project has only been possible thanks to the dedicated efforts of BNAPS restoration team and the continuing support from BNAPS Supporters Club members, together with individual donations, grants and awards, fund raising initiatives and support from various organisations.

Islander G-AVCN is an important part of the UK's aviation heritage and is seen as a tribute to the vision and technical brilliance of John Britten and Desmond Norman together with all who worked with them to make the Islander one of the most successful commercial aircraft ever produced in the UK. This message needs to be brought before a wider audience and BNAPS Trustees will be spending more time and effort to seek a permanent home for G-AVCN to enable it to be put on public display on the Isle of Wight in the near future.

An aspect of increasing interest is that of G-AVCN supporting an educational purpose to help explain what it means to design, build and operate an aircraft. Whilst G-AVCN will never fly, it will have fully functioning flight controls and electrical systems that can be demonstrated. Also there is an opportunity for the restoration team to tell something about the skills and techniques used during the restoration project. In support of the education theme, and to generally promote interest, BNAPS is about to start work on an "Islander Experience" facility using the front section of an Islander fuselage. Initially this will be a "sit in" exhibit but the longer term plan is to develop it as a representative Islander flight simulator.

For more information regarding the above please contact BNAPS by email [bob@bnaps.org.uk](mailto:bob@bnaps.org.uk) or Telephone 01329 315561. Fundraising is a continuing activity and all donations large and small will be gratefully received.

Yours sincerely,

Bob Wealthy, Britten-Norman Aircraft Preservation Society Chairman

### Isle of Wight Sandown Bay 50+ Club Sponsored Walks to Raise Funds for BNAPS.

BNAPS was invited to attend a tea party on 24 July at the end of the last walk of the series.

A giant cheque for the funds raised by the sponsored walkers was presented to BNAPS Chairman, Bob Wealthy, and BNAPS restoration team volunteer, Keith Winter – see photo on the right.

Thanks go to Charlotte Winter for organising the sponsored walks and to all the walkers who took part- their efforts to help BNAPS are most appreciated.



## **G-AVCN Restoration Progress Report May 2019 – July 2019**

- 1. Wing and Fuselage:** With the wing lifted and supported in a horizontal position on the adjustable wing trestles and the fuselage positioned under the wing, the alignment process got under way to align the holes in the 4 attachment fittings of the wing and fuselage. The wing to fuselage fixing bolts were then inserted. Nose and main landing gear wheels were fitted. The fuselage support cradle was removed and the aircraft lowered onto temporary wooden blocks under each main undercarriage axle to keep the tyres just clear of the ground. The wing stands, adjusted their lowest height setting, were positioned further outboard under the wing to provide addition span-wise support whilst work continues. Areas of the wing leading edge having small dents that were not accessible when the wing was in the vertical position have been filled, undercoated and top coat painted.
- 2. Installation and Rigging of Ailerons:** Port and starboard ailerons have been installed. Some detail fitting was required to clear some corrosion on the inner bearing section to enable the hinge bolts to be fitted. Aileron cables will be rigged at a later stage.
- 3. Installation of Tail Plane and Elevator:** Tail plane has been installed. The elevator will be installed when the fin and rudder installation is complete.
- 4. Installation of Fin and Rudder:** The Aurigny lion logo that was made based on what was thought to be good information proved to be too large. The logo has now been remade to the correct size. The logos have been put in place and fin installation is now going ahead as originally planned.
- 5. Installation of Flaps and Flap Actuator Drive Motor:** Port and starboard flaps have been installed. Installation of the flap actuator is awaiting a minor structural modification to accommodate the later spec actuator that is now available.
- 6. Installation of Navigation Lights and Strobe Light:** Electrical wiring for the nav lights and the strobe light has been connected following the joining of the fuselage and wing. The strobe light has been installed temporarily to check it is functioning. Nav lights will be installed at a later stage of final assembly.
- 7. Engines and Mounting Frames:** The engine mounting frame and supporting struts have been assembled preparatory to installing the port engine
- 8. Construction of Wing profile Boards:** Extended length wing profile boards have been made to go with a pair of adjustable wing stands that are being made. When The new wing stands are available the wing stands on loan from B-N will be returned.
- 9. Missing Items List:** The list has been maintained by Bryan Groves and the updated list circulated as necessary.
- 10. Parts Donations:** Thanks go to Isles of Scilly Skybus for donation of a number of fuselage trim items, see photo below:



## G-AVCN Restoration Progress Report May 2019-July 2019 (continued)

The following series of captioned photographs show the results of some of the work undertaken in the last period:



Picture 1

*Fuselage positioned ready for the joining process to get under way. The adjustable wing stands loaned by B-N were essential for the success of the process. At this stage the wing stands were mounted on the wheeled base units that had been specially made.*



Picture 2

*Another view of the fuselage ready to be joined to the wing.*



Picture 3

*View of the wing and fuselage after the wheeled supports had been removed from the wing stands.*

**G-AVCN Restoration Progress Report  
May 2019-July 2019 (continued)**



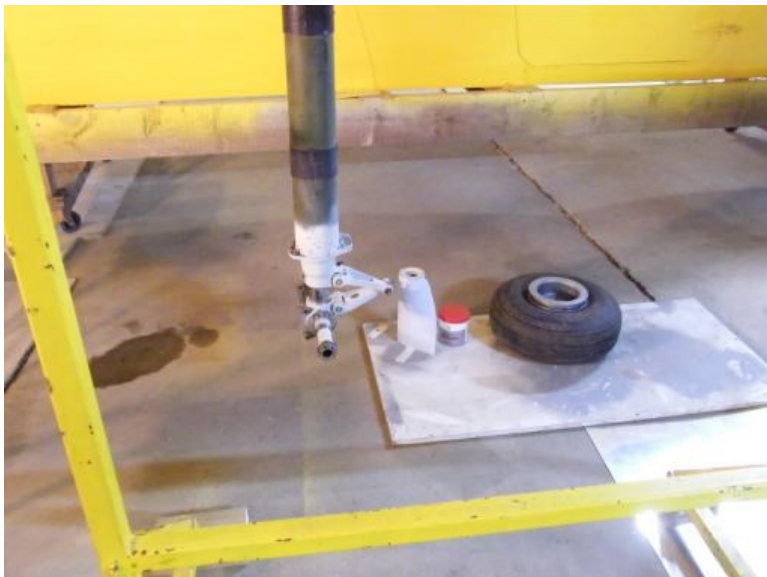
Picture 4

*Wing now lowered on to the fuselage to enable insertion of wing bolts.*



Picture 5

*Close up view of the fuselage to wing join area.*



Picture 6

*Starboard main landing gear wheels in process of being attached.*

**G-AVCN Restoration Progress Report  
May 2019-July 2019 (continued)**



Picture 7

*Tim Barton (left) and Bob Wilson are seen here attaching the port main landing gear wheels.*



Picture 8

*Port main landing gear with wheels attached.*



Picture 9

*Tim Barton installed the nose landing gear wheel.*

## G-AVCN Restoration Progress Report May 2019-July 2019 (continued)



Picture 10

*Nose landing gear ready for the fuselage to be lowered.*



Picture 11

*Fuselage support frame has been removed.  
Wing stands had reached the limit of adjustment which required the main landing gear to be supported on blocks.*



Picture 12

*Fin, rudder, flaps, ailerons and tail plane were made ready for installation.  
Bryan Groves had prepared installation kits for each item to ensure that the installation work could proceed with confidence.*

## G-AVCN Restoration Progress Report May 2019-July 2019 (continued)



Picture 13

*A key activity involved routing the aileron cable through the top structure section before the wing and fuselage were joined.*



Picture 14

*With wing stands moved to an out board position members of the restoration team are seen here installing the starboard aileron.*



Picture 15

*Starboard flap ready for installation.*



**G-AVCN Restoration Progress Report  
May 2019-July 2019 (continued)**



Picture 16

*Left to right, Keith Winter, Mark Porter, Bryan Groves and Bob Ward check the hinge bolts and hinge bearings before installing the starboard flap.*



Picture 17

*Starboard flap in the process of being installed.*



Picture 18

*Left to right, Maurice Dyer, Bob Ward, Keith Winter and Mark Porter are seen here installing the tail plane.*

**G-AVCN Restoration Progress Report  
May 2019-July 2019 (continued)**



Picture 19

*Bob Ward securing the tail plane attachment bolts.*



Picture 20

*View of the tail section from the starboard side after the tail plane had been installed.*



Picture 21

*View of the tail section from the port side after the tail plane had been installed.*

**G-AVCN Restoration Progress Report  
May 2019-July 2019 (continued)**



Picture 22

*Paul Brook worked on the electrical wiring installation in the area of the wing to fuselage join.*



Picture 23

*Patrick Gallagher carried out some remedial work to the starboard wing leading edge where some small dents had been identified after the wing was moved to the horizontal. The dents were filled and the affected areas undercoated and top coated.*



Picture 24

*Steve Cooley carried out some detail work on the port engine firewall to ensure that the engine mounting frame struts could be installed correctly.*

**G-AVCN Restoration Progress Report  
May 2019-July 2019 (continued)**



Picture 25

*Fuselage was tilted back on its tail to provide easier access to the fin attachment fixings during installation.*



Picture 26

*View of the nose section of the fuselage with the nose wheel supported on one of the access platforms to ensure stability.*



Picture 27

*View of the tail section showing improved access for fin, rudder and elevator installation*



Picture 28

*The fin with one of the new Aurigny Lion logos in place*

## G-AVCN Restoration Progress Report May 2019-July 2019 (continued)

### Work planned for the period through to completion of final assembly

The following tasks will then be carried out during the final assembly sequence, not necessarily in order. The extent of the work will be restricted in some areas to avoid nugatory work, bearing in mind that there will be the need to take the aircraft apart at a later stage for storage or transport to a final display location:

- 1 Temporarily fit the wing to fuselage fairings so they can be easily removed
- 2 Finish the fuselage painting (nose area and cheat lines);
- 3 Slave fit the fin, rudder and rudder trim tab;
- 4 Slave fit the elevator and elevator tab;
- 5 Slave fit flaps, install flap actuator positioning electrical wiring and indicator;
- 6 Install the engines and propellers and all associated dressing items, fit nacelles;
- 7 Fit undercarriage fairings;
- 8 Paint remaining items such as engine nacelles;
- 9 Install fuselage interior trim, carpeting, seats;
- 10 Check/adjust flight and trim controls;
- 11 Check/adjust flap operation;
- 12 Install navigation lights, strobe light and associated electrical cabling, overall electrical check;
- 13 Overall inspection and detail remedial work and detail work for completion as necessary.



With Islander G-AVCN now well into the final assembly process it was thought timely to look at how Islander G-AVCN, or "Charlie November", was repatriated in late 1999/early 2000.

The article below first appeared in a supplement to the March 2000 issue of Islander News and is reproduced here nearly 20 years on as a tribute to Peter Graham, Allan Wright, Andy Clancey and Tim Barton who ventured out to Puerto Rico's Isla Grande Airport to bring the historic Islander "Charlie November" back home.

The report was compiled by Andy Clancey as a diary of events that resulted in G-AVCN arriving safely back at Bembridge on 6 March, 2000.



## Sojourn in San Juan or "How to put a 49ft Span Islander into a 40ft Container!"

### Introduction

Having made the decision to form Britten-Norman Aircraft Preservation Society (BNAPS), and to rescue the first production Islander, we now had to recover the aircraft from Isla Grande Airport, San Juan, in Puerto Rico. We knew she had no engines, so transporting her home by sea was the only option.



*Islander c/n 3 was seen in a derelict state at Isla Grande Airport when the team arrived in January 2000.*

In consultation with Britten-Norman we concluded it may just be possible to pack the whole aircraft in a 40ft container, if she was properly dismantled. Islander fuselages had been carried in a 40ft container before, but wings had always been boxed and carried in the open. We wanted to have the whole aircraft in one place, protected from the elements. However, the wing span is 49ft! Andy Howe,

Service Manager at Bembridge, had calculated we could reduce the wing span to just under 40ft. The spar box had a natural break some 9ft in from the edge of the tip at station 179 and there was an approved scheme to repair the wing from that point outwards. So, theoretically we could do it, but it had never been done before.

Initially Andy Howe had said he would come with us, but other company commitments came first, and he was unable to. He allowed one of his Service Engineers, Tim Barton, two weeks paid absence from BN to accompany us to Puerto Rico and carry out the task for which he now has the nickname "Wing Off Barton". What follows is the detailed account of our experiences: Repatriating Charlie November.

### Arrival

The BNAPS recovery team consisted of myself (Andy Clancey) and Allan Wright of BN Historians, Peter Graham from our main sponsor Airstream International Group Ltd., and Tim Barton (the brains!). We had all made our separate travel arrangements to take advantage of price and flexibility. This was particularly important in the case of Tim, so that if we encountered any unforeseen problems he would be able to delay his departure, without heavy price penalties. It was decided we should all leave on 17 January.

Allan was unable to get a flight that day, and followed a day later. The first to arrive in San Juan (SJU) were Pete and Tim, via Miami (MIA). The following morning they made their way by taxi to San Juan's Isla Grande Airport where the aircraft was located. After meeting the Torres brothers, Francisco (Paco) and Ruben, from whom the aircraft had been purchased, Pete and Tim were introduced to Carlos Reyes, the President of Isla Grande Flying School and Service Corp., on whose apron the aircraft was parked. Carlos immediately introduced other members of his family and team, and kindly offered BNAPS the full use of his facilities.

It was then time for Pete & Tim to go and take the first look at our investment. Initial thoughts of "Oh, what have we done?" were quickly dispelled. Tim briefed Pete on removing the engine nacelles and undercarriage leg fairings. Meanwhile I had departed from a very cold Newark (-12°) and was on route to SJU, whilst due to the vagaries of American Airlines' schedules Allan found himself on route to JFK rather than the planned MIA! From JFK he connected with a flight that got him in to SJU an hour earlier than his original schedule! I arrived at SJU after a good flight on new Continental 737-800 and decided rather than trying to meet up with Tim and Pete, I would spend the few remaining hours of light doing a bit of spotting at SJU.

The airport had changed a lot since my last visit in 1971. There were some good views from within the upgraded terminal, but only accessible as a ticketed passenger. I managed to find a left luggage office and dumped the case, then set off to try to find a better vantage point. As is common with most airports I found that the multi-storey car park gave good views of most areas. Movements were very steady, especially from midday onwards, and although American and American Eagle proliferate, most other US carriers operate here as well. There was a good selection of cargo movements being operated by all manner of types, including DC3s, CV340s plus all the usual jets. Some of the more interesting movements were Airbus types from TACA and ACES, and Dash 8s from LIAT and ALM.

Once the light failed it was time to find the hotel, and try to meet up with the others, very satisfied with my afternoon's jottings. When I arrived at the hotel in nearby Condado, I had missed Pete and Tim, who had gone to eat. I decided to await Allan's arrival, leaving a message for Pete and Tim to meet up with us at breakfast the next morning.

## **Day 2**

Wednesday morning dawned bright and clear; the forecast was for clear skies and temperature in the low seventies - quite cool for the time of year but very acceptable for

working in the open! Since Allan and I had awoken early we decided to have a walk along the coastline prior to breakfast. Already Islanders of Vieques Air Link and Isla Nena Air Service were plying their trade out to the Islands; we also observed N203PR, the Puerto Rican Government Islander on departure. At breakfast there was an air of excitement as plans for the day were discussed. First a quick trip into Condado for some essential supplies for the day. We then travelled by taxi to the airfield for our first sight of "Charlie November". Our first reaction to the state of the aircraft was one of disappointment. So many parts were missing! Our opinion soon changed as Pete and Tim's encouragement and enthusiasm convinced us that the aircraft was generally in good condition for its age, considering the time it had spent inactive and open to the elements.



*Head on view of Islander c/n 3 at Isla Grande Airport Puerto Rico. Engines, nose landing gear and instruments were all missing*

We spent a little while making notes and photographing other Islanders in the vicinity. Immediately next to us was N120DW (c/n 249), in a similar condition to 'CN. It was understood by Carlos, that it had been sold to PRALCO (Apple Air) who would use it to assist in the rebuilding of Trislander N127LB (c/n 1010). Behind N120DW was the bright yellow N4991X (c/n 228) of Double P Flying Corporation, which taxied away not long afterwards.



*Dismantling of Islander c/n 3 soon got under way*

So, to work: we were set to work dismantling the tail plane, rudder and elevator. Tim went in search of an air-line, but the aircraft was parked too far from the hangar for the hose to reach. The engineers at the flying school offered to take Tim to purchase some more

hose and fittings. Having concluded a satisfactory deal, Tim returned and was able to start drilling out the rivets on the wing tips. In the meantime Pete had drawn the short straw and was working inside the baggage bay in very cramped and hot conditions to undo the main bolts holding the tail plane in place. Progress was a very slow, and with a short break for lunch, it was not until mid-afternoon that most of the bolts had been removed. The area around the aircraft resembled a crash site with bits of Islander all around, but it at least indicated we were making progress.

I had contacted Agency Navemar, the shipping agent supplying the container, to ascertain when they would deliver. The young lady, Marie Bell, was helpful but it seemed that our requirements had not been fully explained by the shipping agency in the UK. I explained we required a container either on a low loader or with fork-lift points to facilitate the loading. Despite her assurances that she would do her best to arrange this, I am afraid I was not convinced, all we could do was wait and see.

During the day we had a visit from Ruben and Paco who chatted for some time explaining that they had formed Air Charter after the collapse of their mothers' company, Flamenco Airways. They both enthused about the Islander, and agreed that it is the only aircraft for their air charter operation. Its flexibility and ability to be easily converted to cover different roles, together with its ease of maintenance is crucial to the success of their operation. Paco then invited us to go "island hopping" at the weekend, an invitation we gladly accepted, although it would mean working on Sunday to keep to our schedule.

It was now late in the afternoon and time to get cleaned up and hit the town. The need of an ice cold Coors Light or Madang (local beer) was by now desperate. We decided to go to the local Houlihans for masses of steaks and ribs - as workers we have to keep our strength up! All the food and beer soon made us ready for our beds.

### **Day 3 (Thursday)**

Dawn came all too soon, and we rose around 07.00. Again the weather was clear, and promising to be even warmer. At breakfast we assessed the previous day's progress and Tim seemed pleased with the way things were going. More telephone calls to Marie Bell at Agency Navemar and still no definitive answer about the delivery of the container. We arrived at the airfield by 09.00 and immediately set about restoring N290VL to its former UK marks G-AVCN. We had brought along with us the registration already sprayed on to white fabric, so that we could easily place it over the top of the US marks. We had been granted the registration marks by the CAA, being officially

issued to c/n 3 on 13 January. (For the record the marks were applied to the aircraft at 10.00 on 20 January 2000).



*Allan Wright and Islander c/n 3 now with its original registration mark - G-AVCN*

We then set about removing the last bolt to remove the tail fin. What a difference to tackling this job being refreshed made; we soon had it removed. Tim showed Allan and I various fairings which were fixed by dozens of screws. These cover over the joints between the wing to the fuselage, and took some time to remove.



*Islander c/n 3 with the fin removed prior to starting the process of separating the wing and fuselage.*

We were then informed that the container would arrive within the hour; things were looking up. It is amazing how quickly things can change. Fine, the container arrived, but on a high trailer and no fork-lifting points. The driver spoke little or no English, and didn't seem able to understand my instructions about positioning the container. The airport authority driver who had escorted the container truck air-side was happy with the position of the trailer, so we decided it was easier to give in, especially as the escort was getting concerned about the time the operation was taking. At least now we had somewhere to store all the parts we had removed, and to lock away the tools and equipment at night.

We had already discussed at Bembridge the need to construct a wooden cradle with wheels for the fuselage and profiled cradles for the wing. Paco was approached regarding the purchase of wood and other materials we needed. He agreed to take us to a builders' suppliers the following morning. We decided to



return to the hotel to draw up our plans for the cradle and wing supports, but first we took measurements of the fuselage and drew a profile of the wing section. From this we were able to work out the exact quantities of timber required. We were still concerned about getting the timber cut to shape as we didn't have a jigsaw, nor had we found anyone on the airport with the necessary equipment to assist.



*Seats and external parts are removed and wing stands now in place*

After we had drawn up our plans, we decamped to a local Argentine restaurant, Che's, with the Torres brothers, and Andreas, one of Roblex Aviation's pilots. (Roblex operate Islander N821RR c/n 338, probably the best equipped and looking Islander in the Caribbean). A very congenial evening with lots of sangria and food was had by all.

#### **Day 4 (Friday) - The Longest Day**

Up again at 07.00, somebody had said I was on holiday! Quick breakfast, picked up by Paco and off to the airport where we dropped off Pete and Tim and then on to a builders yard. Little did I know that this was going to be the most frustrating day of the trip. Thank goodness we had Paco with us! At least he could speak the "lingo". I could not believe that virtually all the staff in this establishment could not, or would not, speak English. I don't know why, but perhaps I was very tired, but already my patience was going. There seemed to be little or no one serving. Eventually someone started to serve us, but it seemed an age to make him understand our requirements. He then told us there was no possibility of getting the wood cut that day, but it could be done on Monday or Tuesday!

By this time I was thoroughly uptight, and not impressed by the lack of service. I went off to search the store for some wheels for the fuselage cradle and some rope. Allan and Paco continued the delicate negotiations, and when I had cooled down (and found some wheels, but no rope), I returned to them just as the server announced that he could cut the wood and build the cradles for us. Initially I thought this was a con trick just to make some extra money. He quoted us \$110, and now with hindsight, I think

the guy was genuinely trying to assist us. When we quizzed him further he said that he had all the tools we needed, and would personally come to the airport that afternoon after work at around 18.00. I was still somewhat sceptical, but as I thought more about the task I realised that although I was confident we could make the cradles ourselves, someone with all the right equipment would find the task much easier. After a quick call on Paco's mobile to Pete, we agreed with the offer of help. We completed the purchase of the necessary wood and other materials. Much to my surprise, we were told it would be delivered to the airfield a couple of hours later.

However, our frustration was still not over, as we could not buy either the correct kind of rope, or plastic bubble wrap that was need to pack up the parts we had removed from 'CN. We had asked for bubble wrap at the builders' merchant, but it was difficult to find a direct translation for "bubble wrap". The server brought us all kinds of sheeting, except what we needed. It was not until Paco mimicked the noise the bubbles make when popped, did the assistant understand, only to reply, "No, we don't stock it"! Paco then took us to a Federal Express agent, Mail Boxes, who did sell bubble wrap, but I think he saw us coming and wanted to charge us \$230 for a full roll. Again we had difficulty making ourselves understood. When the shop assistant asked why we needed so much, we explained we needed it to wrap an aeroplane. "A model aircraft?" "No, a big one", we replied. "Oh, I see a big model aircraft". "No", we corrected him again, "A real aeroplane. A ten-seat high wing monoplane". He looked at us as if we were just out of a funny farm. "You want to wrap a ten-seat aeroplane in bubble wrap?!", he retorted with a quizzical look on his face. We decide to leave while we were marginally ahead declining his offer. We returned to the airfield feeling somewhat deflated by the morning's events.

Pete and Tim had obviously had a better morning. We could see real progress being made in removing the rivets in the skin panels on the wing in preparation for the removal of a section of the wing. The feasibility for this operation had been discussed in detail at the factory prior to our trip, and this would also be the first time it had been attempted. The purpose was to reduce the wing by approximately 5 feet (now we had the tips off) so that the remaining wing would fit in the 40 foot container. In truth there are only six stringers (3 top and 3 bottom) to cut, all the rest of the dismantling is accomplished by removing the leading and trailing edge and de-riveting all the panels in the spar box section to expose the six stringers. This was successfully completed during the afternoon with quite a lot

of satisfaction on how well it had gone.



*View of the Port wing after removal of a section of the wing box and leading edge.*



*Left to right, Peter Graham, Andy Clancey and Tim Barton with the wing box section that had been separated from the Port wing.*

During the afternoon Andreas from Roblex Aviation arrived and took Allan and I to look at their immaculate Islander N821RR, at their base on the opposite side of the runways from where we were working. Unfortunately due to some new concrete outside the hangar we were unable to get the aircraft outside for photography. We also had a good look over the company's two DC3s, both in excellent condition with new interiors. These aircraft, both freighters, fly regularly from San Juan to most points throughout the Caribbean. We also took the opportunity to inspect two dumped Islanders we had noticed. One we could easily see was N119DW (c/n 243) and the other was devoid of markings. We later found out that it was N88CA (c/n 191). Both were ex-Flamenco Airways, and N88CA would certainly not fly again, although we could not say the same about N119DW as it was in fairly reasonable condition.

While we were absent Pete and Tim had been working on disconnecting various control rods and cables in the wing. Allan then went to talk to Carlos (at the Flying Club) to see if they could assist with power and light for the carpenter we were expecting later. Initially Carlos suggested that Avitech (next door to the Flying Club ramp) may be able to assist as they had lots of exterior lights and were open late. However his request was not received with

much enthusiasm, so he offered his own facility and the use of some portable lights. Daylight was going fast so we finished work on the aircraft for the day, and awaited the arrival of Carlos Silo, the server from the builders' merchant. It was by now 18.45 and he had still not arrived. All we had was his bleeper number, so we made a call from the Flying Club, and his wife called back advising us that he was held up in traffic, but was on his way. At about 19.15 Carlos, the owner of the Flying Club, said that he was leaving for the day, but in a splendid gesture he left us his keys to lock up when we had finished! Eventually Carlos Silo, plus mate, arrived apologising for his delay, blaming the San Juan traffic which seemed just like home.



*Peter Graham, working on the wing structure around the wing bolts.*



*Peter Graham and Andy Clancey preparing the wing support cradles for use*

I must say that once they got started, they worked very quickly and within two hours had completed the fuselage and wing cradles. Despite all my earlier concerns, we all felt that our money had been well spent. We quickly packed away and were met by Paco and Ruben who had just returned from a day's flying. They gave us a lift to our hotel and confirmed the arrangements for the next day's "island hopping" trip. It was by now 22.00, and after a quick wash we went in search of refreshment. This was indeed the longest day!

## Day 5 (Saturday)

This was a relaxed day flying around the islands of Vieques and Culebra.

## Day 6

Up later, breakfast at 09.00 - well it was Sunday! We decided to go to the airfield and try to complete the remaining small tasks in preparation for lifting the wing on Monday. It was quite a fresh morning and there had been a lot of overnight rain. The sun soon got to work drying out the surface, and as the temperature rose so did the humidity - more like Puerto Rican weather. We busied ourselves lining the cradles with carpet from the cabin floor, which would help to give more protection and had the added benefit of making the cradles for the wing a snug fit.



*Vertical wing support cradles were fabricated and are seen here being fitted in place.*

We then met Denny, a one-time pilot of 'CN, who was able to give us some information on the history of Flamenco Airways. He also claimed to be the last person to fly 'CN before she was laid up. He was able to confirm that 'CN had finally been grounded when she was struck on the fuselage by the wing of a DC3 during a hurricane. He gave us the flight manual and promised to send us a copy of his log book. More importantly he believed that there were Islander jacks still on the airfield. We needed jacks to support the wing of 'CN during the lifting process. Denny thought that Caribbean Aircraft Maintenance, who look after the Government's Islander, N203PR, may have some. He also told us that the bird emblem on the tail of 'CN is a Pitirre, so we named our aircraft "Pitirre".

We decided there was not much more we could accomplish that day, and at 14.00 we decamped to a local bar for a snack and some liquid refreshment. Once fully refreshed we got a taxi to Old San Juan; the only chance we had to do any sightseeing and shopping. We spent quite a time walking around the Old Town and harbour admiring the huge cruise liners. We walked along the old fortification wall to the narrow entrance channel to the harbour. Stranded on the rocks was a Russian cargo boat which had lost its way in November. Despite

many attempts to pull her clear, it looks as if she may end her days being pounded by the heavy sea. Looking at the very narrow entrance it's a feat of seamanship every time a vessel navigates this tricky entrance. We then walked back through the Old Town, where by now there were street parties and music in celebration of the Festival of San Sebastian. This year it was an extra special occasion coupled with the new millennium. Christmas decorations were up everywhere; apparently these are not taken down until the annual Festival has ended. The crowds were increasing all the time, so we headed back to Condado for our hotel, but not before a meal of huge helpings of ribs at Tony Roma's to regain our strength!

## Day 7 (Monday)

Overnight rain again, but the forecast was fair. During breakfast we discussed how we were to proceed. We urgently needed to locate some jacks to lift the wing, as our lead from yesterday had been fruitless. Tim was confident that by jacking up the wing we would be able to remove the last four remaining bolts allowing the fuselage to drop on to the cradle. This could then be wheeled out from under the wing, and with the aid of a small forklift truck, the wing could be lowered and tipped upright on the cradles. Off to the airport, and again the usual friendly welcome at the flying school. We still desperately needed rope and bubble wrap, and armed with new information from Denny the day before, we had an idea where we could get some, but we had no transport. A member of the Flying Club, Edwin Lopez, came to the rescue, and Allan and I set off with him in his pick-up into San Juan in search of what we needed. First stop was a hardware suppliers (a little like our Wickes), where, to their credit, they spoke good English. We quickly located some rope, although it was cheaper to buy a whole reel of 1000 feet than the 4-500 feet we needed which would have been charged by the foot. After the hardware store, we headed off to Condado, where there was another branch of Mail Boxes. Thankfully word of the "lunatic Englishmen" had not reached them and we secured a roll of bubble wrap for a much lower price than had been quoted before.

On our return, Pete and Tim set off in search of jacks, and decided to try Avitech first as they were closest. We knew they had some jacks, but were not sure if they would be high enough. They returned shortly with two jacks, and the promise of a small forklift and drivers. We positioned the jacks with baited breath: yes, they were going to be OK. We quickly adjusted them to take the strain and started to remove the final bolts.

However, more frustration, we now needed the forklift, but the two drivers had gone to lunch!

Even with 33 years of accumulated grime the bolts were removed without too much problem, but we need to await the return of the drivers before we can continue. "I don't know about lunch, I think they have gone for a siesta!" I mused. Just as the delay was getting intolerable, they appeared. We supported the wing with ropes tied to the tie-down points. The jacks were then pumped a little higher and with a sudden wrenching noise the fuselage came away from the wing, settling on to the wooden cradle. We continued to raise the jacks, and as the undercarriage legs were now clear of the ground we had to pack wood under the legs to keep the wing stable. We kept up this operation until we had raised the wing approximately 8 inches, which gave us enough clearance to roll the fuselage out on the cradle.



*Side and front views of the wing and fuselage after separation.*

The next stage of the operation was to tip the wing over so it stood upright in the cradles, but I didn't think this was going to be as easy as Tim hoped. I suggested, "Would it not be better to remove the undercarriage legs first?" Tim replied, "I think they may be a real problem to get out." After a few minutes thought, Tim then announced, "Let us give it a try".

Earlier Pete and Allan had removed the majority of the retaining bolts for each leg. This involved them "doing a James Herriot" on the aircraft. The bolts holding on the top of the undercarriage leg have their heads located within the wing, with the other end protruding around the upper retaining rim of the leg. The operation was two man, one under the wing turning the nut, and the other on top of the

wing with his arm inserted up to the shoulder into an inspection hole, holding the nut with a spanner. The man on top was working in the dark, as there was no sight of the bolt head when his arm was in the hole! Allan and Pete alternated positions for each leg. With the bolts left loosened after this procedure, we were able to quickly remove the last couple of bolts on each leg, and now we were ready to remove the leg completely. Although Tim had expected this to be difficult, when it came down to it each leg came out easily! We now had just the wing on the forklift, and it was then lowered to the ground, resting on the engine fire walls, protected from damage by the ever useful seat cushions from 'CN.

Now we had the problem of raising the wing onto its leading edge into the custom made cradles. We hoped it would swing when lifted by the forklift, with four of us and the second driver gently guiding it down. We were right and the wing now sat comfortably on its leading edge, inside the cradles.



*Wing positioned vertically in the wing support cradles.*

Next we had to lift it into the container. There was no proper lifting point available for the forklift, so we put the forks in the centre section of the wing. The wing was gently lifted, until one end was in the container by some 18 inches. We had acquired a small metal trolley from the Flying Club, and placed this under the cradle in the container. Whilst we supported the wing the forklift moved to the end and put the forks under the cradle at the end of the wing in the open.

The plan was to carefully nudge the wing into the container with the forklift pushing from the end. However, this didn't happen, and unexpectedly the wing fell off the forklift back to the ground as we rushed out of the way. It had also turned level again. The fall was exacerbated by 20mph winds gusting up to 30mph, and the failure at the crucial moment of the wooden cradle on the forklift. A quick inspection showed that there was no crucial damage to the wing, and mercifully only a few cuts and bruises to the team. It could have

been much worse, considering that three of us were under the wing when it fell. I was particularly concerned for Allan, who was the last to appear on his feet again. Thankfully all he had was a cut and a bump on his head and no lasting damage (apparently!). We had all hurt our pride!



*The wing had to be inserted into the container in a horizontal position and turned to the vertical once inside.*

So now we had a level wing again, and to save a repeat performance, after much discussion and soul searching we decided to push the wing into the container still level, and turn it when inside out of the wind. With the wing level, the forklift could have a much more secure hold on the end in the open, with the trolley under the end inside the container. We easily accomplished the task and dispensed with the forklift. Now we had to turn the wing again, inside the container. After some brainstorming, and Tim's confidence, we modified the cradles and set to turning the wing upright. This was easier than we had envisaged and we now had the wing upright on its cradles in situ against the container wall - thankfully without further incident. We made the wing secure with rope, and as it was now quite dark, we packed the remaining pieces away and returned to our hotel for a wash before dinner (oh, and just a few beers!)

### **Day 8 (Tuesday)**

Breakfast at 08.00. I felt there was a subdued air, we all had some reservations on how we should continue. On reflection we had probably had a lucky escape, and it would be foolish to attempt the loading of the fuselage with the container still on the trailer and with the very inadequate forklift. I also believe that there was concern by us all on how we would be able to tie down the aircraft in the container. We decided we needed the help of the shipping agent as it had been indicated to us in the UK that they would assist with the tie down. We made contact with Marie Bell at Agency Navemar, and arranged for Pete and I to meet her. Fortunately the office was in the building of the shipping line that was to transport the container back to Felixstowe, and only a short

taxi ride away from the airport. After explaining our problem, Marie Bell spoke to her manager Sandy Blaquez, who suggested that the best action may be to call a representative from Harrison Line, James Leeson. To our surprise James was from the UK and although both girls had been helpful, discussing the problem with a fellow countryman seemed easier. James told us that the union rules did not allow the dockers to go off the port to work. However, after talking to Sandy they thought they may be able to find some agency workers who would come to the airfield with a big forklift truck and assist in loading the aircraft. James promised to call us that afternoon to advise what arrangements he had been able to make. Pete and I returned to the airfield feeling somewhat happier.



*The wing is seen here in a vertical position inside the container.*

Allan and Tim, in our absence, had emptied the container, and were busy wrapping loose parts of 'CN in bubble wrap. Many of these were packed into the fuselage, thus avoiding a lot of extra tying down in the container. Pete then said that Carlos was going to take him to a local tyre depot to collect some old tyres. We would use these to protect both the wing and fuselage during the transit.

We then received a telephone call to advise us that the forklift would be at the airfield at 08.00 the next day - another early start! Pete arrived back with several tyres. Some we positioned between the wing and the wall of the container. We then lashed the wing to the wall utilizing the rings at the top and bottom of the container. Tim and I were still very concerned with the tying down, particularly the potential of vertical movement.

We decided to put on some extra lashings, utilizing the holes where the ailerons are attached to the wing and around the engine mounts. We wanted to cut some of the tyres in half to place over some of the protruding sharper parts of the wing, but this task proved much more difficult than anticipated. The steel walls of the tyre almost defeated us, and after managing just one tyre in an hour we decided to abandon this exercise. It was now late

afternoon so we packed up for the day, knowing that by the end of the next day we should see the job completed.

### Day 9 (Wednesday)

An even earlier start as we had to be at the airfield by 07.45, ready for the forklift at 08.00. On arrival we saw that the forklift had already arrived. We explained the task needed to the crew, and they decided to attempt to load the fuselage into the container with the container still on the trailer.

However, after several attempts they realised this was not a good idea. After a conference they decided to remove the container from the trailer. Quite how they were going to manage this with no forklift points, I was not sure. I visualised such horrors as the container falling off the trailer and maybe even tipping over - at least we would know if we had secured the wing! My thoughts then switched, "even if they get the trailer off, how will they get a loaded container back on the trailer?" I just had time to console myself that we were insured when they started the operation. The idea was to lift the container sufficiently enough to allow it to be blocked up by wood.



*View of the initial stage of loading the fuselage into the container*

The forklift would then go around to the side to allow the huge blades to get under the floor. This was managed without too much difficulty, but we then had no wood left to put on the ground so that the forklift could get under the container to lift it back up again.

We all went in search of odd pieces of timber. I don't think I have ever been on an airfield so devoid of wood - normally, there are always pallets and lumps of timber lying around. Eventually we managed to find a couple of old chocks and old pallet, and together with bits of chipboard left over from the cradles, this just gave us enough clearance. We were then ready to load the fuselage into the container.



*Fuselage was finally manhandled into the container and secured in place alongside the wing.*

The final lift of the container back on to the trailer was straightforward, with the only difficulty being the positioning of the container directly above the lugs on the trailer corners.



*Fully loaded container was then lifted back onto its trailer ready to go for shipment to the UK.*

The driver had done a very fine job in locating the two lugs on the far side, and proceeded to lower his tines right down so the container was again on the blocks of wood on the near side. He then only had to lift the container on its edge, remove the blocks, and lower it back on to the lugs. Simple, but like all best laid plans, they don't always work! Although the container appeared to be in position, the lugs would not interlock, so the locks would not engage. After some more lifting and some serious blows with a very large hammer, the container seemed to drop a little and then settle on to the lugs,

allowing the locks to be engaged. Lots of relief all round, and we thanked the team for their efforts.

We were still concerned about the securing of the fuselage especially as it is only about two thirds of the height of the container. We packed the tyres around the fuselage and then set about lashing the fuselage to the side of the container. We also lashed the tyres in place so they would not move in transit. One thing I have learnt in my years at the airport is that rope is not ideal for lashing. With continued movement it becomes slack and it is best used in conjunction with ratchet straps and nets. However we had neither on site, but agreed we would need to buy some straps to ensure the load did not move. We wrapped all the other parts in bubble wrap and then packed them into the container.

We had almost completed our task - it took us merely eight working days. We are justifiably proud of our efforts, but must thank Tim for his patience, expertise and enthusiasm, without which we would have surely failed. As we packed the final few items into the container, Allan and I take our last look as the doors are closed at 19.00, ready for the pick up tomorrow. Allan and I say our farewells to Carlos and his staff thanking them again for all their help.

#### **Day 10 (Thursday)**

Peter was up early and went down to the airfield at 07.30 to ensure the container was safely collected by the transport company. The tractor unit was waiting by the security gate when he arrived. After arranging for an airside escort, the tractor unit made its way to the

container. On hooking up and trying to drive away, nothing happened - the trailer brakes were jammed on! Eventually, after increasing the engine revs the brakes released, and 'CN was on her way to the Harrison Line depot nearby.

Meanwhile, Allan and I packed our bags and got a taxi to the International Airport, in readiness for our flight to Miami. Again American airlines did their level best to thwart our plans by cancelling our flight; eventually we boarded another flight an hour later.

Tim made his way to Isla Grande to meet up with Pete. From here, with Ruben, they went to buy some ratchet straps. Armed with two ratchet straps they then went to the Harrison Line depot to play "hunt the container", which is played the in the same way as "look for the needle in the haystack"! All containers look the same, and there were hundreds of them! Assisted by two of the forklift crew who had helped us load the fuselage, the container was eventually located. The four of them fixed the ratchet straps; one to the fuselage and the other to the wing. After a final look at 'CN they closed and locked the doors.

Tim and Pete then spent the afternoon at leisure in San Juan, before returning to the hotel and then onto the International Airport for their journey home. As for 'CN, she would not see daylight again until we opened the container at Bembridge on 6 March!

Andy Clancey March 2000



*"Charlie November" arriving at Bembridge Airport in March 2000 .*

# Can you help rebuild first Islander plane?

**BRITTEN-NORMAN** has appealed for ex-employees to come out of retirement to rebuild the firm's first Islander, rescued from a Puerto Rican scrapheap.

G-AVCN "Charlie November" arrived at Britten-Norman's Bembridge hangar on Monday after being shipped from Puerto Rico where it was discovered languishing on the scrapheap.

Work is now set to start on the painstaking and time-consuming task of piecing together the first production Islander to take to the skies — which put Britten-Norman and the Island on the aviation map.

Restoration has been masterminded by Peter Graham, joint managing director of the Guildford-based Airstream International Group, and a registered charity preservation trust has been set up to complete the project.

Britten-Norman marketing services manager Sheila Dewart said: "It promises to be a time-consuming project, but it would be speeded up if volunteer ex-employees came forward. We would be delighted to hear from them.

"It would be particularly good if people who put Charlie November into the air 33 years ago were to make contact."



Members of the rescue team, from left, Allan Wright, Peter Graham, from Airstream, Tim Barton, from Britten Norman, and Andy Clancy. Andy and Allan, are from the Britten Norman Aircraft Preservation Society. 0003-c045-14

Above – News report about "Charlie November" in the Isle of Wight County Press, March 2000.

Below- View of the parts of "Charlie November" in the B-N Factory at Bembridge in mid-2000.



"Charlie November" made another (shorter) journey when it was taken from the B-N site to BNAPS restoration workshop at Harbour Farm, Bembridge, on 10 July, 2010.



News of present day Islanders and operators is always of interest and very welcome. Once again BNAPS News is indebted to Peter Smithson for giving his permission to publish his reports. This issue of BNAPS News includes reports of two of Peter's recent visits. One is a return visit to Romania and the INCAS Islanders and the second to Copenhagen to see Islander operator Copenhagen Air Taxis and the Royal Danish Air Force Home Guard Islanders.

All photographs are courtesy of Peter Smithson unless otherwise stated.

## Islanders in Romania Re-visited – Report by Peter Smithson

After a successful visit to Romania last year, I contacted my friend George and arranged another trip. I visited between the 3-6 June to catch up on the situation with the BN-2 community.

The three INCAS Islanders were all at Bucharest Banaesa, with only YR-BNR, c/n 824, being currently serviceable. YR-BNR is by far the most active Islander at present and has amassed a total airframe time of 3299 Hours, as of 6 June 2019, which is insignificant for an aircraft built in 1978. All the other Islanders have around 3000 hours on them as well which should give them years of life.

YR-BNM, c/n 808, is undergoing a 2 yearly corrosion check which is going well and should be given a clean bill of health over the next few weeks.

YR-BNN, c/n 804, has had the Garmin modification carried out which tidies up the cockpit beautifully. The aircraft currently has no C of A as there are some issues which need sorting before it can fly again.

YR-BNK, c/n 778, is currently undergoing an extensive rebuild and will join the other 3 INCAS aircraft once it has been refurbished.



INCAS Islander YR-BNR in action.



INCAS Islander YR-BNM during its 2 yearly corrosion check.

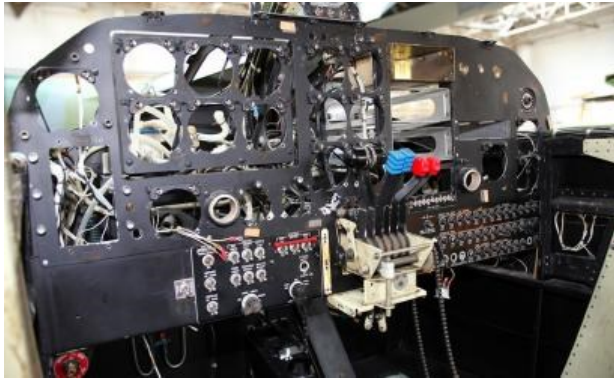


Left-INCAS Islander YR-BNN parked waiting for a C of A  
Right- View of Garmin avionics installation in YR-BNN.



Views of Islander YR-BNK at present in the process of a complete rebuild.

## Islanders in Romania Re-visited – Report by Peter Smithson



*Work in progress to rebuild the instrument panel of Islander YR-BNK*



Mr Ivascu, a retired ROMAERO engineer, is standing next to YR-BNK. He is the resident Islander expert having worked on them since 1969.

YR-BNK has an interesting past and an extract from the story of what happened is included with this visit report.

YR-BNH and YR-BNL have both been moved from their long term storage position by the side of the ROMAERO hangar, to a side of the ramp near to a 727.



*Islander YR-BNH, c/n 775.*



*Islander YR-BNL, c/n 790*

The ex-Romanian Air Force BN-2, No 130, is still preserved at the Romanian Air Force Museum near to Banaesa Airport.



*Islander 130, c/n 130, remains parked in the open at the Romanian Air Force Museum near Banaesa Airport.*

## **Islanders in Romania Re-visited – Report by Peter Smithson**

### **The story of B-N Islander YR-BNK and the “Escape from Bucharest”**

On the morning of Friday, 19 May 1978, two mechanics employed by CIPA (Centrul de Instruire a Personalului Aeronautic) Centre for Aeronautical Personnel Training, came to their workplace, Baneasa airport in Bucharest and decided to steal a plane and fly it all the way to Germany.

Viorel Nicolae (age 23) and George Florescu (age 25) had several reasons: George Florescu's cousin was not allowed to go to Germany for medical care and eventually, due to the rapid deterioration of his health, he wasn't able to escape with them, passing away three months later. They also lacked professional perspectives and as being detached from TAROM to the less glamorous CIPA, not allowed to have a passport, plus if they were caught by the Police while driving a motorbike without license, they were looking at 6 months in jail each.

At 2 pm, one of the aircraft Viorel was assigned to work on, a BN-2A-27 Islander registered YR-BNK that had recently landed after a training flight. This aircraft had previously been assigned to Aviasan, a nation-wide emergency medical flying service. Consequently, it still had large Red Cross signs on the fuselage. This detail was going to prove vital in the subsequent events. Viorel was very interested on how it behaved during the flight, asking the pilots lots of questions about any potential problems. As it was scheduled for another training sortie the next morning, he checked and fuelled it up. Their plan was to take BN-2 serial YR-BNL because it had weather radar, but as YR-BNL was running late, so they decided to take YR-BNK instead.

Being pay day, most of the people finished their program and left for home, or were about to do so, when the two mechanics sneaked on board, started the engines, and began to taxi very fast on the apron, directly towards the main building of the airport. The control tower, located on top of that building, was being refurbished with the controllers relocated to offices on the first floor, from where they could not see the apron.

During the wild taxi roll, the BN-2 hit with its left wingtip, the radome of a parked An-24RV YR-AME. Then it banked sharply, at high speed, to the right and took the short taxiway to the runway. After the (no flaps) take-off the BN-2 gradually gained height but then apparently dived at treetop level over Baneasa forest. It was 3:15 pm. Initially nobody knew who was on board, but soon the military was ordered to force the plane to land. The pair of MiG-21s on QRA from the 91st Regiment at Deveselu had been scrambled, but a misunderstanding occurred over the radio, so they intercepted and forced down an An-2.

Meanwhile, the fugitives managed to cross the Carpathian Mountains through the valleys and clouds, but only just, as they were flying below the mountain tops. The engines were set at 70% power in order to give maximum endurance. George was the pilot flying only by the instruments, while Viorel was the co-pilot helping with radio navigation (a key factor in such a long flight) and visual cues.

The two MiG-21MF-75 on alert, belonging to the 93rd Regiment at Giarmata (near Timisoara), intercepted the BN-2, which was flying at an altitude of 600 meters. After passing in front of the Islander, one of the MiGs fired two long cannon bursts as a warning. Viorel clearly saw the rounds impacting the ground ahead of them, and both heard the noise.

They instinctively descended, their heading was towards Arad airport as they were using radio navigation, so it is possible that the MiG pilots thought they got the message and were going to land. There is also a report that the gun of the second MiG jammed. After the MiGs left, Viorel made a navigation correction, diverting from NDB Arad to the Hungarian border.

## Islanders in Romania Re-visited – Report by Peter Smithson

### The story of B-N Islander YR-BNK (continued)

An AAA battery located nearby got them in its sights, but the battery commander received conflicting orders. One of the superior officers ordered him to shoot it down, another to hold his fire. In the confusion, the fugitives managed to cross the border into Hungary, after crossing a good part of Romania in a flight lasting 2.15 hours - out of the total flight time of 4 hours.

The Hungarians were asked to bring it down by the Romanian authorities. YR-BNK was intercepted and circled twice by a Hungarian MiG-21, which left them alone. Probably the Red Cross painted on the sides of the fuselage prevented a shoot down. The fugitives crossed Hungary from south-east to north-west with Lake Balaton as a way-point and landed in Austria on a field, short of Vienna, lightly damaging the front landing gear as it hit an irrigation trench - all this after a missed attempt when Viorel achieved a hard three point landing purely by chance.

Although they wanted to reach Munich in Germany, the cloud covered Alps and impending sunset made them change the plan, remembering how narrow their crossing of the Carpathians was.

The aircraft was returned to Romania disassembled in a truck, several workers from IRMA being sent to Austria to dismantle it on-site. YR-BNK is currently in the ROMAERO hangar at Baneasa, being overhauled. Initially Viorel and George were sheltered in a refugee camp, but when Romania issued an extradition request, the Austrian authorities imprisoned them for 6 months and had doubts about their story, finding it hard to believe they were not qualified pilots. Finally, they were allowed to apply for political asylum and went to Melbourne, Australia. George never flew again, Viorel obtained a PPL. Back in Romania, they were sentenced in absence to 40 years in prison.

The consequences of this defection were immediate; airports which did not share the runway with any air force units, as well as all the Romanian Air Club airfields received armed military guards. One could not fuel up or start an engine without written order shown to a supervising officer. As a measure of intimidation, two IAR-316 B Alouette III helicopters were detached to Baneasa from the 94th Helicopter Regiment based at Alexeni, each armed with four UB-4 4 shot, 57mm unguided rocket pods.

When I saw YR-BNK for the first time, I was drawn to what looked like a bullet hole in the window behind the pilot's seat and this is indeed what it was!!

To see more of the story There is a video on you tube called 'The escape from Bucharest' <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vDjUWZu3PaI>. It is all in Romanian, but it interviews the 2 mechanics that carried out the flight when they returned to Romania, 34 years after later in May 2012. It also shows the aircraft outside ROMAERO's hangar at Banaesa.



*These images are from the "Escape from Bucharest" Youtube clip and show Viorel Nicolae and George Florescu getting re-acquainted with Islander YR-BNK following their return to Bucharest in May 2012.*

## Copenhagen Visit – Report by Peter Smithson

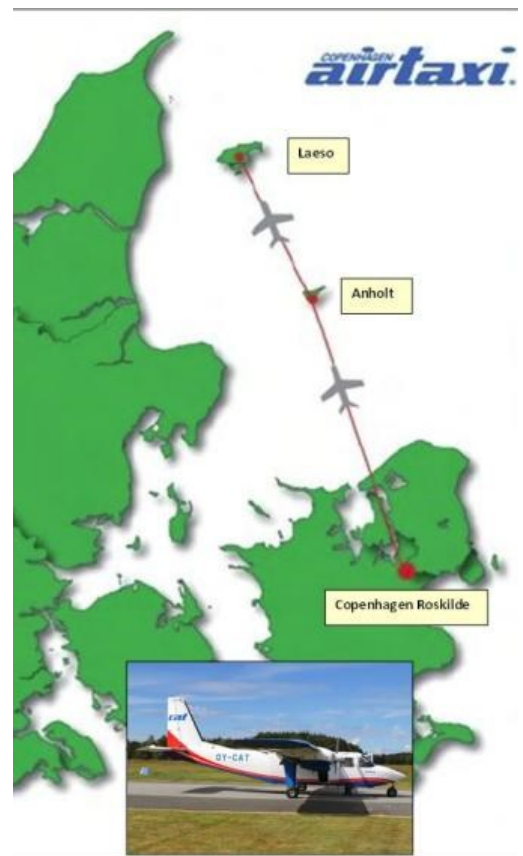
### Copenhagen Air Taxi

I visited Copenhagen for two days, from 7/8 July to go and fly on board Copenhagen Air Taxi's Islander out to the islands of Anholt and Laeso. Copenhagen Air Taxi (CAT) was formed in 1961. CAT is Denmark's most experienced aviation company and is based at Copenhagen Roskilde Airport.

CAT is a family run business and everyone I spoke to said what a great company it is to work for as everybody feels valued and there is a real family feel. CAT provides a wide range of services including pilot training to both private and commercial levels with classrooms and simulators in their facility. CAT operates a large maintenance facility at Roskilde and carry out work on general aviation aircraft as well as carrying out modification work, most recently on the two Danish Home Guard Islanders, OY-FHA and OY-FHB.

CAT's fleet of four Pilatus PC-12 aircraft are used for air taxi work all over Europe. CAT also operates scheduled services out to the islands of Anholt and Laeso. Anholt is around a 45 minute flight from Roskilde and Laeso is a further 25 minutes flying time from Anholt. The two islands could not be more different with Anholt looking like a desert and Laeso being green with trees and grass.

Copenhagen Air Taxi is a family run business. The person at CAT I had corresponded with several months ago was away in Italy on holiday, so I thought nothing much would happen during my visit. On the day of my arrival at Roskilde, I went into the small terminal and was taking pictures of CAT Islander OY-CAT through the glass when this security lady came up to me. Rather than being shoed away, she said "don't shoot through the glass, I can let you on to the apron to get some better pictures." On the apron I photographed the Islander and the pilot then got out. He introduced himself and I explained that I was due to fly with CAT the next day. The pilot, whose name was Stig, said he would be operating the 4 sector flights out to Laeso and back, via Anholt, the next day and he asked if I would like to sit in the co-pilots seat for the flights - easy answer there.



*Copenhagen Air Taxi routes to the islands of Anholt and Laeso*



*Copenhagen Air Taxi Islander OY-CAT at Laeso*



*Copenhagen Air Taxi Islander OY-CAT at Roskilde*

## Copenhagen Visit – Report by Peter Smithson

The day of the flight Stig picked me up at the terminal, got me an airside pass and took me round to the hangar where the Islander was kept. I looked around and took photos in the hangar, while he carried out the pre-flight checks. After these he pulled the aircraft out of the hangar and we taxied around to the terminal.

Stig was extremely informative about the route and was pointing out landmarks and points of interest throughout the flight. He was very complimentary about the Islander and enjoys flying it as it is such a stable aircraft and perfectly suited to the flights out to the islands.

After the usual safety brief for the other passengers, we set off. The weather at Roskilde was rain with thunderstorms and low cloud in the area. The first sector out to Anholt takes around 45 minutes and as we got closer, the weather got better and better until there was not a cloud in the sky. Anholt has an unpaved runway which was a bit soft due to the amount of rain they have had recently. The landscape on Anholt looks like a section of the Sahara desert, in complete contrast to our next destination, Laeso.



*Above: CAT Islander pilot "Stig"  
Below: In flight views*



*Anholt terminal building*

Laeso is around 25 minutes flight time from Anholt. This is the biggest of the 2 islands and is very green with trees and vegetation and boasts a large tarmac runway. After dropping our passengers at Laeso, there were no passengers on the return sector to Anholt, but at Anholt we picked up a couple of people bound for Roskilde.



*Laeso terminal building*



*CAT B-N Islander OY-CAT at Anholt*

## Copenhagen Visit – Report by Peter Smithson

Back at Roskilde, we dropped the passengers off at the terminal and then taxied round to the fuelling station to refuel. It was while we were doing this that Jorn came and met me. When I returned from my flights I was met by Jorn who is the Maintenance Manager for Copenhagen Air Taxi. He took me to lunch and we talked about a whole raft of things, including did I want to have a look at one of the Danish Air Force Islanders.

After lunch, Jorn drove me around to the hangar where the Danish Air Force Islander was housed and showed me some of the upgrade work that his team has carried out. CAE of Luxembourg, a big player in the world of surveillance aircraft, owns the Danish Air force Islanders OY-FHA and OY-FHB.

The two Danish Air Force Islanders were modified by Copenhagen Air Taxi where the digital displays were installed. Jorn asked me not to photograph the crew station, where the surveillance screens are, or the special camera on the side of the fuselage. He said the other aircraft was deployed overseas currently. Both aircraft have also been retrofitted with 4 bladed props and an exhaust silencer system similar to the FLN Islanders in Germany.

Later I visited the CAT Headquarters where the students are taught and was shown the simulators. Whilst here, I was introduced to Kenneth who is Head of Training at CAT. I had a great time at Copenhagen Air Taxi, flying with them and viewing their facilities and am very grateful to Stig, Jorn and Kenneth for their time and hospitality during my visit, Thank you very much. For more information on Copenhagen Air Taxi, visit [www.aircat.dk](http://www.aircat.dk) Jorn was 'expecting me' as he knew I had planned to visit, plus he had seen my previous reports on the BNAPS Facebook group and was very complimentary about the group.



Above, CAT Islander OY-CAT in its hangar at Roskilde and below, the Islander's ID plate.



### CAT Islander fleet details:

OY-CAT, c/n 2224, was built in 1990 as a BN-2B-26 and first registered G-BRPD. It was purchased by a Spanish Air Ambulance company, Ambulancias Insulares in June 1991, registered with Spanish 'B' Class registration EC-750 and was based at Palma in Majorca. Later re-registered EC-FFZ, it continued to be operated in Spain until being purchased by Copenhagen Air Taxi in November 2003.

OY-CKS, c/n 553, purchased from COWI, a BN-2A-21 originally operated by the Belgian Army. This aircraft is leased back to COWI and continues to operate with them in the aerial surveillance role.



Photo credit Erik Gjørup Kristensen /SAI collection

## Copenhagen Visit – Report by Peter Smithson

### Royal Danish Air Force Home Guard Islanders

While in Copenhagen at Roskilde Airport earlier this year, I was shown one of the RDAF Home Guard Islanders, OY-FHA. This aircraft has been extensively reworked and now features a fully revised instrument panel and a rather impressive camera mounted on the port side of the fuselage.

OY-FHA started out life as a BN-2A-21 Defender, c/n 523, in June 1976. Originally registered G-BDVX, it was re-registered B-03 when it joined the Belgian Army. It operated along with 11 other Islanders for the Belgian Army until the type was finally withdrawn from use in mid-2005. The surviving aircraft were put up for auction and the airworthy examples all found new homes.

B-03/OT-ALG was bought by B-N Group and registered G-OBNL for use as a company demonstrator for the best part of 3 years, before being acquired by CAE Aviation of Luxembourg. It is now operated by the RDAF Home Guard as OY-FHA.

OY-FHB has a similar past. It too was built in 1976 as a BN-2A-21 Defender c/n 531 and registered G-BDZI. It served with the Belgian Army as B-08/OT-ALH in October 1976. It was withdrawn from use in August 2005 and put up for sale. After it was purchased by B-N Group, it was stored for several years as G-BDZI, until finding a new home in the Bahamas as C6-LDC with Lindroth Development Company. It operated in the Bahamas for 3 years before being bought by CAE Aviation of Luxembourg and like OY-FHA, ended up flying for the RDAF Home Guard. Both aircraft were converted to BN-2B-21 standard while operated by the Belgian Army although c/n 531, was converted back to a BN-2A-21 during 2009. The impressive avionics upgrade was carried out by the skilled engineers led by Jorn at Copenhagen Air Taxi.



*Port and starboard side views of RDAF Home Guard B-N Islander OY-FHA*



*RDAF Home Guard B-N Islander OY-FHA avionics upgrade was installed by engineering team at Copenhagen Air Taxi*

### RDAF Home Guard Islanders Gain EASA Noise Certification

The RDAF Home Guard Islanders are fitted with exhaust mufflers to minimise the noise impact of their operations. Anotec Engineering based in Spain was contracted to obtain the noise certificate for this modification in accordance with ICAO Annex 16, Chapter 10. A flight test campaign was performed at Roskilde airport, where a mobile flight test lab was deployed. Anotec's pilot guidance system was installed in the aircraft and test data analysed with Anotec's approved analysis software CEDRA and results reported to EASA. The noise certificate was obtained from EASA a month after the flight tests.



## Channel Islander Air Search Receives New Mission Equipped Islander 2-CIAS/N70AS

The new CIAS aircraft, BN-2B-20 Islander 2-CIAS/N70AS, c/n 2314, is the latest off the production line and has completed its acceptance programme with the volunteer-led search and rescue organisation Channel Islands Air Search (CIAS). Under Britten-Norman's EASA Part 21 Approval, the company partnered with CIAS to create a bespoke aircraft design to meet the exact needs of the 24-hour rapid response service.

The new aircraft is fitted with the latest role-specific equipment to enhance CIAS's capability. A new modification has incorporated an Electro-Optical/Infrared sensor and a marine radar in the nose of the aircraft. The multi sensor Wescam MX-10 feeds back live information to two operator consoles to display data in real time. As with all new Britten-Norman Islanders, the aircraft is also equipped with a Garmin G600 TXi touchscreen foundation flight cockpit which incorporates electronic instrument displays and the multifunction GTN series nav/com/GPS.



*CIAS Islander 2-CIAS/N70AS is seen here with the SAR crew outside the CIAS hangar on Guernsey (CIAS)*

Captain Roger Dadd, founder and Trustee of CIAS, flew the aircraft for the first time at the end of May, joined by the full search crew, and said "I found the aircraft a delight to fly; its capacity is phenomenal and it has much reduced noise levels. The Crew of Airsearch are so pleased with what is the best search and rescue aircraft of its type in the world."

Channel Islands Air Search has been operating for almost forty years. The charity covers 5,000 square miles of sea and works with the coastguards of the Channel Islands and France. The charity holds The Queens Award for Voluntary Service.

For more about CIAS and how to make a donation go to [www.ci-airsearch.com](http://www.ci-airsearch.com)

## B-N at Solent Airport D-Day 75 Event and AeroExpo



*At the D-Day 75 event held at Solent Airport on 8/9 June, organised by Fareham Borough Council, it was good to see B-N represented with a line-up of CIAS Islander 2-CIAS, BN-2T G-JSAT, BN-2T-4S G-WPNS and BN-2T G-DLRA.*



*B-N had BN-2T-4S G-WPNS on show at AeroExpo 2019 to promote its ISTAR capability*

## B-N Provides Avionic Upgrades for the RAF's Islanders

A recent B-N press release has revealed that the company is in the process of delivering an upgrade for the UK's BN-2T Islander R Mk1 fleet. The aircraft have recently been transferred to Royal Air Force control and form part of the UK military's ISTAR capability.

The upgrade is being carried out by B-N's military support subsidiary, BN Defence, and involves modernising the aircraft cockpit and enhancing situational awareness and safety. The first upgraded Islander is due to be delivered in the Summer of 2019.

The modifications are based on a Garmin foundation, and incorporate the G600TXi PFD/MFD along with GTN650 GPS/NAV/COM transceivers. Other key features of the upgrade include TCAS integration, new Garmin radar altimeters and the Genesys System 55X autopilot. Penny & Giles Crash Survivable Cockpit Voice Recorder and Multi-Purpose Flight Data Recorder will also be fitted.

The modification will be developed as civil modifications under Britten-Norman's EASA Part 21J Approval before being certified to the military standard. The company will provide the systems integration and flight-testing for these modifications once completed, as well as pilot and technician training.

For the latest information about B-N go to the new website: [www.britten-norman.com](http://www.britten-norman.com)

## Island Air Service Akhiok, Alaska

Island Air Service is an Islander operator in the Kodiak Archipelago, Alaska and has been flying to this location for over 30 years.

Island Air Service has 11 aircraft available for scheduled and charter services including two Islanders, N56891V, c/n 3011, and N27MR, c/n 884. Island Air Service offers scheduled service Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday to Akhiok, a remote village surrounded by moist tundra and rolling hills on the western side of Alitak Bay, Kodiak Island, approximately 90 air miles southwest of the city of Kodiak.

Akhiok is one of the six surrounding villages located in the Kodiak Archipelago and home to more than 74 residents. Notable attractions in Akhiok include the historical Russian Orthodox Church, the Protection of the Theotokos Chapel. Near Akhiok on Cape Alitak are preserved petroglyphs, one of the only written records of the Alutiiq people's way of life. Located near Akhiok, in Lazy Bay, is the Alitak Cannery, built in 1917. Inside the cannery is a museum housing many artefacts of the long history of the cannery.



*Island Air Services Islander N27MR at Akhiok (Island Air Service)*

## B-N Postal Covers

BNAPS Supporter, Norman Hobbs, has offered to provide BNAPS News with a write up about selected postal covers featuring B-N aircraft from his comprehensive collection. Whilst the covers are of interest in their own right what Norman will do is to fill in some of the background to a particular event and something about the subsequent history of the aircraft involved. This issue of BNAPS News features a Loganair postal cover from December, 1976.



Islander c/n 95 made its first flight, at Bembridge, on 17 July 1969 as G-51-30. It was delivered to Loganair on 121 August 1969 as G-AXKB and named "Sir James Young Simpson - physician to the Queen of Scotland in 1847. It was used for Air Ambulance flights and on 10 December 1976 performed the first night landing and take-off at Flotta Airfield.

Islander c/n 95 (G-AXKB) is now in service with Island Airways, based at Charlevoix, Lake Michigan, USA, as N95BN.

## Wight Aviation Museum News

Wight Aviation Museum's team of volunteers has been hard at work building up the collection of exhibits and other facilities in their hangar at Sandown Airport. Although not open just yet on a regular basis for visitors, a number of open days have been supported alongside events at Sandown Airport. For information about opportunities to visit the museum try the Wight Aviation Museum facebook.

The Black Arrow rocket replica is now acting as a "gate guardian" at Sandown Airport as shown in the photo on the right.



For latest information and more about the Wight Aviation Museum see the museum's facebook page or go to the museum's website: <http://www.wightaviationmuseum.org.uk/>

## Wight Aviation Heritage Tours

Subject to demand BNAPS is planning a series of Wight Aviation Tours in 2019.

There is a discounted price of £65.00 For BNAPS Supporters Club members and £47.50 for those members already on the Isle of Wight and joining the mini bus for the tour at Ryde Hovercraft Terminal.

Wight Aviation Heritage Tours		
<p><b>Itinerary</b></p> <p>Hovercraft flight Southsea to Ryde, depart 0930</p> <p>Travel by mini bus to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• East Cowes to see flying boat exhibits and Saunders-Roe Columbine Works</li> <li>• Sandown Airport to see the Wight Aviation Museum's progress</li> <li>• Bembridge Airport including light lunch at The Propeller Inn</li> <li>• BNAPS workshop in Ryde to view restoration of B-N Islander G-AVCN</li> </ul> <p>Last stop Ryde Hovertravel Terminal for Hovercraft flight Ryde to Southsea, departing 1645.</p>	<p>East Cowes</p>  <p>Ryde</p>   <p>Sandown</p>  <p>Bembridge</p>	<p><b>Price</b></p> <p>All inclusive price - £72.50 per person - payment in advance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Tour will be escorted with full briefing at each stop;</li> <li>-Price includes souvenir Wight Heritage Tour brochure;</li> <li>-12places/tour;</li> <li>-Hovercraft fare included.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Proceeds from Wight Aviation Heritage Tours will help the Britten-Norman Aircraft Preservation Society (BNAPS) fund restoration of the historic B-N Islander, G-AVCN, the oldest Islander in existence.</i></p>		
<p><b>2019 Tour Dates</b> Please enquire for latest schedule details</p>		
<p>For further details and a booking form please contact: Wight Aviation Heritage Tours c/o BNAPS, 7, William Close Fareham, Hampshire, PO14 2PQ Tel 01329 315561 Mob 07840036216 e mail solentaeromarine@hotmail.co.uk</p>		

## Valom 1:48 Scale Islander Model Kits Now Available from BNAPS

Valom 1:48 Islander model kits are available to order at £27.00 for BNAPS Supporters Club members and £30.00 for non-members, payment in advance. UK post and packing, first class signed for delivery is £5.00.

The following models are available:

48008 Islander- G-AVCN Aurigny Air Services colours

48009 Islander- Israeli Air Force colours

48010 Islander - Loganair, BA franchise, colours.

Please contact [bob@bnaps.org.uk](mailto:bob@bnaps.org.uk) to place your order.



## BNAPS Sales Catalogue 2019 Edition

Please contact Rita Edgcombe at BNAPS Sales to if you would like to receive the latest catalogue by email: [sales@bnaps.org.uk](mailto:sales@bnaps.org.uk)

**BNAPS on the Internet** - information and back issues of BNAPS News go to [www.bnaps.org.uk](http://www.bnaps.org.uk)

### **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 Edgcombe at [sales@bnaps.org.uk](mailto:sales@bnaps.org.uk)

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.

### **BNAPS**

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:  
7, William Close  
FAREHAM,  
Hampshire,  
PO14 2PQ

Trustees are Peter Graham, Bob Wilson, Guy Palmer and Bob Wealthy.  
Bob Wealthy is currently the Trust Chairman.

### ***Forthcoming BNAPS Events***

***Next BNAPS Workshop Open Day will be in support of the Isle of Wight High Sheriff's "Isle of Wight Day" on Saturday 21 September, 2019.***

***During the coming months there will be opportunities for pre-arranged group visits to the workshop – please get in touch if interested***

***Further Wight Aviation Heritage Tours are planned for 2019, subject to demand, when visitors will be able to view Islander G-AVCN.***

If anyone needs more information about BNAPS activities and what is happening please do not hesitate to get in touch.

### **How to contact BNAPS:**

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**Telephone:** 01329 315561

#### **Post:**

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