

Airfield Memorials Unveiled

MEMORIAL WERE unveiled during late February at the sites of two of the first airfields to be built in the United Kingdom to mark the centenary of British aerodromes. The first was unveiled at South Fambridge on the south side of the River Crouch in Essex on February 20. South Fambridge was Britain's first

airfield and was constructed by Noel Pemberton Billing in February 1909. It comprised a clubhouse, hangars, hotel, water tower, power station and four bungalows for the aviators, who flew from a nearby grass field. The airfield was short lived because the strip was uneven and had too many potholes - by November 1909 all flying there had ceased. However, in 1914 the Talbot Quick Waterplane was assembled there and test flown from the River Crouch. The design was not successful, as it tipped over on an early flight and was quickly broken up. All that is left of the airfield is part of the water tower and the four original bungalows.

The granite memorial at Fambridge is the first to be put up at pioneering airfields in Britain by the newly formed Airfields of British Conservation Trust. Others were due to be unveiled during February at Leysdown on the Isle of Sheppey; Rivenhall in Essex; and Bekebourne, Kent.

Simon Murdoch

The memorial at Fambridge was unveiled by Ken Bannerman, the Director General of ABCT, to commemorate 100 years of British airfields. (Simon Murdoch)



Latest PH200JP Distribution Deal Signed

PEGASUS SIGNED a Letter of Intent (LoI) with Walt Guard Technology for exclusive distribution rights of the PH200PJ helicopter in the Republic of China (Taiwan) in mid-February. The LoI is a four-year agreement allowing the Taiwanese company to distribute 50 assembled PH200PJs in the first two years and 150 fully certified helicopters in the third and fourth years to operators in the civilian, industrial and military markets in Taiwan. Walt Guard Technology will also have the first right of refusal to manufacture the PH200PJ in Taiwan.

The PH200JP is a two-seat light helicopter equipped with a pressure jet rotor that removes the need for an anti-torque tail rotor. It is due to enter production within 12 months. Pegasus announced a four-year manufacturing partnership with Ranger Aerospace and Aeronautics (later Ranger Rotorcraft Group) of Irving, Texas, in October 2008, under which it will co-locate production of the helicopter with Ranger's facility at Meacham airfield in Fort Worth.

Pegasus already has agreements in place to distribute 655 PH200PJ Helicopters (280 kit or assembled and 375 fully certified) over the next four years in China, Brazil, Russia and former Soviet states in August 2008. It signed a LoI with Gais Aero, a helicopter distributor in Russia and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), covering 155 examples. Gais Aero is required to obtain a Russian Federation Aircraft Certificate of Type for the PH200PJ. In the same month, Pegasus signed a LoI with Helitraders Ltd for a four-year distribution deal in Brazil. Helitraders expects to sell an initial 25 PH200PJs in kit form in the first two years, and a further 75 units in the remaining two-year period of the distribution agreement, once it has been fully certified for the Brazilian market. In mainland China Shanghai Fei Tian Aviation Technique was signed up to distribute up to 50 assembled kits in the first two years and 150 fully certified examples in the next two.

Mooney Acclaim Type S Sets Speed Record

A POINT-to-point speed record between Minneapolis, Minnesota, and New Orleans, Louisiana, was set on January 31 by Dr Dave Craddock, flying the first production Mooney Acclaim Type S. An average speed of 333kts was recorded, with a maximum ground speed of 357kts, more than 904 nautical miles flown. The flight commenced from Crystal Airport outside Minnesota and lasted 2 hours 43 minutes. Details of the journey were submitted to the National Aeronautics Association for consideration of the speed record in the C1c category (handplanes between 2,205 and 3,850lb in weight).

Additional Shutdowns for Piper

FURTHER TO the shut downs for a week in both April and July, announced on February 11, Piper Aircraft revealed 12 days later that it will also cease all activity for a week in May and another in June. All 650 employees will be furloughed without pay from its facility at Vero Beach, Florida, during the 28 days. The company hopes that the furloughs will allow it to avoid further permanent redundancies and

maintain its viability in the market. Piper's management states that the large numbers of new and used aircraft available, a lack of credit availability and the general decline in consumer confidence has forced it to take the drastic action to survive. The company expects to build 110 aircraft in 2009, down from the 268 delivered in 2008. The Meridian, Mirage and Matrix variants of the

PA-46 will account for 100 airframes, and the Seminole and Warrior the other ten, although the numbers can increase if demand rises. Production of the Archer, Arrow, Seneca and Saratoga has stopped entirely. Work continues on the PiperJet, although the first examples are not expected to be delivered until 2011.

The Piper PA-46 continues to sell well. (Piper)

