

Police Aviation News

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Conferences
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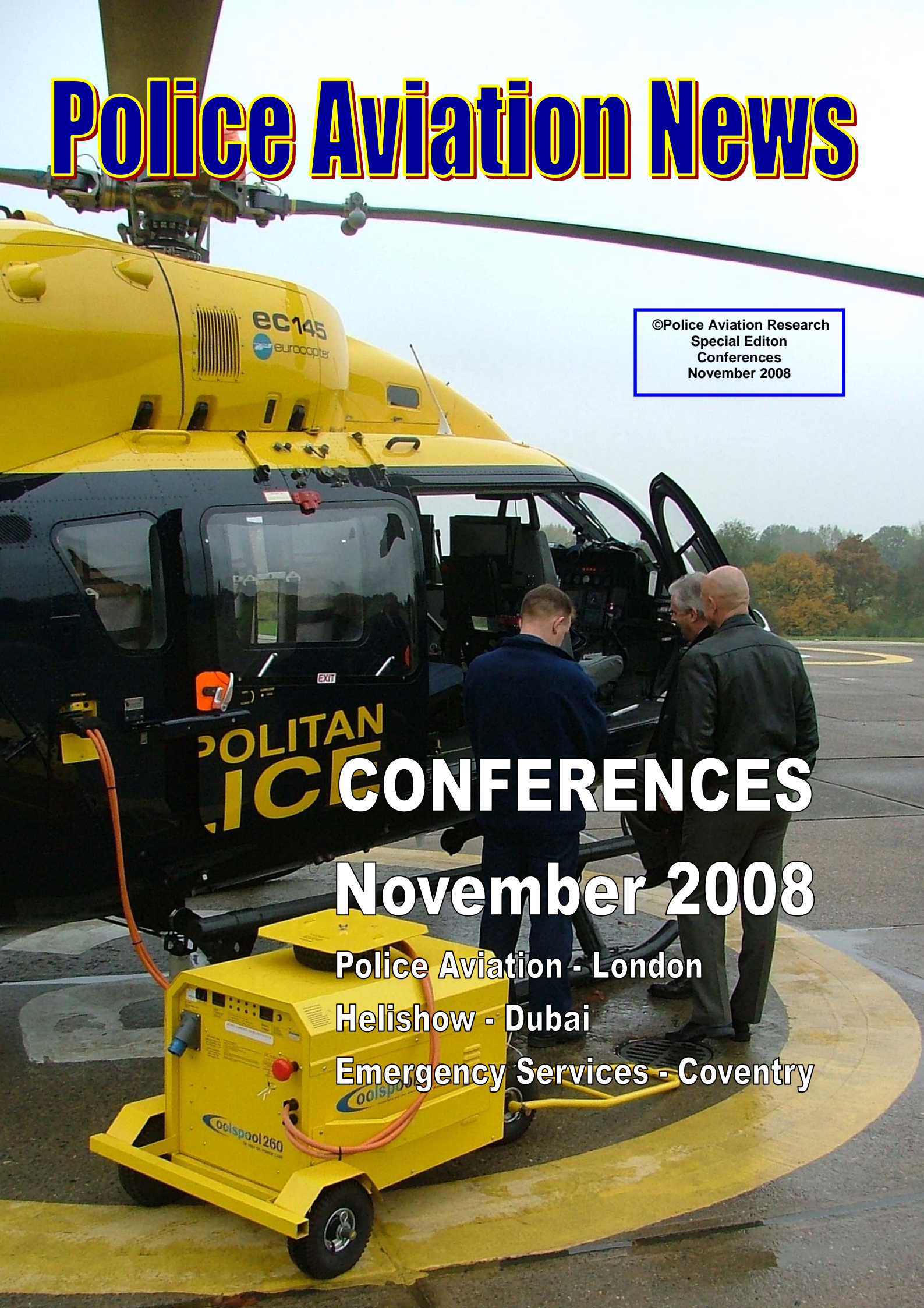
CONFERENCES

November 2008

Police Aviation - London

Helishow - Dubai

Emergency Services - Coventry



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EDITORIAL

This issue covers three events taking place in the last month. As ever the Editor feels a little unclear he can give an even handed appreciation of the Police Aviation Conference because he is so close to it but hopefully the reader will take into account that relationship when reading the report!

The other two reports are appreciations of the third edition of the Dubai Helishow organised by Mediac and an all too brief visit to the Emergency Services Show at Stoneleigh. Each contrasts in their content and their setting.

Bryn Elliott



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RECENT EVENTS

POLICE AVIATION CONFERENCE

November 5-6 Olympia, London.



2008 Conference line-up—some of the attendees: Bill Proberts Officer and pilot USA West Coast, Ken Solosky Chief Pilot East Coast USA, John Osmond, Industry UK and The Chairman Gareth Davies, Industry Germany.

For a brief few days in early November the 2008 Police Aviation Conference organised by the Shephard Group was the centre of attention at Olympia, London. As promised the event included another varied programme of interesting presentations from an international range of emergency services professionals drawn from Europe and the Americas. The presentations are but a part of the event, the greatest gain is from professionals speaking with their counterparts from different nations outside the conference room. Having made the effort to get to London those that were unable to stay beyond the presentations were perhaps the biggest losers in the whole process.

Most speakers are signed up months ahead and obviously their personal and business circumstances change through that period and they have to cry-off late in the process which causes some difficulties. There were times when it looked like circumstances might set aside significant sections of the programme but as ever the programme survived pretty much intact through to the end.

The Keynote Address to the gathered delegates was given by Chief Constable Bernard Hogan-Howe of Merseyside Police. He is the Chairman of the ACPO Aviation Sub-Committee and gave some insight into the official thinking behind the broader picture of UK police air support. There were no spectacular revelations in his prepared speech but it is clear that there remains an officially preferred move towards 'Regionalisation' of air support resources under the stewardship of ACPO.

This year was the first in which Canada and Switzerland gave presentations – and the contrasts were very real. Chief Superintendent Jacques Desilets, a non-flyer, is in charge of the RCMP Air Services Branch and is in many ways the equivalent of Chief Constable Hogan-Howe. Unfortunately they never met due to the tight schedule the latter was on but through the conference and the visits he made to UK units the RCMP officer gained important insights into operations in Europe. Felix Walz from Switzerland was involved in air support in



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his country – such as it is – in the past but is currently running Zurich Airport and overseeing the direct employment of personnel employed in passenger security and screening, a unique police viewpoint. His was one of those presentations that was at a total tangent to the experience of many of the delegates but it found its mark with at least one member of the audience. He was from an airport in the UK

A core series of presentations followed on from a theme set in the last conference in Den Haag, The Netherlands, last year. These further views on Frontex operations in the Mediterranean Sea moved on from Malta's viewpoint to take in the German and Italian aspects. This year is likely to be the last visit of a stalwart of these last few Conferences, Commander Gunter Carloff of the German Federal Police. He retires early next year.

Commercial presentations are seen as a problem at these events... often they can be too blatant and that does not go down too well with the delegates, but new technology necessarily has to come from industry in one form or another. In this vein were a number of presentations including one involving a direct downlink of images from a Diamond DA42 flying over Austria, presentations on a variety of light and medium UAV's and aircraft management systems. None of these would leap into mind as subjects in the forefront of the consciousness of the average police air support member, let alone on their shopping list, but bringing in non core subjects can hopefully raise the interest in the conference experience.

Presentations that take the attendee outside the normal comfort zone is what the Editor sees the Police Aviation Conference being about and bringing the military French Gendarmerie to a largely civilian audience is not that far removed from a keynote address from the head of the air ambulance operations in the UK. The latter may appear to be 'outside of the box' but the clear links between the financial support offered to some UK police air operations by ambulance charities with hopefully reconnect those thoughts.

Conferences such as these suffer from a flaw in that they must end and someone must pick up the short straw of the 'Graveyard' slot where the speaker addresses perhaps a handful of people. Until the last moment that unenviable speaking position fell upon the broad shoul-



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ders of John Osmond with his warning tome on the pitfalls of buying an aircraft from an OEM. As last time there was mention of his trusty Volvo that seemed to be well equipped for service as standard when it arrived from Volvo the OEM concerned and inevitably offers few worries related to its scheduled maintenance at the OEM's local representative. There is a vast contrast between John's Volvo and the service offered by most if not all helicopter OEM's and he offered some guiding words or warning. Some things cannot be avoided but being aware can reduce the pain of ownership.

That went down well and fortunately for John it was not destined to be the ultimate in Graveyard speeches for Michael Will from Goodrich Sensors 'volunteered' for an even later position. Goodrich were late arrivals and this was a commercial slot – the ultimate in Graveyard speaking that invariably attracts an empty room as the delegates recall an urgent train journey. But this was not to be. True the room had thinned out but it is the absentees who should feel a sense of loss. The Goodrich slot dovetailed into John Osmond's Volvo thread like a well rehearsed battle plan. But neither was aware of the others talk, conferences do that sometimes. The result was unexpected and welcome as Michael Will informed the audience about 'Moving from Health & Usage Monitoring Systems to Vehicle Health Management Systems and preparing for Condition Based Maintenance' – quite a dry sounding proposal! But the core of that item was that Goodrich is developing a system that offers a clear ability to improve serviceability by way of Condition Based Maintenance [CBM]. The problem is that helicopter OEM's are not welcoming the capability. Each of them has too much to lose. They sell aircraft at a keen price but the ongoing profit line is spares provision. CBM promises to erode that profit margin in keeping parts in service significantly longer. In many ways it takes the industry back to those heady days when the OEM's were launching new generation airframes with 'unlimited' life cycles until the certification authorities set them back to putting an arbitrary life on their moving parts.

Now the audience is aware perhaps questions will be asked about when OEM's are going to join with Goodrich and grasp a chance to return to those heady days that they themselves proposed.

So the 2008 Police Aviation Conference closed on a real high point of being thought provoking – exactly what it is supposed to have been - regardless of the actual outcome of the CBM issue.

Although this was an event centred on a hall in central London many of the speakers and delegates travelling in from Australia, Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Spain, Switzerland and the USA found time to visit air units near to the Capital. The main recipients of these 'colleague visits' were Chiltern, Essex and the Metropolitan Police. Although the latter pair were presenting in London a 'hands on' visit to see the technology in action is always an added bonus. The Editor took two of the speakers to Boreham, Essex and Lippitts Hill but the latter took in a number of ad-hoc visitors as well and I need to add the profuse thanks that each of the speakers expressed at the event to their hosts for their time and trouble.



Officer Bill Proberts in the Metropolitan Police EC145

Beyond that I wish to add my personal thanks for the effort expended by each of the two dozen speakers – mentioned and unmentioned – in making this a truly memorable and I believe successful event.

To that I add thanks to the 'sick man' of the event, the Chairman Gareth Davies. He hid his streaming cold well and acted as ever as the glue that welded the speakers into one really great show.



Alongside the conference was an exhibition that brought forth some interesting highlights. BAE Systems were promoting the Herti UAV that had featured in their presentation and added material on another couple of ideas they have on a very expensive twin-engine UAV [Mantis] and a lighter than air option.

ECS were announcing sales to the French Gendarmerie for their EC135 fleet, Wescam an upgraded system to the Metropolitan Police and Police Aviation Services were showing the now 'acceptable' Trakkabeam searchlight and Sonix PA systems that were until recently being treated as something of an unknown quantity. They are now seen to have proven their worth in UK police aviation.

The most questionable item was some marketing by AgustaWestland and their AW139 medium-twin. The company stand at the event featured a large graphic of the AW139 featuring it in Metropolitan Police colours flying over central London and this was backed up by leaflets in the same vein. The company are aiming at the UK emergency services market but no

So is to continue to contract in maintenance provision an easy option? Or a best option?

- It would certainly keep my workload down
- 7 years of contracted service experience
- Some good service and some not so good
- Probably quite a common experience for most Contract Managers or Operators



Paul Marrion



Essex Police ASU

Although the speakers and what they have to say are important Police Aviation Conferences are as much about meeting with fellow practitioners in aviation as the content of the presentations themselves.

This year saw a good spread of presentations, some fine food and wine [thanks to Boeing] and some interesting visits to air support units.

Health Warning

- Cars are not helicopters
- If you think any of this applies to your company, that is your own choice
- Customers are always right and are seldom able to prove it
- These are my own views



John Osmond Helimetrics Ltd 2001



Gala Dinner



-one seemed totally aware about it enough to make an official announcement. The type is not seen as replacing the new Eurocopter EC145s in London but more complementing them with a larger capacity craft suitable for special missions and the movement of such as firearms teams. Whether there would be money for such an ideal even in the wider context of a regional solution to air support appears unlikely but it was a talking point in the show.

Within days it was off to warmer climes for the Editor, complete with Gareth's cold of course, to report on the Dubai Helishow..



In the Conference a light hearted wager was placed between fixed wing protagonists and those of a more rotary wing leaning as to the likely pace of unmanned aircraft developments. Many doubted that unmanned aircraft would make operations in time for the 2012 Olympics in London.