



BNAPS News January 2011

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This is the first issue of the Britten-Norman Aircraft Preservation Society (BNAPS) News. It is intended to keep members and supporters of BNAPS informed about the latest developments involving the project to restore B-N Islander G-AVCN, "Charlie November", and related activities of interest. Further issues will be produced at quarterly intervals.

BNAPS Moves Ahead with Restoration Project



"Charlie November" Departs the B-N Works on 17 July 2010

Following the successful move in July of "Charlie November" from the B-N Works to the new East Wight workshop, work has progressed at a steady pace to construct new wing stands and a more substantial fuselage cradle. Meanwhile building work has been underway to adapt the workshop building with an enlarged access door, new electrics and lighting. Further work is continuing to seal the floor, paint the wall and roof trusses and round up work benches and cupboards to enable restoration work to proceed in an efficient and safe manner.



Charlie November's fuselage and wing under cover in the East Wight Workshop November 2010

A period of consolidation is now underway to catalogue and survey the myriad of large and small components of "Charlie November" and to devise a detailed work plan so that the restoration team can get to work.

BNAPS Trust

BNAPS is a Registered Charity, No. 1100735, set up to "preserve the history and aircraft of Britten-Norman with the support of members' subscriptions, sponsorship and donations"
BNAPS registered address is:
The Great Barn,
Nether Wallop,
Stockbridge,
Hampshire,
SO20 8EN
Trustees are Peter Graham, Bob Wilson and Bob Wealthy. Peter Graham is the chairman of the board of trustees.

BNAPS Inaugural Meeting Wednesday 16 March 2011

An inaugural meeting for BNAPS members and prospective members will be held on Wednesday 16 March 2011 at the Propeller Inn, Bembridge Airport. Doors open at 6.30pm for a 7pm start, all are welcome to attend.

BNAPS Supporters Group Opens for Business.

From March 2011 BNAPS will be established as an active organisation. The subscription charge for BNAPS membership is £24/year.

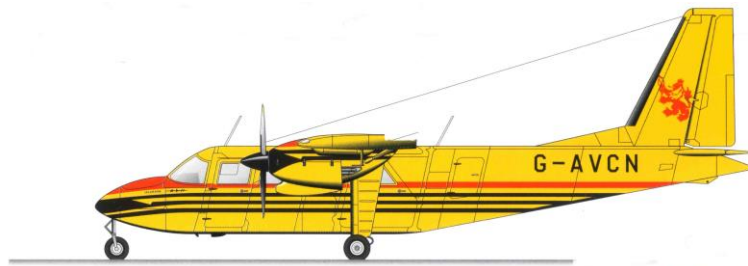
Members will receive BNAPS News by post or e mail and opportunities to support the Islander restoration work and associated BNAPS activities.

It is also planned to hold events such as talks and social gatherings two or three times each year together with the BNAPS Annual General Meeting. The BNAPS website will be brought into use in the course of 2011.

B-N Islander G-AVCN – “Charlie November” Restoration Project

At the time when the future of B-N was again looking uncertain, an initiative managed by Peter Graham came to fruition when the remaining components of the first production Islander G-AVCN, (c/n 003), arrived at Bembridge on 6 March 2000.

Recognising the significance of BN-2 Islander Construction Number 003, registration mark G-AVCN or “Charlie November”, as the first production Islander, and the oldest Islander in existence, Peter Graham devised a plan in 1999 to recover the aircraft from Puerto Rico where “Charlie November” was languishing in a partially dismantled state at the San Juan Isla Grande Airport. The recovery was a joint effort by Peter Graham and his company Airstream International Group with Allan Wright and Andy Clancey of BN Historians and Tim Barton, Service Engineer with B-N Group. BN Historians had been aware for some time of the demise of “Charlie November”. With help from local contacts in Puerto Rico it appeared to be feasible to acquire the remains and get them back to the UK. The recovery of “Charlie November” was supported by a number of sponsors. The work preparatory to full restoration had been made possible through the encouragement, generous technical assistance and facilities provided by B-N Group and enthusiastic support from several former B-N employees including Peter Ward and the late Jack Griffin.



As the first production Islander, G-AVCN, (c/n 003), is unique and therefore of historic significance as part of the British aviation industry's heritage. Constructed in the original B-N hangar at Bembridge, the UK registration G-AVCN was issued on 12th December 1966. To signal the opening of the new B-N factory building at Bembridge, “Charlie November” was “rolled out” for the press in April 1967, although it was actually constructed elsewhere. It made its first flight on 24 of April 1967 and in May 1967 appeared at Paris Air Show. Having been granted full type certification on 10 August 1967, a C of A was issued on 12 August 1967 and on 13 August 1967 “Charlie November” was delivered to Glosair, later in 1967 re-named as Aurigny Air Services. After several years operation with Aurigny Air Services “Charlie November” was traded in to B-N and subsequently exported to the Caribbean where it served with a number of different operators.

A working party was organised consisting of Peter Graham, Allan Wright, Andy Clancey and Tim Barton and travelled to Puerto Rico on 17 January 2000. With limited facilities “Charlie November” was dismantled and packed for shipment into a sea freight container. The wing had to be shortened by removing the wingtips and a further 5 foot long section of the port wing de-riveted to ensure that the main part of the wing would fit into the 40 foot long container. After overcoming a number of difficulties during the dismantling process, packing was completed by 26 January 2000 ready for “Charlie November” to be shipped to the UK.

Initially the remains of “Charlie November” were stored in the freight container pending an allocation of space in the B-N factory. B-N undertook an initial survey of “Charlie November” to ascertain whether there was evidence of any major corrosion problems in the wing and to inspect some damage that had occurred during preparation for shipment and storage and where the wing had been shortened to allow it to be shipped in a standard freight container. BNAPS was subsequently set up as a charitable trust in December 2000 to acquire the aircraft and to further the longer term prospect for restoration of “Charlie November” to airworthy condition.

In February 2003 “Charlie November” was moved to its own separate work area and a plan of campaign drawn up between B-N Group and BNAPS to carry out major refurbishment and repair of the airframe. Initially two B-N Group staff were allocated to the work subject to other priorities that may arise. A working party of volunteers helped B-N Group staff strip the paint from the fuselage, this revealed that there was surprisingly little corrosion damage.

For a variety of reasons the ambitious aim of 2003 was not realised. B-N Group's expanding business commitments meant that workshop and storage space at the Bembridge factory was at a premium and it was not possible to proceed with restoration work on “Charlie November” against the original plan of campaign.

BNAPS was re-organised in 2006 when Peter Graham, as an existing member of the board of trustees and owner of “Charlie November”, took over day to day operation of BNAPS and recruited Bob Wilson, former B-N Managing Director, and Pierre Marie, formerly a B-N Regional Sales Manager, as trustees.

Early in 2009 it became apparent that “Charlie November” was “at risk” in open storage. In recognition of the historic significance of Islander c/n 003 and the urgency of the situation a working group was formed in May 2009 involving BNAPS and Bembridge Heritage Society members to see how best to re-start the project. The group co-ordinator role was taken up by John Kenyon who resides in Bembridge and coincidentally now owns the house formerly occupied by the Britten family. John has many contacts in the aircraft preservation community and was instrumental in the formation of the British Aircraft Preservation Council (BAPC) and held the post of chairman for some years.

Following several meetings to establish immediate actions to secure the future for “Charlie November” and the future direction of the restoration project it was obvious that the need to move the dismantled to a new site was of paramount importance.

Following discussions with B-N permission was given in March 2010 to gain access to the aircraft components to allow a detailed condition survey of the aircraft parts to establish what was to be moved and how this should be done. With help from B-N the dismantled aircraft and its components were surveyed in early March 2010. It was established that “Charlie November” remained “restorable” and it was feasible to move the major components without specialised lifting gear.

Britten Norman Aircraft Preservation Society Needs Your Help

G-AVCN was first flown in April 1967 and is the third Islander produced. As the first production Islander it is the oldest of the type in existence and after delivery to Glos Air in October 1967 it later became the first aircraft to be operated by Aurigny Air Services in 1968, and is thus of unique historic importance. The restoration project began when Airstream International Group sponsored the dismantling and shipping of the aircraft from Puerto Rico in early 2000 as part of an ambitious plan to restore it to flying condition. Wightlink provided sponsorship for the final leg of the journey across the Solent to complete G-AVCN's return to its Isle of Wight home.



G-AVCN, usually referred to as "Charlie November", in a derelict state at Isla Grande Airport Puerto Rico, 1999

An organisation called the Britten-Norman Aircraft Preservation Society (BNAPS) was formed as a charitable trust arrangement to carry the project forward. Despite the best efforts of all involved at the time, the work did not proceed as originally envisaged and for the last few years the aircraft components have been stored courtesy of B-N Group at their Bembridge Airport factory.

In recognition of the historic significance of Islander G-AVCN a working group was formed in May 2009 to see how best to re-start the project. It was decided that a new location should be found as the first priority. At one stage it was thought that a mainland facility could be a possibility but with the help of Bembridge Heritage Society a place was found in the East Wight.



On 17 July 2010 "Charlie November" was transported from the B-N site at Bembridge Airport for a new home in the East Wight

It is expected that restoration work will start in earnest early in early 2011 with the objective of having Islander G-AVCN restored in good time ready for celebrations on the Island of the 50th anniversary of the prototype Islander's first flight in June 2015. It is hoped that by this time a suitable place may be found on the Island to have the aircraft on permanent display as a tribute to John Britten and Desmond Norman and as a tangible example of "Island Enterprise" resulting from the efforts and skills of the many B-N employees that have not only made their livelihood with the company over the past 50 years but have enabled the vision of the company's founders to be turned into reality despite many setbacks encountered on the way.

The Society and Charity trustees welcome expressions of interest from any interested individuals and organisations that could offer their support to the restoration project in whatever way is appropriate. Please contact us to obtain further details about the project and to register your interest by telephone on 01329 315561, by e mail: solentaeromarine@hotmail.com or by post at:

BNAPS
c/o The Propeller Inn,
Bembridge Airport,
Sandown Road,
Bembridge,
Isle of Wight,
PO35 5PW

BNAPS Merchandise Price List January 2011

Trislander 40th book @ £3.50

Islander VCN restoration book – “The Story So Far” (2nd Edition) @ £3.00

Nymph and Freelance book (1st Edition available March 2011) @ £5.00

Britten Sheriff book (1st Edition available March 2011) @ £4.50

Trislander lapel pins @ £2.50

Islander 40th pens @ 50p

BNAPS enamelled lapel badges @ £2.00

BNAPS sew on patches @£1.50

Islander 40th key rings @ £1.00

Islander 40th mugs @ £2.50

Islander VCN A3 colour print @ £1.00

Aviation at Bembridge book (3rd Edition available April 2011) @ £6.50

BNAPS “Charlie November” mug (Available March 2011) @ £6.00

Above items are normally on sale at BNAPS events or place an order by e mail or by writing to the address below. UK post and package will be in addition to prices shown above.

If you would like to support BNAPS as a member of the society please send the completed application form with your cheque for £24 to the address given below:



I am interested in supporting BNAPS and restoration of Islander G-AVCN (Charlie November).

Name.....
Address: House name/No.....
Street.....
Town.....
County.....
Post Code..... Country.....
Telephone..... Email.....

To contact BNAPS please phone 01329 315561 or
e mail: solentaeromarine@hotmail.com

To become a member please complete this form and send it with a cheque for £24.00 made payable to BNAPS to:

BNAPS Dept 01
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All personal data will be held in accordance with applicable Data Protection Act provisions.