Newsletter January 2019

Congratulations

Congratulations to Jim O'Byrne who renewed his SEP by Licence Proficiency Check on the last flying day of 2018. He had been due to take the check months ago but unserviceability due to the gear leg crack prevented it.

Congratulations also to Chris Mulligan who started this year well by renewing his Instrument Rating a few days ago.

Circuit change

Weston management has instructed that aircraft taking off from runway 25 should climb straight ahead to 660 feet QNH before turning right.

This is to avoid overflying the strangely-named "North area" on taxiway C4 which is used for helicopter training, including lifting under-slung loads.

Density Altitude

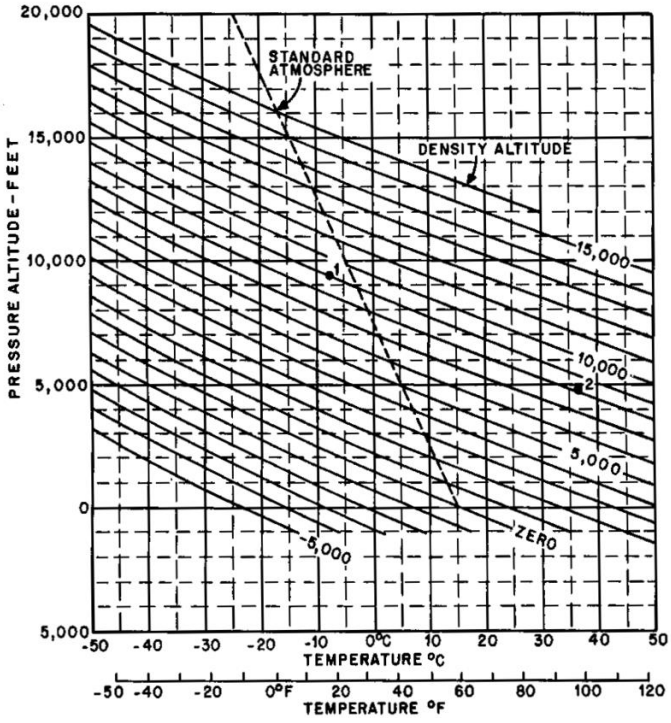
After landing from a recent flight, the fuel dip was a couple of litres lower than expected.

The flight had been flown at the normal cruising RPM, but conditions were not standard. The QNH was 1043 hPa and the temperature at 2500 feet was only 2°C. Performance depends on Density Altitude which is the altitude in the standard atmosphere that would have the same density as the air in which you are flying. To calculate Density Altitude, you need the pressure altitude and the temperature.

You can read the pressure altitude from the transponder and the temperature is shown on the display below the instrument panel.

On this occasion, flying at 2500 feet QNH, the pressure altitude was 1700 feet and when the temperature was applied, the density altitude was only 500 feet. That meant that 2400 RPM was producing more power than it would under standard conditions, so we had a higher fuel consumption. There are several ways to calculate density altitude: you can use the graph shown here; you can do it on your navigation computer; The GPS has a page in the auxiliary section where you enter the figures and the results are shown for you, even calculating True Airspeed if you put in the IAS; you can go to http://www.luizmonteiro.com where you will find a programme where you insert values and it will calculate the result for you.

All this means that, if you are flying in cold, dense air, you will need to use a lower RPM to maintain the same power.



Notams – essential but not always complete!

We planned to fly to Knock on the 8th January to renew Chris Mulligan's IR, but, on checking Notams, we found that Knock would only be open from 09.20 until 1205 on that day. Knock has been plagued with fog over the last few weeks so the next day that looked possible was Friday, 11th.

While flying our first approach, ATC asked if we could hold for 30 minutes before the next approach as they had inbound scheduled flights.

We decided instead to land and sit out the delay on the ground. We had sufficient fuel to continue the flight test and return to Weston, but requested to top up with more fuel during the wait. ATC told us that there was no Avgas available.

This would normally be included in Notams but it was not in this case. Luckily, we had decided not to take the delay by holding in the air! We wanted to clarify a point concerning our flight back to Weston and we thought that it would be better to do it on the phone rather than cluttering up the Tower frequency. No such luck! The switchboard didn't answer and all we got was the list of extensions to call for flight information, airlines, etc.