



Foxbat Australia

Newsletter – January 2011

Welcome to the first Newsletter from our new website!

As you may have noticed, the Foxbat Australia website has been completely re-vamped. We believe it is a big step forward from the previous site, both in design and content, which served well and remained mostly unchanged for almost 4 years.

Part of the new design now enables us to send you Newsletters which are much more flexible in design and content. Also, the method of distribution – via an e-mail link – should help to overcome technical problems experienced by some subscribers with a company firewall, which either trashed the formatting or, worse, turned the information into meaningless gobbledegook (that word is in the spell-checker, believe it or not!).

Read on...if you have any interesting stories or information, preferably Foxbat related, please let us know. Also please let us have your comments for improvement. There's a link on the website at <http://www.foxbat.com.au/contact> where you can send information and messages.

In this issue

- An appeal from our Russian friends
- Andrei Bezmylov, aircraft photographer (and more)
- Foxbat for disabled pilots
- Mike Rudd, aircraft photographer and video maker (and more)
- Installing a 10" SkyView in a Foxbat
- Fat wheels, cabin trim and more

An appeal from our Russian friends

I recently received this e-mail:

Dear Mr. Peter Harlow,

We are amateur pilots (flying A-22) from Krasnoyarsk, Russia. We have a great desire to visit Australia in the period from May to August, 2011.

We would like to rent 2 or 3 A-22 (Foxbat) aeroplanes for a cross-country flight along the route Port Augusta – Wilpena Pound - Leigh Creek - Marree - William Creek - Cooper Pedy - Uluru – Alice Springs and reverse. Probably local pilots might accompany us and could lead our group.

We have Russian pilot certificates for this aircraft type. We ask you kindly to render assistance for realization of our idea. Please advice the best weather conditions period for the route.

Sincerely, Siberian pilots:

Sergey Alekseyev, Sergey Vegelin, Vladislav Cherkasov, Viktor Igoshin, Nikolay Yefimenko, Tatyana Davydenko.

Do any of our Foxbat (or other aircraft) owners out there have an interest in sharing or loaning or hiring aircraft to these pilots for their trip? If you are interested in helping out, please send me an e-mail as soon as possible: peter@foxbat.com.au

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Andrei Bezmylov



Andrei takes the controls of his sports aircraft.

Andrei Bezmylov



One of Andrei's Foxbat photos (original on airliners.net)

I first noticed Andrei (or, rather his photos - I have never actually met him) through his superb pictures of the Foxbat on www.airliners.net. This is a fantastic site containing thousands of (thankfully searchable) photos of almost every type of aircraft. I did not realise at that time that Andrei lives in South Australia and studied in the Ukraine – home of the Foxbat. He was born in Siberia and moved to Australia with a depth of engineering qualifications in 1998 and currently works in the Quality Assurance Department for an 'Australian icon'.

Although it was the Foxbat pictures which first attracted my attention, Andrei has in fact well over 2,000 photos on airliners.net most of which were taken in Australia. He describes photography as a 'hobby' but he is being extremely modest – if you have ever tried to enter a photo on airliners.net (I have) you'll know just how exacting their standards are! So to have so many photos accepted (think how many others he must have) is quite a feat.

Those of you with eagle-eyes will have noticed in the photo above (courtesy of Recreational Flying magazine) that Andrei is not flying a Foxbat but another type of LSA. Now I don't hold that against him as he has been very generous with permissions to use his pictures on our website, and who knows, maybe one day he'll see the light!

Meanwhile thank you Andrei for your great photos – of whatever aircraft – and long may your hobby flourish. Thank you.

Foxbat for disabled pilots

I have been approached on several occasions about the possibility of modifying the Foxbat to suit disabled pilots – primarily by adding controls so that the aircraft can be completely and safely controlled by hand.

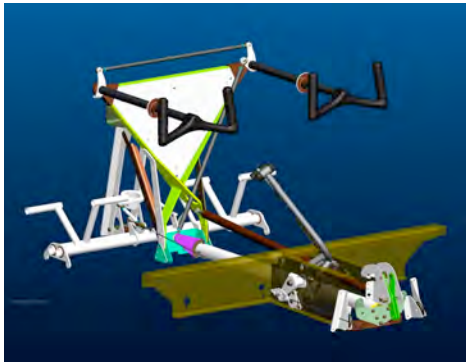
The Foxbat is a particularly easy aircraft to enter and exit – no control sticks to climb over, control yokes mounted relatively high, no need to contort under them – so it seems an ideal candidate for such a development.

The Aeroprakt factory happily agrees and is in the final stages of developing a hand control system which can easily be converted between conventional rudder/steering pedals and the hand control rudder system.



Foxbat Australia

Newsletter – January 2011



Full left rudder



Full right rudder

On the Foxbat, the rudder is controlled by an extended centre throttle lever, which has the brake handle mounted at the top. Conversion back to a rudder pedal aircraft simply means locking the throttle in its central lateral position and disconnecting the pedals from the throttle lever – taking less than 10 minutes.

We currently have an interested school and if testing completes satisfactorily, the first example could be in the country by May this year. Watch this space for more details in due course – meanwhile, if you are interested, please contact me on 0413 900 892 or peter@foxbat.com.au

Mike Rudd



Mike Rudd



Mike on location filming a landing in the Foxbat

Here's another 'when I first met' stories....I was in the middle of demonstrating a SportStar aircraft to a potential customer at Heck Field, South East Queensland, when Mike appeared in the hangar doorway asking about the Foxbat. The SportStar customer was/is a very experienced pilot and instructor, so off he went for a second flight on his own, while I spoke with Mike. (The SportStar customer went on to order six SportStars and has since flown many hundreds if not thousands of hours in them – but that's another story).

Mike was a microlight/trike pilot looking for something a bit warmer, easier and less tiring to control, yet still capable of flying into and out of small bush strips. He was at Heck Field looking at other aircraft when he happened by me and the Foxbat.

It turned out that Mike is a professional photographer and video maker and in due course, after taking delivery of his new Foxbat, he began sending me short movie clips and photos of his

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Newsletter – January 2011

flying activities. After a while, it was time to invest in some ‘proper’ video publicity for the Foxbat, and Mike was the most obvious person to turn to.

Mike’s experience and knowledge of all things video is astonishing. He seems to understand intuitively what you need to show (and say) as well as all the current editing and production techniques, video formats etc. The results speak for themselves – many potential Foxbat buyers and existing owners have commented on the high quality of our videos. I have to thank Mike for all that, without his skills they would all look like the fuzzy and shaky home movies I was attempting before.

Most recently, Mike has acquired a GoPro camera – an amazing little HD camera which can be used freehand or mounted to almost any part of the aircraft (bearing in mind ‘safety first’). Have a look at this link for a video almost entirely shot on his GoPro and you’ll see just what high quality these cameras can deliver: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SAq0ucmOfNg>

If you want to make a video about your product and/or company, I can’t recommend Mike highly enough. Try him on: mikerudd48@bigpond.com if you need to make contact.

Installing a 10” SkyView in a Foxbat

As aviation progresses, digital flat panel screens are becoming more and more popular. We have come a long way since the original Rotax digital engine monitoring system – the FlyDat – with its monochrome screen and simple numbers displayed for the key parameters. The latest modular offering from one of the market leaders, Dynon, is the SkyView System.

The SkyView offers an almost bewildering array of choices and modules to give pilots all the information they could possibly want. At the heart of the system are two flat panel, high definition screens, one 7” and one 10”. These can be installed individually or in any combination of pairs. Feeding them are modules for flight instruments, engine instruments, transponder, navigation and so-on. And the SkyView can be used to control an autopilot as well as displaying all the information you need. And I suspect that this is just scratching the surface of a fantastically capable system.

So, under customer pressure, I decided to install a 10” screen and system in the demonstrator.



Dynon 10” SkyView – the screen can be configured to show any one or more of flight instruments, engine parameters and GPS

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The Aeroprakt factory carried out all the installation but for cost and warranty reasons, they then arrange for the actual Dynon screen to be sent direct here from Dynon. This is then installed 'plug and play' as part of the aircraft re-assembly process. All we have to do is to configure this brand new screen to display all the appropriate parameters we want, in the measurement units we prefer. More on the results in a later newsletter, when I've had a chance to fly it.

Fat wheels, cabin trim and more

As part of a continuing development process, Aeroprakt has added some more options to the A22 – some of which are practical, others which are cosmetic enhancements.

Fat wheels

The Foxbat is already an excellent farm aircraft – rugged, easy to fly slowly, with safe handling characteristics and big wheels. However, some pilots requested even bigger wheels for landing on sand and very rough strips. Almost two years ago, I took an order for an A22LS from Peter Harding in WA. Part of his requirement was to fit oversize tyres to the aircraft for flying in and out of his own paddock. Peter and his sister Shirley (who is also a pilot) paid a visit to the Aeroprakt factory in July 2009 and talked with Yuriy, the Aeroprakt CEO, about bigger wheels and tyres.

Very sadly, Peter died in a trike/microlight accident soon after his return from Europe. However, his words to Yuriy must have sparked interest, as Aeroprakt obtained a test set of bigger tyres – the wheels are standard 6" rims. The mains fit OK without modification but the nose leg and fork are modified to handle the bigger tyre. Testing began in 2010 and the result is now available as an option for the A22LS.



Oversize main gear tyre



Standard size tyre

Cabin roof trim

The A22 is intended to be a utilitarian flying machine. Most of the development and effort has been in the airframe, giving such excellent and forgiving handling. Aeroprakt have always seen the aircraft as a short field performer, aimed at farmers and flying schools. Thus weight saving yet maintaining strength has been important – techno-philes among you will have noticed that the A22LS is 20-30 kgs lighter in empty weight than any of its 600 kgs MTOW competitors.

On this basis, items like leather seats, luxury cabin trim and furnishings (even carpet in the early versions) have been seen as unnecessary, weight-adding items.



However, recent customer pressure has led to the introduction of a few more options, the latest of which is a vacuum-formed set of cabin roof trims, weighing less than 500 grams. These are available as a factory-fit option – they can be retro-fitted with a lot of fiddling, but not recommended.



New optional cabin roof trim

Flaperon hinges

Sharp eyed Foxbat owners have noticed that the flaperon hinges have small holes drilled in the spindles which run through the centres of the bearings. One or two owners have even added washers and inserted safety pins in these holes, assuming that this will add to the security of the flaperon hinge.



Hinge – no pin



Hinge – with pin

The factory has confirmed it is absolutely not necessary to fit safety pins – the geometry of the flaperon controls and hinges means that the flaperon just cannot come off its hinges.

As the wing and airframe flexes under flight loads, it is important that the flaperon is free to move on the spindles, not just up and down but also laterally. Ensure the hinge bearings are kept lubricated, even between services if needed, to ensure they are free to slide. And if you decide you really want to fit washers and safety pins, make sure there is plenty of room remaining for lateral movement in the hinge.

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