

WYE VALLEY FLYERS NEWSLETTER MAY 04

Incorporating Broadmeadow Flying Club

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Editorial Comment

Recently back from my travels, so thought I would put out a quick newsletter. Just had a great weekend of flying (15 - 16 May); down to Bodmin for the day on Saturday and Sandown IOW on Sunday with Graham, Judy and Brian where I counted over 100 aircraft on the ground and I would guess there were over 200 movements during the day, beautiful weather, sunshine and nil wind.

I am a little out of touch with Club activities so will refrain from briefing you on info you have probably already heard. I will dig around and hopefully bring more news in the June edition.

Close Shave

Last edition I announced Spence was the proud owner of a new Pegasus Quik 912 GCCSH. Read on as he explains...

Tuesday 30th March. Finish work and race to the flying field to squeeze in a quick fly, (no pun intended)! Quickly rigged GCCSH, the brand new £?? Quik sat in trike, ready to start engine. Primed the engine by turning it over with ignition off. Funny, didn't feel quite right. Never mind, I want to get airborne. Bang! 6" hole in starboard wing.

In an effort to get flying and at the expense of pre-flight checks, I had forgotten to remove the prop covers. The result is a badly damaged brand new wing. I've learnt an expensive lesson in an embarrassing way. However, more damaging than the harm to my aircraft, pride and my pocket, is the thought that if a flying prop cover could go straight through a wing, what would it have done to a nearby spectator?

Even if I hadn't forgotten my prop covers, I failed to undertake a proper pre-flight check because of my impatience. This could have been fatal for me, or worse a passenger. I'm a prat, and I give permission for all members to take the piss (would I expect anything else). Spence.

Comment: Brave man to come clean publicly. I would suggest we have all had our moments of forgetfulness in aviation and done something stupid. We all continue to learn - either way having noted the lesson learnt, I recommend we all take the invitation to take the piss!

Next photo is the plane in question (prior to the incident) on its maiden flight.



A BOIRE IN THE LOIRE - Part 1 By S Harvey

September 2002, Blois and back. Easy; having followed the lead of an experienced microlight-flying campaigner in the form of Alan (note I didn't say old).

August 2003, another Blois trip anticipated. No problem, loads of experienced old campaigners going (no names mentioned). Should be a breeze.

Thursday 28th August, day of departure. B*****s! There's a serious lack of presence from the experienced pilots; Jonathon, Val and I are the only three packed and ready to go. Perhaps they know something I don't? Never mind, hey ho, off we go.

We take off from Broadmeadow at 10.20hrs with the intention of flying straight to Headcorn. Jonathon's in his 503 powered Shadow G-MYEP and I'm in my 912-powered Quantum G-CBUU. We're going to use Redlands nr. Swindon as a waypoint, speak to Farnborough and fly south of Gatwick. There's an unpleasant front travelling south but I'm convinced we'll beat it. I've marked alternative airfields for potential diversions, programmed their co-ordinates and radio frequencies. How organised am I? Considerably more than normal, and as I am to discover along with other important lessons, you can't be too prepared.

The first half hour passes no problem. The weather is reasonable, the ground speed corresponds with the ASI, I'm excited and Val is fast asleep in the back. Not that this is an indication of well being; she regularly falls asleep within five minutes of being

airborne and even managed to sleep during our previous channel crossing while Alan and I crept under cloud at 600ft.

Jonathon and I are going to skirt around Lyneham to the north and fly through Fairford MATZ. I know that this is now a notam-activated zone so I call Brize and ask if it is active. 'You have to talk to London Information to find that out' was the reply, so I speak to London. 'You need to speak to Brize to find that out' was their reply. 'That's what my map says, however they've told me to speak to you'. 'No problem G-CBUU I'll call them up. Stay on frequency and I'll get back to you'. Silence ensued for several minutes until the nice man from London Information returned, 'I've spoken to Brize and they have confirmed that Fairford is inactive'. I confirmed our penetration and exit points along with our final destination and intended route before resorting to the microlight frequency and informing Jonathon. I cursed the man at Brize Radar for wasting valuable minutes of my life.

We pass over Redlands and continued southeast. Our ground speed had picked-up nicely, but I am aware of the large blackness to our north also travelling in our direction. After several more minutes while just southwest of Newbury I speak to Jonathon, 'This weather is catching us up, I'm going to divert to Popham, put down and assess our next move'. Jonathon agreed and we headed south. As Popham came into view it started to rain. I landed, exited the runway and turned just in time to see Jonathon executed a perfect landing. The time was 12.20hrs. For the next five hours we twiddled our thumbs. The three of us dozed and ate while rain showers were followed by unconvincing bright periods. We took advantage of excellent hospitality in the clubhouse, and on more than one occasion Val deliberately finished her toasted sandwich the quickest to enable her first choice of the cake selection. At 17.30hrs, having studied the TAF's and a satellite prediction I decide to press on. I had convinced myself that the present showers were simply scouting parties for the impending front, and we could outrun the serious gloom to Lashenden. We took off at 18.00hrs.

We skirted the aerals at Oakhanger and headed south of Gatwick CTA. Fifteen minutes later near Billinghamurst at 1200ft it started to rain again. The rain got heavier and the visibility deteriorated accordingly. I spoke to Jonathon, 'this is now getting quite bad. What says we head back to Popham?' Jonathon agreed, so we turned around. The weather behind us looks terrible as well. Within a short period of time the rain is so heavy it had reduced visibility extensively. We can virtually only see directly below and we were being pushed lower. Water had penetrated my neoprene bar

mitts and gloves and was biting at my fingers. Echo- Papa this is horrible, I think we should look for a decent field and put down.' Jonathon agreed. I had seen a potential field a minute ago so I turned and reduced height to obtain a better assessment. It looked flat and was certainly long enough, but had two large trees on the approach. I lined up with the intension of a low flypast for a more critical look and informed Jonathon of my intension. There was plenty of room between the trees, however as I got closer I was sure they were converging like two back-row forwards bearing down on a puny scum half. I was pleased with the approach and the surface now looked fine so I abandoned my original intension and landed with the mildest bump. Before I came to rest halfway down the field I heard a comforting voice from behind, 'Wow, I'm glad that's over' said Val. This was accompanied with a pat on my shoulder. I attempted to sound calm, but realised that I had probably been given away by my nervous commentary during the past few minutes of drama. I speak to Echo-Papa, 'the fields ok, plenty of room between the trees, the surface is ok'. I pulled to one side of our newly appointed airfield while noticing the water sloshing around in my pod.

Jonathon made an approach, flew low down the field and went around for a landing attempt. Unhappy with his second approach, he made an excellent landing on the next attempt. 'This field is really rough down this end, I think I might have damaged the front wheel' said Jonathon. I had forgotten that the Shadow required a longer landing roll and cursed myself for not having examined the remaining length of the field. Val went to find Jonathon while I tied down the plane.

Minutes later I was relieved to hear that Echo-Papa had not sustained any damage and was taxing towards me (weak undercarriage, what weak undercarriage). At the same time a dog appeared in the corner of the field, closely followed by its owner who I presumed to be the farmer. I prepared myself for a confrontation, but unnecessarily so because he provided a pleasant encounter.

Within a short space of time the clouds dispersed. We both acknowledged that we had had enough adventure for one day and consented to fly the short hop back to Popham. Jonathon elected to take-off first and backed up as close to the hedge as possible to avoid revisiting the bumps he encountered when landing. The robust little Shadow was shoved into the air to minimise the take-off roll. The journey back was uneventful, and the relief was evident in our conversation while making camp outside Popham clubhouse. The time was 18.45hrs, a mere 45 minutes after taking off from the same airfield; it had seemed like hours. The

first day of our trip had been an adventure, what was to come? I needed a stiff drink.

Calendar - Events

The next few months are very busy with Fly-ins and aviation events all over the country and abroad. In fact too many to mention in this newsletter, but I will attach the calendar of events Russell has put together and has promised to update. Grateful if anyone with any information on events can forward them to me.

The one event worth mentioning is our own Club Fly-in; strictly speaking this is the BFC event with WVF involvement. Due to be held at Broadmeadow 03 Jul, Russ has got the lead and has advertised the event in his normal manner (to the whole of the UK)! Nearer the time he will be requesting assistance – please help out if you can and make the effort to attend.

Aviators Digest – Titbits

Roger is the proud owner of a Pegasus Quasar, low hours and in good condition, which he collected from Perth Airfield. When I spoke to him he had completed 17 hours already and was enjoying himself. Although you may want to question him over his recent embarrassment of becoming briefly misplaced (lost) when venturing out with Nev in marginal conditions.

Roger also made his way to Earls Court for the Air Show and was to be blunt, disappointed. Clearly aimed at the GA and corporate fraternity there was minimal microlight representation and none of the small stalls so popular at Popham, Kemble and Telford. All very glitzy and expensive but definitely not aimed at the light end of the market he cannot recommend it for next year

Chris L and his Zenair project moves slowly towards completion. When I last spoke to him he was working through a series of rectifications following a couple of test flights – lots of talk of temperatures, and insufficient revs. Hopefully it will all be resolved shortly.

Dean reports he has his new Kiss kit in and work will commence shortly in its construction – good luck.

I asked John H how his Sky Ranger project was progressing and immediately regretted it! Apparently he is finished and simply waits his permit to fly, patience is wearing thin and the weeks pass by, raise the subject at your peril!

Bill was strutting his stuff having managed his first solo flight in his Chevron (just bought from Alan). He

made it look easy and got off cleanly which led Nev to comment he must weigh less than Alan!

I have included a photo of his Chevron landing in Lagos Portugal many years ago when Alan and I flew there, just to now tease him further a field.



Social Fixtures

WVF Club members meet at 2000hrs on the first Thursday of every month at the Red Lion Pub, Kilpeck (off the Hereford – Abergavenny road about 8 miles from Hereford). BFC members are welcome as are any like-minded aviators, why not socialize and join us for a drink?

Comment

Thanks to Spence for his input, many of you have promised to put pen to paper now is the time to submit... Otherwise I will give you another Eurostar story.

Finally I have had a few messages asking me to include various persons in the distribution of this newsletter. Not a problem but please ensure you give the persons e-mail address! Likewise feel free to forward this newsletter on and in the process encourage any written contribution, lots of stories, dramas, crashes, exploits, experiences must be out there untold.

Regards Merv.