

IBM Flying Club Newsletter - December 1998



Clear Prop! - Jon Butts

The transition to Notes Newsletters went fairly smoothly, I've changed the font this month after hearing about a Thinkpad and a printer not coping with last month's font. Irv Lee has his name in lights in the December issue of Flyer magazine, and will be appearing in Pilot magazine too in the New Year. Don't forget you read him here first folks! Not a lot of news or gossip to tell you about, but maybe we'll have some at the Christmas Bash - Bob dig out something interesting for us to natter about! Any late Bash replies to Brian on 01962 842555 please.

A date for your diary is our AGM, which we will be holding once again in Hursley House, this time at 19:30 on Friday 29th January 1999. Should be a fairly straight forward run through, with plenty of bar-time to round off with. Agenda items, nominations for committee posts and the 'Friend of the IBM Flying Club' award, apologies etc to Denis Howe please. I'd like to hear from anyone who can offer to cover any of the club roles next year - likewise if you are already looking after one of the roles for us and you fancy a change, or a break. I will be taking a break from the club committee myself next year - I won't go into why as I did promise to keep the newsletter baby-talk free, didn't I?

Denis and Dasher are working on a scheme to simplify membership renewals. With a bit of help we'll have them all completed and back before the end January. The membership fee will be going up a fair chunk - it's been £10 for at least ten years that I know of, and that was before we started providing loan charts! By the way, if you're an IBM flyer reading this on the net, and not a listed member, please get in touch - every member we can list improves the budget we get from the IBM Club funds. Season greetings everyone, now on with the flying news...

G-EBXU Flies Again! - Jon Akerman

6 years restoration (68 years since previous flight, or 70 years since first flight), De Havilland DH60X Moth [G-EBXU](#) flew again on Oct 15th. She made her first public outing (to Popham and back) on the 18th. We flew shotgun in [G-BPVH](#) and I took a roll of air-to-air photos. Hopefully the results will soon appear in Popular Flying, Pilot, and Sport Aviation.

She was originally built as a Cirrus-engined floatplane for the Aircraft Operating Company Ltd, for photo survey work (although we think this might just have been a cover for a long term MI6 covert operation). We've kept the float fittings but changed to a Gipsy engine. Apart from spares and service advantages this gives us a LOT more horsepower. She had been approved to fly off her test hours with Ron Souch, so neither David Cooper-Maguire nor I have had a chance to get out hands on her. This plus the way the weather has been is unbelievably frustrating.

We have some time off this week and next, so are busy fitting radio kit, checking accuracy of some

of the instruments (all are old, some are WWI), dealing with a minor idling problem, and attending to a few other odds and ends. If we are really really lucky we will get to fly her soon. Meantime all I can say is that she has a very short takeoff roll, extremely rapid climb rate, and an exhaust note to die for. Ron is clearly very pleased with her performance and handling.

XU's fourth flight was on the 6th Nov - Ron Souch took her up for about 40 mins, after we'd fitted a well-calibrated ASI. He says she flies beautifully. She's doing 80mph at 1700 rpm, so at 1900 rpm cruise she should settle down at 90 mph or so. We have also fitted (discreetly of course) the radio gear, which now needs testing. If the weather improves for the coming week we should be able to complete the radio tests and the PFA flight testing, after which I'll be able to provide complete performance data. Then we get to fly her....

If anyone is interested in building their own manometer to check pitot-static systems for leaks and check ASI's for accuracy, please let me know. I can supply construction details and the formula for calculating the head of water for speeds in 1 mph and 1 knot increments. Total cost was £2.02.



Away-day in Venice - Bob Elliott

This years' away-day was to Venice. Previous trips for the Clubhouse Friday-nighters on the Palmair 146 have been Iceland (on an Air2000 B757) and Rome. These trips are designed to give a 'taster' of each city, and are very well done.

The 07:30 departure from Bournemouth had a short delay which meant a 10:30 local arrival at Venice. It was raining. Our private boat to the city was docked several metres away from the covered walkway and we got wet. The boat trip was about an hour, and we had lost Big Dave! The rains relented, but no-one had told us about high-tide! Our boat toured some of the islands and we noticed folk paddling about up to their knees, but I didn't expect to be doing some! (*ed: no you didn't - I recall you laughing at them from the boat, and calling them silly xyz's!*). In the past Murano, where they make glass things, and I got this uneasy feeling! The highest tides of the year plus the incessant recent rains meant that we had to paddle betwixt ship and shore! It had to be done. We only had a few hours to see the sights.

The Bridge of Sighs, St Marks square, St Marks Basilica, (a Basilica is like a Cathedral but has within its walls the remains of a Saint (we learnt in Rome, last year)), up the Campanile for glorious views across the city, walking the narrow streets and alleys to the Rialto Bridge, and a boat ride on the Grand Canal - we resisted the gondola experience - were all fitted in before we met up with the rest back at St Marks - now dry! (*ed: Blue Sky, Sun, CAVOK, tide OUT!*)

We found Dasher who, having got on a different boat to the rest of us from the airport, had spent the entire day with half a dozen lady dentists, was looking very pleased with himself, and the rest of our party of twelve (no-one got lost!) and got the boat back to the airport. The 146 took off at 19:30 local and we were back at Hurn at 21:30.

Thanks for organizing it Eileen (Mellor) and we are looking forward to Prague next year!



Who's Who 3 of 3 - Jon Butts

We complete this month our brief guide to our members and their flying activities - maybe you'll discover someone working/flying nearby that you could meet up with sometime. Norman Luland is known to most of us, retired and living in Winchester, Norman knows how to enjoy himself flying Tiger Moth and Cessna's from Middle Wallop; vintage and touring are particular flying interests. [G-ZERO](#) doesn't count as vintage (yet), but touring is certainly the name of the game, just ask Hursley based James Mason where he's got to since buying his fifth share in this Southampton based Grumman Tiger (F- OO- I- HB- SE- LN- OY- EI-). Brian Mellor is also a PFA and AOPA member, has instructor, CPL and IR ratings and will fly any type he can get his hands on, whether it be aerobatic, vintage, on floats, or I guess even all three?

Don Milton has his hardcopy newsletters supplied by his 'retiree partner' James Mason. When not in France Don is often at Goodwood, either in the flying club or in syndicated PA28 Archer G-BMKR. Besides doing his bit for IBM at Hursley Jeff Moreland is a PPL member of the PA28 [G-BHXX](#) group operating from Thruxton. You crossed out all the 'I am interested in:' categories Jeff, without adding any - so I'll venture one, I happen to know Jeff enjoys pottering around Hampshire on gorgeous VFR afternoons, and amusing eavesdroppers with northerner's style R/T. Jim Morley has a share in Popham based C172 G-BRBI, another machine that gets around the country, no doubt Jim's IMC rating helps with that. Next up, and from Fleet, it says here, is Steve Pick who has night IMC and B ratings, most of which come in handy when flying his syndicate-owned PA28-180 [G-AVSE](#) from Blackbushe. If you're ever round about Normandy House, Basingstoke I'm sure Steve will talk flying over a coffee, or two.

Phil Russell is another Hursleyite, who commutes in from Alresford, but not, to my knowledge in Popham based C152 [G-BRTD](#), in which Phil has a share. Dave Sawdon has got through his CPL QFI and IR tests and currently does a lot of flying from Old Sarum in their Bulldogs, T67s and the usual C's and P's. Dave is another one of us in the PFA, and is really keen on aeros, instructing and flying new types. Peter Short beats a path to Popham from Kings Worthy to exercise his PPL and C150 share - I hope that's working out ok Peter. Some people collect airfields, or types, but Dave Thomas seems to be collecting PPLs - he listed his UK and NZ one's, and that was before he went out to bag his South African and US ones. Night and IMC rating are also in the bag, plus loads of AA5B and touring experience out of Southampton. The syndicate's AA5B [G-BIBT](#) has been sold I hear, Rockwell Commander next is the plan.

Chris Thompson is, like his [Auster DH108 Special](#), a one and only. Best make that the one and only CRT, as we now have ANOTHER Chris Thompson on our books (of whom more when I get to his form in this tome Denis has lent me). CRT's got oodles and oodles of hours and experiences in GA, including a famous force landing on the Isle of Wight after a cylinder failed on a channel crossing. Chris also mans the radio at Popham and Mull from time to time, I doubt you'll miss him when he is, so say hello next time your in for a coffee.

Working out of North Harbour and flying out of Southampton, Thruxton and Sarum is PFAer and 200hr PPL Richard Valler, a VP1 owner who tends to fly a mixture of types, favouring tailwheel, classics and homebuilts - grassroots flying. Also working at Nhbr is PPL/IMC Roger West who rents PA28 for touring out of Goodwood, accompanied by frequent flyer Verity, who must by now have quite a lot experience too - are you going to show us boys how it's done one of these days Verity? John Woodley also flies from Goodwood as a student in PA38's - a lot of us have had our hands on the well-known G-BGRx range. I hope you have been enjoying your training John - how has it been going?

Flying from one of the most picturesque locations is Julian Rees, who works in Bristol - in between his many glider sorties from Nymphsfield, right on the edge of the Cotswolds and overlooking the Severn (worth a look but remember to avoid overflying the glider sites like this one when flying in the Gloucester area!). Andrew Astley is a student PPL with Solent Flight Southampton, eliciting well earned praise from ATC for his first solo, in a Grumman Tiger no less. Are you still at it Andy? Ian

Murray is a PPL up at Warwick flying C152 out of Wellesbourne Mountford - black pudding territory for us Southerner's brunch's. John Trimmer is interested in all type of aircraft, and is a member of the R.A.F.A and R.A.F.R.A.

Don Evans lives in Kent and is a PPL(D), flying microlights (weightshift, Medway,Hybred) from Stelling Minnis near Canterbury. Don is also a member of the BMAA and Kent Micro Club. Happy retiree John Dunn flies Piper and Cessna 'spam cans' and has 99.5% finished Kitfox - that was in May 98, so with a bit of luck that last .5% is completed too? Malcolm McDonald is Hursley based, and is another of Goodwood's many PA38 PPL renters. Bedfont based PPL/IMC/Night Robin Clark lives near Wycombe Air Park which also happens to be where he finds a PA28, G-BGWM, to take skyward. Mike Lloyd is a PPL and as of July 98 was training for his IMC rating. Mike's types are PA28 and C172 (which is best Mike? ...!) from Little Gransden and Henlow.

PPL Keith Male owns a share of Thruxton based PA28 G-BHXK, and comes in as our 61st member this year. Keith's main interest is unusual WW2 aviation equipment, and is often to be found lending a hand at the Museum of Army Flying, Middle Wallop. Although based out of Jackson House, Manchester PPL(A) Ian Abraham lives and takes to the skies in the Nottingham area, base airfield being Tollerton, renting PA38 and PA28 Archers. Finally, the new Chris Thompon! Chris lives in the Chalfonts area, Bucks and is a PPL(A), but more often flies Microlights from his base airfield at Sywell, Northants. If anyone knows instructors at the really light end of the scale - paragliding/power-chuting, Chris would like to know please. Well, that is all the 1998 forms Denis, I hope I've not skipped over anybody! I don't know how interesting reading it's been, but at least now we're all in with a fighting chance of finding out that that chap down the corridor, or in the next meeting, or renting the plane after you - is another one of us!



Stockholm trip report - Dave Sawdon

I recently had a business need to be in Stockholm so decided to take the Old Sarum Seneca and make use of my shiny new Instrument Rating. The plan was to depart OS with full fuel, refuel in Denmark and then on to Stockholm Bromma, returning either via sight-seeing in Norway and Shetland or direct back through Denmark depending on weather. After a few phone calls and queries on the internet we chose Billund as the outbound fuel stop and return routing as either Bergen/Stornoway or Esbjerg.

Do you know about AIS at Heathrow? This is a FREE service which enables you to get aviation info for anywhere in the world. I'd used AIS before by phone but during the route planning stage I visited them for the first time. The service is absolutely superb and thoroughly recommended. A chap showed me their library of all the Air Pilots (for EVERY country!) and where the copier was and said "copy whatever you need". After 2 hours I'd got copies of all the published approach plates, airspace, rules, etc. totally free. They've also got all of the Aerads/Jeppesens, these can't be copied but are useful for reference. Give me a call if you want more info.

I was fairly new to the system so the first challenge on the detailed planning front was how to get through the London TMA. I filed what I thought was a sensible route (WOD CHT BPK CLN then airways, all at FL 90). The flight plan was accepted so I thought I'd cracked it, however, once airborne and in IMC passing FL 70 London decided that they couldn't accept us with those wonderful words "remain outside controlled airspace". Rapid rethinking led to a descent and routing under the TMA, eventually joining the airways at CLN FL 90. The rest was uneventful VMC on top with a vectored ILS into a slightly wet and grey Billund.

Out of Billund following the published Standard Instrument Departure (SID) then airways to

Bromma. The trip was initially VMC on top but then the cloud broke as we got within about 200 miles of Stockholm (what a lot of lakes!), uneventful except for a night ILS in totally clear air to an airfield that I couldn't see; when I queried whether the lights were on there was a pause followed by a runway magically appearing before us - a strange sight.

Three days later the weather at both Bergen and Stavanger (the alternate) was foggy so we came back via Denmark. Bromma SID to an uneventful airways VMC on top trip at FL 80 to another vectored ILS into wet/grey Esbjerg.

The final leg was again airways, initially VMC on top at FL100, but the clouds dissolved into haze just before Heligoland. I noticed a whole string of interesting looking small islands on the NW German coasts. Each one seemed to have an airfield and most had long beaches so I guess they aren't far above sea level - they looked as if they would be a superb destination for a club fly-out and over night camp sometime next year, has anyone been there?

All went well as we flew over the Belgian and Dutch coastal areas but as we approached Gatwick I noticed that the right oil pressure was just below the green and the right oil temperature was higher than the left. The engine was still smooth and fuel flows were normal so there was no need to do anything in a hurry. I told London we had a bit of a problem, declined their invitation to declare an emergency and asked for vectors direct to Old Sarum. They kept us high and passed us to Solent by which time the oil pressure was a bit lower and the temperature a bit higher. Solent passed us to Boscombe who moved people out of our way and vectored us into Old Sarum. Pressures and Temperature were still out of the red so I kept the engine going until short finals and then pulled the mixture to ICO in the flare (to avoid running at low rpm) and taxied in on the left engine.

On inspection there was a largish piece of spinner missing and only a small amount of oil left. When a cylinder was removed the rings were welded into the piston so that's how the oil got out. The spinner failure appears to have been a coincidence.

Total flying 14.5 hours. Fuel VERY cheap in Sweden and slightly cheap in Denmark. The Swedish landing card gives free landings/parking/navigation/emission charges for a week, this was cheaper than paying for one landing and 2 days parking.

The whole trip was great fun and I learned a lot. Some of the major points were:

- Avoid London TMA unless you're already in the airways system. (Others have since told me that it's sometimes easier to file VFR to the UK FIR boundary and then IFR).
- Once you are "in the system" airways flying is easier than VFR flying, near London the slightly tricky bit seems to be getting into the system. You don't need to buy all the 1/2 mil maps, navigation is easier, continuous RADAR, radio handovers are automatic, R/T is simpler.
- ATC are very helpful with direct routings (allowing you to cut the corners) but occasionally this means you are out of range of the appropriate navaid for a while, GPS becomes useful at this point.
- It was the first time I'd flown SIDs and STARs, they look complicated but actually make life easier.
- Airline pilots cock up and mis-hear R/T as well as PPLs.
- The AIS service is too good not to use.
- Four hours is a long time in an aeroplane, fortunately it's possible to use a Transair "Little John" in the normal seated position.

If anyone would like to fly themselves on business trips I would be delighted to ride shotgun so you can either use the airways or just be able to (almost) guarantee getting there. If anyone fancies an over-night trip next year to the German Islands I mentioned (Frisian?) then get in touch.



N494TW - L-749A Constellation - Bob Elliott

The CAA wouldn't let the MATS Connie do pleasure flights in England, so we had to go to Jersey! Jon B, Paul G, Dave A, (Zero Boys) and myself are now members of the Connie Club. For our 'Membership Fee' we got a nice leather luggage tag and a half hour flight around the Channel Islands. Jon and Paul went over in ZERO whilst Dasher and I recruited the CFI to take us, the organizer, and his son, in Cessna 310 G-BARG.

We were all booked on the first Connie flight but ZERO went to the Flying Club and that caused them to miss it! No matter, they got a later trip, and a little present for giving up their seats for others! The deal was for half an hour chock to chock, but we were at the hold longer than that as all the other display aircraft and scheduled trundled in. We eventually got away off Runway 27. A right turn out over St Ouen's Bay to overfly Sark and make a low pass down R27 at Guernsey before returning to Jersey.



Photo: N494TW Lockheed 749A Constellation en-route to Guernsey. By Bob Elliott.
(Camera Ship: Dave Ashford, Brian Mellor; Connie Ballast: Paul Goodman, Jon Butts)

Our pilot was Vern Raeburn, the owner of the Connie. How lucky we are that there are still people like him who not only delight in owning such machines, but also love to share the experience with the likes of us. He had bought it from John Travolta (the actor and bizjet pilot who once glided his Falcon 50 in to Washington National from several miles out after complete engine failure!).

We had a word with Frank Lang, the octogenarian chief pilot of the Constellation Group, and he agreed to formate with us on the third and last flight of the day to provide a photo opportunity. Jersey Air Traffic were very helpful and worked a treat (*ed: sent them a print Bob?*). Guernsey Air Traffic seemed not to be so well informed of what we were up to, and when Dasher was asked to make a right turn for Cap De La Hague the Connie disappeared beneath our starboard wing! We came back to Southampton - and so ended yet another successful day out Now, where is that Stratocruiser!

(ed: Since his May newsletter plug Bob has seen this trip through numerous twists and turns - we thought it was all over. Well done for finally getting us aboard Bob, it really was a cracking day, thanks.)



Sixth Share for Sale - [The Zero Boys](#)

The Zero Boys are looking to expand the Southampton-based G-ZERO Syndicate from five to six members in the New Year. This will be a good time to restructure as the aircraft will have just completed a major annual and had a new 3 year C of A issued. Our motivation is simply to split the costs of ownership six ways rather than the current five ways - at one fifth we all have more than enough availability and are happy to let go of some of it to accommodate a sixth flyer.

We are interested in someone joining us who can:

- be trusted to safely fly the aircraft to high standards, enjoys going places, near and far
- find the time and motivation to fly the aircraft 30-40 hours a year (your logbook for the last year or two is a good indicator for this)
- afford to buy-in. What's a sixth share worth? There's a question and a half. We're still thinking that through. As a guide, AA5Bs are currently advertised between £30k and £40k, for not so good and good examples respectively. Pick something in between and divide by six and it won't be a million miles from the figure we come to by a more complex review of all our assets
- afford to fly at £42/hr. This figure includes fuel, oil, engine fund and 50hr maint contributions
- stump up around £115 a month to cover all fixed costs. Yes this sounds huge, but it is a figure which reflects reality - other groups fees may be lower but basically its because they are 'happier' to stump up as and when bills come in - it's a question of *'when* would you prefer to pay Sir?'. We prefer to accumulate funds before they are needed - it can save wrangling and make it easier to budget personally. Main items Included are Parking, Insurance and Annual maintenance budget.

If you're interested then have a chat with any of the Zero Boys. Jon is going to handle most of the queries and provide more information.



Skye and Plockton - Jon Butts

For the August bank holiday weekend the Highland Aero Club lease Broadford airfield on the Isle of Skye, and the nearby mainland airfield of Plockton for their Annual BBQ. This year their fly-in included a small airshow on the Saturday, with Sea King, S61 and Puma demos, a DC3 flyby, and a hanger disco following in the evening.

Debbie and I began our long weekend break on Friday morning, with a 2hr50 VFR trip to Prestwick, via the Manchester Low Level corridor and CAVOK through the Lake District. We taxied onto Prestwick Flying Club's piece of apron, where we met with a very warm reception, reasonably priced fuel and a £10 landing fee (you will be charged £38ish if you use the airport authority proper!). We knew we were catching up with some poor weather that was not due to clear western Scotland till late evening, so I rang ahead to Plockton, our planned base for the weekend. "Foul weather, it's not improving" was the verdict. We we decided that wherever we spent the night, it would not be Plockton!

The PFC were very friendly and drove us to a nearby restaurant for lunch. While we were there thinking about over-nighting at Prestwick, or going on as far as we could VFR, another group sat down to eat at the next table. One of them noticed my chart and asked where we were going, and we

found out that they too were heading to Plockton for the weekend, from Fair Oaks in a PA28-150. We began working out options for the weather together, and called ahead to Chris Thompson's mate Dave Howitt, who is the Main Man at the Isle of Mull's Glenforsa airfield. When I explained that we were hoping to call in he was adamant that we should not attempt to land there within the next hour or so - the viz was real grim there! However he suggested that it might clear later in the evening, and to get the Tiree actuals, as that was where the Mull weather was blowing in from.

That was a good idea, Tiree was brightening up nicely. A plan was hatched to wait at Prestwick as long as possible for the weather to pass before heading off early evening to Mull, with a Plan C to head for Tiree, and a Plan D back to Prestwick. While we waited the club staff left to go home at 18:00, happily leaving us in charge of their clubhouse and the keys to their fleet of aircraft! G-ZERO left first and being the faster plane became the weather recon. We managed good VFR below cloud toward the Crinan Canal. With the sun was shining off the water to our left around Jura we headed West to track up the coast nearer the sunlight. This was a lovely time to fly in the area. It wasn't long before we could see the cloud over Mull, and Tiree standing out clear as a bell 50 miles to the North West - Plan C was certainly viable, and I wondered how easy it would be find accommodation there.

However it was worth taking a closer look at the Mull weather, and we got right up to Craignure, where the Oban-Mull ferry comes in. We entered the Sound of Mull VFR trying to figure out what was ahead - was it a cloud? Did it go down quite to sea level? Or was it mist that just happened to reach the cloud base? We were only six miles from Glenforsa, but having descended to 400ft figured that to continue would put us pretty much IMC. At 400ft, with mountains either side, no nav aids, and no radar cover for the other plonker coming the other way - no thank you! One 180 turn later we passed Craignure south-east bound to route up the south-west side of Mull, which we had just seen was VFR-able that way. We hoped to follow any better weather headed down the Sound of Mull to Glenforsa from the North-west, and if not head on to Tiree.

The other aircraft out of Prestwick arrived at Craignure. I explained we had recently turned back out of the Sound, but they had a crack at it and made it in to land. I think a few sweaty palms/anxious backseaters were involved - but we were happy where we were, and now able to ask them for the cloud base at the strip! It was around 700ft with great viz to the NW, nil to the SE. From Ulva we were able to route east without any difficulty to join the circuit at Glenforsa at 600ft, downwind for 25. However at the end of the downwind leg - there it still was - this great big, huge, ball of mist, spanning the Sound up to the cloud base! An early turn onto right base kept us clear of that particular brand of localized weather. I've not seen a piece of weather like it before - it appears to basically have been a large bank of fog - not clearing because it was lying in still air in the lee of Ben More and other mountains.

We put ZERO to bed alongside the PA28, and were then surprised to be joined by a Beagle Pup - I can't recall if the height quoted up the Sound of Mull was 100 or 200 feet. We'd no accommodation booked on Mull, but David Howitt helped us out, arranging a taxi ride to Tobermory and a room at the Western Isles Hotel. He'd not asked our names so while he was booking had to make up a name for the receptionist - so our room was reserved in the name of Mr and Mrs Thingy! Our taxi turned out to be one of the islands wildlife tour minibuses, and along with the Pup crew we chatted happily with the guide about the wildlife (natural) on Mull as we drove the 14 gorgeous miles up to Tobermory - spotting seals and a buzzard at the usual places.

This Plan B couldn't have worked out any better for Debs as Mull, and Tobermory, rank amongst her most favourite of places. We sometimes rent a chalet for our holidays there, but as it was a one-night stop, we treated ourselves to the luxury of a £75 room at the Western Isles hotel. Having explained that we were Mr and Mrs Thingy but not really, we retired to our third floor room - with a view of the Sound, and a view from the en-suite over the harbour and quay-side. Sauntering down to the harbour-front, where the buildings are painted in various colours - ideal for postcards - and enjoyed yet another well prepared meal at the Captain's Table. By the time we returned to the hotel stars

scattered the skies and we (I) knew we had a CAVOK day to look forward to!

In fact, the next day was so nice, we (Debbie) decided that we shouldn't rush off, but should just relax and enjoy pottering around Tobermory, especially the shops! Having just got 3hr30 flying in I was in no position to negotiate! I confess it was a very pleasant morning, and we were very much in holiday mode when we caught the local bus back to the airstrip. The PA28 was gone, but responded to my blind departure calls, explaining that they were now en-route to Plockton, having refuelled at Oban; whose own show was now on, Duxford Spitfire and Nimrod flyby included. We climbed out for some aerial shots of Tobermory and headed north to Skye, via the new bridge and Eilean Donan Castle - the one the BBC balloon is always flirting with.



Photo: G-ZERO at Glenforsa, Mull. Debbie Butts.

We changed plan and made a landing at Skye first rather than Plockton, just to see what was going on there. There were a couple of PFA types, a Maule and a C172 there, with a gaggle of aviators crowded round - and a cake stall, loaded with delicious home-made fare! We got chatting to a lady there, called Helen I think, but my memory is so poor I'm sure it can't be! Anyway 'Helen' lives on Skye and is married to a flyer called David (well, so I seem to recall) who I believe used to chair the PFA. Conversation soon centred on two Bottlenose Whales seemingly enjoying a short summer break from the Atlantic, close in-shore in Broadford Bay, just up the road. David and Helen very kindly provided a lift the two miles into Broadford - and it wasn't hard to find the Whales - there were crowds of people just stopped to see what was going on just off the harbour wall. Talk about a crowd draws a crowd - you could see the phenomenon in action. A very pleasant hour was spent watching the Whales frolicking about and eating ice cream (us, not them, - the ice cream that is). Back at the strip we took off for the fifteen minute flight to Plockton, with Helen along for the ride - one good turn does indeed deserve another!

Plockton was busy with Group A and microlights doing their thing. The Stornoway Coastguard S61 has done its winching party piece, an RAF Puma that had come over for the party from Belfast was parked up, and a civvie chopper was giving joy-rides. We found a cosy spot to park ZERO, right next to the windsock and away from the runway action - just in case! We were about the 14th Group A fixed-wing in for the fly-in - a turn out the club seemed pleased with, as it is only their second year running the event. One aircraft came from Denham, another (a Pulsar) from Bournemouth - I guess beating me to the prize for the furthest flown aircraft. It is definitely an event that deserves to grow in future years - a great strip in a lovely place. The fuel situation is a bit hit and miss there, so I'd

made sure we had enough in the tanks to get back to Prestwick OK. A C310 practised short-field ops (597m rwy), making the most of the virtually free landings. Another couple in a Grumman landed, parked up near-by and came over to say hello; they knew ZERO from years gone by and are also members of the American Yankee Association. We got our burgers and I got a few shots of the Puma well and truly beating the place up - sorry, demonstrating low-level military techniques. The Inverness-based Air Atlantique DC3 flew past, landing at the longer runway at Skye, where the crew got lifts back to the party at Plockton.

I got chatting to three guys sitting next to an Islander, just watching the action in the evening sunshine. They seemed a bit awkward when I asked where they had come up from - like it was a difficult question to answer. Well, it was rather! Two of them had been en-route to Plockton from somewhere down south in their group Jodel. However it developed a magneto problem and they had had to make a forced landing on an airfield in Yorkshire (Pocklington I think). Of course they thought their trip to Scotland was well and truly over - however they very soon found themselves airborne again, this time in the local parachute club's Islander which was just leaving - for Plockton! Now then, how's that for *timing*?! (Ho-ho! Excuse the pun, but isn't that the best timed mis-timed timing you've heard of?).

The walk down the hill into the peaceful Plockton village took Debbie and I fifteen minutes. At 'Seabanks' harbour-front B+B landlady Lynn Bruce had left the front door open, and a note on the hallway table telling us our room number and to come and go as we pleased. It was something special to hear that the people there still feel able to leave their front doors unlocked. An evening stroll and a pub meal were just the way to round off a great day out.

Sunday morning dawned bright and we took advantage of a cooked breakfast. A microlighter and partner joined us and we soon started talking flying. They had planned to fly up to Plockton on the Friday, but due to the weather had decided to trailer it up behind his car instead. Sensible chap! The weather in the Plockton area was pretty bad on the Friday - apparently some other micro's had flown up then - skimming the water below the clouds, sometimes out of sight of the high ground either side. I guess we'd have read about it if their GoPlacesSkill-lessly had dropped out, or the batteries had run out. Our particular microlighters set off to enjoy some sightseeing in the CAVOK before trailering home - good for them I thought - it is nice to meet flyers you wont find yourself worrying about later!

Breakfast finished, we caught an hour's Sunday morning boat trip to see the Seals out in the bay, with many a tale regaled by the captain about his appearances in Hamish MacBeth, as filmed in Plockton. This chap was once checked out by Trading Standards, after hearing reports that prior to offering 'See the seals or your money back' trips he had placed a couple of fake seals out on the furthest rocks! (He hadn't, but If you saw a very similar Hamish M episode, you now know it was inspired by real life!). From the boat we walked back up to the hill to the airfield, photographing free-roaming cattle resting on the verges, and diverting into the twee railway station for coffee and more home made cake! We flew out at 14:00, stopping once again at Prestwick for fuel, before arriving back at Southampton at 19:00. I've since learned that Oban is well and truly open for GA (not just gliders), and carries a good stock of 5000 litres of fuel, making the Western Isles even more accessible. All in all a very special weekend, memorable for the super people we met, both on and off the airfields. Scotland - a great place to fly.



New York, New York - Dave Thomas

About a month ago, Clare and I went across to New York for a week to stay with a friend of ours. Whenever we mentioned this, everyone concerned with flying said that we must try and fly along the

lower Hudson River to the East of Manhattan island. The die was cast! First problem was to find an airfield close by where we could rent a plane. The 'Charlie Alpha' web page proved to be very useful as I asked if anyone knew of any contacts and received a reply from a very helpful fellow who told me about Sparta Aviation at Teterborough Airport just over the river in New Jersey. I rang them, and they were happy to oblige; they would check me out in a PA28-181 for an FAA licence, take us for a trip up the Hudson River, and then let us rent the plane to fly ourselves. They even had an FAA office on site to obtain the licence!

On the appointed day, we caught the train, walked to the bus station, and eventually reached the airfield. There was room for improvement on my micro-navigation and catering, but we did manage to sort things out eventually. I could wax lyrical about bureaucracy, about customer relations, and a few other negative aspects of the trip, but that's not really important. Suffice to say that eventually we were on board '48C' learning about the various radio protocols at Teterboro', the local frequency for Hudson traffic, and the airspace limitations in and around New York. Then the real fun started.

Once aloft, I had to demonstrate steep turns, recovery from stalls, and my ability to land the plane at a field called Greenwood Lakes which had a very steep approach over some trees, and was long enough for a Connie to land, but not for it to take off again - it's still there! After two touch-and-gos, we headed back to the Hudson for our 'practice' run.

Despite the various International Airports, there is a corridor up and down the Hudson that is uncontrolled, but within which there are informal practices aimed at making it safe for both GA aircraft and the helicopters running the tourists around. The main points are that you fly up and down the River at 900' hugging the right-hand shore (NJ going South, Manhattan going North), reporting your position at VRPs as and when you pass them. If you plan to fly around the Statue of Liberty ('The Lady'), then you can descend to 500', but fixed wing aircraft fly anti-clockwise, with helicopters flying clockwise.

To start with, you fly over the George Washington Bridge (height 685'!), fascinating in itself, as you keep on asking yourself if there really is sufficient height for you to get over it, and being prepared to both put on power, and head for the middle (lowest part) of the bridge in case. The next reporting point is 'Central Park' which appears on the left as you concentrate on hugging the Jersey shore. As you fly along, every so often you hear a helicopter reporting, and then see it slowly gain height in the middle of the river, and then disappear into the distance - one of the reasons for GA to hug the shoreline. Then there's the USS Intrepid (Aircraft Carrier now converted into a museum), the 'Chelsea Piers', and finally 'Colgate (a huge clock on the Jersey shore, that used to stand in front of the Colgate factory, which is no longer there)'. At 'Colgate' you announce your intention to drop down to 500' to fly around the 'Lady'. It is really wonderful to see the Statue from 500' almost being able to see the individual people in the crown looking at you. After the 'Lady', we climbed back to 900', and flew past the twin towers of the World Trade Centre - 1400' high. The day before we had been up to the restaurant on the top floor and had a drink - it's a sobering thought to know that we were flying below the restaurant. The flight North is really just a repeat of the flight South, which makes it sound rather ordinary, but it is somehow magical to see things like the Empire State Building, Maddison Square Garden, the USS Intrepid, and Central Park from so near (and yet so far). Back to the GWB, and then back to Teterboro for a standard approach and return to base, after which the Instructor said that he was happy and the plane was ours for the rest of the afternoon.

Back to the flying school to plan the next flight. All we really wanted to do was to repeat the Hudson trip, but to include a diversion to the North up the Hudson Valley to see the amazing Tappan Zee bridge (all lattice work) and West Point. So, having checked the charts very carefully for heights, and any airspace restrictions, off we went. We took off, and headed for the Hudson again, then turned North to fly over the Tappan Zee bridge which we could see in the distance. Beyond that there is a bend in the river which is a seaplane base. As we went by, we could even see a seaplane hauled up on the 'beach'. Continuing Northward, we soon came to West Point, where we had to keep

close watch on a helicopter that appeared on a convergent course, but soon disappeared behind us. The buildings of West Point stand out very clearly, and look very impressive (photos available on request). We then turned around and headed South again. After a relatively short time, we saw the 'GWB, descended to 900', and started our 'mantra' of the various reporting points as we continued South.

I was flying and talking on the radio, Clare was operating the video and taking photos, but both of us were continually scanning the horizon and the river for any other traffic, especially the ever present helicopters, buzzing around like flies. It was all quite marvellous, especially to think that there we were, two Brits, flying a US-registered plane on our own up and down the Hudson River just a stone's throw from Manhattan. Even people who hate the thought of flying in a light plane whenever I mention it to them over here, have said that they might be prepared to give it a go for that sight. Anyway, around the 'Lady' again, past the World Trade Centre, and back up the River to the constant accompaniment of clicks and whirrs from the right hand seat. When we passed the 'GWB', I called up Teterboro approach, who eventually responded asking to position myself on an 8-mile final for Runway 24 which I duly did. Then, after one or two orbits, they cleared me to land. This was when I discovered the difference between VFR in the US and VFR in the UK. At Southampton, if they clear you to land, that means that the runway is clear for you to land and will remain so, barring emergencies. Nothing of the sort in the US. It just means that you are cleared to land, but that you are expected to maintain your own separation as you approach. To put this into context, first I saw a bizjet turn on short final and land in front of me, and then as I was on about a two mile final, another GA aircraft was cleared to line up and take off! I was within a couple of nanoseconds of going around, when the other guy cleared the runway, and I came in on the numbers. Interesting stuff. We went back to the apron behind a bizjet, following the very explicit instructions given by the ground controller, where we were met by three guys who were planning to take the plane up for some night flying - now there's a thought!

A great day, and a magical experience. One small incident also occurred that should be reported - as I was checking out the plane, a large American Battleship (a Lincoln or something like that) pulled up on the other side of the wire mesh fence and started to ask me various questions. Without too much difficulty he realized that I wasn't a native of the US, but came from the UK. 'Ah', he said, 'over here to check out the colonies for Her Majesty?' What can I add?



Christmas Joke - Dave Sawdon

Santa Claus, like all pilots, gets regular visits from the Federal Aviation Administration. It was shortly before Christmas when the FAA examiner arrived. In preparation, Santa had the elves wash the sled and bathe all the reindeer.

Santa got his logbook out and made sure all his paperwork was in order. The examiner walked slowly around the sled. He checked the reindeer harnesses, the landing gear, and Rudolph's nose. He painstakingly reviewed Santa's weight and balance calculations for sled's enormous payload. Finally, they were ready for the check ride. Santa got in and fastened his seat belt and shoulder harness and checked the compass.

Then, the examiner hopped in carrying, to Santa's surprise, a shotgun. "What's that for?" asked Santa incredulously. The examiner replied, "I'm not really supposed to tell you this, but we have to check out your skills in handling when problems arise, so you're gonna lose an engine on takeoff."



IBM Flying Club Events - Clare Grange

The next event notified to the Club is the Christmas Bash that Brian Mellor is laying on at the Hursley Clubhouse on Saturday 5th December, at 20:00. Does anyone fancy offering a club evening, say quiz or presentation, or maybe setting up a New Years Day trip?