

# IBM Flying Club Newsletter - September 1999



## Clear Prop - Dave Thomas

This issue has a wide and varied set of articles - rather a lot, but some fascinating reading. The articles on our trip to Portugal give a good idea of what went on, but a serious error of omission from both of them is the evening when the chef came out of the kitchen in the seafood restaurant to compare belly sizes with Dave! No language problem there. Irv's article is interesting, especially after my own 'eclipse' experience. I went aloft in DX with Captain (AKA 'Doc') Watson and two friends over to Cherbourg where we saw 'totality' from FL75, before landing at Cherbourg for lunch. A very eerie experience, but I have captured it on video. As Irv says the Plymouth military controller was very busy and some of the pilots didn't help him. At one point he said 'This is a general broadcast - danger areas - he then read a list - are not active as notified in the NOTAMs, and you've all read your NOTAMs haven't you!' An important point. NOTAMs are there for everyone's safety - do you study the NOTAMs before going anywhere? You should.

I'm glad as well to see that we have a new contributor - Ruth Mitchell - you don't have to be called Dave or to be a ZERO boy to contribute. I'm sure that many of you have interesting flying experiences that we would all enjoy reading about. I can take most formats and with the aid of my publisher (Dave A) we can sort out most problems. Having said that, Dave A's article about our web page is fascinating. I have had at least two foreign contacts as a result of it - it has put the club on the map, and done a lot for our publicity. Obviously most people access the web from work! But, it would be very interesting to know why the US Dept of Defense are interested in us.

On the event front, we have had two very successful BBQs, and are now looking out to 2000. Given the feedback that Clare and I have received we are trying to bring in some more 'back-to-basics' events to appeal to everyone, especially those with limited experience. Most of the more experienced pilots in the club gained a lot from local fly-ins and we need to do more of this - any volunteers to organise anything?

A final note - having read Brian's article on his trial lesson reminds me of my first (and only) experience on a horse. The young girl who was acting as my mentor asked me if I'd ever ridden a horse before to which I replied 'no, but I have ridden an elephant, a camel, and an ostrich'. She was not impressed or amused, but it was completely true.

Happy flying - and read the NOTAMs.



## Events - Clare Grange

We've had two very successful and enjoyable BBQs recently.

The first, at Hursley was on Fri 20 Aug and attended by 50 of us. Many thanks to Denis and Ann Howe, and Jim and Jeanette Hull for all their hard work. Thanks also to Eileen Mellor for her help (*Ed: and Clare for her contributions as well*). There were a few 11th hour problems, one of which involved Dave T and I dismantling our gas BBQ and transporting it to Hursley. This was a problem that none of us could have anticipated but in Shakespeare's language - "All's well that ends well!"

The second, at Bourne Park on 5 Sep was also a roaring success. Many thanks to John King, Linda

Taylor and all at Aerofab. The weather behaved until about 15:45 when there was some precipitation and a couple of ominous looking CBs appeared. Quite a few aircraft flew into Bourne Park including John Akerman in his Moth - G-EBXU, two Bulldogs from Old Sarum, two Cubs, Dave A and Eileen Mellor in ZERO, Chris Thompson's Auster G-ARLG, and Brian Mellor and Bob Elliott in WD. Neale Fray turned up in his little MG, Gil Collins in his Mercedes, and Margaret in her 'girlie' car (BMW Z3)!

Chris Thompson took Dave T and I for a tractor ride round the Aerofab estate. This was amusing to say the least. I defy anyone to say flying is uncomfortable!

Honorary Member Ulrich also came along (from Paris for the weekend) and all in all we had a splendid afternoon. It is rumoured that he brought the key for the Aerofab bonded store to release supplies of German beer.

Again, thanks to all those whose sterling efforts made both barbecues such a success.

## Ideas for 2000

Currently these are the proposed fly-ins for next year. So far only at the planning stage and looking for volunteers.

**Yeovilton** - I'll try to organise - military venues have proved popular with the club

**Perranporth** - Cream tea fly-in - Gil's keen on this

**Le Bourget** - Bob E's idea. He did tell me more details but I'm temporarily uncertain of them (Ed: I think that there is a GA airshow that alternates with the airshow for the big boys, and it's GA's turn in 2000)

**East Kirkby** - hopefully will be scheduled for next year - Bob E organising

**Brize Norton** - Dave is still working on this, but unless IBM can guarantee world peace we will still be struggling!

**Tangmere** - We're wondering if it's possible to fly-in there. To be continued...

I would really welcome ideas for events at zero feet to keep us entertained during the winter. If possible, please let me know well in advance in order to advertise the event in good time.

Anyone else with bright ideas? Danny - you usually know of a few interesting talks.

Email me at [Clare@Partacoona.flyer.co.uk](mailto:Clare@Partacoona.flyer.co.uk), or ring me at home on 01962 715144.



## An Amusing little story - Clare Grange

At the end of August I took two ladies flying for a little tourist trip. They were both first-time flyers but reasonably relaxed and looking forward to it. The controller cleared me to taxi from the grass park to B1 (at Southampton). When approaching B1 he asked if I was ready for departure. I replied 'negative' as I still had power checks to do. The controller instructed me 'DX, taxi north of B1, do a 180 and conduct your power checks there'. The controller then cleared an ATR to B1. The ATR was holding and I called ready for departure. 'Delta X-ray do you require a back track?'. I replied 'approximately half way'. 'In that case, Delta X-ray follow the ATR on to the runway and line up south of him!' The ATR pilot seemed very amused by this. My lady passengers were delighted and felt rather important particularly as their relatives were in the viewing gallery.

The flight itself wasn't without incident. One lady was unfortunately sick (*Ed: the DX malaise*) and so I had to abandon my plan to fly over the Charlie Alpha Golf (*Ed: not a new VOR but the Cerne Abbas Giant*). I also had the usual orbits both outside and inside controlled airspace before getting back on the ground again. The 'unfortunate' found this a bit much I think! However, both passengers said they'd enjoyed it, but I wonder if they were just being polite?



## Trial Lesson - Brian Mellor

Most of us were introduced into flying by the traditional "trial lesson", a try-before-you-buy concept, that allows you to get a taste of it, before committing to go further. Well, purely for comparison purposes, and to help the chairman fill the pages a little, here is my story of a different trial lesson that I had whilst on holiday in France recently.

We were, in the foothills of the Pyrenees, in a remote little village that time seems to have passed by. The "hotel" was basically an old farm house, and we were staying in a converted cowshed (*Ed: any wise men in sight?*) at least 1000 years old, 20 metres away. I noticed that the farm had some horses in the field, and somewhere in the blurb, it mentioned "equestre". Having been deprived of the opportunity to fly, whilst on this holiday, something was needed to fill the gap. So, I asked about a horse riding lesson (pretty adventurous, I thought, since I have never sat on one before).

Well, I duly met my instructor, and we walked up to the field to pick up my horse, and then walked her back to the farm, to sort out saddles, bridles, and things. Here was the first surprise - lesson no. 1 seems to be "cleaning the horse". I was given a spiky plastic thing to scrub her back with, and a small hand brush (the spiky thing raises great clouds of dust, and the brush transfers this dust to the floor). Just imagine going to an aircraft rental establishment to rent a plane, and being given a bucket of water and soap, and told you can't fly until you have washed it down. (Hmmm - I wonder if it would work... perhaps I have been missing a trick all these years).

With both horses saddled up, we walked them to the centre of the village square, to the water fountain. The horses took on about 5 gallons each, so did our "escort" - three dogs. The dogs weren't actually invited, as far as I can recall, there just seems to be some understanding that they have a right to go with the horses, up into the mountains.

The instructions to me were all in french, so there was the occasional "say again?" from me, but overall, messages got across somehow. Remember, I am learning on a single seater, there is no "I have control/you have control". Monkey see, monkey do. Taxying was OK, based on holding the reins, and steering the horse "like a bicycle". Line astern, we went up the cart tracks, away from all civilisation. After 10 minutes of walking (the horse, not me), the instructor seemed satisfied that I could stay aboard, so he told me how to change the pace, to a trot, by digging the heels into the horses side, somewhat aft of the C of G. Eureka!

After a short stop for the horses to have a snack, we were off again, and this time I am asked - would I like to try a gallop! YES! I must have misunderstood the instructions, because we finished up trotting again, but we sorted that - the trick seems to be to give the foot signals as before but FORWARD of the horse's C of G. And there we were, galloping down the narrow cart track, almost under control, and me grinning like a maniac. The significance of the little branch thing poking out ahead somehow escaped me, in all the euphoria, otherwise I would have ducked. However, a smack in the kisser does remind one of the need to look out, and take appropriate action, just as in aviation. The blood was wiped away, but the smile was still there.

Those were the highlights of my trial lesson. I was lucky to have such a docile mount for my first

attempt, who tolerated my tyro efforts (her name was "Camel" - can you believe it?). I know that in WW1, the RFC used to recruit horsemen as pilots, on the grounds that the skills required for these were similar, and I think they may have had a point. If anyone is interested in a fly-in to somewhere in Ireland one weekend, where there might be a hotel, pubs, and stables quite close to an airport, with a view to some more horsey trial lessons, let me know.

## **Flying High with Solent Flight! - By Ruth E. Mitchell**

I don't quite know what prompted me to book up my first flying lesson. I can only imagine that I had experienced a thoroughly stressful week and needed a release or an opportunity to undertake some mad and exciting activity!

I decided to take the plunge and rang Craig at Solent Flight in Southampton who persuasively talked me into booking "The Land away". This is a flight from Southampton Airport, landing at Sandown, Isle of Wight and returning to Southampton. Two hours in duration. The beauty of this trial lesson is that it enables you to take a friend or family member along, someone who can record the momentous event!.

My imminent lesson attracted a fair amount of attention from friends and colleagues, with comments such as MAD, WHY? and WOW!, however I was undeterred and nearer the day I found myself scanning the skies and imagining how I would react when airborne. Thankfully, I consoled myself that I had not inherited vertigo from my mother.

The big day came and so did the nerves. I recalled the time my mother had imparted her flight experience to me. As a child of nine years old, I remember her returning home, exhilarated, but shaky. The plane she had flown in had rickety doors that rattled in the wind and she was utterly convinced they would fly open at any moment and she would hurtle out into the night sky (*Ed: she must have gone for the cheap trial lesson!*) I believe this image was foremost in my mind that morning.

On arrival at Solent Flight Training Centre, I walked into an office of immaculately dressed men, all looking incredibly official in their flight uniforms. I felt somewhat out of place in combat trousers and T-shirt, however, they quickly introduced me to the brave man assigned to fly with me and I set off to meet my plane.

To say surprised at the size of the plane would be an understatement. I had envisaged something a little larger than a minibus, although I realise size is not necessarily an indicator of strength or ability, it may have helped to reassure me. It had a rather smart picture of a tiger on the wing (my favourite animal, I remember thinking).

With two seats in the front and two tiny seats in the back, I couldn't see that there was much room for a friend. I had already extended the invitation to my husband Jon, and after careful consideration he politely refused stating he was too unnerved to travel in a plane flown by me!

My one saving grace was that there appeared to be no doors on the plane to rattle or fly open. Instead there was a pull down roof to the plane which seemed to be a more practical and safer option.

I promptly kitted myself up with the headset, complete with microphone and belt, whilst Mark the pilot carried out various safety checks. He explained the various controls, which to my surprise seemed less technical than I had originally imagined. My hands gripped the side of the seat as Mark spoke to the control tower, which then cleared us for take off.

Strangely enough, the lift from the ground was remarkably smooth and I hardly noticed. It was a weird sensation, my heart was beating madly as we rose higher, my body involuntarily stiffened and the adrenalin was pumping. The day however, was stunning, ideal flying conditions, although the cockpits' temperature quickly soared the higher we climbed and I regretted my multitude of layers.

On the route to Sandown I peered out at the landscape below and bombarded Mark with question after question. Mark was happy to talk and I think he found me quite amusing as a novice flyer. "What happens if the plane stalls, like in a car?" I asked. To that he replied "Well.....I'll show you", and as a result raised the nose of the plane (which stalls the plane), the engine chugged and then silence. My heart was in my mouth at this point!

On the landing descent I started to feel distinctly nauseous and was pleased to see the ground rapidly approaching and cross that it was slightly marring the whole experience.

The landing was somewhat different to the take off....bumpy and a little scary. Mark was in complete control and I trusted him implicitly. We landed and I took gulps of fresh air to relieve the nausea. I was grateful to be back on solid ground.

We talked for a short time at the local tea shop, watched the planes and set off again. This time, Mark produced a sick bag, after sharing a story of a girl who had recently vomited over the controls during the first 10 minutes of the lesson. I didn't want to follow suit.

Back up in the air again, I gained in confidence. I took the control stick, my arms relaxed, my back gradually untensed and my palms lost their stickiness. Once in control of the plane, I had a real sensation of power and any sickness soon disappeared. This was better than any flight simulator game on the Nintendo, I felt like a female Maverick in "Top Gun", corny I know.....but true!

The control stick was extremely sensitive to movement and I was unprepared seeing the ocean at such a close proximity when manoeuvring the plane. We flew across Portsmouth, Gosport and back to Southampton along the coastline at approximately 2,500-3,500 feet. The thermals were ever present when flying over the land, which I understood are common in warm weather, but I didn't lose my nerve, the scenery was just too spectacular.

Soon enough Mark directed me towards the landing strip and I steered, maintaining a steady altitude of 1000 feet, Mark then took over the controls and effortlessly landed the plane.

Back on solid ground, I asked Mark if he would take some photographs of me complete with headset for my proud moment! Gladly obliging he took them and then remarked that I had smeared engine grease across my forehead.....oh well, more authentic I guess.

In all, a fantastic unparalleled experience. I am completely hooked! I have always loved driving for the control and freedom it provides, however I increasingly find I am forever frustrated by traffic jams, road works, road rage.....you name it. The freedom you discover in the skies cannot be equalled, it takes you away from the hustle and bustle of every day life which can only be good for the soul!

Solent Flight were a top outfit! I will undoubtedly be booking my next flight with them and perhaps one day work towards my Private Pilots Licence. A most rewarding experience!!

**e-Clips - Irv Lee**





*Photo by Irv Lee*

Jill and I took G-WD out of Southampton, (complete with 'kidnapped' re-fueller Ray from Southampton who was in the right place at the right time, and suddenly found himself donning a lifejacket and getting a free ride). 50+ miles due south and 8000 feet up, with only two other aircraft nearby, we had the most amazing experience mid-Channel, which makes us 3 of a very small band (low hundreds, perhaps?) who saw the whole Total Eclipse from start to finish whilst still in the UK.

Armed with IMC privileges and still in UK Airspace, we climbed through about 500' thickness of cloud somewhere around 7000' and settled ourselves at 8000 feet in the crystal clear air right in the centre of the predicted path, with 5 minutes to spare. At this altitude, south of the Isle of Wight, there were clear blue skies above and a thick white blanket below, which provided the perfect background for the shadow racing towards us from Cornwall.

The whole "2 minutes plus" was just awesome, a word which now has to be removed from our future vocabulary - it can't be used again after this. All the effects, Bailey's Beads, the Corona, the planets, and finally the Diamond Ring were there, but the rich 'colour' of darkness provided an unexpected extra. The horizon was in bright sunlight, and the light from afar reflected across the white cloud below to give deep purples, dark blues and clarets rather than pitch black. After an unmeasurable two minutes or so, the diamond ring blasted it all away, and it was time to start a long descent to land in Sandown for lunch, and sit there hardly able to believe what we'd seen. Jill tried some photos, but as we only had a simple



camera, and it was fairly well fooled by the darkness, the cockpit reflections, etc. We've got one or two, but none that actually come near to what we actually saw. On this simple snippet you can see the corona at totality and close inspection might reveal a planet nearby (5 o'clock). Incidentally, I have no idea which way up it should be - it could be upside down and perhaps the planet ought to be at 11 o'clock - I'll need to recheck the negative to find out if I scanned it upside down!

An appreciative word is due for the Radar Controller at Plymouth Military. How many aircraft left the frequency afterwards without a word at all, not even a "frequency change" call? A reasonable number left without a short 'thanks' for the superb service over the previous 30 minutes, even if such a "thank you" is not 'standard radio procedure', to quote a phrase. There was a fairly short 'non standard radio' transmission from a young lady somewhere over Torbay as the eclipse hit, but I can't believe the timing was that good, so it must have been faked.



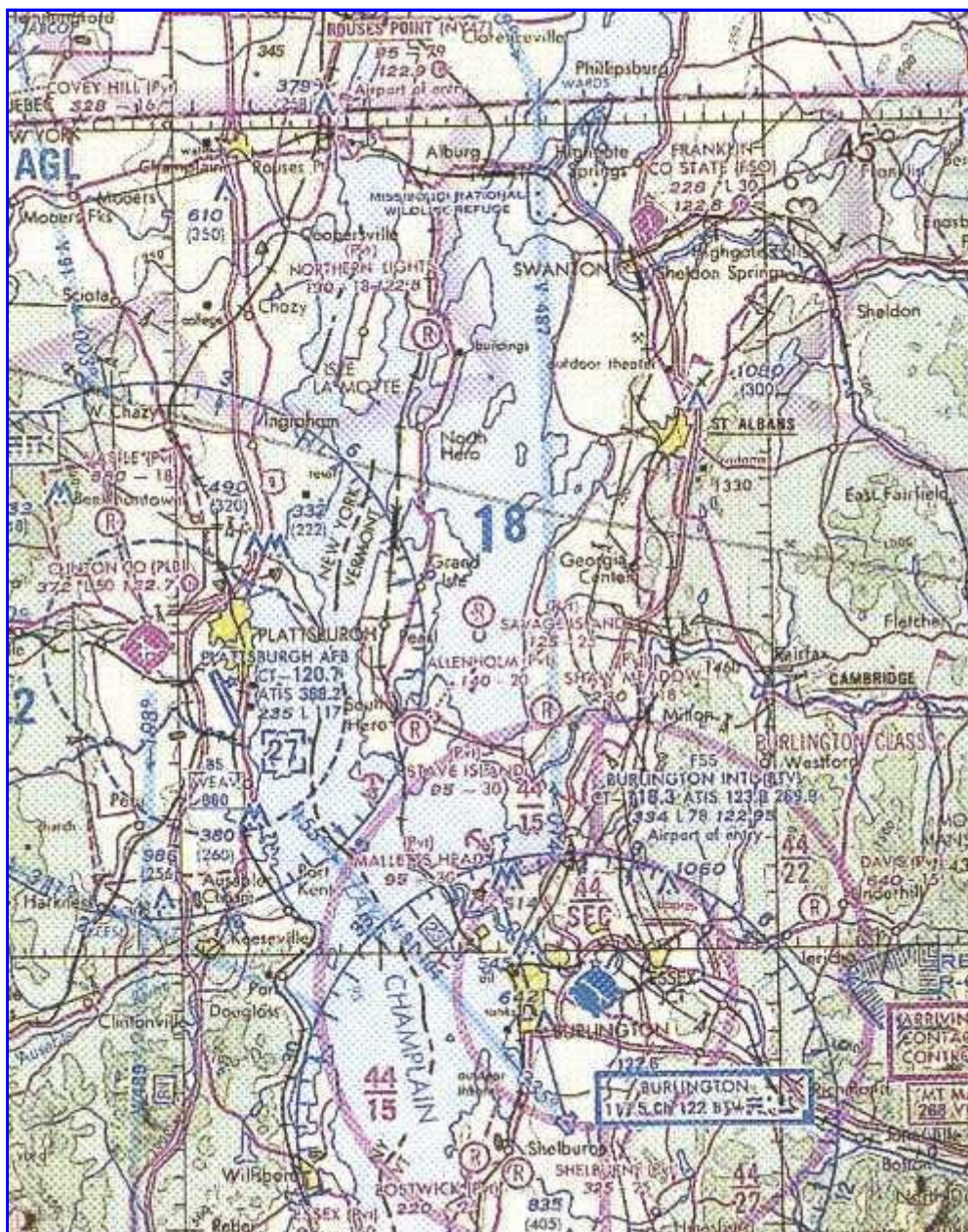
## **First time flight in the USA - James Mason**

I recently had the opportunity for my first flight in a high wing aircraft which also allowed me to get the U.S. in my logbook. Valet Air Services at Burlington airport in Vermont are a friendly GA organisation and an instructor, Mike Gregory, showed me around their fleet one evening. I arranged a slot to fly the following Saturday and the weather turned out to be excellent with a cold front having just passed through the local area.

We walked across the apron (no high-viz jackets or handling here!) to the C172 Skylane. Mike asked me to run through the checklist which proved to be an interesting exercise, highlighting quite a few differences from the AA5B/FA200/PA28 checklists that I am used to. There were no strobes or



electric fuel pumps (gravity feed from the tanks) and the fuel tap could also be switched to a both tanks position. The nav lights on the wings also had light pipes which would deflect some light towards the cabin so they could be checked in flight. A couple of things that I did not like was the enclosed stall warner which made a pre-flight check difficult and only one static vent. Like the AA5B, this aircraft had electric flaps with the switch providing fixed increments of flap. Valet Air had just recently purchased this aircraft and overall it felt very nice with a good level of equipment.



After the external checks, I started the engine using the mag key which had an extra start position, the engine started first time. After going through the rest of the checks we taxied to the hold for runway 01 (Burlington has two runways 01/19 and 15/33 which intersect). Mike instructed me to rotate at 55 knots and to climb out at 65, when we reached 1000ft this was increased to 75, all lower speeds then I am used to. We were soon climbing out and I found it more difficult than usual to keep the speed constant with quite a lot of turbulence. However once we were past 1000ft, things settled out and the view was excellent, out to the north Mike pointed out a range of hills which were next to Montreal which

meant that the visibility was 60 miles! The local controller now informed us of traffic behind us and I now experienced the obvious disadvantage of the aircraft, looking out behind was almost impossible.

Mike had already told me that flying in this area is relatively easy from a navigation viewpoint. Burlington stands out as the only major town for miles around and is on the shores of Lake Champlain which runs roughly north-south. Parallel to the lake in the distance is a range of mountains and there were quite a few landmarks to help find your way back. We then headed across the lake and we climbed to 3500 ft since "this would be sufficient to glide to the shore if the engine quits over the lake". With these comforting words I headed towards Plattsburgh on the opposite shore which has an enormous airbase - now mothballed - where B52s were based. We then tracked south and then back across the lake to Burlington, during this time I was impressed by how nice the

172 was to fly, the controls were docile and the engine noise was fairly low.

Mike then requested a couple of circuits and we lined up for base on 11 left hand circuit, the entry into the circuit went well. Coming in on finals was a bit more difficult, especially keeping the airspeed constant. I think that this was probably due to my inexperience in the aeroplane, it doesn't help having to look for the airspeed indicator! I was satisfied with the landing and we accelerated down the runway for another go, this time on the right hand circuit. As we were on the downwind leg, I noticed a F16 of the Vermont National Guard on its take off roll! We were then asked to expedite our landing with a short finals and it was a full flap, power to idle approach (I hope no other Zero Boy reads this bit). The approach went well, I found that I needed to use the rudder quite a bit, but I flared a bit too high which extended our landing distance. We applied the brakes and turned off, I then saw the other aircraft land on runway 33 and pass through the intersection with runway 01, this time it wasn't a F16 but a commuter jet.

Mike was satisfied with the check but for insurance purposes it only lasts 30 days so I doubt whether I'll have opportunity to take advantage of it. However the experience certainly whetted my appetite for more US flying and for the C172!



## Our web-page - Dave Ashford

It occurred to me a while ago that I had no idea about how much our Web site was being used and so I installed some software that gives some very basics statistics on usage, which I thought you might like to see. Since 19 May 1999 there have been 968 different visitors to our main page, with an average of 12 visits per day. If you break this down by domain, which gives some indication of where the visitor is based, we see the following:

Commercial (.COM)	760	United Kingdom (.UK)	220
Networks (.NET)	176	Unknown (.???)	155
FRANCE (.FR)	15	Organizations (.ORG)	14
CANADA (.CA)	12	GERMANY (.DE)	11
NETHERLANDS (.NL)	10	AUSTRALIA (.AU)	8
NORWAY (.NO)	7	DENMARK (.DK)	6
Educational (.EDU)	3	BELGIUM (.BE)	3
RUSSIAN FEDERATION (.RU)	3	UNITED ARAB EMIRATES (.AE)	3
US Dept of Defense (.MIL)	3	IRELAND (.IE)	2
SINGAPORE (.SG)	2	SWEDEN (.SE)	2
SWITZERLAND (.CH)	2	BULGARIA (.BG)	2
ICELAND (.IS)	2	COLOMBIA (.CO)	1
NEW ZEALAND (.NZ)	1	US Government (.GOV)	1
PAKISTAN (.PK)	1	INDIA (.IN)	1
SAUDI ARABIA (.SA)	1	INDONESIA (.ID)	1
CHINA (.CN)	1	ISRAEL (.IL)	1
ITALY (.IT)	1	JAPAN (.JP)	1

These statistics only show people who visit our main page, so anyone who has 'bookmarked' other pages, like our Newsletter page for example, will not show up. Even so, I think this shows that someone out there is watching us!





## **Subject: Birthday present - Dave Ashford**

Question: What's big and yellow and can give two people endless hours of fun?

Answer: A 1944 Boeing Stearman PT13D

For my birthday recently my sister & brother-in-law bought me a ride in the Stearman at Old Sarum with our intrepid aerobatic instructor Dave Sawdon. This flight represented many firsts for me: 1st time in a bi-plane; 1st time in an open cockpit; 1st time in a tail-dragger; 1st time behind a radial engine and, most importantly, 1st time doing aerobatics in a powered aircraft.

I could have hardly hoped for better weather for my flight, with temperatures in the high 70s and a good cloud base ('good' as in 'not too low'). I was very excited as I climbed aboard a 'real' aeroplane and the first thing I noticed was the sturdy construction, which instilled a lot of confidence. I believe the aircraft is cleared for manoeuvres from -3g to +6.5g, which is probably well beyond my own personal limits, not that we were planning to go anywhere near these figures on this flight. The next thing I noticed was the space - this 'plane was built to train American airmen and the cockpit is clearly designed to accommodate people of generous proportions, so I was OK. The other thing you notice about the cockpit is its simplicity - everything seems to be in the right place and there aren't too many instruments cluttering up the panel - this is strictly VFR flying. You fly with your right hand on the stick (yes, a real stick, not a control column) and the throttle, mixture and trim are on the left cabin wall. I thought this might present some problems, but there was no need to worry, I didn't once get things back-to-front.

The start-up was brilliant! Lots of noise and oil smoke and everyone in the vicinity looked round to see what was going on - I love the sound of radial engines! Taxiing was a new experience but due to the insurance situation and my total lack of tail-wheel experience, Dave did the take-off and landing and I followed him through on the controls. Apart from this I did most of the flying. I used to fly gliders, where you use rudder much more than in the 'spam-cans' that I now fly and I'd forgotten what it was like to fly an aircraft that needs rudder with every turn. When Dave was flying his feet were constantly on the move and they worked overtime during the take-off and landing. I tried my best to keep the aircraft in balance when I was flying it, but it was easy to forget my feet - I got gentle reminders from the rear seat whenever this happened.

As far as the aerobatics were concerned, we did some wing-overs, three loops and I totally messed up a barrel-roll (the only manoeuvre Dave didn't demo first), but I had a fantastic time, although it all went far too quickly. The experience of flying in an open cockpit was superb and I could easily imagine myself touring over open countryside, looking for a field in which to pitch my tent for the night. I chose the Stearman because I had been told that the aerobatics wouldn't be too extreme (which was true) and I wanted to start out gently, not knowing if I would take to aerobatics or not. I needn't have worried - I loved it! I particularly liked being upside down and the 4g pulls at the bottom of the loops were most enjoyable.

I learned a lot that day about flying - not in the 'I-messed-up-but-got-away-with-it' sense, but from the perspective of brand-new experiences. Firstly I will never again assume that anyone in a tail-dragger can see me on the ground - forward visibility is, to say the least, limited and whilst you weave from left to right in an attempt to improve matters, you are always looking at where you are planning to go next, not where you are going now! In the air the only blind spots are forward between about 10 and 40 degrees above the horizon, with a similar restriction downwards, but otherwise the visibility all round is excellent, which you'd expect, seeing as you are sitting outside!.

The other thing I learned was an appreciation of what you can do with an aeroplane, if you really

want to (or perhaps need to). All of us have stalled and recovered an aircraft and made recoveries from unusual attitudes, but these moves, whilst they may seem extreme, are only a subset of what you can actually do (in a suitable aircraft, of course). I know there are arguments for and against aerobatics, however it is my personal belief that the skills required to safely perform aerobatics can only enhance your general piloting skills and spatial awareness.

Anyway, this is not an advert for aerobatics or open-cockpit flying, I just wanted to share with you my excitement at having had such a wonderful aviation experience - it came close to matching the excitement I had on my very first flight in a light aircraft. My 30 minutes in the Stearman cost £80.00 (you don't have to do aeros if you don't want to) and I understand that Old Sarum also has Bulldogs for hire if you want to fly aerobatics in a closed-cockpit aircraft - the cost is about £60 for half an hour. Have you tried a new aviation experience recently? If not, why not try aerobatics, or perhaps just try open cockpit flying? I would thoroughly recommend both. Thanks Angie & Dave (my sister & brother-in-law)!



## Thoughts - Dave Sawdon

A couple of nice articles clipped from AVWEB.....

A NOTAM YOU WON'T OFTEN SEE: This Notice To Airmen deals with airspace near Smyrna, Del.: "EFFECTIVE SEP. 23 2200 UTC UNTIL SEP. 24 1100 UTC 1999. TEMPORARY FLIGHT RESTRICTIONS ARE IN EFFECT ... TO PROVIDE A SAFE ENVIRONMENT FOR PRISONER EXECUTION." Hmmm. Safe for whom? And why do they need 13 hours?

IT'S STILL SAFE TO FLY: Don't we all just love to tell nonpilot friends that other forms of transportation are more dangerous than airplanes? Here are the latest numbers, straight from the NTSB, to back you up. In 1998 in the United States and its territories, 43,920 people died in transportation-related accidents. Aviation accounted for 683 deaths, with 621 of them in GA. Bicyclists, recreational boaters, and people walking in front of trains notched 794, 808, and 831 fatalities, respectively.



## Caught Short - Dave Ashford

The following tale ran in the Chicago Tribune travel section recounting the adventures of freelance writer Gaby Plattner:

Her flight was three hours late when she boarded the shabby jet at Kariba airport. As the passengers settled into their seats, the pilot's voice came over the speaker: "We're all ready to go ladies and gentlemen. However, we've been waiting for the co-pilot, and he still hasn't arrived. Since we've already waited so long, we're just going to be flying without a co-pilot today. If any of you feel uncomfortable with this, feel free to disembark now and Air Zimbabwe will put you on the next available flight to Hwange." A pause, then: "Unfortunately, we are not sure when that will be. But rest assured, I have flown this route hundreds of times, we have clear blue skies, and there are no foreseeable problems." It was only a one-hour journey, so the nervous flyers opted for the solo flight. Everyone stayed on board.

When the plane reached cruising altitude, the captain made another announcement. The plane was on auto-pilot, and he was going to use the bathroom. "I just don't want you to worry," he said. Then he fastened the cockpit door open with a rubber band to a hook in the wall and went to the toilet. But while he was in the cubicle, the plane passed through a patch of turbulence, snapping the elastic free with a mighty "ping!". The door swung shut.

When the pilot came out of the bathroom, he froze. Then he charged down the aisle and began wrestling with the sealed door. It began to dawn on the passengers that cockpit doors are designed to lock automatically to keep terrorists from infiltrating. As travellers gripped their armrests, the captain sprinted to the back of the plane and returned armed with an axe. He chopped a hole in the door, then reached through it and let himself in. "Ah, ladies and gentlemen, we just had a little problem there, but everything is fine now," came his voice on the loudspeaker. "We have plans to cover every eventuality, even pilots getting locked out of their cockpits. So relax and enjoy the rest of the flight."



## **Subject: What I Did on my Holidays - Dave Ashford**

Of all the different types of flying you can do, touring is probably my favourite, so each year I look forward to taking 'ZERO on a long trip to somewhere I've not been before. This year was no exception and so in the early part of the year I decided that I would like to visit Portugal, which is about 1000nm from Southampton, as the coast-following crow flies. I knew nothing about the country or the people but I did know that I didn't want to go to a tourist area like the Algarve, so being partial to the odd glass of Port wine, I decide to make Oporto my destination. In contrast to previous years I wanted to make the flying two big efforts - one each way - then stay in one place for a couple of weeks, exploring by car and foot and getting to know it in more detail than you can in one or two days.

A couple of the 'Zero Boys' said that they might like to come along, but not necessarily for the whole fortnight, and Dave and Clare said they'd be interested in joining me, provided that they had an aeroplane (G-BIBT had been sold and G-BYDX was not then available), so it looked like Portugal was 'on'. One area I knew would be a problem was obtaining charts for Spain and Portugal. On a previous trip to Spain I had to use the TPC charts published by the US military, along with information that I had researched from the Spanish AIC. To my delight I found that the Spanish authorities now publish aviation charts, which also appeared to cover northern Portugal, however when the charts arrived from Transair it was clear that we would still need the TPC charts - the Spanish charts only have information on Spain, the Portuguese areas of the charts are blank! Clare and I visited the AIS Map Room at Heathrow (which is available to any pilot at 2 or 3 days notice) and extracted all the information we needed from the Portuguese AIC. I also phoned Porto airport and found out that landing and parking charges for 10 days would amount to about £25.00, so everything was looking good.

In parallel to the flying arrangements I found some accommodation in a converted manor house (5 bedrooms, 4 bathrooms, large kitchen, 2 lounges, large pool, BBQ area, wine tasting room, maid, barking dogs, noisy neighbours, mad locals who let off fireworks at 03:30 am....) and arranged en-route hotels and a rental car. The only thing I couldn't arrange was the weather, but more of that later.

The day of departure arrived (Sunday 11th July) with a mixed weather forecast. Southern England and much of France looked good, but a low-pressure system sat over the Iberian peninsula, spreading poor weather along the north coast of Spain. We had decided to take two days to get to Portugal, flying two 2-hour legs each day. James took the first leg from Southampton to Nantes and

all went exactly to plan. We arrived in plenty of time for a good lunch and to pay the landing fee of FF17.00 (that's about £1.75)! For an airport that is easily as busy as Southampton and certainly a lot larger, this fee represents excellent value for money - and you can walk to and from your aircraft without needing high-viz jackets or special bus rides. I do love flying in France.

The second leg on Sunday was from Nantes to Pau Pyrenees via Bordeaux's overhead, avoiding the prohibited area of Mont de Marsan and its ranges which surround Pau to the north and west. This is where a little confusion occurred with a controller which resulted in both 'ZERO and 'BYDX being cleared to transit the prohibited area of Mont de Marsan. Both Dave and I confirmed with the controller that she had given us this clearance and she confirmed it, but as we approached LF-P35, she called 'BYDX and told them to turn right immediately to avoid the area. I was ahead of 'BYDX at that time and much closer to the prohibited area, so I did likewise and resumed my original track to route via Dax, avoiding P35. As it was Sunday all of the danger areas were closed, so we could transit them all safely. I concluded that the controller had meant "the Mont de Marsan ranges" when she said that we were "clear to transit Mont de Marsan", although I can't think what she was thinking when I asked specifically if I was cleared to transit P35 and she responded "affirm". I learned a little lesson there - don't always trust what a controller tells you - they may have misunderstood your request. We could have been looking up the jet pipe of a Mirage whilst trying to read the Interception Procedures if the controller had not spotted where we were heading!

We spent the night in a pleasant little hotel on the outskirts of Pau which, much to our surprise, was built around a Real Tennis court. Last year I booked a night-stop in a hotel built above a bowling alley, so once again I managed to pick a sporting theme for our first night stopover. The weather, alas, was not playing the game and we awoke to the sound of thunder and heavy rain, although by the time we arrived at the airport it had cleared and the forecast looked OK for our route, with the possibility of isolated Cbs for later in the day. We set off for Asturias in northern Spain and were soon seeing the Cbs from earlier on, although they were isolated and very easy to spot (and avoid). We did a little aerial ballet over Biarritz at the controller's request before continuing en-route, following the coast. The scenery was pretty along our route, however a call to Santander confirmed our fears that the weather further west was not very good. We decided to divert into Santander and have an early lunch (we were about 30 minutes short of Asturias) and see if things would improve.

After lunch the forecast showed that the cloud base would be about 1500 feet and the viz acceptable (I forget the exact figure) so we set off, knowing that Porto and the west coast of Spain looked flyable, albeit with poor-ish viz (7-8k, if I remember correctly). Within 10 minutes of departing Santander we were scud running at 700 feet, so both aircraft decided to return to Santander, which we did without incident. The only choice was to stay the night in Santander and see if Tuesday would be any better. We found a nice hotel within walking distance of the town centre and spent the evening looking for somewhere to eat - it appears that the Spanish don't start eating until 20:30 at the earliest, so we had some trouble finding somewhere earlier than that. After a night-cap at a table outside the hotel we turned in for the night.

Next morning we were greeted with a deluge of Biblical proportions - the sky was black with clouds, the rain looked like iron bars falling from them and the streets has turned into small rivers! What had we done to deserve this? Pessimistically we set off in a taxi for the airport and spent the next few hours in the departure lounge waiting for the hourly weather updates. Clare built a largely sign-language based relationship with the Met man and was the hero of the morning with her regular visits up to the Met area. By early afternoon the clouds had cleared and the weather looked OK, although the low that had produced the poor morning weather was still affecting our route. We departed with plans for diversions or return to Santander, depending on what Mother Nature decided to throw in our path. Pretty soon we were faced with our first decision: to stay under a thickening cloud base, go VMC 'on top', or divert. 'BYDX chose to stay in sight of the surface underneath the cloud and I chose to climb to FL55, above the cloud, and hope that Porto would remain clear, as forecast. The higher altitude also had the benefit of reducing the headwind that was slowing our



progress and thus extended our range.

Much of 'ZERO's journey along the northern Iberian coast was spent above a broken layer of cloud with only occasional glimpse of the coast. I had planned this stage very carefully with lots of waypoints that I put into our RNAV box as well as using my GPS to give us a good idea of where we were. The glimpses of coastline were comforting and confirmed that we must be roughly on track. As we rounded the north-western tip of Spain and turned south, the crosswind became a tailwind and the clouds below started to melt away. By the time we reached the Portuguese border the sky was clear, although the viz was hazy at 6k, just above the minimum required for VFR flight in Portugal.

We continued tracking the coast to Porto and joined downwind left hand for runway 35, remaining at 2000', as instructed. We were told to extend downwind, due to departing traffic and that was when the controller seemed to forget about us. I called "ready to turn base" when at least 4 miles south of the airfield and was told "roger", so I turned base and stayed high, right over the city of Porto. I called ready to turn final and was told to "continue", so I turned final and called it. The controller told me "I do not have you in sight, but you are cleared to land" - not the most conventional call I have ever heard, so I continued the approach and landed, but I felt very vulnerable the whole way down finals. The controller was talking to other aircraft in Portuguese, none of which I understood, and it occurred to me that he could well be clearing one of the 'big boys' for the approach, which is why I stayed well above the glideslope. I reasoned that at least they stood a chance of seeing me if my worse fears were realised, which thankfully they weren't. 'BYDX arrived about 10 minutes later and we adjourned to the airport bar for a welcome beer. We met the owner of the house we had rented and he kindly lead us there and gave us a comprehensive tour of the house and grounds and then took us to a marvellous local restaurant, which we revisited twice during our holiday it was so good.

The next 10 days flew by (no pun intended) and we did some great sight-seeing and wine tasting as well as a marathon journey to Lisbon by car the day after we arrived to collect James's friend Rosie, who had flown down with 'Go' to join us for a long weekend before returning on Sunday, with James. Phil and Maggie Russell joined us on Thursday, courtesy of BA via Porto, so there were seven of us there for the middle weekend, which was great fun. Maggie left for England with BA on the same day that we set off for France, so we were once again back to two crews of two for the return journey.

The morning of our departure was clear but very misty, the viz being just 2000m when we arrived at the airport, although Phil said it had been much worse than that when he had arrived several hours earlier to drop Maggie off for her flight home. We filed our flight plans, refuelled, got the aircraft ready but by 11:00am the viz was still only 2500m with little prospect of improvement, so I called the tower and asked if a Special VFR clearance was available. The controller asked what height we would like for our departure and I told him 5500 feet. He told me to stand by and all went quiet for about 5 minutes, then he called us and told us we were "clear to take off SVFR"! I enquired what the minima were for SVFR and he responded that we were "cleared to take off", so I didn't enquire any further! Phil got us airborne and the first 2000 feet were very poor viz, although we kept sight of the ground and coast all the time, so it wasn't too bad. Once we had climbed to our cruising altitude the viz was much better (well above the required 5k minimum) and we set course over land towards Asturias. As we approach Rozas, which was about the mid-point of the leg, a solid layer of cloud appeared below us. We checked the weather at Asturias, which was OK, and as we neared the coast we could see the cloud was well broken out to sea, so we routed about a mile off-shore and descended through a large hole to 2000', which put us about 1000' below the cloud base. The approach to Asturias is quite interesting - you have to hug the coast, which has high mountains a short distance inland and then route over a bay to land on top of a cliff, which produced some interesting sink.

During lunch the skies cleared and the afternoon leg was a beautiful VFR trip at 1500' along the

coast into Biarritz, where we spent the night and had a wonderful meal in 'Le Gallion', a rather up-market restaurant on the seafront. Phil ordered a seafood platter that took him longer to eat than it did the rest of us to eat our starters and main courses, even though he had been provided with a large set of eating implements that look more suitable for performing open-heart surgery than eating! The wine and spirits flowed freely that evening - our last together on holiday - and at least one member of our party was lucky to escape a well-deserved hangover the next morning.



*G-ZERO and G-BYDX waiting for fuel in Biarritz. Photo by Phil Russell.*

Friday morning dawned fair and after much line drawing and route planning (Biarritz is also surrounded by the Mont De Marsan ranges, which are active on weekdays) we set forth for Nantes via the VFR route around Dax. Phil took us up the west coast of France and as we were approaching La Rochelle, about 30 mins short of our planned destination, we heard Clare call them for landing instructions, declaring a 'minor problem'. We diverted too, to see if we could help, but it transpired that Dave had not been feeling too well (not a hangover, I hasten to add), so Clare had decided on an early lunch stop. Phil and I ate in the restaurant, while Clare and Dave sat out in the departure area. We had to wait until 14:00 for the fueler to come back from lunch, so the fact that it took 45 minutes to get served in the restaurant wasn't a problem and it gave Dave a nice long break. I decided to route back directly to Southampton from La Rochelle, whereas Clare decided to stop in Cherbourg before hopping across the channel, so 'ZERO was back home about an hour before 'BYDX.

All in all this was a most enjoyable holiday and the flying was exactly what I had hoped for - a mixture of good scenery plus the occasional challenge that made us work a little harder. It didn't all go to plan, but we coped with everything and I know that I learned a thing or two as a result. It also reinforced my belief that it is easier and more fun to fly in France - and Spain and Portugal - than in the UK and generally it's cheaper too, as is the food and wine. No wonder I head south at every opportunity :-).



## Transport Policy - Chris Thompson

John Prescott has been having real problems lately devising his transport policy. I came across this piece of advice for him in an aviation magazine to assist him getting cars off the road....

1. All cars (including Volkswagens) should cost at least £40,000

2. A driving licence would have to be recognised by JCR (Joint Car Regulations) and would take four months and £4000 to obtain
3. You would need a type rating on each car you wanted to drive - viz. number of control pedals, number of gears, petrol, diesel, number of cylinders, number of valves, transverse or in-line engine, front or rear wheel drive, number of seats, number of windscreen wipers, different colours, etc.
4. There would be a maximum time on type (1 hour a month) and you would have to be checked out by a type rated examiner at a cost of £300/hr. every six months
5. If you wanted to drive in bad weather i.e. rain, fog, etc., than you would need an BWE (Bad Weather Endorsement) obtainable by 60 hours of home instruction at £400/hr
6. You would require a night rating (£2000) to drive between two hours before sunset to three hours after sunrise
7. Insurance would be £5000/year for a Fiat 500
8. The clock in your car would cost £300 to replace and would not work correctly (neither would the fuel gauges!)
9. All cars would have to replace current ignition systems with dual magnetos and have them completely stripped down by a licensed garage mechanic every 25 hours
10. A replacement engine would cost £18000 and would be based on a design from 1928.
11. All cars would be required to run on three wheels so that existing lengthy GA aviation practices could be applied. Additional training (and associated type rating) would be required if the third wheel was at the back of the vehicle
12. Your annual MOT would cost £1000 and a three year STAR MOT would be about £3000
13. You would be required to do a weight and balance check before setting out on the road and have this signed off by a driving instructor.
14. If intending to drive into a different Post Code area then a Driving Plan must be filed with the appropriate authority at least twelve hours in advance stating the EET to any boundary crossing. In addition, if your drive is to take you to a different County then Customs must be advised in writing four hours beforehand. Travel to a different country would have to be authorised by the Ministry of Transport.
15. No one could drive a truck or a bus without special training for the over 5700Kg category. This would entail a further rating in all categories (£5000 each additional type)
16. Everyone would require a Class 1 medical to include a monthly ECG, monthly Chest X-rays, and an inside leg measurement of no more than 29 inches.
17. Circumventing any of the above would be a criminal offence punishable by a jail sentence
18. A new car would not be certified roadworthy until the weight of the associated paperwork exceeded the weight of the car
19. All control of the nations cars would be done by a new centre (CCA - Civil Car Authority) soon to be opened at Swanwick when the weight of the paperwork for the computers for this project equalled the weight of the buildings



## Elderly Periodicals - Dave Sawdon

Over recent years the club library has accumulated a significant number of: GASILs, Safety Data Dept Occurrence Lists, Flight Safety Bulletins, Light Aviation's, AOPA Yearbooks, Feedback's and a few ancient copies of Pilot but there has been virtually no interest in them. The pile is now about 80cm high so unless anyone shows an interest in them in the next few weeks I will recycle them. Anyone interested should contact Dave via the normal channels remembering that he spends 50% of his time upside down.



## Package tours - turned up in my e-mail - Dave Thomas

Dear Aviator:

I would like to introduce you and your flying club to Parkwest Air Tours. We offer self-fly group tours of the American West. Our service is to package and guide the tour, while you have all the fun of flying. You can either rent an aircraft (Cessna 172) from us, or bring and fly your own aircraft on the tour.

All of the details of the tours are on our web site at [www.parkwestair.com](http://www.parkwestair.com)

As a special deal for flying clubs, we're offering a 5% discount for club bookings of 8 or more people for one tour.

We would like to send you our full-color flyer that you can post at your club offices. Please e-mail us your postal address and we will mail it to you right away. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Marisa L. Fay  
Business Manager  
Parkwest Air Tours  
Phone +1 (970) 464-4775 Fax +1 (970) 464-4776  
E-mail: [mlfay@parkwestair.com](mailto:mlfay@parkwestair.com)  
Website: [www.parkwestair.com](http://www.parkwestair.com)



## Portugal - the 'DX' version - Clare Grange

Dave T and I had originally planned to fly to Norway for this year's big trip but after a lot of discussion we decided to join Dave A and his plans for Portugal. James Mason and Phil Russell were the other ZERO boys involved - James flew out with Dave, and Phil and Maggie Russell joins us a few days later by commercial means. James's friend Rosie also flew to Portugal commercially. As usual the planning was becoming more involved by the minute!

### Sat 10th July

I filed flight plans for both ZERO and DX as the ZERO boys had decided to go to Duxford for the day. I refuelled DX, ensured we had extra oil in the baggage compartment and generally organised everything; packing, foreign currency, etc.

### Sun 11th July, Southampton - Pau

This leg went very smoothly despite our avionics problems but this is another long saga! The landing fee at Nantes came to the grand total of £1.75. Amazing. We had a good lunch and then departed for Pau. (Ed: Clare has left me to write this bit, but, apart from the fiasco around and about P35 as mentioned in Dave A's article, it was a very smooth flight, going to plan. I should add that both aircraft, independently were convinced that we had been cleared through P35).



## Monday 12th July, Pau - Santander

This leg did not go according to plan! I had filed for Asturias giving Santander as one of my alternates. The weather for Santander was OK but decidedly dodgy for Asturias although the TAF said it would improve but we all know about forecasts! Some miles east of Santander I asked the controller if he could check the Asturias weather. The answer was 3000m viz and broken at 1000 feet. I decided to divert into Santander and ZERO followed suit. I have to say this controller was very helpful. *(Ed: we spent a while in the terminal waiting for the weather to improve. Eventually the picture at Asturias, and into Portugal looked better so we took off. After 15 mins with limited viz, and a cloudbase starting at about 1000 feet and slowly dropping, we had a brief radio conflag with ZERO and elected to return to Santander)* We ended up spending the night there. We were woken during the night by thunder and lightning and very heavy rainfall. The hotel was very pleasant but finding an open restaurant before 21:00 proved to be very difficult. The Spanish (I have now learnt) don't eat early *(Ed: like me!)*

## Tuesday 13th July, Santander to Porto

After packing our bags and paying the bill we optimistically made our way to the airport. The weather was still grim; mainly the viz and certainly not flyable. I made several trips to see the met man. Gradually things improved (although not brilliantly) and we were able to depart after lunch. Dave A and James amused themselves by comparing Psions and I received detailed instructions on the benefits of both! Definitely one-upmanship. *(Ed: I was due to fly this leg, and started out with some trepidation as the cloudbase was still low-ish. The view along the coastline was spectacular, with little villages on the coast, many, many lighthouses, a few mines, and everywhere large chunks of cumulus granitus inland. Although Dave A reported clear skies at 5000 feet, I elected to stay below the cloud, so that I could eyeball the scenery and wouldn't have to face coming down through the cloud in the event of an emergency into mountainous terrain. Having said that, it was very useful having ZERO as our eye-in-the-sky, as they were able to talk to ground stations where we couldn't - a combination of the terrain, and our radio problems. It was a long flight, and I was very pleased to be able to establish contact with Porto and eventually to land on their runway - 3.4K long! A challenge, and I was very grateful to have Clare as P2 to share the load, but more of that later!)*

I won't go into details of the places we visited whilst there but we enjoyed ourselves. Portugal is a very Catholic country and obviously there is no shortage of religious artefacts, convents, monasteries and cathedrals. Braga is known as Portugal's religious capital and it was certainly an interesting place to visit. We had a very nice BBQ one lunchtime with Maggie and I sorting our jacket potatoes and salad and Dave A doing sterling work with the BBQ itself and cooking the meat *(Ed: Phil and I supervised and sampled the wine).*

## Thursday 22/July - Porto to Biarritz

This was another of those 'do we, don't we situations'. The viz at Porto was 2500m when we got to the airport. I chatted to the met man who said it wouldn't be improving yet awhile and we were in for a long wait. I had filed for Asturias taking a straight line from La Guarda (N of Porto) over Portugal's national park to the Spanish coast. This was to be conducted at FL55. Dave A asked for a SVFR clearance and got it. The viz could only have been 3000m or so at this point. After a discussion between the two crews we departed. We were through the worst of the haze by about 2500 feet and at FL55 the viz was excellent with hardly a cloud to be seen.

The Porto met man had previously warned me that we would likely encounter more cloud further north and that is what certainly happened. The weather at Asturias was fine with cloud base at about 2000 feet if I remember correctly. I deliberately flew out to sea before descending just in case things were worse, but, in the end, we had a beautiful clear run into Asturias. The runway at Asturias is on top of a cliff which made the approach very interesting. There was a lot of sink which necessitated the application of more power but the landing was fine. The Asturias approach reminded me very

much of the Isles of Scilly but this time the runway was straight and level and I didn't kangaroo down it!

Dave T flew us from Asturias to Biarritz which I fell in love with - we must go back there again. We found a lovely hotel (courtesy of the Contact group) and a very nice restaurant. Phil Russell had a sea food platter which was enough to feed the 5000. I stuck to good old fashioned meat and Dave T had mussels.

### **Friday 23/July - Biarritz to Southampton**

The weather next morning was fine and we departed Biarritz for Nantes (in theory at least). I was flying the VFR route round Dax military area when Dave T was rather ill and had his head in a plastic carrier bag. He really did look unwell. Any way, this intimate conversation with the bottom of the bag continued and in the end I insisted in diverting into La Rochelle as we both needed a break (*Ed: and some fresh air!*). ZERO diverted as well. Phil and Dave thought one of us needed to spend a penny urgently! After approx two hours on the ground DT was feeling a little better. ZERO departed for Soton but we decided to break our journey at Cherbourg for a variety of reasons. We refuelled at La Rochelle and planned for Cherbourg. DT was obviously in no fit state to fly whatsoever. We landed and rested at Cherbourg, filed our plan for Southampton (the weather was still brilliant) and departed. The trip across the channel was perfectly smooth and DT was definitely more comfortable on this leg. We were both very glad to land back at Southampton and to reach home. (*Ed: A very long day for Clare who not only had to Aviate, Navigate, and Communicate as normal, but also had to cope with someone in very poor shape occupying the P2 seat. Although I was unwell for most of the journey, I knew I was in very safe hands*).

All in all we had a very good holiday. The flying was challenging and a great experience builder (especially with dodgy radios). The only nuisance factors whilst in Portugal were dogs which seemed to bark all night, fireworks until 03:30, and an omnipresent Portuguese landlord! The people were very friendly and helpful and the restaurants superb - excellent food and very good value. Almost everyone who was on the trip ended up with some sort of ailment, which have varied in diagnoses from German Measles to Legionnaire's disease - the truth is out there somewhere! Portugal is very very hot 36-38 degrees C - definitely Norway next year!



## **My First 5 months with G-ZERO - Phil Russell**

*Photos by Phil Russell*

The opportunity to become a sixth member in the G-ZERO group came at just the right time for me. The prospect of an airways equipped 4 seater cruising at 140 mph was very attractive having spent the last 6 years flying G-BRTD with the 152 group at Popham and being restricted to 2 seats and VFR. I had both IMC and night ratings but did not have the plane or the airfield to utilise them. Also I love Tigers having done most of my training on one. So I winged my email off to Jon Butts and was up in ZERO on a test flight within 24 hours and the rest is history.

So what's it been like to become a Zero Boy? Well I first had to get used to the aeroplane. It took quite a few flights to get to know how to used all the switches and dials plus being able to trim for straight and level in a timely manner! Even now I'll forget to use the heading bug because I haven't been used to using one for so many years. I must say that ZERO has a very nice equipment fit and is a real pleasure to fly. Those extra 30 mph over a C-152 do make a big difference in the cruise. Also being based at Southampton is a big bonus although the down side is the time it can take to get

airborne sometimes.

Having got comfortable with ZERO my next challenge was to get as much experience as possible going to the Continent as this was all new for me. Of course you could not wish to be associated with a better group to accomplish this - you only have to mention French cuisine to any of the ZERO boys and you have a trip plan evolving as you speak! And so it transpired that in the space of a few

months, despite the usual problems of weather etc, I had flown legs to Cherbourg, Dinard, Abbeville and Alderney plus a weeks holiday in Northern Portugal where Maggy and I joined Dave Ashford, James, Rosy, Dave and Claire. This gave me the opportunity to also get Oporto, Asturias, Biarritz and La Rochelle in my log book as I flew home with Dave Ashford. Maggy elected this time to fly back commercially so that allowed us to fly ZERO in cargo mode with the back seats down and crammed full of bags, wine, port and goodies. It took quite a time to unload when we landed at Soton!

So that was my first 5 months with the ZERO Boys. Eight new foreign airfields and lots of good experience gained. Long may it continue. Travelling has now taken on a whole new perspective as we eagerly look for any airports near where we want to visit Portugal was a good holiday so let me end with a few words about our experiences there.



We stayed at the Casa de Cela a 5 bedroom Manor House situated in its own vineyard which can be viewed at

[www.manorhouses.com/manors/minho/felgueiras/](http://www.manorhouses.com/manors/minho/felgueiras/)

Owned by Senor Luis, we were his first paying guests and he just loved to entertain us into the small hours with his 35 year old port and other estate wines! Unfortunately, as big Dave pointed out, in conversation he seem to have his own agenda and it was very difficult to sway him from this and get a word in edgeways! The Casa did have its attractions though in the shape of a

fabulous swimming pool and a covered BBQ area fuelled by a wood-store packed with the wood from ancient vines.

We ate out very cheaply most evenings sampling the local regional food and wines. Fernandos the local restaurant for the Casa was particularly good. Tourism hardly exists in these small villages in northern Portugal and poor old Fernando took fright the first time we all piled into his restaurant speaking English. In fact he phoned Senor Luis who immediately came over from the Casa to translate for us! There followed dish after dish of tasty starters ranging from sea food, cured meats and salads before he asking how many wanted the steak we had ordered! This then always came the same way, deliciously fried with a fried egg on top. And then we had pudding (!) - which turned out to be creme caramel!



Nights at the Casa were not that peaceful. Unfortunately we seemed to have hit the peak of a festival season celebrating the return of the workers, I know not from where, which was characterised by exploding firework bombs well into the small hours accompanied by a chorus of barking dogs from all around the valley. Having finally got to sleep you were then awoken by the dawn cockerel - but

perhaps that was to be expected, it being the national emblem!

The area has many good places to visit which are steeped in history. Many interesting castled castles which underline Portugal's turbulent past. Incredibly ornate cathedrals which to us were inspiring and to the pilgrim must have appeared absolutely awe inspiring. Also church clocks which when striking the hour chimed out a folk tune or hymn.

The language which sounded a bit like Russian is incredibly difficult to converse in - although big Dave made a valiant effort using his Spanish and a lot of charm. Also an earthy discordant yet lilting folk music was heard on several carnival occasions which repeated endlessly but was none the less quite captivating.



Oporto is of course famous as the home of port and we visited Calem, one of the old Portuguese port lodges on the river Douro. In the old days, the port was brought down the river on port barges call rabelos. Today, these can be seen moored in the river and make a memorable sight with their sails deployed.

All in all, a place full of interest and atmosphere and one we shall return to some day having first done a more in-depth study of the phrase book!



## Flight to Porto (G-ZERO & G-BYDX) - James Mason

*Photos by James Mason*

After converting G-ZERO to 'cargo configuration' and loading up for the trip, we start the engine and taxi to the hold for 02 at Southampton and our holiday has begun. Heading towards St Catherines Point (Isle of Wight), I contact the very busy London controller ending up at 'number 6' when we reach 50N, when I report changing to Deauville she apologises for not being able to help. We then fly right over the MP beacon and head to Avranches, there is some scattered cloud below us but generally conditions are good. I am soon in contact with Nantes and the landing is fairly straightforward although with such a nice long runway you would not expect anything else! On the ground we meet up with G-BYDX and make our way to the huge terminal building and rather apprehensively pay the landing fee, it turns out to be just 17FFr. I can't help thinking that it is hardly worth the effort of collecting but at least we can impress the young ladies collecting it with our French language skills!

We next head off to the restaurant and it is up to the usual French standards. After checking the met, we head back to



the aircraft and Dave Ashford is soon departing for Pau.

Some of this leg is familiar from a previous trip to Carcassonne, as we head past Meribel (Bordeaux) and the lakes south of the city. DX then gets cleared direct to Pau through several danger areas and a prohibited area. We follow tracking further south although it is unclear to us why we can transit the prohibited zone. Sure enough some minutes later, the controller realises that DX will enter the prohibited area and clarifies that she meant for us to just pass through the danger areas. The land is changing to foothills but the mountains of the Pyrenees are still well in the distance.

We spot Pau airfield and Dave brings us in for a good landing after which we taxi up to the aeroclub for refueling, while we are up there I see DX landing and she soon joins us at the pumps. There are some interesting light aircraft around the club with a Flambard transport also parked on the apron. After taxiing down to the control tower for parking, we find the terminal building and bar for a hard earned beer. A taxi then takes us into town to our hotel which turns out to have a real tennis court attached although it shows some signs of decay. After a quick shower, we head down the road to a self-service restaurant followed by a couple of drinks in the bar before turning in for the night.



As we tuck into our continental breakfast the next morning, we discuss the weather, it looks as though there has been rain overnight and that the weather will deteriorate during the day. Our best option seems to be to depart as soon as possible and we are soon off on our way to the airport. Checking the met shows that our path to Asturias will be clear but with thunderstorms to the north in the Bay of Biscay and also to the south over the mountains of northern Spain. However there does seem to be a clear corridor at least 50 miles wide along the coast. After filing a flight plan and completing my nav, we head off to the aircraft and I am soon lifting off G-ZERO towards Biarritz. The cloud is scattered and the landmarks along the first part of the trip are not particularly good and I feel that something is not quite right. Dave has noticed this as well, I have an error in my track having set it as 240 degrees when 270 degrees would be more accurate. Slightly longer than expected we are between Biarritz and San Sebastian when the controller puts us into an orbit because of departing traffic from the latter airfield. Clare also has to orbit in DX and we never get to see the departing aircraft before we continue along the coast of northern Spain. The landscape is impressive and we can see the CBs out in the Bay of Biscay and also embedded in the cloud over northern Spain. Along the way we talk to Bilbao and reduce our height to stay under cloud which is increasing. As we approach Santander, Clare rightly decides to divert and I follow her into the airfield. After lunch, we look at the weather again and it does not look too promising and is set to deteriorate further. Some military training pilots are also planning to fly to Porto and have similarly been delayed by the weather. The weather has improved slightly and we decide to go, however soon after take-off, we are down to a 1000ft and decide to return to the airfield rather than continuing on a long flight under these conditions. An unexpected but enjoyable stay in Santander follows which is somewhere I would never likely have visited had I not had a share in a light aircraft!

The next morning, a look out the bedroom window shows that it is very grey outside, I then hear heavy rain and watch it bouncing off the roof outside. Down at breakfast, we gloomily discuss the weather and watch the running of the bulls on television hoping that the bull will at least get the satisfaction of goring one of its tormentors. After a second cup of coffee we check out of our rooms and drive through a soggy Santander to the airport and once inside, Clare collects the met. The metars are poor, Porto is fogged in and it is clear that we are staying put until at least the afternoon. We set up camp in the lounge and wait for things to improve, after a snack we review the weather, its looking better and mindful of the met lady's advice that the afternoon would be best, we make plans to depart just after noon. We have a quick lunch to sustain us and then make our way to the apron, first job is to refuel again as we want full tanks for our next leg and our abortive trip the previous day

cost us around 30 litres. There are patches of blue appearing in the sky overhead and we now look forward to the departure. We take off to the west and track along the coast at 1500 feet, we head out to sea such that DX is closer to the coast and we can keep her in sight.



I take some video of the coast and DX, the scenery is superb, Dave then climbs to 4500ft to take advantage of a more favorable wind. We talk to Asturias on the way past and as we round the north-western tip of Spain, the cloud becomes more broken giving us glimpses of the land below. Beneath us, Dave and Clare have worse visibility but its not a problem and they decide to stay at a lower level. Interestingly the Spanish charts just show Portugal as a blank white area which is not very helpful! All the way along we have not seen another aircraft as we cross the FIR

boundary and make contact with Porto for a FIS. The most enjoyable part of the flight for me is the trip along the Portuguese coast and we report Viana Do Castelo as we head towards Porto. It is rather hazy but the visibility is at least 10km when we receive our joining instructions from what sounds like an uninterested controller. We join the circuit on the downwind leg heading south looking out for airliners as the controller does not inspire confidence! Turning over what looks to be the chemical works, we are soon on finals looking at the huge runway ahead.

We are soon trailing the 'follow-me' van and as we shut down I watch DX land and we help Dave and Clare pack up before being 'handled' with the minimum of formalities to the terminal building. Our holiday in Portugal now begins after three days of excellent and challenging flying.



## Caption Competition - Dave Ashford

Last month's winning caption was from Chris Thompson:



*Elliott (in cockpit) "Do you think if I use "up" elevator it will take this weight off the nose wheel?"*

The runner up was from James Mason, with the caption for the above photo (taken in Koblenz) *"Germany shocked by crack British aerobatics team"*.

Once again I seem to be the subject of a photographic offering, this time from Dave Thomas, taken whilst we were waiting for the weather to clear in Santander. Please send you captions to [me](#) and I will publish the winner in the next newsletter:



If you have any pictures of club members or aircraft that you think might be suitable for a caption competition, please send them to me. There are no prizes, just the chance to show off your creative abilities and have a bit of fun.

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