

February 2003 Newsletter

Startup - James Mason

Welcome to the first newsletter of 2003 and my first as chairman of the IBM Flying Club. Over my years as a member of the club, I have never ceased to be impressed by the richness and diversity of experience within the club ranging across the whole sphere of aviation. We have members who have worked in the aviation industry with companies such as Vickers-Supermarine and Scottish Aviation and on projects such as the TSR2 and VC10. We have members who are qualified flying instructors and are now professionally operating in this field. There are other members who are active in aircraft construction and renovation and finally there is the core interest in light aircraft flight and operation. Despite all of this knowledge and expertise, I have always found club members to be very helpful in guiding fellow members of the club. In fact it is only after quite a few years as a member that I fully appreciated the depth of the club's collective knowledge and experience. Consequently, I feel that it is a great privilege to be chairman for 2003 during the centenary of powered flight.

As well as private flying, I am personally interested in aviation heritage and engineering, consequently I intend to adopt this as a theme for my year as chairman. I am working on several events during the year which I hope will be of interest to other club members namely visits to the Newark air museum, the Paris Airshow and possibly to an aircraft manufacturer. Please let me know your thoughts on these proposals, and as ever if you would like to help in the organisation that would be much appreciated as well. More news on these events and others will follow in subsequent newsletters.

On the subject of events, the club really revolves around the flying and social meetings and organising an event which will be enjoyed by other members of the club is in itself a very rewarding process. Similarly, the complexity of an event can vary enormously and a relatively simple event such as a pub or curry evening can be organised by anyone and enjoyed by everyone. Consequently I would ask every member to think whether they could organise or assist in an event sometime during the year since I think that if we all do something then the club will be even more successful. Having been involved with the club BBQ for a few years, it always impresses me how much we can achieve working as a team and also how popular events can become.

In this newsletter, I have taken a retrospective look at some of our flying activities over the last year since recent weather has naturally limited activity in the last few months. Consequently some of the news may be rather old but I hope it is still of interest. One of the highlights of the year for me was the stupendous (and I don't use that word lightly!) visit to RAF Brize Norton for the VC10 refuelling operation. Clare has done a brilliant write up of this day later in the newsletter but I for one certainly did not expect a trip on the aircraft when I originally signed up for the trip and many thanks are due to Dave for making this happen. Watching Tornado fighter aircraft refuelling at the rear of the aircraft

and then seeing another VC10 some distance in front which was going to refuel our VC10 was an incredibly awesome sight.

I hope you enjoy this newsletter and please keep the articles rolling in for future newsletters. It just remains for me to wish you all a happy and safe years flying.



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News From Old Friends

Brian Mellor in Jerez

Well, it is almost 2 months (when written - ed) since Eileen and I left sunny Hampshire, to start our new life in sunny Spain. I thought it was time to write a few words on what has happened since then, as I won't get chance to see any of the IBM Flying Club members for quite a while, to give a personal update on a Friday evening at the Clubhouse.

I departed on a Monday – Iberia flight to Jerez, via Madrid – and arrived Monday night. Tuesday was spent visiting the airport (for a security pass), the social security office, the bank, and various other essential places. Wednesday, I was flying, and don't seem to have stopped since. 95% of the time is flying the Seneca, starting people on their very first twin flight, and continuing until they have got their ME/CPL skill test completed, then carrying on through the IR phase.

The CAA examiners come down here every month or so, to do the IR tests for the current course which has reached the appropriate stage. Inevitably there are “front runners” and “back markers”, so I seem to have been given quite a lot of the latter, plus some others who weren't successful the previous session, and required some remedial work. The workload increased dramatically as the dates drew closer, but it was all worth it, and was very satisfying from an instructor's point of view.



Eileen did not set off to Spain at the same time as I did, she was left with the unenviable task of preparing all our goods for collection and shipment to Spain, and also preparing the house for rental. We were very lucky there, the estate agent found us some excellent tenants, and they seem to be enjoying the house, and are already getting on famously with our neighbours. When Eileen did depart, it was with a friend of hers, the pair of them had the job of delivering our two cars to Jerez. Now, Eileen doesn't like ferries, and doesn't like sailing, because she suffers from motion sickness, if the sea is at all rough. You may recall that the last Saturday in January was not too pleasant – it was blowing a force 10 gale in the channel. That was when they travelled across to Le Havre. However, they survived the journey very well, and then had a pleasant journey down through France and Spain, taking about 5 – 6 days, with one or two adventures along the way.

We now have a house, quite close to the sea which we are renting, which is generally OK, but it does have a significant problem – the bathrooms stink, every now and then. If the landlady fixes it, we stay. If not, we move. We have not done much travelling, due to work constraints, although we did go to Gibraltar last weekend, to stay overnight. It was very pleasant, just like being back in the UK – 13 amp sockets, plenty of RH Drive cars, and most of all – English speaking. We are taking Spanish lessons, but it is only just reaching the point where we feel we are getting a useful base, so that we can soon use the language in earnest.

While I am at work, Eileen often goes out on exploratory trips, finding places for us to visit when we have some time off together. There are some beautiful places up in the mountains, about a couple of hours drive away. She has also been exploring the relative merits of some of the Bodegas, the sherry houses. Only got reports on Gonzales Byass and Osborne so far, but there are a few more to be sampled yet. It's a tough job, but somebody has to do it.

Chris Thompson has been doing a sterling job of looking after the aircraft for me, and much more besides. The biggest relief is that I have now sold one of the aircraft – the C172. It was not earning its keep by a long way, and it had to go. The purchaser and I never met, so again, it was thanks to Chris that the transaction took place so smoothly.

I intend to come back to the UK for a couple of weeks in August, which is the peak season here, for holiday-makers. Many of them are from Madrid, and desperately need to get down to the sea and the sand, for their annual "fix". Our landlady is one of them, and it is a condition of rental agreement that we vacate for the month of August, so I may be looking for some "digs" in this area myself, for a short period. The weather here is starting to warm up rapidly, and I am told it is "unbearable" later on, so maybe coming to the UK in August makes a lot of sense anyway. I will be down the clubhouse at least one Friday, if I can, to catch up on all the gossip



Regards to all my flying pals.

Khalil Barsoum in Canada

You may remember me, Khalil Barsoum, I was a member of the club while in the UK some three plus years ago. I then returned to North America as Global GM of Industry sector, and finally, last October 1st, retired from IBM. I traded my 182, which you may remember for a P210, and have hangars in Toronto and Sarasota . Lucille and I fly a lot around the US, Canada and the Caribbean. We are toying with the idea of returning to Europe for a few weeks of flying around Europe. I have a Canadian IFR private certificate and the US equivalent (so I can fly either C- or N# aircraft easily). Say hello to everyone at the club...We still remember fondly our trip to Carcassones with you, hopefully we'd repeat that again.

IBM Flying Club Goes Inflight Refuelling - Clare Grange

During 1998 Dave Thomas organised a fly in to RAF Brize Norton where we had a very enjoyable tour of ATC. Whilst there a great deal of interest was expressed in the work of 101 Squadron, acting on which, Dave asked if there was a possibility of going aloft in a VC10 on one of the refuelling sorties. Amazingly the RAF said yes (I don't know how he wangled it) but then everything went on hold because of the Serbian situation which had developed.

Dave wrote to the Officer Commanding 101 Squadron again in May 2002 and after a little delay we received a 'phone call from Flt Lt Richard Strudwick who was delighted to say the trip could go ahead and would sort out the details. A date was set for August 20th and we went into full steam ahead organising mode.

The day arrived with James and Dave A arriving on our doorstep at approx 07:00 with James looking definitely weary! Gil, Bob and Paul G arrived shortly after with Gil and Bob definitely full of beans and PG looking a bit like James! Our drive substituted for a car park and we set off in two cars. All fourteen attendees arrived at Brize by 09:00 and were met by Richard Strudwick. We then had to go

through the security formalities with a humourless sergeant doing the paperwork. Richard then gave an excellent presentation on the work of 101 Squadron, its history, other squadrons at Brize, their functions, personnel and all manner of detail. Richard also gave us an overview of what to expect from the rest of the day. We then adjourned to the Officers Mess for coffee and from there walked over to the terminal to await our flight which was due at about 13:00 if I remember correctly. Whilst waiting a few people, including DT, decided to see what the vending machines had to offer whilst the organised ones who'd brought packed lunches ate theirs. Jon Butts kindly shared his with me as DT and I hadn't brought anything. We didn't realise at this point that we'd be fed on the 'plane. More of that later.



We were bussed out to our VC10 the registration of which was XR810 and named after David Lord VC. This particular VC10 brought Terry Waite home from Beirut. Richard walked us round the aircraft which was educational in itself. Some VC10s have three refuelling units consisting of a central hose drum unit situated under the rear fuselage and two wing pod units. Our VC10 had the two pod units which have a hose length of 48 feet, hose diameter 2 inches, delivery pressure 50lb/square inch and refuel rate 3000lb/min. A ram air turbine at the nose of the pod drives a pump for extending and retracting the hose plus fuel transfer. It takes a fighter aircraft approx five minutes to

receive 10,000lbs (5 tonnes approx) of fuel and a large transport aircraft up to 30 minutes to receive 40-60,000lbs(25 - 30 tonnes approx). The nozzle of the receiving aircraft's probe matches the internal contours of the drogue's reception coupling. The probe also incorporates outer and inner spring loaded sleeves. As the probe nozzle enters the drogue it meets a seal ring in the reception coupling forcing back both outer and inner probe sleeves. At the same time the nose of the probe pushes open a cut off valve in the reception coupling, all components are locked in place and correctly aligned for the transfer of fuel. The probe contains an emergency valve and a weak link section which would fracture allowing disengagement in an excess loads situation. The emergency valve would prevent loss of fuel from the tanker.



The drogue looks like a basket and is constructed of cloth and a light metal framework which collapses when the drogue is pulled in by the winch. When the drogue is extended into the airstream the cloth canopy expands the framework to its maximum. The cloth canopy contains a system of reflectors which are used to guide receiver aircraft at night. There are also three pairs of refuelling lights, red, orange and green visible to the receiver aircraft. When the red light is on it tells the pilot of the receiver aircraft not to engage the drogue. Amber signals that the hose is fully extended and the drogue may be engaged and the green light indicates positive engagement and transfer of fuel. These lights

are also repeated on the engineer's control panel on the flight deck. A rearwards facing TV camera is also mounted relaying pictures to the engineer's screen enabling constant monitoring of the refuelling process.

Now back to the fun bit. We were all on board a huge empty aircraft apart from our seats, which were situated at the rear of the 'plane and facing rearwards, and of course the enormous amount of fuel it was carrying! The height of the floor is considerably higher than that on a normal VC10 because of the fuel tanks beneath. As a result it was necessary to kneel in order to look out of the windows. At times, during the flight, the inside of the 'plane was more like a place of worship with people kneeling on both sides admiring the aircraft flying through the heavenly vista.

Before we were able to taxi away, there was a slight technical problem with one of the engines. Ground crew appeared with what looked like a large hammer and bingo the problem was fixed! Take off was very interesting with a climb rate which seemed distinctly steeper than civilian commercial aircraft use. The trainee Loadmaster (in fact he was being tested) did a safety briefing which was quite "relaxed" compared to the airliners again. It's just as well I didn't need the loo as the facilities were male orientated to put it politely! We were climbing to 22,000 feet, our cruise speed would be 290 knots, and heading out to the North Sea. The Loadmaster then brought out lunch boxes for us all and all I can say about these is that the airlines could learn something. They contained good basic nutritious food (nothing fancy) and even Bob ate his which is saying something! There was too much to eat but they were designed for the young, energetic, calorie burning airman!



Somehow in all of this Gil had managed to talk his way onto the jump seat and was having the time of his life apart from the fact the crew intercom had ceased to function. He did join us for lunch and the spectacle that was to follow. Seeing three Harriers appear off the starboard wing was truly phenomenal and for once we were all quiet just watching what was an incredible show. The first Harrier pilot seemed to have a little difficulty inserting his probe but after a few minutes he succeeded. The subsequent two appeared to have more experience! During this whole procedure it was incredible to realise just how close we were to the refuelling aircraft and how precise and skilled the pilots are. There is very

little room for error.



Next in the fuel queue were three Tornados. I was keeping a very good eye on one in particular when I noticed the navigator raise his visor, have a good look at the row of faces staring at him, lower his visor and continue. The Tornados had no difficulty hooking up and all I can say is that this whole experience seems like a dream. It was surreal.

Next on the programme was VC10 to VC10 refuelling which was started but discontinued due to the intercom problems. During the refuelling process we were able to look into the flight deck and the TV screen which was monitoring the procedure. As you can imagine the work load was intense for the crew.

All too soon it was time to return to Brize and luckily for me Richard asked me if I'd like the jump seat. I understand Dave A suggested Richard ask me which was kind. I didn't need any persuading but did ask DT if he'd like it and being the chivalrous chap he is he declined. I had already looked at the NDB/ILS approach plates for Brize and was hoping I'd see the crew fly an instrument approach

but as it was such a nice day they very definitely made a visual approach. We seemed to eat up the countryside and all too soon the runway was in sight. Lowering the undercarriage produced some interesting noises and rumblings but the touchdown was featherlike.

There was slight consternation after parking as no bus had arrived and technically "a bunch of civvies" weren't supposed to stand around. However they let us, although I do believe someone (James!) got told off for wandering! We were escorted back to our cars where DT gave a little speech thanking Richard for all his efforts and presenting him with a bottle of something nice! We drove home and some of us met up for a drink in our local. The day had been so superb we had to celebrate.

Thanks are due to Flt Lt Richard Strudwick, the crew of XR810 and of course to Dave Thomas for making the whole thing possible. It was the event of the year.

Yankee Papa Website - Peter Short

I have been putting together a web site for the Yankee Papa Flying Group (G-BAYP) - you might want to create a link to it the next time you update the site, and give it a mention in the newsletter? The url is <http://www.slx-online.biz/yp>

(Peter's website also contains some great pictures of the VC10 trip - ed)

Van's RV6 G-BZXB by John Akerman

Build completed on Jan 15th (myself and Barry King-Smith). She was weighed the day after and came in at a very pleasing 1039 lbs. Due to poor weather the first flight did not take place until Feb 14th. In attendance: Barry, me, Danny Elliott (with video camera) and most of the Goodwood staff. Bob Cole (ex CAA light aircraft chief test pilot and now Britten Norman chief test pilot) very kindly drove over from Andover to do the honours.

After a 35 min flight in rather gusty conditions he returned with a big smile and a very short list of very trivial problems. It seems that he really likes Vans aircraft, almost as much as F4s. Bob then took Barry and me up for 30 mins each, to give us a full briefing and run off another hour of the 5 hour PFA flight test schedule. The following day I got my approval through from the PFA to complete the test schedule. This was all done by the 18th, and the Permit arrived on the 24th. Since then we've flown whenever the weather has been OK .

Solo, these are the sort of performance figures I have been seeing. That's with a (new) O360 and a Warnke 72 x 74 prop:-

- 2450 rpm cruise - 160 KTAS.
- Flat out straight and level - she'll exceed the 2700 rpm engine red line
- 170 KIAS, 176 KTAS.
- Climb - 2400 fpm is the best I have seen, although a zoom climb will seriously exceed that for up to 20 secs.
- Overall fuel consumption - 33 litres / hr.
- Stall (full flap) - 54 KIAS (actually 49 KT, since our (new) ASI overreads by 5 KT at low speed).
- Not much difference in any of these figures at the 1600 lb MTWA.

She is lovely to fly - very light on the controls, but not at all twitchy. Tremendous roll rate. It has not taken too long to get used to slowing down - if you are cruising at 160 KT / 5000 ft it takes 20 miles to get down to circuit height and 10 KT. Life will be easier when the engine has completed 50 hrs and we can simply shut the throttle. Landings have taken some getting used to, after so many years of J3 Cub and DH 60X Moth. It's having a forward view that spoils things, I guess. Having good brakes and an excellent heater are huge bonuses.



If anyone else in the IBM Club is thinking of building an RV, I hope to have our build diary available on CD fairly soon (see later article in this newsletter - ed). Meantime all I can say is, great aeroplane. It is still a mystery to me how Vans could design something that flies so well yet can be built by people who have never done anything like it before.

Slingsby Flight by Mike Lloyd.

I spent a great day as usual at the Lt Gransden Children in Need Day on Sunday 2nd September. Congratulations to everyone who again made it go so smoothly and successfully. When Tracy Martin had finished her exciting display in the Bell 47 G-MASH, I wandered happily back to the car (only the raffle ticket draw remained, running late - it's always other people who win the raffles, right?), and I drove home.

I'd only been in for 5 minutes when the phone rang. It was John Jefferies ... "Mike, you've won the flight with Neil Scanlan in the Slingsby Firefly T67M!". What?? Quick word with Neil (ex-Skyline instructor, of course) ... and he agreed to "stand by 15"

Sped back to Gransden ... already 1830hrs, and clock ticking for Neil's return to his base before sunset. Parachute on. Cockpit briefing. Just a few new features for this PA28 / Cessna man to absorb in about 5 minutes:

- flying from the right hand seat (a new take on crossed controls!)
- wobbly prop control and MP gauge
- joystick, not wheel
- fuel-injected, no carb heat
- HSI, slaved to compass
- electric trim
- amazing all round visibility (esp. above!)
- BIG engine (260hp, Vne 200kts !)
- no bill from Graham at the end!

And once Neil had started her up and finished the cockpit checks, she was mine for the taxi, power checks and takeoff!

Rotate about 55kt (very soon!). Climb at about 1400 fpm! So easy to maintain climbout heading with all the power driving us up. 4000 ft in no time, turn to NW, and big cumulus straight ahead over St Neots. "Shall I go left or right, Neil?". "No, just climb above it and we'll go play in it". But before we reach the cloud: "All OK, Mike? Right ... follow me through ...", and we're immediately in a full loop, my first aerobatics ever ... utter disorientation, but a fabulous sensation! Then ... "now you do one ... go on ... keep pulling back ... keep pulling back ..", and over we go again, gently relaxing back pressure as the horizon reappears from the top of the windshield. This time I've kept in touch with the rest of the world! "Good first loop" says Neil. "Hey!". And then ... that world goes crazy again as he turns her into a "Victory Roll".

And then we go above that big fat bunch of beautiful white cumulus at about FL55, with Neil encouraging me to just fly how and where I want, above it and inside (it's like being in a big white tea cup - but not into IMC!) - steep turns, fast climbs and dives and zooms, combinations, going through holes, skimming the tops, etc ("max. 200kt, min. 60kt, throw it around, you'll hit your own limits before this plane does!"). Brilliant. Then we leave the cloud behind, pass back over Gransden at 180kt, and quickly head for Bassingbourn (my home village). 3 miles to run and Neil says "OK... show them a couple of loops" and I do a pair in quick succession, one quite good, the other a bit less controlled at the end, but we still level out over Bassingbourn! Then the next highlight ... "can I try a really steep turn ... say 80deg AoB?" "No problem ... just give it some power and watch the VSI". So there I am, wings almost vertical, screaming around back to Bassingbourn Barracks in about 15 seconds! Rate 1 Turns -eat your heart out!

Time to go home. Quick landing briefing ... prop control to forward, standard RW28 approach from Wimpole at about 75kt, full flaps when ready ... but then Neil says "we've got time for one last bit of fun" and tells me to stay at about 100ft on final. Then at the threshold he takes control and whams her into a tight left bank that takes us round the hanger and right over the heads of the brave souls still left behind on the ground! No respite for me though ... as soon as he's straight and climbing again, "You have control", and it's a quick return to late downwind, reconfigure again, military 180 degree final, just as the rain begins to pour! Finally things begin to go a bit loose... driving a brand new type on short curving final in the rain with the throttle and the column both in the wrong hands is not conducive to a perfectly stable approach. I keep lowering the nose when I'm trying to add power!! And vice-versa! Not enough time to adapt. But with Neil's help I reach the flare ... but then the opposite controls get the better of me, and wings begin to wobble! "You have control Neil!" ... and of course he recovers her instantly, puts her on the ground, and immediately gives her back to me on a nice, newly greasy surface. But we roll out with no problem!

We taxied back. A few envious old friends still around to welcome us back! Off came the chute, and Neil and his partner hurriedly re-embarked for their trip back to Lincolnshire.

Neil Scanlan was the instructor at Lt Gransden who first taught me to land an aeroplane. And he's clearly still having to do that! These days, Neil works for Hunter Contract Services, who use the brilliant H67M (the most powerful Firefly, with full USAF military specification) as a basic trainer for new military pilots before they move on to the jet trainers. HCS kindly donated this flight for our Children in Need raffle.

To Neil, and to HCS... many, many thanks for a fabulous experience ... and for 30 minutes in my log-book in a new, complex type. And thanks again to John and Mark Jefferies, Dave Poile, Graham and Dawne, and everyone else who made the Day so great as usual .. especially for me!

Your Aircraft Flight Manual - John King

I wrote these few paragraphs in light of someone having trouble getting their CofA completed due to the Flight Manual going AWOL. It might help as a reminder to others:

Do you know where yours is?

Please remember, that the Aircraft Flight Manual (AFM) should be checked at each CofA (every 3 years) for currency. The CAA provides the chosen Maintenance Organisation with a checklist for the AFM when the CofA application is made.

If your AFM is not up to date it may be necessary to obtain the relevant pages from the OEM and CAA. Failure to have the correct level of manual could cause a delay in the reissue of your CofA.

The official AFM should have a green sticker on it and be over stamped and dated by the CAA. Inside the AFM there should be a specific weight and balance schedule for your aircraft and an Airworthiness Notice 88. Notice 88 will tell you the anticipated length of time the battery will last after a generator failure with just the essential services operating.

Make sure you know where yours is and keep it safe and available.

Campbeltown or St. Nazaire - PORK goes away for the weekend - Dave Thomas

For a couple of weeks Clare and I had been planning to go North to the Mull of Kintyre and Islay over the Easter weekend. However, as the weekend approached, the forecast became worse and worse, so we abandoned the idea and looked for an alternative destination. For some time Clare has been keen to go to St. Nazaire so out came the French charts, and planning was begun. Usually we fly alternate legs, but for this trip decided that I would take us there and Clare would bring us back.

The other decision was that as the Channel is still a bit cold, we would cross over from Lydd to Le Touquet rather than take the long water crossing to Cherbourg. The weather for Good Friday and Easter Saturday looked excellent, but Easter Sunday and Monday looked much more doubtful, so we decided just to go for the one night. Daft, maybe, to go all that way for one night, but what the heck!

On Friday morning we left for Southampton, having checked the weather and the NOTAMs, and faxed off our flight plan and GenDec. When we arrived we topped up our supply of Euros, our chewy sweets, and Avgas, and took off to the East. Although the viz was supposed to be 9999, it was very hazy at 2400 feet, and even at 4000 feet, once we had passed Gatwick's TMA. As we approached Lydd it was clear that there was a lot of traffic heading across the channel, being aided by London Information. We made the necessary calls and coasted out just to the East of Dungeness, well clear of the TRAs for the power stations. Just before the FIR, we changed to Lille approach and had to persuade them that we didn't want to land at Le Touquet, but to continue down the coast to Deauville. They asked us to call abeam the Abbeville VOR (which doesn't appear to be operational), which we duly did. After overflying DPE, we changed to Deauville approach whose first words were 'we have your flight plan'. The viz was still pretty murky over on the French side of the Channel, but we managed to find our way into Deauville. It's worth remembering that although a lot of the French VORs don't have DMEs, the airfields do have ILSs with DMEs, so that you can pick up distance by using the ILS frequency. This was true of both Deauville and St Nazaire. We stopped at Deauville long enough to refuel both ourselves and PORK. We really only wanted a croque monsieur and some frites, but there is only a fully blown restaurant there so we had to manage with salmon, steak and chips and an apple tart washed down with Coke and Perrier. Whilst we were there, an American registered Tiger (N2121T) landed and parked next to PORK and the two pilots gave PORK a close inspection. They didn't stay for long and didn't give us a chance to return the favour!

After lunch we refuelled and then headed Westwards towards Rennes. The leg from Deauville to Rennes was about an hour long, and we were flying over almost featureless countryside. Although the GPS was switched on, it just sat on the 'eyebrow' whilst we navigated using Mark-1 eyeballs and VORs. The Rennes controller was very helpful and as with most French ATC folk really didn't want to bother with us; he just gave us a squawk and clearance through his overhead at 3000 feet. After leaving Rennes we switched to Nantes who handed us over to St. Nazaire about ten miles from the airfield. St. Nazaire field is easy to find and long enough for a Tiger as Belugas land there to transport Airbus fuselages to Toulouse for assembly! We knew that the field was closed on Easter Saturday, so we arranged to have PORK refuelled by two very helpful 'pompiers' who also helped us to find a taxi to take us to our hotel. Over the past few years we have made a lot of use of one French loosely connected set of hotels who provide you with a stamp for every night that you stay and then you have the 12th night free. This was to be our twelfth night! On the way to the hotel we were driven past the old German submarine pens which are both a formidable structure and a formidable sight - one of the chief reasons for going there. No beaches for us, and no art galleries, just solid engineering. Not everyone's cup of tea, but we like solid engineering. There was no bar at the hotel so we wandered along the main street in search of our traditional post-flying beer and used the time to determine our priorities for sightseeing on the following morning. Number one was the submarine pens, and number two was the French submarine in another part of the dock. Having decided our program for Saturday, we moved on in search of some food. After our lunch of steak and chips we didn't want anything too substantial and found a very nice little creperie/restaurant where we settled down for a kir aperitif followed by gallettes (savoury pancakes); they were excellent. Then back to the hotel for a good night's sleep.

Clare woke up early the next morning to put the finishing touches to her flight planning. Then we went down for breakfast, after which we walked down to the submarine pens. Just over the road from the pens is a large open space with a piece of so-called modern art that is supposed to represent a Siren of the Sea. However, there an interesting notice attached to the base of the statue that says 'this is a piece of art, not a toy - do not climb on it'! Given some of the exhibits that we saw when we went to the Tate Modern (dragged there by friends!) a couple of weeks ago, I can see the need for such notices. Meanwhile...



The pens were built between January '41 and December '42 and are 295 metres wide by 130 metres long, by 18 metres high of which 4 metres is the roof, all built out of solid concrete. The picture shows only three of the fourteen pens. The allies gave up trying to destroy it by bombing it and just concentrated on flattening everything in the city; it was 85% destroyed! Eventually everyone was evacuated, leaving just a German garrison and the workers in the submarine pens. After the war, the French did think of trying to destroy it, but gave up when they realised how much it would cost and the potential damage that they would do. So, it remains as an example of German military architecture serving as a museum.

Unfortunately they don't have a real U-boat, just a French diesel-electric submarine built in 1958. We did manage to have a trip around that, and it was fascinating to listen to and to try and identify various sounds on the Sonar, ranging from icebergs through langoustine to fishing boats. It was amazing how people could live in such conditions with only two loos and one salt-water shower for 65 men and a dog!

After our sightseeing we stopped for lunch, and then headed back to the airport in a taxi. As we had been warned the airport was closed, but we were able to clamber over the fence out onto the apron. As usual, we both wanted the loo in the interests of comfort. But as the terminal was locked we wandered up to the nearby hangar which was full of lawnmowers (I think some people call them micro-lights) ready for some gang-mowing and found a very helpful man who actually gave us the key to

the terminal building! So, there we were, having climbed over the fence, with the key to the airport terminal building! Once we had used the facilities to make ourselves more comfortable, we duly handed back the key, and checked out PORK. During the start-up routine Clare was going through the usual checks until she came to the Autopilot. Instead of just confirming that the Autopilot was off, she added that it wasn't necessary as "you've got me". Given that she has just renewed her multi-IR, I have to accept her statement at face value!

Some time ago, John King gave us a sheet of useful French ATC phrases for use when there was no ATC available. As luck would have it, the airfield had been totally quiet until we were about to leave, but then someone started calling blind over the radio. Clare's calls were word perfect and we established a sort of communication with the arriving aircraft; at least we knew what he was doing and vice versa. Just after we took off, he announced that he was on final and duly landed. We flew over the dock to take another look at the massive roof of the submarine pen and then headed North to Rennes. The beaches to the West of St. Nazaire looked superb, so next time we go back we shall probably go into La Baule and spend some time getting a tan (not really, but I had to say that, didn't I. Clare will be on the beach reading a book, while I will be looking for something big and heavy to look at). Clare had elected to clear customs at Le Touquet so we had a 2.5 hour flight. It all went by very quickly, with Clare navigating by VORs and the navigator constantly monitoring the ground beneath. Rennes wouldn't let us fly through their overhead this time so we had to keep five miles clear to the West, but that presented no problem. As we flew by Fougères I noticed a superb castle in the middle of the city, but no nearby airport, so that will have to wait until we pass by at zero feet. The VORs came and went as we approached Le Touquet, there were occasional spots of rain on the windscreen, but ATIS was confirming that the weather was CAVOK so we continued on and landed. Le Touquet was as busy as ever, but we were surprised and pleased to see G-DAKK (the South Coast Airways Dakota from Bournemouth) there, especially as we were told to park next to it by ATC. Whilst we were filling in flight plans and making ourselves comfortable, the passengers turned up and customs must have taken a good half hour to check out their passports etc. before letting them on. It made us feel very important to be able just to wander back out to PORK! The Dakota departed and we continued along to the holding point for runway 32. As we lined up and took off there were at least three British aircraft who appeared to have come over to Le Touquet to practice instrument approaches. The controller was far too busy with standard VFR traffic to pay any attention to them and as far as we know they are probably still orbiting in the hold above the LT! given that Le Touquet is known to be busy at weekends it did seem a bit daft! The trip over the channel was uneventful, but the trip back to Southampton was not that pleasant as we not only had to cope with the haze, but also with the setting sun. However, Southampton did clear us straight in for left base, so that made life a little easier.

Another super trip in PORK, with a total of seven hours added to the log books. More to come. And, although we never made it to Campbeltown, it is somewhat amusing to know that during the war the British did attempt (and succeed) to jam the lock gates so that the submarines could not enter or exit the basin. This was done by ramming the dock gates with the Destroyer Campbeltown and then blowing it up. As a result of this successful action, there is a monument erected to commemorate this action. We may not have made Campbeltown, but we did see the Campbeltown monument!

South Africa National Air Rally (Irv Lee)

I'm just back from competing in the SA National Air Rally, clutching my 'Sportsman's Class' Bronze medal The Rally - great fun. I just fell into it - I had no intention of ever entering anything like this - it's a very formal 'sport' but actually great fun - a mix of timed navigation, observation, spot landing, etc over 3 days.

These championships were held in and around Bloemfontein, and sponsored to a considerable extent by 'ACSA' - whose that?, it's the S.A. version of BAA. I wanted to go to South Africa to get some good weather (cheap) flying in (region of £30 per hour) and also talk to a club (Algoa) down there in Port Elizabeth (bottom right of the map). They are keen to train UK PPLs (about £1750 for the whole course including books, exams, and B&B) and then send them on my PPL Masterclasses as 'finishing school' when they return to the UK.

One Popham pilot, Nick, who learned in S.A. with Algoa last year, attended my PPL Masterclass last autumn, and I emphasised to everyone the need to have a short term ambition, no matter how big or small. Nick took this to heart, and decided he wanted to return to S.A. to compete in their National Air Rally, which he'd heard about during his course there. As he only learned last July, he wanted someone to ride shotgun. Nick's Dad, Donald, wanted to go. He had never flown before, but would be a useful observer. So, Nick somehow persuaded me to go with them both, and that's how I found myself as his 'nav'.

Nick and Donald went out a week earlier than me to get 'into' the life at the club in Port Elizabeth again. I got off the SAA 737 on Tuesday, 2 days before the rally start. By 6pm I was 'validated' after an air law ground exam and a flying proficiency test. The bar was open, and mistakes in 'capacity' calculations were made, but by the time the paperwork was turned around by noon the following day, we'd recovered. We set off up-country in a 172 for the 3 hour flight to 'Bloem', with a leg-stretch and role swap at a strip by the Orange river half way. Magnificent countryside, rising to about 4 to 5 thousand feet as we headed north, so we tended to be at about FL75 all the way.

Next day, I had no idea what was happening, it was just learn as you go, after listening to the briefs. Everyone had a callsign for 3 days ("Rally 5" was ours), and by special arrangement, everyone had their own personal squawk for 3 days so that ATC could keep an eye on us and know how to fit us in to 'real' traffic.

Every other team but ours had flown the Rally on more than one previous year, so they knew the form. There are two groups - everyone has to do the same route in specific times based on your aircraft's cruise airspeed, but otherwise with the same rules. The only real difference, except for 'attitude' is that the fun group (Sportsmans) actually get a route line and turning points drawn on a chart with 15 mins to take off which saves them a little plotting time but there is still masses to do in those 15 minutes. This is to make sure the 'sportsmen' actually don't get totally lost. The other group, more serious, (and every other year competing for places in the National team) are called the 'Open' group. They have to actually plot the route themselves from just enough instructions to construct the route line (eg: Start point is 072 degrees magnetic, 10.5 miles from airfield, 1st turning point is 030 degrees true and 15 miles from start point, etc). Note mix of true and magnetic (variation was 20 degrees!).

Everything is so tight that own GPS and mobile phones are confiscated, and the route and there is so little time to plan that all calculations by both groups are actually done by the navigators whilst the pilot is starting up and taxi-ing to the hold. (It's not a mass take off, everyone has a specific take off time to stick to, and slots are 5 minutes apart).

The key for both groups is to make timing marks on the lines, estimate the drift and groundspeed, and calculate magnetic headings to follow the true tracks and ensure arrival over each checkpoint on time - to the second. Every arrival early or late at each checkpoint earns penalty points, even for a few seconds out. The later or earlier, the more the penalties. The idea is to end up with minimum points.

All aircraft were fitted prior to take off with sealed 'blackbox' GPS co-ordinate and time logging equipment so that the entire route of the aircraft, second by second, could be played back later on laptops by the judges. There was no screens on these GPSs, they were just 'spy in the cockpit' devices. If you found you were arriving at a turning point early due to a strengthening tailwind, you could 'S' turn and slow down but if the playback showed any turn took your aircraft to an angle of more than perpendicular to required track (i.e. if you orbited or turned back to waste time) the penalties hit very hard.

A photo of each turning point was supplied, and when you got there by navigation, you had to say if that was a genuine photo of the calculated turning point. Some were, some weren't. For example a turning point may be a farm house (maps were very detailed scale), but you might have been given a photo of a different farmhouse for this point (e.g.: different colour roof, or outbuildings not the same). Getting the photo question wrong means more penalties.

At certain points along the route, a large white letter would be on the ground, and penalties came in again if they were not noticed and marked on the chart by the overworked crew. Observers were given plenty of work to do - enroute photos of quite minor and unremarkable features of countryside (e.g.: a pond of a certain shape, or a water trough near a road junction) were supplied in random order, and penalties given if not spotted and marked on the map. Double points penalised any wrong identification of enroute photo position. The route each day was different, and covered about 1.6 to 1.8 hours for us in a C172.

The first day was a real learning exercise for us - we hadn't even realised there were ground marker 'letters' - we hadn't picked that up for some reason in the brief, so penalties there. Actually we did OK - I was happy we got back as the countryside was so strange to us, and the maps we had were not Air Charts, just detailed OS maps. We only missed one checkpoint out of about 10, when we, along with others, were 'suckered'. It was a church, and there were two churches not far apart, one much more obvious than the other from 'distance', so we fell for it and flew over the wrong (bigger) one. We still were pleased with everything, especially when running in to the (real) finish we heard the aircraft ahead of us reporting the same position at the same time and being told by Air Traffic they were not in any danger of conflict with us as from the squawks we were in the right place on the edge of the CTR and they were actually 15 miles south of the finish. They actually thought it was a joke from ATC and continued for about 3 minutes, whilst we were cleared in. When we were on right base, we heard them calling up 'lost' and given a vector of 360 and 19 miles to return, which caused some fun over beers later.

The 2nd day (different route, same idea) was our best, and everything was spot on for us time and route wise, and we even got some photos and markers correct, limiting our penalties. Apart from our amazing day, the initial highlight was a story from Ernie and George, two guys also there for fun in our class. Their radio had given up before departure, and they were using a 'hand-held' to get in and out of Controlled Airspace, but that left them without an intercom, a pretty vital tool. All went well for most of the route until the Nav (George) spotted another rally aircraft nearby. As well as shouting to Ernie, he tapped the side window hard to emphasise direction of the potential conflict. The window fell out, and the slipstream sucked out the photos and route directions. Fortunately they were on the final leg, so were able to find the finish. This would have been the 'bar story' for the evening, but when the results were published, it was superseded - there was genuine amazement from officials and competitors alike at the end of day briefing as our 'near perfect' day and mistakes by others in the Sports-

man class meant we actually took the lead at the end of the second day - albeit fairly tight over the top 3 positions.

We had a fun 3rd day, but with very strange winds around - no wind at the airfield, but a fairly stiff breeze out on the route made life difficult for everyone, and spot landings results were added in too. By the prize giving meal in the evening, we found others had coped better, but we still had 'bronze' in class (and a cheque!) - far better than we would ever have thought possible before starting, and actually taking the lead at one stage was our real 'high'. Further cheques were then distributed to all competitors to pay for fuel for the 3 days!

The whole experience was great fun, not to mention challenging, and of course for Nick, only having a licence since last July, a real confidence boost. We celebrated by dropping in (invited) into a Game Reserve for short look around and lunch on the route back to Port Elizabeth on the Sunday. Instructions: fly down the strip to clear animals off it, land, but don't get out of the aircraft unless the guide is there with his safari jeep. There was a herd of 'bok' munching away at the reciprocal threshold but they were unimpressed by our fly-by and refused to move. The strip was plenty long enough, so we landed anyway, with no danger. They must have seen it all before and worked out the landing distance for a 172.



Humberside via East Anglia! - Clare Grange

I've had a bee in my bonnet for some time now about flying to Humberside. I've no idea why but just fancied going there. DT smiled patiently and went along with another female whim! He smiled even more patiently when he heard the route I proposed to take - EGHI, MAY, overhead Southend, CLN, Beccles, overhead Marham, Fenland, Coningsby, Humberside.

The ZERO Boys took off just ahead of us - they were enroute to Andrewsfield - and followed a similar track to us to begin with. The weather was excellent and I received my usual good service from the Gatwick Director (to keep Bob and James happy) even when I told him I was east of MAY which I hastily corrected to west! This I knew had made the occupants of ZERO snigger particularly as Dave A piped up telling us all he was overhead Burgess Hill - in other words we heard you! I am particularly fond of East Anglia as I grew up in that part of the country. It always brings back memories and it is lovely to fly over places I knew as a child.

I attempted to call Marham on 124.15 but received no response. After three attempts I made appropriate traffic calls. A short while later I was tracking towards Fenland having intercepted the required track to the Fenland NDB when we heard "Are you an AA5?" Dave and I looked at each other puzzled and I answered the query. The other pilot announced he had us in sight and would overtake on my left. I looked behind and all I could see was red which gave me a momentary fright! The aircraft turned out to be a bright red Beech Baron G-FLAK and looked very impressive. The pilot continued to chat telling me he was on his way to Popham and where were we from etc. I had to explain we were taking the picturesque route to Humberside. We all waved and he departed by executing a steep left turn just for us to get a good look! Unfortunately we didn't have a camera.

The remainder of the flight was uneventful and we joined right base for runway 03 at Humberside. The airport is quite modern with a reasonable restaurant. Landing fee was £14 which isn't too bad. It was quite busy when we arrived as several Spanish flights had been delayed. A lunch of sandwich and coffee followed after which we refuelled (bit of a performance) and DT flew us home. His routing was more direct after initially flying over Spurn Point and the Humber Bridge both of which are worth seeing. We also flew over Scunthorpe and then via GAM, DTY, CPT landing back at Southampton at 17:00. We adjourned to the bar and then drove to Warsash to take Dave's mother out for a meal. We were quite tired when we got home but very happy. A good day out. Now for the next whim!

Tiger in the valley (Scotland in G-BYDX) - Paul Eathorne

Some weeks ago, chatting over a beer and curry with Mr Lee and fellow North Harbour club member Ian Abraham, the subject of a trip to Scotland came up. Ian is a new member of the DX syndicate at Southampton and fancied doing a good trip somewhere. I said if he was ever looking for a navigator/loadmaster/tyre kicker on a trip up there I'd love to join him as I have very fond memories of an eventful trip to Mull some years ago.

Ian had had a lot of bad luck with his flying as every time he tried to fly either bad weather, work or technical hitches, such a no battery in the aeroplane, prevented him going so it was with a sense of 'this can't really be happening' that we found ourselves airborne from Southampton (well before Elliott vertical time) all set for 2 days touring the Scottish Isles.

Southampton - Carlisle (Thursday 16/5/02 - t/o:08:45 ldg:10:40).

Beautiful weather, good forecast, 'DX running sweetly, all is well. Route took us between Lyneham and Brize o/h Shawbury, through the Manchester low level corridor to Carlisle. Brize get us to talk to Lyneham and then no less than 5 separate Brize frequencies, no idea why - training or just having a larf with us 2 poor PPL's!! Good VFR all the way, L/L corridor nice and quiet, very friendly sounding and helpful lady at Warton LARS great views of the Lake District and so to Carlisle for a monster fry up and re-fuel. Luckily Ian's from the north of Watford so I managed to offload my black pudding.

Actually Carlisle are getting ready for scheduled services starting soon, no idea where to or who is operating them but good news for Carlisle which is pretty much in the middle of no-where. Good time to Carlisle, not having been this way in a Tiger before, we'd doubted our 2hr en-route estimate but it turned out to be about right so we were very pleased, in fact arriving well before the usual 'Bobs Law' 11:00 Southampton departure time!

Carlisle - Islay (Thursday 16/5/02 - t/o:12:30 ldg:13:40).

We'd planned to do some island hopping and knowing there were not many flat places other than the sea to put down in an emergency, we had brought all the safety kit as well as the immersion suits which we now clambered into...and very self conscious we felt, two orange men on the apron at Carlisle! Although I'm sure they would get you in free to certain specialist clubs in London, they are not the most comfortable of garments, however, as soon as you leave the mainland coast, you start to feel mighty grateful for them. (these suits are owned by the club and can be borrowed by any member planning an overwater trip, if you want to borrow them, contact Dave Sawdon) In contrast to the built up areas around Manchester there were very few places of habitation on the way out to Turnberry VOR, where we turned to route overhead Gigha island, where there is a small grass strip. We called Islay for airfield information and got the works, including height above sea level, runway length, density of the tarmac and date of the last post for Christmas! I'm being unkind, Islay is a lovely little airport, set just back from the beach with a very smart terminal and tower. They were very friendly, the AFISO has a wonderful job - just two scheduled flights per day and a glorious view out to sea. Time for tea in Morags, pick up some Lagavullin and we were off again. Cheerio Islay...4000 inhabitants and 7 distilleries. Good place to nightstop I'd guess.

Islay - Oban (Thursday 16/5/02 - t/o:14:45 ldg:15:20).

From Islay we went direct to Oban, following along the coast of various islands we passed over Easdale, a place that I'd stayed at with Jude, it looked beautiful from the air. The wind at Islay had been 15kts down the runway and it had started to pick up a bit so that in the lee of the islands it got a bit bumpy, although nothing major ...at that time. Oban looked great from the air, we spotted a small cruise ship the 'Hebridean Princess' alongside. This is an old CalMac ferry converted to carry about 50 people in absolute luxury around the Scottish Islands and when I win the lottery.... We flew in over Kerrera, an island just South West of Oban which Jude and I enjoyed walking around once...it looked just as good from the air. Having played airliners earlier in the day, the fun flying could really start, we said cheerio to Scottish Info and called Oban to get a very warm welcome from Paul Keegan who operates Oban (Connell), following up airfield info with a cheery 'good to hear you 'DX, come on in the kettles on!' The wind had mysteriously vanished again so we landed and parked near the Grumman Albatross that is living here for a few months, a really impressive amphibian that I'd last seen at the Altenrhein airshow in Switzerland doing a VERY low fly past. After fuelling we were invited to have a look inside, what a marvellous machine! The owner had flown it across the Atlantic, even bringing his motor cycle with him. Typically everyone we met on the trip was so friendly and helpful. What amazed us the most was the fact we'd had a very relaxed journey from Southampton, not rushing at all, had been to an off island, seen wonderful scenery - and it was still just after 15:00 !

Oban - Glenforsa (Mull) (Thursday 16/5/02 - t/o:16:50 ldg:17:30).

Over tea, Paul suggested we take advantage of the improved weather around Oban to do some flying up the lochs and valleys. I'd done a little of this before and I know it can be a lot of fun but you do have to be careful about route and weather. Paul gave us a briefing on a route and the local conditions and we set off up Loch Etive towards Glencoe. This was new stuff for Ian but the initial apprehension of having granite on both sides soon eased and we both enjoyed a great fun flight up Loch Etive, past Ben Cruachan, down Glencoe, out over Ballachullish and into the Northern end of the Sound of Mull, passing Tobermory. The approach to Mull from the East is a Popham style dog leg which was a no

problem for Captain Abraham, a seasoned Popham campaigner. After switching off their was just the sounds of a cooling engine and the seabirds and a gorgeous clear view up and down the Sound of Mull. Chris Thompson, chairman of South Hants Airways and Mr ATC for the Mull fly ins had advised us to contact David Howitt who lives alongside the airfield. I'd sent him an email a few days earlier and he now appeared, extracted a landing fee on behalf of the Argyle and Bute District council and as if by magic produced a car which needed 'delivering' to the very place we were staying, the Salen hotel at Aros, about a mile down the road from the airstrip. On arrival, we found a traction engine full of Irishmen that had stopped to 'refuel' at the pub! This was one of a number of steam engines that had come over to Mull for a rally (not sure how they coped on the ferry, don't they usually say no smoking on the car deck??!!)

After a great day, Gerry at the Salen hotel sorted us out with some excellent beer and tuck which we followed with a pleasant stroll to Salen pier. By now we realised we'd need to route home via the East coast as thunderstorms and bad weather were already pushing well into the West of Ireland (even though it was a lovely May evening on Mull) so it was down to some serious planning ...over another pint. We decided that Dundee looked interesting and from there we thought to drop down to Teeside or Nottingham and home that way. That was the plan.

Glenforsa (Mull) - Dundee (Diverted Oban) (Friday 16/5/02 - t/o:08:00 ldg:08:30).

A beautiful still morning on Mull, up early for breakfast and Gerry kindly gave us a lift to the airstrip so we could be off by 08:00. David had offered to get us weather and it was soon clear we might have problems. The East coast was affected by previously unmentioned clag and winds were also a lot higher than expected. A call to Dundee confirmed it was not going to be straightforward. I should say that although Ian is current on his IMC we decided to stay VFR for the whole trip, a wise decision I reckon. Anyway, we set off with the weather perversely looking better where it was meant to be bad, ie the South West but gloomy to the East. Our intention as to follow the line of the valleys. All started well but shortly after passing Oban, cruising up Loch Etive and in the lee of Ben Cruachan (a 3,600' lump of granite best admired from a distance) the air started to get very turbulent, at the same time the viz ahead looked decidedly dodgy. At the point I was beginning to regret my fried breakfast, Captain Abraham decided he did not like his head hitting the cabin roof and made a good command decision to divert us back to Oban, where the wind was once again - mysteriously - almost calm!

Oban - Prestwick (Friday 16/5/02 - t/o:09:30 ldg:10:15).

We now realised we might not get home until the weather had improved so decided to get as far as we reasonably could. The weather still looked reasonable to the South, Prestwick confirmed excellent VMC with winds picking up so we set off. Within 5 minutes the strengthening Easterly winds over the high ground ensured we got a bumpy ride but it was manageable so we continued, with the weather ahead looking gloomier but still acceptable VMC. Passing the Isle of Bute a small but ugly black cloud gave us a real hard pasting and the approach into Prestwick was a lively affair! Earlier thoughts of continuing to Carlisle were forgotten, I don't think either of us fancied another hour on the roller coaster so we landed at Prestwick which fortunately has a very long (and wide!) runway, the wind by now 18-20 gusting up to 27 kts on the ground. (may not sound much but I can assure you we felt it!!) All this time the Tiger had coped with the weather very well indeed, remaining as stable as you could hope in the circumstances.

Time to sit it out in the comfort of Greer Aviation who made us welcome, little did they know then that we'd be staying a day and a half!!) Latest weather was not good. Strong wind warning now in force (we'd noticed!) We were joined by David and Catherine in a Robin DR400 who had also come in from Oban and had taken a similar beating plus a chap trying to get home to Wales in a weight shift microlight!! By 16:00 we decided to call it a day and get a B&B for the night. Poor Ian now had the

extra pressure of the news from his wife Sue that she had taken their little boy Ben into hospital following an asthma attack. Bert Greer sorted us out with a B&B and suggested a pub for food but by now we were pretty despondent but resigned to setting off on the return next day around midday.

Prestwick - Farley Farm (Saturday 17/5/02 - t/o:18:00 ldg:20:40).

A pleasant Friday night out in downtown Prestwick followed by a good nights kip and a fried breakfast saw us back at Greer Aviation again for about 09:00. The worst of the front was meant to have passed through overnight, worryingly, we had woken up to dry streets but the sky had filled and it now started to rain heavily. We spoke to the met men at Glasgow and Ronaldsway (yes, you can speak to a human and get clarification on what the weather is doing and very helpful they were) They confirmed the front had slowed and was now 'meandering' between Liverpool and Belfast. The actuals and TAF were differing significantly - the morning TAF for Blackpool gave acceptable if not brilliant VFR but their METAR continued to give BKN 700' rain, low viz, etc. So with nothing to do but wait, we chatted to the various interesting crews coming through Greer Aviation which handles all the corporate stuff at Prestwick, including:

- a USAF instructor who'd borrowed a jet for the weekend to take a young student to Reykjavik for some training (I'm sure she performed very well...)
- the very friendly Coastguard and DEFRA crews, out looking for drugs and spanish fishermen
- two great American pilots who had brought their boss in to play golf
- best of all the crew of a brand new Cessna Citation who invited us over to see how the other half lives ...nice aeroplane! Plenty of champagne on board. Interesting to hear them carefully route planning to avoid the bad weather, it seems the weather radar on some of the smaller jets is not as effective as I'd imagined.

The day wore on, fall back plans were looked at - Ryanair, train, hire car - but all had their problems (Ryanair require photo ID for internal flights, only passport or driving licence are acceptable and I had neither) After a final word with the met man at Ronaldsway we realised we might just get out via the coast, either that or we took our chances very early next morning, so we decided to get airborne to with Prestwick showing signs of improving (ie the rain had eased!) we took off at 18:00, following the coast out past Turnberry at 700' below a thinning layer of broken cloud. GBBMB had departed a few minutes ahead of us and passed back invaluable and welcome information that they could see the weather breaking. To keep in the better weather we coasted down the West coast past Portpatrick, eventually climbing up to route south to The Isle of Man. Shortly after we cleared the area of low cloud and ...marvellous! CAVOK! Thereafter it was back to airliners again, talking to Ronaldsway, Liverpool Approach and tracking into Wallasey VOR, thereafter an relatively uneventful flight (apart from a big area of grot which almost ruined our evening by crossing our path near Marlborough, luckily it was not as bad as it looked and we continued on to land at Farley Farm at 20:40, after a mini epic flight of 2:40 minutes from Prestwick!) Mr Lee then came to the rescue by providing a taxi service.

Although eventful, this was a fabulous trip, so much easier and pleasurable with two of you to share the workload. We saw some great scenery, met some really friendly people and the Tiger confirmed that it really is a super machine for touring - my last venture to Scotland was in 'WD, the extra speed makes so much difference! David Howitt on Mull and Paul Keegan deserve special thanks for their help and making visitors like us very welcome! And if only we could find them, we'd say a big thanks to David in Catherine in G-BBMB for their excellent Pathfinder services which helped us get out of Prestwick!

Henstridge IFR or I Followed Roads! - Clare Grange

Gil Collins kindly organised a fly - in to Henstridge in order to indulge in a big breakfast. Five aircraft and one Mazda 626 attended. The car was mine as I had decided not to fly due to two very blocked ears following a horribly uncomfortable commercial flight back from Vienna two days previously. I arrived at Henstridge just in time to see PORK landing with DT and our friend Alex aboard. This was followed by ZERO with Neale , the campanologist, at the controls and James as P2. G-AZWD had already landed crewed by Gil and Paul E. John and Linda arrived in a Cub from Thruxton but unfortunately couldn't stay long. It was rumoured to be John's birthday but as usual he wouldn't admit it and Linda was under orders not to!

G-BYDX arrived with the Cogle family on board. Baby Peter is being initiated at an early age! We all enjoyed our breakfasts with Gil and DT eating my sausages and fried bread. James went veggie. We then proceeded to watch the autogyros practising hops along the runway. The day was full of innuendo, mainly from the campanologist who was on good form to put it mildly! I don't know how he gets away with it! Dave A's ears must have been red hot as the Carcassonne bathroom wrecking episode was recounted yet again!

All crews had reported quite grotty conditions en route with varying degrees of cloudbase and visibility. I understand Peter Short had set off but decided to abort his flight and return to base. A very sensible and responsible decision. Margaret was the other absentee due to the fact Gil had generously passed on his bugs to her!!

I gather the wx on the return trip was also difficult in places. However PORK still managed to find the Cerne Abbas Giant (Bob and Irv - I missed out this time) , George III on his horse, Portland Bill and flew at 1000 feet along Bournemouth beach. DT had wanted to show Alex the Needles also but low cloud put a stop to that.

I understand ZERO had to do a "180" at Calshot because of the cloud and eventually routed in via Totton. One amusing moment was when there appeared to be two Romeo Oscars in the circuit, one downwind and one on final. Apparently the controller announced he was rather confused and asked just how many ROs were there. I understand that DT in PORK flying downwind was the cause of the problem!!

Gil, DT, Alex and James were already in the airport bar when I arrived having " bumped into" Neale on the walk from the carpark. Thanks to Gil we had a very good day and a good start to the flying season.

Aberporth - John Akerman

David Cooper-Maguire and I have taken the RV6 into Aberporth (now West Wales Airport). It is such a delightful, well-kept and friendly airfield that I wanted to recommend it to anyone who hasn't been there, or hasn't been there since the MoD sold it to the Mann Organisation.

Interesting journey wherever you are coming from. 915M of nice smooth tarmac 08/26. 100LL from a real bunker. Cup of coffee made for us on arrival. Nice new simulator available, which can be set up to mimic most twins. Phone 01239-811100 for PPR - the range is still very much in use so a brief-

ing is required. We just missed 2 Eurofighters (seeing, that is, not hitting) which were late for missile-firing tests.

PS If anyone in the Club is considering building an RV (or, I guess, any other metal aircraft) I have on CD-R the build diary for our G-BZXB. I gave a copy to a local just-beginning RV builder who found it so useful (he says) that I thought I ought to offer it to anyone else who might benefit. It tracks the build from start to finish in photos and (sometimes terse) words, explains why we chose to do things the way we did, the problems, the successes, from making the decision to do it right up to the first flight. The whole thing is in Word. I can burn the CD's and mail them at cost, about £3.

The Rules of Flight - part of a continuing series by Dave Sawdon

Never trade luck for skill.

Two of the three most common expressions in aviation are, "Why is it doing that?", "Where are we?" (for the third ask Dave - ed)

Weather forecasts are horoscopes with numbers.

Airspeed, altitude or brains: two are always needed to successfully complete the flight.

If the wings are travelling faster than the fuselage, it's probably a helicopter - and unsafe.

Flashlights are tubular metal containers kept in a flight bag for the purpose of storing dead batteries.

Flying the airplane is more important than radioing your plight to a person on the ground incapable of understanding it.

When a flight is proceeding incredibly well, something was forgotten.

Just remember, if you crash because of weather, your funeral will be held on a sunny day.

Never fly the 'A' model of anything.

When a prang seems inevitable, endeavour to strike the softest, cheapest object in the vicinity, as slowly and gently as possible.

The Cub is the safest airplane in the world; it can just barely kill you.

A pilot who doesn't have any fear probably isn't flying his plane to its maximum.

If you're faced with a forced landing, fly the thing as far into the crash as possible.

Though I Fly Through the Valley of Death I Shall Fear No Evil For I Am 80,000 Feet and Climbing
(Sign over the entrance to the SR-71 operating facility)

You've never been lost until you've been lost at Mach 3. (SR-71 pilot)

Never fly in the same cockpit with someone braver than you.

There is no reason to fly through a thunderstorm in peacetime.

What is the similarity between air traffic controllers and pilots If a pilot screws up, the pilot dies; If ATC screws up, the pilot dies.

If something hasn't broken on your helicopter, it's about to.

Basic Flying Rules:

1. Try to stay in the middle of the air.
2. Do not go near the edges of it.
3. The edges of the air can be recognized by the appearance of ground, buildings, sea, trees and inter-stellar space. It is much more difficult to fly there.

Some Future Events by Irv Lee

A guy under the handle of 'pilot pete' and I are organising a trip in early April, (once we are on BST again), probably to the Museum at RAF Cosford. It will be offered to pilots reading the Flyer Forum who want to start Spring 2003 with a 'different' destination. Due to military restrictions, it will probably be a Friday. If you fancy a trip to a military base, I'll announce a date if/when it becomes definite, but I suspect it to be one of the first two Fridays in April. We're trying to get Flyer magazine to find a major sponsor to either 'do something' or 'subsidize something' for the pilots who fly in, but don't depend on us finding any. If the trip itself postponed on the day, we'll probably be rolling it forward every 3-4 weeks on Fridays until it happens. (3-4 weeks to ease booking problems for rental people)

Also, I've had a few requests for another PPL Masterclass in Hampshire - that will be the 6th - it will probably be a Saturday in March or April, in a pub with food and drink. To find out more or to have a say on the date, see my webpage www.higherplane.flyer.co.uk/seminars and there are one or two IBM-F-C club members who can feedback, having already attended. To see some non-IBM feedback from the one I've just done in Kent, see <http://www.flyer.co.uk/forum2/read.php?f=1&i=5412&t=5412>

Royal Aeronautical Society Lectures contact Danny Elliott (flying@aelliott59.freemove.co.uk)

Weds 5th March Turner Simms Concert Hall Southampton University

47th R.J.Mitchell Memorial Lecture.

As part of the celebrations of the 100 years of powered flight.

" The Next 100 Years of Military Aviation"

By

Air Chief Marshall Sir Malcom Pledger,

An Examiner is Born - Dave Sawdon

I can now do ground examinations as well as flight examinations.

Earlier this year the CAA came through with my final examiner approval so I can now do ALL the PPL tests:

- Single Engine skill tests and proficiency checks
- IMC initial tests and renewals
- Multi Engine skill tests and proficiency checks
- -PPL ground examinations (SEPL, MEPL, IMC)

R/T changes. The CAA recently issued an addendum to CPA413 (R/T manual): "taxi to holding position nnn" is replaced with "taxi holding point nnn" or "taxi holding point nnn runway mm"

Also, CAP413 will no longer be re-issued annually. From 1/Oct/02 it will be available in loose-leaf format or for download from the CAA site (I have actually downloaded it, very useful feature - ed).

Whilst on the subject of R/T there's a common mistake that people make: when talking about a change of height don't use the word "to".

An example might be:

- Correct: "descend altitude nnn feet".
- Incorrect: "descend nnn feet" or "descend to nnn feet"
-the dangers are obvious once you think about it, especially in IMC.

FAA instruction available locally. Old Sarum now has an FAA instructor (Steve Randall) who can do BFRs (S/E and M/E), IRs (S/E and M/E), etc.

Give Dave Sawdon a call if you want more info or see www.btinternet.com/~kennetco/ferryflight/

Now a South African Instructor as well - Irv Lee

Probably of academic interest to qualified pilots, I'm now a South African instructor. I've recently had to jump through various flaming hoops in Pretoria and Port Elisabeth, passing commercial ground exams and 4 flying tests (3 commercial, one instructor) to get their SA Commercial and Instructor ratings.

I swore years ago I was never going to do any sort of commercial exams (eg: ATPL) again, but I just have. The SA commercial ground exams are now computer based in Pretoria, and they actually give you the official results your click on 'Confirm Finished' - terrifying - it takes about 2 minutes of plucking up courage to make the final mouse click, as the screen is instantly filled with the percentage and the word 'pass' (or fail). It also prints out the questions which were incorrectly answered, and a reference of where to go and look up the correct answer.

Why? Well there are a growing number of S.A. PPL holders here in the UK flying daytime-VFR on the South African licence (which they are entitled to do with no conversion). They either emigrated here with the SA licence, or they spotted the incredible value of the courses down there due to the Rand

weakness. A full PPL inclusive of training, return flights, B&B accommodation, books, exams, tests, etc is a little over £2.5K, and no lengthy background checks needed as in the USA now. With that sort

of cost, there is a growing emigration of people learning abroad to switch from Florida where training can sometimes be a bit 'weak' on UK fundamentals, to South Africa, where their whole system is based on ours from the past including overhead joins, QNH/QFE, etc etc. I have been very impressed by all the SA clubs I visited - they really teach students thoroughly to very high standards.

The big snag in the past has been that after a year, these UK resident SA PPL holders need a flight with an SA instructor. Also, an even bigger and annoying snag is that S.A. PPLs are very strictly type rated - by aircraft type, not just by manufacturer. So if they qualified on a C172, they must stick to 172s until approved on other types by a S.A. instructor. They cannot legally just get any instructor to convert them - whether they want to fly a PA28 or even a smaller Cessna like a 150, they need a test, a ground written exam on type, and a form registered with their CAA in Pretoria by an SA instructor. Now, instead of search for visiting SA instructors to 'type convert' them or sign off their renewals, they have one resident in the UK and of course the SA clubs won't be slow in pointing this out to their current pupils.

IBM Flying Club AGM held on 21st February 2002 - James Mason

Present

Dave Thomas, Clare Grange, Dave Ashford, Dave Sawdon, Bob Elliott, Jeff Moreland, Chris Thompson, Paul Goodman, Graham Cogle, Jonathon Airey, Danny Elliott, Jim Hull, Anne Howe, Denis Howe, Innes Read, James Mason

Apologies

John King, Irv Lee, Phil Russell, Martin Halfacree, Gary Jones, Adrian Spann, Gil Collins, Margaret Collins, Graham Cogle, Nigel Waters, Richard Valler

The chairman (Dave Ashford) opened the meeting at 19:35

Minutes of the previous meeting

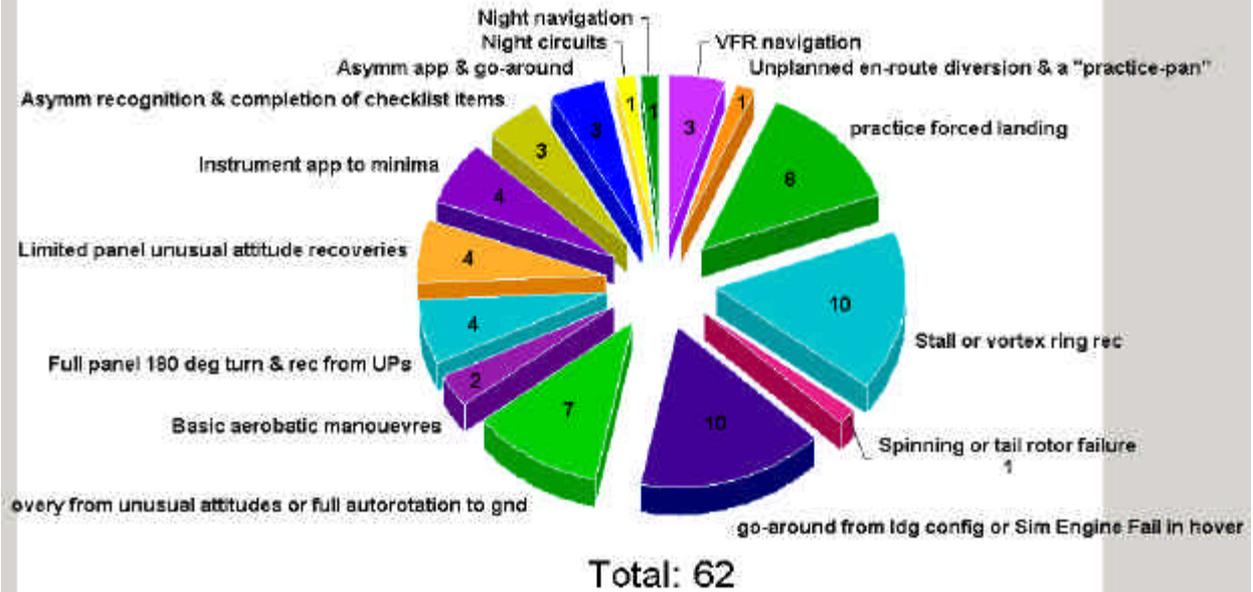
The minutes were not available to the meeting

Treasurers Report (Dave Sawdon)

Dave presented the state of the finance for the club. He reported that the club had brought a flight simulator yoke and some books this year. He reported that the club GPS not used very much and questioned whether the rental was too high. The liferaft equipment continues to be well used with rental income funding most of the annual maintenance. On the safety refreshers, 12 people made 62 claims with the following spread of training:

2002 Safety Refreshers

-12 (13) people-



Secretary's Report

Apologies from Adrian Spann who was away on a business trip, however he reported that club membership was down with the current information being:

	2003	2002
Family	3	5
Full	20	34
Guest	4	5
Life	2	2
Retiree	17	18
Total	46	64

17 people have not yet renewed their membership

Chairman's Report

Dave Ashford reported that the following events had occurred and been appreciated by the club members:

- Royal Aeronautical Society lectures, co-ordinated by Danny Elliott and attended by various club members.
- Henstridge breakfast flyin organised by Gil Collins.
- Lyneham visit which was unfortunately curtailed due to poor weather with most of us at our respective airfields, thanks to Dave and Clare for their efforts with this event.

- Quimper trip organised by Jim Hull, unfortunately again curtailed through poor weather.
- BBQ, a great team event.
- Flight Refuelling, one of the best ever events organised again by Dave and Clare.
- Bourne Park BBQ organised by John King.
- Christmas Party.

Awards

Dave Ashford announced the following awards:

- Friend of the IBM FC: Clare Grange
- Achievement Award: Brian Mellor and Chris Thompson (for their ferry flight from the UK to Japan)
- Chairman's Award: James Mason

Election of the Committee

There was a volunteer for each of the Committee posts, so the following were elected unopposed:

Chairman	James Mason
Treasurer	Jeff Moreland
Secretary	Adrian Spann

In addition, the following responsibilities were confirmed:

Transair Co-ordinator	Graham Cogle
Pilot Distribution	Paul Goodman
GPS and Radio Loans	James Mason
Website Designer	Innes Read

The Meeting closed at 20:15.

Postscript

I have just received the following note from Clare:

I'd like to thank the club for the award I received at the AGM with particular thanks to whoever was kind enough to nominate me. I really do appreciate it.

Clare

I would also like to thank Dave for the Chairman's award and also thank all of our contributors this month, please keep those articles coming in.