



April 2003 Newsletter

Startup - James Mason

Welcome to the April newsletter and I am pleased to report some major achievements by quite a few members of the club. First of all, Chris Sawdon has made his first solo just two weeks after his sixteenth birthday which is both a great achievement and a great opportunity to be able to fly at such a young age. Next we have two new NPPL holders, David Dewar and Danny Elliott, both David and Danny have written up their experiences which I'm sure will be of wider interest.

It was also brought to my attention that Chris Thompson has been recognised by AOPA with their Controller of the Year award for his provision of an especially good service to private pilots. I think all of us that fly in to Popham are appreciative of Chris' hard work and I have taken the liberty of reproducing the AOPA article within this newsletter. Congratulations are also due to Chris and Lyn on their recent marriage.

The committee of the IBM Flying Club have also decided to award life membership to Brian and Eileen Mellor for their services to the club over many years. Although now based in Jerez, Spain both of them keep in contact with the club and attend the Friday social meetings in the Hursley clubhouse on their trips home. Many congratulations and thanks to them both.

The flying season has now started and some events are now on the calendar with details below. We have also held our first event of the year which was the visit to the Meteorological Office at Bracknell and this was very successful. Many thanks to Clare for her excellent organisation and at least one member of the club availed themselves of the opportunity for a custom weather briefing for a flight the next day which I am pleased to report was extremely accurate!

Keep those newsletter articles and events rolling in!

James S Mason
Email: jsbmason@iee.org
(including newsletter articles)

A New Eagle- Dave Sawdon

I had the dubious privilege of sending my eldest son (Chris) on his first solo on Sunday, 2 weeks after his 16th birthday

Son was cool but Father was twitched and Mother was worried - all ended well with a good circuit and landing in G-BULL.

He's been ready for some time but had to wait until his Birthday before it could actually happen so we filled the gap with some Aeros and Spinning. The next step is solo consolidation followed by PFLs and Nav, the hard part will be getting him to study for the exams once GCSEs are out of the way and before A levels raise their heads.



NPPL and More - David Dewar

Way back in 1981 I started to learn to fly on Cessna 152s at the Warwickshire Aero Club, then based at Birmingham airport. That summer was, I recall, quite good - and I soon clocked up enough experience for a first solo. Some solo consolidation followed, though I soon ran out of money! I was a contract systems programmer in those days, and the absence of contiguous contracts made a big difference to cash flow.

Then a long gap, during which I tried to persuade myself that I wasn't really interested in flying anyway. I carried on contracting, during which, for interest, I gained an HGV class 1 and PSV class 1 driving licences, and eventually moved to North Yorkshire, and joined IBM in Leeds. Near where I now live, on the southern edge of the North York Moors, is a fairly famous steam railway, and so I trained to be and qualified as a signaller: same training and examination as on the Railtrack system - so we are all, on the NYMR signalling roster, also eligible to apply to join whatever railtrack has become as signallers - should we wish to!

In 1999, I could resist the pull of flying no longer, and started again for a revision lesson (on a Robin 200) with Multiflight at Leeds. They pointed out the differences from my old UK PPL training and the (then) new JAR licence, and advised that I get a medical certificate as soon as possible.

I failed the medical. Now followed a protracted set of investigations, and correspondence with the CAA Aeromedical section. During all this, I could resist no longer the urge to fly, and booked the occasional lesson with Multiflight, and subsequently with Leeds Flying School (C172s).

For various reasons, this phase lasted until August, 2002. Then it was that I realised that the new NPPL syllabus, with its lower medical certification requirements, would chime in with my driving qualification. (My HGV/PSV DVLA group 2 medical was up for renewal mid 2002, as was my signalling medical.) At Sherburn Aero Club, Sherburn in Elmet being not far from the new IBM Leeds office, I found an instructor who was involved in the setting up of the NPPL. It was obvious that I should go for that qualification, whilst still talking to the CAA, and fulfilling their requirements for medical tests, etc.

I value the training I have had at commercial airports very highly, in particular the RT practice, and traffic circumstances. I'm equally grateful for the situation at Sherburn (3 grass runways, one tarmac, etc.) which allows more time to be devoted to actually flying during each lesson. Sherburn is one of the largest clubs in the North, with around 750 members, and about 200 students, I believe. There are usually 20 instructors on the books, most of whom are part-time. Instruction has been exemplary, and all the instructors are very friendly and helpful. There are two examiners at the club, including providing examination for the RT practical. (I had obtained an FRTOL in 1981, but was advised that I should take it again). All the groundschool papers can be taken at Sherburn (the NPPL ground syllabus is identical to the JAR-PPL).

So, first (or, rather, second) solo on September 27th 2002, QXC on December 9th, and GFT on December 28th. The NPPL licence actually arrived on 16th January, dated from 15th. All my Sherburn training has been on PA28s (Cadets, and Warriors.)

The CAA have just told me that I now have satisfied their requirements for a JAR medical, so having seen an AME (who comes to Sherburn, where he is a flying member anyway, to carry out medical examinations) am now awaiting the piece of paper.

Then, having now clocked up around 70 hours, for a conversion to the PPL(A), and then IMC/Night. About to do a type conversion to the Robin 2160 (of which Sherburn has two), then a QXC for the PPL.

At last, after a long saga, it feels that I am making progress - and there's plenty of scope for interesting and informative hours building around this part of the country, too.

If you have any plans to visit Sherburn, please check out the Sherburn Club's website: www.sherburn-aero-club.org.uk

(Ed - David sent me the following update on the 5th April)

Having got the NPPL in December ...

Did my QXC for PPL(A) last Monday, 31st (Sherburn -> East Midlands -> Humberside -> Sherburn) - that was OK, but the weather still somewhat hazy.

Did the GFT yesterday ((Friday, 4th) Sherburn -> Skegness -> VOR tracking to Otringham + diversion to Sandtoft + exercises + PFLs + many kinds of landings + etc..) and passed.

So now, more money to the CAA, and then IMC/Night. (Journey through all this from very beginning has now put me at about 85 hrs total time, with 36.5 P1, so the experience helped yesterday!)

AOPA Controller of the Year



Club member Chris Thompson receives the AOPA Controller of the Year award from AOPA chairman George Done for an especially good service to private pilots.

NPPL to the Rescue - Danny Elliott

Nov 96 and bang goes the CAA medical, through a cardiac problem, and with it the privileges of the PPL/A licence. Then comes the 21st century and with it the concept of the NPPL. a purely British licence for use in the U.K only and all I can say is well done to AOPA, the PFA, BGA, BHGA, etc, etc and all those who stuck to their guns and got it through.

The birth of the NPPL wasn't without it's pains and the original introduction date was set back a further 6 months because some folks in the industry needed further convincing by a further iteration of the proposal to be presented to Parliament to amend the ANO. This was done and a vote of confidence finally achieved

The biggest single benefit from the NPPL is the reduced medical requirements. Now, you just walk into a main Post Office pick up a D4 form." DVLA application_ for a HGV licence, take this to your GP and ask him/her to do the business for you. There are some Doctors who advertise this as a special service, your GP may be more reasonable The medical is "reviewed annually" or if your Doctor thinks you need it after an illness. Excepting the D4 all the necessary forms (not just medical can be downloaded from the Internet). Special cases, e.g.a treadmill ECG you must organise yourself, ask a cardiac consultant via your doctor and the going rate is in excess of £330. I spoke direct to a hospital cardiologist and a technician direct and got it done for £243. hopefully you wont need one.

As an ex PPL/A licensee I did not need to do the full course as I was cross credited with some experience, especially in the area of the written exams. This is all fully explained in the NPLG form NPPL/XC/REV02 and also appears on the website <http://www.nppl.uk.com> Basically the system for lapsed

licences is that if you lapsed under 5 years a GST is all that is required. Between 5-10 years you will need to be assessed by your Instructor and do an amount of refresher training as he directs, then a nav skills test prior to doing the final skills test, you do not need to do a solo cross country!

As an ab initio student you will of course do the full course the content of which is the same as the JAA/PPL except the amount you do in each exercise is at the discretion of the instructor. This is how the magical figure of 32 hours is possible if you are a hot shot that is, otherwise it will take what it takes. When I did my course in 84 it took 6 hrs instrument awareness, spinning and other things you don't do now. But nevertheless all the good safety belts are in there: slow flight control, stall/spin awareness, unusual attitude recovery, spiral dive recovery to name but a few.

All in all I reckon it's a good thing which does not detract from the original and necessary safety aspects and if you are reasonably competent and can achieve continuity and you can do it in less time than the JAA one. I wish anyone thinking about it good luck and have a go

CALENDAR

Newark Aviation Museum April 26th - James Mason.

Unfortunately the trip planned for April 13th was postponed due to the weather. Our alternate date is Saturday April 26. If you would like to attend please contact me on jsbmason@iee.org or 002380-615113 for an airfield briefing sheet and further details.

Popham Aerojumble May 5th - Chris Thompson

I don't know if you have plans for another newsletter but just a reminder to the assembled multitudes that the Microlight Trade Fair is on at Popham on 3/4 May and the Aero/Auto Jumble is on the Bank holiday Monday 5th May. The trade fair is always very busy if you want to shoot down microlights (17 on finals at one time last year and 23 joining overhead) and the Aerojumble is usually crammed with light aircraft. We had a total of over 2000 movements for the weekend and a total of 765 visitors. There are also 400+ classic cars expected, it is a paying event at £5 per person but there are no landing fees.

I still plan to go to Glenforsa (probably in the Auster but maybe the Chrislea - wx dependent!) for the last Bank holiday weekend of May and that also coincides with a big fly-in being held at Perth. All details of Popham and Glenforsa obtainable from me.

EMAIL: ThompsonCR2001@aol.com

RAF Cosford May 16th - Irv Lee

I would like to declare a fly-in to RAF Cosford (NW of Birmingham) on FRIDAY MAY 16th primarily to:

- (a) see the big Museum there
- (b) to get people experience of flying into a military airfield - if you are not confident or 'unsure' for any reason about a longer navex, or feel your embarrassed about your 'formal' radio, please use this to GET confident BUT please team up to do it rather than learn the hard way!
- (c) possibly see the rumoured Spitfire display there that day particular day (it is only a rumour though so don't go just for that!). The fly-in HAS to be a Friday, so if it doesn't happen due to weather that day, I'll keep rolling it back 2 or 3 weeks to allow people to re-book aircraft until it finally happens.

Fuel will NOT be available on the day, and I think we have to be outbound by 16:30 to allow them to 'POETS'. I will see if I can arrange free landings anywhere nearby if pilots land going to or from Cosford that day to take fuel, but don't hold your breathe. Landing fees will not, at first glance, be cheap - if you do NOT have MOD insurance, expect about £30, (cheaper for training flights!) but remember the Museum visit will be free for all p.o.b., so build that into your opinion of the cost. (I would assume proper certified MOD insurance would save you the usual £8.50)

Bookings via a website: <http://www.thehangar.co.uk/flyin/main.php?find=57> - copy me your details or any changes by e-mail too, as that site is not secure and anyone malicious could alter your booking-in details. Irv Lee <http://www.higherplane.flyer.co.uk>

Royal Aeronautical Society Lecture May 21st - Danny Elliott

Further details from <http://www.southampton-raes.org.uk/lectures.htm>

The Rebuilding and Maintenance of Spitfire Aircraft Today

Peter Sadler / Mark Harris

Lecture room A, Nuffield building, Highfield Campus, University of Southampton

21 May 7:30pm

Kilkenny Rally June 12th-15th - Paul Eathorne

Today, I received a brochure for Kinair, the air rally at Kilkenny which takes place this year on June 12th - 15th.

The club have been to kilkeny before on a number of occasions (although not for Kinair as far as I know) and it was always a brilliant trip...wonder if it's worth circulating?

<http://kinair.ie/kinair.htm>

Brize Norton July 12th - Dave Thomas

As you know, last year we had a very successful trip to RAF Brize Norton including a flight in a VC10 over the North Sea on an active refuelling exercise. Since then I have kept in contact with Brize and as a result, we have now received an invitation to their Family and Friends Open Day on 12 July. As with RAF Odiham, they have very few GA aircraft on the base. They welcomed the opportunity to have some GA visitors on the airfield so that the range of aircraft on view is greater than they could otherwise have achieved.

They expect crowds measured in the thousands, and are organising an air display as well as other attractions. The exact format is still under debate, particularly given current events in the Gulf. However, the overall plan is for us to fly in during the morning, and then leave en masse towards the end of the day. My intention is to beat the excellent turnout that Irv Lee managed to muster last year for RAF Odiham, which was either 12 or 13 aircraft. As an inducement, I have managed to gain agreement from the RAF that there will be no landing fee, and no requirement for Crown Indemnity Insurance.

Given that Brize is an operational RAF base, there will be various formalities which will necessitate people making commitments in advance. For some people this does appear to be a problem! But, we will be the guests of the RAF so we do need to fit in with their requirements.

This is only an initial notice and will be followed up by more details once I know the exact format of the day. But, it would be very helpful to me if those of you who are interested in taking part (Dave Thomas1 on Notes, or Dave_Thomas@uk.ibm.com) could register your interest with me asap, so that I can see what interest there is. Anyone with access to an interesting GA aircraft is particularly welcome.



Met Office Visit - 19th March 2003 - Denis Howe

A dozen club members attended this excellent visit that was organised by Clare Grange. Most managed to find the Met Office after only a couple of orbits of Bracknell city centre

We were taken first to the "Innovation Centre" where we were given an introduction to the Met Office history and current operations. Here are just a few of the facts that we learned:

History (Key Dates):

- 1854 - Met Office founded as a dept of the Board of Trade by Vice Admiral Fitzroy
- 1920 - becomes a dept of the Air Ministry
- 1922 - the BBC first broadcasts weather forecasts
- 1962 - first computer installed in the (new) Bracknell Headquarters
- 2000 - new direction - corporate identity and logo launched
- 2001 - work starts on new Met Office Headquarters in Exeter

Current Directions:

The Met Office provides services to the MOD, CAA and DEFRA but now (since 2000) works to provide information also to private industry (the utilities, transport and travel organisations and even ice-cream manufacturers).

Statistics:

The Met Office employs approx. 1500 people. Of these approx. 370 are forecasters, 250 are computer staff and 42 are "Broadcast Presenters" (where can I get Helen Willet's autograph?)

To accommodate our specific interests in aviation weather forecasting, Will Owen, Commercial Aviation Services Manager (an ex-RAF Herc jockey and ATPL holder) was "wheeled in". Will told us much about the Met Office's services to aviation and in particular the services to General Aviation (us lot). Some of the interesting things to come out of the presentation were:

- "Production" of information is funded by the CAA (with money derived ultimately from airline passengers)

- "Distribution" of information is not free (as we well know) and is funded by the users (e.g. Metfax at 75p/min)

Will then went on to discuss some of the technologies currently used by the Met Office (e.g. lightning detection) and also took time to demonstrate the excellent new "Met Training" CD-ROM produced jointly by the Met Office and Oxford Aviation Training

After these most interesting presentations, we were honoured with a quick visit to the "Forecasters' Den" and allowed to a talk to a couple of actual, live forecasters. The 20 or so forecasters in the area each had a powerful workstation on their desk and were working in some specific aspect of forecasting.

Thus ended a very enjoyable visit._ Many thanks to the Met Office for providing such a fascinating afternoon and to Clare for doing all the hard working in setting up the visit.

More information about the Met Office can be found on <http://www.met-office.gov.uk>

New Aircrew 'Trade' - Paul Eathorne.

To the list of aircrew duties such as navigator, wireless op, loadmaster etc I can add a new trade...flying chef!

On the way back from a very enjoyable visit to the Scillies, Mr Abraham and I called in at Henstridge to sample their well known aircrew fry up. Initial disappointment at finding the restaurant had stopped cooking soon cleared when we were shown the kitchen and invited to operate self service. I would have given up there and then but Mr A revealed skills not normally associated with the typical male. Basically, he can cook! Ian, (or Delia when he's got his apron on) finished off a great days flying by rustling up a magnificent plate of sausage bacon and eggs.

(Many congrats to Ian and Sue on the recent arrival of their latest addition Molly! No more peace in the Abraham household!)

Flying Pig Sighted Over Oban! - Dave Thomas

One Wednesday evening I arrived home to discover Clare poring over METARs, TAFs, 215s, and Synoptics. Nothing unusual there, I thought to myself, especially as we had planned to go flying some time over the weekend. But then, the bombshell dropped – 'how do you fancy the idea of flying up to

Scotland for the weekend?'. We'd often thought of it before and never made it because of the weather, but this weekend looked good apart from the haze, which although perfectly acceptable for flying, would not be very good for sightseeing. Still, it was worth a serious thought. So, out comes Pooleys, trying to find a Scottish airfield that is affordable and open on a Sunday. Oban (North Connel) seemed to fit the bill, and we had been there before at ground level. So, on Thursday, Clare did some investigation and eventually spoke to 'Brian' at Oban who seemed to be an English ex-pat who had migrated North looking for space and a slower pace of life. He was able to confirm that the airfield would indeed be open on both Saturday and Sunday, that fuel was available, and that we could leave PORK safely overnight. So, out came the charts and planning started with Clare at one end of the dining table and me at the other. The initial thought was that we would fly to Wellesbourne for coffee with pals of ours and then head straight for Oban. But, on the day, the viz at Wellesbourne was just too poor, so we decided to put into operation plan 'B' which Clare had prepared earlier. This was an alternative plan to drop into Blackpool and then head off to Oban directly from there.

The weather at Blackpool was fine as was the weather at Oban according to Brian, so we headed for the airport with our overnight bags, flight bags, passports, and Scottish/English dictionaries. The trip North was fairly uneventful, with RNAV points passing by until we arrived close to Chester. We had decided to fly overhead Liverpool instead of going via the Manchester low-level corridor – more straightforward, and we could always rely on Clare's ability to charm ATC into letting us go where others fear to fly. Clare's response from ATC is usually 'cleared through my zone at

whereas mine is 'remain outside controlled airspace' or similar! Who says that women are discriminated against? Sure enough, Liverpool cleared us through their overhead and then we continued Northwards to Blackpool where the landing was excellent as was the hospitality from the firecrew who take the landing fees. The food was very mediocre, the refuellers friendly, and general information were very helpful to me in filing my flight plan for the onward leg. For those lovers of classic aircraft, there is a Vulcan parked about 50 yards from the refuelling station.

Back to PORK for the next leg onwards to Oban via the Lake District, the Solway Firth, overhead Prestwick, and overhead the Crinnan Canal. We had spoken to Brian before leaving Blackpool to confirm that everything was fine and he informed us that runway 20 was in use. Nothing untoward about that we thought. We took and headed North over the Lake District watching our MSA and looking for the hills. There was a layer of haze up to about 3000 feet, but above that it was clear. Although we could see the lakes below, the view was not as spectacular as we have experienced before, which was a pity. After a while, Prestwick came into sight, and it was fascinating to see the long runways; the last time I had been to Prestwick was many years ago when a Concorde was doing circuits! Overhead the Crinnan Canal, built to avoid boats having to go all around Kintyre on the way from the Clyde to the Atlantic. ATC in Scotland is excellent. After Prestwick I had intended to go straight to Oban, but was asked to call Scottish Info. I almost didn't, but decided to and was very pleased to hear 'we have your details', which I wasn't expecting. Very conscientious up North it would seem; very reassuring. About 15 miles from Oban I transferred to Oban Radio, to be greeted by Brian. He confirmed that runway 20 was in use, so I decided to join downwind. The closer I approach the more concerned I became as there is a huge rock 1000' high one mile directly in line with final approach, which looks very daunting. So, I continued flying downwind until it was time to turn on base leg and as I turned onto base there was the huge rock between me and the natural line for final approach. So, I adopted a dog leg approach to pass the rock and then turn onto final. The landing was straightforward, and once we had parked the plane we finally met Brian who is a very friendly man with plenty of enthusiasm, coffee, and biscuits. There were two or three based aircraft there, plus some lawnmowers (micro-lights) who had come from Edinburgh for the day. They departed on a gang-mowing trip home while we waited for a taxi to take us into the centre of Oban.

Frankly, there isn't a lot to Oban – a harbour, a shopping street, a few pubs, and some hotels. We found a hotel overlooking the harbour, with an excellent restaurant, and spent a pleasant evening wandering

around, and enjoying the food. We didn't have the energy to climb up to McCaig's folly ('monument' for the politically correct), built by McCaig to generate work for local artisans during one of Scotland's many depressions, but we could clearly see it from the harbour.

The next morning, we did our flight planning and then went back to the airport to be greeted by Brian saying 'The voice of an angel' when Clare announced our arrival. We duly paid our fees (£10 landing) and having checked out the plane, Clare departed to the North, avoiding the rock, which does look a lot closer than it actually is. Once again, the visibility was poor with the top of the inversion layer at 3000'. As we flew along the coast, you could see the top of the inversion layer very clearly with the occasional Munro poking out of the top. Our route took us out over Glenforsa, Tobermory, Iona, then back to the East to fly over the top of the so-called 'Bridge over the Atlantic' at Clachan. Then, down Kintyre to Campbeltown – the runway is awesome – overhead Arran and Prestwick and on to Carlisle. Again, Scottish Information provided us with an excellent service. When we were approaching Carlisle, we were told to follow the motorway and join right base. We could certainly see the motorway, but given the haze, finding the airfield was very difficult. Clare eventually spotted it and without further ado we were on final for a smooth landing. The food at Carlisle is reasonable but they seemed to be short of many ingredients. Another Vulcan here, but difficult to see as it is some distance away from the apron.

My leg took us back home to the west of Manchester this time. Having flown through the low-level corridor myself on many occasions, I wanted to try something different so went to the west of Manchester, keeping below Manchester airspace, and routing via POL and Huddersfield. ATC at Leeds Bradford were very helpful, and seemed happy to provide us with FIS, even to the extent of allowing us to cut a corner and fly direct to Huddersfield; sometimes it pays to use the smaller ATC organisations as they can be more GA friendly. From Huddersfield we flew home to the west of Birmingham, over Brize, and then into Southampton. It was a long two days, but well worth the trip. The two legs Northwards average 1.5 hours each, whereas those South were closer to 2.5, reflecting the wind and also that we took a more picturesque route home. The only shame was that there was so much haze, which did spoil the enjoyment a bit. Nevertheless we had a good time, which is what really matters. We can certainly recommend Oban and Brian - tell him 'the Angel sent you!'

A Jarring Note - Gil Collins

This two year sign off for the new licence is a bit of a nuisance in my opinion - no matter how many hours you do in year one you still have to complete 12 hours in year two A morsel of micturation (look it up if you don't know), I hear you say.

Admittedly, driving down the runway at Colerne in the MG at over 100mph did see us BOTH in the air for several sweaty moments and the steering wheel did not have the same effect as a control column. Also the CFI ruled that this event could not be put in the log book as JF5278 is not a recognised British aviation registration. Pity really with six runs, warm up and taxiing it could have been worth a couple of hours.

So reduced to using aircraft, I plotted how to get my 12 hours in between April and December. Why April you enquire? Aircraft availability and weather is the answer. It is amazing that as a casual user, how many times weather. brilliant for days either side of the booking is poor on the booked day. Conversely you arrive at the airport on a cavok day to find that another user has run the aircraft out of hours or damaged it. When you try to rebook...services and other users get in your way.

Thus it was that I started my year with GAXBH at Popham with Irv to get me legal again. A trip to Henstridge and the wonderful tour of Kent in WD with Paul Eathorne (aka Dave Sawdon) and Clare meant I had 3:25 in the bag before the end of June. Odiham in July extended that and when Paul Eathorne and I completed the Shobdon/ Turweston marathon in early September I had less than 4 hours to go.

As I was to be in Malaysia in November and busy after that, the flying had to be done in October. I booked about 20 sessions in WD and made arrangements with Paul E and Clare to come with me on an assortment of venture with alternates depending on weather direction, wind and cloud. Confident that I had fixed the problem I relaxed.

Relaxation is a no no. I did not worry when the first sessions were cancelled but as the days ticked off I began to feel distinctly unquiet. A whole week was booked with Clare in WD but unprintable weather finished it. Then cavok but some prior user had shattered the front screen. We had completed ground checks but on investigation and being safety conscious, we declined to take off. However I did sense that Clare had other things on her mind. Rightly so as it turned out, the public behaviour of Tigger and Piglet required more than mere admonishment.

Malaysia take off was 1/11 and by the 25th October the “days had come down to a precious few” so with a hole in the continuous depressions forecast, I planned a trip to Bodmin with Chris Thompson in G-TASH from Popham.

The day dawned but not cavok!!!! There was a 1000ft layer of mist overhead at 1000ft I went to Popham with Chris and we scanned the weather All the forecasts were good with all the 9s although Bodmin were not too positive. We took off into the scud I would not have gone without Chris but with his knowledge the positive weather forecast for the west and egged on by the JAR limit I felt it should be ok

Scud started at about 1300/1600 ft and maintained at this level as we headed west, With us both navigating and the GPS we were always aware of where we were and recognised and passed Cornpton Abbas to the south. We also got a close view of Rampisham masts and detoured round them. The cloud did not clear as forecast and was still a problem when we reached the coast at Sidmouth as planned and flew south of Exeter.

The scud became lower (ca 1000ft) as we worked the coast towards Plymouth with no sign of improvement . Bearing in mind that Bodmin Moor goes up to nearly 1400ft with 2000ft masts we made the decision to turn back to Exeter and landed in a nasty cross wind for lunch . After lunch we had another brief try for Bodmin but there was no change in the cloud base so we turned and headed back along the coast and inland (avoiding all the danger areas). Coming down through Poole Harbour I saw Brownsea Island for the first time. Too high for the red squirrels though and Baden-Powell was not in.

Permission was requested and given to fly along the cliffs at Bournemouth at 1000ft, up the Beaulieu river, then via Chilbolton to Popham. All achieved without problem. The magic 2 hours were completed but only just.

So we flew not because we wanted to but to meet an arbitrary new rule and avoid an expensive retest. Not only that, the new rule also states that if you have done everything necessary for a renewal but that you forget to get the required signature in your log book by your renewal date even as little as 24 hours is too late, all is lost and you have to retest.

Road to Recovery - Clare Grange

As some of you know I recently had quite a long break from flying due to a medical problem which manifested itself last Autumn and was resolved surgically at the beginning of this year. The reason I'm writing this report is to explain how I felt and how very helpful all the parties involved have been.

To cut a very long story short I informed my AME Dr Cook immediately I knew there was a problem and kept him apprised of the results of the various tests I underwent. He was utterly professional and fair. I felt happy because I had been honest with him and wouldn't dream of being otherwise. I do not see the point of trying to hide anything. Frankly it doesn't pay to lie - there only needs to be one incident, however small, and all sorts of trouble will follow including insurance problems, possible loss of licence or worse.

Believe it or not I was flying again seven weeks after my operation. I was seen by Dr Cook and my specialist both of whom were very happy indeed with my progress. I must admit I could hardly believe myself that I had recovered so quickly but I now realised how unwell I had been feeling before the surgery. The specialist dictated a report to Dr Cook immediately after my appointment, the secretary faxed it to him and Dr Cook faxed it to the CAA. I rang the CAA Medical Department, spoke to a very helpful lady, who rang me the next day to say I was "fit on the system". I could not believe the speed with which all of this had happened but more importantly it was nice to know that these various professionals had my welfare at heart and wanted me to fly again. I had thought there might have been a delay at the CAA but they were extremely helpful and nice. My specialist, the secretary and Dr Cook were extremely kind, helpful and efficient and I am grateful to them all.

As I had not flown for five and a half months (partly due to the weather) I decided that the safe and sensible approach to my return was to go aloft with an instructor and ease "back into the saddle" that way. I asked an instructor I knew from my commercial training days and he was very happy to come along especially when I suggested lunch in Le Touquet!

We departed EGHI and routed to LYD talking en route to Gatwick Director for a FIS. This seemed to surprise my companion as he, like so many pilots, seemed wary of talking to EGKK. I then called Lydd Information to be greeted by a cheeky and friendly controller who actually made me blush! The weather wasn't bad, cloud base approx 2,500 feet and visibility supposedly 10km but as it was hazy it seemed less. We landed on runway 14 at LFAT and promptly found the restaurant. A lunch of entrecote steak, frites and salad followed with mineral water to drink and coffee to finish. None of this fruits de mer lark with an array of implements an orthopaedic surgeon would be proud of!

I had felt apprehensive before flying but was surprised at how quickly I was comfortable with the 'plane and the flight in general. That is not to say, however, that there weren't little mistakes along the way. I do not believe anyone can have a break, such as I had, from flying without feeling rusty and frankly this is the danger with the JAR rules allowing a pilot to leave his/her 12 hours until the second year thus allowing that pilot to have a year's break from flying and yet still be legal to go aloft albeit on his/her own. I know this is a much debated subject and I have heard all sorts of different points of view about it.

Back to my flight. The trip home was fine, general handling etc en route and circuits being carried out at EGHI. All landings were in a crosswind. We put the 'plane to bed and adjourned to the bar for a well earned beer. I was actually more tired (but elated) at the end of the day than I had thought I would be. I'm sure this was a reflection of the fact I had been a little anxious before the flight and also showed that I had got out of the habit and practice of flying.

A few days after this trip DT and I took PORK to Oban and had a very nice weekend in Scotland. We are now planning our various summer ventures and enjoying flying together again even if I do have to put up with a lot of cheek

The Big Country Breakfast Henstridge 13/5/02 - Gil Collins

The first planned fly in of the year (2002) has happened and we got five of the seven booked kites into Henstridge despite some less than perfect weather and all takers fettled ourselves well. Paul E and the Giant slid themselves in past Compton in conditions that were marginal and attempted the deck landing. In my memory it was not that short....but in reality by heck it was....only for Frights and Fugis (of blessed memory). We were joined by Clare low level (blocked ears) and then DT and friend. Breakfasts (huge) were ordered and consumed

Peter Short (YP) turned back from Salisbury as the sky in front of him got too near the ground (good decision that), Margaret (XK), an unwilling recipient of Gil's flu, stayed in bed.

The others arrived. James and Neil in ZERO, but no big Dave. The time was when the chances of finding rocking horse poo in any child's bedroom were greater than Big D missing a good breakfast. But as Bob Dylan said in 1965 and again last week...The times they are a changing... Mind you, both the above mentioned worthy pilots remarked on how easy it was to trim ZERO without Big D in the back.

DT (PORK) arrived with a friend and did a go around Just to keep Clare happy. Graham Cogle (BYDX) came with his whole family. The hungry faces round the table fell when Mrs Cogle declined to order the full breakfast for her infant son. Finally M le Roi arrived with his consort in a Cub but rushed off in a huff (and the Cub) because the red carpet had not been laid out for them

We then sat down with coffees to watch the family of autogyros playing. They first ran slowly along the runway, then they ran faster occasionally lifting the nose wheel, then faster still doing little hops and finally soaring to 100 ft in the air. What happens next we asked the ATC man "We throw them out, too blurry noisy". Ah well twas, ever thus.

Once the excruciatingly interesting autogyro interlude was over, we all planned packed and went our several yet interesting ways home through the murk. WD nearly went via the coast but the 6d Handley roundabout appealed more because we could see it. PORK went via Hurst Castle...but not the Needles which must have been in their cases, BYDX via sundry ways.

Even Clare met traffic jams

We returned to Bewleys for a well deserved pint and unfortunately were forced to watch the way that Ferrari turned a very good GP into farce.

The Cerne Abbas Giant, who was only visible in parts.

ANY TAKERS - Danny Elliott

In conjunction with John Bond, my Plessey Flying Club member friend, remember the Perranporth trip? I am looking into the possible setting up of a syndicate for 6 based on a Super 2 (ARV). Having

inquired of the PFA if there were any around going for sale, I was advised of one that had been out of use for a while and is owned by a PFA member. He had bought 2 of them from the Shoreham Flying school when the problems with the engine and prop bearing/shaft occurred. obviously as an investment? One was sold on fairly soon, the other, which last flew in 1990, he kept, intending to fly it himself but just hasn't got round to yet and it is still in storage. This aircraft has flown a total of 476 hours prior to storage, there is a choice of 2 engines one at 376 hours the other at 289 i.e. Mid life for a Hewland.

Our present thoughts are 6 equal shares at £3K apiece i.e., £18K with a purchase price of £8--£10K leaving funds for a years insurance, maintenance. hangarage (possibly) etc . That is as far we have got so far and would like to see what interest there is for such a syndicate. We are looking at basing at Goodwood but if the majority of members were near Eastleigh then that could be the base unless anyone has another option (strip). These aircraft are fun to fly and reputedly cheaper to operate. If you or anyone you know are interested contact me on 023 93 799148.or Email now on arthur.elliott@ntlworld.com

Accommodation in France (passed on by Brian Mellor)

From: "Peter Gaffney" <valgaffney@msn.com>
Subject: Bed and Breakfast in France

Do your members ever bring your planes to the Vende in France? We are based at Fontenay le Comte and we offer bed and breakfast in a double room with shower and toilet at 40 euros per room per night to include continental breakfast. Cooked breakfast available at a supplement of 3 euros per breakfast. Fly into Fontenay le Comte (grass runway) no landing fees and free "open air" parking. We can collect you from airfield cost 8 euros or you can take a taxi. Car hire can be arranged on the web. Go to www.ada.fr for details. This company is based in Fontenay le Comte. We look forward to welcoming you. Val Gaffney

Popular Flying Magazines - Dave Sawdon

Is anybody interested in a large pile of Popular Flying magazines?
Sep 1985 to Nov 1996 inclusive, mostly in pristine condition.
Tel/Fax: +44-1962-816120. eMail: dave_sawdon@uk.ibm.com

An amusing interchange! - Dave Thomas

Last week I was flying from Southampton to Manchester (Barton), and having decided to route via the WBA NDB, I contacted Wolverhampton Tower for a Flight Information Service. We exchanged the usual courtesies and messages, and I eventually wished to transfer to Shawbury for clearance through their zone. The exchange with Wolverhampton is reported below:-

G-PORK(RK) 'Clear of your zone to the North, request transfer to Shawbury on 120.77'
Wolverhampton Tower (WT) 'Goodbye and keep bringing home the **bacon**'
RK 'Thanks for your help, and your humour, RK'
WT 'I only resort to it in my **rasher** moments'
RK ' Don't give up your day job, RK'
WT 'I'll stick to **ham** radio in future'

RK 'Good idea, RK'
WT 'Bye'
RK 'Bye, RK'

And Finally

A picture from one of our lady members about "Hurricane Gilbert which rampaged across Jamaica for eight hours in 1988!"

