

## October 2003 Newsletter

### Startup - James Mason

I am drafting some of this newsletter in the Visitor's Centre at Heathrow waiting for the final in service landing of the British Airways Concorde. I know that quite a few of the flying club members are around the airport also waiting for this historic event. Many of us grew up with Concorde and it will not seem the same again without seeing her in the skies. Paul Eathorne has provided a short article this month describing one of her last evening departures from Heathrow and I have followed this with some pictures that I took on October 24th. Concorde may be gone from service but she won't be forgotten, certainly not by those who had the privilege to fly on her or see her at airshows.

A full newsletter this month describing some interesting and varied flying over the last few months. I also know of some other trips that have been made recently which would make good newsletter articles so why not write them up? I will be awarding some small prizes at the AGM for some of the best articles which have been published over the last year and everything that I receive before December will be eligible! Also if there is anything that you have particularly enjoyed reading in the newsletters this year then please let me know.

### PORK's Polish Patrol - Clare Grange

Dave T and I had been talking for some time about the possibility of flying to Poland and eventually came up with the idea of Gdansk. Why you may wonder. We have no logical answer to that one, it just seemed like a good idea and something a bit different.

We obtained the appropriate charts (HMS, French North East, Belgium/Netherlands, 4 German charts and 2 Polish) and the various VFR guides plus appropriate instrument approaches and charts just in case we needed to file IFR. We then decided on the exact route. This took a lot longer than we had originally thought as we wanted to divide the flight into three reasonably even legs taking into account that all legs must have approximately an hour's fuel reserve. We were, therefore, looking at legs of about three hours duration. PORK's fuel endurance is approximately 4hours 15mins but we always work to 4 hours as it provides a better safety margin. We also work to a figure of 45 litres/hour (it actually uses less) but it is a good figure to work with and again provides a little extra safety. Aeroplanes are like humans they seem to consume more fuel on some days and less on others! I then spent a considerable amount of time investigating the various aspects of flying into Poland including the insurance side of things. An interesting point to mention is that although I knew our insurance covered us for Poland I am glad I decided to check. Germany was actually the problem as they require cover against acts of terror and sabotage etc. Most insurance companies removed these clauses after Sept 11th and will now reinstate them for an additional premium which, interestingly,

is the same across the aviation market i.e. an extra 25% from Concorde downwards! Our company was very fair and covered us without any extra charge as we would only be away a short while.



Due to the weather we finally departed for our first stop, Antwerp, a day later than planned. Weather and NOTAMs obtained, weight and balance etc all calculated plus flight plan and Gen Dec form faxed to Ops at EGHI. Paul Goodman had kindly volunteered to be chauffeur and arrived at 07:00 bright and breezy to transport us to the airport. After departure (life jackets on, life raft within easy reach) we turned eastwards away from EGHI and noticed the cloudbase getting lower and lower (we had been diligent checking the weather which had all been good) which not only impinged on MSA but as our route took us underneath the London TMA, south of Gatwick, we would be unable to climb without infringing Class A airspace. We decided to obtain a radar service from Solent, turned south towards SFD and climbed to FL50 which put us nicely on top. Dave was P1 and working hard but once we were settled "on top" the flight became a little more relaxed. As we tracked along the south coast from SFD to LYD the cloud was becoming more patchy but the conditions were still surprising given the forecast etc. The conditions across the Channel were very smooth and we were soon talking to Lille Approach. We were able to descend to 2000' and tracked to MK. Our next turning point was KOK but we were asked by the controller there to route along the coast as there was some military activity. We then talked to Ostend and were able to resume our track towards Antwerp and landed on runway 29 (1510m). We decided to refuel immediately (just as well as the refueller was SLOW!) and paid with cash as

VISA not accepted. We then walked across the apron to the terminal for lunch. The waitress was also SLOW with the result that our timing was now beginning to slip even though we had built in extra into the planning. However this is what you come to expect from aviation!



We eventually departed routing towards Eindhoven and across Germany to Berlin Schoenefeld. The Dutch Military controllers were excellent allowing us to transit overhead EHN and at one point asking us to descend to 1000' as they had a jet at 2000' in front of us going into Volkel.



The jet pilot acknowledged he could see us and I did the same. Having crossed the FIR we transferred to Langen Approach to route overhead Munster Osnabruck, after which we contacted Berlin Information and routed towards point Sierra our entry point for Berlin. I cannot speak highly enough of the German controllers as they are very efficient. The Berlin Information controller

gave us a squawk, had the flight plan details (as had the Dutch Military) and generally gave excellent service. An amusing incident occurred as I requested a change to Berlin Arrivals when about 25 - 30nm from point Sierra. I was asked why I wanted to change which puzzled me. I explained that I thought I should go to an approach frequency as this is what we would do in the UK. I was very politely told to stay with him and he handed us over to Schoenefeld Tower shortly before Point S. Tower knew all about G-PORK and cleared us for immediate left base runway 25L. We were then cleared for final. Well, what a sight that was. The Tower controller put on all the lights and neither Dave nor I had ever seen anything like it. I have to admit to feeling very important at this point!! Landed on the numbers (runway only 3000m!) and given instructions to follow the Follow - Me car. The photo does not do justice to the actual view partly because of all of the bugs on PORK's windscreen which were picked up during the flight. (We got through a lot of wind-screen cleaner during this venture!) This leg from Antwerp had been 351 nm and taken 167 minutes airtime = ground speed of nearly 126 kts.



The driver of the Follow - Me car was a very friendly fellow who spoke quite good English. He helped us with our bags etc and took us to the GA terminal. We then decided to stay the night at the airport Holiday Inn (had originally planned to go on to Gdansk) as the time was marching on. Taxi to the hotel, nice shower and wander round the hotel. Dave discovered there was a roof garden and hoped there might be a bar there. Instead of a bar he found a naked woman on the roof - and that is no exaggeration! The pair of us disappeared from there as rapidly as we could and then giggled. Dave was bright red! We found the bar downstairs and enjoyed a nice and well earned gin and tonic recovering from the shock as well as all the flying!

I have no pictures of naked women so Tigger and Piglet will have to do.



The next morning we arrived back at the GA terminal to find Customs rather interested in us as we were going to Poland. Both passports were scrutinised and taken off somewhere to be checked. This made us both feel uncomfortable even though we had no reason. Both passports were returned after what seemed like a long time and we filed the flight plan. Weather obtained, refuelling carried out bills paid (approx £10 for landing and overnight parking!) and we were away. The flight to Poland was straightforward. The Polish like GA to follow one of their VFR routes which are clearly marked on the charts. However the scenery (in this part of Poland) is quite dull with few landmarks. Fortunately the reporting points were all situated over the few towns there appeared to be. We were told to fly at 600m above the surface so we settled at 2,300' - MSA was generally 2,100'. Dead reckoning was the order of the day as nav aids were few and far between and because we were restricted with altitude (by ATC) we could not climb to improve reception range. Our VFR route eventually ended at the KRT VOR which is 10nm south west of Gdansk Airport. No problems joining etc and we landed on runway 29. We were then met by a couple of soldiers on a golf buggy. They sat and watched while we unloaded and put the cover on etc and then we had to bundle ourselves and our luggage onto the back of the golf buggy. Over to Immigration where passports were produced and we were quizzed about why we were visiting Poland, where had we come from and how long would we be staying etc. The Immigration Officer was actually quite pleasant and spoke fairly good English so this was not too bad. Both passports were stamped and it was back to the soldiers (who were lounging around smoking and didn't want to know anymore) who told us to walk airside with all our luggage to the GA terminal. We pondered certain things during this walk like the possibility of such a thing happening at Southampton! We were greeted warmly at the GA terminal, completed the formalities there and were told to walk airside again back to Immigration. We were getting a little tired now particularly as it was so hot. Fortunately someone took pity on us and gave us a lift to the main terminal. We talked to the soldiers again (still smoking) and escaped to the outside!

We found a nice hotel in one of the Gdansk suburbs. The area was quite rundown with a great deal of graffiti. Our hotel was a real contrast given the surroundings. The next day we caught a train (bone rattler) into the city and wandered around. There were many money touts and I was approached more than once. There were also beggars. The city centre was old and interesting but what we saw was clearly a veneer as overall the area was quite poor. Everything was cheap and we felt very well off not just monetarily. A boat ride was called for and we took a very enjoyable trip through the shipyards to the seaside town of Sopot where we had lunch. Back to our hotel for our evening meal after having been on our feet all day in the very hot temperatures. An amusing situation developed over dinner in that the restaurant had no wine list. The choice was a glass of the house red or white and that was it. I chose white as usual but what arrived equated to a schooner of sherry over here. It was very palatable but didn't last long! All joking apart we had a very nice evening prior to our departure the next day. The next day dawned with low, overcast cloud. I sat up in bed planning an IFR departure but we could see the weather improving therefore decided to stick with the VFR plan. This turned out to be a mistake and not for weather reasons. We arrived at the airport and ran the gauntlet of passport control in departures (again the staff were very pleasant) but the floor was littered with very tired teenagers who were all something to do with the Tall Ships event which was happening nearby. It seemed they had been there all night and Dave surmised it must have been something to do with the recent chaos at Heathrow in which they had been caught up. We felt very privileged being able to just walk through again skipping all the queues. Another soldier let us airside and we wandered off to the aircraft to load the luggage before going to the GA terminal. We were met at the 'plane by more soldiers! One of them asked me where the door was and I explained it was under the cover. I removed the cover to discover he was only interested to see that the green security sticker, which had been put across part of the canopy, had not been tampered with.



He didn't want to look at the tech log or anything else. I then left Dave at the 'plane acting as loadmaster and went across to the GA terminal. This is where the fun started. They were so SLOW organising the bills that they made the service at Antwerp look fast. I had to pay at differ-

ent counters for different things - although the charges were very good. The only efficient person was the refueller, who realised I was stuck and, having spotted Dave, went out to the 'plane to refuel and save some time. Gdansk is also the only place where I have found the meteorology service less than courteous and again snail like. Eventually all was ready and we went to the aircraft. I was then called by the refueller (who had refuelled the aircraft and returned) as he had Tower on the 'phone saying we couldn't fly the VFR route (which is stipulated on the chart) as the military were active. She said I either had to replan or wait until the military had finished. We decided to replan which boiled down to me flying and Dave navigating. This is where I wished I had gone ahead with the IFR idea - but there's no guarantee that would have been accepted either. The flight out of Gdansk along VK8 instead of VK13 and VK10 was a lot of very hard work to say nothing for the heat. We then found ourselves in the position where we thought we were okay to resume our original plan to be told by the controller that we could not again because of the military. This caused more problems and we were glad for full tanks etc. Eventually we reached the FIR and it was a real pleasure to speak to the Germans. We headed towards the FWE VOR which is approximately east of Berlin and from there it was straightforward to Leipzig with an excellent service from the Germans. We were cleared to cross the approach for runway 08 (3,600m) at Leipzig to land on runway 10 (2,500m). No orbits or delays of any sort. During the Polish part of this flight we had (as before) been told to fly at 600m above the surface and the OAT was showing 28 degrees at that altitude. We were very, very hot and very glad to land as the flight had also been very bumpy. Dave's amusing comment was that this leg, from Gdansk, was a very long leg for a short legged pilot! We were again greeted warmly at Leipzig and Customs were also waiting for us at the GA terminal. We were getting used to this German/Polish thing now and were not so worried by it anymore plus we were too hot to care! The Germans also wanted to see PORK's noise certificate which was no problem. A taxi and hotel were organised and into Leipzig we went. We checked in at the hotel and wandered across to the most amazing railway station I have ever seen (in a shopping centre of over 100 stores and absolutely pristine) where Dave organised a hire car. That evening we ate in the Novotel which was nearby and checked the weather as it had internet access. More CBs and TS.

The next day was really the highlight of the holiday as we drove to Colditz. The village of Colditz appears to be in a time warp but the castle is receiving some investment and is open to the public although only through a guided tour. We were fortunate enough to arrive with a coach party from Colchester who had previously booked so we joined them. The coach driver and I discovered that we both used to live in the same village - in Hampshire not Essex for those of you who are wondering! Small world!

Our guide was an entertaining German gentleman who certainly knew his subject. An amusing story he told concerned the French who dug a tunnel into the wine cellar. The tunnel was a success but unfortunately the British had beaten them to it and replaced the contents of the wine bottles with a certain renal product! We really did enjoy the visit to Colditz but sadly were unable to see as much as we would have liked. There was a lot of work in progress and a great deal of scaffolding about. Interestingly the courtyard which is always portrayed as level in the films is actually slanted and cobbled. We visited the attic in which the Colditz glider was constructed and there was a display area dedicated to the prisoners including Airey Neave.



A visit to the gift shop was required where we found a bottle of Colditz “champagne” for the enormous price of 5.5 euros! James helped us drink it when we got back to the U.K.!

We would like to have stayed another night in Leipzig as we liked the city and would also have loved to have gone back to Berlin - another time - but the weather forecasts showed TS after TS sweeping through Europe and the forecast/synoptic charts showed it would be sensible to depart for the U.K. a day earlier than planned. We therefore decided to leave early the next morning before any TS arrived which were forecast for later that day.

When we arrived at the airport the very helpful GA man there told us our ‘plane had been hijacked! In reality they had moved it and tied it down (because of TS and strong winds) with the most enormous tie-downs we had ever seen. We thanked him for his concern, filed the flight plan, paid the bills (landing fees and parking again very cheap), Customs not interested this time as we were going to Maastricht and off we went. No sooner had we departed than we noticed a deterioration in the visibility. Initially we thought it was haze but soon realised it was something somewhat bigger and more threatening. We gave it a very wide berth and eventually were able to regain our original track.

Maastricht was a peculiar place to fly into and we really would not bother again. There was a distinct lack of courtesy (particularly in the restaurant) but apart from that it seemed very dull. As far as I can remember it was inexpensive though. I was actually due to fly the next leg but did not feel well enough. I think, in retrospect, that I was just fatigued from all the heat and the fact our holiday had been quite rushed. Anyway as the next leg was quite complicated (lots of different airspace and radio work) and I had planned it we split the workload. Dave was happy, after he’d rested and refuelled himself, to do the flying and I did all the navigation and R/T. This flight went like clockwork and turned out to be very enjoyable. I got the usual sarcastic remarks from DT about receiving favourable treatment from ATC and “in future” he said “if I want anything from air traffic I’m going to put you on the radio - all they tell me to do is stay outside controlled airspace!” This was very funny as he was only pretending to be huffy - I think! We were delighted to

be home again and were even cleared straight into Southampton's Zone and to land without any delays.

Finally, I would like to mention that although we flew into airfields with very long runways and relatively low elevation (Berlin is 489') the performance calculations were not forgotten. PORK flew very well but we were aware of the difference the heat made.

This trip was a great experience builder and we would like to visit Poland again (perhaps Krakow) and see more of Germany particularly Berlin. Last year we flew to Corsica and Tuscany and whilst it was hot it was not the oppressive heat we have experienced this year. We also had more time as we did not have the same weather concerns.

Who knows where we'll go next.....



### **Newark: We finally made it - Danny Elliott**

James had tried two or three times to get this one off the ground. It was Saturday the 13th of September. The day looked good, bright with a slight haze aloft. I was picked up nice and early by Martin Halfacre and he then drove us to Eastleigh where we left his car in the tender care of the Rail Authority! Just slightly ahead of James. We signed out and went out to ZERO With the tanks topped off we took off to the north at 10.53 BST.

It was relatively smooth and we were soon past Popham then abeam Basingstoke with the remains of Greenham Common in view. The weather remained fair and it was a good trip with

James doing all the hard work, while I enjoyed the view from the P2 seat, checking off the waypoints Oxford, Turweston (must go there sometime), Northampton, Market Harborough and Melton Mowbray then Newark on the nose alongside the A1(M).

Keeping a good lookout for gliders, we made a good approach and slotted in between them and James made a nice touchdown on the grass as we were not too confident with the surface of the hard runway. We had heard Jim Hulls' voice on the radio on the way up and as we finished parking up, he and Jeff Moreland landed in XK

Having all joined up we made our way to the Museum area and the entrance which is through a shop. This sells all the usual goodies, Sweets, Stickers, badges souvenirs etc and they must have thousands of aircraft modelling kits, Think of a type and they'll have it. Before going round the Museum we all went to the cafe for a snack and drink which is what they provide, no full meals I'm afraid, they probably don't get the custom for full facilities. even so the place was clean and reasonably priced. As the day was still nice, we all sat outside in the sunshine and enjoyed the view and watched the gliding fraternity dashing to and fro on their activity as we ate.

The Museum was quite well packed with exhibits and there is a fair sized hanger just crammed with a wide range of aircraft both complete and in sections, i.e. Tiger Moth, Vampire, Prentice and suchlike, mostly those of an age or condition that need keeping under cover. There was also a building which contained a number of piston and jet aero engines, some quite early.

In between the various buildings we came across all kinds of aircraft, parked in such places as they could squeeze them in. All down one side is an area likewise crammed with aircraft, mainly military, including from the Vulcan, Canberra and Swift to a Meteor T7 which I am sure, I recognise as having been based at Odiham during my stay there over 1953-5. I was very pleased to see the Supermarine Swift as I had not seen one of these for a long time.



Generally speaking it is a place well worth the visit. It is obviously run by the usual band of dedicated volunteers who are doing their best to keep it up to scratch, but also need a lot more in the way of funds, so, if you can, please do visit as every penny counts.

Having made the visit to the usual facilities and made our farewell and thanks to the Gliding club, we departed at 16.25. Martin sat in the P2 seat for the return journey whilst I relaxed in the back, making the trip in conditions remaining fair. My analysis, a good day out, well worth the trip and my personal thanks to James for organising it and taking both Martin and myself.

### **The passing of an era - Paul Eathorne ( 10th October )**

Leaving Bedfont last night feeling very tired after an early start, I faced the choice of the South-bound M3 or a chance to see one of that last Concorde departures. It was a lovely evening and Heathrow were using 27R so I nipped around to the end of the runway on the Western perimeter road. Departure is booked for 18:30 and by 18:15 the assembled crowd was in the 100's. Finally, a little late (what flight isn't these days) we heard Speedbird One pushback. Lesser aircraft were held to allow her onto the runway. Concorde took off into a beautiful red sun setting in the West and a huge full moon rising in the East which seemed entirely appropriate. She ripped the air over our heads, reheat glowing blue. My last vision of this lovely aeroplane (still stunning after how many years?) was a just a dark shape, afterburners shut down, climbing out to the west.

And strangely I didn't feel tired anymore!

(14 days to go)

### **Final Day at Heathrow: Confessions of a Closet 'Spotter' - James Mason ( 24th October )**

Returning from a business trip at Heathrow on the morning of Friday 24th October gave me the opportunity to see the last Concorde scheduled services into Heathrow. I had tried to see the last Concorde arrival into JFK the night before but like many airports these days it is difficult to observe aircraft and the schedule of business travel is not very conducive to this activity ( not that I would admit to being a spotter apart from this occasion! ). I roughly knew where I needed to go but thought I would check at the information desk, "you're better off going home and watching it on TV but if you want to see it then try the Visitor's Centre on Bath Road" was the reply. With those encouraging words and with bags in tow, I caught the 285 bus out to Bath Road and the Visitor's Centre. Just before departing, Dave Ashford called on the mobile letting me know that another group of IBM FC 'spotters' were en route to Bedfont.

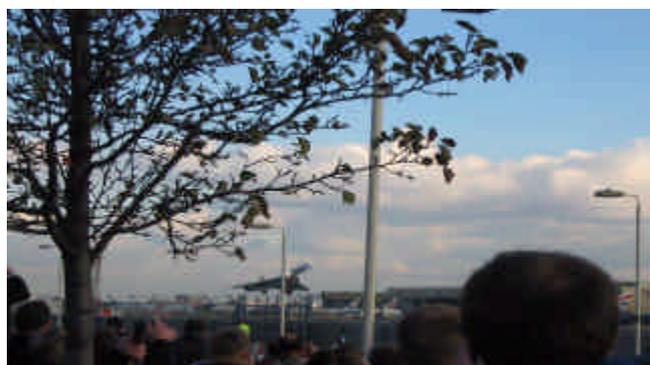
As I manhandled by bags to the Visitor's Centre, I glimpsed the grandstand and the gathering of Concorde wellwishers which were going to make this a special day. On entering the Visitor's Centre ( well worth a trip incidentally if you have an hour or so spare at Heathrow ) I found

myself entering the world of the spotter, overhearing airband radios and discussions about aircraft registrations and movements. As I sipped a cup of coffee looking out on 27R on Heathrow, I knew that the Concorde departing for Edinburgh would be leaving around 10:30am. With bags in tow, I scurried down to the car park where the grandstand was installed, “tickets long gone mate” was the reply from the security guard but no problem as the view was just as good alongside as the Concorde taxied to the hold. Lining up on 27R, the Olympus engines roared into life and with awesome power the aircraft rotated just to the right of our position. Soon she was soaring off into the clear Autumn skies making every other aircraft look positively pedestrian, I know that many are fond of the sound of the Merlin but at the risk of heresy I would say that an Olympus is even better!

The next few hours were spent looking around the centre ( some excellent photographs of early airliners at Heathrow and displays on UK aviation history ) and a pub lunch on the Bath Road. In the early afternoon, the Concorde on the Bay of Biscay charter taxied out and this time I was fast enough with my camera to catch her departing:



The next couple of hours were spent back in the Visitor’s Centre amongst the spotters and Concorde enthusiasts waiting for the landings of the three Concorde ( the third being the final JFK scheduled flight which was the aircraft I had tried to spot the night before). At 15:40, I made my way back to the car park, unsurprisingly there were even more people now, literally thousands and as I looked back at the office blocks behind every window was full of people looking out. Suddenly we saw a Concorde, a gasp went around the crowd as she appeared overhead and disappeared to the north east. A few minutes later, we saw the first of the three Concorde come into land and this was the second:



A round of applause was given for each landing Concorde , somehow it seemed hard to believe

that we would not see her graceful elegance again. Having watched countless airliners land during the day, I can truly say that nothing matched the elegance of Concorde with her natural bird-like landing.

I had been tipped off by one of the spotters that the Heathrow fire brigade had rehearsed a tribute to Concorde the day before so waited for the first Concorde to taxi back whereupon we were treated to the following:



Farewell Concorde you may be gone but you certainly won't be forgotten!

### **Jet Provost - Paul Eathorne**

Just recently Captain Abraham asked me if I fancied navigating for him on a trip to North Weald where he'd been offered the chance of a ride in a Jet Provost, with the possibility of a ride for me too. Not the most difficult decision I've ever had to make!

Come the day, we suffered from a lack of aeroplane (and on closer inspection a lack of current licence - Captain A had expired and needed to do a test!) so we made the journey to N Weald by car.

Here we met up with Robin Tye who has a share in the JP and quickly got kitted out with overalls. The JP's get quite a lot of use so we completed the paperwork and went out to the apron for a walk around. Incidentally, there are lots of interesting things to see at NW, apart from the jets (5+ assorted JP's, L-39, Gnat and I think a Hunter tucked away somewhere) there is a Catalina, a variety of big props (DC-4?) an aging Mitchell and a Beech 18 to name but a few. Cap'n Bob will know 'em all anyway!



Robins tip on a jet DI is to look on the ground for fluid leaks. With the nerves starting to kick in, I had fluid leaks of a different sort in mind at this point, however, Ian took the pressure off by volunteering to go first. I think he regretted it a few minutes later though - strapping into the unfamiliar harness, Robin told him to 'tighten your lap strap until hurts' Why's that? Because no matter how much you tighten them now, when we're upside down they will feel loose !!

The ejector seat is disarmed (safer that way apparently) but you still need to strap into both the aircraft and parachute. The detonator cord in the canopy is still live so helmets are worn with visors down in flight. No oxygen masks though. Maybe it was the previous nights over-indulgence but Ian seemed slightly pale all of a sudden and frankly I was quietly hoping for a sudden change in the weather before my turn came!

Preflight photographs over, Robin started up and they were off down the taxi way. Time for me to head over to The Squadron and think about the big fried breakfast we'd confidently been discussing on the way over. OK, I've thought about it - got any biscuits?

### **Flying the JP - first impressions**



Ian came back smiling like a Cheshire cat, absolutely full of the flying they'd done, which made me a little less apprehensive! Having shorter legs than Ian I was allowed in the left hand seat. Sitting in the cockpit, the first thing that comes to mind are all the stories you've ever heard about the haphazard layout of some British cockpits - the JP seemed to follow that pattern, with no sign of the standard panel you might find in the stuff we usually fly. I took Robin's tip and tightened the lap strap as hard as possible (or so I thought!) Start up seemed to happen very quickly. The whole cockpit felt very spacious and actually - pretty comfortable! Steering relies on differential wheel braking making taxiing feel almost normal for a Tiger driver. Take off and climb out felt quite flat and just seemed to 'happen' and we headed out towards Clacton. I tried a 180 turn around a reservoir on the way. It felt lovely to fly, bags of power, a nice big throttle and trim wheel. Good visibility too. Robin told me to fly with finger and thumb as it's quite sensitive. We tried a stall clean and with gear down. (she stalls at 90kts from memory)

Robin then asked me if I'd had breakfast that morning. I offered a hesitant 'yes' which seemed to be the correct answer! (settles the stomach apparently!) Robin then demo'd a roll - nose up 20 degrees, stick left, roll and ease smoothly out. My turn, nowhere near as tidy but still a great feeling. Next came the loop. Robin asked if I'd done aero's that involved pulling G. I'd experienced 2.5 but the JP hits 4.5 pulling out of a loop so Robin tried me out with some tight turns. The trick is to tighten thighs and stomach to prevent all the blood draining from the brain - but still remember to breathe!! So, off we went, nose down, pull up, over the top, down, pull out, really feeling heavy now, then recover the height, using I think about 1500'. Marvellous! Robin then demo'd inverted flight. What a feeling that is. Best view of Clacton I've ever had. Our slot time used up, we cruised back to North Weald at around 180kts, with Robin letting me do some flying as we let down to circuit height. Robin flew the run and break and we were back on the ground, all the happier for having experienced a taste of jet flight in a classic RAF trainer, one which most of us grew up with. Now time for the fry up!

While we debriefed over a brew, more JP's took off, one chap taking his girlfriend to Cranfield. The Gnat taxied by, right in front of us, looking magnificent. In fact there were one or two magnificent sights on display at North Weald that day! On the way out, we stopped to watch some guys flying model jet aircraft - they turned out to be jet powered, complete with wheel brakes, nosewheel steering, air-brakes etc. Flown beautifully too.

If you're ever offered chance to fly in a JP - grab it!

(and if you fancy a good fry up, try North Weald!)

## **Editors Note**

Paul and Ian flew with Robin Tye and here is a note that Robin sent me earlier:

I am 400hr PPL/IMC based out of Fowlmere flying PA32/28s most of the time but also have a part ownership of two Jet Provosts based at North Weald. They are a Mk3 and a Mk5. I often take others up for sorties in them and was wondering if any of your members would like a go? I have a

briefing note that details all the considerations if you are interested. It has to be said that they are expensive to fly using up to 20lbs of fuel a minute and I usually split the costs 50:50 with a passenger which works out at about £150 for a 45 minute sortie. Let me know if your members might be interested and we'll decide how to organise some trips.

Robin Tye  
mobile: +44 7802 232413  
South Bank, London

### **Le Touquet 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Vintage Fly-in, 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> October 2003 - Chris Thompson**

I saw this event advertised in the GA newspaper about six weeks ago but it did not appear in any of the GA magazines that I know of. Initial enquiries via several e-mails revealed that it was "on" so I then planned to take the old Chrislea G-AKVF from Bourne Park over the water for the first time. Brian Metters (the owner) apparently had been very unreasonably told by his wife that it was her birthday and so he could not attend! As all the hotels seemed to be booked up even at that early stage (more of this later) I surfed the net and found a very nice B&B for Lynn and I. The idea was also put to Max Robinson & and John Hunt as they expressed an interest in taking G-LUSI the Luscombe also based at BP as they had never been over the pond in a small plane either (ex Concorde and ex B747 captains)! Much planning then took place and I received all the VF confirmations by e-mail. I also had to send pictures of the Chrislea and some basic data for their program.

I filled the front auxiliary tank on VF for the first time using Jerry cans and nothing seemed to leak out. This tank would give an additional one hour and twenty minutes over the two and a half hours in the mains which was adequate for the planned one and a half hour flight. Flight plans and Customs forms were all filed at Popham on a very gloomy Friday ready for us to depart early on Saturday morning. Max and John flew SI over from BP at 500ft to fill up ready for what promised to be much better weather the next day.

We all met up at eight thirty and got the planes ready. I had planned VF for an 08:15Z departure and SI followed behind planned for 08:30Z. In true South Hampshire airways style I got VF airborne exactly on time and obviously not to be outdone we heard LUSI also depart exactly as planned. We had both arranged to call Popham to activate the flight plans as we passed overhead and Alan on ATC was ready for our calls. The weather was exceptionally calm and we had about a twenty knot tailwind so made good progress averaging about 107kts for an indicated 90kts cruise. Whilst I usually go to Le Touquet direct to SFD and then direct, we took the extended route via MID, MAY, LYD to keep just south of the Gatwick zone as the Chrislea had never been flown this distance in one leg. I changed from the front tank overhead Lydd airfield after exactly one hours flight as there is no fuel gauge for the aux tank. Everything continued to thrash in the noisy bit up the front so we headed out over the water with the French coast and the Le Touquet estuary clearly visible from Lydd at 3000ft. Max and John in spite of never having flown single engine over water and not having four big jet engines to help them across, had elected to route via

Hastings and then over the pond.

At mid-channel I switched to Le Touquet and could not get a word in as the ATC was so busy and the VF radio is not very good. Having ascertained the runway and QFE from everyone else on frequency we elected to just join downwind as we were expected and on time. In the descent we heard ATC give two Mustangs permission for a run and break which boded well for the machinery we were to find there on arrival! ATC were also turning everyone away who did not have a pre-booking which was causing a lot of agro on the radio as some people had obviously booked late but had not made it to the controller's list which he was sticking to resolutely. We wondered at that stage whether Max and John had done all their booking paperwork for LUSI in time and whether they would be turned away as well. I finally managed to get a call in as we joined downwind and then had to do an orbit on finals to give way to a French speaking Emeraude who also appeared from nowhere. On landing we had a "follow-me" bicycle take to a centre stand area and whilst taxiing in we saw our "Ground Support Crew" waving and taking pictures. These guys were three of the spotters from Popham who had driven over that morning via the Calais ferry. I had got them airside passes as part of our operation so they were well pleased to not have to wait for the public access at two o'clock.

On arrival, all our details were correct and having received a bottle of Champagne for our trouble we were then armed with two blue airside "Pilot" passes and were free to enjoy the assembled aircraft. Max and John however were not on the magic list so we explained to the reception that their details must have been lost and reserved two hotel rooms for them. Le Touquet staff had block bookings in all the hotels which explained why I had not been able to get anywhere earlier. If I had known I would have let them take care of this.

The sheer number of war birds amazed us. There were two Mustangs, two Hunters, two Vampires, a Corsair, a Douglas Skyraider, several T28's and Harvard's and numerous other beautiful vintage aircraft. The following pictures are just a small example with the Chrislea tucked away amongst them.

The organised free lunch in the hangar on Saturday consisted of a superb array of sandwiches and canapés with assorted drinks. I took some purple coloured Ribena but it definitely tasted of red wine so I had to have another to check it out properly. LUSI had still not arrived and we were unable to phone them as for some reason my mobile steadfastly refused to roam to the French network.

As suspected, LUSI had heard all the ATC commotion as they coasted out from Hastings and decided to return and land at Lydd to sort things out. They actually arrived at Le Touquet around two o'clock and missed lunch but did get the rooms that we had asked to be set aside for them. They only managed to get green (non-booked) passes and it later turned out that they had to have blue ones to get to the organised dinner that evening. I went back to the reception and did some polite talking and persuaded the lady to give me a couple of blue passes so we were all set for the dinner downtown later.





During the afternoon it turned out that there was a Concours d'Elegance. Neither of us had specifically cleaned the planes and when the judges arrived at LUSI they seemed puzzled that an L8F

in such immaculate condition was not entered. We rapidly explained that there had been some mistake in the entry (like Max had forgotten to even arrange his arrival let alone the Concours) so they judged it anyway!

We wandered about all afternoon and went back to the B&B about four o'clock for a rest prior to meeting Max & John downtown for the dinner later. If anyone wants a great B&B in Le Touquet we can thoroughly recommend "Le Belvedere" run by an English lady, Maggie Clarke. It is an enormous villa in the woods just one mile from the airport and is a magnificent building with very friendly service and good rooms (£68 / night for a couple in a king sized double en-suite with continental breakfast).

Taking a taxi downtown at 20:00 we met up with Max & John at the Catering College for the organised dinner. This again turned out to be much better than expected. We managed to consume about four rounds of "Kir Royale" in the foyer before entering the dining room which easily seated the 250 – 300 pilots and crew that attended the event. We commenced with a very nice avocado, prawn and crab dish which was followed by an enormous paella with crevettes and mussels. There were two bottles of wine initially supplied to our table (only the four of us) and when emptied, without prompting they just came and supplied more. I think we actually managed five bottles between us by the time all the speeches and prize giving was over! Max and John managed to pick up 2<sup>nd</sup> prize for the pre-1948 category, being only surpassed by their friend's Beech 18! All in all a very successful evening.

On Sunday we met up late morning for a further natter then filed Flight plans for 14:00 local to return. The wind was a good 20-22kts when I took off and it was a real slog getting back even though the weather was Cavok all the way. On landing at Bourne Park we made a quick call to Popham who kindly closed the flight plans for us.

Look out for this event next year as they are promising it to be even better. Spamcans are allowed if pre-booked but you will have to park away from the real aeroplanes!

Chris & Lynn Thompson

### **Hydrocarbon Drawback Rate Change - Dave Ashford**

As from 1st October 2003 the drawback rate is £0.2810 per litre.

### **Librarian Wanted**

Dave Sawdon has resigned as the flying club librarian, if anyone would like to take over this job please let me know ( jsbmason@yahoo.co.uk ). It would probably be easiest if this could be someone from one of the main locations for accessibility.

## **Caption Contest**

If you can remember back to the previous newsletter's caption competition, here are some replies:

"I got so hungry waiting for Ops to come and escort me to the security gate I just had to get a Big Mac!"

"Don't worry, I won't run out of food on the trip - I've got 14 more pasties stuffed up the front of my jumper"