



July 2005 Newsletter

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Startup – Dave Thomas

It seems odd to think that I am writing this with half a year behind us already. On a personal note, Clare and I have been able to do a bit more flying so far this year than last, including trips to Manston, Sheffield, and Elvington. There are reports on Manston and Elvington elsewhere in the newsletter, but nothing on Sheffield, so let me briefly mention that trip.

We had been planning to visit the new Robin Hood Doncaster Sheffield airport, known to us in the past as RAF Finningley, and so we contacted them. The phone call was rather bizarre in that they were happy for us to arrive and change pilots, but could not provide us with transport to the terminal. This was because of some problems with security and also because we did not need/would not be prepared to pay for handling. Although this would have been a bit daft, we would have been happy to go along with it, but for the fact that the wind was blowing about 25 knots across the runway, so we thought about going to Sheffield instead. However, there is the requirement for PPR at Sheffield, including the completion of a complex form which has to be faxed to them. We have done this a couple of times in the past although we had never actually made it to Sheffield. I rang the tower and they said that as long as we had completed the form in the past we would be welcome so off we went. It's a lovely little airport with all the facilities you could want, and some very friendly people. Do go there if you can - I think they need support because it is likely that RHDS (Finningley) may be taking some business away from them and they are apparently faced with closure. As one of the UK's most recently opened airports, it would be a great shame to see them disappear off the map. Perhaps if they were called 'London-Sheffield' it might help their cause!

At our last committee meeting, we started having a very philosophical discussion about the make up of the club these days. One of our conclusions was that the number of 'active' pilots was remaining static, whereas the number of 'retired' pilots was actually increasing. We want to ensure that we are able to continue to attract all pilots so we need to change the way that we operate. A lot of our focus in the past has been on flying events of all sorts, despite the fact that we have struggled to arrange such events which has disappointed me, as you will be aware. However, the one or two we have managed to organise has demonstrated the fact that we are running short of capacity to provide seats for those who want to attend. That being the case, we have decided to look at arranging events (including sponsorship) at ground level with an aviation theme. For example, you can expect to see notices coming out shortly via the Bulletin Board about planned trips to the Biggin Hill Air Show and the RAF in concert at The Anvil, Basingstoke. If anyone has other ideas, then please let me know, but only if you are willing to volunteer to organise the admin side of things! As ever, I am still looking for suggestions for fly-ins or just local trips to enable us all to meet up for a chat and an all-day breakfast, or even a healthy salad!

Until the next newsletter, fly safely, Dave.

Lasham, the Visit to ATC – Gary Jones

Clare does it again! A very interesting off-season visit to ATC at Lasham Airfield was arranged in impeccable style as always by Clare last Autumn. We were introduced to John Thomas the Head of Engineering and his colleague, the personnel manager, who had both kindly returned to work in the evening to show us around.

I personally had only an inkling of their activities. Although I am very familiar with Lasham, I only remember the maintenance area being in the care of Dan Air in the 70s and 80s. I am also very familiar with the plan view of their area, although it was often spinning around during glider training! In those days it resembled a scrap yard with many Comets and Boeing 707s being parked and disassembled around the hangars – together with the ‘preserved’ DC3, DC7 and Ambassador - the latter now being at Duxford.

Well, as we found out, things have changed dramatically although John does own up to being there with Dan Air before ATC acquired the site. We were given a very entertaining introduction to the maintenance activities and the shown around the work in progress.

First up was a Boeing 757 belonging to DHL for a check and paint work. Being ex British Airways, we may have flown in this very aircraft in its previous life before parcels. We were unable to look inside due to the painting but just walking beneath it gives a completely different scale to that one would normally get when boarding through a gangway.





Moving on to the second area, we were allowed to examine the inside of an American registered private Boeing 727-269. This aircraft spent most of its



career with Kuwait Airways before being converted. While temporarily stripped of some of its splendour, it was still easy to see the way some people travel! The cockpit was interesting particularly as it had instruments which I could recognise (not being a TV fan)! It reminded me of the excellent grey plywood consoles of the BAC-111.



Also in the hangar was an EasyJet 737-3L9 recently transferred from 'GO'



and a Ryanair 737-8AS on scheduled checks. The latter was available for inspection and the no frills offering was very apparent!



ATC have a sister facility at Southend. Together they perform checks on a large variety of aircraft. We were told that things were a bit slow at the time of our visit but that work would soon pick up at the end of season. Some quick research confirms this. Recently Lasham has checked aircraft from Bulgaria, Aruba, Norway and Thailand as well as many from Easyjet, Ryanair, Jet2, and My Travel. January even saw a DC8 from New Zealand.

It is clear that they have found a very lucrative niche. Who would have expected such business in a quiet little backwater such as Lasham? We greatly appreciate the time and hospitality provided to us by ATC and thanks again to Clare. As both John and his colleague remarked – “what a great place to work”.

Bournemouth Grummans go to Manston – Clare Grange

Saturday 2nd April dawned bright and clear with not a cloud in the sky. This was a complete contrast to the previous two Saturdays when we Grumman pilots (based at Bournemouth) had tried unsuccessfully to reach Sheffield but had been thwarted on both occasions by fog. This had been somewhat frustrating as we had had to complete Prior Permission Required (PPR) forms and fax them to Sheffield the day before. One particular pilot amongst us found this whole business particularly annoying and bureaucratic, so the fact he'd had to PPR twice, and still not made it to Sheffield, was galling in the extreme! This had also been exacerbated by the fact that this chap had a free landing voucher, burning a hole in his pocket, which he'd been unable to use. Listening to the diatribe was entertaining!

As a result of the PPR shenanigans, we gave up on Sheffield, and decided Manston, now known as Kent International Airport, was a nice place to go, particularly as it has a Spitfire and Hurricane Museum. The museum also has a good little restaurant which serves all day breakfasts thus keeping the men happy! We arranged to meet at our aircraft at 10:00 local and we all duly arrived on parade punctually. The three aircraft for this venture were AA1 G-BFOJ (Nigel Thomas and Paul Vickrage), AA5B N31RB (Tim Comber, Ian Matterface, Alan Keeble) and AA5B G-PORK (myself and our esteemed club chairman). I should add here that we'd also had to PPR Manston, only by telephone the day before, but we were given slot times. As you can imagine this did not go down too well with certain individuals (both with the same surname) with words such as bureaucratic nonsense (that's the polite translation) and jobs worth being uttered. Anyway this did not spoil our fun and we duly departed Bournemouth International in the correct sequence for our slot times. PORK's pilot had refused to shave again this particular weekend (he's going through a funny phase) and was beginning to take on the appearance of an escaped convict. Nigel, who considers himself the epitome of sartorial elegance, was very quick to point out Dave's scruffy appearance with the result a certain number of insults were traded but I put it all down to some sort of male bonding ritual.

Dave and I, in G-PORK, took the scenic route (we had the latest slot time) over the Isle of Wight and Portsmouth Docks (gained a nice view of Admiral Nelson's ship HMS Victory) but we still managed to catch the other aircraft (ours is a pretty slick machine) so we took another detour over Dover castle and the white cliffs. N31RB landed first followed by G-BFOJ and then G-PORK all within a few minutes of each other but at least in the correct order.

We were met by fellow Grumman owner, Adrian (based at Manston), who had kindly organised transport to the museum. Our conveyance turned out to be a big Land Rover which Adrian had a little difficulty driving or more correctly changing gear. This was due to the fact he had Paul and Nigel in front with him with Paul occupying the middle seat. Each time Adrian tried to change gear he accidentally groped Paul so that in the end Paul and Adrian coordinated the gear changing – Adrian depressed the clutch and Paul changed

to the appropriate gear. Paul found a yellow rotating beacon, on the floor of the Land Rover, which he promptly put on his head throughout the journey! Men!



This was very funny but parking was even better with Adrian making excuses about not being used to the size of this machine!

We arrived safely at the museum (the gods were smiling on us) and ordered lunch with the majority having a fry up. Jack Maher, son and friend then arrived in a Mooney (I know it's not a Grumman) from Belgium so there were now ten of us squeezed together in the restaurant. We received some very odd looks from those around us particularly when they realised we'd flown in. I'm not sure whether the facial expressions were fright or admiration! We must have looked a motley bunch especially my look alike felon. After lunch we had a look around the museum, enjoyed the Spitfire and Hurricane plus other memorabilia there, bought a few things (there were several wonderful pictures of the Lancaster but they were a little expensive – Dave said no) and then all ten of us clambered into the Land Rover for the return trip to the airport with much the same driving arrangement as before.

Adrian then showed me his one wing AA5B, the other wing had a fuel leak, had been sealed and was drying on his dining room table! Talking to Adrian I discovered he's single – apparently his girlfriend decided enough was enough when he wheeled his motorbike into the kitchen and started to take it apart. I don't know why but he did remind me of someone I know! Jack came along to G-PORK and made nice comments about Grumman and after bidding farewell Jack and friends departed for Belgium and the rest of us to Bournemouth.



After landing, and putting the planes to bed, I suggested a quick post flight bevy which took the men about a microsecond to decide was a good idea. Dave and I headed off to the bar and waited and waited and waited! Eventually it transpired that Tim had been unable to start his motor scooter (a new acquisition) because of a flat battery which had to be removed and put on charge. This was fine but I couldn't help wondering about how many men it takes to remove one battery!! It was obviously a very difficult and technical job requiring a lot of thought and debate. All joking apart we really had a very pleasant drink and chat discussing the highlights of the day and generally putting the world to rights.

Dave and I thoroughly enjoyed our first trip with the Bournemouth Grumman owners (also known as Grumpies), the repartee (downright cheek would be a better description) and just good old fashioned niceness. We're looking forward to the next outing.

PS - Dave has now been officially named Grumpy Whiskers!

A Holiday Tale - Brian Mellor

First time to the USA for almost 4 years, so we intended to enjoy our 2 weeks in Florida. As far as aviation was concerned, that would consist solely of the Iberia flights from Jerez – Madrid – Miami, and back. Plus a visit to Lakeland, for Sun'n Fun. Therefore the flying did not get off to a good start, since the 747-300 was a bit of a wreck, and the seat pitch was the shortest I've ever experienced. Only hope was that Sun'n Fun would live up to its name.

My brother Dave lives in the Bahamas, and while we were spending a few days with him, I checked my emails. Out of the blue was a request to see if I could help ferry a growing number of aircraft that needed moving over the pond. I was flattered, but had to reply that I couldn't help, since I was on holiday for the best part of 2 weeks, by which time it would be too late. Isn't it annoying how these golden opportunities always come at the most inconvenient times! And then, I applied a little bit of lateral thinking, and emailed the ferry company again.

It was a long shot, but, if the aircraft were to be ready to depart at the end of my holiday, then maybe I could do it after all. The ferry company said – “Yes – let's do it”. Trouble was, I didn't bring a headset, GPS, tools, charts, cold weather gear, nothing. This was fairly easily fixed, by buying a minimal toolkit with the essentials, and having the rest of the stuff UPSed out to Bangor, where the aircraft was being tanked, and HF radio fitted. The surprise was, my brother said “God, I would LOVE to do that trip! PLEASE let me come along!” Well, he's a good guy, and I could see it meant a lot to him, so I said – I'll do what I can. The boss agreed, but emphasised that he was a crew member, not a pax.

The aircraft was a 2 year old C172, to be delivered from Bangor to Asturias, in northern Spain. Funny thing was, it had already been ferried up to Bangor to be prepared for the flight – from Tamiami, in Florida. It would have been rather nice to have flown it up there myself, but the hanging around for several days while it was being tanked would have made it impractical.

A lot of time was spent planning the various options for crossing, but deep down, I really wanted to go via St. John's to the Azores. Canada was still going to be very cold, even in April, and to go south to warmer climes seemed a much better option than going north, to Greenland. Apart from that, I had never been to the Azores.

Part of the logistics involved getting the two of us from Florida to Maine. Checking the internet, JetBlue offered a brilliant price of \$169, from Fort Lauderdale to Boston (one person travelling), so it was clear we could not do better than that. But when we booked our two tickets, the price had fallen to 109 each!! It was what they call a “Get it together” price, i.e. discounts for multiple people. Needless to say, we grabbed the tickets at that price, before they changed. When all the planning was complete, I returned to vacation mode, and we spent the rest of the remaining time enjoying ourselves.

On Wednesday 13th April, I dropped Eileen off at Miami Airport, then drove up the road to Fort Lauderdale, to catch the JetBlue flight. Best value for money flight ever. New Airbus, with not only seat-back screens, but live satellite TV channels. I was sorry to get to Boston, as Von Ryan's Express had just reached a really critical point. Never mind, I had seen a brilliant episode of MASH. We picked up our rental car, and drove up the road as far as we could, till we needed food and sleep. Crashed out, up at 0600 the next day, hit the road, to get to Bangor by about 0800.

I inspected the plane, it was a beauty. 180 HP, fuel injected, perfect condition, with excellent Bendix-King GPS and screen. The 124 US gallon tank had been installed, together with the HF radio. Checked the weather – oh-oh, very strong winds from the north. First port of call was Goose Bay, to pick up liferaft and immersion suits, and it looked like being a long flight. My intention was to get there as soon as possible, pick up the gear, fly down to St. Johns, sleep for a few hours, then set off to the Azores. It didn't look possible, because the parcel with headset, approach plates, etc. still hadn't arrived. However, I filled in the Customs declaration forms, to export the aircraft, phoned the Canadian customs officials to advise them of my ETA, filed the IFR flight plan, and went for lunch. It was ages before the gear arrived, so we really had got off to a slow start.

Once above 5000 feet, I switched to the ferry tank, and waited to see if we got the usual problem. Unfortunately I forgot to brief Dave about the air locks you get in the plumbing, so when the engine quit, he let out some choice words. It just needed cycling one more time, then it was fine. The ground speed was definitely not fine – we were getting 40kt of headwind at FL070. Eventually I called ATC to get a lower level, and the improvement was dramatic. Just 2000 feet difference, but our speed improved by 20kt. Flying on into the darkness, the temperature was getting very low outside, and turning on the landing lights showed that we were flying through snow clouds. Fortunately, it was so cold, the ice crystals could not stick to the airframe. Over the long stretch from Presque Isle to Goose Bay, VHF was no good, but we got it back again within about 80 miles of Goose. We finished up at the destination later than planned, landed in gently falling snow, and taxied up to the handling agents, Woodwards, to clear customs, and get a room for the night. Customs were very annoyed that we were a whole 2 hours later than I originally told them (the UPS parcel took longer to arrive than I guessed, at Bangor). So, a big bollocking, ending in me saying “You are right, I screwed up, I should have updated you, sorry, ...” After that, he relaxed, and told me he would not put a black mark against my name, for future visits. Off to the Northern Hotel, for SLEEP. But not much.

Up at 0500 the next day, we were picked up by the handling agent from our hotel, and at my request, went to the coffee shop at the “Terminal building”, where I bought some sandwiches for the onward flight, and also, some GLOVES! I know what it is like to do a preflight on an aircraft that has been standing in severely sub-zero temperatures overnight. I thought I could survive without the heavy jackets and trousers, even without the fur hats with flaps that come over your ear, but not without gloves. The bus then took us round to

the aircraft, passing the magnificent gate guardian, the Vulcan, which looked rather forlorn, in the dark, with the snow blowing round it. Weather conditions were as forecast the previous day, i.e. a horrible low, centred just south of Narsarsuaq, which would have been overflowed, with the northern route, but which gave lovely anticlockwise isobars to push us down to St. John's, and on to Santa Maria. The preflight check was completed by yours truly – couldn't entrust that to a non-pilot (pity you weren't there Chris. I would have lent you my new gloves...).

The flight to St. John's was one of the most spectacular ever, for me. The lakes were still frozen, as was the sea in many places, but the millions of pieces of broken ice packed together like pieces of a jigsaw was breathtaking. Much of the flight was above broken cloud, and 7000 feet seemed just right. I saw the airport later, in a convenient hole, and requested to continue for a visual approach. ATC said they couldn't do that, but I could be offered a "contact approach" if I wished. I said yes, although I have to confess that it was about 30 years since I did my FAA IR exams, and had basically forgotten what it meant anyway. Whatever, it seemed to work.

Did the calculations for the fuel, ordered it, was reminded that the truck driver was not allowed to fill the ferry tanks – pilot's responsibility. I had to stop when the tail of the aircraft started to sink towards the ground, and wait for the refueller to find an old tyre for the tail to rest on. The aircraft was temporarily outside C of G limits, but that would be fixed when the two crew got on board, to move the C of G well forward of the main wheels again. On the subject of weight and balance, the aircraft had a special authorisation to depart with a 30% over gross certified weight, this terminated the minute it landed at the destination airport. I did not fill the tank completely, but I made sure I had a good 3 hours reserve. The HF radio was tested on various frequencies on the journey to St. John's, but without success. Another hour or so was spent trying again on the ground, but no joy, so I decided to depart anyway. The legal requirement is to have HF radio. There is no law that says it cannot fail, after departure.

So, the long leg began. The Bendix-King GPS and colour screen was all very well, but it had an Atlantic database, so there was not a single VOR, NDB, airport or intersection on the N. American continent to be found. They only started to appear once closer to Europe. Therefore every point of interest, including the chosen lat/long reporting points, had to be programmed by hand. This was not difficult, and could be done easily, with the autopilot taking care of heading and altitude. That autopilot was the best I have ever encountered; the VSI never moved a millimeter, nor the altimeter. It seems that aircraft and avionics manufacturers have caught up with current technology at last.

Yes, it was a long flight. The need to make position reports ensured a bit of stimulation every now and then, but without the HF, it was always via a VHF relay on either 123.45 or 121.5. There was one point when we flew through the cold front at FL110 (OAT showing -3), and picked up icing, with the inevitable loss of performance which happens quite rapidly. Dropping 2000 feet cured that, and I stayed there until clear on the warm side of the front.

After passing a standard position report to Gander, the relaying aircraft came back to me, saying “ATC wanted to know WHO gave me clearance to leave my assigned flight level!” Gimme a break! Like, I should watch the ice forming for 10 minutes, while I patiently wait for Gander to double check if there is anyone else at that level. Not for about 2000 miles, I would have guessed.

After 10+ hours airborne, Santa Maria came within VHF hailing distance, and we exchanged pleasantries. They wanted to know my ETA. “0520”, I replied. Half an hour later – “N5312W, confirm your ETA”. “Still 0520”, says I. “Are you aware that the airport is closed until 0600? However, they will open it up earlier for you, but it will cost 800 Euros”. “No, that won’t be necessary, I will not land until 0601”. And I did. That was the longest period I have ever had to stay awake, and fly. More than 24 hours on the go, without any sleep, and 16 hour of flying. I was extremely tired, and very relieved that the airport was in good VMC conditions; my brain was running on one cylinder by that time, and the sleep deprivation would have made a good IMC approach extremely unlikely.

The welcoming party of two customs officers were very pleasant, and once we got the immersion suits off, made it straight to the nearest hotel. Just as I was getting to sleep – 15 seconds after I closed my eyes – Dave says “Hey Bri, we ought to think about what we are going to do tomorrow, and what time we need to wake up”. “Dave, I don’t want waking, I need sleep, my body will tell me when to wake up, trust me”. A bit rude perhaps, but the forecast for the next destination looked a bit iffy. I was not going to set off if I still felt knackered with lack of sleep, knowing it would only get worse.

I actually woke up before I expected, but the body clock was completely asynchronous by now, so it didn’t surprise me. It was a beautiful day, and although we had missed breakfast, we were in time for lunch – steak, actually, but I couldn’t finish it – my body clock must have told the stomach – “Sorry, it’s breakfast time if we’ve just woken up – and we don’t do steak, for breakfast.” Afterwards, we had a little walk around, and the countryside had lots of pleasant green to it – a bit like the UK. In fact, the islands reminded me of the Channel Isles.

Back to work – tried to refuel the aircraft for the last overwater leg, to Porto, after which we could thankfully get rid of the immersion suits. Problem – the avgas bowser/trailer pump decided not to work, so it took over an hour to get it fixed. ATC didn’t seem to care about the delay – usually I would have to send a delay message, in Europe, but these guys were far removed from Euro Control, they didn’t have secondary radar, they didn’t have traffic, so they were completely cool about it.

Off at last, for a nominal 6 hour flight, with a pretty bad forecast at the destination. Everything went sweetly, no chance of icing at these lower latitudes, with our preferred FL110. One or two relayed position reports, then eventually got radar vectors onto the final approach path into Porto. It was raining, with low cloud and poor vis, as stated on ATIS, so a real ILS down to

minimums was completed successfully. There was still 3.5 hours of fuel left, enough to get us to several places that were still open (just after midnight), most of which were in good weather.

We parked next to a Cessna Caravan that was being ferried by the same company, but had routed directly from the USA, and got in before us. He did not have HF radio, so I left the aircraft unlocked so that he could take it, in case I wasn't around when he was ready to go, next morning. His trip was to Nairobi, so it could have been useful; in the event, he decided not to bother, and I got to my aircraft the next day, just in time to see him taxiing out, flight planned direct to Malta.

So, the last leg – a short one, to Asturias, in northern Spain. Just 2 hours, with a delayed departure, due to the fog that was reluctant to clear, at Porto. No problems en-route, and it was rather satisfying to start speaking to Asturias Tower, at long last. Still IFR above the clouds – with snow-capped mountains poking through. Positioned for the ILS approach, and made a successful approach and landing, after which we parked on the GA apron, quite close to the main airliner bit. Within 15 minutes, an Arrow arrived next to us, and it was the new owners, who had obviously been advised by tower that we were here – their base was about 15 minutes away. I gave them a rundown on the aircraft, the few small snags, and got a photo handing over the key to them.

The biggest problem of the whole journey was to get back to Jerez, on the southern end of the peninsula. It was very expensive to fly to Madrid from there, but time was passing by, and brother Dave was happy to pay the big bucks (240 Euros actually). I thought I would try something else. I met the crew of the incoming Madrid flight, on the apron, and introduced myself to the skipper. I explained that I had just brought THAT aircraft over from the USA, and desperately needed to get to Madrid – was there any chance that .. At this point, he cut me off in mid-sentence, and said “Sure! Just meet us at the steps of the aircraft in 20 minutes time, leave your bag by the hold, and you can have a ride. Sit up front with us, if you want, or ride in the back. I will just need to get your licence number when we get back, to put you on the loadsheet.”

Then, as an afterthought, he said “By the way, you realise that British Airways would never do this for us!”

To which I could only reply “You are right, sorry about that. However, next time I take one of these across the water, you can have a free ride with me!” (I still don't know why they laughed so much.)

So, quickly to Madrid, then found out the cost of the Madrid Jerez flight – another 240 Euros! As Dave said, he could travel across the Atlantic and back for the money he would have spent, so we caught the AVE – high speed bullet train, to Seville. Unfortunately, no more trains from Seville to Jerez until morning, so at this point I rented a car, and made rapid progress home. We got in at 11:59, just in time to kiss Eileen “Happy Birthday!”. Another minute, and I would have blown it!

So, back 4 days later than I originally planned, straight into a mountain of work, from which I still have not caught up. Any regrets? Only one. When I got an email a week later, saying “There is a V-tail Bonanza that needs taking from London to the USA, and a brand new Arrow to pick up from Vero Beach factory, to take to Switzerland. I regret being so damn busy with commitments, I had to say NO!



Flying the Big Stuff – Chris Thompson

Late last year I sold my share in the Auster G-ARLG and decided that I needed to fly something different for my aviation hobby. Browsing the Internet, I came across an advert for a CriCri for sale up in Caernarfon. The CriCri was an aeroplane that I had always loved and we flew up to North Wales to look at it but it transpired that this one had never flown. In the interim it transpired that G-SHOG was also for sale. This was the CriCri that used to fly for the Mitsubishi Display Team from the top of the Shogun about three years ago and was only lacking a Permit renewal to be airworthy again.

After purchasing G-SHOG, the Permit was renewed with assistance from Dave John of Aerofab Restorations, and John Tempest and Francis Donaldson of the PFA.

Commencing with about a dozen fast taxi runs up and down Bourne Park's bumpy grass and a Permit to Test in hand, I opened up the two JPX 18hp engines and committed to the air test. Lifting off at around 55mph the little machine, which weighs in at 78Kg (170Kg gross), soared upwards at a Vy of 75mph and a climb rate of around 1000fpm. The engines rev at 6200 rpm in the climb and settling down to the level cruise at the recommended power I can get 120mph at 5500rpm. It is very delicate, yet very easy to control, having very small stick movement and not a lot of feedback.



Stalls, power off, come at 57mph with no flap (full width flaperons), 51mph with take-off flap, and 45mph with landing flap. The best recommended single engine speed is 75mph so I am using this for final approach even

though there is no “Blue Line” as such. The little bird is very slippery and once down over the runway and in ground effect one then has to lose 30mph before settling very gently and easily down. The plane behaves like a typical “T-Tail”. Acceleration is brisk and nothing happens until about 50mph when you get a fast pitch change skywards. The take-off ground roll is averaging about 250 meters with gentle headwind. It is currently taking about 450 metres (on Popham grass) to land but I will get definitely get this shorter with practice and with a slower approach speed.

A common question is “will it fly on one engine?” I usually reply, somewhat tongue in cheek, “it will fly on no engines!” The real question should be “Will it continue to fly on one engine?” to which I can state that I can climb at around 150ft/min with one engine at idle. Additional useless trivia – you can park it anywhere (e.g. under the ex-BA B747 Classic at Dunsfold last weekend)!



The plane is now based in Hangar 2 at Popham and I hope to start flying it around to other airfields soon. Fuel consumption has not fully settled whilst all the testing has been going on but I am averaging 7.5 Litres/hour and I have a 23 litre tank so a range of 2.5 hours should be realistic. With a roll rate of 180 degrees a second, no restriction on inverted flight, and aerobatic manoeuvres allowed, this is one FUN machine to fly!



Elvington – Jon Butts

Having not flown since November 2001, one 2005 new year resolution was to get back into flying - before I became an “ex-pilot” rather than a “resting” one. Medical re-instated, but not really expecting the weather to co-operate, I booked a day’s refresher flying with Irv Lee on 16th Feb. When the day came both Irv and I were surprised to find it eminently flyable.

First flight was revision of general handling and circuits, with Pophams Rwy 08 providing a good test of Irv’s ability to coax my approaches and landing skills back up to a credible level. After lunch and chatting to Chris about his pending Cri-Cri purchase, we launched for revision of Navigation and more general handling.

The nav didn’t go as well as it should have, and I became Irv’s 3rd nav “scalp” of the year to date! Not that I minded, I rather enjoyed the extended 3rd trip - flight test up to Aylesbury and back which rounded off the days flying. Having “passed”, and completed the paperwork we each headed home about 18:00, entrusting the clubhouse to the club cat. Somehow by 19:30 I was at home in bed shivering with the flu – came out of nowhere and knocked me out for four days! I hoped I hadn’t passed it onto Irv – if I did he has been kind enough not to say - at least to me anyways!

It’s an ill wind that blows no good, but the one that has made resident GA unwelcome at Southampton did at least create the opportunity for PPL rental at Lee-On-Solent - Carill Aviation having relocated there from Southampton in April. I met Carill founder/owner/CFI Caroline Rabson and checked out on PA28-161 - flying the circuits at Bembridge and exercises/Stalls/PFL over the IOW. In May I flew my ‘first solo’ since 2/11/01 - back to Bembridge for more touch and go’s, and back to Lee over the cruise ship “Aurora” (returning to Southampton having been repaired in Germany following it’s ill-fated “World Cruise to Ventnor, IOW”).

My “2005 Flying” plan now was to fly this sort of 40 minute local VFR trip once every three weeks. I wasn’t expecting to particularly want or be able to fly cross-country trips this year, however Carill has an active “PPLClub” who meet up and fly together regularly, renting the aircraft for days out, and occasional over-nighters. I soon found myself with a day pass and joining in on a three aircraft outing to Rochester-Earls Colne-White Waltham Sunday jaunt. Much as with the IBM Flyers, the company and flying were excellent, and having had a thoroughly enjoyable day out the flying bug was beginning to bite again. The PPLClub use a web SmartGroup to communicate and I soon found another member, Alistair MacDonald, who would share a days rental with me, enabling us to join in on the IBM club fly-out to Elvington.

Come the day of the Elvington trip I met up with Alistair and Martin Halfacree, who’d been able to take advantage of our spare seat via to IBM club web-forum. We were (fairly) soon airborne from Lee and working farnborough for MATZ clearance, routing overhead RAF Odiham at about 1800ft. From Odiham plan was simply to track north all the way to Elvington.

Weather wasn't particularly great, or a problem, but around Reading it began to get murky and required descent to around 1500ft or so. At Henley-On-Thames the cloud has lowered further and it was evident there was no VFR way ahead over the hills around Wycombe. To stay VFR required a 180 left keeping Henley town in sight. At this point the flying workload was too high for me to formulate any options other than head back south and scrap the plan for Elvington. I was kicking myself too for not having pre-planned a Plan B around the high ground – the thought had crossed my mind when planning the weekend before but I hadn't actioned it.

This is where having company in the form of an experienced PPL (30+ years worth) who also happens to be a retired head of the Ordnance Survey really came into its own. Alistair's proposal was to follow the Thames river south back to Reading, west to Goring and then north to Benson. I had enough MIPs to consult my chart - with a railway line running alongside, the river would take us around and clear of the hills, just as long as we could maintain a reasonable height and VMC. Unfortunately G-BSAW doesn't have intercom for the rear seats, and I was aware Martin might be getting a bit concerned, not being able to hear or concur with what Alistair were working on. RAF Benson were very accommodating and agreed to our plan which took us through their MATZ and ATZ at initially 1200ft then 1000ft QFE (Elev).

It was a challenging ten minutes, and certainly the only time I've flown within a few miles of Didcot power station and not seen it. The plan worked, but was definitely a "two-crew" effort that saw us get to Benson and around the hills. From Benson we were cleared to head northeast to Westcott. However, there was no sign of the cloudbase improving at all. Rather than being formed by the hills as we had initially (optimistically) supposed, the cloud was in fact the remnants of a cold front drifting south. We decided to head to Turweston, again using ground features to take us directly there, and land if there a good improvement in the viz and base wasn't evident. A call ahead to Turweston provided an estimated 1500ft base, with better weather to the North. So it proved and in ever improving weather we routed via the RAF Cottesmore's overhead to arrive in glorious sunshine at Elvington at 12:35. 2hrs20 airborne.

We met up with Clare, Dave and Dave who had arrived in G-PORK, and Jim and Jeff who had crewed G-BHXX. Evidently Nigel hadn't got airborne from Wycombe air park, grounded by the cloud that obscured our intended track. James in G-ZERO had diverted into Kidlington en-route I guess having run into similar weather with more hills ahead on a more westerly route than ours.

We enjoyed the museum before Alistair flew us back to the south coast, with a brief stop Sheffield City airport. Glorious weather made for a memorable trip - you could really savour the beauty of the country. I enjoyed Alistair's approach to the Nav – occasionally using Navaids to simply take him to a line feature (e.g. railway) which would form the basis of the next leg. On reflection this is probably why I paid more than usual attention to, and appreciated more, the countryside beneath. I got more familiar with it, and found it more rewarding than beacon or town hopping. Similar to Gil navigating by cricket pitches (do they publish their GPS co-ords?) Alistair also knows his way

around. Back at Lee the three of us agreed we'd had a thoroughly enjoyable days flying - thanks for the excuse to get airborne Clare! Now then, what were those other new year resolutions...hmm, arrange an IBM Flying Club fly-out I think... ...would anyone fancy a fly-out to DARA/RAF St Athan to visit the maintenance squadrons? (I think they still do the deep maintenance on Tornado, Harrier, Sea Harrier, Jaguars, Hawk, VC10).

Scuba Diving in Australia – Paul Goodman

Back in March I was discussing with Dave Thomas when could we publish the next newsletter. As always we discussed the number of articles that I had received when Dave said that I could write one concerning my holiday to Singapore, Australia and Thailand. “Er Dave” I remarked “but the aim of my holiday is to go scuba diving on the Great Barrier Reef.....they’ll be no aerial activities whatsoever”. Later, however, I left the pub a little perplexed thinking perhaps Dave would like an obtuse article about colourful fishes in a devious way to expand the interest and therefore the membership numbers in our club.

So I departed Heathrow Friday evening, next stop Singapore. As this is a Flying Club newsletter, I suppose I’d better include at least one picture with an aviation connection, my 747 touching down at Changi, Singapore.



Flight over, I walk to the door of the aircraft, say goodbye to the cabin crew and then I feel my chest tighten and unable to breathe.....

.....I come around from my unconsciousness lying in the recovery position with a mask providing me with welcome oxygen. I am being tended to by the British Airways staff and apparently an unknown passenger (thanks) – I can hear requests for the Medical Centre but above all I am being forcefully told to “stay awake!” but it is quite a struggle to keep my eyes open. After about 5 minutes I recall asking for a sick bag and I duly obliged! After a further 5 minutes the airport medical staff arrived and I was connected to a drip and transported to their Medical Centre. It was at this point that I realised that I had soiled myself.

At the airport Medical Centre I was assessed not only for medical reasons but whether I had insurance. To be fair the insurance questions were directed at my travelling companion and not me. Once it was confirmed I had insurance, the airport bill was settled, a payment to get in the ambulance was made, and I was dispatched to hospital - I am sure you'll appreciate its name.....



The consultant at the hospital immediately suspected pulmonary embolisms (blood clots), otherwise known as DVT or “economy class syndrome” since I was basically fit and had no previous medical history of collapsing, I had “just moved” after sitting down for a “long” time and there was some swelling in my right shin. I was sent for a MRI-type scan with dye injected into my bloodstream and this confirmed pulmonary embolisms in 4 places, namely the right upper lobe, right middle lobe and both lower lobe arteries. The seriousness of the situation dawned on me the following day when I was informed that a single clot travelling to the lung can be fatal and basically it was a “toss of the coin” that I had survived.

I remained in hospital for 5 days of monitoring whilst I was given heparin and warfarin which are blood thinning agents. As an outpatient I continued to use warfarin on a daily basis and will do so for at least 3 months; then I am due to have heart and lung tests.

I was deemed “unfit to fly” and so had to remain in Singapore for the duration of my holiday but the return was very pleasant as my insurance company insisted that I travelled anything but economy class so Emirates Airline duly obliged with business class.....although alcohol is not recommended on flights my first drink onboard was champagne as it was a kind of celebration that I was making the trip back home.

So here is what I have learnt about DVT – I hope it helps you.....

I boarded the flight at 22:30 and had a meal. It was then midnight and it was natural for me to want to sleep, not least encouraged by the aircraft lighting being turned off, the window shutters closed, the “keep seatbelt light on” remaining lit, feeling “trapped in” against the window by the stranger asleep in the aisle seat, and there being no drinks served (we tend to have one if offered) via a trolley. (BTW - I attach no blame to British Airways, indeed their staff acted in an impeccable and professional manner.) Also, I wanted to “sleep off the boredom of the flight”. **Collectively this was a big mistake as it meant that I was subjecting myself to long periods of inactivity. In future I will never fall asleep for more than 1 hour if in economy class and ensure that I regularly leave my seat.** (Higher class seats are much less susceptible to DVT conditions as you can sleep in a horizontal position.)

Insufficient mobility is very risky. I am sure that we are all aware of DVT but do you realise what “moving about” means. It is obviously preferable to regularly leave your seat but if you do remain seated then appreciate that merely flexing your legs is insufficient. In fact the onboard video on my return flight showed that about 2-3 minutes activity whilst seated is required. I appreciate that exercising whilst sitting is difficult within the limited legroom space of economy class but the pre-flight video showed for each leg 20 ankle circles to the right and then to the left, then 20 full leg stretches for each and, finally, 20 ankle rocks each against the cabin floor. This should be repeated every 2 hours.

Drinking is encouraged. Most preferable is water as this is less likely to thicken your blood. I wouldn't suggest that drinking alcohol is particularly bad as enough of it imbibed will encourage frequent trips (and therefore mobility) to the toilet!

At this point I've included the information leaflet that is included with Boots Flight Socks for you to see what they mention; interestingly it suggests activity every 30 minutes and the after flight danger is highlighted. With respect to the latter point I have recently heard about a lady who flew back to the UK from China earlier this year and she had a pain in her leg two days after returning.....fortunately she went to the doctor and an untravelled blood clot was identified and treated.



Flight Socks

Compression level 14-17mmHg

Department of Health Guidelines

Greatest risk: -

- Those who have blood clots already
- Family history of blood clots
- Those suffering from or who have had treatment for cancer
- Certain blood diseases
- Treatment for heart failure or circulation problems
- Recent surgery especially on the hips or knees
- Inherited clotting tendency

Additional risk: -

- Over 40 years of age
- If you are pregnant
- If you have recently had a baby
- If you are taking hormone replacement therapy
- If you are taking the contraceptive pill

During the trip: -

- Be comfortable in your seat
- Bend and straighten legs, feet and toes while seated every 30 minutes or so during the flight
- Press the balls of your feet down hard against the floor or foot-rest to help increase the blood-flow in your legs and reduce clotting
- Upper body and breathing exercises can further improve circulation
- Take occasional short walks, when in-flight advice suggests this is safe
- Take advantage of refuelling stopovers where it may be possible to get off the plane and walk about
- Drink plenty of water
- Do not drink excess alcohol, which can lead to dehydration and immobility
- Avoid taking sleeping pills

After the trip:-

For the vast majority of air passengers no problems will be experienced. However, you should see your local doctor or go to the nearest accident and emergency department if you develop any of the following:

- Swollen painful legs, especially where one is affected more than the other
- Breathing difficulties

Directions

1. Turn the flight sock inside out, as far as the heel.
2. Put thumbs inside foot of sock and pull outwards and insert foot.
3. Ensure that the heel of the sock is correctly positioned.
4. Pull the sock up the leg ensuring that it is not overstretched.
5. The top of the sock should be just below the knee.
6. If the sock is too far up, ease it back down the leg to the ankle and pull it up again to the correct position with less stretch.

Ensure fingernails, toenails and jewellery are free from rough edges as these could snag and damage the hosiery.

Back home, I feel fine but taking the warfarin has affected my activities: Not surprisingly the CAA have suspended my PPL and I am not permitted to do scuba diving so those colourful pictures of fish will have to wait!

--- End ---