

August 2006 Newsletter

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Start Up - Dave Thomas

One of the IBM Flying Club's main aims is to encourage our members to adopt safe flying practices. Recently I have seen and heard of a number of occasions where pilots appear not to have taken safety into consideration when undertaking trips and thereby not only risked their own lives but those of others. The recent tragic loss of one of the G-PORK pilots (just hours after flying) has focused my mind on the fragility of human life and that we should do whatever we can to prolong life.

I am not setting up myself as a perfect example of a pilot - I make mistakes, and I have taken some risks that I am not proud of. But, I do try and learn from my mistakes and don't want to tempt fate in the same way twice. I also think I have a reasonable understanding of my own limitations.

When was the last time you knowingly landed with a crosswind in excess of the demonstrated limit for your aircraft? What would be the impact of a poor landing? A broken aircraft, or maybe lives lost. Have you checked your insurance recently - does it actually cover you in such cases? Probably not!

I have heard recently of a number of pilots (not IBMers I hasten to add) who regularly flaunt the instrument approach minima. The CAA defines the privileges of people with IMC and yet these folk regularly go beyond the limits of someone with IR privileges. I don't think this is clever.

If you look at the current Southern half-mil chart, and then refer to the CAA web site you will find that there are a number of updates which apply to it already - for example Luton (I refuse to call it London Luton) airspace has expanded, therefore even with a current chart there are updates to be applied. It is a legal requirement to fly with a current chart and yet I have come across people who are quite happy to fly with a chart that is out of date. The same applies to foreign charts - you can always find a current one - even Airtime at Bournemouth stock some!!

The weather in and around our sceptred isle is always very variable, and the Met Office sometimes doesn't seem to have much of a clue about what is going to happen. Whilst it is one thing to check the weather at both your home airfield and your destination, what about the weather in between? It may be good at both ends, but there could easily be all sorts of problems in between - even towering CBs. Whilst I may moan about the Met Office, both in terms of their accuracy and the reliability of their website, it is there, it can be used and it should be used to check the weather before anyone goes flying. I would also take this opportunity to remind you all that the club does subscribe to the Met Office therefore you can obtain enhanced information.

NOTAMs! Years ago they were easy to access and check, but then improvement was inflicted upon us and ease of use went clean out of the window. The current system is frankly appalling, but, having said that, I use it because I don't want to be the one who flies through a TRA that has been created because of a Royal flight, or the Red Arrows. Just two weekends ago, the Red Arrows had to abort their display at Kemble because three separate infringements were made of their display area. The AIS system provides NOTAMs not only for the UK, but also a lot of other European countries (one benefit of the new system - probably the only one!). How many of you check the NOTAMs before you fly abroad or before aviating in this country - you should, no matter how unfriendly the system. It is vital to check the NOTAMs even when going for a 'short hop'. Can I also remind you about the freephone number which should also be checked - 0500 354802.

A number of pilots have IMC ratings, and use the privilege sensibly within the UK. But, a lot of folk seem to forget that the IMC rating is not valid outside UK Airspace. I have heard of too many people flying outside the UK in conditions requiring a full IR and yet only having an IMC rating. It's a risky business in many ways. It's also appropriate to mention that if you do not have a particular rating then don't fly as though you have!

I'm deliberately being very negative, but let us remember that we are a unique band of people - we have all worked hard to gain the privileges of our licences - it would be silly to forget the safety aspects of flying and put them aside simply to be able to boast about something we have done when the risks that have been taken are plain for all to see and the downside of those risks is something we would not wish to experience.

Changing the subject slightly, a number of folk we know have been in the habit of regularly flying abroad (including the Isle of Man, the Channel Islands and Northern Ireland) without bothering with GEN DECs. Completing a GEN DEC provides the information required by Customs, Immigration, and Special Branch. It appears that these agencies are taking a lot more interest in GA aircraft going foreign now than they have been of late. They have recently made their concerns known around the country and as a result their fax machines have suddenly become very busy! Watch out - make sure you know the procedures that are in place at your local airfield for going abroad (including IoM, CI, and NI) and adhere to them. And don't forget that if you go to France you must arrive in France and depart from France via a Customs airfield - it doesn't matter if there are no Douanes there - that's their problem!

Fly safely.

We Set Off for Kirkwall and Ended Up in Sligo - Alastair Macdonald

(Alastair, a friend of Jon Butts, has kindly given permission to include his write-up of their trip.)

Most of you will know that Alan, Jon and I have been planning for weeks to take ZF to Scotland. We reserved the week beginning 4th June for the 3-day trip and, as the date approached, various uncertainties crept in - would the weather be OK? Should we go to France instead? ZF only had 14 hrs left on its engine and its Annual was due on the Friday of our week. Would we run out of hours? Would the weather clamp us in Tiree as the Annual ran out? However, with Caroline's help, and after numerous calculations, all was well with the aircraft, the hours were deemed sufficient and, unbelievably, a high pressure began to build right on cue. Sunday 4th June dawned bright and clear. The trip was on and this short account is designed to whet others' appetites for what proved to be a hugely exciting and enjoyable trip.

Sunday 4th July

Alan departed Lee in superb CAVOK only 20 mins behind our target of 0900 local, bound for Kemble to pick up a life raft from a contact of Jon's. The visibility was limited only by earth curvature and our flight at 3000ft was without a tremor. There was general agreement that this was what flying was all about and we were soon lining up to land on Runway 26 at Kemble. A quick turnaround and we were off again with Jon flying and 3.5 hours endurance. As we had come onto the west side of the country, we elected to stay there and go for Prestwick 2h 20m away in one hop. The route took us up past Great Malvern and Shawbury where a weak front had produced a high overcast. By the time we reached the Mersey we were in sun again and transited Liverpool CTA via Runcorn Bridge. However, soon afterwards a heavier high overcast appeared and Blackpool Tower could only be seen in rather murky conditions. We crossed the top of Morecambe Bay and headed over the mountains of the Lake District, passing close abeam the summit of Scafell on one side and then Wastwater and Pillar mountain on the other. For someone like me who had scaled these mountains, it was fascinating to see them so close from the air. At Dean Cross VOR, we made a careful assessment of fuel remaining as Carlisle was the only feasible alternate. We decided that the weather was stable and giving no problems and that we would have enough fuel remaining for any delays at Prestwick and so on we went over the Solway Firth into Scotland. We were now working Scottish Information and were immediately struck by the trouble the controller was willing to go to on our behalf. A request for Oban weather was met with a willingness to phone the airfield and get a detailed picture of what was going on there - mainly a story of inbound aircraft turning back because of low cloud. It became clear that the "sea fog on western coasts" predicted in the Met had hung around all day. This was disappointing after all our high hopes and the lovely weather on departure. The lowering cloud base did not however affect our arrival at Prestwick although we did manage to coincide with Ryanair traffic and had to do a couple of orbits over Ayr racecourse before being cleared to finals on the 3000m runway 31 where we landed at 1330 local. Jon had been here before and elected to taxi to Prestwick Flight Centre rather than the GA Terminal thus avoiding handling charges. It is hidden away behind the Control Tower and is a long way from anywhere but it was worth the longer taxi. Much to our surprise, aircraft

spotters lined up on an embankment were studying us with delight and even taking photographs of ZF - presumably its first visit there and a new registration for their records. Once in the Flight Centre, decisions had to be made. We began to realise that, in northern Scotland, diversions were few and far between and you needed to be really sure of your weather at destination and alternate. So Kirkwall, Wick and the Outer Islands were out, Inverness was possible in IMC (but we didn't come all this way to look at Scottish clouds), Perth and Dundee were clear but would not get us much further north. We waited until 1630 and then decided to try for Oban - the route suggested by local instructors was along the shore line of Loch Long to Lochgilphead where there is a gap in the hills that is followed by the Crinan Canal to reach the open sea. The hope was that the open sea would be clear and we could turn right and fly up to Oban in the clear. I took off just after 1700 after a long delay for a dosey American driven cargo jumbo, two Ryanair flights and three incoming light aircraft. Most of the time Prestwick is empty and quiet yet we had managed significant delays inbound and outbound! Prestwick weather was SCT at 1500 feet and nothing but sunshine above but we kept below and crossed the Firth of Clyde over a returning nuclear submarine, passed along the shore of Bute and picked up the Loch Long shoreline, all the while keeping a wary lookout on the weather behind us. Cloud began to increase and pushed us down to 1000ft and finally 800ft as we passed abeam of Lochgilphead and picked up the Crinan Canal to transit to the open sea. Sadly as we arrived over the sea, it was immediately apparent that weather to the north was far worse and cloud base there was virtually 0 ft. To the south, towards Jura, it was as much as 2000ft but this wasn't much use to us so we turned back, transited the Canal gap again at 800ft and returned to a sunny Prestwick gaining altitude all the time. We were lucky to phone a landlady who fixed us up with 2 beds in her house and one across the road. She said Prestwick was always busy because of cheap flights and golf and we were fortunate she had made a mess of her bookings and had a spare room as a result.

Monday 5th July

We pulled the curtains back and saw to our dismay that there was OVC at 300 feet. On arrival at the Flight Centre, we found the Met was continuing to give sea fog around the coasts with little prospect of improvement. We couldn't get out of Prestwick VFR anyway so we settled down to another wait. As the morning wore on and the cloud lifted and broke, it became clear that our only exit was Londonderry which was, for some reason, unaffected by the sea fog. So Kirkwall and the Hebrides were regretfully abandoned and Alan used all his charm to persuade Special Branch that we could set off for Northern Ireland at short notice. The route took us past the southern tips of Arran and the Mull of Kintyre. It was now a clear, cloudless day generally but with the Arran mountains in cloud and the stubborn sea fog lapping the western coasts. This made it a fascinating flight - Campelltown was reporting zero visibility at one end of the runway and CAVOK at the other as we passed by. To the north, Islay and Jura were poking out of the fog and, to the south, the whole of the Irish Sea seemed choked with it. Ahead, however, the northern coast of Northern Ireland was completely clear and we were soon passing over the Giants Causeway and then looking out at the Maze Prison as we turned into Lough Foyle for the approach to Eglington airport. Here we had to make further decisions - where next? We phoned Enniskillen to be told that it was closed on Mondays so Eire it had to be. We had a chart but no phone number but the lady at the information desk was able to come up with the number for Sligo Airport and they were

happy to accept us. We had to file a flight plan for this flight and, shortly after takeoff, Jon was crossing the border into Donegal. The landscape was a mixture of barren moorland hills and scattered smallholdings in the green valleys. Every farmer seemed to be building a second two-storey house next door. We reached the west coast at Ballyshannon and switched to Sligo Control for the approach past the impressive cliffs of Truskmore. We entered the circuit over the huge expanse of sand at Rosses Point and landed at the very modern airport.



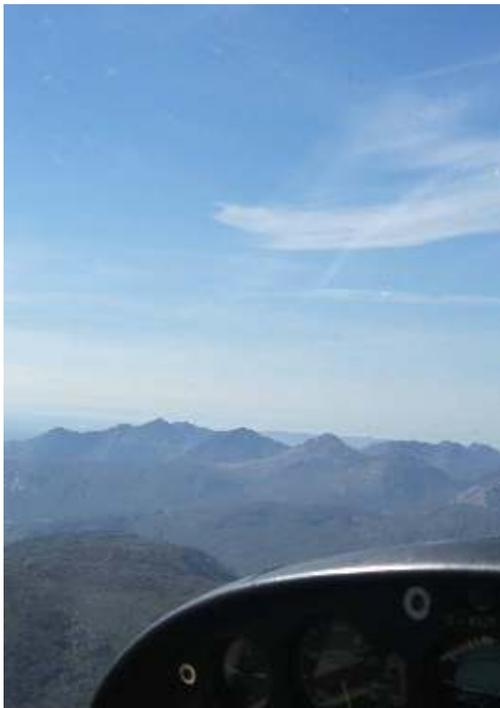
The contrast with Eglinton was considerable and it was immediately clear that Ireland is now a very prosperous country. A helpful taxi driver got us a good deal at a city centre hotel and the hotel staff obligingly got us onto the Weston Airport (Dublin) website to obtain the approach maps for the rather complex arrival route there. The weather was now very settled and, after an excellent meal, we went to bed relaxed about our last day.

Tuesday 6th July

We were right, the weather was perfect and we were up early and at the airport by 0830. Unfortunately, Air Airrean's Dublin flight was on the tarmac and we were stuck on the grass in front of it unable to reach the fuel pumps until it departed. We had a slight panic over fuel when it transpired that "tabs" didn't mean much to the young fireman who served us and he went well over what we wanted. Fortunately, we were able to compensate with the second tank without exceeding limits or unbalancing the aircraft. I took this flight and it turned out to be one of the most beautiful I have ever experienced.



The controller urged us to get on our way as she thought sea fog was rolling in but once we were off we were able to tell her that it was at least 10 miles offshore. At her suggestion, we elected to take a longer coastal route and this took us out among islands, bays, lakes and mountains, over a blue sea and sandy beaches and under a blue sky empty of traffic. Once again we could fly at summit height along uninhabited valleys between the mountains.



Shannon Information kept us in light touch with the rest of the world until we transferred to Galway Control as we approached that town over a long strange stretch of sea marsh dotted with little lakes. Jon took the next leg to Weston, Dublin's GA airfield. This was a huge contrast, dead flat, with big areas of peat stripping going on but much more habitation and cultivation than I had expected. More careful flying was needed to avoid Ballyconnell Military airbase and conform to the dogleg approach to Weston. Controllers however were delightfully cooperative and made it all very easy. Walking in to the Weston terminal was a shock - a brand new building furnished with repro (probably) Empire furniture and tiled floors and looking more like a VIP terminal in a Middle East state than something appropriate to the pilots of ZF. Once again, everyone went out of their way to help us and you felt that we were treated no differently to a foreign head of state. However, we now had to face up to our ad hoc approach to destinations. We wanted to fly to Caernarfon but had not given the requisite 12 hrs notice and even when Alan phoned the North Wales Port Authority and used all his charm, they were unyielding. We had to find a 24hrs Customs entry point. Initially we lodged a plan for Liverpool but, during lunch, noticed that we could enter via Gloucester. This seemed more attractive and might avoid delays imposed by commercial traffic. So we refiled and planned for a crossing from Wicklow Head to Bardsey Island through D201. Departure from Weston is another complex manoeuvre, heading north in the climb before turning south to return over Weston not above 1500ft all under the control of Dublin Radar. This controller was the most brilliant example of all the Scottish and Irish controllers we met - they were all wonderful but he was a real character. In between working innumerable inbound Aer Lingus and Ryanair flights, he always had time for us. When Alan asked to be contacted London Mil for the Danger Area crossing, he responded "No, just leave that to me, I can phone a contact in Aberporth for you". Sadly, permission was refused ("Sure and aren't you the unlucky ones today" was the controller's comment) - D201 was hot, as they say. So Jon took over as navigator, Alan turned onto O60 for the northern coast of Anglesey and waited for further instructions from Jon. It was an excellent example of two pilot operation and we eventually got clearance from Valley to cut the corner and pass down the west coast of Anglesey at FL050.



Passed the Menai Strait (photo), over Caernarfon and past Snowdon which was just peeping out of the clouds. From here, the clouds were higher and we had a good view of Cader Idris and the Barmouth estuary before crossing the Welsh mountains, passing over Builth Wells' showground (a good visual cue to remember) and finally being very impressed by Alan's impeccable overhead join at Gloucester. We thought we would be tight for an 1800 arrival at Lee but a carefully crafted phone call by Jon to the police elicited the information that 1800 was not being enforced (except on Sundays and Mondays) until the new gate was operational so, being Tuesday, we could relax and have a short rest after the long 2h 30 m flight from Weston. I flew this last flight in pleasant evening light and we got a clearance at 3000ft through Southampton Zone right over our house before a final landing on 05 at Lee.

It had been a truly memorable trip and I am afraid that hopping over to Bembridge will have lost a lot of its buzz as a result. We totalled 13 hours of flying in a variety of conditions and over almost entirely new country. There is something deeply satisfying and very exciting in just immersing yourself in flying and nothing else for three consecutive days; making decisions about weather, destinations, endurance and routings; seeing a huge variety of countryside, seascapes and cloudscapes; dealing with new controllers and experiencing the incredible kindness and helpfulness of everyone in the outer parts of UK and Ireland. We all enjoyed ourselves immensely and we all want to do it again. It is well worth saving up and doing it yourselves. Go for it!

Not Another Ferry Trip! - or - DIY Differences Training - Brian Mellor

Well, yes, I did just do another ferry trip, but just in case anyone is getting fed up of hearing about them, I thought I would introduce another slant to this write up, because I actually got exposed to some new aircraft technology, and although it took a while to get used to it, perhaps the information might come in useful for others, before too long.

The background is that I was asked to ferry a new C182 Turbo from Bangor (the standard jumping-off point from USA to Europe) to Beirut (which rings automatic warning bells for most of us Brits, with the name Terry Waite coming immediately to mind, and enduring TV reports from a war-torn city, back in the early 90s).

The arrangements were made, and I got out to Boston, half way up the road, then a brief overnight stay in a motel, before arriving in Bangor at 0800 local. The aircraft was a beauty - delivery mileage only, pristine condition, and already fitted with its 124 usg ferry tank, leaving little room for much else - except that I had the use of the copilot seat on which to store things in flight. Not only that, I was going to be able to test my home-made "seat-back ferry pouch", for want of a better name. This was hand-crafted by me, using material similar to that of the children's dresses in the Sound of Music, and from an identical source (and the end product being every bit as attractive). Should be adequate to contain sandwiches, drinks, tools, approach plates and enroute charts - at least, that is what the design spec said.



The seat-back-pouch, HF radio (on the ferry tank), and O2 controls (in the ceiling)

The fuel truck was called, 181 us gallons (\$830 worth) was used to fill it up. I attached a couple of insulators to the LH wingtip and the fin, then ran the HF antenna from the wingtip, via the fin, into the cabin, and into the HF radio. Connected the 24 volt

converter, spliced in the 24 volt supply (used to feed the ferry pump), and that was it. Should be airborne in record time.

Now for a quick visit to US Customs, also advise the Canadian authorities (1-888-CANPASS) of my ETA in St. John's, and that would be it. Wrong. US Customs wanted to know where the aircraft was going. "Only to Lebanon". Hmm. Couldn't find the bill of sale - bad start. Then the officer looked at the other paperwork, and said the special category C of A was out of date. They then drove me over to the aircraft, and started searching it. After I contacted the ferry company for "HELP!", it was explained that the aircraft would remain on the US register, and return to the USA, once it had been used for some corporate flying purposes. At this point, the officer rechecked the C of A, and found he had made a mistake - it was OK all along. He accepted the rest of the info presented to him, and stamped up my docs, so I finally got to the aircraft, quite late.

Flight 1. Bangor to St. John's, Newfoundland

I needed to get the show on the road, but had no time to familiarise myself fully with the Garmin 1000 glass cockpit of this aircraft, which I have never used before. After 20 minutes of engine running, and knob twiddling, my skill level was sufficient to be able to monitor the basic engine parameters, and use the radios. I still had three old friends available - proper Attitude Indicator, ASI, and Altimeter (classed as "standby" instruments). Eureka! Enough to get airborne - I should hopefully learn a bit during the 5 hour cruise to St. John's, Newfoundland. Called for taxi, used the checklist very carefully, and finally got airborne.

Played with the toys en-route, and started to get an insight into the operation of everything. The fuel tank management was basically - use mains, until showing $\frac{3}{4}$ full, then switch to the ferry tank. The engine continued to run, and over a period of time, the mains started to fill up. From this I deduced that the ferry fuel must be pumped into the mains, at a rate which only slightly exceeds the normal burn rate anyway

Landed at St. John's, taxied into the Fixed Base Operator, and prepared to meet my doom, with the Canadian Customs officials. I was 2 hours late, partly because of me dithering on the apron, learning the rudiments of the systems before departure, and partly because I had been lead to believe the aircraft was much faster than it was, and finally, because the headwinds were stronger than I had anticipated. Last time I was in this situation, the officer made it clear that I should have let them know the ETA was different, and - don't ever do it again! So, I called CANPASS, declared that I had arrived, very late, and sat back to wait for the explosion. Thankfully, the guy was happy to give me a good telling off, but he didn't ground me, and force me to wait until I had been rebuked in person by one of his colleagues. But - "Don't ever do it again!"

Another potential problem that had arisen during the call with the Canadians was that, according to their database, this aircraft had not been cleared by Transport Canada for transit/overflight, and I was liable to a fine, if I tried to leave the Canadian shores without it. Fortunately, no-one came to do a ramp check (it was the weekend!), so enough said.

Flight 1 - Lessons learnt

- There are two large, identical displays - however, they certainly don't display the same information.
- The aircraft has a main and a standby battery, and during the start procedure, the standby battery must be tested, then "armed". The standby battery is obviously there for redundancy, since a single electrical system failure would deprive the pilot of all the essential information that was previously presented by mechanical gauges.
- On startup (with both avionics busses "off"), only the pilot's display is alive, and shows engine information, and radio, nav frequencies
- After the avionics busses are turned on, the LH display (PFD - Primary Flight Display) shows things like attitude indicator, HSI, VSI, Altimeter, etc. But these are presented in a user-friendly, but very alien, manner. Now all the engine instrumentation has slipped quietly across to the RHS. Fooled me for a minute or two, but then I got the hang of looking at Manifold Pressure, RPM, Fuel Flow, and EGT, CHT over the other side.
- The colour moving map occupies most of the RHS, and there were the usual GPS buttons to allow "Go To", and Zoom in/out. What a great relief! This little beauty had an international database, so I could punch in the designators for the airports, waypoint, VORs, without a problem.

Flight 2. St. John's to Santa Maria, Azores

I knew that I would naturally wake up early in the hotel, so didn't bother to set the alarm - I would sleep as much as my body would allow. Big mistake. Overslept by about 2 hours, so a bit of a rush ensued, and didn't have much of a breakfast, although I had provisions in the cockpit. Got the Atlantic weather briefing, Notams, filled in the flight plan (Flight Level 110), fuelled up, and departed.

Well, I got up to FL 110 OK but I still was struggling with the finer points of the GPS, and I couldn't insert the Lat/Long info that I needed. Fortunately, I had my ancient portable Magellan, so I would have to use that, initially. The temperature was -3, and sure enough, there was cloud at this altitude, and sure enough, it started to pick up ice. At this point, I called Gander on the VHF and requested descent to FLO90 for a while. He was not happy, since the minimum approved flight level was actually 110, but I explained that I was having problems with my navigation equipment, AND picking up ice, and I really wanted only one problem to fix at that time, not two. I would call him when I was sorted, and request a return to FL 110. I duly got the LAT/LONG programmed for the whole route, and by that time, the cloud had gone anyway, so it was no problem.

The only problem that I had was that there was no mic for the HF radio! In my rush, I didn't notice that the mic socket was a multi-pin affair, not the normal headset type, as I had assumed. This is because the radio can be mounted remotely, and the mic has switches to step up/down through the various published channels, without straining to reach the controls on the radio itself. Shame, because the reception was the best I have ever heard.

The rules for crossing the Atlantic on that route are that an aircraft must be equipped with HF radio. Technically, I was. So, I continued regardless, and was able to get VHF radio relays on 123.45 or 121.5 from other big guys - Aero Mexico, Iberia, and one or two others, for my mandatory position reports.

The ferry tank continued to be used on a cyclic basis, so as to keep the mains between 75 and 90% full. Then, towards the end of the flight, there was a hiccup. The engine coughed, twice, and started to lose power, so I immediately switched to the mains, and didn't use the ferry again. Because the autopilot was in "Altitude Hold" mode, the poor thing tried to retrim nose up, to maintain height regardless of no power. At the same time, there was a male voice saying "THE TRIM IS IN MOTION!" I felt like saying "Yes, I was nearly in the same situation for a second".

Why did the engine stop though? I eventually realised that my previous assumption was wrong. The ferry tank didn't feed the main tanks at all - only the engine. The reason the main tanks started to fill up is because the engine driven fuel pump supplies fuel at a rate greater than required for cruise (i.e. sufficient for full power climbs), and the SURPLUS fuel must be vented back to the mains. Mystery resolved.

Arrived at Santa Maria more or less on time, cleared immigration, and went for a meal, and bed.

Flight 2 - Lessons learnt

- The engine instruments are far more comprehensive than I first realised. By pressing the appropriate button, it was possible to monitor the CHT and EGT for each of the 6 cylinders.
- Until this point, I had been using the TIT (Turbine Inlet Temperature) gauge, keeping it at about 80% of the green band using the mixture control, but the little explorations with the buttons showed that this, and the Fuel Flow, could be accurately measured, with digital readouts, instead of analogue.
- The Heading Indicator could be displayed in various modes - CDI, OBS and HSI (I think).
- The two VOR frequencies can be selected, and displayed simultaneously on the Heading Indicator (with different representation for each). Still, the Go-to button on the GPS worked well, so no need to bother with those at the moment.

Flight 3. Santa Maria to Jerez, Spain

Sunday morning, got a lift to the airport, and prepared for the flight. Found out (remembered?) that the fuel guy doesn't take credit cards, only cash or carnet. Fortunately, I had \$500, and a few euros. Fortunately, I had two credit cards, and there was an ATM in the terminal building. Unfortunately, it only dispensed 200 euros for any one card, so I JUST managed to pay him, and have VERY small change left.

My intention was to route to Jerez, my home base, and have Eileen pick me up on landing, so that I could at least have the luxury of sleeping in my own bed, before the next leg. The flight plan was submitted, but came back highly modified, with a lousy routing, taking me up into Portugal, then Seville, before turning south to Jerez. Out of VHF range for quite a long time, but eventually made contact with Lisboa, and asked them to please find a better route - I gave them some suggestions. They agreed, and thereby shaved at least half an hour off the route time. It was SO nice to be able to talk to the familiar controllers, and land at my base airport.



Primary Flight Display, showing Attitude Indicator, Air speed indicator (with colour coded bands) (bottom box is TAS indicator), Altimeter (top box is autopilot selected altitude, bottom box is the pressure setting), Vertical Speed Indicator, HSI display, with CDI, VOR Relative Bearing Indicators, confirmation of navaid ident, symbol used to depict Nav 1, DME distance, Inset, showing aircraft heading and wind vector, Transponder squawk code.



Right Hand screen, showing basic engine parameters, and colour map display

Flight 3 - Lessons learnt

- The VORs worked a treat - not only that, they actually display the ident on the screen! Still need to ident it aurally though - old habits die hard.
- The Garmin 1000 has a built-in stormscope. I displayed the page, but since there were no clouds, there was nothing of interest to see.
- It also has the capability to download real-time weather. But, the subscription had not yet been paid, so there was just a warning message stating that it was not available. Again, nothing to see.
- I have been told there is a kind of "poor man's TCAS" available also. If so, it was not enabled.

Flight 4. Jerez to Malta

Bad news. When I first heard that the trip was on, I phoned the Aerad people in Stockholm, to get the appropriate enroute charts for the remaining legs, and the approach plates for Malta and Lebanon. They confirmed that they would be with me by the end of that week. They hadn't arrived! And today was 1st May, a bank holiday, so no chance of getting them in time.

My first call was to the UK ferry company, to say - please scan the necessary charts and plates, and email them to me, otherwise, there could be delays. "Difficult", the man says. The guy who would man the office, where the info was kept, would be at the mercy of

the bank holiday bus schedule, and might not be in till quite late in the day. Oh well - do what you can.

I phoned up IFPS in Paris, who are responsible for processing IFR flight plans for this area, and explained that I needed to get an acceptable route, in the system, but it would be a while before I could get any charts. Help! They were great. I was told - just route Jerez - direct - Malta, and they would look out for it, tweak it, and send it back with an acceptable route. They did exactly that - although it seemed a bit of a round-the-houses route.

The staff in Jerez ATC were also very helpful, they lent me their charts for the few days that I would need them. The problem of no approach plates wasn't too serious, because the weather was forecast to be VFR for the remaining trip, and anyway, I would normally expect radar vectors to final approach. The thing that made me feel confident enough to depart was the fact that the Garmin 1000 has this fantastic database that can be called up, to give all the required info for any airport, including the frequencies, and airport diagrams.

Again, the Jerez refueller could only supply fuel for either cash or carnet, so drew yet more dosh out of the hole in the wall machine - just enough to cover the filling of the tanks.

So, I departed with sufficient information, albeit rather later than I had hoped. The routing was initially towards Malaga, then inland (passing some of the highest ground on the whole route), up towards Valencia, Barcelona, and across to the east, and eventually passed just south of Gozo, for a landing at Luqa.

The handling agent was awaiting my arrival, also the refueller (who did take a credit card, thank goodness) and organised a taxi to my hotel, and a pickup the next morning.

Flight 4 - Lessons learnt.

- I played around with the nav display, and got the colour-coded maps to show up beautifully.
- There was a feature that monitored the altitude, and the nearby terrain, and would alert, when the terrain clearance was inadequate. At least, that is my understanding - the flight plan route for FL110 was validated by Eurocontrol to ensure minimum IFR separation requirements, so it never kicked in.



Flight 5. Malta to Beirut

Checked my email, and was relieved to find that the approach plates for Beirut had been sent. Printed these, and at last, felt properly prepared for the final leg.

I submitted the flight plan, with the all-important Beirut clearance number specified in the RMK/ section, and set off for a very pleasant flight, in good VMC conditions, to the final destination. Even so, I half expected political problems, going into an Arab country with a US registered aircraft, and had deliberately fuelled up with plenty of reserve fuel, to get me back to Cyprus, in the event that I got refused at the last minute.

As it happens, there was no problem, other than the fact that the Approach Controller started to give me radar vectors for one runway, then changed his mind, causing me to do a lot of manoeuvring, by now in haze. I remained at the previously cleared altitude, while I was still picking up the salient details of the new approach, and by the time I regained the correct localiser path, I realised what the DME was showing. Sure enough, I was way too high for a normal approach, so I asked Tower for a 360 on final to allow me to lose height. This did the trick, and once clear of the runway, I trundled after the Follow Me vehicle - passing a bunch of people stood outside a large hangar, waving furiously - sure enough, the driver was confused, overshot, and had to do a 180 to take us back to the welcoming party.



Right Hand screen, showing the programmed routing, and attempting to show real-time weather (but not enabled)

I was royally welcomed, met the new owner, and was immediately told that I had been booked in for two nights in a rather nice hotel, at his expense. To cut a long story a little shorter, I was also given the use of a car and driver, available 24 hours, met up with the owner and his friends and guests both evenings, and enjoyed some of the best food I have ever eaten. I had never tried Lebanese food until then but it really was excellent (apparently there are at least 4 Lebanese restaurants in London, that do a roaring trade).



Beirut Airport - handing over the keys to the new owner

At most tables in the restaurants, people were there smoking from these strange devices with a long hose, glass bubbles full of water, and some stuff burning on top. I asked my host what were they smoking? He said I would be surprised - apple! When I got home, I tried to impress Eileen with this new-found knowledge. She simply said "You'd believe anything!"

Flight 5. Lessons learnt

- I finally figured out how to string together a bunch of waypoints, to make them into a route, which the autopilot could then follow for hundreds of miles, turning over each one, without any further command from me. I would have cracked this earlier, except the buttons I was pushing were the obvious ones. The critical one was in the middle of the concentric knobs, used to step through menus and sub-menus.
- At one time I was beginning to doubt that the aircraft could display ILS information - where was the glideslope indicator?? However, during my descending 360 on final approach, I waited for the PAPIs to show the right combination of colours, and sure enough, there it was, right in the middle of the vertical scale - a bit non-obvious when I was at full scale GS deflection.
- Differences training - it actually makes a lot of sense. I was lucky enough to figure it out empirically, but only because I had an easy trip, in good weather, for long periods, with a fantastic autopilot doing the work. I could have learnt the same things, in a fraction of the time, if only I had been able to use the services of a good instructor. My way was fun, it helped beat the boredom - but training would have been 10 times more efficient.

It's Less Bover with a Hover - James Mason

Following last year's successful trip to Alderney, the intrepid island hoppers decided that a visit to the Scillies would be a good choice for this year. Jason took on the organization and we penciled in the weekend of May 19-21. However as the date drew closer various events conspired against the trip, in my case our aeroplane, GZERO, was sold. This caused plan B to roll into operation which was to take the Sikorsky S61 helicopter service from Penzance to St Marys. The others did not fare much better, Nigel was diverted onto a business trip and the weather stopped Jason so in the end it was just me and Chris in the S61 followed a day later by Dave and Clare in G-PORK.

Never having traveled in a large helicopter, the S61 was a very attractive proposition for getting to the Scillies. It took around four hours to get to Penzance from Bournemouth and the check in for the service was very relaxed and friendly. As you would expect the noise level is high and as we took our seats the expression '1000 parts flying in loose formation' sprang to mind! After lift off, the helicopter moved across the airfield at low height and speed before crossing the main road and climbing over the bay



Actually it was a good job we were not intending to fly that day as the cloud base was around 500ft and we were soon in IMC. Somewhere between Lands End and the Scillies, we broke cloud and then flew at a few hundred feet to St Marys where we did a low level tour of the airfield before landing!



As in Alderney, we decided to camp and there is an excellent campsite in St Marys at Garrison, it is a short walk from the town with superb views out over the sea to the neighbouring islands. I have had the pleasure of staying there before and have found the owners to be very helpful and friendly. Chris even spotted that they had tumble driers in the washrooms, fortunately we did not need them. After putting up the tents, we ambled down into town for tea and experienced the excellent St Austell Tribute beer. This was to become a familiar theme during the evenings of our stay and has been much missed on our return! Suffice to say there was no problem getting off to sleep back at the campsite...

The next day after breakfast, we walked up to the airport to greet the arrival of G-PORK, the weather conditions were much better on the Saturday and Clare had phoned us to say that they were on their way. We walked around the coastal path to the side of runway 33 and waited for the sound of a trusty Lycoming. After watching the S61 a couple of times, we saw G-PORK arrive:



It was a surprisingly long walk back around to the terminal and by the time we arrived, the efficient G-PORK crew were all finished and just about to leave. We walked down the hill and after some lunch made it back to Hughtown and dropped Dave and Clare at the Harbourside Hotel. The nice thing about visiting the Scillies for more than a day is that you can take one of the boat trips from the harbour. That evening I managed to persuade the others to visit the Turks Head on St Agnes. The boat takes you across, drops you at the pub and then collects you at the end of the evening - when did you last get a boat to go to the pub? Not only is the food and beer excellent but you have chance to walk some of it off, the island is fascinating to walk around, on this occasion I found the remains of what I think was a cetacean on the beach. On the two occasions that I have visited St Agnes, the weather has been clear and sunny and the island is certainly a very tranquil and peaceful place to visit at this time.

The next morning, we had breakfast with Dave and Clare at the Harbourside, we were actually suffering withdrawal symptoms from the Alderney trip were Nigel and Sarah had cooked us bacon sandwiches over an avgas stove! We decided to make another boat trip to St Martins which has been described as the "most fortunate of all the islands around Britain's coasts" and it is hard to argue with that. On the way out, we had an interesting tour of the local sea bird sanctuaries and saw quite a few seals sunning themselves on the rocks. After walking around the island, we found the Seven Stones Inn where we were able to have lunch and sample some more excellent St Austell ale. Afterwards, Chris took us on a great walk around the island walking up to Top Rock around Great Bay and eventually getting to Higher Town. I imagine that the Scillies represent rural England in times gone by, the quietness and proliferation of wildlife are a pleasure to experience. The boat picked us up at the Old Quay and took us back to St Marys where we spent some time exploring before the evening. At this stage, the weather was starting to turn and it looked like it might be a soggy evening which focused

our minds on getting back the next day. After a very pleasant evening in Hugh Town, we returned to a rather wet campsite, fortunately the tents were still standing. It is rather nice to be warm and snug inside your sleeping bag hearing the rain on the flysheet, however this is somewhat tempered if you have to visit the washroom during the night

The next morning it was mist and light rain as we packed away at the campsite and joined Dave and Clare at the Harbourside. Even the helicopter was grounded and Dave and Clare made the decision to stay another day while it looked as though the S61 might fly in the afternoon. After exploring some more of Hugh Town, we made an interesting discovery, the Star Hotel at the Garrison has an interesting dungeon bar open to visitors which made an excellent lunch stop. Somehow it was going to be difficult to leave such a friendly place with excellent Tribute beer.

The weather cleared considerably in the afternoon and the helicopter trip showed us far more on the way back.



We had a good view of Lands End when returning to good old blighty...



Driving back to Bournemouth we caught up with some of the low cloud that had affected us earlier on and Clare and Dave wisely chose to enjoy another day in the Scillies before coming back the next day. I certainly recommend the helicopter if you cannot fly yourself to the Scillies but personally I am looking forward to my next trip there as P1!

The weather forecast was ok but we would have broken cloud and a front on the way to Waterford. We got to the front as we crossed the Severn at the bridges



Approaching the Severn

We flew IMC with radar info service till we came out of it before the STU beacon at Haverfordwest



STU beacon

We both felt fine and decided a stop at Haverfordwest was not necessary so continued on to Waterford, changing to Shannon at the Fir boundary. Soon we were landing at the airfield to be met by a Scot who helped us refuel. He was really friendly and got a taxi and hotel booking for us. We went to Dooleys Hotel, used by the pilots and we got it at pilot rates. We had a great meal in the restaurant there

The next day was a "no flying day" The weather closed in and we went exploring Waterford then decided to go to Tramore, a seaside resort for the night. We stayed at the Majestic hotel. Next day was flyable in the south so out to the airfield, file flight plan and fly to Kerry. We had a lot stronger wind than expected and ground speed was way down at 47 knots at one point. Approaching Kerry, we were impressed by the mountains around us.



Magillicuddy's Reeks, just past Killarney

Landing at Kerry was challenging. We had stronger gusts than forecast so we had to be careful. We landed and taxied to a spot where the controller would be happy whether we stayed a couple of hours or stayed overnight. After a bite to eat we decided the wind was too strong to continue so we elected to hire a car. Tralee or Killarney? We decided on Tralee and drove there. We didn't like the roadworks so went on round the Dingle peninsular. We loved Dingle. We found the Skellig Hotel with Leisure facilities and negotiated a good rate for an Executive Suite, with meals included, for the night. They had only 2 rooms available.

Driving back to the airfield next morning there were loads of Harley Davidson bikes in groups of 4 or 6. There is a shop in Dingle selling crystal glass, the owner is well in to The Harley Davidson crowd. There must have been a meeting on, I guess. Refuelling at Kerry I took on 67 litres. The refueller comments, now you are done I am off to refuel the private jet there. He wants 12000 litres. He's flying out within the hour. (How the other half live!)

From Kerry we flew north to the Aran Islands. ATC did not raise any objection to us circling the islands, only advising us there was aircraft movement on Inishmore. In the event it was one aircraft on the ground as we flew over.



Some shots of the Aran Islands

Then we flew on to Galway for our next overnight hotel. This was by the square a short walking distance from the main pedestrian area. Musicians were everywhere.

We enjoyed a jazz group, drummer group, musicians in the pubs before going to Gemelle's restaurant for a super meal. We really enjoyed Galway and will go again.



Next day it was Clifton then Sligo, except it was broken cloud again and we did not get much of a view of Clifton area, so on via the coast to Belmullet and Sligo. The weather improved and we had some lovely scenery unfold below us.



We landed at Sligo, runway 29. Janette did not want to go into Sligo so we had a break in the restaurant at the airfield, not much choice so don't expect much there.



Runway 29 at Sligo



Just parked at Sligo, Rescue Helicopter based here

We flew direct to Enniskillen, over the hills. Another alternative would have been round the coast, worth considering if you do this trip. Here is a shot looking south of Enniskillen as we approached the St Angelo airfield.



There was a major cycling event that week end in Enniskillen so we found the Manor Hotel north of the airfield. There were leisure facilities there, the food was good, and so it was a good find.

Only trouble was they faxed a blank flight plan for me in the morning. The girl must have put the paper in upside down. It did not cause a delay as I thought it would, sitting in the plane with engine running, discovering St Angelo couldn't open the plan. I gave the details over the radio. I had 10 minutes flying before changing to Shannon after take off. Surprisingly they had my details and we were on our way.

All went well till the coast. There we ran into cloud, changed to Radar Info service. We came out of it maybe 10 miles from Ronaldsway. We landed at Ronaldsway with the weather worsening, still ok. Later about 2 hours after we landed the rain set in and curtailed vfr flying. So we stayed the night in Douglas and decided to leave Caernarfon for another time.

We flew back to Thruxton on the Sunday. Another front was in our path so we had a short time while with Birmingham ATC in IMC then we were above it but with some cumulus puffing up towards us. It was very scenic. It was showering when we landed at Thruxton so we got a bit damp putting the plane to bed. We were home by mid afternoon.

In summary we had a wonderful time and can recommend flying round Ireland. I did not manage Donnegal airfield or a visit to Sligo town. We did not plan to visit Kilkenny, did not visit Killarney, so there is lots to do for another visit. It's not cheap in Ireland. Domestic fuel costs are 1.6 euros per litre plus 21% tax but foreign trips get away with 1.3 euros with no tax. We budgeted for 12 hours flying and actually did 14 hours.

We will enjoy the memories and the photos of the trip for a long time.

IBM Flying Club Fly-In to RAF Cosford - Paul Eathorne and Richard Valler



G-PORK - DT, Clare & James
G-BHXX - Jim Hull, Jeff Moreland, Mike Beard
G-TASH - The grey ghosts
G-EGTR - Nigel Waters
G-BASJ - Jason and Helen Bamford
G-BSAW - Jon Butts, Paul Goodman, Cap'n Elliott
By car Gary Jones and Chris Slee (...low approach)

the day started early, prompted by cracking weather, the prospect of a good days flying - and a desire to try and arrive at Cosford on our designated slot time of 10:35. I signed on from home at 6:30 to check weather & Notams (loads of exercises across the UK - looks like we're expecting WW3) then get up to Popham by 8 to do the DI and refuel on G-TASH, the Cessna 172, which I fly now. Still getting the hang of her to be honest and although I've loved flying G-PORK over the years, am gradually getting used to having wings on top, which true aviators recognise as the correct place to have them, so I'm told, given that you never see a low wing bird!

Captain Valler appears carrying his GPS, a day I never thought to see. After years of claiming a phobia against anything vaguely electronic or smacking of gadgetry, these days he's to be found tooled up with GPS, laptop, wireless, mobile phone ...it'll be an iPod next! Still draws a line on his half mil though...

Disregarding the carefully worked out 'wheels off' time that will get us to Cosford on schedule, we (well, I) add a 20 minute fudge factor to our 'off blocks' time on basis things always take longer than expected. 2 up with full fuel, TASH climbs like a rocket and we're off, tracking towards Brize. The magic box says our ground speed is 140kts which suggests a little less fudge might have been in order! Brize get us to transit at 3,000' and advise of a VC-10 joining the Brize Circuit 10nm to the East, same height. The fine old lady appears. What a marvellous machine. The lucky ones will remember an outstanding trip in one a few years back. Not for the last time today, I remember what I like about flying. The day job is put in its proper perspective.

I concentrate on flying the aeroplane - heading, height, airspeed, while RV counts satellites and keeps us on the thin black line. The airfield previously know as Halfpenny Green comes into view. Richard has heard a rumour it's under new management so maybe Wolverhampton International will become more welcoming to light aircraft in the future.

'XK are with Cosford Approach. We're both well ahead of time, despite a slow, wide orbit to examine the delights of Bromsgrove (a high speed pass would have been sufficient) They pave the way and we have the benefit of hearing where the RAF want us. The roof of the new Cold War museum hanger helps lead us in.

8 aircraft have arrived so it's a good turnout. Buttsy herds the cats into formation for a team photo in front of an old Jetstream. Lots of interesting aircraft here, not all can be on display at the same time so I guess you could come again and find exhibits have changed. Some of the airliners that have been on display have sadly been broken up - some cost cutting by British Airways maybe? Inside, the hangers are full of good stuff. Lots of 'one off' British development aircraft from 50's & 60's made by the likes of Bristol, Hunting, De Havilland, English Electric, etc, etc. It's a great place and I think deserves to be publicised more widely. Well worth a visit.



A pressing appointment means we need to get back South. We spot a long queue of traffic on the M5 and try flying to the end of it to see what's up. Quickly realise it's the Friday exodus to the West country and we could end up in Exeter so resume track!

It seems surprisingly quiet in the air for such a beautiful day although it's quite thermally so we end up 'surfing' back to Popham (or maybe it was my flying). As we put TASH to bed a strange aeroplane appears overhead. It's got elliptical wings so it must be a.....but that doesn't sound like a Merlin? RV solves the mystery...it's a scale replica Spitfire and a very well made one at that. It also has 2 seats (just) which the lean captain valler is squeezed into for a blast over Hampshire. (seen more fat on a butchers pencil!)

A great day out. Regards to all who came. Our thanks to Clare for arranging!



Fly-In to St Omer - Jon Butts

The fly-out to St Omer on August the 4th went well, with the following crews participating: Jon Butts, with Sean Bowling and Tim Robinson, in PA28-180 G-AXZF from Lee-On-Solent. Nigel Waters and Tim Clark in diesel PA28 G-EGTR from Elstree. Jason and Helen Bamford in PA28-180 G-BASJ from Filton. Jim Farquhar and Bruce Dean in Bo 208C G-ATVX from RAF Henlow

Everyone had made their way to Le Touquet by 1130 local. Photo: All the aircraft lined up in front of Le Touquet ready to route inland to St Omer. This photo is a contender for use in a Caption Competition!



For Nigel and Jason the next leg to St Omer represented their first 'inland' flight in France. Jon led the way and picked out 26 as the best available runway at the unmanned St Omer. A stiff NW wind generated some mild turbulence and a cross-wind for the approach and landing on the 600m tarmac runway. Everybody handled it very well. Photo: Jim Farquhar with Bruce Dew, making a great job of landing on the numbers with cross-wind from the right - note the right main going on first!



Taxi's appeared in short order to take us to the V2 rocket site at La Cupole. This was a very interesting visit in itself, however having now seen both local V2 sites, it is definitely the Blockhouse at Eperleque Forrest that I would recommend as the best one for a future visit. Photo: Preparing to depart St Omer for Le Touquet (St Omer club hanger in the background).



The trip back to Le Touquet was uneventful. We had TX, SJ, ZF all downwind right-hand for 32 - well-spaced and with TR following to join downwind also. Photo: Helen Bamford's air-to-air shot of G-AXZF en-route St Omer - Le Touquet.



Back at Le Touquet the ZF and TX crews settled down to relax at the restaurant before their respective flights home. Nigel and Tim raided the nearby Supermache for unspecified goodies, then flew them home. Jason and Helen shopped and night-stopped in Le Touquet, returning to Filton next day via Blackbushe. All in all I think everyone had a good days flying - four take offs and landings, two cross channel flights, and at least one new interesting airfield in the logbook. James clocked up his 300th hour too! My thanks to everyone who took part - I hope you didn't miss your days work too much!

P.S.1 If any of you pals in other clubs are interested in visiting, the details are [here](#).

P.S.2 St Omer Aeroclub have a Jodel Lovers fly-in each year, this year the dates are [confirmed](#) as 2/3 Sept. Apparently participating crews do not have to fly Jodels, or be lovers. Neither do they have to clear customs elsewhere provided their details are provided to the club in good time.

Review of ATC Services Outside Controlled Airspace - Irv Lee

I was recently invited to a workshop at the CAA run by the DAP (Directorate of Airspace Policy) to chew over such things as improvements to services such as FIS/RIS/RAS from a G.A. point of view. Don't expect any great change til Mode S timeframe (2008) (although it is not 'linked' to Mode S - it could be later!). The hardest thing to tweak at all is the Flight Information Service as this has an ICAO definition but there may be one or two things can be done there.

I've put in a few ideas which may or may not ever see the light of day. Just one example of a few: As a way of freeing up the frequency for the pilots who really want some service, each radar unit to have a unique squawk for GA traffic nearby to declare they are just listening out on frequency in case the unit wants to talk to them, but otherwise won't actually call. This would mean pilots don't have to jam up a frequency when they actually don't really want anything specific, but has the advantage that if the unit wants to know the exact routing to co-ordinate with other traffic which is getting some sort of service, or as a last resort to warn the listening aircraft of anything (you are about to bust airspace), the unit would at least have a chance of calling the listening aircraft. There are issues that this would mean 'unverified' squawks, but nothing that couldn't be sorted out if they are looking at changes to 'rules'. Anyway, don't hold your breath!

The basic premise is that the system isn't actually broken, but there may be advantages to all sides to have some tweaks, so they are consulting all sides (GA, Commercial, Military, ATC). There was big discussions on what the 'bubble' of safety is around the aircraft - i.e.: if another aircraft looks like it will eventually get within 'x' miles horizontally or 'y' feet vertically of an aircraft having a traffic service, a pilot would want to know, but what are 'x' and 'y'?

One episode which ought to be amusing to IBMers was that the workshop was late starting as their I.T. support couldn't get the laptop/projector combination working - no obvious 'back up' for the day either and the workshop driven by 'projection'. I decided the IT support was too well dressed so probably had a good I.T. 'certification' plaque on the wall but knew little about fixing things. Once we were 15 minutes late, I was full of 'extra coffees' and the I.T. support had given up, I wandered over, took a quick look and told them to plug the cable from the laptop into the empty socket marked 'LAPTOP INPUT' in large letters on the projection box rather than where it was (the socket that was marked something else). Funnily enough, when they did, it all burst into life instantly.

Fly On Track - Irv Lee

The original 'On track' report looking at the reasons why there are so many airspace 'busts' in the UK was published a while back, and the original website www.flyontrack.co.uk was then handed over to the General Aviation Safety Council (GASCo) for further use in consultation with a CAA/DAP Airspace Infringement Working Group (AIWG). Further development of the site is expected later in 2006, and I have been invited to work with GASCo and AIWG as the website administrator/webmaster under CAA funding. Don't expect any great changes immediately, but the site should develop further later this year.

--- The End ---