



September 2009 Newsletter

Startup - James Mason

As event organisers will know “it’s not over until the fat lady sings” and the club trip to fly the Tiger Moth at Cambridge was a case in point. There were various delays along the way and several club members were unable to attend in the end but it went ahead at the start of August. We were almost stopped by the weather on the day but sat it out in the clubhouse and the folks at the Cambridge Flying Group were very patient and generous with their time. At the end of the afternoon, the skies cleared and the three of us were able to do short cross country trips to get a feel of flying these machines. It is a privilege to be able to fly a Moth and as the prop was hand swung for one of the flights, it was almost as if the scene could have been from seventy years ago, a good change from glass cockpit flying!

Despite being promised a ‘barbeque summer’ from the met office, recent months have been rather a damp squib from the flying perspective, I for one have seen more than enough flying trips cancelled due to weather by flying friends. In anticipation of a well deserved ‘Indian summer’ for UK pilots, we have the second instalment of John Akerman’s airfield guide. A few weeks back I was camping in Cornwall and having caught the same bug as John went for a walk around Predannack airfield. This is a satellite station for RNAS Culdrose and also has an interesting history with some of Barnes Wallis’ work on swing wing aircraft after the war. At this airfield there is a National Trust path around the airfield and it makes a good walk with an aviation theme, perhaps one idea with other airfields for rained off flying days!

I would like to receive more items for the newsletter so if you have been flying recently or have any general news then please send me some details, all formats welcome!

Happy and safe flying.

James S Mason
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Fancy somewhere different? (Part 2) – John Akerman

Bentwaters

Bentwaters, about 10nm NE of Ipswich, is great! In every sense of the word. Known by its inhabitants as Crooked Creek, it was a USAF base from 1944 until the early 1990s, with home-based aircraft ranging from F84s and F86s through the Century series fighters up to F15s. Today the ends of the runway have been chopped off but it still sports 1500M of perfectly smooth tarmac. All the various structures erected by the USAF are still there, including what must be the prettiest bomb dump in Britain, best viewed in early summer when the gorse is in flower.

Today the airfield is home to Caroline Grace's Spitfire, the Cassutt Racer trio, and a few other aircraft.



I somehow managed to blag my way into the local LAA Breckland Strut fly-in on May 3rd, all for the cost of a £5 landing fee. Not having much time to spare we limited ourselves to a visit to the really excellent Cold War Museum which is located in a massive concrete structure a couple of hundred yards to the north of the palatial control tower.

Although they host a couple of fly-ins a year, to be honest I am not too sure how you should set about getting PPR. However I think a good starting point would be www.bentwatersparks.com

Hinton-in-the-Hedges

Hinton is about 8nm ESE of Banbury. During the early years of WW2 it was an OTU with home-based Blenheims and Wellingtons. It finished its service days as a radio trials and beam approach development base. These days it is operated as the Hinton Skydiving Centre www.skydive.co.uk and also used by the ProFlight and London Parachute Schools.



I first flew in to Hinton in 1994 in a Cub after a 5 min trip from (very) nearby Turweston. At that time the only runway (24/06) looked so rough that I made a last-minute executive decision and landed on the grass alongside it. However some years ago a 700M x 18M asphalt strip was laid on 24/06. On my second visit (in the RV, a couple of weeks ago) I found it to be very smooth and level.

There are now a lot of aircraft based at Hinton, in an unusual assortment of hangars, sheds and huts. I also spotted what may be the best-kept An2 in the country and possibly the only PAC Cresco 750XL (it's a NZ-built aircraft, specially designed for paratropping).

Since it's a parachuting base PPR and briefing by phone are absolutely essential. It is also appropriate to plan approach and departure routes carefully because of the proximity of Turweston ATZ and Croughton HIRTA. There is no landing fee but donations are welcome. There's a refreshments hut that provided the best bacon sandwich I have had in some time.

Tiger Moth Flying – James Mason

After talking about flying different types with some of the club members, several of us decided that flying a tailwheel aircraft such as a Chipmunk or Tiger Moth would make a good club outing. A few years back, I experienced flying a Moth with the Cambridge Flying Group and much enjoyed it so I contacted them again to see if we could visit as a club. The CFG were very supportive even though one of their Moths is in deep maintenance at the moment which takes them down to just one aircraft.

Unfortunately take up for this trip turned out to be less than expected for various reasons but three of us, Jon Butts, Ronnie El-Masri and myself, travelled up to Cambridge in early August. Jon had planned to fly up in a Cirrus from Blackbushe so I hitched a ride with him. The weather was not that promising but we were willing to give it a go and Ronnie was already in Cambridge staying with his daughter, the forecast was set to improve for later in the day. As I drove up to Blackbushe with Jon, the weather deteriorated and was worse than forecast, although Jon was planning an ILS approach into Cambridge, the weather at Blackbushe was now too bad to leave. I convinced Jon that we should go to Cambridge anyway and continued on the M3 past a very murky Blackbushe. When we arrived at Cambridge we were met by David and Ed at the CFG clubhouse, the cloudbase was probably around 400ft and it looked pretty unpromising but our hosts were very hospitable and we were soon talking flying over a mug of coffee! The CFG is the only place that I know of where you can still train for a PPL on the Moth, if you achieve this then you have your name engraved on a propeller in the clubhouse. Ed is working towards this objective himself and it seems a very special way to get a PPL. We were soon joined by Ronnie and his wife who had come well prepared with her laptop as we sat out the weather hoping for a brighter afternoon.

After our instructor, Mike, had arrived we decided to prepare the Moth so that we were ready when the weather improved. We wheeled the aircraft out of the hangar, which has very practical hanging flap doors, and onto the grass. The aeroplane is in beautiful condition and Mike and Ed showed us around the check procedure. I was particularly taken with the inspection of the tailskid by Jon, don't try this on your regular aircraft, I think Jon might have had three shredded wheat that morning but actually not that much strength is required for this check!



The beauty of the Tiger Moth is that everything is relatively simple and the operation can easily be understood by the layman, from the gravity fed fuel tanks for the engine to the way that the cable controls operate. However I was impressed to see that a transponder has now been fitted as well so all mod cons as well! The weather had not improved very much so we went back for a packed lunch in the club house.

David took us to see the Moth G-AHIZ under maintenance elsewhere on the airfield, on the way he pointed out a building which still has traces of wartime camouflage, I can't say that I have seen this before and am impressed that it has survived this long. This Moth has just reached the end of her maintenance schedule and looked in superb condition, it was also interesting to see the Dornier behind her:



Finally the weather was improving and since it was now around 4pm we decided to do a short flight of around 30mins each so we would all get a chance to fly before the airfield closed. Taxiing the Moth is a challenge with no brakes and a tail skid but with a bit of practice you get used to it and I was able to line her up on the grass runway. Visibility out to the front is not great so a bit of weaving is required on the way. Applying power, the tail skid soon came unstuck and after accelerating along the grass we were soon on the climb out. The open cockpit is a great experience and I was wondering why there was so much noise on my headset, I then realised that my microphone had been swept back into the airstream, tightening the friction control did the trick. South of the airfield we practiced some turns and then a steep turn, it was exhilarating to see the ground through the bracking wires of the wing. Unsurprisingly I did find that I was moving the stick a lot and there was a lot to think about flying the aircraft but looking out over the windshield you really felt in touch with the environment with the wind whistling around your ears! I also enjoyed using the compass which is a traditional circular compass positioned in front of you which works surprisingly well. My previous Moth flight had been just in the circuit so it was fun to have a cross country element as well. On our first approach to land we were a bit high and Mike demonstrated the side slip which works very well on the Moth. On the second circuit, the height was just right and as we landed plenty of footwork was required on the rudder to keep us running in a straight line. All too soon the flights were over but I think that all three of us greatly enjoyed the experience and it was just a shame we could not do more flying that day. We were all very appreciative of the time and support given to us by Mike, Ed and David that day, its great to see others who enjoy flying as much as we do and are so helpful in sharing it with others. I'm sure I will be back again one day!

Updating an IMC and PPL license – Duncan Barlow

What do you do when you need an hours training to have your licence signed off? I was in this position with both my IMC rating and PPL needing refreshing.

In the past I have completed an hour of IMC training before sitting the skills test killing two birds in one. Previously, I have used instructors from Thruxton who have been OK and done the job, but I have never felt a good connection with them. Therefore, I decided I would try and book some time with one of our own IBM club members who instruct.

Dave Sawdon was available at the short notice I needed, do other people leave this to the last minute? I had options to use G-BHXK, the Cherokee I share, or try out a different aircraft. When speaking with Dave there were options of using club aircraft at both Old Sarum and Bournemouth. This got the old brain matter going, I would be keen in the future to look at more complex aircraft should we ever get rid of G-XK. One of the aircraft available was a PA28R Arrow, wobbly prop and retractable gear, I love a challenge so decision made.



My options were to do some IMC revision in this aircraft but also if I coped well enough to add some extra time and complete the differences training. We left it with the option that if I was struggling we could just do the IMC stuff. Since I had not completed a signed off approach since my last IMC renewal, it would be best to get one out of the way so I only had one other to do on the skills test. This all went into the decision making process which meant we would do an ILS back into Bournemouth as part of the flight.

I took a Friday afternoon off work and arranged to meet Dave at Bournemouth, little did I realise the traffic would make it 1hr 10 mins from Hursley; it transpired that it was Bournemouth Festival. At the airport, the flying club was full as the Red Arrows were coming for dinner. Subsequently,

when I eventually arrived after battling traffic, I was ushered away from the flying club with a man saying “you can’t park here mate it is full”. OK where can I park? “no idea” said the man blocking my way, so it was another 5 minutes before I got in and met up with Dave. I started wondering is this an omen? Heavy traffic, couldn’t get in to the place, what was going to happen next?

After finding Dave, we dodged past the kids, the bouncy castle and trampolines to find a classroom in the club. What followed was a thorough briefing of the differences between the Arrow and a Cherokee; Dave has a very good way of explaining the intricate issues so even I could pick things up. Once we had completed all of the ground school we discussed what we would do during the flight and then booked out.

G-TORC is the Arrow, we took off her covers and did a walk round inspection. The oil was a little low so we had to get some, but we also noticed that the bottom of the engine was smeared in oil; it was not dripping but there must have been a small leak or someone had spilt oil while adding some previously. Perhaps this was another omen, was the aircraft going to go tech? Whilst we checked her out and got some oil the once sunny sky started to get quite dark. Eventually, we climbed in and then the heavens opened with some seriously heavy rain. No matter, this gave us time to go through the checklists and actions with the actual controls in front of me.

The rain stopped, but it was looking really dark out to the North where we would be heading, time for coffee to see if the weather would improve, yet another sign that this may not be my day. Dave was able to check the rainfall radar in the clubhouse and give Old Sarum a call as we wanted to do circuits there. Old Sarum were marginal, but it looked like things were clearing up with less rain on the radar coming our way. Dave was concerned that if we got airborne and was not able to complete our plan I would be wasting money and offered me the option to cancel. With all of the omens so far perhaps that would have been the right choice. However, having waited so long I wanted to go fly the Arrow even if it was just for 20 minutes. We booked out again and went back out to G-TORC, all seemed well I went through the different process for starting an injected engine; she started first time and hummed away whilst I went through the checklist.

Suddenly, it was time to go a quick call on the radio and we were cleared for the short taxi and to line up. Once cleared the aircraft accelerated smoothly to rotate speed and then leapt off the runway providing a nice rate of climb. I was going through my list of actions Brakes, Undercarriage, Flaps and so on under Dave’s watchful supervision. We were cleared right turn our own navigation to report clearing the zone not above 2,000 feet. This meant I had time to relax and get to grips with all that I was doing and not panic about all of the new things I was learning.

After clearing the zone Dave put me through some handling, tight turns and so on before we did a PFL. I am sure Dave catches people every time on this, but I was feeling good I had identified the field we were going to reach into wind according to some smoke we could see. The approach looked good to me if anything we were slightly high, as we got closer I dropped the undercarriage and then said out loud we are still high I will put in some more flap. The response was I wouldn't do that just yet, but I had already reached down and selected flap. It was just after this that the gear had obviously finished travelling and we got three greens. Suddenly, we were gliding at about half the rate before the undercarriage went down, there was no way I could make the field. "What are you going to do now?" said Dave, fortunately, I had the option of another field short and slightly left of the first one. Dave did not have to say anything more, I really learned about the drag of the undercarriage.

After the general handling it was time to join the circuit at Old Sarum, they were operating the westerly runway and since Boscombe was not active had a right hand circuit. In the circuit either my thinking process was really slow or the aircraft was much quicker, probably a bit of both. Anyway, it took a few touch and goes before I felt I was fully in control of things and not slightly behind the drag curve. It seemed different in so many ways to the Cherokee, even the approach view had different perspective. By now I was really enjoying myself, we departed the circuit to the South and it was time for the foggles.



After some basic exercises recovery from unusual attitudes etc, I called Bournemouth for a radar to ILS requesting a traffic service. It was quite refreshing to get such a positive response from the controller, but she limited traffic service owing to radar performance or something like that. My response of "Roger" was not enough, apparently you must acknowledge the limit in service; was this a change can't remember doing that before? It would have been nice not to have been under

foggles as traffic called to us that a Vampire climbing out to our right. Dave kept looking but never did see it. I was most impressed with the Arrow as an IMC platform, it was a lumpy day but she flew smoothly, much easier than G-XK. As we turned onto the localiser, it was hard to see as there was bright sunlight shining at the foggles. Nevertheless, I felt comfortable on the approach keeping the needles fairly central. At my MDH Dave took control and I took off the foggles and there was Bournemouth bathed in sunshine. Hopefully Dave would agree I did a nice landing, well it felt good to me so was a nice finish to my flight.

So despite all of the omens saying this was not my day, I had a very enjoyable flight, Dave felt comfortable signing off my differences validation as well as clearing me for another two years flying. With the ILS in my log book I am now ready to sit my IMC skills test, which I will arrange shortly. Looking back on things, my idea of using one of the club instructors proved to be a success for me, I got far more out of my refresher than I have in the past. Obviously, using a different aircraft and gaining additional experience helped make the whole experience better. To round off the day when we went into the bar the Red Arrows were in, including the new female member of the squad chatting to the visitors and signing autographs. Besides giving generously of his time Dave even bought me a nice cold beer, what more could I have asked for?

Flying a mini-WAR Bird – Chris Thompson

About three months ago I drove my truck and trailer from Popham up to Wickenby in Lincolnshire to collect a Focke Wulf FW190 replica that had been stored in the hangar there for over five years. G-SYFW is a prize winning, approximately half size WAR FW190 (stands for War Aircraft Replica) was originally built from plans by Mark Parr, a farmer in Guernsey in 1985. The plane is constructed from wood with a fibreglass skin and a short specification of the aircraft follows:



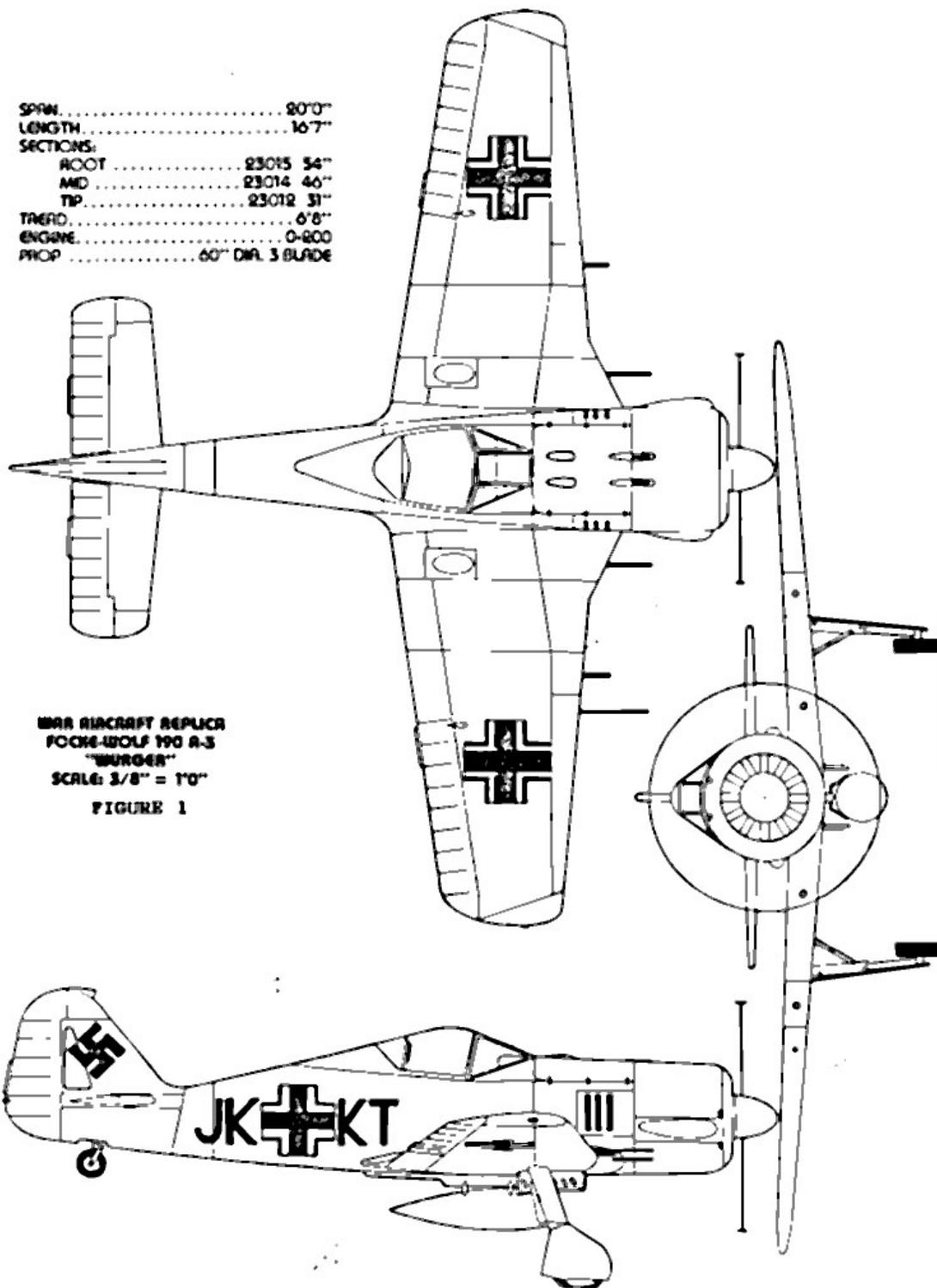
**G- FW-190
SYFW**

**Registration 2 + 1
(Fuse) 7334 (tail)**

This particular aircraft holds a CAA registration exemption to carry the colours of a famous German pilot, Josef Wurmheller who served on the Eastern Front. The plane is now owned by John Cull and it is kept in his hangar at Popham.

This FW190 won a prize when it first appeared at a Cranfield PFA Rally in 1985 and was then later sold to Gavin Hunter who flew it at East Fortune in Scotland for several years. After languishing five years in the hangar at Wickenby the plane now needed some TLC to get it airworthy again as it was showing signs of hangar rash and all the mechanisms had dried out with some rusting showing on the exhausts etc.

SPAN 80'0"
 LENGTH 16'7"
 SECTIONS:
 ROOT 23015 54"
 MID 23014 46"
 TIP 23012 31"
 TAPER 6'8"
 ENGINE O-200
 PROP 60" DIA. 3 BLADE



WAA AIRCRAFT REPLICAS
 PÖSCHEL-WOLF 190 A-3
 "BURGER"
 SCALE: 1/8" = 1'0"
 FIGURE 1

Span.....20'0"
 Length.....16'7"
 Sections:
 Root.....23015 54"
 Mid.....23014 46"
 Tip.....23012 31"
 Tread.....6'8"
 Engine.....Cont 0-200
 Lyc 0-290-D
 HCI Radial
 Prop.....60" dia. 3 blade

Empty weight.....600-620 lbs
 Max Gross Weight.....900-920 lbs
 Wing Loading.....12lbs/sq ft
 Cruise.....135 MPH @ 3.2 GPH
 Max Speed.....165 MPH
 Stall Speed.....65 MPH
 2-degree twist stalls wing
 smoothly with no obvious
 tendency to fall off on
 either wing

Approach/Pattern Speed.....70-75 MPH
 Take off run.....800-1,000 ft
 Rate of Climb.....700 ft/min
 Endurance.....3-4 hrs: 400 miles
 Maneuvering/structural
 capability.....Aerobic +/- 6g's
 Prop.....3 or 4 blade grnd adj.
 Extra features.....fully retractable landing gear
 sliding canopy, dummy
 ordnance, detachable wings
 authentic paint scheme/markings

After refitting the wings a full permit inspection was done. The engine started first time and ran sweetly with good pressures and temperatures. It was also necessary to do a full gear retraction test. The oleos gave us numerous problems as they were very sticky and they either would not maintain pressure or would not drop down fully. When this happened then unless the gear was fully extended the wheels did not go fully up into the wheel wells under the wings. There are no

safe jacking points on the plane so we had to hang it up from the roof on a rope from the engine bearers to do the retraction testing.

The undercarriage gave us some real headaches as we eventually had to take the wings on and off several times to get access to the legs. We changed all the "O" rings and the fluid but with no plans and no specifications it was all trial (and mostly error!) to get the gear to work correctly.

After the PFA inspector signed the 'Permit to Test' form I then did some taxiing trials up and down R21 at Popham to get the feel of how twitchy this little bird would be. There is NO vision at all out of the front whilst on the ground so extensive weaving about was required. I have previous experience of flying a Cassutt Racer and the FW190 was much easier to control than that! As with all single seat aircraft it was a case of "read the book", "read the book", and "read the book" again to get the numbers engraved in my mind as there would be no-one there to say "I have control"! A short shakedown flight was planned prior to a full Permit Test to see what, if any, other snags might appear after the long lay-off at Wickenby. The following picture is me taxiing out for this trial flight off R21 at Popham. The weather was not brilliant but with the wind straight down the runway it seemed suitable for this trial run.



After lining up on the runway the acceleration was smooth and after about 50 yards I was able to lift the tail and actually see where I was going. The stall warning light (no buzzer) came on at 90kts on the roll which was way too high bearing in mid the published stall speed should be 55kts. Climbing out round the corner from R21 to R26 and raising the gear the 'gear safe' light would not

come on, the engine gave a couple of 'coughs' and I decided to immediately to return. The gear came down OK and with "two greens" showed locked down. Further ground runs showed no problem with the engine and the splutter was put down to a fouled plug after the extensive taxi trials (I now run the engine almost on full lean while taxiing and the fault had not re-occurred). The first landing was 'interesting' as you cannot see the runway over the nose on finals. You just have to keep a small side slip every now and again and as you cross the threshold at 75kts, place the aircraft in the three point attitude about six inches off the deck, close the throttle and wait! Once down you cannot see ahead at all so it is then all done by peripheral vision.

As the gear did not lock up properly on this short trial the legs were stripped and adjusted again several times before we seemed satisfied that everything would work properly. The Permit to Test was extended and the great day arrived. As R26 was in use, the following photo shows me with the tail up, passing the Popham Clubhouse, off and away to do the test itself.



All went well with a benign stall at about 55kts and a Vne dive of 175kts! The little birdie cruises at around 125kts at 2500 rpm burning about 15 litres/hour. There is no forward view when flying straight and level as the top of the nose cowling is right on the natural horizon. There is no manual trim adjustment and the elevator trim was out, probably because the trim tabs had got bent after years in the hangar. This did not fail the test as the tabs could be easily adjusted later. The general handling was excellent (remember I used to fly the CriCri and the internal cockpit space and handling is very similar). The FW is stressed to +/- 6g and is aerobatic in the USA but I have not

found out why it is not in the UK as it certainly handles as if it should be. With the paperwork completed and sent off to the LAA the full Permit arrived only three days later - an excellent service as usual!

On arrival back at Popham the mandatory photo opportunity pass at 150kts for the spotters follows:



I have subsequently taken the FW to Old Sarum and also to RAF Benson for their Families Day where it attracted a fantastic amount of interest. We are still finding odd little problems - DI has failed now, and the undercarriage is still very slow to retract. There is a lot of cosmetic touching up to do on the fibreglass but we are slowly getting there!

La Ferte Alais – James Mason

I have heard a lot about La Ferte Alais over the years so set about planning a trip there this year, the airfield is some thirty miles to the south of Paris so I planned a long weekend using the Portsmouth – Cherbourg car ferry to include some sight seeing around Paris as well. The Amicale Jean-Baptiste Salis, named after its founder (1896-1967), rebuilds and puts on display, in flight or on ground, many historic aircraft. AJBS is located on the Cerny-La Ferté Alais airfield and still involves the Salis family. Apart from the museum, a large part of the aircraft are maintained to flying conditions and are frequently displayed in airshows all over France during the flying season. The Amicale is well known for its yearly airshow (always during Whit Sunday week-end) and any airshow which produces a poster like this must be worth visiting!



I knew that I was getting close to the airfield when I spotted a Junkers tri-motor overhead, not something you normally see in the skies. Driving through the town of La Ferte Alais I noticed people walking from the station to the airfield, it is quite a way but certainly feasible and might be an alternative to driving next time. Parking on the airfield, it was a short walk to the hangar area which had all sorts of interesting attractions including the Focke-Wolf 190 replica which I had hoped to see. Unfortunately it was clearly not going to fly but it was nice to see it close at first hand, top marks to those involved for making it so accessible. I now realise that I should really have gone to Popham instead! The aeroplane park was full of interesting aircraft, many of which I had not seen before. The airfield is actually on a plateau and there was an impressive view from

the edge of this park over the surrounding countryside.



The weather was pretty well perfect for a flying display and it must be one of the best that I have seen. Even though it is hard for an Englishman to say, I am always impressed by the enthusiasm for flying in France and by some of the flying feats that are achieved there. One example of this at La Ferte Alais was the flight of the Me163 replica. My disappointment at the non flying Fw190 replica was soon tempered when I saw this in the airfield park. Before then I did not even know that a Me163 replica existed let alone that it was going to fly. Seeing it being towed up was impressive enough and then the display resumed with other aircraft. A while later the Me163 reappeared and what a sight to see in the skies!, as it came in to land I lost sight of it behind the crowd and it seemed rather low to me but it was soon running along the runway to a tumultuous applause. An incredible display, I only hope it comes to the UK at some stage because I would love to see it again. Of course no air display is complete without the Red Arrows which were superb as always. An odd aspect of this display was the ground commentary by the Arrows representative and the French airshow commentator, it almost sounded as though they had been an argument between them beforehand! The show was packed with great flying from a wide diversity of types, a bit like crossing Shuttleworth and Duxford shows and the hangar displays are also excellent, I thoroughly recommend going!