

June 2011 Newsletter

Startup - James Mason

Having just returned from an IBM club event at North Harbour to celebrate the centennial of the company, it was refreshing to see various club subsections actively involved on the day. The IBM Flying Club simulator demonstration could not match the enthusiasm of some of the subsections with the sailing club even having a dinghy on the small lake outside the offices! However we did attract some interest with one participant demonstrating a rudderless landing at Southend, although he did then mention that he had flown helicopters with the Army. I never cease to be surprised by the aviation experience that you encounter around and about the club and events such as these certainly bring it to the fore.

Another case in point was the talk given to the club by Keir Macnally on his experiences flying off carriers in the Fleet Air Arm and later work with BAe selling fast jets. We had people in the audience that had been involved in some of the events that Keir spoke about which certainly makes the aviation world feel small. It was another well received talk and it was only disappointing that we could not attract a larger audience.

Following the AGM in January, the committee has agreed to continue for another year and my grateful thanks to them and some of the other helpers within the club. In the current climate, it is a challenge to maintain the club, especially with large reductions in income that we are experiencing. On a brighter note, my thanks to Nigel Waters for restarting the Pilot subscription, it is great to see it re-established as a member's benefit.

Happy and safe flying.

James S Mason
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Odd Airfields (Part 9) – John Akerman

Oaksey Park



Oaksey Park is about 3NM SE of Kemble and possibly gets overlooked as a result. If so it's a pity because it is a really lovely airfield – beautifully kept, very pretty, and with a splendid clubhouse that looks like a restored cricket pavilion but in fact is a Club homebuild. The two runways (17/35 at 795M and 22/04 at 975M) are exceptionally level and smooth, although it's best to land just after the windsock when on 22 because of an old filled-in ditch that refuses to remain level. Handily the windsock is close to the white displaced threshold markers. PPR by phone for a first visit, due to local noise abatement and overflight restrictions. Avgas and JetA1 available. Not that easy to spot from the air since at first glimpse it looks more like parkland than airfield. The photo was taken looking across 22/04, towards the 04 end. Sorry about the RV in the way.

Wadswick Strip



Wadswick (04/22, 650M) is about 2NM SW of the lovely Cotswold town of Corsham and nicely located for a longish stroll to see the town and the splendid 16th century Corsham Court (house and Capability Brown gardens). Corsham is also home to enormous underground quarries from which stone was cut to build Bath. During WW2 the quarries were used for, amongst other things, a Bristol aero engine factory and ammunition storage. Also partly underground at Corsham is RAF Rudloe Manor, HQ for Fighter Command 10 Group in WW2. Right next to Wadswick Strip is a large country store in the grounds of a Cotswold stone farm. In one corner of the store (which is where landing donations to Wiltshire Air Ambulance are made) is an excellent little café. The airfield is very close to RAF Colerne and within Lyneham CTR (until September 2011, anyway) so please talk to Lyneham Zone and if possible plan an approach from the SW. Strictly PPR, and note that the bit about traffic lights that still appears in flight guides no longer applies although the access road to the country store is close enough to 04 threshold to make landing short a bad idea. See <http://www.wadswick.co.uk> Photo shows the parking area on the S side of the strip. The country store is next to 04 threshold and also on the S side.

Lydeaway Field



It's about 3 miles SE of Devizes and is immediately north of, and parallel to, the railway line that runs between Newbury and Frome. It's not marked on the Ed 37 half mill but you will find it right under the 'S' of the chart legend 'BOSCOMBE DOWN ARA' that appears just to the right of Devizes. It's a bit of a hike to Devizes itself but well worth a visit to see the 16 locks at Caen Hill and the town itself. The strip is PPR by phone from either of the numbers in the AFE guide, which also contains very useful and accurate guidance on noise abatement etc. The owner will provide the combination of the clubhouse lock so that you can pay a landing donation and make a cup of tea. Note that the displaced thresholds (obvious from the positions of the 2 windsocks) really do need to be respected because there are quite large dips adjacent to both. The photo is a bit blurred but you should be able to make out the two windsocks.

Illness – Paul Eathorne

Just a quick update from me to thank everyone for their kind thoughts following my recent body 'engine failure'.

Ironically, I'd taken a week off work to chill out and it was a Tuesday evening after a stunningly beautiful 24 mile bike ride through the lanes around Cheriton that I was relaxing by just sitting on the bed. With no warning, I lost all coordination and basically had to get flat on the floor in order to crawl to the loo, where I spent the night in very unpleasant circumstances. An out of hours Doctor diagnosed Labyrinthitis (wrongly as it turned out - seems I'm too young and fit to be a classic stroke candidate so confused the medics for a long while) and it was a few more days before an ambulance was called after my condition deteriorated, a period of which I have no memory at all. A visit to QA was rapidly followed by a transfer to SGH for an operation to drain a startling amount of fluid from my brain.

I can only recall events a few days after the op, starting with having lots of drips and wires attached to me. The main recollection, which lasts to the current day, is of tiredness and dizziness. Whatever people may have heard of the NHS, my treatment was fantastic, the nurses and Doctors I came across were all a great bunch. Agreed, you had to be a bit careful what you eat but that's a small matter!!

After a short spell at QA to recuperate, I've since been discharged and am currently recovering in Cornwall. The outlook is not as quick as I'd like but hey ho, I'm told eventually I will be back to normal, even if it takes months rather than weeks.

So thank you for all the kind words, in particular good luck to Dave who I hope is back to health in quick time.

In the meantime, enjoy your flying and everything else in life, you never know what's in store for you.

Airbase, Coventry – James Mason

Quite a few years ago, we had a club flyin in Air Atlantique at Coventry. I particularly remember this trip since I was fortunate to fly in their Percival Prentice in the P2 seat and it was quite a memorable day out. Consequently with the recent opening of their Airbase facility, I was keen to go back and see some of the aircraft again.

The first stop was the DC6 diner and what a nice job has been done on converting this aeroplane. The tables are arranged at along side of the aircraft with a bar at the rear with the food being brought onto the aircraft. The internal arrangement has been well thought out with good views over the airfield on the starboard side tables. I really enjoyed the meal on board and the quality was good at a reasonable price, I

overheard quite a few favourable remarks from other diners. What a great facility for Coventry airport and it is a really imaginative idea, if I was a private pilot at Coventry I know where I would be on rainy days!



In these days of health and safety with the ever increasing burden of security, it seems to me that we have lost the facility to comfortably look at aeroplanes in airports, let alone walk around them. I feel particularly sorry for youngsters interested in aviation since the days of being able to easily observe aeroplanes at your local airport have largely disappeared. In this respect, Airbase is really quite special in that you are able to walk around aeroplanes and see them being worked on and these are not just museum exhibits but generally aeroplanes that are or within reach of being airworthy. It is almost as if you are walking around an airport apron with an incredible diversity of aeroplanes. Traditional museums are great but sometimes seeing aeroplanes in an advanced state of decay with peeling paintwork and flat tyres is not the best encouragement for youngsters interested in aviation. In this respect, Airbase is great in that you feel that every aeroplane is being looked after and you can see jobs being worked on which must surely promote engineering skills with the younger visitors. The Heron below was being worked on with the propellers removed but visitors were still able to walk around the aeroplane.



The active maintenance hangar could be viewed from the doors and a lot of interesting work was going on inside, I also spotted an 'old friend' of some of the club members- the Chrislea Super Ace:



Airbase have a Shackleton and Nimrod MR2 and on my visit both were open to visitors. I remember going inside the Shackleton when it had first arrived at Coventry and today it is still in excellent condition, a real testament to the volunteers who look after her. I was shown around by one of them who told me that they were shortly going to ground run all four engines which must be a treat. The Shackleton is an interesting aeroplane to look around inside and there are not many opportunities to look around aeroplanes of this generation and clambering over spars in the main cabin! The Nimrod MR2 XV232 was signed as fuelled and electrically 'live' and certainly looked as though it was ready to go, again it was great just to be able to wander around inside the cabin and view the systems. I remember looking inside a MR2 a few years back at a trade show, I think it was Farnborough, and now here it is in a museum. With the history of the Comet and Nimrod in British aviation, it's a pity that one cannot be kept flying but the Airbase exhibit is certainly the next best thing.



Altogether, I was very impressed by Airbase and I really hope that they are successful in what they are trying to achieve. I have visited quite a few aviation museums and Airbase must surely be world class in their novel approach in creating a living museum.

A New Type – Bob Elliott

Those of you who know me will be aware that I'm always up for a ride in any aeroplane, but a new type adds to the level of keenness! My first flight was on the 24 May 1958 in a BEA Dakota from Eastleigh to Jersey. First light aeroplane was an Auster Alpha later that year. Through my first job at the Hampshire Aeroplane Club I had the opportunity to fly in number of what are now quite rare and exotic machines, including the Stinson Reliant, Messenger, Hornet and Tiger Moths, Rapide, Emeraude, Jackaroo, and Airspeed Oxford. In the 1960's and 1970's most of the flying I did was in airliners, which included Constellation, Superfreighter, Vanguard, BAC111, Britannia, 707, 727, DC10, Trident, and so on. In 1977 I flew in the Sandringham, and in 1982 Concorde. The 1980's brought my first Airbus (300), and a whole range of Boeings, and MD's. Then in 1990 Mr Mellor dangled the carrot of a trial lesson in a Grumman Tiger, and the rest, as they say, is history!

In the 1990's I added over 50 different types to my list, including a hot air balloon, Aeronca C3, our beloved Fuji 200, Long Ez, Robinson 22, Schleicher Glider, Cessna 425, Prentice, Piper Beech and Cessna twins, Cub and Cessna Floatplanes, Viscount, loads of different airliners, and the never-to-be-forgotten Cyclone Microlight!

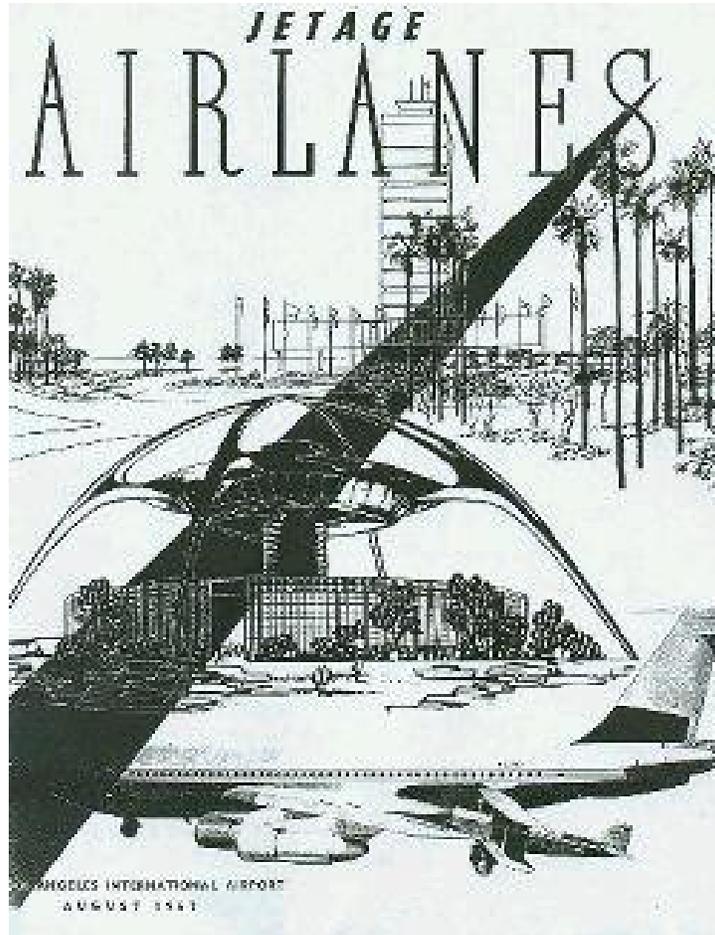
The 2000's saw a big downturn in the amount of flying I did, but still managed to bag a few more types like the Chrislea Ace, Mooney 20, Beaver floatplane, Cirrus 22, Aeronca Champ, PA46 Malibu, and a few more airliners.

The 109 different types I claim to have flown in include the different models of 737 (2,3,4,5,8) and 747 (1,2,4), so its a bit of a fraud, really.

However, in August 2010, the chance of flying in a truly different airliner was too much of a chance to miss. I spotted an advert for a trip on the A380 of Air France, which was as affordable as my Concorde experience (Calshot air display - £99!). This was to fly from Heathrow to Paris de Gaulle, and back the next day. It was remarkable. The flight time was 40 minutes, and in that time they managed to serve the 500-plus passengers a drink! Before and after the flight we were allowed to have a good look around the double-decker, and there lies my only warning if ever you get to fly on this fine aeroplane. Don't get on first. It takes about an hour to load 500-odd passengers. Once aboard, it was great. The noise-level, comfort, and performance, were outstanding. Recommended. I doubt you will get as good a deal as we did though. For my 110th different type - 82 quid return!

Lax time at LAX – James Mason

There is something about the 'Theme Building' at Los Angeles International Airport (LAX), its certainly an iconic building which has appeared a lot in TV and movies. It reminds me of something that could come out of H. G. Wells' 'War of the Worlds', a sort of giant spider ready to pounce on unsuspecting air passengers. Anyway on a recent transit stop, I decided to leave the humdrum existence of airport terminals and to investigate further.



The building was constructed in the early 1960s and was originally going to be part of a larger dome structure. It was designed to have a restaurant from the beginning and on my trip I hoped to visit since it is generally open lunchtimes and evenings. However for some reason it did not seem to open that lunchtime, maybe just as well since I was meant to be travelling on a budget. The lift does take you up to an observation deck which gives a great view of around the airport:



Returning down to the base of the building I did find a cafeteria which is mainly intended for airport employees but which served good traditional food and a welcome relief to what was available in the terminal. Walking around the base of the building was also pretty pleasant although it was a baking hot day when I was there. Altogether a good way to spend an hour or so whilst waiting between flights and next time I hope to sample the cocktail bar....



Here is some feedback from club members, if you have any comments then drop me a line and I'll include in subsequent newsletters:

Hi IBM Flyers,

Here are the official photos from the fly-in that we went to on Sat 4th June at Tisted (near the West Meon Hut). Super afternoon and lots of really interesting planes

Best Regards

Denis

Subject: FW: Tisted Picture Album

Hi Guys,

I have uploaded the 48 Tisted pictures to an on line album. If it all worked then click on this link (or Cut and past this link into your browser) to see the slide show. If you then want a specific picture sent to you I will do it individually. Once again, credit to Wes Edwards for the photos.

Link is:

https://picasaweb.google.com/crt86t/Tisted2011?authkey=Gv1sRgCO_Qi7We84OBOA&feat=email

Rgds, Chris