



April 2012

This Month's Meeting - Wednesday 18th April

Our speaker for April is Andy Marshall from Lindstrand Balloons who will be telling us about Balloons and Ballooning. Andy designs and does the stress calculations for the "weird" shaped hot air balloons such as houses and Boeing 737s etc. He also builds and flies radio controlled hot air balloons.

This will be the last indoor meeting until September. From the beginning of May there will be regular weekly fly-ins - weather permitting - which will be notified by e-mail from Myron, the Summer Events Coordinator. (See Myron's article on page 2)

Quote of the Month

"A pilot who says he has never been frightened in an airplane is, I'm afraid, lying."— *Louise Thaden*

Police Ports Authority by Nick Heywood
The meeting on the 21st of March was well attended and, I think, enjoyed by all.

We started off with a presentation given by Nick Penmore of the Gloucestershire Police Ports Unit. Which covers counter terrorism as well as smuggling etc. They are also interested in any crime or unusual behaviour in or near airstrips or hangars. In view of the thefts of Rotax engines last year this has to be good for us. Below is a link to the Pegasus page of their website that shows a video filmed

by them at Staverton explaining what they are about.

<http://www.gloucestershire.police.uk/counterterrorism/Ports%20Unit/Aviation/item18214.html>

The Ports Unit would like to know the details of any sites used by Club members. So if members could contact them on the address below they would be very grateful. If you have any problems they are then more likely to be able to respond quickly.

DC Emyr Harvey
Gloucestershire Ports Unit,
Protective Services,
Police Headquarters,
No.1 Waterwells,
Quedgeley, Glos GL2 2AN
Tel:-01242 247899 ,Fax:- 01242 247896

For General Enquiries email:
<ports.unit@gloucestershire.pnn.police.uk>

For General Aviation Reports
email:<gar@gloucestershire.pnn.police.uk>

After this presentation we moved on to the main talk for the evening, which was about Bruce Drake and friends summer flight down to Malta in a pair of CTs, given by Anthony Hartley who, it seems, did all the planning and editing of the film while Bruce seemed to do the drinking

and taking the credit!!! He claimed his film was stolen. Do we believe him? Seriously though there are some lowlives about, so just try and make sure all your kit is secure. I enjoyed it and it made me want to get everything together and do some continental touring.

SVMC fly-ins commence 2nd May by Myron Burak

The popular SVMC Fly-ins will commence this year on the 2nd May. The usual format will apply, in that food and drink will be provided at the venue. We have the usual long list of venues, with maybe a couple of new ones to arouse your interest. The actual event on that day is always, of course, weather permitting. As has been the practice in the past, the decision to go/no go will be taken at the last practical time, this being the Tuesday evening of each week. So look out for an e-mail giving you all the details if it is go, or cancelling if it is not go.

The first event is scheduled for the 2nd May at The Flying Shack, Staverton, hosted by Mike Edwards. As I will not be around in this week, the decision to go will come from our Chairman, Dick. Mike has said that we can fly-in any time but full details will be published nearer the time by e-mail.

I will not be around the next week either, which is the 9th May, so this event will be organised by Dave Steade and will be at Croft Farm, Defford. Once again, watch out for details by e-mail nearer the date. The go/no go will come from Dave directly, or possibly Nick, our winter programme organiser.

Some words now on safety. One very important point to note is that where a field does not have an approved ground frequency, then for Club events **SAFETYCOM** on **135.475** should be used. Safetycom can be used by aircraft operating in the vicinity of an aerodrome

or landing site that does not have an approved air to ground frequency and should normally be used only to broadcast the pilot's intentions. There should be no response from the ground, except where the pilot of an aircraft on the ground also needs to transmit his intentions. It is worth noting a couple of points. First that 129.825 is definitely **not actually allocated to general microlight use** in any way, contrary to a widely held view. At Club fly ins we must be seen to be correct. Also, not all SVMC members have radios, so there may well be non radio aircraft in the vicinity of airfields where radio is not mandatory, which, in the case of our fly-Ins, will be most of them. A keen look out will be needed. There may well be upwards of 20 aircraft at any venue. Proper circuit procedure should be adhered to, appropriate for that field. Details will be circulated on this for each event. Whilst on the ground, be very careful of and considerate to other aircraft and pedestrians, who may not be aircrew, but members of the public.

I hope to organise a series of fly-ins that are up to the very high standard that has been the case up to now in the Club.

Record Altitude Attempt, Defford by Andrew John

Croft Farm has hosted an extraordinary variety of visitors over the years – this was no exception!

Preparations began at 7 am on the 24th February 2012 on a bright and increasingly breezy day. A film crew from Bristol, accompanied by a 'professional meteorologist', began to prepare a weather balloon which was to be attached to a camera and recovery parachute. The purpose of this 'flight' was to obtain an high altitude picture of the earth's curvature for the BBC 'One Show Challenge' series.

The components were assembled in a conveniently sheltered open hanger,

facing east. Two cameras were secured in a polystyrene box to which was attached a recovery parachute. These in turn were attached to the neck of the balloon. In addition a tracking beacon was on board with which to plot the route and assist recovery.

Filming the event inevitably slowed the operation. However, by 11am all the checks had been made and the balloon had been inflated with helium, held down by four plastic milk bottles of water! The camera box and recovery parachute were secured by a ten metre light cord to the neck of the balloon. The local ATC had been contacted and the whole combination was cautiously moved out of the shelter of the hanger into the breeze, which now was gusting at over 15 mph, requiring several hands to control the lurching rubber monster and its fragile payload.

The 'launch' required the 'crew' to run as fast as possible downwind allowing the balloon to rise before releasing it. At this point its distorted pear shape resumed a natural sphere as it rapidly ascended, trailing the camera and its recovery parachute. Thanks to the clear blue sky



the white diminishing dot remained visible for at least ten minutes. Once out of sight the track and altitude were displayed on a laptop screen showing a track of almost due east. After twenty five minutes the upper winds had taken it as far as Milton Keynes, rising through 35,000ft.

Target altitude was 100,000ft at which point the balloon would burst or would be automatically released from its payload, which would then return to earth (or sea?!).

Surprisingly the film/launch crew were in no hurry to leave, but eventually they moved off in pursuit of their 'quarry'.

Flight Report:-

Launch	: 1140 hrs
Croft Farm, Defford, Worcs	
Balloon burst	: 1310 hrs
8 miles south of Bedford	
Altitude at Balloon burst	: 98,000 feet
Payload landed	: 1400 hrs Church End, Braintree, Essex
Distance travelled	: 115 miles

Apparently this will be broadcast on the BBC One Show in about four months time!

VISIT TO CARDIFF INTERNATIONAL

-by Bob Hinds

It all started with Alan Coulon telling me about a great time he had flying to Cardiff sometime ago and how welcome he had been made. I mentioned that if he was going again sometime, I would like to come along.

Tuesday 6th March there was a text from Alan - "How about Cardiff?" The weather was great. He had phoned Cardiff, I was free to go, so we met at Staverton at 1230 and, after all the preps and signing out, we left at around 1330 for our trip to Cardiff International.

The visibility was clear. We headed out over the Severn and followed the estuary all the way down.

With Alan doing all the radio work, I was able to take note of all the procedures that I had let lapse all these years. After contacting Cardiff, we were handed over to Filton Radar and then back to Cardiff as we passed Newport. The views were spectacular (although not beautiful) of the docks and old steel works as we made our way down to Cardiff.

As we approached Cardiff bay, we had the airfield in sight and were given a right base approach to R30 and no circuit pattern to adhere to. We were even told that we could park where Alan had parked before - they are so friendly and welcoming there. The width of the runway made it seem as if we could have landed across the runway if needed!! Told to turn left from R30, we parked in AEROS, made our way to the Clubhouse and signed in. Provided you contact Paul Keeble on 07969980799, before flying there, the landing fee is £23.50.

The Clubhouse has a nice café where hot meals can be had at a reasonable price. Everyone is friendly and welcoming and "they like to see microlights in". We met an elderly gent, originally from Gloucester, in his 80's, still flying and appeared to have flown everything right down to the original Stearmans - a real character.

After a bite to eat, and before leaving, Alan decided he would be happier to have a top up of fuel. We thought that we would have to taxi to the pumps but we were told to wait where we were. The bowser duly arrived. Moving the bowser probably consumed more fuel than the 10 litres Alan purchased!



We made our preparations to leave, called the tower and were told to hold at taxiway as a KLM Fokker FK 70 landed in front of us. Then we were cleared for take off on that vast runway. A right turn routed us west of the Wenvoe Mast

(lots of radio interference as we passed), and then back to Staverton, initially following the motorway and then the estuary.



With a good tailwind we had a ground speed of 100mph plus and we were home in around 50mins .

A really great afternoon of enjoyable flying to somewhere different, not too far away and you are made to feel welcome. I suppose there are not too many places where you are welcome to mix it with the BIG UNS!!

Thanks, Alan. for a great afternoon

Safety

This is the time of year when we have a few moments to think about flying before we reach the flying season. The spell of dry, cold weather earlier in the year, no doubt encouraged some Club members to do some flying. However, there will be others, for whatever reasons, who will not have flown during the winter. Obviously, being good pilots, they will give their aircraft a very thorough preflight inspection before using it for the first time since last season. Although the aircraft may be in tiptop condition what about the pilot? The obvious thing to check is the validity of your medical certificate. If a visit to your GP is necessary to renew it then there will be an opportunity for the doctor to assess your physical condition. However, if you don't need to visit your GP then the assessment of your condition is down to you. Be honest with yourself. Are you mentally and physically fit to act as Pilot

in Charge of an aircraft? **This is as important as the condition of your aircraft.** These are the two major items when thinking about flying - the aircraft and yourself.

We now come to the extras, some of which are optional. These days our aircraft are equipped with many electronic devices such as GPS and radio. In both cases it is worth checking the battery supply for this equipment. If you have not flown, have you left the battery in situ and connected or has it been removed from the aircraft completely? In either case it will benefit from a good, steady session connected to the charger. It is easy to check whether both GPS and radio are working without actually flying - initially just switch them on! In the case of radio it is possible to ask for a radio check while on the ground either from the local airport or from other flyers on the field. This will confirm both reception and transmission. Be aware, though, that if you check the radio using it as a handheld with a rubber duck aerial it does not prove that your aerial connection in the aircraft is serviceable. Equally, your radio may show in its display the fact that you are transmitting but the signal may not be reaching the aerial due to a faulty connection or aerial lead being damaged. One other piece of mandatory equipment is a current map which is your backup should your GPS and/or radio fail in flight. The latest half-mil England South map was published on 8th March. Think about these things and enjoy a safe flying season.

Use of the Radio by Bill Austin

With the flying season almost upon us it is an opportune time to consider the use of the radio in an aircraft. At least two Club members have experienced problems when using the radio and, without doubt, other members have similar experiences to report.

One of our members had an altercation (on the ground) with another pilot

arriving at the airfield. Both pilots had broadcast their position and intentions before landing. The visiting pilot accused the other of bad airmanship and of cutting him up on final. In actual fact it was the visiting pilot who was in the wrong because he was using the wrong radio frequency for the airfield. The frequency had been changed sometime previously but the pilot had not bothered to check before he set out.

Action-be sure to have the most up-to-date frequency for your destination. If there is any doubt at all do not rely on published information but phone your destination directly. Also take this opportunity to obtain any particular local requirements such as circuit height and procedure and no-go areas.

Can you hear me?

What do you do if, apparently, nobody replies to you? First carry out the following checks:-

1. Are you using the correct frequency?
2. Are you within radio range of an airfield?
3. Is the volume on the receiver is set correctly?
4. Is the squelch control adjusted so that the static is just eliminated?

Follow this by checking whether your radio is actually receiving signals by tuning to another known frequency. If you can hear other aircraft or ground stations then you might have a failure in the transmission circuit. Using this working frequency request a radio check from the other station. If you receive no reply be suspicious that the transmit circuit or one of its components is faulty in some way. When using the push to talk button check that the transmit icon on the radio display lights up/appears. This, however, merely indicates that the transmit circuit within the radio has been activated and **not** that the signal is being sent to or leaving the aerial. As soon as is reasonably practical check all the aerial connectors and the cable between the

radio and the aerial itself. If the radio develops a fault while in flight, by all means try and trace the fault but do not let this interfere with your prime function of flying the aircraft.

Action- 1. Whenever possible carry out a radio check before takeoff. If this is not practicable do it as soon as possible after takeoff.

2. If you suspect a fault in the aerial lead replace it and the connectors at either end.

3. Check also that the connection at the bottom of the aerial on the aircraft is not corroded.

4. If all else fails, have the radio checked by an electronic engineer.

If there is a transmission of speech failure but you can still receive it may be possible to use the carrier wave to communicate in emergency - known as the "speechless code". Details of this can be found in CAP 413 which can be viewed/downloaded via the CAA website.

Internet

This could also come under the Safety heading but you need a computer to see it. Keeping a good lookout is essential to safe flying. We have all read that we should not stare fixedly but scan in small segments. To see what happens if you stare at one point for a short length of time go to www.msf-usa.org/motion.html I guarantee you will be surprised!

Gloucestershire and Wycombe join UK airfields offering UL 91

Wycombe Air Park and Gloucestershire airport have this week joined the growing number of UK airfields offering Total's new unleaded avgas UL 91. Wycombe is in the final stages of preparation and will be online in the coming weeks, while Gloucestershire began offering the new fuel from Monday 19th March. At Gloucestershire, the avgas is retailing at £1.79 per litre including VAT, some 20 p per litre cheaper than 100 LL. The airfield

has allocated a 13,000 litre underground tank for the product and total have installed a new pump and hose reel. Airport Operations Director, Darren Lewington said, "We have every intention of remaining at the forefront of developments in the GA industry and we are very well aware that the Rotax-powered fleet is a growing sector of the business. Amidst the current spiralling oil prices, anything that reduces operating costs has to be of benefit to the industry. We are going to incentivise things further by offering a reduced landing fee of five pounds (including VAT) to visitors refuelling with UL 91 at the airport."

Gloucestershire Airport emerges as UK's "busiest GA airfield"

Official Civil Aviation Authority statistics have revealed that Gloucestershire Airport at Staverton was amongst the busiest in the UK during 2011, with the majority of the traffic being GA aircraft.

Gloucestershire appears at number 13 in the list of 64 UK commercial airports, handling 66,715 flights during the year -- just pipping Bristol and beating other major regional airports such as Newcastle and Belfast.

"The figures are very encouraging," says Head of Operations, Darren Lewington. "All those airports above us in the list are major, 24-hour operators handling airliners with hundreds of passengers aboard. The majority of our aircraft are light and training aircraft, with a small number of business and scheduled flights, such as our daily services to the Isle of Man. This is known in the industry as 'General Aviation', and the table clearly shows us as the number one GA airfield in the UK.

"We have a huge diversity of operations here, ranging from hot air balloons and microlights to emergency helicopters and business jets. All of these contribute to a thriving centre of business activity,

creating jobs and generating income for the county.

"The airport will be completing its £3.8m Runway Safety Project later this year, which is expected to stimulate business traffic further, especially with the closure of Filton airport, north of Bristol.

"The economic situation and rising fuel prices are still very challenging, but we're looking forward to a successful future. In addition to our runway project, there are a number of development and hangar refurbishment projects also underway amongst our tenants and these statistics underline the role the Airport has to play."

Microlight Trade Fair

The annual outdoor showcase for microlighting takes place at Popham Airfield over the May Bank Holiday weekend. If the weather is cooperative there will be many aircraft of all sorts fighting to occupy the restricted airspace around the field. Be aware of this and take care.

Your Editor would be grateful to receive, in due course, some comments on the show and news of any particularly interesting new developments from any member or members visiting the show.

Dates for your Diary

28th 29th April - Clench Common, Triple B Fly-in. See details earlier in the newsletter

5th – 6th May – Microlight Trade Fair and Fly-in – Popham Airfield

1st – 4th June – Nationals Round and Tour of Cornwall, Over Farm

2nd – 3rd June - Round Wales Rally

15th – 24th June – Fly UK 2012

23rd – 29th July – EAA AirVenture, Oshcosh, Wisconsin, USA

7th August – 1st September – World Microlight and Paramotor Championships, Air Marugan, Segovia. Details at <www.airmarugan.com>

31st August – 2nd September – LAA Rally, Sywell

1st - 2nd December – The Flying Show, NEC Birmingham

For Sale

Mainair Flash2 Alpha 1990 - ideal first microlight. Airframe 320 hours, Engine Rotax 462 LC 120 hours. Warp drive prop, intercom and helmets. permit ran out march 2012. can be seen at Over Farm. £1200. For more details telephone Russell on 01452 812940.

Acknowledgements

Andrew John and Bob Hinds for their articles and photos. John Hamer for the items about Avgas and Gloucestershire Airport. Myron Burak for the fly-in information and Nick Heywood for follow up details of the Port Authority talk..

Congratulations also to John Sparks whose photo of Kemble in the snow won the April Microlight Flying competition - a larger version of the photo which appeared in last month's Airscrew

Bill Austin (Editor)
marshview@btinternet.com
01684 833789