



November 2014

This month's meeting

Our Guest Speaker for November is 'Roly' Robinson and the title is 'An Instructors Plight'

Roly is a senior engineer with EDF. He builds Nuclear Power Stations for a living but he is also a part time/volunteer GA Instructor at Cotswold Flying Club based at Gloucestershire Airport. He has several thousand hours and is qualified in fixed wing and rotary aircraft as well as recently learning proper flying in a flex wing with our very own Rob Keene!

Roly is not charging the Club a fee but would welcome donations for his particular charity, Dementia UK.

Please park in Roberts Road (opposite the camp entrance) and then cross the road to enter the camp via the pedestrian entrance. Remember to arrive in good time for passes to be issued so that the meeting can start on time at 8.00pm

Quote of the Month

"Flying was a very tangible freedom. In those days, it was beauty, adventure, discovery -- the epitome of breaking into new worlds." — Anne Morrow Lindbergh

Fly-in Report Correction - Andy Virgoe

I have been corrected in that one intrepid Severn Valley flier did attend the Shobdon event. None other than Steve Slade, who tells me the weather was in fact quite good and after hanging around waiting for everyone else, he gave up and went home!

Summer Fly-Ins - Co-ordinator required for 2015

from Andy Virgoe
I, with Alan's help, took on the job of organising the summer fly-ins at last year's AGM when no one else volunteered. The news was greeted at home with 'and where are you going to find the time to do that?'

Well the time was found but now reason has to prevail as I need to get the house I started building 11 years ago finished as the time has come when we need to consider moving, so finished means actually finished as in ready to be put up for sale !

Add in flying the Rans I bought this year and the Sherwood Ranger which is yet to have the repairs completed I have decided to step down from the post of Summer Fly-In Co-ordinator as the time devoted to 'flying' needs to be trimmed.

So a **volunteer is needed** to take it on for the 2015 season. If you think you could do it you are welcome to give me a call and I will explain exactly what it entails.

Midnight VFR Flying in Sweden (or Rich, Russ and Tim's amazing Arctic Adventure) by Dick Osler (Part One)

DAY ONE (18 JUNE 2014)

So, there was I, in the cold light of dawn at Oaksey Park, Gloucestershire on 18 June 2014 at 0800 hrs surveying G-AZWB, a well used PA28/140 Cherokee. How the hell did I get in this position? There was I, a guy knocking on the door of 70 (God willing), apparently having agreed to fly up to the Arctic Circle with Russ and Tim (who are both in their 40s) with a view to doing some midnight VFR (Visual Flight Rules) flying. The trip was to take between 10-12 days and involve some 40+ hours of flying. I have a LAPL (Light Aircraft Pilot's Licence) for GA aircraft/microlights and some 500 hours in the logbook. I felt completely out of my depth.

Russ (Stein) has done this trip before on previous occasions and was hooked on it. I have flown with Russ on several occasions in PA-28s and his EV-97. Tim (Smith), like me, was a relatively low hours GA pilot. The plan was for me to share the flying between Tim's PA-28 and Russ's EV-97 and to be the duty photographer. We were basically using the PA-28 as a baggage truck so that we could actually take more than a change of underwear (should we need it)!



We had the foresight to equip the Eurostar with a GoPro video camera and Spot Tracker so that this would give a clue to

the AAIB about our demise and show our loved ones when they would be eligible to claim on the additional life insurance policies that we had raised!

The first stage was to fly to Damyns Hall, east of London, prior to flying across the channel. The weather was fairly marginal, with showers and unspectacular viz, but having loaded everything aboard, we set off at around 0920L. The flight to Damyns Hall was pretty low key. The viz was not much to shout about but with London to our west, we had a murky view of Wembley Stadium and in the distance, the London Eye.

On arrival at Damyns, we set about refuelling the aircraft and ourselves. We had to have the obligatory aviator's breakfast, and with no landing fee to pay providing we had a meal in the airfield restaurant, it was a no brainer. We all had the foresight to kit ourselves out with immersion-suits. This was not only for the brief channel crossing, but the cold waters of the Baltic and the Gulf of Bothnia that lay ahead. We also had PLBs and as mentioned before, the Spot Tracker. Has anyone here tried to put on an immersion (blobby) suit? The ones that we hired (£60) were made of a breathable fabric. However, putting one on seemed to be similar to climbing inside the inner tube of a bicycle! The suit may have been breathable, but with the vice like rubber clamp around the neck, personal breathing was initially a chore, let alone the clamp around the wrists and rubber socks! Another phenomenon that became apparent was that as altitude increased, the air contained within the suit began to expand. With great hilarity, we exhibited arms like Schwarzenegger. A pull on the rubber seal at the wrist caused the suit to rapidly deflate with the sound and effect of a rapidly deflating balloon! We filed a flight plan for our channel crossing on-line via

SkyDemon (a boon to us throughout our trip).

I changed aircraft at this stage and flew in Russ's EV-97 for the channel crossing. Tim fancied a lengthy North Sea crossing from Damyns Hall to Midden Zeeland (Holland), but I preferred the brief hop across the channel from Dover to Cap Gris-Nez and then up the coast through France and Belgium. I wouldn't say that the cloudbase was really low across the channel, but I swear that from out of the drizzle came a Maersk container ship that loomed above us, and climbing over the ship, I believe that the VSI was reading 500 fpm caused by a thermal from the heat emitted by the funnel!



Mid-channel, we were handed over from London FIR to Lille FIR. Once across the other side, conditions became much better, and flying along the coast, the French landscape was a pleasure. Soon we were in contact with Brussels, and a flight over Brugge was really memorable. Near the Belgian/Dutch border we were handed over to Dutch Military.

We landed at Midden Zeeland at 1525L, a flight time of 2hrs 20 mins. A really pleasant sleepy airfield was my impression of this, and we were met by two customs officials who were really pleasant and checked our passports.

Having found nothing amiss, we were allowed into the airfield tower/restaurant and paid our €22 ultralight landing fee. The relief of getting out of the blobby suits was immeasurable! There was very little

airfield activity, but several GA aircraft were out on the apron.



We closed our flight plan from UK. An hour and a half comfort break and coffee/cake, and another flight plan opened, we were airborne once again, heading for the German border.

What struck me was the informality (in general) of European Air Traffic Control. On approaching the German border we changed to Bremehaven Flight Information and were entertained with a spontaneous reading of the results of the World Cup Football games that had been played that day!

We had booked to stay in an hotel at Barssel in Germany (Hotel Dubrovnik) and with a flight time of 2 hours 20 mins we touched down at Barssel at 1925L. My reasonable German language skills came in handy (learnt from the days of being in the RAF in Berlin for 7 years), but on landing at Barssel, we went into the flying club building, to be met with a fluent English speaking controller (Tony). He was in the throes of teaching one of his students the art of radio telephony, and as she had prepared this huge saucepan full of Goulash, it seemed to be churlish to refuse, so we were well fed. We then tied the EV-97 down and removed our bags from Tim's PA-28 that had arrived 20 minutes before us. A German pilot that happened to be on the airfield at the time of our arrival willingly agreed to run us the 3 kms to the hotel.

The hotel was OK, the food was reasonable, and the beer was great. The weather was going downhill however, and we anticipated that we would not be flying the next day, and as it turned out, this was the case. **Hours flown today: 5:40**



DAY TWO (19 JUNE 2014).

There were no rooms available at our hotel the next day, but we managed to find another hotel within a short distance and booked there. En-route to our new hotel, we called at Barsell airfield to check that all was well with the aircraft and rechecked the tie-downs on the EV-97. The Wi-Fi signal at the next hotel left a lot to be desired however, so the flight planning for the next leg of our trip was tedious. Probably more tedious was having to stay in a rural area of Lower Saxony for an additional day, where the national sport seemed to be muck-spreading! A couple of beers improved the situation, but we were longing to be on our way once more.

DAY THREE. (20 JUNE 2014).

The day dawned pretty grey and grim, but the met forecast showed an improvement further north, so we made a decision to grin and bear it briefly through the murk, with the promise of better to come. We were airborne at 0900 and I was flying with Tim in the PA-28. We were pretty low on fuel, so our first stop was at Westerstede, a pretty little airfield with some fabulous buildings nearby and only 15 minutes by air from Barssel. We filled up and gasped at the €2.30/litre price tag, but later when we were on our return journey, we had to pay €3 for 100LL back in Holland.

The second leg of the day was from Westerstede (Germany) to Höganäs, Sweden (therefore, another flight plan to open). This was a 2hr 50 min flight time and just about maximum bladder endurance! Funnily enough, the subject of adult nappies came up, though fortunately we didn't buy them! A handful of salted peanuts and rice-cakes seemed to prevent an excess of internal fluid, but we all made a suitable contribution to the Swedish plumbing system at the airfield once we landed! Typical of Sweden, the Höganäs airfield was immaculately maintained and the airfield "manager" Lars was so typical of what is so good about flying in Sweden. Nothing was too much trouble for him. Höganäs has a clubhouse with cooking facilities and bedrooms. It costs around 150 SKR (around £15 per room) and there is coffee/biscuits, a lounge with television and hot showers. No landing fee is charged. Bicycles are available to hire for £2.50 and the nearby town has a reasonable restaurant on the waterfront. The only drawback with Sweden is the beer. It is generally 2% proof. We didn't stay at Höganäs on the way up, but did so on our return.



The third leg of the journey north was from Höganäs to Falköping. This took 1 hr 35 mins and we stopped for a brief comfort break. We were flying on 20 June and there is a huge celebration throughout Sweden to celebrate the midsummer. Therefore, a lot of the airfields we landed at were not manned. I flew the PA-28 on our fourth and final

leg of the day to Tierp, a former Swedish Air Force base that at one stage housed Viggen aircraft.



The concrete runway is divided into two parts, with a drag track and stadium occupying half of the runway. A 10 ft high obstruction divides the drag track from the runway, and I lifted G-AZWB over this obstruction to a gentle landing. Our host at Tierp was Mats who was a former Viggen pilot. Russ knew him from previous occasions, and had been in contact with him during the organising stage of our trip. Mats had stacked the fridge with provisions for our overnight stay, including 2% beer! Bacon and eggs was the stable diet! Once again, the accommodation was immaculate and we were pretty exhausted from a fairly gruelling day's flying of 6.25 hours. Not too exhausted however to appreciate the fabulous sunset that was displayed for us, (the shape of things to come). It was around 2300. The airfield was completely deserted and we probably turned in around 0100. **Hours flown today: 6:40**

DAY FOUR (21 JUNE 2014).

After our airborne marathon on the previous day, we decided on a leisurely start for day four. We paid for our accommodation and provisions which was a measly £25 each. We refuelled the aircraft (Tim's fuel cost the equivalent of an eye-watering £237). The plan was to cross the Gulf of Bothnia via Mariehamn on the first leg. Once again, we climbed into our blobby suits!



The water temperature was still down in single figures, so we wouldn't last too long if we ditched. It was back to the Eurostar again with Russ and we took off from Tierp at 1140. We sent off our flight plan and set out to Mariehamn, an island that boasted a substantial airport and belonged to Finland. We touched down at Mariehamn at 1350L but as the clocks advanced one hour on entering Finnish Airspace the flight time was only 1hr 10 minutes. Mariehamn was as previously stated a substantial airport but was completely deserted. No radio contact was made with Mariehamn, but we advised Helsinki Flight Information of our intentions.



A quick comfort break, and then at 1425 we headed over to the Finnish mainland proper with myself as P1 on leg 2. Our next stop was at Oripää and we touched down here at 1540. It was good to get the blobby suits off once more! Goodness! There were people to be seen! We closed the flight plan, and whilst back in the land of the Euro we decided to refuel the aircraft. I managed to attract the attention of a young

unassuming guy who I thought was just a GA club member. A bright green Pitts S2 had been doing aerobics over the airfield and I think this guy (Yuri) had been flying it. He refuelled our aircraft with this Heath Robinson pump driven by a two-stroke motor. Bashfully, he apologised when he couldn't give us any change. I asked if there was any chance of a coffee. We went over to the club house which was adorned with posters of F/A18 Super Hornet Aircraft. Yuri turned out to be a Captain in the Finnish Air Force who flew F/A 18s, had successfully ejected from one after a control failure and had some substantial scars to prove it! He has fully recovered from a broken back and is back flying again as a test pilot. He looked about 22, but was actually 37. I wonder what they put in the water!

Our third leg of the day was to Alavus. On the journey to Alavus, apart from crossing what appeared to be several million hectares of forest with no landing areas we flew through snow showers in June! We were up at around 6000 ft so as to give us the best gliding time to find a soft tree to crash into, if the donkey refused the carrot. Those nice uniform fire breaks between the trees looked inviting to glide into if things went quiet. This was not as it seemed however, because on closer inspection it was discovered that high tension pylons/cables filled the gaps.



We were actually staying in Ähtäri, but the runway at Ähtäri was too short for Tim's PA-28 (just 350 metres) so Alavus had been previously selected. We touched down at Alavus at 1830, a flight time from

Oripää of 1 hr 25 mins. Russ had previously contacted Marco one of the Ähtäri club members. There are two other EV-97s there. In Finland, they have a more relaxed approach to microlight aviation, and these aircraft were painted. Funnily enough, if you apply paint to the metal of an EV-97 it appears to toughen up the metal skin and doesn't resemble bacofoil like the unpainted variants! Tim left his PA-28 and we all decanted into the Eurostars for a 30 minute flight to Ähtäri. We actually had a formation flight back to Ähtäri with the other Eurostars and a motor glider in close proximity. Our Finnish hosts were once again, incredibly generous. We had all been given a Tee shirt with the Ähtäri Flying Club logo emblazoned on it. Marco had generously offered us the use of his Sauna cottage which was situated down on the lakeside. It was idyllic, apart from the basic lack of sanitation. There was an outside non flushing toilet, but should we need anything more substantial, there were all the facilities in his main house.

Within an hour of arrival we departed to Virat for a meal and a couple of the 2 per centers! After the meal, we returned to Marco's sauna cottage and he began collecting wood! What followed next was quite surreal! I have been around a bit during my 20 odd years in the RAF etc but had never had a sauna. The sauna was prepared and held 3 "willing" occupants! Sat on the wooden rack absolutely starkers at what seemed to be gas Regulo 8 I began to steam and then melt! After about 20 minutes we all got up and went outside into the 8C deg temperature for a dip in the lake! All the other hardy souls leapt in with great gusto including Russ and Tim. I began to think that were I to do so, my 67 year old heart would say "bugger off" and refuse to keep going. I waded out until a sensitive part of my body touched the icy surface and I thought, "Stuff this, that's enough!" We

returned to the sauna for a second helping of heat followed by a sluice down with shower gel.

Our sleeping arrangements were comfortable enough with mattresses on the upstairs floor. We were all shattered because it was around 0230. However, one of our party of 3 had a horrendous cough like a 40 a day Capstan full-strength smoker, and snored like an excited Aberdeen Angus bull (no names, but it wasn't me or Russ). After exhausting our apparent unplumbed depths of expletives, we managed a couple of hours sleep. **Hours flown today: 6:20**
(To be continued)

Autumn Fly outs

Yeovilton, Spamfield, Bournemouth, SSAFFA - by Myron Burak

You don't know what you can get until you ask for it. I became aware of two things recently, one is that it is possible to fly into military aerodromes and the other is that there always seems to be some light aircraft at flying displays, not on show but obviously flown in and parked up. I wanted to see the Vulcan flying this year, which could have been the last year it could fly. Looking at the dates and venues advertised, Yeovilton seemed my best bet. So I gave them a call, was put through to the man who organises these things and told no chance as all available slots had been booked ages ago. 'What about a fly in sometime then and a visit to the museum?' 'That could happen', he says. So, I left it there as it was close to Yeovilton Air Day. In the event I dragged Budge and Bruce Drake with me and saw the Vulcan. I rang the bloke back about a week after the show and basically arranged a date.

The forecast was good the Friday before, so it was called. Monday came and everywhere was fog bound, but due to clear. Around 11 we were given the green light, texts to everyone and off we went. We had Bruce and Rob Keene and Rees with us. As we got closer we heard Neil

coming in from Redlands and the Steades from Croft Farm. The radio chatter coming in was a bit challenging as the military say things a bit differently, and also we had three frequencies to get us in, Radar, Tower and Ground. Unfortunately one of our aircraft had a heavy landing and did the nose wheel, which shut the runway for a considerable time. The people there were most helpful in getting it into a hangar, until repairs could be organised.

Anyway, it was a short walk from the aircraft park to the Royal Navy Museum, where we congregated in their excellent café. Our numbers had been restricted to 8, because there was not room on the apron, which when we parked up looked like it would take 8 A380's. Apart from those mentioned above, we had Bumble with Dave Matthews, from Long Marston, and Bruce, Wendy and Bernie from Eastbach. It was then into the museum for a few hours to wander round. This is one of the great museums around It is unusual in that it concentrates on naval flying. The imaginative ways they find to display the many interesting exhibits makes for a great experience. However, they have one hall devoted to experimental and prototypes, where they have Concorde 002, still kitted out with all its test equipment.



With a totally inadequate length of time passing to see the museum, it was time to make our departure. Again, 3

frequencies to get clear. We took the long route home, up the Bristol Channel, the weather was just lovely for it.

I get a bit ahead of myself, before this event was Spamfield at Sandown, which I would miss as I was on holiday. As a well publicised event, I was not going to organise a fly out, but did suggest the those intending to go could let me know and I would circulate to all. I think this worked quite well, as about half a dozen let me know, and I hear that all met up on the Isle of Wight and had a good time.

Weekend of the 25th and 26th of September was going to be memorable. Saturday was going to be the SSAFFA fly in at Goodwood and the next day was Bournemouth. The SSFFA Fly in is usually held at Thorney Island, but was changed. We were going to fly to Goodwood, then on to Sandown to stay in the town and then Bournemouth on the way home. Well, in the week beforehand the venue was changed again, to Popham. This change did not excite Stephen and myself at all, so we decided to just go to Bournemouth on the Sunday.



Once again , I get ahead of myself. I had been tracking the SSAFFA event since the first notification, and the details, including the change to Goodwood had been circulated to the club. Several had written back to say they were going. When it came to it, it was all so confusing with the changes that all I could do was make sure everyone was aware. I really don't know if anybody went in the end, I've not heard of any.

However, the Sunday was Bournemouth and the weather was still holding out. They called this a GA Bonus Day, where landing fees were to be a fiver. I circulated details some time ago, but no one got back to me to say they were going. A couple of days to go Peter Satchwell from Kemble I think, wrote to say he had a slot. This should have been a good fly out for the club. The info was not widely circulated, so I hope that my efforts would give us a good showing. I suspect that many were put off by having to book, or could not get a slot when they tried. One thing I've learned is that when you are presented with the opportunity to go somewhere but have to book, then go for it. The time of your slot is not that critical, and you can always send an email cancelling if you know you can't make it.



This was another large aerodrome again with 3 frequencies to get in, but we were now old hands. When we arrived we eventually found Peter, with his daughter Emma. We also found Russ Stein, from Redlands, who had brought his son. We then had a great afternoon, including being shown round Airtime, a company devoted to aircraft maintenance of all types. As well as this, we had the full tour of ATC.

This is always interesting. That particular visit generated many questions about procedures to get in to Class D aerodromes, and we left feeling illuminated. The flight back was pleasant and uneventful , except it was obvious that the nights are pulling in.



We had left mid afternoon and landed not much before dusk.

Well, two major airports on successive weekends that you wouldn't usually go into. In the past both Yeovilton and Bournemouth presented themselves as large blocks of airspace to have to go around and avoid. It was quite something to make a bee line for places that before have always been Indian Country.

I lay claim to organising four fly outs in the latter part of the year. I think the results have been encouraging, with points learned to build on. I don't think much will happen now till next year but there may be the opportunity for one or two over the winter. If you have any ideas, let me know, otherwise watch this space.

Dates for your Diary

22nd - 23rd November The Flying Show, International Exhibition Centre, Telford. Buy tickets in advance via the web site for discounted admission.
www.theflyingshow.co.uk/tickets

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