

Severn Valley Microlight Club

AIRSCREW

August 2004

This month's meeting – Wednesday 18th August.

The fly-in for the Club night this month will be Eastbach or Spence Airfield if you prefer. If you need any details then Club member Mark Taylor will be able to help you if you ring him on 07768 746055.

To the south of France, (and Bill came too!) by Phil Hanman

Six weeks before our trip the planning started with a meeting at Fred Williams' home at Stratford on Avon which Bruce and I flew to in his C42. The trip was to include three planes, - 2 Rans and 1 Icarus C42 but this changed to 1 Sky Ranger, 1 Rans and 1 C42 the night before we left for France due to a small disabling bump to Dave Ross' Rans. The meeting included the 5 members in the flight, Fred Williams, Anthony Hartley, Dave Ross, Bruce Drake and myself Phil Hanman.

At our planning meeting a route was agreed upon after a little 'this way that way' with the final details being organised by Anthony, including the finance, equipment, maps and flight plans. The organisation of the trip and the notes we all received from Anthony proved to be invaluable and a vote of thanks must go to Anthony for them.

Monday 12th. July 2004. 7-00am, the intended date for the trip, came round very

quickly as such things always do. We had agreed to meet up en route at Compton Abbas and at 10-00am all 3 planes arrived. We had a cup of tea, and Anthony filed our flight plan across the water to Alderney and on to Dinard in France. While having our cup of tea I informed the rest of our group that I had practised crossing over water the week before by flying over the Severn near the bridge. Fits of laughter followed from the others as they informed me that we were going to be flying over 60 miles of sea to Alderney. It just had not registered till then!



Bruce's Icarus

All departure details sorted we boarded our planes and set off for Alderney. As we flew to our first way point at Sand Banks and the big blue sea loomed up I felt very quiet sat next to Bruce. After 20 minutes and about 26

miles out over the sea I felt very much at ease and started to enjoy the smooth conditions that flying over water give you. Then there it was – Alderney. Radio for landing instructions, understood, downwind, base, finals with landing spot on and very happy to be there. We had lunch at a local restaurant served by 3 old ladies all had to be over 70 years old and all good fun.

Back to the airfield, fuel, board and on to our next stop, Dinard, France (more water!). We arrived at Dinard, information, expedite descent and all landed safe and sound. Taxi and hotel organised, we spent the night in a Best Western hotel inside the walled city of Dinard - go see, first class! Next morning up early and back to the field, fuel up and ready for the next section of our planned journey from Dinard to the island of Belle-Isle (more water!). En route the views were fantastic and on arriving at the airfield we found the staff very helpful and friendly. We took a taxi down to the nearest village and had lunch and a beer over looking the sea, took a few pictures and back to the field, fuel up and away. Flying from Belle-Isle to la Baule and then following the coast all the way to St Pierre D'Oleron where we landed for fuel and a short break. All back aboard our planes and on to Chalais north of Bordeaux and the end to the flying for the day.

At Chalais Bruce had organised our accommodation at Bill Vinton's daughter's, Liz, which proved to be absolutely perfect. Nice people, nice place, all round great places to be, we stayed 2 nights.

Thursday morning came and ready for the next part of our journey. Fuel checks done, all aboard and back in the air. We flew from Chalais due north to Saumur where we landed to fuel up and have a bite to eat for an hour and then back in the air on to Blois. This part of the journey gave us the opportunity to view the many chateaux in this area also the flatness of the landscape and what is meant by a big big wood east of Blois. We landed at Blois - what a huge field

indeed. Taxi to hotel, meal out, (very, very good food and a little drink of course) and walk around the town see the sights, great! Friday morning early start back to the field, fuel and into the air en route to Granville. Several way points and 2 hours later brought us in sight of Mont St Michel. Brilliant view from 2000ft then it was gone lost in a fog bank moving in on us and our intended destination. Our lead plane managed to fly through the ever narrowing gap but it was not to be for us the following 2 planes. We were both forced to turn away in a left hand orbit and climb away from this white stuff. With a full 360° turn back to our intended track we were pleased to see the fog had passed through in that short time and our track to Granville was totally clear again. Radio for landing instructions, finals, landing all safe, heart rate returning to normal. Taxi and hotel in Granville for the night, very nice place to be! Most excellent meal 5 courses wine and a little lager (well a lot actually!)

Saturday morning up 9-30am, breakfast, taxi to the field, weather forecast for Cherbourg and Bournemouth looking good to go after lunch. Track set on maps, GPS and flight plans filed, time to take to the air once again and - guess what - over more water “no problem”. Fifty north, Sandbanks and on to Compton Abbas. It should be said that 26 miles across the Channel we found the fog again, tried to go under but no way so climbed up above, made radio call to London Information for Bournemouth weather. Confirmed that all was clear there so we continued over the top of the fog bank and sure enough it broke up as fast as it came. *(We should all remember the correct use of the radio for information in these situations can prove invaluable and very reassuring.)* Compton Abbas, radio for landing instructions, OK watch out for air show aerobatics display, call final, landed. All safe and in need of a cup of tea. Re-fuel, all happy back in the air and en route to Over for Bruce and myself and on to Stratford on Avon for Fred, Anthony and Dave. We all arrived back home safe and sound with this

tale to tell. For me 3 new friends and five wonderful flying days. "Thanks!"

Defford Fly-in by Bill Austin

Wednesday July 21st saw the arrival of summer – at least according to Mr Bumble! In his e-mail the previous week cancelling the event due to the inclement weather he had postponed it until "the summer"! As it turned out the weather was perfect and resulted in some twenty aircraft arriving to partake of the bangers and beans and doughnuts. Donations were invited for Mission Aviation Fellowship (the charity supported by Clive Porter, the owner of the strip). The final total raised was £45 – thank you to all who contributed.

We had a good cross section of aircraft present from Jim Taylor's immaculate Sky Ranger to Barbara Austin's 1986 Half Pint.

It was interesting to note that there was a fairly even spread between flexwings and three-axis aircraft. Without doubt when it comes to looks the newer three-axis aircraft could all be candidates for the 'concours d'elegance' at any fly-in. Jim Taylor's Sky Ranger was immaculately fitted out and sported a snazzy line in graphics which made it stand out from the crowd



Jim Taylor's Sky Ranger

Phil Hanman was his usual cheerful self – that is until the time to return to base arrived and then his aircraft decided that it was not

ready to go home and refused to start. A lot of pulling on the starter rope, sweating and muttered Anglo-Saxon words ensued until, at last, the engine capitulated and Phil departed. Funnily enough, the same performance occurred at Hartpury the following week but on this occasion George Cole was the magician who persuaded the engine that it had work to do.



Phil Hanman and Passenger

Another new aeroplane on view was the Foxbat of John Hancock. It was impressive to look at with a lot of Perspex around and behind the cockpit area. Bruce Fowler was lucky in that he had the chance to fly it during the evening.



John Hancock's Foxbat

Later in the evening, just as a complete contrast, Barbara ventured into the calm air with her Half Pint. This has a horizontally opposed two-stroke direct drive JPX engine

which for all the world sounds like a four-stroke when fired up



Half Pint – real fun flying?

There must have been something special about the evening or the venue since Bill Keel-Stocker arrived by air and we don't often see him at these events! As usual his aircraft was immaculately clean and polished.



Bill Keel-Stocker's aircraft

Thanks to Brian for organising the event and to Julie and Sue for serving the refreshments.

Quote of the Month

“Now, there are two ways of learning to ride a fractious horse: one is to get on him and learn by actual practice how each motion and trick may be best met; the other is to sit on a fence and watch the beast a while and then retire to the house and at leisure figure out the best way of overcoming his jumps and kicks. The latter system is the safer, but the former, on the whole, turns out the larger proportion of good riders. It is very much the same thing in learning to ride a flying machine”. — **Wilbur Wright**,

Fly-ins

25th August Wednesday Fly-in – venue to be advised

30th August (Bank Holiday Monday) Eastbach (Spence Airfield) Fly-in. All welcome. Contact Mark Taylor on 07768 746055

1st September Hartpury – John Hamer's strip – 01452 700314

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