

Severn Valley Microlight Club **AIRSCREW**

FEBRUARY 2006

This Month's Meeting – Wednesday 15th February

This month our Chairman will reminisce, with the aid of slides, on the fly-ins of 2005. Was it a good year? Where did we go? Did the 3-axis outnumber the flexwings? All this and more. Don't miss it! We aim to start at 8.15.

Club subscriptions

Your annual subscription is now due. The AGM last month agreed that it should remain at £20 (£25 for new members). Please complete the renewal form attached and return it as soon as possible to the Treasurer at the address shown on the form together with cash or cheque or, alternatively give it to him at this meeting.

If you have not renewed your membership by the end of March **you will be deleted** from the distribution list.

Chairman's Report

Looking back at 2005

Well here we are in 2006 with 2005 just a faint memory. Here are a few lines to remind us.

As usual, weather played a big part in our activity with Popham starting the season with its usual fog and murk preventing most arrivals until 3pm. Indeed, our own Fly-in season due to start on 27th April at Gary Ball's strip was delayed until 11th May. JH and friends had a much better Fly UK Rally this year finishing at the now regular

Spamfield Rally at Sandown I.O.W. The July PFA Rally at Kemble was replaced by Flying For Fun, same thing but more expensive and less exhibitors, a trick repeated at the NEC under the guise of "Splash". Unless I missed something, there appears to be nothing new, in fact the biggest news is a "new" Chaser variant awaiting regulation changes. Talking regulations, it was the first year of compulsory third party and Passenger Insurance cover.

Committee

For those who missed the excitement of the Club AGM in January, your committee remains unchanged although not unchallenged!

New Aircraft

Dave Steade and Adrian Lloyd continue with their Kitfox and Alpi with the Alpi at least a nose in front. There is also a strong rumour of another Sky Ranger emerging to replace Colin Davis' MW, while Phil Hanman is enjoying the power of his newly acquired 582 quantum.

AirScrew

Bill Austin continues to deliver an excellent publication in Airscrew to keep us all updated on the microlight world and beyond. Thanks for all your articles, these are what keep Airscrew going - keep it up!



“Spitfire Award” – Bruce Drake

Farmers Club

This year, our Club Speakers were almost all home grown - the exception being the re-scheduled Air Ambulance talk in April. Phil and Bruce treated us to a tour of France in February while JH told us about a challenging time during Fly-UK in March and a more leisurely time in Florida for the May meeting. After a summer recess, Steve Slade gave a well received talk on all things Microlight. October saw Robbie Keene explain his involvement as Competition Director at the World Microlight Championships and Bruce was joined by Fred Williams to tell us all about their trip to Poland. Well done everyone, it's good to see such involvement in the Club.

Club Funds

Phil Hanman has managed to balance the books resulting in no increase in subs for the third year running, well done Phil

Awards

As Ken Cole appears to be the only member with his own “private pilot” it seemed fitting to award him the Poser Trophy, apart from

his continuing enthusiasm for the sport at a mere 70 years of age.

Bruce Drake’s nomination for the Spitfire Trophy received a unanimous vote as he continues to open his “Envelopes”. Well done both.



“Poser Award” – Ken Cole

Fly-ins

As mentioned earlier, the season’s fly-ins started at Gary Ball’s strip at Teddington continuing at Bob Hind’s at Newnham, John’s strip at Hawling, Mark Taylor’s at Spence Airfield (Eastbach), followed by a cancelled fly-in to Oxleaze where enough members turned up to justify lighting the Barbie! Robbie organised a well attended Treasure Hunt, with Chris Ball pipping the competition to win the elusive Over Farm Trophy. Several Club members enjoyed a setting sun on the slopes of Bredon Hill with tables and chairs supplied by Andrew John. JH opened up his larger field for the last fly-in at Hartpury in September. A big thank you to all the Fly-in hosts.

Training and Safety

There were no official courses run by the Club this year although there are signs for

the need of a Radio Course this year, please contact Bill Austin.

Sadly, several members were involved in accidents last year. All were competent and experienced pilots which only serves to remind us it can happen to anyone, so let's be careful up there.

An Average Year, well, maybe by Myron Burak

I like to write for the mag when I've had a particularly memorable flight and share it with others. Equally, I like to read their exploits, often with envy. Sadly, last year's flying was, for me, very average and it's a good while since I've had anything much to say. However, looking back may yet yield something of interest.

May Bank Holiday and a trip with my flying partner, Andrew, to the Isle of Wight. We took off to plan in a bright blue sky with spring sunshine doing no more than making the air pleasantly warm. Around Bath high stratus was now above. Over Wing Farm, cloud base was down to 2 or 3 thousand but still safe. As we neared the New Forest things became decidedly murky. Into low cloud at around 1000 feet led to an immediate 180, followed by circling an old airfield called Stoney Cross. Bournemouth gave a couple of suggestions but I elected to land. This led to a nightmare adventure on the ground and an aborted weekend but which was a good decision. It took me a good while to admit to myself that I had actually been at fault here. I should have got the latest weather for our route before taking off. Easier said than done. None of us are perfect but the responsibility is the pilot's at all times. I am reminded of this episode every time I do a pre-flight and look at the mended gash in the leading edge where we hit a 30 mph sign, but that is another story!

Later in May, I had the not really pleasant task of spreading my good friend Colin's ashes from the plane and it was done with suitable dignity. It was a good couple of

months later that I realised that the ashes that I could not bring myself to clean from the prop were, in fact, heavy abrasion of the surface of the blades. A weekend of lacquering and rubbing down left me to reflect that this was a not a good idea with a rear engined plane, however noble.

Two months with a bad back around May, made me quite reluctant to fly most of the time and what I did was not very exciting. In July I was taking my good friend Barbara for a spin which quickly developed in to a forced return to base with a misfire. A new set of plugs just made the situation worse. Closer inspection revealed that the gaps were all over the place, in spite of my being certain I had stowed them after checking them first. A ruined evening's flying reminds me to not be so mean with plugs and when I do change them, check them first.

On to August now and a long awaited flight for another friend named Andrew, a non-flier who had been patiently waiting for about two years. A few drips of fuel onto the air filter box from one of the carbs directed me to check that the float and float needle were in good order. I did not get full power on climb out, and the engine felt as if it was going to die any second but I managed a normal landing on the strip – thank God! I think the float needle had got stuck when I fitted the float bowl back on. The moral of this story is to do a full power check as part of the pre-flight. This is not always possible with a light nose but you can check the rpm gauge before rotating or at least deliberately listen and feel the power as you accelerate. Again, things are seldom perfect, but when it goes wrong it's all the pilot's fault.

Well, if that's all I had to say, it would not have been an average year, it would have been a bloody disaster. But things came good in late August, which was supposed to be a week away. I decided on day trips instead because I had nothing planned and did not want to end up camping on my own at the end of some deserted strip. As a taste

of the week to come, I went up with Jim in his Skyranger - a completely different experience in Microlighting - after which Jim came up with me in the Kiss.

I had a brilliant day flying up to and around Snowdon. I had been to North West Wales twice before but never got to Snowdon, and it has long been on my "to do" list. This was one of those days. The challenge of a summer sky heavy with cumulus and the gradually increasing inhospitable nature of the terrain but breathtaking at the same time. The first time wonder of flying around a true mountain above all land and cloud alike.



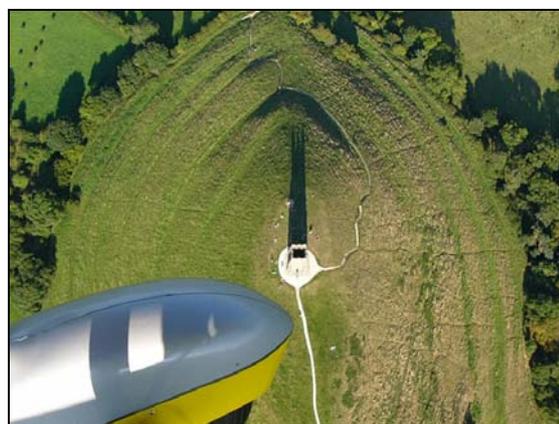
Snowdon

The reward of the navigation and communication side of things, planning fuel stops and time in the air. Then the long cruise home, feeling quite a few thousand feet higher than whatever happened to be showing on the altimeter at the time. I just wish I'd put the foot brake on at Welshpool. The plane would not have been blown around in a full circle by a taxiing helicopter, a known hazard at this otherwise friendly aerodrome.

Later that week I went to Sywell, home of Flylight who import the Kiss that I fly. A warm welcome and a guided tour from Paul Dewhurst was rewarded with a 20 quid order for spares. But no time to hang around because thunderstorms were forecast from the west later that afternoon and, sure enough, things got worse the closer I got to

home. A bolt of lightning less than a mile away whilst almost overhead Gary Ball's strip should have persuaded me to land there and then but I was not going to give up ten minutes away from home. So I scudded home at 500 feet with relatively no rain and no wind until the moment I landed. Ken and Toby helped me sling the plane into the hangar. I'm really not sure about this one. Pressonitis is a curse that can easily affect almost all pilots, but if we do not give in to it to some degree, we would not even venture into the sky which always contains some element of the unknown That's why we do it! How do we push the envelope without going too far? I think I pushed it close to the limit that day.

To finish off the week I took Emma, my youngest daughter, on a trip down to Westonzoyland - another one on my list of must do's. This place is well worth the trip if you have not been before. There I met up with an old friend, Bruce, and took him for a flight around Glastonbury and the Somerset levels.



Glastonbury Tor

On the return, we got a close look at the balloons taking off from the middle of Bath, always a spectacular sight. And guess what, nothing went wrong. However, it was around this time that Andrew John had his prang, news of which made me very sad.

So, last year, I've actually had some big lows and some big ups with some good memories and several valuable lessons

learned without too much cost. I've enjoyed the spirit and camaraderie of the Over community and now don't actually regret the complete debacle of my attempt to get my own strip close to home here at Coaley. In particular I'd like to thank Ken and Jim, without whose help I would certainly have done many less hours than the just under forty hours that I achieved in 2005. There have been other good flights and visits that do not fall at either end of the spectrum, showing that on reflection, this year has been anything but average.

Where will you go this year?

The Club Committee has been discussing the possibility of organising a fly-out over two days when the better weather comes. The idea is to fly to a location, e.g. Haverford West, stay overnight, either camping or in local accommodation, and then fly back the following day. Does this sort of adventure appeal to you?

As with all such arrangements the weather will be the governing factor so the decision to go will often be taken at the last possible moment. This will not be a problem for members on e-mail as they can be contacted quickly. Other members would have a number to phone. At this point in the year the Committee would like some indication of who would be interested in being notified of such an event so that planning can commence. **Expressing interest will in no way commit you to go on any notified trip.** As with all flying decisions the final one rests with the pilot. Please contact Mr Bumble or JH if you want to be kept in the picture.

Why the French think we're mad

A report seen in the press a few weeks ago relates an English couple's request to a French estate agent. The wife specified "a decent sized garden, no trees and flat. My husband is going to commute weekly back to the UK **by microlight**". Apart from

any requirements of the French authorities, who fancies a weekly two-way journey across the Channel especially in winter? Perhaps this is taking the phrase "a place in the country" (France?) too literally!

Building News

You may remember that Adrian Lloyd started building an Api Pioneer in early 2005. The latest news is that he is "on the final straight" with the next big milestone being the test flight. Watch this space.

Dates for your diary

1st – 2nd April – Barnstorming Microlight Fly-in Dunscombe Farm, East Meon, Hampshire. PPR Tel:- 023 9246 8806, www.hmclub.com

4th – 10th April – Sun 'n Fun, Lakeland, Florida, www.sun-n-fun.org

21st – 23rd April – Fly! The London Airshow, Earls Court, London

29th 30th April – Microlight Trade fair, Popham

16th – 18th June – Spamfield, Sandown, Isle of Wight. Subject to confirmation

14th – 16th July – RIAT 2006, Fairford. www.airtattoo.com. Watch out for airspace restrictions.

(Editor's Note:- Unfortunately I will not be at the meeting so, unless it is urgent, I will sign log books next month)

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