



January 2004

This month's meeting – Wednesday 21st January

The AGM is the focus for this meeting. As always your views are important as is your active participation in the running of the Club either as a Committee member or by arranging an event such as a fly-in or a speaker for one of our meetings. Perhaps our theme for 2004 should be "What can I do for the Club?" The agenda will be as follows:-

1. Apologies for absence
2. Chairman's Report
3. Treasurer's Report, acceptance of accounts for 2003 and recommendations for fees in 2004
4. Training and Safety Officer's Report
5. Election of Officers – Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, Training and Safety Officer.
6. Nomination of general Committee Members
7. Presentation of the Spitfire and Poser Awards
8. Any other business

December meeting

Fourty-four members and guests booked for the Christmas dinner. The evening seemed to be a success both as a meal and as a social occasion. Almost a quarter of those present had actually flown during the day as recognition of the hundredth anniversary of powered flight. It would be interesting to know just how many Club members made it into the air on that day.

Myron and Mark's Big Adventure by Myron Burak

My friend Mark's 50th was coming up at the beginning of November. We originally planned a big holiday with our two families, Disney Paris or something like that. It was the morning after our mutual good friend Colin's funeral. Mark had come down and stayed overnight. We were discussing the situation regarding his 50th, as all Mark's plans had turned to poo for one reason or another. Searching for some alternative I suggested a microlighting tour, not expecting Mark to go for it, as he is a dedicated hang glider pilot. Pensively, he replied, "That might be nice, I've always wanted to fly over Glen Coe". I stifled my immediate reaction that we would have no chance in the North of Scotland at the end of October, saying "Why not! Even if we don't make it all the way, we will have some kind of fun on the journey". We decided to go, and these are my impressions of one of the most wonderful experiences of my flying career.

Although microlighting for a number of years, I have never been one to stray too far or carry out exciting missions other than the odd day trip to the Isle of Wight. I also needed to stand on my own two feet now, with the demise of my long-standing flying partner. This trip seemed to have the potential of moving me through this particular barrier, a catharsis if you like. So, although the trip was to celebrate Mark's

50th, I realised that I had my own personal agenda to achieve. The choice of Mark turned out to be brilliant for that purpose. We are old flying buddies from way back when I used to fly hang gliders and right from the initial planning stages he proved to be complimentary in skills and attitude. His main task was to do the navigating and weather forecasting, I would do the pilot stuff and radio. It was an enormous boost my confidence to have his abilities supporting our efforts, as although he does not fly microlights, his all round airmanship is frankly, better than mine. I am happy to say, we never fell out once, even when my stress levels went into the red.

Right from the start we had loads of help and advice from people, starting with John Hamer, who once tapped for a bit of advice, gave us much beneficial knowledge over a couple of beers one evening at his place. That was just the start. We never had to pay for a taxi the whole time, often got hangerage for free, accommodation was found for us always promptly when we landed, ensuring we had the best that was available. We never had to hunt or hang around for fuel (one of my biggest fears, with the short days). In short, people were generous and sympathetic to what we were trying to do. I've said my thank you's elsewhere to these people, but if you are flying around, I can recommend visiting Tarn Farm near Lancaster, Carlisle particularly (Dave Parkers microlight school) and Ince near Preston, run by John North. Even bigger places like Caernarfon and Barton made us feel as if we belonged. Also, a mention for the ATC. The majority of the time they could not do enough to ensure a safe and pleasant flight, even at times when I was fluffing it.

The conditions we had were incredible for the time of year, or for any time really. We flew five days out of six. We had tail winds all week, so for a change my prayers really worked. One good thing about flying at that time of year is that most of the time we cruised a couple of hundred feet below cloud base, with hardly a ripple in the sky.

None of the arm wrenching you get at the height of summer, so most of the time the flying was very relaxing.

The most memorable moments were putting the trike away on the first night, in a hanger on a strange field over a hundred and fifty miles from home. Taking off from the Wirral on the most gorgeously beautiful clear, blue and still morning and being given permission from Liverpool to cross the Mersey at 3000'.



Liverpool



Windermere

Going through the gap in the Lake District at Shap at eighty miles an hour over the ground with yet another tail wind. Having to fly around the Lake District to the West, because of orographic cloud on the high peaks, only to find the views that way were absolutely stunning, oh! and we didn't lose any time, because yes, we had a tail wind.

Flying over Morecambe bay under about ten or twelve wave bars, and learning to ride them up and down, rather than use power to maintain height, (a good lesson in going with the flow). Then flying from around Lancaster to Barton, in the most clear, glass like conditions I have ever known. Then having enough time on the way home, to detour around the Shropshire hills, like the Long Mynd and the Lawley, places that I have often visited, but now with a new perspective. Arriving back at base, at the planned time.

We did have our challenges though. The first was at Tarn on the second day. We were stopped from progress in our desired direction by bad weather, being forced back from about twenty miles out by a mixture of lowering base and squally rain clouds. The weather was better South, so we reversed direction and flew to Caernarfon. On the way, we had to pass a nameless lump above Conway, forced to stay low and over the sea by the relatively low cloud base on one of the rare times we had a head wind and turbulence. Arriving at Caernarfon, literally at the same time as a front coming in. As we landed we could not see the other end of the runway, and got a soaking taxiing to the hanger. The third day was the grimmest. Low cloud and rain, but about one o'clock the tower gave much improved conditions as the front cleared to the East. Once again a tail wind, which this time worked against us, as we gradually caught the front up as we approached the Wirral along the North Wales coast. The words "You can always land out" echoed as the conditions returned to the low cloud and squalls that had dogged us for the last two days. More easily said than done surrounded by some of the most controlled

airspace in the country and in unfamiliar territory. I nearly wrecked the plane, trying to land on a rough golf course, before finding the right field for us.

Mostly I was quite pleased with my general flying. My radio procedures were reasonable, and improved with use during the trip, but I was always having to ask the ground to repeat as I couldn't retain the info they gave me for more than a few seconds (I've now found a way to write notes in the air, which should solve this memory problem). Navigation was a problem to start with, before I realised that I would now just have to give in to old age and wear my glasses in the air for reading. My weather forecasting improved too, with Mark's help. In fact my flying took a small but significant step forward. Not that I didn't cock it up at odd times.



Barton

I remember with embarrassment landing on the wrong runway at Barton (they have a left and a right hand). Coming out of Barton on the way home, I got disorientated and stressed trying to find the low level corridor (without reason as it happened, we were OK all the time). I confess to a couple of minor airspace infringements, just at slightly the wrong height or place. Airspace can get very complicated in some parts of the UK. However, I was on radio the whole time.

After flying we had some great adventures in the evenings. Setting up home in new digs every night was fun - new towns, a different restaurant every night, even good company. When we left Tarn we carried a

couple of pilots along with us, Barry and Ian in a Quantum 912. We got split up the next day, but we had a great night in Caernarfon, a curry to remember. Even being forced down on the Wirral ended up a bonus, as we found a restaurant called Ruby in Hoylake, where we had the most well cooked and presented meal that I have had in years. This turned out to be the 'official' celebration of Mark's birthday, with a fine ttle of champagne. Most evenings with good wine and food inside us, we would talk about just about every subject under the sun, and a lot about flying of course.



Lastly, the plane obviously deserves a mention. The Kiss behaved impeccably. It proved to be comfortable and easy to fly over long distances. Quite often, I would glance up and around it, giving thanks to the legacy left by Colin, as it was mostly his dream and he did by far the greater share of the construction.

With its fantastic handling and good stability, it really proved itself to me. But it's more than that. It looked and felt right, and I felt right flying it. Team work was good at all times. Also all the kit worked well. The radio, two GPS's, even how we stowed our gear. I used everything I took with me, and missed for nothing. For example, at Caernarfon, our current flying buddies in the Quantum found they had a puncture. I was particularly pleased to be able to dismantle the wheel and fix it, with the kit I had with me, asking only for air to pump it up again. I used all my previous experience and Mark's too. I

extended my boundaries, but not to dangerous extremes. I remembered and used much, but learnt and developed even more. It so rarely happens in life but its something to cherish when a plan comes together. One day I may yet be able to truly call myself a pilot.

Oh, and by the way, we made it to Scotland, having a fantastic joy ride over the Gretna Green area, from Carlisle, after landing and refuelling on our flight up from the Wirral.

Medicals

I am sorry to labour the point but I am still getting calls relating to medicals and the old pink forms. These forms are now obsolete and you are required to download the new forms from the CAA web site or obtain copies from the BMAA. As has been previously stated the medical conditions are now related to the DVLA class two or class three requirements for HGV driving.

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