

Severn Valley Microlight Club

Airscrew

March 2008

This Month's Meeting - Wednesday 19th March

This month our speaker is former Club Chairman, Brian (Bumble) Finch, who will be talking on "The life and Times of the Bumbles". The meeting will start at 8.00pm to allow time for socialising afterwards.

Quote of the Month

Flying is inherently dangerous. We like to gloss that over with clever rhetoric and comforting statistics, but these facts remain: gravity is constant and powerful, and speed kills. In combination, they are particularly destructive.— *Dan Manningham.*

Membership Subscriptions

Have you renewed your Club membership for 2008? If you have please ignore this reminder. For those members who have not renewed by the time the April edition of Airscrew is published please note that this will be the last newsletter you receive. Subscription

is based on the version of the newsletter you receive - £20 for hard copy or £15 for e-mail. An application form was sent with last month's edition of Airscrew.

Was 2007 such a bad year? - John Hamer poses the question.

Brian Finch, the retiring Severn Valley Microlight Club Chairman, at this year's AGM bemoaned the fact that the weather had once again substantially curtailed aerial activities in 2007 -- but did it really? Reference to my logbook would indicate that from my point of view

this wasn't quite true. Yes, the weather did influence things, but then it does every year and 2007 was really not really much different – just it was differently phased with the more flyable conditions coming much later in the year. What I did notice about this year was the apparent



increase in the number of days there were northerly winds which inhibited the use of my home strip at Hartpury on many more occasions than usual. However, fortunately I did have an alternative for Monica and I had a new toy to play with – an Escapade – and this wasn't kept at home.

At the beginning of the year the Escapade was based at John Davies' at Hawling. His multi direction, well drained airfield contributed to a reasonable amount of flying during the first three months of the year. Indeed there were several days when it would have been impossible to fly in the fog bound / rain soaked Severn Valley – but up on the Cotswolds they have very different weather.

April saw the sun arrive and our first longish trip to Chilbolton for a CAA noise test on the new propeller fitted to the aircraft. Although our flying rate was now greatly increased, it was interrupted by a trip to Sun'n Fun in Florida. Apparently the weather was brilliant while we were away!

The beginning of May saw our annual pilgrimage to the Microlight Fair at Popham. The aircraft was on display there so that saw us camping for a couple of nights under the wing. It was the journey back that John's multidirectional strip's proved their worth with a landing into a 22 mph wind, which would have been an impossible cross wind at Over Farm, let alone Hartpury.

Later we also ventured further east than usual to Laindon – a strip on the far side of London to inspect two MiniMaxs. Interestingly this was the first time I had been around the north London "gap".

The end of May saw the now annual Round Wales Rally, but again as in the previous year, the two day event was reduced to one which meant Round South Wales instead. Even so it was an

enjoyable trip that took us via Swansea round the coast to St David's Head and back via Haverfordwest and the Rhayader dams.

This was followed shortly after in June by Fly UK or Round Britain as it is colloquially known. This started in good weather from Kemble and took us down to Lands End and back to Swansea on the first day. This memorable trip included seeing basking sharks off Lands End and the 28 miles sea crossing from Ilfracombe to Swansea. The second day saw us reaching Carlisle via Caernarfon and Ince Blundell. However the future weather prospects didn't look good, and so, with the Scottish border tantalisingly in sight, for us a prudent retreat home from Carlisle via Barton was the order of the day. Once the stormy weather had blown through, the final objective of Sandown, aka Spamfield, was reached albeit slightly later than originally planned. The remainder of June was a bit of a wash out, save for a very small weather window that enabled me to move the Escapade from Hawling to its new home, the new hangar at Over Farm, Nr Gloucester.

July started more promisingly with a trip to Popham for the Solent strut / PFA fly-in. Reality Aircraft had a stand there and so we were on display duty for the day. Shortly after we followed this with another enjoyable day trip south but this time with our folding bikes in the back for a day out at Sandown. We did 17 miles on the bikes around the island – it was a great way to get around and see the place.

Despite the July floods affecting Gloucestershire, Over Farm remained operational, though sometimes difficult to access by road. This enabled us to continue flying albeit we spent most of the time over-flying the flooded areas to see what was happening. The highlight of the month was however a trip to Plymouth on a perfect flying day. The airfield is a fully fledged regional airport

with daily commercial services and thus full airport security etc. We thought they might not welcome us, but that was far from the truth – they fell over themselves to be helpful and cleared us straight in from 10 miles out even though we couldn't see the airfield. They even put the lights on for us - and all for only £6.70. Best value by far.

The start of August saw us on a trip up to Welshpool with our bikes – an essential requirement for this remote airfield with poor refreshment facilities. Our portable transport enabled us to explore the local castle as well as the town – and find food! The beginning of August also saw me complete the flight test programme on the 56th MiniMax to fly in the UK. I did its first flight back in June, but suitable weather/ wind on my strip had inhibited progress. It always seemed to be blowing a northerly.

Immediately after that saw us once again out camping overnight at the Wing farm fly-in which we attended via the Milson fly in – equidistant in the opposite direction! The most memorable thing about the trip was the failure of the GPS and I had to map read. Then Monica dropped my reading glasses that she was holding for me and they disappeared into the bowels of the aircraft, and so it was then resort to memory and long distance vision!

The end of the month saw us making a long trip north to the PFA regional rally at Sherburn in Elmet. Once again Reality Aircraft had a stand there and we were on display so it was another couple of nights camping. This was the only one of the five PFA rallies that wasn't weather affected. We had planned to go to three of the other four but rain stopped play as they say.

September started well with a trip to a fly- in at Coombe Bissett near Salisbury, before going west to another one at Dunkeswell.

A couple of good days were then found to fly Chocolate II – Andrew John's new HiMax. Unusually I got the whole flight test programme done in two consecutive days, albeit after a substantial wait for suitable conditions.

The highlight trip of the month was one Saturday up to Caernarfon and then down the Welsh coast to Haverfordwest and home. The trip across the Brecons in a clear cloudless sky with outstanding visibility was stunning. In addition the air was silky smooth and we had a tailwind! The good weather continued on into October with trips to Old Warden, Swansea and Eaglescott as well as Henstridge to fly a MiniMax for its annual permit renewal.

The reducing available daylight in November saw us going for 'lunch' trips to Sywell, Compton Abbas, Haverfordwest, Half Penny Green and Shobdon. This continued into December when we managed to have lunch at Leicester before the shortening days and indifferent conditions curtailed our activities.



So yes, the weather did affect our aerial activities but we did nevertheless visit over 40 locations in 147 days flying, clocking up 213 hours (278 flights) in the process. Now my average over the past 22 years is 100 hours per year (actually 99.6hrs!) so I would class 2007 as

definitely better than average – after all I was flying at a rate of more than one day in three despite the perceived poor weather. I suppose if the weather had been better we could have done more, but then if the weather had been perfect we wouldn't have anything to grumble about! So like everyone I hope 2008's weather is better with more flying.

Flying days - 2007

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul
6	7	9	11	10	9	17
Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec		
20	17	20	14	7		

Australia, here we come!

At our February meeting two new members joined the Club - Ian Nuttall and Jon Ingram. What's remarkable about that I hear you say. They are based at Over and are planning a 5000 mile trip across Australia starting in July accompanied by nine other pilots in flexwings.

They have put together a website <www.youvegotwings.com> which contains a lot of information about their proposed trip which will be raising funds for Leukaemia Research and the Australian Flying Doctor service. They have agreed to give a talk to the Club about the trip at one of our meetings in the autumn. The extract below from their website gives a flavour of the expedition.

"The original concept and inspiration distilled from ideas and a chat during a dinner party. Australia became the chosen goal because, while it is vast, the infrastructure and climate lend itself well to a supported adventure during the cooler winter months. We also felt that the variety of inhabitants, wildlife, scenery and unique culture of the country, would make an interesting journey. The plan now is that a team consisting of both Brit and Aussie Microlight pilots will fly their Flexwing aircraft from Perth up the west and north coast of

Australia to Darwin and then across the 'Outback' to Brisbane in July 2008 – a journey of more than 5,000 miles. The trip is in aid of Leukaemia Research in the UK and the Australian Flying Doctor Service which is celebrating its 80th anniversary in 2008."

Apology and Correction

The photo by Monica of the floods in the last issue was not the correct one - the Editor apologises. The right one which appeared in the Gloucester Echo appears below.



Licence Changes

If you have read the latest Microlight Flying from the BMAA you will have seen the article and explanation relating to the change in the requirements for the issue of a Certificate of Experience for holders of the NPPL (M) licence. Holders of this licence now come into line with the NPPL 24 month period of validity for the C of E plus other requirements for the issue of the C of E. Members having the original UK PPL(M) licence retain the 13 month period unless they opt to transfer to the NPPL conditions. If they do this they cannot in the future revert to the old UK PPL(M) conditions.

The full conditions for NPPL (M) licence holders are rather more complicated than just a 24 month period and a flight with an instructor. For the benefit of Club members the following paragraphs are

reproduced from Geoff Weighell's article in "Microlight Flying".

The new revalidation requirements that you will have to complete within the 24 month period following that date are:

- 1. Fly for a minimum flight time of 12h, of which 8h must be pilot in command and 6h must be within the 12 months prior to the next revalidation signing**
- 2. Fly at least 12 takeoffs and 12 landings**
- 3. Undertake at least 1 h of flight training with a flying instructor in a microlight.**
- 4. The takeoff and landing requirements are new to the NPPL, as is the flight training requirement. The flight training can be a single flight or more than one flight with different instructors in different aircraft. Instructor flight tests can be counted as flight training for these purposes.**
- 5. If a pilot has not flown the required 1 h of flight training with an instructor, but has completed the other minimum flight requirements, the examiner can complete the revalidation certificate but must add 'single-seat aircraft only'. This restricts the pilot to flying single-seat aircraft, not two-seat aircraft flown solo. The restriction can be lifted by completing the 1 h of flying training.**
- 6. If you have not managed to fly the required minimum hours, or you have not had your revalidation certificate signed within the validity period of the**

previous one, you must revalidate by test. Just complete a GST flight with a microlight examiner and be revalidated for a further 24 months. If you have a current rating the new period will run from the end of the current rating, if your rating has expired the new rating will run from the date the examiner signs it after the test.

- 7. All the above requirements are just for the NPPL, not the old PPL (M). However if the holder of a PPL (M) wants to use the NPPL revalidation system they can elect to do so The examiner will issue them with a rating page to be included in their licence and sign a 24 month revalidation period. Once the licence holder has elected to use the NPPL system, they cannot revert to the PPL (M) system later.**
- 8. Full details of the requirements are published in Schedule 8 of the Air Navigation Order which is published as a downloadable file (CAP 393) on the CAA website, <www.caa.co.uk>.**

UK Nationals - First Round - Over Farm - 19th - 20th April

Last year's round at Over was a great success both from the competitors' and the marshals' points of view. This year the competition is back at Over and Rob is looking for Club members to participate in the flying as well as help with the marshaling duties.

Two aircraft from the Club participated last year and enjoyed the experience. Rob emphasises that if you wish to fly then you need only do as much as you feel your experience will allow and he will

be on hand to give newcomers as much assistance and advice as they need.

The other essential part of any competition is the ground crew. People are needed to man check points and observe spot landings as well as general duties like fetching fuel and parking aircraft. Have you a few hours on either or both days which you could offer? If so, then contact Rob on 07831 237353 or by e-mail <rob.keene@btinternet.com>.



Perhaps these photos of last year's event will serve to awaken memories and encourage you to participate either as a competitor or as ground crew.

To plagiarise a WW2 poster "Your Club needs you!"

Dates for your Diary

19th -20th April - UK Nationals, First Round, Over Farm, Gloucester. Contact Rob Keene 07831 237353 or e-mail <rob.keene@btinternet.com>

3rd - 4th May - Popham Microlight Trade Fair and Fly-in

8th -14th April - Sun 'n Fun, Lakeland, Florida

12th 15th - June - Spamfield, Isle of Wight. Discount booking now open. Organiser; John Moore. Contact <john@cyberstitch.co.uk>

25th - 27th July - Bleriot 100. Mass microlight crossing of the English Channel to mark Louis Bleriot's 100th anniversary. Contact: Frank Spiniello frankspiniello@hotmail.co.uk

28th July - 3rd August - Oshcosh, USA. EAA 56th Annual Fly-in Convention. www.eaa.org

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Bill Austin (Editor)
bill@austin65.freemove.co.uk
01684 833484