

# Severn Valley Microlight Club

## AIRSCREW

October 2004

### **This month's meeting**

This month we have the Gloucestershire Air Ambulance (otherwise known as Helimed) as our speaker. Many of you will remember that for almost two years they were based at Defford while their new HQ at Strensham was being organised. They also base themselves there each year during Clive Porter's MAF Open Day and some of you will, no doubt, have taken the opportunity to look inside their aircraft at the time. We all hope that we will not need to call on their expertise but it will be interesting to find out more about their operation. **We will be starting promptly at 8.00pm** so please make every effort to be there on time as a courtesy to our speaker.

### **Garage story** by Richard Rawes

Out to capture a title that has eluded me, I entered this year's European Championships in Portugal, but as you are about to find out, my attempt ended in spectacular style!

My arrival at Castello Branco, the site of the 8<sup>th</sup> European Championships, with Nigel Beale was later than I would normally aim for. This was due to preparations for my imminent posting to Boscombe Down preventing me committing to the event until the last moment. But with a few days of

practice remaining and a little work required on the aircraft to get it ready I got stuck in. Unusually, during the first few familiarisation flights I made a mental note to myself that, should anything untoward happen, I would aim to land on a road; the terrain of rolling hills, forest and rocky clearings did not lend itself too well to an out-landing.

With the opening ceremony complete, planning for Task One began. A limited time window was applied to the task which required us to fly around as many turnpoints as possible, predicting overhead times at certain compulsory locations; a bit of a nobby task really but I set myself a challenging route. GPS loggers were being used for the very first time to verify our actual flight achievement; the loggers offering no navigational data to us. With the first 3 turn points located and over flown and now 15 minutes into the flight, I set course for the next turn point which was to route me over hills and forest. Then, with a tinkling noise heard through my headset, I became aware of a possible engine problem. However, the engine instruments at that moment were not indicating anything unusual. Moments later the engine began to run very rough and eventually stopped altogether. With

the engine room running silent, that moment we all dread was now upon me.

Looking amongst the trees for a suitable landing ground and thinking that something is going to get broken here, I recalled having flown around a petrol station near to the last turnpoint. Checking behind, the road and petrol station were within gliding range. Although the road had obstacles and many cars on it the garage on the North bound carriage way had only one vehicle in it. It also offered a relatively clear approach path and a reasonable landing run in a parking area. Decision made. Thirty five seconds later as recorded by the GPS, I had executed a perfect landing, running up to the pumps in the petrol station.

At this point, it is worth noting that all the precision landing practice in all those previous competitions - landing over a tape and pulling up short - was now being exercised for real. So there is some point to the task 😊.

Having pulled up by the fuel pumps, I immediately confirmed an engine seizure and that this was probably the end of my championships. Calling on the Team's recovery crew I was then greeted by the Portuguese garage owner who appeared to be quite unphased by this unusual vehicle parked at the pumps. After a few obligatory photos for the owner, I was recovered and back to the competition base within an hour.

The engine strip revealed a failed rear piston resulting in cylinder and head damage. With the spares that were available and with the superb support of Nigel Beale and Eddie Clapham, a rebuild exercise then began. It was to be 4 days however before the engine was running to my satisfaction. Then with a few local flights to ensure all was indeed well, I re-entered the competition on the penultimate day. With nothing to gain personally, every point gained would now contribute to the Team's overall success. Flying only 4 tasks out of the overall 14 I scored 2957 points out of a

possible 3200, winning 2 tasks outright, one being a task to fly as far as possible on a limited amount of fuel!. The British Team as you are probably now aware came third overall to the Czech Republic and Spain. We did however win an individual Gold medal in the 2-seat weightshift class and Silver medal in the 2-seat fixed wing class.

Another year another championship.

### **Safety**

With good weather now becoming more the exception than the rule, the end of the regular flying season must be fast approaching. What happens then? Just put the aircraft away until the next flyable day - or next year - and forget about it? Definitely not! It is time for an end of season check. Whatever amount of flying you have been doing there will have been some wear and tear on the aircraft and the "close" season is the time to have a thorough look over the aircraft - not forgetting those parts "which others cannot reach" to coin a phrase. If you have a flexwing, when was the last time that you looked inside the wing and checked all the wires and joints? (Remember Barbara's wing tensioning wires from the last issue?)

On a three-axis machine there should be some inspection panels which can be removed - use them they're not just lightening holes! Whatever type of aircraft you fly take some time to ensure that small furry creatures and flying things can't gain access to build a cosy residence while you are away or even take a fancy to some fabric or wire covering as a dietary supplement. This is all the more important if you hangar your aircraft somewhere which is a long way from home and it requires a special journey in the winter to check that everything is alright. A thorough inspection now and some "mothballing" will save time, patience and, perhaps, money the next time you want to fly!

An interesting statistic for you. In the BMAA half year accident summary out of fourteen incidents reported seven were directly related to landing and a further four to engine problems and landing. It just emphasises the fact that the flight is not over until the roll-out is complete and the engine is switched off. Take off is optional, landing is mandatory!

### Quote of the Month

“Mistakes are inevitable in aviation, especially when one is still learning new things. The trick is to not make the mistake that will kill you”. — *Stephen Coonts*

### Internet

Members running Windows XP will no doubt be aware that September saw the release of the long awaited Service Pack 2. A lot of correspondence has been generated over the months about this, particularly on the issue of compatibility. Well, the Pack has now been issued and users are naturally advised to download it as soon as possible because it contains a number of “fixes” for known problems. However, before you rush off and connect to the Web, be advised that it is an 80mb download and the estimated time for downloading at 56kbs (the maximum dial-up connection speed which hardly anyone ever achieves!) is 14 hours!

All is not lost, though, because it has also been issued on CD by some of the computer magazines and doing it this way takes about 40 minutes.

The experts reckon that this is not so much a Service Pack as a complete revision of the operating system with 80% new code included, which would account for the size of the bundle. Two features which you are made aware of are the Microsoft Firewall, which is said to be much improved on the previous edition and which is automatically activated on installation, and the “Pop-up stopper” software. If you already have a firewall installed you can still use that and disable

the Microsoft one, although you will be told that it is preferable to use the Microsoft version. The Pop-up stopper works quite well with a small icon appearing briefly each time a pop-up is intercepted and dealt with. It is also claimed that a number of security issues which made XP vulnerable to attack have now been addressed and the system is therefore more secure. Time will tell!

Having said all that, it is implicit that you should keep your computer up-to-date by using the Windows Update feature on the computer. This can be set to download and install updates automatically or to notify you that they are available and you can decide when to download and install them. If you choose the automatic option you will find (on a dial-up connection) that anything else you want to do on the Internet is slowed up considerably. At the same time you might not be aware that the download is happening and you will shut your computer down. The result is that the next time you connect to the Internet the download will resume. For those members on Broadband don't bother to read this as everything seems to happen so quickly that you probably would not notice!

As a complete contrast, I have recently been using my daughter's computer which has Windows ME installed. At one time this would have been considered an advanced system but using it now after experience of XP it seems to run so slowly that you can go and make a cup of tea while the computer thinks about what you are asking it to do! That's progress for you.

### Insurance

Those of you who read “Flightline” will already have seen the latest bombshell from the European Union – compulsory insurance at a specified level. It appears that from 1st May next year third party and passenger insurance will be compulsory for **all aircraft** in Europe. The amount is

pre-determined and will be the same for all aircraft under the specified MAUW

At this point it would appear that if you fly a two seat aircraft you will **have to have** passenger insurance even if you only ever fly solo. The BMAA have already briefed some insurance brokers and are waiting to see what the response will be.

Will this lead to a re-incarnation of single seat aircraft, I wonder? Microlight flying used to be regarded as a relatively cheap form of fun flying but it is fast becoming expensive not only in terms of insurance (now to be compulsory rather than optional but, as responsible pilots we should all have at least third party insurance) but also in terms of the price of modern microlights. *(It looks as if all those pennies you were saving to buy a transponder for use in 2008 have just been spent for you! – Ed)*



***The same third party premium for both?***

### **New Radio Manual**

A new version of CAP 413, the CAA radio telephony manual, has just been published and is available for download from the CAA site on the Internet. As usual there are a number of small amendments to wording and procedures which are indicated by a vertical line in the margin of the page.

One very interesting addition is the introduction later this year or early in 2005 of the "Safetycom" frequency. This is the equivalent of the "Unicom" frequency used in the USA. It is meant to be used at airfields where there is no allocated radio frequency. Because it is a single frequency for use over the whole of the country, it will, at times, be possible to hear transmissions intended for an airfield many miles away. You will need, therefore, to include the name of the airfield you are addressing in your call together with your intentions. Please note that **it is not a general air-to-air chat frequency.** The introduction of this facility is a contribution to safer flying so make sure that you use it properly. The actual frequency to be used will be announced later.

### **Trip to Lundy Isle** by Rob & Rees Keene

The final competition of this year was due on the August bank holiday and was to be held at Inch Airfield in Scotland. Rees and I had been looking forward to flying there and competing, but as with the rest of the summer, the worsening forecast caused the cancellation of the event.

The Saturday's forecast, however, was good and so rather than do no flying, we decided to go south and meet up with my wife Sue and her friend, who were on holiday near Woolacombe. After work on Friday we packed up and, as usual, left later than expected!

The flight along the Bristol Channel was notable for the reflection of the setting sun

on the water. Visibility was great and it was a calm flight which was just as well as we needed to maintain 70mph to make the distance before darkness fell.



***Sunset in the Bristol Channel***

We arrived overhead at 8.40pm and it was almost dark. A couple of passes overhead a grass field ensured there were no wires or ditches and we were safely down. The girls soon found us and took us to the pub for some food and bevies!!

The next morning looked good with no wind. Lundy Island was visible only 15 miles from the bay. Pooleys had stated that they required PPR, so we phoned the given number only to speak to a surfing shop nearby! We decided to go anyway, and face the music when we arrived!

The cloudy sky soon started to break up and after a couple of trips to the garage for fuel we were back in the sky and buzzing the Saturday surfers over Woolacombe Bay.

The 20 minute crossing to the island was very calm and pleasant. The coast of Pembrokeshire was clearly visible in the distance.

Lundy sticks out of the channel quite prominently and its cliffs rise out of the sea to an undulating treeless plateau about 3 miles long.

There are 5 walled fields, loads of sheep, a few grey houses, an old lighthouse, a great

pub, a shop, quay, church, and of course a runway, which is marked by rows of large white painted rocks!!!!



***Lundy Isle***

There was no one to come and reprimand us for our unannounced arrival, so we wandered off to the "town" to see what was what. A Quad-riding shepherd wearing a Lundy island T-shirt rode by and announced that landing fees were dealt with in the bar, so we headed there!

The very pleasant hostess hit the landing fee button on the bar till, which stated that we owed £10 plus £3.50 per person!! More than usual, but definitely worth it.

(The view from the outdoor urinals was outstanding and must be the best in the country, you could even see the mainland 15 miles away!!)

After a gentle stroll around the cliffs and a visit up the impressive old lighthouse, we were back in the trike, heading for Hartland Point, only 11 miles away.

A memorable flight followed along the cliff tops for 30 miles until we reached Boscastle to survey for ourselves the damage caused by the floods. The damage was considerable to the houses by the river, but the vast majority of the village was on the hill alongside the valley and was apparently unaffected. (The media, I felt, had led you to believe that all the village was washed out.)

From Boscastle we flew to Eaglescott for a late lunch and then on to some friends at Tiverton, who we took flying, had some tea and headed home.

Arriving back at 8 pm, it felt like we'd been away for several days as we had seen so much in such a short time.

If anyone is interested in going to Lundy, the number at the Tavern is 01237 431831. The reason for PPR is that the sheep may be grazing the runway and they need to clear them off!!

### **Rotax Engine Maintenance Course**

John Hamer is running some more one day Rotax engine courses which are designed to give an understanding into the workings of two stroke engines (both water & air cooled) and their associated accessories. The functions of all engine components, fuel system, electrics and other associated components are discussed in detail, and in particular, their individual problem areas are identified.

On the practical level all items are taken apart, and the required servicing demonstrated.

The objective is to give the owner/operator a better comprehension of his power plant and help him service it up to de-coke level, as well as recognise and rectify potential problems and faults. It is hoped that armed with such knowledge, it will aid him to keep his engine running more smoothly, efficiently and reliably.

The course starts at 09.30 am at Hartpury, - 6 miles NW of Gloucester, and lasts until approximately 17.00hrs

The cost is £30 per person, which includes lunch, coffee, tea etc.

The next two courses are planned over the weekend 20th/21st November, so if you

want to attend, please contact him on 01452 700314 or e-mail him on [hamerjl@ukonline.co.uk](mailto:hamerjl@ukonline.co.uk)

### **Micro-Air Services – Shobdon**

We offer the following range of services:-

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01568 708927 (Workshop)  
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### **Dates for your Diary**

**27<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> November** *International Airsports Exhibition, Telford*

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