



November 2009

SKYWRITINGS

Newsletter of the *Mid Kent*



Light Aircraft Association

Mike's Mutterings

Mike Negus -
Editor



Irish Idyll?

The two main reasons we head south for our summer “flying vacation” is the weather is normally better and it is slightly cheaper. We have often spoken about heading north and doing a tour of Scotland, Ireland and Wales and this year we finally did it. We figured that since the Euro was so strong against the pound it would be better “fly at home” and presumed that Ireland would not be that expensive. Woops.

By Gary Smith



Inishmoor Airport

Brian joined me in the RV (his aeroplane being out of permit) and we departed for our first stop at Sleaf (south of Manchester). The weather

November Meeting
26th November 2009
Golf Club at 8pm

should have been better for the 1st August but alas no. Within the hour we had diverted into Leicester, Franks Colt and John Dean's Jodel arrived and we spent a miserable afternoon watching the aeroplanes get totally soaked. Tea time saw the sun come out and we hopped the last 20 minutes to Sleaf to meet the last aeroplane in the party of 4.



Irish Adventurers

Sunday morning we headed north for Carlisle and were hoping for a direct route over the lake district. Low cloud prevented this and we took a nice scenic route up the coast past Sellafield nuclear plant (or whatever they call it now) and despite being lower than one would like there were no cockle pickers in Morecambe bay.

Our intention was to route from Carlisle to Islay for their Scottish fly-in and then to Londonderry in the late after-

The easiest way to find something which is lost is to buy a replacement

noon, but there were complications with Special branch and the weather was not looking so good either. The pilot of a privately owned Jet Provost came in while we were waiting and settled his bill for a one hour sortie... £1000. We looked at each other wide eyed, hoping to get a weeks flying for half of that. Newtonards (10nm east of Belfast) were most accommodating and we decided to go there instead.

The lady said they were expecting "liquid sunshine" on Monday so we decided to catch the bus for the 25 minute ride into Belfast. I went with an open mind and was impressed with the huge amount of building work going on and with the city itself. We took a bus tour which drove openly through the troubled areas and its hard to believe that the 1970's to 1990's media made such a "play" of what was going on in basically two streets. The cranes of the Harland and Wolfe dockyard were clearly visible and we visited the dock where the Titanic was built.



Tuesday threatened to be was another "liquid sunshine day" (that's pis_ing rain to you and me) so we took a bus trip up the eastern coast to the giant Caules way. John Dean told us a story

about driving up this coast on his Lambretta scooter back in the 1960's which kept us amused until the bus broke down, but that's another story.

Wednesday morning the rain had stopped, but it was very windy instead. Our plan to visit the Arran Islands on the Atlantic coast (south west corner) was not so smart so we elected to go south to Kilrush instead (two runways at 90 degrees).

Thursday was much better and we decided the Arran Islands were possible. Having flown over Inisheer (1 runway, population 40), and Inishmaan (1 runway, population, 100) we landed on Inishmore (1 runway, population 150). The runway is like an aircraft carrier in the middle of a bay with a caules way joining it to the island. An undershoot or overshoot of more than 100m would mean a swim, did I mention the runway rises 30ft in the middle too. With Brians newly purchased genuine Arran sweater carefully stowed in the back we departed with a sporting crosswind for Sligo (north west corner of Ireland).

I can't remember much about Sligo town but the circuit and landing was a laugh. At the end of the "down wind leg" there is a 1000ft mountain with shear cliff faces. Not wishing to get too close (200ft is close enough for me) you have to turn base as late as possible, then turn onto finals at 1000ft and the strip is under you. Its probably okay if you are a helicopter but if you are in a slippery

There are two kinds of
pedestrians: the quick and
the dead

ship.....well it was a laugh. Friday we left Sligo and had a truly memorable flight across the centre of Ireland to the farm strip of Kilkenny. The welcome was warm as ever and it had a special rustic charm of having been used and enjoyed but needing a lick of paint here and there. The town was really alive and I have pencilled this as a place to revisit. With the afternoon sun starting to fall we continued south east to Waterford and our last stop before heading home.

Whilst nosing through the hangers we found the owner of a BD5 aeroplane making some repairs, after which he was intending to test fly it. The BD5 is a little single seat "rocket" that has had a chequered history of accidents and has been



banned from flight in UK airspace....but this is Ireland (Eire) of course. One of our group had been waiting 30 years to see a BD5 fly and it was about to happen before our very eyes (hopefully you should have read the full story about the Irish BD5 in the last edition of the LAA's Light Aviation Magazine).

Saturday morning, and the "liquid sunshine" was back. The rain stopped but the cloudbase would

not lift above 400ft. Bored of waiting we took our chance at 4pm and “scud ran” under the clouds to Rosslare and into the Irish Sea. Within 15 minutes we were up to 4000ft and heading towards Wales and Haverford West. The south Wales Fly-in was just closing down as we arrived and a quick turn around had us on our way.

Rumour had it that the Luscombe owners club were having their annual BBQ bash at Oaksey Park (Gloucester) that evening and we decided that a few “low wingers” would make it more cosmopolitan. They told us to “park right at the end please” and we even convinced John to camp the night (a rare event indeed).

The spread of food and evening flying display was magnificent and Sunday morning came around too soon. Farnborough air traffic control were paying the price for it being a perfect flying day, you could not get a word in edgewise and we were glad to get signed off and get back to the strip.

Did Ireland live up to our expectations. The people were friendly and had time to chat, the weather was unpredictable and Yes it is very green. I don't know who said it was going to be cheap but Eire has the Euro and 2.35Euro/Litre for fuel is not funny. Despite the “liquid sunshine” we will be going back.

Health is merely the slowest possible rate at which one can die.

Jodel Fly In - St Omer

by Bruce Alexander

Having attended the Luscombe Fly In at Oaksey Park several years ago and several Jodels and their crews attending same I thought we should return the compliment and go to the Jodel ‘Lovers’ (very Gallic) Fly In and sample their hospitality. I would add this wasn't the first time but I hadn't stayed over and having seen the preparations that time with all those moules and French sticks a return had been in my mind.



Simon and I paired up for this one and a nice uneventful trip of an hour and a bit saw us land, a quick fuel up ready for the return whilst the pumps were quiet, always a good plan and we parked for the night. Several Strut Members had made the run as had a lot of Brits, in fact of the 80 plus aeroplanes booked in, a very high proportion were from G.B. It would appear despite the economic gloom we are still prepared to travel, witness aeroplanes from as far a field as and . French hospitality was matchless and we had a couple of (small) beers and a baguette then put up the tent. I said to Simon that after a couple of disturbed night previously I had two choices, one go for a kip or two go for a

walk. Visitors to the airfield will be well aware of the memorial erected to the air services which operated there during World War One and a number of casualties that never made it home are buried in the nearby cemetery. On the way in to Saint Omer you quickly arrive at this cemetery and I don't think it is any harm at all to pay your respects to all those who lie there, over a thousand of all nationalities, including Chinese and Indian. A bit of a stroll on then picking up a bottle of wine on the way back an time for the evening festivities. The theme is moules and frites so if you don't like sea food then it ham and chips served up in copious quantities and all washed down with your favourite tipple, good conversation, good food, good wine and good night!

Wrong! Making the mistake of taking my eldest daughters lightweight sleeping bag I discovered not only was it light weight in keeping the cold out but it didn't barely cover my nipples which remained in the erect position(due to the cold I hasten to add) until with the first flush of dawn I staggered off to the ablutions. Now here's a thing, someone there has spent a good deal of money on putting in a fine new shower and toilets with a communal washing trough which knock the spots off a good many airfield facilities at home. I don't know why this is, the French taking stick for some of their habits and plumbing and then they provide this sort of standard where least expected.

Anyway, after a decent breakfast both Simon and I needed to be back to the by lunchtime so flight plan filed after the weather apparently cheered up and we were off. Things across the

channel were a bit fraught with the edge of a rain bearing front drifting across the forcing us a little West of track but after that a good run home. Nice, a little enjoyable trip and one for the less experienced traveller, to be put in the diary for 1010.

Winter Barbie OR How Bonfire Night Was Celebrated Strut Style!

More like antonyms and not words you usually associate together. Once again Farthing Corner airstrip was made available for what turned out to be a fire-works extravaganza, with a raging bonfire.



The helpers started arriving throughout the afternoon and bit by bit things

started to take shape. The fresh carrot and coriander soup began to simmer, the jacket potatoes were cooking and the rice salad completed. Of course we had the staples of burger and sausages but also available were fresh chicken and vegetarian; with bread pudding and mince pie & custard for desert no one was going to go hungry. To ensure people didn't go home thirsty either we had beer, red or white wine, soft drinks as well as tea & coffee.



As the weather good all day and likely to remain so until later in the night we knew it would be busy and as day went on we got more calls from people asking if they could attend. Most people brought a firework along with them and the blonde tells me that one forward thinking chap brought along some toffee apples, which went down exceptionally well with the kids. A few of the regulars to these events were unable to attend due to prior commitments but this was compensated for by some new faces that had new stories to tell.

I was asked by someone how the event became so popular with nearly 100 people attending, but priced at £5.00 per adult to include starter, main course, desert & drinks and free for under 16's, it's exceptional value. Earlier in the day

at Old Sarum a bowl of soup and a roll were £3.50 and these LAA types can surely spot a bargain.

I won't single out anyone in particular for special thanks, if you were one of those working unpaid, Thank you! As well as having a good evening amongst fellow pilots and their families, believe it or not we made also made a profit for the strut which means the subs are less likely to have to go up, so just by supporting the event, you're all helping out.

Last Months Meeting

We had the welcome return of John Thorpe who gave an interesting insight to his earlier career prior to Gasco when he was involved with flight testing at Filton (Bristol) during the 60's and 70's of the last century culminating with work on Concorde. One fascinating project was the Bristol 188 a stainless steel jet twin which was commissioned to explore the flight envelope between Mach 2-3. An ambitious task in the relative early days of jet propulsion. One of these airframes still exists at the RAF Museum, Cosford to which coincidentally I visited only two weeks after Johns talk. I am interested in most aspects of historic flying although to be fair the more esoteric one offs are way down the scale compared with other to me more interesting types, however I was able to look at this aeroplane along with the other experimental types held in the collection with fresh eyes. When you see the airframe close up with a wingspan less than a Cherokee and a leading edge you could almost shave with it does look very futuristic. Not to be, it suffered endurance problems amongst other issues and eventually the pro-

gramme was cancelled and the three airframes disposed to various sites or scrapped. One was used at Foulness artillery range to investigate the effect of shot and shell against stainless steel, the preserved example was to share the same fate but was reprieved and after time was put in to Cosford.

Johns talk enthused over what must have been a fascinating time for British aviation from a golden age when we still had such a flourishing industry. Plus ca change eh!

Anyway a fascinating glimpse and thank you John.

Christmas Dinner @ The Golf Club

Saturday 19th December 2009
7.00 for 7.30 pm

Yes folks its that time of year and we are pleased to announce our Christmas Dinner will be held at Cobtree Manor Golf Club and the price a very reasonable £20 per head. A booking form is enclosed for your use if you could return just as soon as practicable in order that numbers can be quantified.

Hope to see you all there for a convivial night with your fellow Strut members and their friends and family.

In the 60's, people took acid to make the world weird. Now the world is weird and people take Prozac to make it normal.

Strut Projects

News is filtering through on a number of new builds and potential first flight(s) again so we expect to see the Strut fleet growing by considerable numbers. There is even talk on an innovative microlight build so watch this space.

FLYING SAFETY TIPS.

* Horizontal turns. To take a turn the pilot should always remember to sit upright, otherwise he will increase the banking of the aeroplane. He should NEVER lean over.

* Crash precautions. Every pilot should understand the serious consequences of trying to turn with the engine off. It is much safer to crash into a house when going forward than to sideslip or stall a machine with engine troubles.

* Passengers should always use safety belts, as the pilot may start stunting without warning.

* Never release the belt while in the air, or when nosed down to land.

* Engine noises: Upon the detection of a knock, grind, rattle or squeak, the engine should be at once stopped. Knocking or grinding accompanied by a squeak indicates binding and a lack of lubricant.

Why is there a light in the fridge and not in the freezer?

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Did you ever notice that when you blow in a dog's face, he gets mad at you, but when you take him on a car ride; he sticks his head out the window?

Gardening Rule: When weeding, the best way to make sure you are removing a weed and not a valuable plant is to pull on it. If it comes out of the ground easily, it is a valuable plant.

Do illiterate people get the full effect of Alphabet Soup?

Dates for your Diary

Nov 26	Golf Club
Dec 19	Christmas Dinner
Jan 28	AGM