

# WYE VALLEY FLYERS NEWSLETTER AUG 04

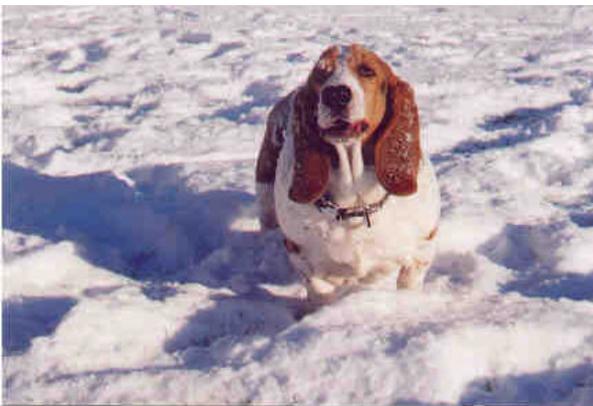
Incorporating Broadmeadow Flying Club

Editor: Merv Middleton e-mail [merv@middletons.flyer.co.uk](mailto:merv@middletons.flyer.co.uk)

7th Edition

**Editorial Comment.** Hi again, what a month July has been, fantastic flying, new places and lots of adventures with over 55hrs in my logbook. Flights to Bodmin, Kemble PFA Rally, Chambley RSA Rally and our big trip to Portugal, Spain and France.

Your thoughts on Kemble? Pretty depressing jumps to mind? Put aside the poor weather, the attendance was bad, entry costs high and most of the BMAA Microlight fraternity were absent, foreign visitors were few and the trade stands almost empty. Whilst wanting to be upbeat and positive I do find it hard. What is the root problem and what is the solution? Can't help but think it needs to be reflective of all aviation, get the BMAA, BHGA, BHPA involved for a start. Reduce entry costs, air display and many more ideas jump to mind. I am well aware of the insurance costs, Kemble management wanting their slice etc but surely reductions could be made in fire and medical cover, lavish publications? Who successfully managed to down load the monster Yellow AIC complete with colour photography of obscure fields? At the end of the day you could have a day at the Farnborough Air show for less money and far more entertainment. I for one will pause before attending next years show.



Picture of my Dog Hank! For no reason other than he is cool and is on his last legs (allegedly) it is aviation orientated anyway because below the snow is the Broadmeadow Airfield!

**Blois Part 2** My moaning worked!

**A BOIRE IN THE LOIRE - continued** By S Harvey  
It was pitch black, although I could just make out a light in the distance. The three of us were in a small country lane in the deepest depths of Hampshire. Luckily I had Val to protect me from the mad axe man that I was convinced was following us, so I

stayed close by. Jonathan would have to look after himself.

We were beginning to doubt the presence of the elusive hostelry that we had been given directions for from the local garage that sat just outside the airfield. However, in the distance, and in a different direction to the instructions given we could see a light that resembled our quest. Jonathan took the initiative and knocked on the door of the only house we had encountered. Apparently the distant light was a pub, not the intended one, but in the opinion of the homeowner it was a better option.

One and a half hours later we all sat in a warm restaurant with pleasantly plump bellies while recounting the day's happenings. My Pigeon in red wine gravy starter had been excellent, while my medallions of pork had been even better. To top our evening the wonderful landlord gave us a lift back to the airfield, thus eliminating that lengthy walk in the dark and bypassing the mad axe man. The pub was called the Fox, and I highly recommend it.

On Friday morning we woke to the sound of rain on the tent. We were still at Popham. Until 5pm our lives were an exact duplication of the previous afternoon, the monotony was only broken by Jonathan having to repair a puncture on the Shadow. We had been given regular updates on the weather, and it was apparent that things were looking good for early evening. At 5.30pm we were packed, in the planes and ready to go. The hospitality at Popham could not have been better. The airfield manager had even given Jonathan his reading classes because Jonathon couldn't find his own. What more can you say!

The flight to Lashenden was fun. It was great to be flying again and the weather was excellent. As we flew south of Gatwick I listened into their information channel. I learnt the weather conditions, QNH, QFE and runway in use. I asked Val if she fancied making a landing that would make the 10 o'clock news but she declined, so I continued on. I watched jet liners sucking air in the distance as I gently fanned my way over Haywards Heath at 1200ft, and felt hugely privileged. I thought about the passengers; oblivious to me just a few miles away, and as I often do during the drive home after flying, I felt as though I had a special secret.

On arrival at Lashenden we were subject to the usual great hospitality. This included the use of a hanger for us and G-CBUU to sleep in. Unfortunately we couldn't squeeze Jonathan's plane through the gate in front of the doors so his had to sleep outside. We were accompanied in the barn, come hanger, by a variety of flex-wings and their masters, apparently from Barton. Jonathan and I filed our flight plans with James the airfield owner, who then took time in the dark to fork-lift a bowser full of unleaded petrol to our planes, and subsequently proceeded to drink it in an effort to initiate a siphon. 'Beyond the call of duty' came to mind.



Val and Spence in the machine concerned.

During the one and a half hours spent attempting to refuel, Val had been sitting in the bar surrounded by several men (I have to mention that she was the only female for several miles around). While speaking to two fellow pilots who were flying a Quik, she had learnt that several years previously they had landed in Le Touquet in the evening, made camp, and then were promptly arrested in the morning. Their aircraft was impounded and it had cost them 1000 francs to be reunited. This made me feel uneasy. We were going to close our flight plan in Abbeville, and although according to Pooleys it was not necessary to provide 24-hour notice, I was sure it was not a custom airfield and required more than the 1-hour notice our flight plan would provide. I pushed this worry to one side and enjoyed my curry and a pint.

The nights sleep was interrupted with thoughts of the mornings channel crossing and monumental snoring from our Barton compatriots. We broke camp at 6.00am, made good use of the hot showers on site and packed the plane. At 7.30am we were installed in our respective aircraft with life jackets on. The day looked promising with an already active sun materialising above the horizon. The Quik was first to set sail while the two 462 Q's, Eclipse Raven and 912 Quantum from Barton

endeavoured to pursue. Jonathan and I bought up the rear.

During our flight towards the coast I spoke to London Information, confirmed the receipt of our flight plan and activated it accordingly. London Information was very helpful and even requested that we remain with them for the whole crossing, including notifying them of coasting in. We coasted out over Dymchurch at 4000ft in stunning conditions with nil wind. France was in view and I pointed the trike at Cap Gris-Nez. Jonathan was in front and the Barton lot, who we had caught up, were slightly further west. The Quik had long since gone and I thought to myself that I would like to try one out sometime.

The channel crossing was different than my previous one. I liked the fact that the boats looked like toys and I couldn't read their names, and although I felt what I presume is a normal level of nervousness, I enjoyed it enormously. The air was smooth and the engine sounded sweet, the gauges read slightly cooler than normal and our groundspeed was on the right side of the ASI. Val actually stayed awake during the whole crossing and provided great company. I'm sure it must be easier to fly over dangerous areas with a passenger to help quell any nerves with distracting chatter. Val is such a professional passenger now that it's probably a deliberate skill she's honed.

By mid-channel I had overtaken Jonathan but felt confident enough to circle back and check on the progress of my companion. I spoke to London Information at the same time to notify them of our mid-point location as requested. We coasted in just south of Cap Gris-Nez, spoke to London Info, and headed southeast to Abbeville. I spoke to Le Touquet and requested use of their airspace. They agreed to my route and asked if Jonathan and I could fly directly over the mid-point of the runway at 1000ft. "Non problemo mon cheri"; I said impressively, and thanked Del Boy for those invaluable lessons. On approach to Abbeville I refrained from using any of my new found French and attempted English. As per usual there was no answer so I made a circuit and landed into what little wind there was.

On the ground I met Chris Finnigan who had been trapped there for a day while the weather that we encountered in Popham had passed through and continued south. He had contacted a friend who was further on route and had been assured that things were looking better. We wished him well while he maneuvered his not inconsiderable physique into his bright yellow 912 Quantum.

We took on board a dribble of fuel in an attempt to avoid paying a landing fee, which seems to be a pleasant practice at French airports. After resting for an hour we departed in good spirits on route to Chatres. This was the best flying of our trip so far; 1 hour 40 minutes of pure bliss. Val slept (I wonder if this was part of the pleasure?), and Jonathan seemed to be enjoying it as much as me. I was about to speak to Chatres when I heard a fellow British Microlighter being informed by the French radio operator that unless we can speak French it was not necessary to communicate and to simply land at our discretion. Determined to attempt some more French, I practiced a few choice phrases before Val started giggling and cruelly dissuaded me. Subsequently, Chris Finnigan, who was just departing broadcast the runway direction and circuit pattern. Our landings were uneventful.

I remembered that there was a Carrefour supermarché just outside the airport so the three of us tied the aircraft down and ventured the short walk. Once inside, Val likened it to heaven, and I could understand why. There was superb food to suit every persuasion. A large pain, (That's a French loaf to those who don't speak French, haw haw mondu.) a selection of cheeses and a bottle of wine were among the purchases. When back at the airfield we ate a feast and packed the remaining food into every vacant orifice on the Quantum. After a brief sleep and 2 hours 20 minutes on the ground we were ready for departure. My poor plane groaned with the extra weight of food and under protest left the ground at 14.00hrs. I took a slight detour to take a closer look at Chatres's impressive cathedral before heading south. Next stop Blois.



This photo Spence labeled; God I am so cool...

Another great flight, 1 hour 50 minutes of reasonable sunshine and great visibility. The only slight concern was Jonathan's unusually noisy and rough running engine. (This was later investigated and found to be due to two broken exhaust springs.) I hardly made an input as Val flew on the training bars and allowed me to enjoy the surroundings and listen to the sometimes amusing chatter on British microlight frequency. The chatter escalated the closer we got to Blois, and this coincided with the increase in air activity. The Blois ULM meeting is actually held at a grass strip just to the south west of Blois in Onzain. It was easy to recognize due to the fact that it was the only patch of ground not inhabited by a parked aircraft. Val and I kept a sharp lookout for other planes while manufacturing an approach. We had the choice of three runways ahead, each with their own guardian at the threshold in the guise of an energetic little Frenchman brandishing a colored rag. Their purpose seemed to be to challenge for your attention and persuade you that their runway is best. I picked the one with the most vigor and rewarded him with my trade and an average landing. What a great game I thought.

Jonathan followed and we were ushered to the aircraft parking and camping area. We found an uninhabited patch of grass, disembarked and greeted each other with broad smiles. Two days of perpetual rain in Popham, the nerve-racking water crossing and nearly three days of travel had all been worthwhile, well done to the both of us I thought. At that very moment a friendly face appeared. Approaching, clad in shorts and a wide grin with a bottle of port in one hand was Merv who with one sweeping statement proceeded to upend our relief and sense of achievement. "Where've you two been? I've been here since 11am this morning. Left Broadmeadow earlier after filing a flight plan, closed it in the air over Cherbourg and flew straight here. 4 Hours dead, 37 liters of fuel. Brilliant flight." I was tempted to call him something rude but thought it might jeopardize the possibility of sampling some of that port. I needed a drink.

*Ed: Spence fails to mention he got his Port and proceeded to get extremely inebriated that night!*

### **Trials and Tribulations - Zenair Experience**

By Mr. X, titled:

#### **I LEARNED ABOUT BUYING FROM THAT**

A young, but brilliant, aircraft engineer based at a small and sometimes friendly flying club near Hereford purchased a propeller for his aircraft from the same supplier as the engine. 'No problems', he thought, 'nothing can go wrong'. (Mistake number one)

Flight trials soon highlighted a small, but significant

shortcoming in the aircraft; it didn't go up very well. Several tests were carried out to ascertain whether the problem was caused by the throttle linkage or the inflow of air to the carburettor - but all to no avail.

Mr. X, as we shall refer to him, consulted his apprentice (John) and all other interested parties, the consensus was that the propeller was the problem - but how could it be, when it does so well on the Savannah? Mr. X carried out extensive research on the Internet, and had an excellent response from several Zenair/Jabiru owners. He is now an expert on the flight characteristics of Jabiru powered Zenairs.

After a conversation with S.T Aviation, our intrepid builder was offered a finer pitch propeller. After an interval of two weeks (with no propeller arriving on his doorstep), he had the same conversation with the supplier about air intakes, filters etc... And then a new question was asked, 'what's the serial number of your engine?'

Horror of horrors, the engine is not the 'new supadupa' variety with the power to drive a coarse prop, but needs a finer prop. The supplier assumed, when the initial order was made, that the engine was the new type (mistake number two) and sent the wrong propeller.

I learned about buying from that ...Never assume that what you're getting is what you need.

The grief and disappointment borne by our hero is so intense that he will be off to the USA for several days of intensive therapy, this will include a few days in Oshkosh, the Pima Aircraft Museum in Tucson, an airshow in Ohio and anything interesting in between.

*Ed: Hopefully followed by an account of his travels?*

### **Tour 2004 – Portugal and back (via every high mountain in between)**

Well we did it; is the first thought that comes to mind! Nine days away, roughly 3000 miles, or for me 387 litres of fuel and 37 hrs engine time. Down through France over the Pyrenees across Spain and into central Portugal to see the venue of the European Microlight Championships. Back across Spain, a traverse along the length of the Pyrenees over to the maritime Alps and finally 140 miles over the Alps taking in the summit of Mont Blanc. Every day beautiful sunshine and 95% of the time a tail wind!

Participants: Graham and Judy (Eurostar), Val and Spence (Quik), John and Brian (Skyranger) and

finally Merv (Eurostar) with Eddie (Eurostar) going as far as the competition venue.

What a trip, excellent hospitality at every stop, lots of food consumed (especially Val) and more than a few drinks...



Just to wet your appetite – The Alps from circa 15500ft soon after crossing Mont Blanc summit.

Without doubt the hero of the hour – Val. Sat in the back of the Quik for hours on end over hostile ground and at times severe turbulence, freezing cold at high altitudes, sweating like mad at 40C plus in a flying suit, all without complaint – beat that.

What's more Val has volunteered to write up the full story and once completed I will give you a bumper edition, with a photo show to follow in the winter months. Planning has commenced for next year...

Well got to go; need to draw some lines on my maps, off to the Isle of Man Jurby Festival of Aviation tomorrow.

**Social Fixtures** Until the autumn WVF and BFC Club members meet at Broadmeadow Airfield on the first Thursday of every month about 2000hours. Any like-minded aviators, are welcome to drive or fly, why not socialize and join us for a drink?

Regards Merv.