

# WYE VALLEY FLYERS NEWSLETTER OCT 04

Incorporating Broadmeadow Flying Club

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9th Edition

**Editorial Comment.** Hi folks, I have been away on and off for a few weeks and was delaying in the hope that Part 2 of the article by Val of the flight out to Portugal would have been completed. Unfortunately this is not the case due to the pressures of work. Not wanting to steal Val's thunder (or incur her wrath) I will find a different subject.

As I write this the rain is pouring down and the wind is blowing so what better than a picture of the River Lugg flooding just North of Hereford. Taken a few years back from my Shadow but a frequent occurrence at this time of year.



**Flyers news.** Catching up on flying news I have trawled up the following which might be of interest:

**SAFETYCOM.** The CAA has announced that November 11<sup>th</sup> will be date of commencement of the awaited Safetycom frequency which can be used throughout the UK on 135.475 For use at airfields that do not have an air to ground frequency (either in vicinity of or landing). Only below 2000ft and within 10nm for the broadcasting of intentions. Great stress being placed that it is not an air to air chat channel.

**Diary date.** The PFA Rally has been re-branded (no surprise) and is to be called 'Flying for Fun' but hopefully at less cost than the last show! Next event is July 1<sup>st</sup> - 3<sup>rd</sup> 2005 at Kemble. Lots of promises of change and answering the criticism of 2004, as you may have gathered I view this all rather cynically but wait to be pleasantly surprised...

**SpaceShipOne.** History was made and a prize of \$10 million won for the first non-government aircraft to fly into space and repeat it within 2 weeks. SpaceShipOne achieved this on 4<sup>th</sup> Oct in the Mojave Desert USA. Lots of hype over this with talk of it equalling the crossing of the Atlantic by Lindbergh in 1927 or even the Wright brothers. You can draw your own conclusions but nonetheless one hell of a feat.

**Single sky threatens GA.** VFR flying in Europe is under threat of airspace charges thanks to the Single European Sky (SES) project being advocated by the European Commission, and to which the British government has

signed up. Eurocontrol, the European air traffic management quango, has been charged with undertaking consultation but has issued an imminent deadline of 17 September.

The SES project wants all aircraft, regardless of size and use, VFR or IFR, to pay for use of airspace services such as air traffic control, NOTAM, weather information, search and rescue, and so on, whether or not they have been used. No exemptions are included in the draft proposals - not even for gliders, microlights or balloons.

It's not at all clear how flights would be charged, though with the mandatory adoption of Mode S transponders due in the next few years, it would be possible to track all flights so long as the transponder was switched on and functioning. One possibility being mooted is a flat rate annual tax, similar to road tax for VFR flying.

Nothing in the draft proposals suggests that even a light aircraft flying non radio, from one private strip in uncontrolled airspace to another will escape being charged. The proposals apply to all civil air traffic and General Aviation (GA) is not mentioned. It will, apparently, be up to the governments of individual states to decide how the payments are levied. Dft [Department of Transport] is said to be sympathetic to the plight of GA and wants to exclude us as per the current airways charges exemptions but the regulations do not permit that unless the Government pays the costs thereof to the Air Navigation Service Providers - and it won't.

It suggests amending the proposal to say: It is acknowledged that exemptions for VFR flights and for all flights of aircraft of less than 2 tonnes MTOW have hitherto been granted from Eurocontrol's charges for good and practical reasons. These exemptions shall continue.

Depressing news but the deadline for comment has gone, so we sit and wait I guess for the decision. If you read this far well done! To make you feel happier I have just read the SES have backed down following a mass of complaints, it appears under 2 tonnes will be exempted...

**Can you see it?** Anyone who reads this and understands needs a medal. 5 October 2004: A new method of measuring visibility at aerodromes becomes effective from 25 November. Can you understand what's proposed?

Aeronautical Information Circular 84/2004 (Yellow 145) issued on 16 September gives details of the new method of measuring visibility which has been agreed by ICAO, the international organisation for aviation standards. It will affect the visibility reporting in METAR, TAF, Special Reports and Trend Reports in Met Office forecasts.

ICAO defines prevailing visibility as: "Prevailing visibility is the visibility value that is reached or exceeded within at

least half the horizon circle or within at least half the surface of the aerodrome. These areas could comprise contiguous or non-contiguous sectors"

The new proposal (ICAO Annex 3 Amendment 73) for the reporting of prevailing visibility says: "If the visibility in one direction, which is not the prevailing visibility, is less than 1500 m or less than 50% of the prevailing visibility, the lowest visibility observed should also be reported and its general direction in relation to the aerodrome indicated by reference to one of the eight points of the compass. If the lowest visibility is observed in more than one direction, then the most operationally significant direction should be reported."

What a load of crap! I think simply put it means to give the worst case visibility!

### Fly UK.

This challenge got off to a poor start, several name changes, different organisers and a last minute start point. Nearer the start date the long range forecast was miserable and many participants understandably dropped out. But with the end date tied to the IOW Spamfield Fly-in it pretty well fixed the start.

Friday the 18<sup>th</sup> of June was windy and wet but with a promise of breaks late in the day, I was packed and in the air by 1830hrs for a short flight over to Hartbury near Gloucester – John Hamars field of Minimax fame. Having dodged rain squalls I had an un-eventful landing, tent up quickly and down to the only pub, here I met up with many of the participants and learned of the outline plan.

Saturday dawned sunny and clear but with a forecast of rapid deterioration from the South West, increasing rain and wind. So following a quick brief we took to the air, must admit I never did work out the total numbers, but it included an AX2000, 2 Eurostars, 3 Minimax, and about 6 flexwings, with others joining later, even a Gyro! All told quite a cross section of machines. So North for Hucknall, rain showers around Birmingham spread us far and wide and saw aircraft arriving hours apart. This was the way of future events, the itinerary was loose and whilst there were en-route fields the main aim was to make the same evening destination.

Having watched a Spitfire perform (it was the Hucknall – Robin Hood PFA Fly-in) and seeing black clouds approaching it was time to move on to Bagby up on the A1. More rain squalls, led to a fairly zigzag route being flown but at least the numerous MATZ were not active. Bagby were excellent, friendly, helpful and with an excellent café. Probably just as well as the wind was blowing 20 mph plus and the visibility steadily got worse. The decision was made to wait it out and consolidate before deciding about pushing on. Over the next 2 hours everyone appeared out of the rain and all were up beat about pushing on to Eshott (North of Newcastle) our night destination.

I guess it was at this stage I realised I was flying with a hard core of determined flyers, and a team unity was forged. I elected to go outside of Newcastle airspace and track North up the coast, it was bumpy and the wind was strong. So even with a 40 mph headwind at 2000ft I made swift progress (100mph on the ASI) to Eshott, some of the flex wings were down to 20mph over the ground.

Just as well I hurried, because the boys at Eshott were in the process of locking up, not believing anyone would get through. The landing was interesting but at least the wind was roughly down the runway, I tied down firmly and manned the radio and lit the BBQ as the Eshott boys shot down to the shops for food and drink. Over the next hour everyone landed safely but were cold and wet. But with great hospitality, food and drink, spirits were soon up and the war stories flowed.

Sunday morning dawned and an early start, destination Perth. Once again the early morning clear skies soon darkened and by the Scottish border everyone was in small groups. I waited until last to depart having helped the AX2000 crew with a flat tyre, and then played catch up giving a running commentary over the radio as I passed aircraft. This in fact became the norm for much of the trip. By the time we got to Perth the sun had re-appeared and the wind lessened (15mph). The next leg was to Inch near Aberdeen and then around the coast to Dornoch, North of Inverness. Unfortunately the cloud over the Cairngorms was bad and Inch was closed to traffic. Following a quick debate it was decided to run up the A9 direct to Inverness staying low, with me going in advance to check the bottle neck at Aviemore.

Next followed an exciting hour of low flying, circling rain showers and dodging black clouds whilst being confined in a narrow valley flying under the cloud base. Near Inverness it was evil, one big black cloud blocked the route, so in hailstones I pushed to the West and circled behind it, eventually landing in Dornoch and relieved to be down. The remainder, being behind landed in the glider field at Feshiebridge (although I did not know at the time), got stung for a membership fee but at least had hot drinks with some even taking a shower! Meanwhile I wandered into Dornoch and discovered how nice it was, in the process having a big Sunday roast. Several hours later everyone arrived individually and in small groups, tents up in the nearby campsite, fuel run from friendly local aviators and another large meal in the restaurant reserved solely for us.



Cleared the snow squall and approaching John O'Groats, just right of centre is a Minimax.

Monday morning and it was damp and generally miserable, but being near the coast the visibility was reasonable. The forecast indicated it would not improve, so John O'Groats here we come! The flight was relatively

simple, follow the coast until it came to an end, or at least that was the plan... Approaching Wick under low cloud, over water and high cliffs to the left I ran into a bank of sea fog so decided to cut in land West of Wick. This was a wise move as I found clear spots and by the time I got to John O'Groats it was fairly clear. Being well ahead of the bulk of the group I continued out to the Orkneys before turning back in time to catch some of them for a photo shoot over the headland.

Back in Dornoch the Tain range was active and Tornados were passing through low and fast. But with comms to the RAF established I took the previous nights restaurant owners young son for a short flight, his first plane ride. The night stop was Oban but with the option of taking in Plockton near the Isle of Skye. The bulk of the team elected to go direct via the Great Glen due to weather concerns and lack of fuel availability at Plockton. So we split and I went with Julie and Terry in their Quik to Plockton and then on to Glenforsa on Mull for scones and coffee (all very civilised). We had perhaps the best days flying I have had, the weather rapidly improved and by Plockton we had glorious sunshine, no cloud, and superb visibility. Taking our time we arrived in Oban about 1700 hrs and found everyone there safely, with the exception of the Minmax's who had landed and pushed on. This caused an amount of discussion and adverse comment, but at the end of the day was the respective pilots decision. I later found out with a crap forecast, they wanted to push on and get South to avoid possibly being trapped. We enjoyed ourselves without them! The Oban boys left the Club house open, and after a great meal in a local restaurant we retired. This was the longest day and being that far North it was barely dark for a few hours so early Tuesday we were up and about, ready to move by 0700 hrs.



Terry and Julie with Quik G-TERR at Plockton, a pair of well-travelled and adventurous aviators from Kemble, they took turns to fly the various legs.

The aircraft with the fuel range were heading direct for Carlisle, with several having to drop into a small field near Irvine harbour (Prestwick) for fuel. This was arranged by Graham who knew the owner (William another Eurostar man); having been before I escorted them. The weather was once again favourable but with an increasing wind as we moved South and due to be a storm by nightfall, the race was on! William was a great host but we had difficulty getting away from the cake and sandwiches! I made fast progress to Carlisle and was on the ground for

less than 20 minutes. The weather was still holding but further South it was already closing down. We were working well as a team and the late arrivals were refuelled in minutes and pushing on, initially to Tarn Farm for fuel if required or direct to Barton the planned night stop. I crossed the Lake District at 6000ft under high stratus cloud and a lot of turbulence and by the time I was approaching Manchester the wind had increased to 25mph from the South East. Barton were great, opening the into wind runway (which was NOTAM as closed) to get the microlights in safely. Over the next few hours everyone bar one flexwing landed with quite a few stories of turbulence to tell, including several missed approaches and one flexwing taking to the long grass. Incidentally the other flex wing remained at Tarn Farm and was looked after grandly - Flash 2 Alpha with a 40 hr pilot and his 67-year dad flying for the first time! (They caught us up later at the I.O.W.).

Wednesday and Thursday saw constant strong wind and rain. Just how many movies can you watch in the Trafford shopping centre? I saw 5! Ate lots of popcorn and spent hours drinking coffee and people watching. With increasing concern over the remaining time to complete many plans were redrawn, several dropped out and several decided to head direct to Sandown. Friday dawned cold and clear with a breezy North Westerly and a promise of more storms on the Saturday / Sunday. Glad at least to be flying again the first stop was Shobdon for an English breakfast. Unfortunately the Chef failed to turn up for work so lukewarm coffee sufficed. Dropping into Broadmeadow I filled the tank and flew direct to Lands End routeing along the North coast of Devon and Cornwall. Here I got the long awaited breakfast and within the hour was circling Lands End camera clicking before heading to the Lizard to take in the most Southerly point.



Lands End from the West before heading to the Lizard.

With a 25mph tail wind I had a smooth but fast flight along the coast straight lining apart from a small detour over the Eden project near St Austell. With even Solent radar, (normally anti microlights what ever they say, if you don't believe me try asking for a zone transit or even a FIS) being helpful. Sandown came into view and with a quick join downwind I was on the ground, mission complete.

With a bad forecast I had already decided not to stay (plus there are no cinemas near by!) so within 20 minutes

having said hello and good bye to Russ, Spence and Val it was time to go and beat the setting sun back to Hereford.

It turned out Saturday was pretty well a wash out, and Sunday was little better with a few aircraft having difficulties either on leaving or arrival at their home fields. So I did not feel too guilty leaving the Wye Valley Flyers to drink all the alcohol...

In summary; an experience and adventure, the weather was overall bad. I visited a few new fields, made a stack of new friends, and had hospitality second to none. Flew in marginal conditions but saw the beauty of the British Isles. Memories of flexwing pilots making snowballs collected from the pod in Dornoch having flown around John O'Groats in snow showers. The shortest night in Oban and them dam midges. Going stir crazy in Barton where they pulled out all the GA aircraft from the hangars and housed us safely but would take no money. Finally shepherding a low hour pilot around the British Isles with his retired father when he had never left Perth previously, makes me smile when they gave the award at Spamfield to the CT pilot. I could have nominated half a dozen flex wing pilots who made his flight pale into insignificance.

Would I do it again? Yes.

**Maintenance.**

Rotax via Skydrive have recently published a few instructions for the 912.

SI-18-1997 R5 concerning the type of motor oil to use.

ASB-912-045UL R1 for the inspection of oil filter.

SB-912-043UL coolant specification.

If any owners need more specific information give me a call.

Until next time. Merv