



Grandpa flies the Spitfire

On 20th February 1948 the last Spitfire was delivered from South Marston airfield to the Royal Air Force. It was a Mk 24, serial number VN496 and was manufactured at what is now the site of the Honda car plant on the edge of Swindon. On the same day, I was delivered, six weeks premature apparently.

To mark my milestone anniversary of three score and ten, my family felt it appropriate for me to become more intimate with this iconic Supermarine machine and arranged a flight in the Grace Spitfire from Sywell.

My life from a small lad had been immersed in an aeronautical haze and my first flight in a Dragon Rapide from Portsmouth Airport in 1958 firmly secured my ambitions to fly. This in turn led to my first solo in a Slingsby T31 from North Weald on 19th July 1964. I had a spell of gliding, and even hang gliding, and then a little later my PPL was in my hand... and like many, I wanted to fly a Spitfire.

Down the years I have been fortunate enough to have flown in several different types of aircraft,
(continued on next page)

Cornwall Flying Club Ltd Annual General Meeting

The Club's AGM is to be held in the Clubhouse on Monday September 1st, starting at 7:30pm. You should have received official notification by email, along with the accounts for the last two years. Two Board members must step down this year, and one of them will be our Chairman Darren Fern, who is offering himself for immediate re-election. Before the AGM, Kevin Riley will be distributing some tongue-in-cheek 'Dubious Achievement Awards' to deserving recipients – all in the best possible taste.

many of them as pilot, yet there was still one type that had eluded me – you guessed it, the Spitfire. So on that birthday morning Katie and my sons Seth, Sam and Stefan presented me with my invitation to fly in the Grace Spitfire. I was elated to say the least. My connection with this aircraft goes back to when Nick and Carolyn Grace lived in Cornwall and Nick was busy rebuilding the Spitfire, amongst his other projects. I was a regular visitor to the workshop at St Merryn and watched ML407 progress from a pile of parts to a magnificent two-seat Spitfire T9. The aircraft had originally been built as a Mk 9 and had seen service in the latter stages of the Second World War, laying claim to the first kill over the D-Day beaches in June 1944.

Fast forward and it's August 1st 2018, I'm kitted out in a new flying suit, I've had my essential briefing from Carolyn and the weather is looking good. The excitement is building as I walk out to ML407 with pilot Steve Jones (of Red Bull and the Matadors fame) and we discuss the forthcoming flight. Now I'm strapped in and waving at my family as the Merlin comes to life with a thunderous roar. We taxi to the hold, deliberately weaving so Steve can see ahead. Checks complete, we line up on runway 21. After 50-plus years of flying, I still get a thrill when going from two-dimensional to three-dimensional, and today was no different – except it was magnified at least a hundred times!

"You have control," Steve declares as we leave the circuit and my dream is realised after all those years – and yes, it is magic, and yes, it does fly beautifully and yes, I am overwhelmed by the sheer beauty of the elliptical wings as I meander around the Northamptonshire sky getting a little braver with my actions each minute. Steve breaks my train of thought as I watch my fourth Messerschmitt spiral smoking to the ground below and asks if I would like to do some aerobatics... there is only one answer to that question! Could this flight get any better? It just has – rolls, loops all perfectly executed by a master of aerobatics, reminding me how much I do enjoy and miss being upside down in an aircraft. After the aeros, Steve passed me back

the controls and asked me to fly ML407 back to base, which I did with a little feeling of sadness that my journey would soon come to an end, even though I just knew there was a *Staffel* of 109s still out there waiting to be dealt with by the master of all fighters. As we joined right base it was my turn – "you have control" – and Steve effortlessly greased us back onto 21. As I slid back the canopy with the realisation that we had returned to 2018, I could see my wonderful family all waiting there expectantly, although the image was just a little blurred as my eyes leaked tears of sheer joy... WOW! The flight of a lifetime.



Pete and family... and at right, Steve Jones

Come to the AGM

By **Darren Fern**

Another AGM looms after a challenging year for the club, and particularly for the volunteer Board members; if anyone had predicted the challenges that would face them when they signed up for the job of maintaining and developing a club that we all feel passionately about, I doubt that we would have had a Board at all. I would like to express my thanks to those who have shouldered the responsibility of taking difficult decisions that were necessary to ensure the viability of our club.

The club has delivered its promise of getting our much troubled Cessna 172, G-EGLA, into service. It is a magnificent aircraft that has rapidly become the workhorse of our operations. Our Cessna 152s have been refurbished and

now reflect the professionalism of the team of instructors who operate them. Our new CFI, Bruce Abbot, is a hugely experienced aviator and has instituted changes to the flight school operations that have benefitted the students and instructors; longer lesson slots allow more time for lesson briefing and de-briefing and protect the well-being of our instructors. We have a growing team of 'Introductory Flight Pilots' to assist our instructors. Any club member with the appropriate experience is welcome to join the team, subject to meeting the training requirements laid down in the club's policy manual.

Our manager, Jay Gates, has done an outstanding job of getting our accounts in order, to the extent that our accountants have reduced their bill significantly as they are now so clearly presented. Our financial position is good, setting us up for the winter months and the demons that our weather brings. We have finally been able to engage contractors to produce and install the steelwork required to repair the sagging hangar doors, and that will allow safer and easier access to the hangar. Hopefully this work will be completed before the weather turns. The airfield itself is in good condition after careful management over the winter months, and we will endeavour to maintain safe access to the strips as much as possible over the coming months.

CAS Ltd was sold to AT Aviation this year, relieving the club of financial and personnel responsibilities, and there has been no difference to their day to day operations as far as the club has been concerned.

Our social programme has been excellent this year, and I would like to thank Pete White and Martin Pengelly for their efforts at attracting our local communities to engage with our club, and Kevin Riley for his fly-outs.

Diner 31 has thrived over the summer, thanks to these events, but we need to ensure that over the winter months we continue to attract visitors. I wish to thank the volunteers who have helped manage and maintain our club and its facilities; without your efforts, our environment would be significantly poorer.

The AGM has been delayed until after the busy summer period and we look forward to meeting as many members as

possible for the evening. We have two recently appointed Board members, and our articles of association require that half of the Board positions be appointed each year; Bob Harris will be leaving us as he moves on to another of life's adventures in the autumn, and has decided to stand down at the AGM. I had decided to stand down as Chairman due to the strain of the responsibilities imposed over the past year, but have been asked to continue for another year. I have agreed to do so, provided that the majority of club members wish me to do so. I have therefore decided to seek re-election to the Board this year... we will have to wait and see how much support I have from the membership in a fair, and confidential ballot of the membership using the Ballotbin system introduced at the last AGM.

If any club members wish to stand for office, please forward details of a proposer and seconder to Jay Gates, who will be managing the elections to the Board.

Milestones in flight

The CFC Training Programme has produced a new PPL in August, while two students have flown their first solos. Richard Bracey passed his GST with Terry Earl. Richard, who lives in Lostwithiel and owns a renewable energy company, came to CFC late last summer to take the PPL course – the installation of hi-tech



Terry Earl congratulates Richard Bracey on passing his GFT

power systems takes him all over the country and it was only at weekends that he could find the time to fly. Also during August, one of our youngest PPL students flew his first solo. Carter Farrell, who started flying at Bodmin when he was 15 years old and is now 16, flew his first solo on the last day of the month under the supervision of Rod Bellamy. He was on a visible high when he landed. Carter wants to become a pilot with the RAF. Leith Whittington also flew his first solo under the guidance of Gary Perry in the C42, and incredibly he took all five theory exams in one sitting, which allowed him to do so. Leith is a glider pilot converting powered flight – he was a navigator for BCal back in the day, and later an instructor to commercial pilots on the INS system that rendered him obsolete. Congratulations to all.



Rod with Carter Farrell



First solo: Leith Whittington

AIRFIELD REPORT:

Shame about the weather

By Jay Gates

The airfield continues its encouraging progress from a statistical perspective, although the poor weather in August did put a dent in the upward trend to our movements and accompanying fuel sales. July was an excellent month and August still returned some impressive statistics, despite the weather. For July, a total of 995 aircraft movements were recorded, which was just short of the impressive total recorded for June. The busiest single day in July, a Saturday, recorded 110 movements. This reflected in the fuel sales for the month where over 8,000 litres of avgas was dispensed. In August, despite the almost continuous poor weather – which included one day where no flying could take place – we still achieved an impressive total of 690 movements, with the busiest single day, again a Saturday, recording 86 movements. We dispensed just over 6,200 litres of avgas in August.

By July 21st we had passed the 800 movement mark for the month and dispensed almost 6,500 litres of fuel. By comparison, by August 21st we had not yet managed to reach 600 movements

and had dispensed just over 4,000 litres. That difference, in high summer, translates into a huge loss of expected, and very precious, income. During July's good weather the flight training programme continued apace, with the club aircraft equalling the 124 hours flown in May. As



George Hays in the CAP 232

always, the club is indebted to the flexibility of our squad of very amenable instructors – once more, I give my thanks to Bruce Abbott, Kevin Jones, Nick Chittenden, Olly Smith and Rod Bellamy. We also have to thank our Introductory Flight pilots, notably Howard Fawkes, Sandy Wilkinson, Bob Harris, Pat Malone and Lloyd Edwards, who completed over 30 such flights in both July and August, resulting in some very happy voucher holders. Pat and Bob also completed their differences training for the Cessna 172 and now fly G-EGLA, as well as the Cessna 152s. We are also very pleased to see Lloyd is now over his recent health woes, and the CAA have reissued his Class 2 medical. We are still on the lookout for more volunteers who would like to join the Introductory Flight team, so if you are interested, get in touch.

The movements over the two summer months, from home based aircraft, visiting aircraft, event days, training, introductory flying and public footfall from the local area meant that Carol in Diner 31 continued to receive a welcome boost to her income, despite most of August providing her with more than one health scare. Hopefully, those health issues are now behind her.

Every month, Bodmin continues to attract visitors from all over the country, some coming from an airfield that we have not recorded before. In August, we had a glut of arrivals from the east of the country, which included aircraft based in

Langham (Norfolk), Crowfield (Suffolk), Slinfold (West Sussex), Eaton Bray (Bedfordshire) and the magnificently named Wombledon (Yorkshire). This last was a superb Avions Mudry CAP 232 with the appropriate registration of G-SKEW, flown by

George Hays whose father used to be one of the managers here at Bodmin Airfield.

The aircraft is a serious aerobatic machine, as can be witnessed by the scaffolding on the ends of the wing and the fact that it has a four bladed prop. When Terry Earl saw it he stated "that is a hooligan's aircraft."

George was here for a long weekend holiday stay with his father.

Another very special visitor to drop in for a long weekend stopover was N239MY, a Hughes 369 helicopter which arrived from Norwich. Except that this was no ordinary civil helicopter but an ex-US military Hughes OH-6A Cayuse and a genuine Vietnam War veteran. She was built in May 1969 with US Army serial 68-17172 and was assigned to Scout Platoon, A Troop, 2nd Squadron, 17th Air Cavalry Regiment, 101st Airborne Division (hence the Serial

numbers and Cavalry Pennon on her side). With an 'Assault' callsign she was tasked as a Divisional Reconnaissance helicopter. However, she only served in Vietnam from October to November 1971, but still managed to notch up a creditable 92 operational flying hours in that month. She still sports two repair patches to bullet holes received



Ex-Vietnam 'Loach' N239MY

in combat in Vietnam.

The need for volunteer airfield workers is never ending and your generous offers are always welcome. Our continued thanks go to our regular volunteers for kindly giving up their time to get much-needed maintenance done. I thank Pete Chapman, Roger Davis and Richard Saw for their continuing efforts to keep the airfield infrastructure

in working order. The current project is refurbishment of the secondary Windssock Mast opposite the Tower. Watch this space! Pilots often compliment is on the pristine condition of the runways, taxiways and parking areas, and this down to the sterling efforts of Roger Davis and Richard Saw with the mowing gangs. From a non-aviation perspective, we are always trying to get more people off the local roads and into Diner 31, which helps Carol with an improved income stream and raises the Club's profile in the area. We recently teamed up with Keith and Dotty Elderkin, who live just across the valley beyond Cardinham, and who run regular monthly breakfast meets for local petrolheads who enjoy Classic Hotrods and American Street Cars. She ran the first monthly meet at the clubhouse on the last Sunday in August, attracting over 20 people and a selection of American cars and pick-ups. Everybody who came loved the clubhouse with a superb diner and a large, secure 'off road' car park. They were of the opinion that within three months there would be more than 50 people, all needing to be fed. Their previous meeting location could not provide any of the facilities that we offer. This is the kind of non-aviation fringe activity that will assist the club through the quieter winter months and bring a broader clientele into the airfield. As they say, "great oaks from little acorns grow."

EVENTS REPORT:

This year good, next year better

By **Pete White**

After two super months in June and July the weather gods turned against us in August, leading to the cancellation of the Lundy Sunday fly-out and badly affecting the Summer Vintage Wings & Wheels gathering and the Tiger Moth days, which will now be incorporated in the LAA Cornwall Strut Fly-in on September 15th and 16th.

We did however get the FOG fly Bader Braves day under way on August 4th, and that was adjudged a great success. Numbers were slightly down because it was the height of the school holidays but it was very well received. We had a letter of appreciation addressed 'To the Volunteers' from Keith Delderfield, their Director of Operations, who thanked everyone for giving the kids "some



Soon to be a regular sight

wonderful memories of a great experience" at Bodmin. He goes on to say: "Whether you are one of the FOG ground crew volunteers, steward or pilot your generosity is very much appreciated on behalf of all the youngsters, their families and everyone at the Douglas Bader Foundation; I send my heartfelt thanks."

Before we draw a line under the Wing Walking event in July, let me just say that we were so successful in getting the word out – largely through Johnny Rutherford's report on the BBC TV news – that we already have 46 people signed up for next year's event. As a result we have added another 3 days bringing it up to 6 over two separate weeks for next year's wing-walking; the dates for your diary are July 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 9th, 10th and 11th 2019.

The Cornwall Strut Fly-in this month marks the effective rebirth of the Strut; while we've had a couple of inaugural meetings to talk through our



Martin Parker with young Bader charges



BMAA, and he came to Bodmin in May to compete in the TopNav competition. On November 21st our own equally remarkable Kevin Jones will tell 'the story of a self-improver'. And ex-airline pilot and now an instructor with Cornwall Flying Club, Kevin relates his journey from flying light aircraft tugging gliders to bush flying in Africa before he retired from the airlines with Flybe. There's a choice of dates for the Aeroclub Christmas celebrations at the Club... we've got Sundays December 2nd, 9th and 16th, so book well ahead to give Carol a chance to cater for the right number of people. FOG will be introducing aviation days for the Guides/ Brownies/Rainbows at the airfield similar to the ones in operation with the Cubs, Beavers and primary schools.

plans, this is the first flying event, and given that we have the bones of the Wings & Wheels and the always-popular TMT Nostalgic Flight Tiger Moths at the same time, it should be well worth a visit. That's on September 15th and 16th – see you there! The following weekend, September 21st to 23rd, is the Cornwall Scouts Aerocamp. Badges attained are Air Navigation, Meteorologist, and Aviation Activities Stage 5. We've already got some speakers lined up for the winter AEROCLUB programme of Wednesday evening events; at the first of these, on October 17th, you'll get a chance to meet the remarkable test pilot Graham Andrews, who will talk about his 13,000 hours test-flying 177 different types of aircraft at Boscombe Down and for Shorts and Rolls Royce, flying everything from the P-1127 to the Tucano. He's also a former Chairman of the



Things to come

The 2019 event planning is coming on, and the programme will be confirmed later in the year. So far we have these dates pencilled in for next year:

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| May 4 | Ladies Day Fly-in |
| May 11 | TopNav Competition |
| June 22 | Vintage Wings & Wheels |
| July 2, 3, 4, 9, 10 and 11 | Wing Walking |
| July 20 | Action Stations |
| August 4 | Lundy Sunday Fly out |
| September 14 | Cornwall Strut Fly-in |



The last round-up



Eat your heart out, Bo Peep – Richard Saw's on the job

Three hearty cheers for Roger Davies and Richard Saw, who have finally mended the hole in the fence that has been allowing our neighbour's sheep to trespass on the airfield over much of the summer. The hole was apparently opened up about seven years ago when Chiefy's car rolled backwards down the bank and through the fence. A 'temporary' fix – a pallet was stuffed in the gap – worked well enough, up to a point, and there were few if any ovine excursions onto the airfield until this year, when a flock of particularly determined and wily woollies took up residence next door.

In the fullness of time they figures out a way to lift the pallet and get to the other side, where the grass is of course always greener. For about a month, mass trespass on the runways was an almost-daily occurrence, and it was clear that shoring up the temporary fix was no longer an option – we tried, but the sheep outwitted us. Drastic action was required.

Thanks are due to Steve Farnell, who provided a five-metre roll of fencing, Kevin Riley, who came up with the fence posts, and Brett Lorraine, who gave us the locking wire we needed – and above all to Roger and Richard who did the spadework. As our picture shows, Richard also ushered the flock off the airfield for (hopefully) the last time. And if you're wondering how many sheep Richard is herding, Jay says it's 47.

Bodmin's new frequency – 120.325

By Jay Gates

We've been hit with a demand from the CAA to adopt a new 8.33 kHz radio frequency for Bodmin Airfield, and we must comply before the end of November. The new frequency will be 120.325, although the current frequency 122.7 will continue to be available during a grace period – probably up to the end of the year. The demand means that the Club is forced to buy a new radio transmitter because the current one, which was salvaged from an aircraft, cannot be converted to 8.33. We have sourced a keenly-priced ICOM IC-A120E transceiver, but even so it will cost us £700, while the licence to use it means we must pay Ofcom £3,300 a year. Radio pricing is a stealth tax that takes no account of the user's situation – Bodmin pays the same as Heathrow and Swanwick, despite us having only local coverage out to 10 miles, not more than 2,000 feet above our airfield, and being only allowed to pass information on

request. The claim that we are running out of aviation frequencies is pretty thin; it's been demonstrated that we'd have more than enough for all our needs, now and in the future, if the 27 frequency allocations in Europe were amalgamated and the overlap and duplication was washed out. But the authorities have realised there's money to be made, and they're not going to back down. The excuse for the frequency change is that the claim we are too close to Compton Abbas, which also broadcasts on 122.7. Compton Abbas is 100 nm away; it's true that when conditions are right for it we hear their approach traffic, but that's been happening for years and it's never been a problem. We also hear Brest and even Sywell, but no-one has ever been misled by it. We remain open to non-radio traffic, with PPR; so you're free to come in with no radio, but trying to use a .25 MHz radio will be *verboden*.

Hangar rash hits us hard

We've had an incident of accidental damage to an aircraft in the main hangar, and it's likely to cost a significant amount of money and may affect the Club's insurance premiums. The Club policy is that a minimum of two people are required to move aircraft in and out of the hangar – and it's a rule that's being regularly ignored, as a review of the CCTV in the hangar will show.

The Board discussed this thorny issue at its August meeting, and confirmed that the policy had to be maintained. If you need to move aircraft and there's no-one handy to help, talk to the Duty Manager and he will either help you or arrange for assistance.

It goes without saying that the smallest amount of damage to an aircraft, however innocuous it seems, could compromise the airworthiness of that aircraft. Failure to report such damage is very bad airmanship.

Too few of us are disciplined about putting aircraft back in the hangar. We've seen occasions on which a pilot has taken out perhaps half a dozen aircraft to get his or her own plane out, then has simply flown off and left all the extracted aircraft on the apron. And sometimes, when they returned they left their own aircraft out for someone else to put away, because there was then too much hardware parked around the hangar doors!

This is unfair on the people who have to step up to untangle the problem, and particularly on the Duty Manager – who, incidentally, is also subject to the rule that at least two people are needed to move aircraft.

Often, the Duty Manager is the last person on the premises in the evening. If aircraft have been left outside, in theory he cannot put them back. However, he often feels forced to do so if bad weather is forecast overnight, but it can be very difficult, especially if the bigger aircraft are involved. If he follows the letter of the law and the aircraft are left out overnight, owners are not happy.

We need to do everything we can to ensure this situation does not arise. Instructors are being asked to ensure that the Duty Manager is not left alone at the end of the day if there are still aircraft outside the hangar, but all members are asked to keep this problem in mind. If you take planes out (with help) please put them back

(with help). And please don't leave the Duty Manager alone if the aircraft have not been put away.

The Airfield Manager has been asked to investigate the cost of extending the CCTV recording period from one week to one month.

August Board meeting

The CFC Board met in August and decided on a date for the AGM – Monday October 1, at 7:30 pm. Much of what the Board discussed is dealt with separately in this newsletter, but several other important matters were covered.

The 2017/2018 accounts were presented by Corinne Dennis, who noted that the figures for the year were very good. Full details will be available at the AGM. Our accountants Bennett Jones & Co have rebated the Club £1,000 because of the transparent and professional way the figures for this year had been presented to them. This has also cut the cost of the book-keeper, who now works two hours per fortnight. The bad debt situation has improved slightly. The total is on the order of £10,000. Only two debts are in excess of £1,000. Some are very old. Airfield Manager Jay Gates is contacting the Federation of Small Businesses for help and advice on bad debt pursuit.

The Airfield Manager is still without a contract and has not had a performance appraisal 18 months into his employment. A contract needs to be negotiated and an appraisal completed, and Kevin Riley has taken responsibility. He will also look after Human Resources matters in general. Kevin proposed that half the Bennett Jones & Co rebate be paid to the Airfield Manager as a bonus, independent of any wage negotiations, in recognition of his meticulous financial record-keeping. Bob Harris proposed that the bonus should be half the rebate after tax, which would mean a payment of £750. This was agreed unanimously.

Kevin also proposed that the C172 be made available for fly-outs if social members wished to participate. It was agreed that given sufficient notice, in liaison with the Airfield Manager, and with a minimum charge of three hours per day, this should pose no problems.

The Board expressed its thanks to Roger Davis, Richard Saw *et al* (see separate story) for fixing the broken fence which has allowed sheep to wander onto the airfield. It was noted that this

damage had been caused six or seven years ago and had never adequately been addressed until now. The Airfield Manager has been offered a sum of money, yet to be finally established but not fabulous, for the remaining fuselage of FZ. It was agreed to accept the offer, if reasonable – buyer collects. The old Land Rover has been sold by Pete White for £1,000, and given that the new one cost £250, we're well ahead of the game.

Help wanted

We're in the process of writing a contract for Jay Gates, and in order to allow maximum flexibility – this is a businesses in which the day-to-day demands on management change with the weather – we would dearly love to find one or preferably two members who could act as Duty Managers on Jay's days off. Could it be you?

We already have two stand-ins, Pete White and Richard Saw, and they generally cover for each other when their own lives get in the way of the Club's needs, but there are times when we need more hands to the pump. The duties include manning the Tower, opening and locking up the hangars, taking the morning fuel samples, answering the phone, taking the money – any of the myriad duties an airfield manager will be called on to perform. The rewards are £50 a day and immense job satisfaction.

You'd need an Air/Ground RT qualification (easily got) and some training in the basics of the SAGE accounting system, for you'd be called on to satisfy callers' requests for introductory flights, trial lessons or whatever, and take money for fuel,

aircraft and instructor services. You'd need to spend some time with the current managers to learn some of the quirks of a lively little business where no two days are the same.

This would more likely be *ad hoc* work rather than regular duty; it would probably also be seasonal. For more details, call Jay on 01208 821419, or email him (admin@cornwallflyingclub.com) or just drop by for a chat.

Watch your step at Exeter

Exeter Airport, recently refused its own Class D zone by the CAA, is stepping up for another shot at carving out a swathe of controlled airspace for itself and is keeping a log of the alleged impact of general aviation operations on its instrument approaches. Devon Strut of the LAA is asking all GA pilots, where possible, to avoid Exeter's ATZ and instrument approaches and to make contact with Exeter ATC when in that area.

Since the last refusal there has been a change at the top of the CAA, and the attitude to dishing out controlled airspace has changed with it. The disastrous Farnborough decision – it is the first GA airfield to be granted controlled airspace, despite its relatively low number of movements – has heartened all those who want to own the air. Oxford is pressing ahead with a Class D application, Biggin Hill is mulling the possibility, and several others are expected to throw their hats in the ring. Exeter's new demand will be lodged on November 1, 2019.

Bodmin invades Belgium – Part II

In last month's newsletter Kevin Riley described how the Cornwall contingent got to Sanicole in Belgium for a fascinating fly-in; here, Kevin and Steve Leach tell the story of their return.

Having been keeping a keen eye on the weather for the route home via XC Weather and the Met Office app (*Steve writes*) it was clear that the chances of returning to Bodders that day would be very interesting to say the least, with the remnants of Storm Andrew forecast to hit land over Cornwall. The decision was made to head off to Le Touquet for lunch, then to re-evaluate the forecast there. And as catering manager, I had to make up for the fiasco of lunch in Calais

on the way out. Having taken off into a good headwind, downwind the GPS was showing ground speed in excess of 160mph – not bad for a Lycoming 0-235. With G-ICOM and G-BNKY in front we grouped in a very loose formation and headed west not above 1500ft towards the gap between the Antwerp and Brussels CTRs. The weather was good, and Brussels Information just acknowledged that we were on frequency and left us to our own devices, no doubt keeping a keen eye on our progress. Having successfully navigated through the gap thanks to the help of SkyDemon we routed just south of Ghent. This was easy to find even without SD as there was a large plume of black smoke towering over the town. This smoke, from a very

nasty fire that was raging on an industrial site on the southern edge the city, was visible for more than 30 miles. We flew on over the battlefields of Roeselare, Moorsele and Flanders, where your mind can't help but wonder what it must have been like 100 years ago, and what carnage and destruction

was shot down in in 1941 south east of St Omer and famously lost his false leg whilst bailing out. The RAF dropped a replacement prosthetic limb by parachute over St Omer airfield. As we approached Le Touquet a frequency change to 118.45 was approved. I was given a squawk and told to position myself for an early downwind join for runway 13 – and boy, was that controller earning his Euros that day! Everybody and his mate was heading for, or inside Le Touquet CTR. The controller was giving instructions to pilots in English and in French with 'break break' between each transmission, not requiring the pilots to answer before his next transmission.

Needless to say we all landed safely and headed for the restaurant for lunch. After a check on the weather we would encounter if we were to continue to EGLA it was agreed to order a round of beers and stay the night. We booked three twin rooms at the Red Fox and went out to explore and have a few more beers. Le Touquet is a lovely seaside town with lots of shops, bars and restaurants and miles of sandy beaches – a great place for an overnight stay. Touring like this with club members is a great way to foster friendships between people whose true personality you might otherwise not get to know. And you gain invaluable experience that will only enhance your aviating. The total trip took 1.4 hrs of very enjoyable flying.

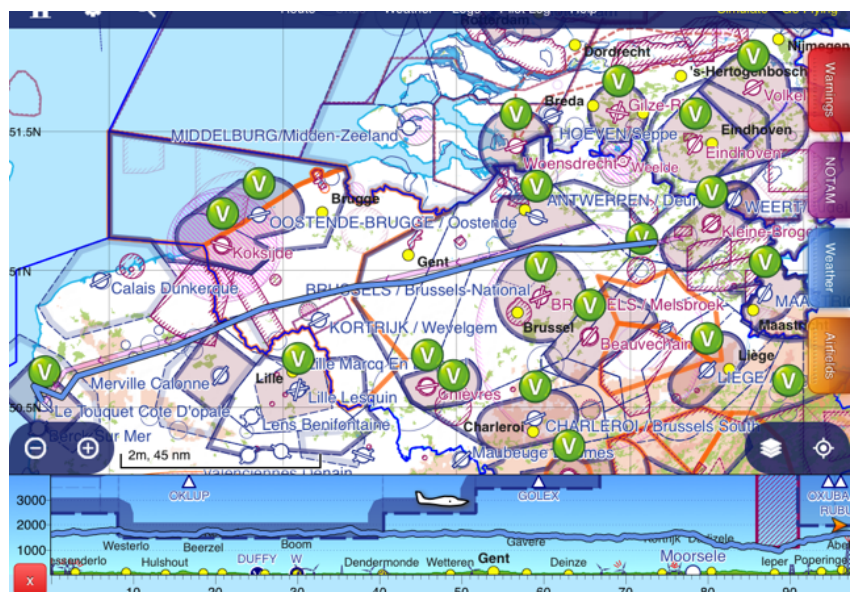
Kevin takes up the story for the journey home:

The last leg of trip was enlivened for us by the tachometer deciding not to play as we approached Le Touquet. Reg and I decided to err on the side of caution and stay an extra night at the Red Fox to see what assistance we could get from the local FBO maintenance on Monday morning. After a leisurely breakfast the CFC contingents got taxis to the airport, the Transport Coordinator booking Executive cars at half price. While Steve and Bob in G-OISL and Nick and Matt in G-ICOM were sorting out their flight plans and GARs – four hours prior to UK arrival – Reg and I were with engineer Christophe Dervillers, nicknamed the Grease Monkey, who was more than happy to

Thirsty work, continental travel

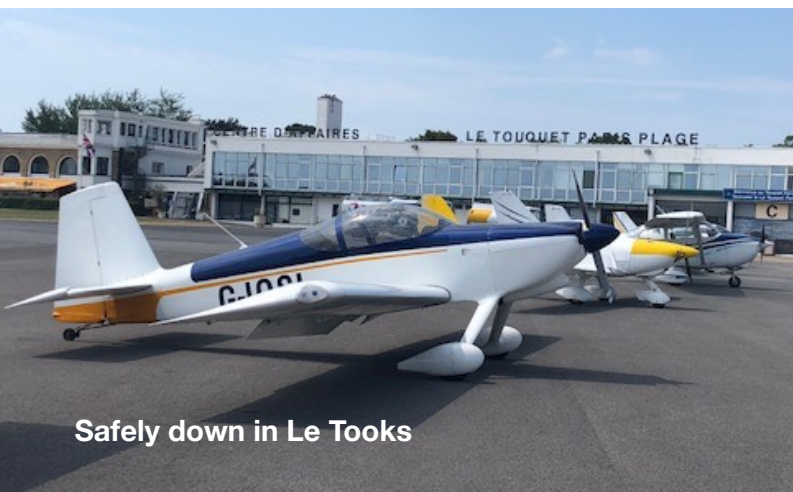


happened just a few hundred feet below us. You realise that you're flying in the same airspace as the incredibly brave WW1 aviators in their Sopwith Camels, Triplanes and SE5s, as well as the other Fokkers. We had to descend to not above 1100ft to remain clear of EBR25, which happens to be directly over Ieper (Ypres) and your mind once again drifts to thoughts of what happened below a century previously. Approaching the FIR boundary I asked Brussels Info for a frequency change to Lille Info on 120.275, which was granted in a very friendly and relaxed manner. We tracked south of the famous airfield of St Omer. In its heyday – 1917 and 1918 – St Omer was the biggest aerodrome on the Western Front. It was the RFC headquarters and main support base for the entire airborne effort over the Western Front. About 5,000 personnel were based there, and it still has a green hangar in use today that was built by the British in WW1. St Omer was home to a squadron of Messerschmitts in WW2 and the main hangar was built by the Germans. Today it is the home of the St. Omer Flying Club. Douglas Bader



help. When Reg explained we were on a flying holiday he stopped working on a Robin in his hangar and came straight over to G-BYNK. He quickly diagnosed our problem and succeeded in finding a spare rev counter which he installed quickly at a very reasonable price. With a sigh of relief from our wallets we headed back into town, which was actually a very pleasant scenic stroll with plenty to see, and thankfully flat.

Next morning came with the forecast of plenty of unpleasant weather arriving around tea time, so we decided to beat the weather home. We paid our dues and decided to leave about 12:00 local. I got my timings slightly out as I didn't read the tower opening times correctly – it was of course closed. No problem; it just reverted to uncontrolled airspace in the circuit, and once airborne we contacted Lille Information and asked them to open our Flight Plan. The very professional lady controller did so, advised on squawk code, handed us over to London



Safely down in Le Tooks

Information as we were approaching the boundary, and somewhat sadly we were on our way home. We had a nice flight direct to Beachy Head and a steady scenic run along the coast past Brighton, negotiated clearance through Shoreham's overhead and proceeded westward unhindered. From then on it was relatively easy; we used listening squawks, changing to the appropriate frequency as we flew on, dropping down to 3000ft as we ducked under Solent Airspace. Around Bournemouth we heard ATC warning other aircraft of our location, but we were left alone. Using a squawk and avoiding airspace certainly is easy, and must reduce the workload on ATC, especially if you give the airspace sensible clearance laterally and vertically.

As we flew along the coast we listened to Exeter ATIS (119.320) and then contacted Exeter Radar South on 123.575, but as we progressed west the sky started to look ominous. Exeter were warning of heavy showers along the coast, so we swung north

west and came back via Okehampton. Bodmin was a welcome sight as we had flown for 2hrs 25mins non-stop and I was gagging for a hot cup of tea. We did at times have a groundspeed of 140kts and averaged 130kts from Le Touquet to Shoreham, and we arrived well before the weather came in. The routes were relatively easy and well within a confident pilot's ability. Shorter hops can be planned if needed. Take off light (weight and balance) on a relatively short strip at Bodmin, into Dunkeswell with its big tarmac runways, de-bladder and refuel and go.

ATC was helpful from start to finish. Listening squawks helps both ATC and the pilot, but keep a sensible distance from their airspace; if you creep up along the edge the controller has to be extra vigilant. As club pilots with varying levels of experience, we all learned something during the trip. Talk to other pilots if you're not certain about something. I chatted with Bruce Abbott about Headcorn, Steve Leach knew Calais – not the restaurant, though – and Reg knew Le Touquet. Graham Newby, ex-CFC, helps plan and run the Sanicole event. Basic planning, such as weather, notams and airfield plates, is vital; I got the approach into Le Touquet wrong as I didn't get my orientation right. That put the controller under unnecessary pressure.

Electronic navigation certainly makes life easier, but be aware of where your iPad is positioned, and don't be head-down. My iPad threw a wobbly some 25 miles from Headcorn, but planning and comms between Reg and I resolved it quickly. We were very aware of our proximity to the London TMA, vertically and laterally, and we 'aviated, navigated and communicated' pretty well.

Be aware that heat can effect your iPad, as it did mine on the return leg; it just shuts down with no warning. There is a cooling gadget on the market for aviators, but it's not cheap. As a point to note, a pilots' website in the USA recommends that you don't have a black iPad or tablet. I could have done with a GoPro; my biggest regret is lack of pictures to share with club members, and for myself. Finally, I'd like to thank the club members who gave us support before going, the group I went with, and also Mr Patient, Reg Stainer, who was brilliant at complying with my navigation and comms demands as we planned the routes and flew the routes. As CFC members we bonded more; I'd urge other members to get next year's Sanicole fly-in in the diary – you won't regret it. At the close of this exciting venture, Steve and I discussed the WW1 battlefields and the WW2 dogfights over the English Channel – and just at that point I heard the drone of a Rolls Royce Merlin and a Spitfire flew over my house! And on that note...