

July / August 2004

Strut Coordinator:	Alan George	(0117 373 9945 e-mail: george.alan@virgin.net
Treasurer/Membership Sec:	Gordon Pritt	(01934 511908 e-mail: gordon.pritt@virgin.net
Newsletter distribution:	Ian & Mary Leader	(01275 541572 e-mail: ian@pfabristol.flyer.co.uk

Bristol Strut at the Rally

With no formal Strut meetings during the months of July and August, members will often go flying during the long sultry summer evenings. However, this year the weather so far has been somewhat less than ideal, but nevertheless we have managed to make good use of the chances we got.

As is our custom, Bristol Strutters once again attended the Rally at Kemble, looking after the used aircraft sales line. Additionally, Nigel and Alan were to be found in the Booking-in tent, Geoff was busy keeping the amps flowing, and Dave was fully engaged in the Education tent passing on his aviation knowledge to young Pilots-of-the-Future. Edwin spent much of the weekend with the Media department recording the event on film, but also managed to squeeze in rides in some new types for his logbook, such as the impressive Euro Cubby from Sweden.

The rally weather was changeable throughout the weekend, and visitor numbers were down from last year, so we didn't have as many aircraft on the sales line. However, several enquiries were made and at least one deposit was paid so we consider the effort worthwhile. Next year we are promised a more central location on the field, so more customers will be able to find us. Thanks to Edwin for taking the picture above, and the team left to right – Matthew, John, Alan, Mary, Ian and Roger. Also on the team was Steve Neale, elsewhere on the field when the picture was taken.



Places to go in August

There are free landing vouchers in *Flyer magazine* for August: at Enstone, Gigha Island, Huddersfield and Old Buckenham

Also, the August *Pilot magazine* offers vouchers for: Bagby, Beccles, Eaglescott, Popham, Roserrow and Stapleford

There is a new strip on the Devon Strut circuit which we have just heard about from Chris Howell. The first fly-in at **Treborough**, Exmoor, will be on **Sunday 1st August** by kind invitation of Mark and Sarah Weatherlake. Telephone 01984-641179 for PPR.

The strip is 800mtrs 090/270, 1200ft AMSL - N 51.06.52 W 003.24.61 - Radio 123.50

Nearest fuel would probably be Dunkeswell unless you feel like a visit to Eggesford or Eaglescott as well.

Henstridge Fly-in – August 28th

We have heard from Peter Campbell of Cirrus Books about the Bank Holiday event:

It's nearly time again for our annual Fly-In at Henstridge (**Saturday August 28th**), so I'm writing this to remind you that you would be very welcome to attend once again. Apart from the usual goings-on, this year we're pleased to announce that the BoB Memorial Flight (Lancaster, Hurricane and Spitfire) have promised to attend, and RNAS Yeovilton are hoping to send one of their Lynx helicopters to add to the static display.

A major attraction of the day will be the launch (at last, deferred from G-VFWE Abingdon) of Alex Henshaw's new book "Wings Across The Great Divide" and once you have booked in you can obtain a free copy from our Cirrus Books stand. While pre-booking of your aircraft is not essential, an e-mail or a quick phone call to me on 01747 838165 some time would give us an indication of numbers to be expected. If the weather is suitable please just turn up any time after 9.00 am local time. The approach frequency for Henstridge is **130.25**. This year food and drink will be available all day from the Clubhouse, and the local modelling Club (Wincanton Falcons) hope to display with some of their larger models.

Advance notice for Yeovilton

Our last event for 2004 will be associated with the Yeovilton Air Display on Saturday September 18th, and is limited to 20 aircraft, so if you would like to attend, please contact Terry Booker ASAP (01202 737430).

Reminder: Both tarmac and grass will be available, as usual, but bear in mind that the grass may be a bit uneven, as this event is the only time in the year it is used!

Peter Campbell, Cirrus Associates (SW) - cirrus.sw@virgin.net - www.zolid.com/cirrus

Other events during August

Most fly-in meetings of any interest are listed in the PF, Pilot or Flyer magazines so we see little point in repeating them here. However, we would always try to support the various PFA Strut events in our area, especially the very well run Devon Strut circuit. Details on www.devonstrut.co.uk

Also, look out for the Gloucester fly-in on **August 8th**, the PFA open day at Turweston on the **20th**, and the Isle of Wight fly-in on the **22nd**.

Where we went in the holidays

We are always happy to report on interesting trips made by our readers, as their experiences may inspire others to do the same. While it is great to fly around just for the fun of it, our aeroplanes are also a great means of transport that enable us to travel long distances and see places otherwise out of reach. We may even venture abroad to Europe and beyond, and it is nice to share such experiences with others who have yet to go there.

This month we hear from Dave Hall who had recently accompanied Graham Clark on a trip to Germany with a view to attending the Air Show at Mlada Boleslav in the Czech Republic. The trip didn't go exactly to plan, but made for an excellent long weekend away. Over to Dave for the story...

Off to Mlada Boleslav ... err, where?

Ah, there it is, 30nm north-east of Prague. Graham's magic carpet Jodel 1051-M1 Sicile would take us to the airshow there, weather permitting. Sadly the weather gods only gave permission grudgingly, and not in full, but that did make for a good lesson in forecast interpretation and lots of navigation.

The air-show was being organised by a friend of Graham's, Vladimir Handlik, at the grass airfield near the Skoda car factory in Mlada Boleslav (LKMB), Czech Republic. The plan was to leave on Thursday June 10th for an overnight stop at Bonn-Handelar (EDKB), but TAFs and METARs said no, and so did a 'real-time weather' flight on Flight Sim 2004 (not to be used for operational purposes!), so we met on Friday at Oaksey Park at 7.45am. This time the TAFs were a little more encouraging, so we loaded the back seat with the luggage and set off for Lashenden (EGKH), formerly Headcorn, north-west of Folkestone.

Swindon was easy to see, and so was Blackbushe, with Farnborough Radar giving flight information, while the OCK VOR was helping us stay clear of the London CTR. In any case, the M4 is visible from quite a distance and then the M3 and M25. Graham explained the IFR technique of navigation - I Follow Roads, Railways and Rivers. We sneaked round the edge of the Gatwick control zone, with help from some usefully-placed motorways and aimed for our re-fuelling and Customs landing at Lashenden (Headcorn), an 800m grass strip which, we discovered on our return, has an interesting museum containing excavated wartime aircraft parts well displayed and documented. It had taken almost exactly an hour to cover the 105 nm from Oaksey.

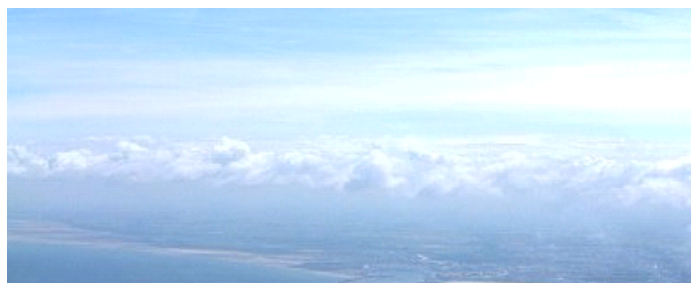


Finals for 29, Lashenden (Headcorn)



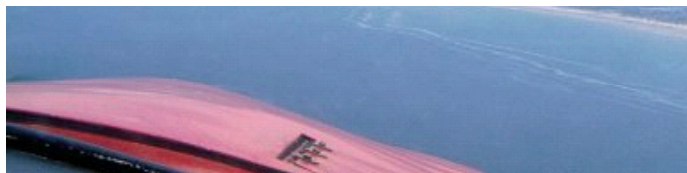
Headcorn Re-fuelling

With front and main tanks filled, flight plan and formalities arranged, and our lifejackets 'donned' we were off again for the next sector, heading for Bonn-Handelar. It's not easy to get lost when the Channel coast is ahead of you, and the channel tunnel rail complex is alongside. A curious orthographic cloud was sitting over the Cliffs of Dover much as the 'table cloth' is said to do over Table Mountain, RSA. Now there's an idea for another time, Graham!





Folkestone and cloud-capped Dover



Calais Harbour ahead

The French coast came in sight almost as soon as we were over the water and we headed in over Calais, meeting scattered strato-cumulus at about 3000 feet. The cloudbase allowed us to maintain 2200 feet, which kept us clear of controlled airspace and was acceptable to ATC. Just as with London and Gatwick CTRs, there's a gap to go through between Brussels and Charleroi, and contact with Lille Information and Liege radar helped keep us out of trouble. The Belgian chart wasn't the easiest to use for visual navigation, having relatively little orthographic information, but with Graham's local knowledge and roads, railways and towns, he was able to keep close to track. We diverted north-east in the Eifel Mountains to take advantage of clearer weather in the valley and save climbing into less certain conditions above the tops.



Near Lille



Bonn 'skyscrapers' and the Rhine

You can't miss Bonn as it sits on the Rhine, with Bonn-Hangelar, the original Bonn airport on the north-eastern edge of the city. The light rain showers returned for the approach and landing, but it was a welcome landfall for what we hoped would just be a transit stop. The 250 nm flight from England had taken 2hrs 20mins, an average speed of 107 knots with a little help from the light tail-wind.



Short finals and light shower at Bonn-Hangelar



Classic Wings Antonov at Bonn-Hangelar

With the plane refuelled, and a new flight plan filed, we sat in the hanger of the Flying Club and waited for the departure time to come. The met man phoned the club with bad news - "It is not possible to fly VFR to Karlovy Vary (LKKV) as the mountains will be obscured by low cloud and there are also thunderstorms. It will not be possible tomorrow either". Hmm, nothing for it but to stay overnight and see if the morning brought an improvement in the forecast. Saturday was the day of the air-show and Vladimir said we could be accepted until 12 noon local - at 3 hrs flying time, it would still be possible if the weather improved enough.

Facilities in the clubroom were very comfortable; we used the club computer to check the weather forecasts; sat in the 'Eagle's Nest' in the hangar roof-space looking out over the field, drinking tea and eating flapjack. An old friend of Graham's from Bonn took us out for an evening meal, then it was sleeping bags and air beds on the floor for a good sleep after the very early start, with the Jodel safely tucked up in the adjacent hangar.

The weather man was quite right - the next day was no better. Though luckily the weather at Mlada Boleslav was fine for the airshow, it was still no-go in the mountains, and the options for an alternate on a 3hr flight in sparsely-populated country are few. So we checked the weather TAFs to the west, which showed nothing sinister, submitted a flight plan for

Lashenden EGKH and waited to go.

We set off for home at 0944Z, reached the Eifel range where a large thunderstorm with sheet lightning blocked our way. We diverted south-west in an attempt to skirt it, but it was clear that there were yet more beyond, so after 25 minutes we reversed course and returned to Hangelar, tucking the Jodel into the hangar again just in time to avoid the thunder-storm and torrential rain that hit the airfield. We whiled away the rest of the day watching the intrepid gliders using the thermals from the clouds, and studying the pmet website to observe the weather radar and thunderstorm warnings. The radar animation on pmet later that afternoon showed storms had been developing on the west side of the Eifel Mountains all day, streaming across towards Bonn - another good weather decision!



Running from the storm . . .



**. . . and the subsequent rainbow over
Bonn-Hangelar**

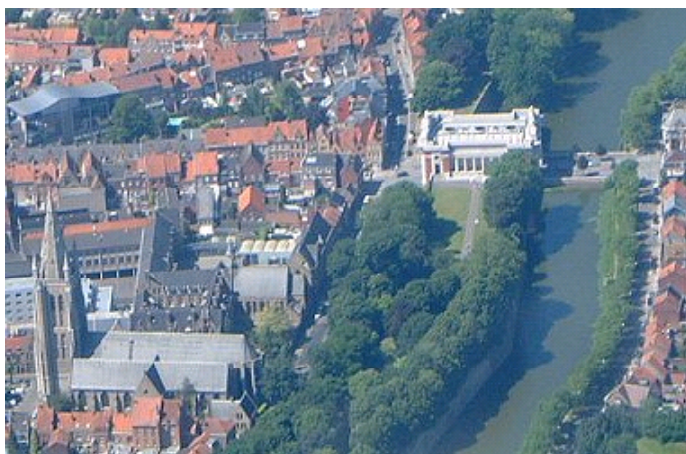


Club Aircraft - Robin . . .



. . . and Piper Cub

Sunday morning was a lot better, with occasional showers but also splashes of blue sky, and the TAFs confirmed the improving conditions. Once up and past the Eifel range the murk had gone, and Belgium was spread out ahead with blue skies. We flew past Ypres (Ieper), and Graham pointed out the Menin Gate by the canal, where the names of almost 55,000 British and Commonwealth soldiers of the First World War who were reported missing are inscribed. Then on past Popperinge, the rail head for the front line where troops could recover for a time before returning to the front and past Dunkirk back to the coast at Calais. Then it was 'fingers crossed' and out over the channel to Lashenden via Folkestone and Ashford.



The Menin Gate war memorial (by the canal)



The Port of Calais





Folkestone Harbour and town



Ashford Designer Outlet Centre (Richard Rogers)

At Lashenden we refuelled again, filling both front and main tanks to save the landing fee, and set off for Oaksey Park. The weather over southern England was the best of the trip, and gave me a chance to take the controls. It seemed no time at all before Swindon appeared in the distance, and then the lakes of the Cotswold Water Park, but it was altogether about an hour's practice at maintaining course and altitude for cross-country flying. That and all the navigation and met. practice made for an interesting and enjoyable few days, during which the plane averaged about 100kts over the ground in the 8 hrs flown. It was a pity that the final goal eluded us this time, but as a learning experience it rated highly for me, with timely help for the next stage of my flying course, and Graham met up with several of his old flying club friends at Bonn. Sometimes my memory plays tricks, but I have a distinct impression that I heard Graham say something kind, or at least ambivalent, about GPS during the weekend. Maybe it's lucky I got some compass and map experience under my belt this time.

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Thanks to Dave and Graham for sharing this with us. Next month we will hear about Edwin's flying trips during the year, and perhaps catch up with a bit of mountain flying in Austria.