

East Staffs Flying Club



Newsletter

June 2008

Chairman's Report

There was a disappointing turn out for the Fly-Out to Le Touquet with only two aircraft departing from Tatenhill. The weather was excellent and the coast of France was visible as soon as you coasted out. Spare seats in both aircraft were utilised and everyone who went had a great time on the beach and sampling the French cuisine. Arriving back at Tatenhill it was straight into the inaugural lighting up of the ESFC BBQ! This was well attended with 30+ people attending and it was great to see some new faces, the weather was kind and everyone appeared to enjoy the event. The next 'formal' BBQ is scheduled for 12th July, so please try to attend (with your provisions) and meet other members of the club.

The outside fencing and furniture has recently been painted by one of our newer members, so a very big thank you and it certainly improves the appearance.

The Annual Rally takes place on Saturday 28th June and runs throughout the day. The route to be flown will be in the local area and can be completed within an hour. This is a 'fun' event so why not book an aircraft, team up with someone and have a go. Students are especially welcome and if there are any spare seats I am sure they will be very welcome to take part as a 'spotter'.

The ESFC Annual Fly-In will take place on Saturday 9th August and we will have a Spitfire based at Tatenhill for the afternoon, flown by our friend Flt Lt Charlie Brown arriving around 2pm. I would urge you to be at the airfield to see the arrival of this very special aircraft, a sight/sound not to be missed. We are also very lucky to have Genna Elfimov, probably one of the most experienced Yak 52 pilots, demonstrating his exciting and unique aerobatic programme showing of the full capabilities of the Yak-52 (kindly loaned by Colin and Jane Reeves). In addition we will also have that most impressive aircraft the Antonov An2 (Baltic Bear) being put through its paces by club members John Calverley and Dave Holland, a terrific display for those who have not seen it and not to be missed. We will make a collection on the day which will be shared between the County Air Ambulance and the BDFA.

There is a very good article penned by Mark Hoffmann in this month's newsletter, if anyone else has a story they would like to share please email Alison Todd (contact details at end of newsletter) and she will include in a future newsletter.

There are still a couple of slots for the Helicopter Trial Flights, please contact Terry Watts if you are interested in having a go (see end of newsletter).

Mike Tidmarsh



Recent Achievements

Felix Moore flew solo for the first time on Friday the 30th of May. Well done.

Olivier Balland passed his IMC Flight Test on Monday the 2nd of June...just in time for the start of the traditional British summer. Congratulations.

Phil Moorcroft passed his PPL Skills Test on Monday the 16th of June. He did well to complete the course in approximately forty-six hours. Congratulations.

Martin Handley.

Change Hand Swinging and Crashing (Part 1)

By Mark Hoffmann

Back in the summer of 2002 Mark Bodger and I spent quite a lot of time buzzing around in a couple of single seat tail-draggers: 'PU' a Druine Turbulent and 'LM' a Brugger Colibri. We hangar the planes at Abbots Bromley, a farm strip adjacent to Blithfield reservoir a few miles to the West of Tatenhill.

Looking back, those days of bumbling about in the sky on warm summer evenings seemed carefree and idyllic. I just need to force myself to forget all the times we couldn't start the little buggers. They both had to be hand-swung to start; and the Turb — with its 3 blade prop — was both stubborn and a menace to your fingers. I shall also put out of my mind the many times I'd flown the open cockpit Turb with my teeth chattering and my hands so cold that I could barely feel the stick. OK, so idyllic is not the word, but it was great fun.

If you are going to fly wood and fabric home built (and maintained) planes using converted VW Beetle engines, then you do have to expect a bit more adventure than you might get with a sturdy C of A certified aircraft. Nowadays as Mark and I bat along at 120 knots in our Robin DR400 we often think back to those days — days of hand swinging and crashing.

Of course crashing is a relative term and I may well have some tales to tell some other time of full-blown crashes that resulted in dead aeroplanes and somewhat shocked pilots; but for this article I shall tell of a little incident that hardly even qualifies for the title 'crash'. It was just the small matter of a wheel falling off as I touched down at the PFA rally at Cranfield.



[The Popular Flying Association (PFA) has since been renamed the Light Aircraft Association (LAA).]

Looking back in my logbook I see that it was 26th June and my brakes off time was 7.45 am. Blimey we were keen in those days! I flew the Colibri and poor Mark was in his thermals flying the Turb. The two planes didn't cruise at anywhere near the same speed. The Colibri zipped along at 100 mph, but the Turb, with all its extra drag, only managed about 85 mph.

The speed difference notwithstanding, we liked to fly together so whoever was flying the Turb would take the lead and do the navigation and the Colibri pilot would follow along behind, flying at reduced power and making the radio calls for both. The Colibri did have a tendency to get a spot of carb ice, so sometimes it was necessary to fly at normal cruise power and then fly orbits or wide sweeping S-turns to stay in position.

Another quick squint at the logbook tells me we got to Cranfield at about eight o'clock. To say the circuit at a PFA rally is busy is the understatement of the century. That was one of the reasons for our early arrival: to avoid the rush. But even at that time there would have been multiple planes touching down at the same time (on parallel grass and hard runways) and probably eight or so aircraft on final.

We elected to use the grass runway — 03L if I recall — and Mark touched down ahead of me. The controller had asked him to land long so that I could land short as he vacated. The weather was fine and there was no wind to speak of and I flared and touched down in a 3-pointer about 75m in from the threshold. The grass runway at Cranfield was pretty rough and once I was down the little plane relayed its feelings about this to me through various judders and shakes.

So, it was all going splendidly right up to the point that the tail wheel leaf spring snapped. The plane kept moving forwards but the wheel lagged behind, still attached to the rudder by the two steering springs. The steering springs expanded (as springs are meant to do) and then just as the plane slowed to a crawl, they reached their maximum extension and with a thwack, contracted and punched the wheel into the rudder.

The radio was suddenly hot with calls telling the aeroplanes on final to go around and within seconds a ground crew was there helping me get LM off the runway. You can't fault the PFA's organisation and efficiency. Those of you that know Mark B will not be surprised to hear that he ambled across to where I was parked with a resigned but unconcerned expression on his face. He'd been flying these little planes long enough by then to know that these things happen. And if they were going to happen, where better than the PFA rally?

Within 2 hours we had bought a new tail wheel assembly from the flea market and had it fitted. I recall that we'd nicked a traffic cone from somewhere and wedged it under the rear fuselage so that the tail was high enough off the



ground for us to work on. So, just one problem remained. When the springs had contracted and punched the wheel into the rudder, the wheel had unfortunately ripped a ruddy great hole in the fabric. We decided to worry about that later.

The rest of the day was spent enjoying the sunshine and wandering about amongst the hundreds of planes that had flown into the event. We consumed the mandatory 4 cups of coffee each and ate a dozen greasy doughnuts. Then we purchased some gaffer tape.

At five o'clock we booked out and headed over to the crippled little Colibri. With her new tail wheel she seemed to sit much higher at the rear and this helped accentuate the gaping hole in the rudder. We patched it over with the gaffer tape.

At this point it must be stated that it is not big and it is not clever to fly a damaged aeroplane. We would never take such a risk and neither should you. So with that in mind, thinking back ... yes that's it I remember now ... we went and found a qualified aeronautical engineer and got him to sign off our work. Yes, yes, that's what we did I'm sure.

Mark B admired our handy work and said, "I'll fly it back if you like." Oh you should have heard the enthusiasm in his voice. I was tempted but no: I'd broken it so I would fly it home. Anyway the thought of an hour in the Turb's open cockpit, with no thermal undies ... nope, I'd rather risk the gaffer tape.

What else? Oh yes, we got back OK obviously but it says in my logbook that there was a stonking great cross wind at Abbots Bromley. Ho Hum.

CLUB EVENT - 28th June 2008

ANNUAL ESFC RALLY & BARBECUE

Saturday 28th June sees the Annual ESFC Rally and spot-landing competition, which will be followed by a barbecue for all members and their partners. The Rally involves plotting a route using clues (don't worry your route will be checked before you set off!) and identifying photographs taken along the route. Upon your return you will have a light-hearted (non-aviation) quiz to fill in.



FLYING EVENTS

HELICOPTER TRIAL FLIGHTS (R22)

Saturday 26th July 2008

Flights operated throughout the day. A special rate of £60 for circa 15-20 mins has been negotiated for ESFC members. Anyone wishing to have a go should contact Terry Watts at: dwatts756@aol.com

FLY-OUTS

1. Fly Out to WATERFORD

Weekend of the 25th, 26th and 27th July

2. Fly Out to ALDERNEY

Weekend of the 15th, 16th and 17th August

Pre-planning meetings will be held in the run-up to the event.

If you have any other questions relating to any of the above events please contact Mike Dillon on 07818 004188.

ESFC ANNUAL FLY-IN SATURDAY 9TH AUGUST

The 2008 ESFC Fly-in is presently in the planning stages. Events will be confirmed closer to the date, however a flying display by Gennady Elfimov in the Red Yak, and John Calverley/Dave Holland in the AN-2 are in the pipeline. We will also have a Spitfire on static display as well as Flt Lt Charlie Brown. With the County Air Ambulance now based at Tatenhill the buckets will be rattling again for donations, with all monies also being shared with the BDFA, which also operates out of Tatenhill. Further updates will follow via email, in the newsletter and on the clubhouse notice board.

Please keep an eye on the club notice board and the website (www.esfc.org.uk) for more regular updates on forthcoming events

SOCIAL EVENTS

OTHER EVENTS

JUNE SOCIAL EVENT - CANCELLED

If you have any suggestions for other events or would like to help, please contact Jon Faulkner at esfc2007@hotmail.co.uk

Wednesday 25th June - Gliding Evening at Needwood Gliding Club commences at 5.30pm

Once again ESFC have managed to organise a gliding evening at the local gliding club for members wishing to try this alternative to motor powered flight. This event is now fully subscribed.

NEWSLETTER

If you have any articles for the newsletter or comments on the format, please contact Alison at alie_todd@yahoo.co.uk.

NEXT MEDICAL DUE?

As a reminder Dr Hill, our local AME, continues to give a discretionary £5 discount on aviation medical examinations to East Staffs Flying club members. To receive the discount you must show your current ESFC membership card at the time of your medical.

Contact details for Dr Hill are as follows:

Dr J D Hill AME
Burton upon Trent
01283 730201