

Squadron Buzz



Fleet Air Arm Squadron
linking former, current and future naval aviators

Issue No 58
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Brian and Lindy Cornes get up close in their Pitts Special

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Airfield Quiz

Well done to the three of you who correctly identified Kirkbride Airfield up in the border country. 'Lightening' Peter Lovegrove phoned in at 0950 on Saturday 12th closely followed by 'Observant' Ollie Dismore with his 1259 email. The rostrum was 'rounded up' on Sunday 13th by 'Perceptive' Peter Moorehead's 1256 email which 'nailed' this northern

outpost which allegedly has a nice hotel within walking distance.

This month you have a much easier target to decipher, so simple it is hard to give clues which don't make the location too obvious. Constructed in 1936 for the RAF, I used to regularly fly in there every year in the Auster. Sometimes we even camped on the airfield enjoying the thrill of impromptu uncontrolled circuit flying very early in the morning before air traffic arrived. There was hot dog stands and beer tents as well as aerobatics to watch and formations to fly in. No real naval connections but a very popular rallying point for light aircraft albeit not so much in recent years



Buzz 58

Mystery Airfield? Answers to Ed please.

Email morsuepj@ntlworld.com or 07703162288 or 01243374681

From Editor

It is June and at last we cannot complain about the weather except perhaps for a lack of rain. It should be good for the rest of 2011 after what



was suffered at the Kemble and Standards weekends, both severely curtailed by cloud and precipitation. Despite this, Standards 'entertainment' this year was most impressive particularly the AIB presentation by Phil Taylor also Clive Rustin's Tales of a Test Pilot all reported on page 14. Sorry that there is no 'copy' for "Winter's End" but I was away on 'duty' in Gibraltar at the time so have instead 'done a little dit' on that very pleasant trip with our Admiral, Sir Raymond, on page 16.

I hope you will excuse my 'senior moment' which caused me to forget Denis Woodhams's Irish writeup. This should have appeared in Buzz 56, now belatedly reproduced on page 4. At least it might act as an appetiser for those who have not yet experienced the terrific hospitality and goodness of Guinness from the Emerald Isle. Get your name on Denis's list his number is on page 20.

The FAAOA gliding scholarship scheme continues to flourish despite SDR so I thought you might be interested in an unsolicited report, on page 6, of the last Lee course which as usual was supported by FAAS aircraft.

On page 8 John Eatwell relays the fun we had with the 'Royals' at Chivenor. A great day out, 12 aircraft attended and the Squadron was given the 'red carpet' treatment by everyone especially the RAF SAR flight. ATC's 'follow my leader' stream takeoff routine was a joy to implement and should be adopted more widely.

I hope you enjoy Brent Owen's part 2 of his Austerling career on page 10. A riveting read albeit slightly bereft of the old 'gaspipe and gingham gargantuans' focussing more on hairy hunters and sleek scimitars from the halcyon days of the FAA.

Like No 57, this issue is only 20 pages long instead of 24 as there appears to be a paucity of copy at the moment. Don't be shy especially new members, aviation particularly in the military, is full of amusing incidents so please share your yarns with others, publish in the Buzz.

Happy Landings

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Phil Taylor". The signature is stylized and cursive.

The Irish Weekend 24th to 27th September 2010

By Denis Woodhams

This report is being penned in Combourg, France as my biker chick and I had only time to repack after Ireland before setting off on our motorcycle trip to the Pyrenees and the Picos de Europe in Spain.

What a cracking weekend it was too and despite the weather forecast we had good weather throughout and fulfilled all that we wished to do. The fliers came into Waterford during Friday whilst Margaret and I came low level to Pembroke Dock and then ferry to Rosslare. By the time we



L'Atmosphere

reached the Travelodge all had decamped to "L'Atmosphere" a very fine restaurant in the city centre. We made ourselves presentable and joined the party for an excellent meal and some very fine wines. Dinner over, most of the party returned to the hotel but Eve and Michael B-C

and the two of us had a walk about and found a very fine Irish pub. This was "H & J Doolans" packed to the gunwhales with excellent beverages and fine traditional music provided by a live group. We stayed until very late !! Saturday saw us all departing for Tralee via Kerry Airport with Margaret and I committed to a terrain following exercise. The weather was fine and sunny and I'm sure the flying was

Preparing to depart Waterford



Bikers at the Grand

good; our ride was very fast and fun. All meeting up again at The Grand Hotel, Tralee we were in time for a very good snack lunch then most of the party went off to explore the city and some had a siesta. Margaret and I went off to find a pub we had stayed in the previous year. It is called "Sean Og's Drinking Consultant"

When we got there an eight piece Irish band was having a jam session, it was superb. Fiddles, accordions, banjos, bodhrans (Irish drum) and guitars. The musicians were very talented and exchanged instruments regularly. The Guinness was so good and again we tarried for too long. The evening was spent in a local restaurant, a pleasant walk from the hotel; where we wined, dined and swung the bell until late. Sunday morning again dawned fine and after a hearty Irish breakfast it was time to plan the day. The original idea was to fly to Inishmore but after discussion and consideration this was abandoned. Michael and Eve went off to collect their hire car as they were staying on for a few days. Tony and Jill stayed in town to visit the museum whilst Phil and Sue, Michael and Charmian and ourselves took a train to Killarney. It was a pleasant ride on a very clean train through pretty countryside. We even passed Kerry airport where the fliers had a glimpse of their aeroplanes, they were still there ! Arriving in Killarney we walked to the centre for a welcome cup of coffee. This was when Patrick introduced himself and sold us a ride through the national park in his horse and carriage. It was a fantastic tour with a brilliant running commentary by Patrick; the carriage was drawn by an Irish draught horse called Bill. The park has no cars, a castle, a monastery on an island and a huge lake. It was the first national park established in Ireland, created when Muckross Estate was donated to the Irish state in 1932. The park has since been substantially expanded and encompasses over 102.89 km2 (25,425 acres) of diverse ecology, including the Lakes of Killarney, Oak and Yew woodlands of international importance, and mountain peaks. It has Ireland's only native herd of Red Deer and the most extensive covering of native forest remaining in Ireland. We were then ready for a good lunch in the International Hotel before boarding our train back to Tralee where we found Roger and Carol Bunbury who had flown in from the Isle of Man. Time for



a wash and brush up before dinner in the hotel, and it was very good. Michael and Eve arrived back after dinner having toured the Ring of Kerry and Killarney. Despite the forecast saying otherwise Monday was quite fine weather and we bade farewell to the aviators and set off for Wexford. The weather remained fine although there was some cloud on the



Waterford waterfront
where the good Guinness flows !

mountains I'm sure the flights back to Waterford remained VFR and scenic. All in all a very interesting and fun weekend, so good the Boss, Michael Ryan wants to repeat it next year. In fact we researched a couple of hotels in Killarney and told Patrick we would be back.

Participants:

<i>Michael & Eve Bonham-Cozens</i>	<i>BE6Bonanza</i>	<i>G-MAPR</i>
<i>Phil & Sue Moore</i>	<i>PA28Arrow</i>	<i>G-BTLG</i>
<i>Michael & Charmian Ryan</i>	<i>TobagoTB10</i>	<i>G-BOIT</i>
<i>Tony & Jill Ashmead</i>	<i>Pulsar Mk3</i>	<i>G-BYJL</i>
<i>Roger & Carol Bunbury</i>	<i>Cessna172</i>	<i>G-BZZD</i>
<i>Denis & Margaret Woodhams</i>	<i>BMW1200RT</i>	<i>KN10GXT</i>

An Inspirational 7 days

By Elizabeth Brettell

I have always been interested in flying and had been taken gliding a couple of times when I heard about the Fleet Air Arm Officers Association (FAAOA) Gliding Scholarship. After applying online I anxiously waited for the response and was lucky enough to be selected for the course in Lee-On-Solent, Portsmouth. Arriving at the gates of HMS COLLINGWOOD at 1730, the security of the Royal Navy struck in with the large enclosed campus spread out in front of me like a village. This was where I would be staying for the next 7 days. As everyone arrived we congregated in the Officers Mess where we could be staying and were greeted by the course manager Lt Richard CROKER. Gold, mahogany, trophies and paintings filled the large open room. Upstairs television rooms, lounges and a bar portrayed luxury and class. 'Maybe this wouldn't be too bad after all' I thought to myself as the evening drew in. The next morning up early and ready to leave for the airfield at 0815, I hopped onto the minibus with everyone, excited yet nervous about our first day learning to fly. As we reached the hanger, instructors including the club CFI Lt Andy DURSTON

CFI Andy Durston congratulates Elizabeth after her first solo



(Harrier) and gliders stood there to greet us, and there it began. After the first day I knew I had made some life long friends as we helped each other with everything from getting strapped in to the glider, helping with take offs and towing them back from landings. Throughout the week we got to know each other better and

enjoyed evenings chatting, playing pool and relaxing together after a hard day of concentration. Slowly the nerves dropped and the confidence grew as things started coming together and towards the end of the week the word 'solo' crept up. We were lucky enough to have a beautiful hot and sunny week to carry out this course and everyday we were able to fly without too much trouble from the crosswinds. Monday night, Cdr Phil MOORE from the FAA Squadron gave us a brief on the powered flying activities we would carrying out. These included navigating a powered aircraft from the airfield to three different landmarks around the area. This was a great insight in to the art of navigation. Using basic materials we worked out the distance travelled between each point, the angle we would be heading and also how long it would take flying at a constant speed. This overall exercise was a great experience and rewarding in the air when I was able to spot the landmarks. Everyone was so friendly and helpful, especially the two 'Sea daddys' S/Lt Adam VINES (DHFS Shawbury) and Mid Chris AVISON (grading) who looked after us for the week. Also the six guys that joined us from Britannia Royal Naval College (BRNC) were helpful and enjoyed answering questions about what the navy is like and the different exercises involved in training. By the end of the week I had made some great friends, thoroughly enjoyed learning to fly, and had a wonderful week away with everyone. I feel we all connected as a group very well and the course has inspired me and the other scholarship students towards careers in the Royal Navy mainly as pilots.



Elizabeth prepares to set off on her NAVEX & TACR with Tim Nicholas

Visit to RMB Chivenor—Wednesday 25th May

By John Eatwell

EGDC Chivenor Rmks. Helicopters only, not available to fixed wing ACFT.

Despite the published airfield details Nigel was able to arrange for a Squadron visit to this far flung outpost in Devon. The main runway was in excellent condition but the wind at 20 knots from the south put it out of limits. Luckily common sense prevailed, the plan was quickly changed and all landings were made on the more favourable 16, which involved flying through the open security fence gate. A total of 11 fixed wing and 1 helicopter attended. The air and ground parties, a total of 27, met up in the Sergeants Mess for coffee before



taking their seats for the briefing session. (the Officers Mess having suffered a machinery failure). Sqdn Ldr Olly Podbury, OC 22 Sqdn SAR Flight welcomed us to Chivenor and gave a detailed presentation on SAR operations. His Flight of two Mk3 Sea Kings was responsible for an area covering 1 million square miles. It was established as a military rescue unit but the vast majority of the work was in support of the civilian population with 6% sea rescues, 24% coastal and 67% overland. They had a total of 2,300 callouts in 2009. He explained the National Emergency Organisation and how the different units fitted into this, all under the control of the ARCC at RAF Kinloss. This was followed by a very detailed brief on the capabilities of the Sea King with particular reference to the way the 4 crew members supported each other with inputs from the Sea Search Radar, Multi Sensor Pod and Automatic Flight control systems to obtain the best solution for the task. All night operations were undertaken with the pilots using night vision goggles (NVG). Several video clips were shown of rescues which illustrated the capabilities of the crew and their aircraft. Whilst the aircrew were all RAF the maintenance was entirely civilian with most of the engineers being ex-servicemen who had previously been members of the flight and who had recognised a good opportunity when the reorganisation took place. It seems to be an ideal posting but the downside is that all the SAR crews have to do a 6 week deployment to the SAR Flight based in the Falklands. Questions were asked about the future UK SAR and it was explained that the Sea King was due to be retired in 2016.



There were several options under discussion for a total civilian operation but the future was uncertain at present and no contracts had been issued. The military apparently were not keen to continue in the role. Major Mark Woosey RM, the acting Base Commander then took the stage for his part of the briefing. A certain amount of inter service banter ensued as Olly had overrun by some 45 minutes. *Mention of a BMW was made? Where did he park it and how did it get there?* All slides were dispensed with and a rapid fire brief followed. Chivenor was the Logistics base for 3 Commando Brigade comprising a Logistics Regiment, 29 Cdo Regiment of artillery and 24 Engineer Support Regiment. He emphasised the unique amphibious role and flexibility of the Royal Marines. The Brigade was unique and totally independent, responsible for positioning personnel, providing fully serviceable equipment and Medical support. Apparently 60% of all Royals are qualified to be Officers, 30% are graduates and 55% of Special Forces are drawn from the Corps. Chivenor garrison has about 1200 personnel, although a large number are deployed in theatre, with 500 RM's, Army and civilian engineers and a large medical unit (mostly RN). We were then given the choice of further questions or food! Hunger prevailed and we adjourned to an ante room for a buffet lunch. The party was divided into 2 groups for the afternoon session with a tour of the vehicle pool and engineering facilities followed by a visit to the SAR Flight where we were invited to 'climb' over the aircraft and have the various electronic equipments demonstrated. *Some of us are now able to answer the BMW questions!!* Remarkably the tours finished on time and Cpl Morrish very ably marshalled the visiting aircraft in a "follow me" taxi route up to the SAR Flight where we turned, passed through the security gate and executed a very professional stream take off into a strong blustery wind! All this was accomplished without any ATC presence, just good airmanship and common sense! Our thanks go to Nigel for



organising this unique visit, Flt Lt Dom Sanderson for co-ordinating the arrangements and Cpl Morrish for his sensible and flexible approach to the requirements of light aircraft in the prevailing wind conditions. Particular thanks to Major Mark Woosey for allowing the visit and Sqd Ldr Olly Podbury for giving up so much of his time to brief us on the capabilities of his SAR Flight.

Austering Part 2

By Brent Owen

After graduation from Dartmouth, the next place was to be Royal Air Force Station Linton on Ouse. I had managed to graduate from Dartmouth a little early, took myself up north and weaseled my way into being allowed to fly Chipmunks prior to starting training proper on the Jet Provost. I don't remember now how a lowly Sub Lieutenant had the nerve to arrive at a new station and immediately talk his way into a little unauthorized flying. I suppose a nervous smile and pleading look worked in those days. I think that, back then, enthusiasm seemed to count for something! So there we were for the next 14 months or so, Jet Provosts, then Vampires. I was able to get home for a little leave occasionally, to fly with the Coventry Aeroplane Club in the Austers. This was always a good reminder as far as where the tailwheel was, and its effect. Unfortunately once more the fear of failure was a constant fellow. The flying classes were very small, and some of them simply disappeared. Apparently our class was unusually fortunate in that only 50 % of our mates were sent away. The Vampire was a super aeroplane for its time, and for a first generation jet fighter it was very good. The cockpit was very cramped for two folks in full gear, but it was certainly fun. At the time we had lost a few due to spinning accidents and the R.A.F. had banned deliberate spins. Interestingly the Fleet Air Arm in their wisdom, never did. It did have quite a vigorous spin though, and needed the correct spin recovery in order to avoid the potential embarrassment of not being able to recover. After the presentation of 'wings' we were sent off to the tender mercies of the Fleet Air Arm to fly Hunters. Now the Hawker Hunter must be one of the sweetest flying



and most beautiful looking jet aircraft ever designed. I still love it, and was fortunate enough to be flying one with an aggressor unit against the U.S. Navy until a couple of years ago....., but I digress. Even when flying the Hunter, I was still able to get my hands on a Tiger Moth that was used for glider towing, and since there were not too many other pilots there who were tailwheel qualified, or at least interested in towing gliders during their free time I was able to do quite well, getting my hands on it most weekends when they were gliding. After the Hunter came the Supermarine Scimitar.

There had been a couple of fatalities, and I suppose a warm body was needed. It was a very big beastly with more than twice the power of our Hunters and still with a single seat. I felt very privileged that the Queen was trusting enough to let me use one. I can well remember standing on the ejection seat and looking back towards the tail.....as



1964 - Supermarine Scimitar

one does..... and thinking. That is an awful lot of aeroplane to be following behind me. Fiftyfive feet of it actually. There were no two seat Scimitars, but we did have what was humorously referred to as a simulator. The aircraft was generally reckoned to be a good introduction and trainer for the simulator, rather than the rather mundane other way around of today. In the bar before the first takeoff, various gems of advice were proffered. There is so much power no one raises the undercarriage until 10,000 feet on the first takeoff said they. Remember a firm pull is required to rotate, otherwise you will go off the end of the runway at 400 knots because it won't fly itself off. Not this tiger of the skies said I to myself, they just don't understand the cunning of my plot. I will merely use partial power to bring it back somewhere close to Hunter performance and raise the undercarriage with suitable élan to the amazement of all. Now, I have to admit that some might come to the conclusion that I hadn't quite thought things all the way through, and that a firm pull following a partial power takeoff were mutually exclusive....perhaps not too wise even. All went according to plan, partial power followed by a firm pull back at rotate speed To be followed immediately by the most sickening wing drop. A boot full of rudder with the accompanying slamming forward of the throttles corrected things. The eye-balls were recovered from the back of the skull somewhere at about 10,000 feet, so I then raised the undercarriage in the normal first flight Scimitar



Approaching Ark Royal
one 'beautiful'
winter evening

The fuselage flaps can clearly be seen

1964

fashion. It was an interesting aircraft and quite exciting to fly, with lots of novel innovations. Leading edge slats, fuselage flaps, boundary layer control (blow), automatic stabilizer trim, all hydraulic controls with no manual backup, and most important for carrier operations, a very superior angle of attack system, which to my knowledge hasn't been improved upon even today. It was quite exciting to fly, but whereas the Hunter never seriously tried to hurt me, even when it failed its engine very noisily never to start again on the first so-

lo, the Scimitar tried, quite deliberately with malice aforethought, to kill me in all manner of interesting ways. It was designed to be a high altitude interceptor, but when they tried this kind of thing, it was found prone to fall out of the sky all over the place in quite a rude fashion. In the spirit of true British compromise the deep thinkers with pointy heads said....."Let's call it a low level strike fighter. That way no one will know just how badly we have screwed it all up". In an interesting exercise of symmetry in mathematics, 76 were built and 38 crashed. Some say 39, but I prefer my figure since I can't divide 39 into 76 and make any sense at all. One of the very good things of this era in the Fleet Air Arm, was the variety of aircraft available to play with if one spoke nicely to the Commanding Officer of the 'Station Flight' I had access to their Tiger Moth, Vampire and of course the Hunters. They also had a Sea Prince which I managed to get some time in. The Admiral kept a very nice dark blue Vampire, which on occasions I was able to borrow for a special weekend. Mind you, I am not sure that he actually knew about the borrowing part of it. The squadron that I was on was very senior, and I, a rather junior lieutenant at the time, did the displaying for the navy. The Scimitar was a good display aircraft, in that it was very noisy, smoky, low and fast. Just under the speed of sound in level flight at very low altitude. At 600 knots from 100 feet we would climb vertically and on a clear day disappear from view at 33,000 feet while the sound was still shaking the ground. We flew a tight 12 ship formation which was a bit of a sweaty business a times. It had an exceptional rate of roll. I was told 540 degrees per second, though I never actually counted the degrees myself, I do know that there were a lot of them and they came quickly. Such was the amazing unreliability of the Scimitar, that at Farnborough and other important shows, we had an airborne spare to slip into the formation when one of the aircraft had an attack of

the sulks. Naturally most flying displays are during the summer months, so we went off to sea during the winter. To demonstrate their sense of fun and frolic, their Lordships sent us off into the north Atlantic, sub Arctic and North Sea, I don't think I ever felt warm on board that ship. The Scimitar leaked and dripped fuel from its 'wet' wings, and the deck was normally wet with spray. The deck supposedly had a non skid surface, but bearing in mind that the contract for the non skid paint went to the lowest bidder, the coefficient of friction of the deck with that mixture of jet fuel and sea water was about that of wet ice. I enjoyed bouncing on and off the deck, but taxiing around it was very unnerving at times and a very slippery slidy business. On the day that I arrived onboard we lost a Gannet with its crew over the side in part due to this. A good friend of mine from Dartmouth was the pilot, and another was one of the observers. As young men from that era did, the incident was passed off with very little upset and a somewhat callous quickly passing sadness. In the fullness of time I was very fortunate in that someone higher up in my universe must have taken notice of the various bits of excitement that I had survived in the Scimitar, and offered a job seconded to Short Brothers and Harland. It even carried with it a promotion! This unit did all the acceptance test flying of new and overhauled aircraft and delivering those aircraft to the squadrons. We were also tasked to evaluate badly damaged aircraft in the hope of patching them up enough to fly them back to the manufacturers rather than disassembling them which would be more expensive and time consuming. Interestingly, well interesting to me, although I did have some moments of interest in new and overhauled aircraft, none of the badly damaged ones gave a moments problem. After the requisite time serving Her Majesty, it was decided that I really had to look for a grown up job, and so moved to the United States and joined 'The Airline'..... Once more flying everything I could get my hands on. The next 30 years were interesting, starting on the 707. 727 and D.C 10, and finishing on the 767 and 757. I was also able to spend a number of years in our Flight Academy instructing on the MD 80, Fokker 100 and Airbus A300 which was a lot of fun.



Squadron Standards Weekend 7th & 8th May

By Phil Moore

The Squadron Standards Weekend at Yeovilton this year was hit by very bad weather. Of the eleven aircraft due to take part only the RV6A flown by Doc and Helen Holliday arrived by air on Friday. Saturday dawned sufficiently dismally such that nobody else flew in, the rain being sufficiently severe enough to keep even the locally based machines home and dry in their YFC Hangar. The editorial Arrow, delayed at Deanland on her annual check, had given way to the Honda Legend which wafted Sue and I to the wonderful FAA Museum on Saturday morning just in time to hear Phil Taylor's masterful presentation on aircraft accidents. Striking examples of Cultural Influences and the Chain Effect on GA incidents were explained together with the most vivid pictures, maps and narrative all of which kept everyone spellbound even the ladies. Michael Ryan introduced Simon Wilson who gave us a quick run down on the new, (post Wasp accident), procedures for operating GA at Yeovilton when the airfield is open and when it is closed. This was followed by an excellent Warnefords lunch at which Michael Bonham Cozens took the opportunity of presenting our retiring treasurer Peter Lovegrove with a most beautiful crystal decanter thanking him for his years of service since the Squadron was founded. Due to the weather the flying activity pm was cancelled, so, Michael Ryan took us through a few interesting briefettes. Topics included a new way to keep a check on engine oil contamination, a revision of ditching drill and a review of airspace infringements including what the afternoons flying exercise would have been. Next up, which was a real treat for me, was the day's final, (unscheduled), item "My Life as a Test Pilot by Clive Rustin". With 183 types in his logbook from 'flying bedsteads' to Concorde, Clive had us all spellbound with some pretty amazing stories and pictures to match, of life in an aeronautical era the likes of which we shall surely never see again. With



The CO reminds us of the ditching drill

Clive's concluding account of ejecting from a doomed Jaguar ringing in our ears we headed off to our accommodation to 'gather the girls' and make ready for the night's festivities. The Rose and Crow did not disappoint providing a most excellent meal in convivial surroundings. Even the drought breaking rain failed to dampen Squadron spirits on what was a most enjoyable and instructive Standards Weekend. Thanks are due to Yeovilton for providing the venue and to our long suffering Boss, Michael Ryan, for arranging it all with such precision and flexibility.

Clive Rustin and Helen Holliday at the Rose & Crown



Letter from Peter Lovegrove to Editor 9th May 2011

A short note to convey a big Thank You to the Squadron for the magnificent decanter presented to me by Michael Bonham Cozens on Saturday 6th May at the Yeovilton Standards Gathering.

The 'journey' was long, but very worthwhile and a pleasure to carry out.

Thank you.

The retiring "Bob Scratchit"

alias

Peter Lovegrove



Cessna Co pilot to Gib & back 17 – 28 March 2011

By Phil Moore

Perigueux was to be our first stop en route to Gibraltar via an overnight break in Perpignan. After delaying departure an hour or so for the rain to stop, Admiral Sir Raymond Lygo lifted his big Cessna 206 Stationair off Goodwood's soggy turf into a sky still drenched with cloud at 1115 on



Thursday 17th. We were soon above it all cruising 'rock solid' on the autopilot in bright sunshine at FL 35 complying with the French semicircular rule for VFR traffic. Little glimpses of Gallic ground could be seen through the cloud confirming GPS accuracy and the immaculate service from French Air Traffic. After blue sky the poor low level visibility at Perigueux proved more challenging requiring

concentration in the circuit so as not to lose sight of the runway. During the refuel I was annoyed by an N Reg Cirrus who had just landed and rudely joined the queue revving his engine and gesticulating at me to hurry! Then the 'penny dropped' as I recognised my good friend Geoff Prout and his aeroplane which sits next to mine in the hangar at Lee, what a coincidence! Airborne again I planned to route down the Toulouse Carcassonne valley to avoid high ground, "not possible" said the man from Aquitaine info! A desperate scan of the map ensued, "how about via the Gaillac VOR" I said "that ees OK" and so it was albeit needing a climb to FL55 to avoid a 4304 ft tall mast at Pic de Nore. Even better our ground speed was up at 188 knots, 53 knots of mighty tailwind! My big grin evaporated however when Perpignan tower gave the wind as 40 gusting 55 even though it was right down runway 31. Indeed our 80 knot final approach at 300 ft gave a GPS ground speed of 34 knots coupled with extreme turbulence and a very short landing roll. Taxiing to the pumps was 'exciting' and even when parked PEPA pranced about energetically in the angry air. The met man said the weather would be better on the morrow with less wind. Next day the sky was indeed sunny and clear although a mighty breeze remained as evidenced by the hotel willow trees which were still whomping wildly. We

booked out and set off for the airfield eventually being delivered after much unnecessary airfield hassle to the very remote GA park where PEPA had spent the night in splendid isolation. The saying that there are two groups of people paid good money to tell lies, (Politicians & Met

Schedule

Date	TL	TZ	Event	Time	Fuel
Thu 17	1115	1115	Dep Goodwood		
	1445	1345	Arr Perigueux	2:30	137
	1815	1515	Dep Perigueux		
Sat 19	1735	1835	Arr Perpignan	1:20	184
	1000	0900	Dep Perpignan		
	1230	1130	Arr Valencia	2:30	151
Sat 26	1440	1340	Dep Valencia		
	1720	1620	Arr Gibraltar	2:40	
	0945	0845	Dep Gibraltar		
Mon 28	1245	1145	Arr Valencia	3:00	268
	1445	1345	Dep Valencia		
	1650	1550	Arr Perpignan	2:05	211
Totals	1110	0910	Dep Perpignan		
	1420	1320	Arr Goodwood	4:10	183
			Totals	18:10	1142

men), sprang to mind as only a very brave man would have untied the 206 which was leaping about alarmingly in a gale blowing more violently than when we arrived the previous afternoon! I carefully replaced the chocks, which had been blown away in the night, tightened the tie downs and we all sheepishly got back into the airside shuttle and took a taxi back to the hotel which luckily was able to accommodate us for another night. Next morning, Saturday 19th was a very different story, the met men all prophesied “senior officers flying weather along the coast right down to Gib” and they were right! At 1000 local the mighty Cessna ascended into bright sunshine framing the snow topped peaks of the Pyrenees, destination: Valencia for lunch. Cruising comfortably at 6000ft above a craggy coastline we headed for Cadaques, our first waypoint in Spain. This was followed by handily placed VORs at Bagur, Callella and Villafranca deviating a little bit out to sea at Castellon in reponse to air traffic’s dire warning of a ‘plague of parachutists’ emanating from this small coastal airfield. To plan a landing at any biggish airfield in Spain can seem a bit daunting for a GA pilot. Prior to departure you not only need to have filed a flight plan



but must have agreed a slot time and have engaged a handling agent. Then there is the somewhat complex joining routine. This had us down at under 1000ft frantically looking for ‘November one’ at Puzol which once identified elicited a laconic “report downwind left hand for one two” from efficient and friendly Valencia Approach. We never did see November two at Moncada, as often is the

case, things turned out to be much easier than expected and we were soon on Spanish tarmac, two and a half hours out of Perpignan, and now frantically looking for the fuel farm. Suddenly a Servisair ‘follow me’ van materialised, as if by magic, driven by a charming girl, who, having got us to the pumps, took everyone off to the cafe leaving me to organise a non English speaking bowser man. After a bit of sign language and gesticulation I managed to get PEPA’s main and tip tanks topped up giving her a duration of over seven hours, much needed as Gibraltar has no AVGAS and was just on six hours there and back from Valencia. With PEPA reparked the servisair girl rushed me past the lucky crew



Sierras Gador
& Nevada



drinking coke in the cafe, to be deposited in front of two ancient computers at 'flight planning' for the "filing of your flight plan", (such is the lot of co-pilots!). After some frustrating minutes trying to get any sense out of either computer I gave up and persuaded a kind lady in the office to file one of the paper flight plans that I had prepared earlier. At 1440 Sir

Raymond had us rolling down Valencia's voluminous runway, next stop Gibraltar 2 hrs 47 minutes away according to my computer. The planned route was Benidorm, then across Alicante bay to VORs at Murcia, Almeria, and Malaga before the final dash to Gib. We sailed along at 6000 ft in sumptuous sunshine until, cutting the corner at Almeria, a climb to flight level eight zero was called for to clear the 7333ft high mountains of the Sierra de Gador. Breathtaking scenery outshone only by the snowy 11,417ft backdrop of Sierra Nevada. We had been deliciously airborne for nearly two hours and I could see Gib on my GPS. Time was getting close to bar opening, the engine sounded very sweet, completely unaware it was over the sea. Why not save time, ask Malaga if we could go straight to Gib?

"Cleared direct" they said and so we sailed on for another 50 minutes across the bay with the iconic Rock getting ever bigger in our windscreen. Suddenly we were there, turning starboard around

Europa Point, the friendly RAF voice warning us of birds on the approach to runway 09. Cameras snapping in the back, great views of the rock bathed in evening sunshine, this was the life I had 'joined' for. A high approach to avoid a big 'ball' of previously reported seagulls surrounding a fishing boat inconveniently parked close in on the extended centreline. Once clear, snap shut the throttle, a hint of sideslip and we were down on

the runway scooting past two phalanxes of frustrated traffic to the palatial RAF Hangar where Corporal Black and his team awaited to welcome and convey us to the Rock Hotel in his 4x4. The beer never tasted better, how nice it was to be back in Gib, an evening of celebration ensued. By far the highlight of our visit however was lunch with the Governor Sir Adrian Johns and his wife Susie. We were regally



Steering clear of
the 09 seagulls



2 happy pilots on
arrival Gibraltar



Corporal Black & his Team + 'girls'

entertained, aided by a small team of local FAAOA worthies. Afterwards Sir Adrian gave us a top tour of his home at the historic convent one of the last vestiges of Britannic might. If you are thinking of visiting gorgeous Gibraltar then for really good weather go slightly later than March. Although the day we arrived was very nice a levanter

got going on Monday which generated some cloud over the Rock and a very strong Easterly headwind for going home which did not abate until the following Saturday when it finally became weak enough to enable us to reach Valencia in 3 hours. There were no dramas at Perpignan this time, although, the weather held us there for a not unwelcome extra day before heading back non stop to Goodwood in 4 hours 10 minutes. Total distance was 2326 NM in 18 hrs 10 minutes giving an average speed of 128.08 knots, (147 mph), burning 1142 litres @ 63 l/hr. Gib is well worth a visit even if you go Comair. The 'natives' all speak English and are very welcoming. Prices are quite reasonable and in pounds not Euros. The restaurants, hotels, shops and tourist attractions are even better than I remember and there is no longer a problem with the Spanish border. One little gem at 329C Main Street is Luis Photos where you can get pictures of all the old ships you ever served on, (he quickly trotted out all six of mine), good quality, reasonable price and fully googleable for a postal service. Taking the Admiral out to Gibraltar was a truly memora-



View from the Rock



ble trip, great flying, wonderful scenery, a terrific reception in Gib by both the RAF and the Governor's office. Many thanks to them all, but especially to Ray and Jan for their brilliant company and for having the idea in the first place.



The Governors Lunch Party

Diary of Events 2011

July Wed 27th

Duxford *

(Doc & Hellen Holliday 07894455869)

September Sat 3rd

Summer Party with Aviation

(Michael Ryan 07785294108 & Sue Moorehead 01749672791)

September Fri 16th

Ireland Long Weekend *

(Denis Woodhams 01789763347)

October Sat 8th

Shobden Rally *

(Andrew Eames 07768514399)

November Sat 26th

Annual Dinner at HMS Collingwood

(Michael Ryan 07785294108 & Sue Moorehead 01749672791)

* Members of the FAAOA living in the area will be invited by the Squadron to join in the asterixed events above



Provisional Dates for Powered Flying Support

Lee on Solent:	August 23rd & 24th	
Yeovilton	August 16th & 17th	
Culdrose:	August 9th & 10th	August 16th & 17th

The **Squadron Buzz** is the quarterly "Newsletter" of the Fleet Air Arm Squadron. The editor invites contributions including photographs from all members (e.g. Reports, Letters, News, Anecdotes, Flying Information etc.). Please submit for Buzz No 59 by the deadline date of Friday 26 August 2011 to :

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