

CovAero

The Newsletter for Coventry Aeroplane Club Members

Issue 15 • Spring 2024





... News From The Field ...

Weather Emergency

A group of club members recently decided to carry out a land away flight to Turweston. The outbound flight went without a hitch however the weather closed in significantly for the return flight to Coventry. The flight departed Turweston normally but was unable to locate the airport at Coventry due to poor weather and low cloud; none of the group were licenced to fly in cloud.

The pilot contacted the Birmingham radar controller for assistance. However, the controller was unable to offer any meaningful assistance and handed the pilot over to the East Midlands radar controller. The East Midlands controller was able to guide to crew to a successful emergency landing in very poor weather at East Midlands airport.

There are probably a couple of lessons we can all take away from this event: firstly be sure to check the weather prior to departure on all flight legs. The weather can unexpectedly change and forecast accuracy can be poor. If in doubt seek some instructor advice or stay on the ground.

Secondly, don't take risks to get back home as per your plan. It is better to get home late by taxi or train.

Thirdly, if you do find yourself in an emergency situation then do not hesitate to declare an emergency; this allows the controller to use all available resources to get you safely back on the ground. If you have any questions on these kind of events please do feel free to talk to any of the club's instructors.

Annual General Meeting

It's that time again! The 2024 AGM is planned to take place at **14:00 on 21st**

April 2024. A hog roast feast will be provided - this has been hugely popular at previous AGM events so come along for that if nothing else!

New Club ID Cards Are Out

By now most of you should have received your 2024 ID card. You might have noticed that the expiry date has been deleted; this will allow us all to keep using the same cards for a number of years which is a significant cost saving for the club. Note that your access to the club building continues to be controlled by your existing door access card. If you need a new ID card, or if you want to update your photo please get in touch with the Ops Desk or email committee@covaero.com

Come Fly Your Aircraft!

As we head into Spring and Summer we currently have more aircraft available for hire than we've had for a while so please do come and fly!

You'll have seen **G-BOFY** in a previous newsletter; it's our completely overhauled PA28-151 which is ready to go where you will at a PPL hourly rate of just **£178.80**

We're also really excited to tell you that PA28-181 **G-OGEM** is joining us and is available for a PPL hourly rate of just **£199.00**

Most of you will be familiar with G-OGEM; sitting in our hangar as it does wearing its immaculate red and white livery. Under the hood is the very capable 180 hp 4-cylinder Lycoming which is a great "next step up" from the club Warriors.

Inside, the seating is decked out in sumptuous cream leather and the avionics fit includes 2 Garmin 275 displays, 2 Garmin GNS430 WAAS

GNSS units, Garmin audio panel, Trig transponder and an autopilot. This is a real going-places machine (have a look at CovAero Newsletter issues 8 and 9 to see it in action) so do come and enjoy it this flying season.

Training rates and block booking discounts are also available; please call the ops desk on **02476 301 428** or drop in for a chat.

Earlier issues of the Newsletter can be found here:

<https://www.covaero.com/downloads>

Club Socials

Our thanks go to Stephen and Susie from Aerotech who dropped by to give us an insightful overview about aircraft maintenance as well as a fascinating behind-the-scenes look into G-BOFY's renovation. The event was well attended and a good time (and good grub) was had by all!

Another social event is planned for May with additional events and flyouts running over the Spring and Summer.

Keep an eye out for those via club emails and the Whats App Newsgroup. If you have any ideas for a club event please do step forward and let us know.

Gardening Time

Thanks to committee member Darren Cheshire who corralled a willing group of volunteers to muck in and help tidy up the club grounds on several occasions over the last few months.

Thanks also to member Simon Logan who repainted our white lines!

We hope you'll notice and agree that the club apron and grass areas look all the more smart for it!



... News From The Field ...

Up, Up and Away!

It's been a while since our last newsletter so there's some catching up to do!

Congratulations from all of us to this great bunch of members who have achieved the lofty heights of Exercise 14, the First Solo. Stick with it guys, before you know it you'll be racing towards cross country navigation and your skills test.



Isaac Ridge, June 2023



Richard Dovey, June 2023



Mike Young, July 2023



Sid Patel, August 2023



Omar Awaad, September 2023



Patrick Pokorny, January 2024



Bleak Midwinter?

With a bit of planning it's still possible to use your licence to fly somewhere interesting.

I have a friend, Richard, who lives and works in Alderney. As well as having a practice near Blackbushe, he comes and goes from time to time and having previously flown together and in conversation we agreed to make the trip again. We flew on a Monday as G-COVA was available and it had sufficient hours remaining for the flight so I duly booked it in FSP. Indemnity requested and subsequently approved as the first step in the planning process about a week ahead of the intended flight date, Richard was able to source some LSE in the form of a lightweight

four-place life raft and two lifejackets from a friend at Blackbushe.

So began detailed planning in SkyDemon whilst sat at home with my laptop: Blackbushe PPR, flight plans and GARs are required both inbound and outbound to Jersey CTR and easily done through SkyDemon. Also required is an Alderney-specific GAR to be emailed to Alderney customs and Jersey Police and that was the admin aspects covered. I make a checklist and include my passport though not essential for Alderney as driving licence photo ID is

accepted. A diversion into France could be more hassle if it's not with me, so I ensure all admin is done and can easily be undone in the event of a no-go.

My plan was to depart from Coventry on full tanks solo at 09:00, stop at Blackbushe to pick up Richard and the LSE then on to Alderney with ATC at Blackbushe having activated my flight plan on take-off, stop for lunch and a walk if time permitted then back to Blackbushe solo to drop off the LSE and so back to Coventry by 15:30 at the latest. Careful calculations were also done regarding fuel as



Above: Almost there...Burhou sits to the north west of the island.

there is no AVGAS available at Alderney but refuelling at Blackbushe was possible using self-serve pumps if required.

The weather always - but even more so in December - was a key factor; my approach is always to plan and then decide based on TAFs, METARs and Met Office forecasts using the F215 and F214 forms. I also use Windy (www.windy.com is a great weather tool, take a look if you've never seen it - ed). A good overview of the current met situation is important as getting caught out just adds stress, risk and complication.

On the day, or as near to departure as possible, I look at the forecasts (and I use the plural as there are many sources as we all know and all too often, they don't always agree) which showed a consensus of a breezy, dull day with near total cloud cover and cloud base 1700 ft to 2300 ft and viz 10km or more. The route was 191 miles each way so assessing the weather along the route, and especially at Alderney, was critical when making the go/no-go decision. Windy days are better as there is less risk of the sudden fog that the Channel Islands can experience.

As I planned, using TEM alternates were very much in mind so from Coventry I had Turweston, Oxford and Wycombe Air Park as options if the weather deteriorated on the way to Blackbushe and on departing Blackbushe I had Popham, Southampton, Lee on Solent, Goodwood or Sandown. Finally, Cherbourg Manche was a suitable diversion into France if the Alderney weather suddenly closed in - though I'd most likely do a 180° turn and head back to the UK.

On Monday the weather was as forecast with 18 - 23kt wind pretty much down the runway at all three airfields so after completing the A-check I was soon on my way and on time. There were some light rain spots as I turned south but nothing after Southam VRP then over to Oxford Radar for a traffic service as I passed down their east side at 1600 ft which kept me well below the cloud and in good viz. There was some turbulence but of no discomfort or concern. Passing overhead Chinnor and ensuring I could see the Stokenchurch tower QSY from Oxford to Farnborough for a traffic service then into Blackbushe arriving within 5 minutes of my PPR ETA was a good start. I was given hardstanding parking to embark

Richard and LSE which saved any mess in the very wet grass parking area.

After startup advised ATC I wouldn't be transiting Farnborough controlled airspace (they are very accommodating if you want to and I have done so previously) with Rwy 25 departure heading out west to go round Odiham MATZ and avoiding Popham before turning south for a transit though Solent CTA. Having obtained Southampton ATIS I gave Solent Radar a call for a VFR transit Bullington Cross to Needles at 1600 ft. "Remain outside controlled airspace" said the controller followed a minute later by "Cleared as requested not above altitude 2000 ft VFR."

As the Needles came into sight we carried out an extra FREDa check to include the LSE and fuel state with updated ETA at Alderney. All was as expected so on exit from Solent CTA we changed over to London Information to advise coasting out at Needles with our next reporting point at ORTAC. This is an Airways RP and also the intersect point of the London and Brest FIRs, 43 miles SW of the Needles and was our entry point to Jersey CTA. Any turbulence disappeared as we were now over water, literally could have been hands off flying it was so smooth despite the 28kt SW wind the G430 was showing and the huge bow waves the ships were making as they ploughed into it.

London Info had advised Jersey I was inbound as per our FP and also passed me their frequency (they provide such a good service) so 10 NM NE of ORTAC QSY from them and call Jersey Control: "Cleared to join not above altitude 3000' VFR, tracking to Alderney lighthouse for a 26 right base, join currently No1. Advise Alderney in sight". Once Alderney was sighted QSY to Guernsey Control who advised "Continue approach and report airfield in sight". 5 NM north of the lighthouse I could see the airfield so another QSY to Alderney tower and we were cleared to land. Once parked I closed the FP in SkyDemon as it often seems to be the case that ATC don't bother with VFR FP's.



Richard disembarked and a check on the weather for the home run showed it remained as previously forecast but I opted not to linger. I dipped the tanks to confirm what the gauges were saying and fuel remaining was slightly more than calculated. I use 37L PH in my calculations but the actual consumption was nearer 35L PH. After a coffee and comfort break, I was on the return leg to Blackbushe - a reverse of the route but this time with a healthy tailwind achieving 135kt at one point in COVA was rather nice. After a short stop at Blackbushe to drop off the LSE I dipped the tanks again and with sufficient fuel plus reserve it was back to Coventry, arriving at 14:30 after 4 hrs of great flying. Flying over water may not be for everyone and as always, it's a pilot's personal choice and decision but well worth doing in my view.

Where to next, I wonder?

Words & Pictures: Bruce Dean



Top: Left base for Alderney

Above: Beautiful beaches, walks and restaurants – and it's really not that far!

“AIFOA”

Aviation Is Full of Acronyms!

...so just for fun, and to help out those who may not have seen some of these before, here is a list of every acronym we could find in this edition of the newsletter.

AGM - Annual General Meeting
ATC - Air Traffic Control
ATIS - Automated Terminal Information System
AVGAS - Aviation Gasoline
CTA - Control Area
DI - Direction Indicator
ETA - Estimated Time of Arrival
F214 - Met Office wind chart
F215 - Met Office weather chart
FIR - Flight Information Region
FP - Flight Plan
FREDA - Fuel, Radios, Engine, DI, Altimeter
FSP - Flight Schedule Pro
ft - feet

G430 - Garmin GTN430 GNSS avionics unit
GAR - General Aviation Report
GNSS - Global Navigation Satellite System
hp - Horsepower
hrs - hours
ID - Identification
km - kilometres
kt - knot(s)
L - Litres
LSE - Life Saving Equipment
MATZ - Military Aerodrome Traffic Zone
METAR - Meteorological Aerodrome Report
PH - Per Hour
PPL - Private Pilots Licence
PPR - Prior Permission Required
QSY - changing to en-route frequency*
RP - Reporting Point
Rwy - Runway
SW - Southwest
TAF - Terminal Area Forecast
TEM - Threat and Error Management
VFR - Visual Flight Rules
Viz - Visibility
VRP - Visual Reference Point
WAAS - Wide Area Augmentation System

*Anyone know what the acronym actually stands for?

It's Your Committee...

Coventry Aeroplane Club is owned by its members and run by a General Committee elected at each AGM. The committee members are also directors of the two limited companies owned by the club.

Officers:

Acting Chair: Neil Hedges
Vicechair: Stuart Robottom-Scott
Secretary: Rowan Smith
Treasurer: Neil Hedges

General Committee Members:

Darren Cheshire, Bruce Dean, Peter Gibson, Richard Holland, John Read, Anthony Ryan, Bob Weaver, Stefan Winkvist

Head of Training/Chief Flight Instructor:

Colin Moore

Want to Join us?

Email us at committee@covaero.com

Safety...

...is at the heart of everything that we do. If you want to discuss or report a safety issue, please email safety@covaero.com

...and your Newsletter

We hope you enjoy reading this newsletter – our aim is to produce them for Club members quarterly. What else would you like to see?

Warm thanks go to all of the contributors of this newsletter; if you enjoy reading the features then remember that all of them are written by club members just like you.

Do you have a flying experience that you would like to contribute?

If so we would love to hear from you!

Get in touch with any committee member or email

committee@covaero.com

Do you use Social Media?

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