

I pitched camp, rolled out the awning, unloaded the push bike (very useful on a bloody great airfield with some events at opposite ends), raised the Aussie flag and headed for the main hangar .....it's where the bar was! A few pints later I wobbled back to the van, cooked my din and settled in to bed - got to be up early tomorrow. The morning dawned mainly grey but with some sunny bits

and not too windy. Lincolnshire is flat and renowned for the wind. There is no way I can tell you everything I saw or send you the mountain of pics but I'll try and give you a taste. I set off to do the rounds, there is a hell of a lot to see, everything from Pylon Racing to Scale to Team Race to Fun Fly to Combat (it went non stop for 3 days!) and includes a show of large models for Joe Public to dream on.



I had seen one the night before in the hangar, a modest 23 ft span B52 powered by 8 (yes – eight!) turbo jets. The fin was taller than me. I thought I'd check out the T/R first after all that was what had brought me to the Nats all those years ago and right next to the circle I found this. It's an immaculate home built trike based on a 2CV. The whole thing sparkled and I spoke to the owner, he said he had built it during the foot and mouth outbreak in the UK when most country flying fields were closed and there was no flying allowed – time well spent I reckon! At the T/R it was business as usual with 3 or 4 blokes doing the old short arm shuffle and trying to fly as high as possible without getting penalised. There were some fast planes there, you can just see a yellow blurr of one on the far side in the pic – looks a bit high to me but I'm sure he'll claim he was just overtaking.







the Trade Tents (oh the goodies for sale - oh for someone else's credit card!) and you can just see the B52 flying above them. It looked incredibly real and the sound ....!!!! Sadly that was the only flight I saw as the next day it took off in far from ideal conditions, turned slowly downwind (Aha! I hear you say, the dreaded downwind turn!) and just slid into the ground! A huge explosion, a thick column of black smoke and, estimates vary, but about 25,000 quids worth of model was no more. I have yet to see the official reason but a strong rumour was that it suffered from the same thing that, apparently, full size ones do. If you get them banked far enough they just slide sideways and don't pull out!

I continued over there and saw a bunch of sexy jets do there stuff, the usual prop hanging by giant piston aircraft and another multi jet, a beautiful Comet IVB that flew without a wobble

Back at the combat they continued screaming around – this modern stuff is terrifying and how they can control them at those speeds beats me. I watched one bout where the winner was 13 ... and a girl ..... from Moldovia. She and her family had driven in a van all the way from Eastern Europe and were camping in it just to compete. The guy she beat was an ex UK & European champ!

So I checked out the speed circle. This little beauty was sitting on it's dolly and fired up - shit, it screamed. It took off and the revs shot up - SHIT this was something ....then it came onto the pipe - HOLY SHIT it was the most incredible sight and sound you can imagine. Ten laps later the results showed 206 mph, not bad for a 15! The combat carried on, I don't think there was a waking hour without the MEEEOOOOWWWW of hot combat motors!

So I moved on to C/L Stunt – the legendary Gold Trophy. Bloody'ell they are good. Square loops that are really square, pull outs to inverted 6 ft off the ground, Clover Leafs that require you to be a contortionist and the quality of the models .... Gorgeous! Here is a line up waiting to fly, check out that runway - over a mile of practise circuits and way down there in the distance, screaming Pylon Racers (best place for'em really).



GBR 02135

I only saw one whoopsie. A guy was flying straight and level about 6 ft off the tarmac when the "up" line broke! Need I say more, there was hardly a piece worth picking up, and that included the engine! Ouch! That evening, the Saturday, comp flying finished at about 5.00pm except for the combat of course, did I mention it went on forever?

By 6.00 pm there was not a model in sight ..... and then out they came! Dozens of small diesel powered free flight models, classic oldies like the Veron Cardinal or the legendary KK Slicker Mite and the smell of ether was everywhere! Scores of people gathered to watch as they were hand launched over the grass, sometimes as many as 8 at a time. There were constant cries of "heads up!" or more appropriately "DUCK!" as some of the trimming left a bit to be desired. In this safety or sue age I'm surprised it was allowed - but it was terrific. This picture sums it all up, they flew until it was dark - and some even after that! As well as

the classics there were a fair number of "alternative" aircraft and these among the more extreme. They were just made from ¼ " balsa but flew quite well, mind you, you had to keep an eye on them as their descending circles were highly alarming! (I wonder how a 6 ft span RC one would look?) Back in the main hangar the bar was doing great business and there was a section netted off for indoor electric RC models (the little foamie 3D models are amazing!) alternating with tiny rubber powered models - delightful! Sunday did not bode well! Strong winds, heavy clouds and rain threatened! So get down the the Scale RC quickly to see Mick Reeves latest creation fly. Whoa! A third scale Bleriot (immaculately detailed as you would expect) facing into enough wind to blow it backwards! It flew better than anyone would have thought, though there was a lot of gasping at times. I believe it finished up 3rd overall.

The quality of the models is great, shame about the weather as some people chose not to fly - it was really blustery and nasty – and then it rained. I went back to the main hangar to see the "Bring & Buy" tables. Lots of stuff, OK so I bought an electric glider, yes, inaddition to the Zagi, but I would have loved to get my hands on some of the vintage engines. This table was typical of about 6, all full of collectable

metal. There was even a guy selling all sorts of repro parts like the old plastic tank for an ED Bee that he makes.







That afternoon I had one of those "what are the chances of this happening" moments. I was watching the RC Fun Fly when a voice said "do you know the rules of this?" I turned to find Chris, a guy I had worked with in Xerox about 30 30 years ago! We and his wife retired to the van for a coffee, a biscuit (OK cookie to you in CT) and a session of "whatever happened to ....." Just as well – it rained again.



Talking of engines, I mentioned the Trade Tents, among them was this little number, yes, a genuine model turboprop that was also demonstrated in a flying Pilatus Porter. Do yot remember when you thought a throttlable motor was cool technology. How the times have changed. Oh yes, and only 1700 quid to you.

The evening flying was not well attended, the bloody wind just would not go away! But there was always the hangar! Most people left that evening, I stayed one more and left under a rainbow in the morning ..... I shall return, see you there?

Mike

## SCAMPTON MEMORIES by Graeme Swalwell



During my recent visit to the UK with my wife Lorraine, we were fortunate in being invited by Vic Cramer, a former Commanding Officer of 27 Squadron based at Scampton, Lincolnshire, to visit the base with him. The original "Dambusters" 617 Squadron was also based at Scampton, during WWII and this historic field is now the home of the R.A.F aerobatic team, the "Red Arrows" that fly the B.A.E. Hawk aircraft also used by our RAAF as an advanced trainer.



Graeme in his "formal" flying suit with a Hawk

Lorraine and Vic's wife (Rhonda) were both part of a 53 person group of choristers and supporters from St. Swithuns Church, Pymble that travelled to the UK to sing services at Lincoln Cathedral for 1 week in late August this year. The visit to the Scampton base was a real highlight of the trip and we were guests of the present C.O., Wing Commander Bill Ramsay.

We were first invited to view the base museum which contains many items of interest concerning 617 Squadron, including details regarding the development and testing of the bouncing bomb and its designer, Dr Barnes Wallis. Practice and techniques necessary to ensure that the proposed raid on German dams would have the desired effect of crippling the industrial power of the Nazi war machine by flooding the Ruhr valley are shown in detail and club members may care to refresh their memories of this epic event by obtaining a copy of Paul Brickhill's book "The Dambusters" or watching the video/film of the same name.

Although the raid was successfully carried out in May 1943, it resulted in heavy casualties with the loss of 5 of the 19 Lancaster bombers and their aircrews. The C.O. at the time was W/C Guy Gibson who was awarded the V.C. for his leadership and courageous actions in repeatedly flying in before other crews made their attacking runs, so as to draw flak and give his crews a better chance of success and survival.



Following the museum visit, our party enjoyed lunch with Wing Commander Ramsay, before walking to the edge of the tarmac to watch as the Red Arrows prepared and departed for an airshow at York. The precision with which the pilots and aircrew carried out their departure was most impressive. Both Vic arid I were given the opportunity to sit in the cockpit of a spare Red Arrows' Hawk. We found the cockpit a bit on the small side but would not have missed the chance to try it out and have photographs taken.

We also visited the grave of Guy Gibson's black Labrador 'Nigger' which is respectfully tended by Scampton Station personnel This dog was sadly killed by a motor vehicle on the afternoon before the raid and, at Gibson's request was buried at about the time the Lancasters were over the German dams.

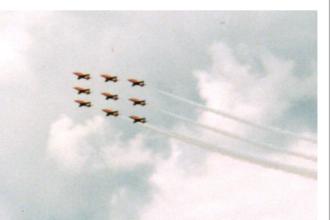
The Red Arrows returned to Scampton shortly afterwards with a low pass followed by a spaghetti bomb-burst, with all 9 aircraft going upwards in different directions trailing red, white and blue smoke, before making precision landings and each taxiing to their allocated positions.



Vic in the Hawk cockpit







A de-briefing then followed in a small theaterette and we were very privileged to watch video footage of the airshow just completed and listen to the constructive criticism of the flying by each pilot. Souvenirs of our visit were then made available and an RAF cap and other mementos will remind us of a most enjoyable visit to Scampton. As mentioned earlier, Vic Cramer was a CO of 27 Squadron at the time it was flying Avro Vulcan V Bombers and the

"Cold War" with the Russians was "on" Vic held the rank of Group Captain when he retired in 1973 and has kindly agreed to come to a Club Meeting early next year to speak about various events in his time as an RAF officer. He has had over 1,000 hours in Dc Haviland Mosquito aircraft and has assisted with advice and information that has been gratefully accepted regarding the

1/6 scale model Mosquito that Jim Masterton and I are finishing at present. On another occasion, Vic Cramer and I also visited a most interesting display at Newark Air Museum, situated a short

distance from Lincoln. This Museum has a large collection of early jet aircraft on permanent display and visitors can get up close to most of the aircraft. A Vulcan B2 Bomber, of the type flown by Vic during his time as C.O of 27 Squadron, is one of these jets, together with mock-ups of the "Yellow Sun" hydrogen bomb and "Blue Steel" cruise missile carried by these aircraft during the Cold War period.

Before leaving England, Lorraine and I visited the RAF Museum at Hendon, north of London and spent a pleasant day checking out the very wide range of WWI and WWII aircraft there. This Museum is well worth a visit by any members visiting London and is easily reached by the Underground.







**Marty Cowan** 

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