

Day 1: 9/9/09: East Fortune to Sherburn in Elmet 2hr 40mins

Early start at the airfield - unlocked the gate and entered with Richard close behind us. Packed and fuelled up, and ready for off just after 10am - well almost - as we lined up for our checks, Richard was rummaging in his map case, and asking on the radio 'so where's the first stop then?!' He was then advised of a dropped glove, slightly flat tyre and some trim coming adrift from his plane(!), but announced ready for off, so I took the first take-off.



Having had problems running at low oil temps lately, I had covered up more of my radiator and oil cooler, and was immediately slightly disturbed to find the temps now running a bit higher than I'd prefer - not in the danger zones, but enough to preoccupy me during the climbout and first 20 mins or so of the flight, till I could see where they were settling down to in the cruise. We switched to microlight frequency, and was further distracted with radio interference that I couldn't get rid of with the squelch. We could all hear each others' transmissions, but we had the added pleasure of continual interference as well. All this internal distraction meant that I quickly lost sight of everyone, and was relying on their position reports for reassurance that we were all reasonably close. Cloud was patchy, and we climbed above it spotting landmarks below. Milfield glider field appeared, and we tracked down the A1 towards Newcastle. It was wisely suggested that we regroup at Eshott before entering Newcastle zone as a group, and panic mounted for me as I couldn't find Eshott, cloud seemed to be thickening, and still couldn't see the rest of the squadron! After a few tense minutes, I realised I was too far south, and Richard reminded me to find the A1 and follow that to Eshott! A few minutes later and I saw the welcome site of 3 other planes circling above the clouds - relief! We decided to descend below cloud then and continue towards Newcastle, changing to Newcastle approach for transit through the zone. Gordon



squawking his transponder, friendly controllers and wonderful views over the river, bridges and the 'Armadillo concert hall' glinting in the sunshine. The interference on the radio was less on Newcastle frequency, but I also then discovered a slightly dodgy connection between headset and radio, meaning that if I changed position a certain way, I lost connection. This unfortunately happened just as everyone was being told to change frequency to Teeside, and oblivious to the change I listened to Newcastle getting fainter and fainter...

... still in visual contact, we flew in a fairly tight formation so I was able to copy whatever the others were being instructed to do, but hearing nothing, I turned to microlight frequency as we'd agreed to do - but calling out to anyone else there was met with silence (apart from the interference, of course!)

... deep breath - ok, I know we have to call Church Fenton MATZ before we get to Sherburn in Elmet to get permission to enter, so I'll just tune into them and wait till I hear them call... concentrate on where we are as we travelled across North Yorkshire...

As we approached Sherburn, I could hear other planes talking to the MATZ for instructions, but no G-CGAZ! A bit further on, and I was pretty sure I could see Sherburn airfield in the

distance! Shit!! OK.. we are within the Matz now, so must have permission... we need to change to Sherburn for joining instructions, so I'll change there and pray.....

... a minute later, the very welcome sound of 'G-CGAZ formation of 4 microlights inbound to you, requesting airfield information and joining instructions'..... thank christ! (they had been passed from Teeside to Leeming, then direct to Sherburn, so no wonder I hadn't heard them!). I'd spent some considerable time studying the airfield plates and google satellite view of the airfield the night before, so was finally happy to be able to hear joining instructions and knew what we were meant to be doing. The formation spread out into what was to become our familiar landing configuration of one long line, and we all announced turning finals - microlight 1, microlight 2, microlight 3 and finally G-EB, microlight 4 final for 25..... lovely long tarmac runway, long taxi to the parking area.. and finally engines off! 2 hrs 40 mins I made it on my clock...



Elated but still a bit rattled, I set to looking at my various problems... put the oil covers down a bit, looked at where I could reposition my headset connection so it wasn't being caught up with me moving about, and Mike looked at the GPS to see that the backlight hadn't been set up, which explained why I could hardly see it. We decided to save our sandwiches for the delights of 'meal with chips' from the Sherburn cafe! The lady serving seemed to be having a worse day than I was, as all her staff had called in sick, but she managed to produce some good, comfortingly stodgy fare and mugs of tea, for a very reasonable price, and I began to relax a bit with the familiar Yorkshire accents around (I was born in Leeds!). We got the maps out to discuss the next leg - relief at no zones to transit, but slight concern that we'd be on microlight frequency/interference for the whole leg! No option of changing seats with Mike, as he hadn't flown enough recently to take a passenger, so I was going to have to do this all... gird your loins, gal, and another deep breath!

Had to make a business phone call so retreated to the ladies to do that... 'if I sound as if I'm in a toilet, its because I am!'... came out to find everyone getting ready to push planes into the fuelling bay to top up with mogas - one of the reasons we had picked Sherburn as a stop. Richard decided to go the other way round the one-way fuel bay (!), but otherwise fuelling was straightforward - 37 litres thank you (not quite the 15l/hour I was expecting fully laden with Mike plus camping gear!)... and the lovely Yorkshire folk pretended it was 40l to give me a free landing!

We were thinking about going into Westonzoyland microlight field for our next stop, and Graeme called for PPR. He was a bit surprised to be given the third degree about their complicated 'no fly' area procedures, and couldn't answer in sufficient detail (this is Graeme?!) so we were refused entry!! Not much hope for anyone else then.....! So we went to plan B and called Dunkeswell.. this trip was starting to sound quite familiar now....!!

Sherburn in Elmet to Dunkeswell - 2 hr 40mins

The next leg had, in addition to the radio interference, the joys of having to turn the map round mid-flight, and trying to read it sideways.... however temperatures were behaving now, gps was more visible, and we stayed in visual contact with each other for the whole way. I found the route harder to navigate, with not that many distinctive landmarks - all the large Yorkshire towns looked fairly similar! We passed over Calton Moor, where Graeme had

delivered Gordon and Jill's last plane to its new owners earlier in the year, finally sighting Wolverhampton airfield 'Hal'penny Green' which was our turn point for due south. The weather was improving all the way, less cloud, and excitement mounted as I spotted landmarks that I'd seen when I came this way as Graeme's passenger in 2007. I started to enjoy things more - managed to turn the map and we came past the hills above Great Malvern, seeing the mighty Severn glinting in the sunshine. Slight false spot of Bath - well, I remembered it appeared as we came over a shelf of hills.. but the town I spotted was significantly smaller than Bath - and we soon came across the real thing - no mistake! Spotted the racecourse, and started to descend to 1500



feet to avoid Bristol airspace. Graeme commented on the strange feeling of flying towards the 2000ft Wells Mast at 1500 ft.... With the tailwind we were soon past the mast and able to climb a bit now that we were out of the airspace area... and before long recognised Dunkeswell, where we had stopped off also in 2007. Runway 05, I knew the approach this time and we landed in our formation, perfectly one after the other... this was fun! We didn't hear Richard calling,

but he landed in behind us, and then told us he hadn't got Dunkeswell programmed into his radio, and by the time we'd all announced we were changing, we'd changed before he could ask us to repeat the frequency! Tracked all the way up the long runway, parked and had a quick cup of tea before deciding where to head for the night. No contest for me... it had to be Bodmin again! To top the day off with a nice familiar flight, knowing where we were going and enjoying being able to show Mike where we'd been before.. we called Bodmin and were told that the radio would be unmanned, make blind calls, and there would be folk in the bar drinking beer when we arrived! Deja vu indeed!



Dunkeswell to Bodmin, 55 mins

Take off provided some amusement, as we taxied round to the runway intersection to do our checks, we all heard Richard's voice saying 'strange.. that's all very strange'..... Then the controller at Dunkeswell tried to cut in saying 'you have your PTT switch stuck on!'..but of course Richard couldn't hear him, because.. he had his PTT switch stuck on! Gordon and Jill tried to mime to him what was wrong, and eventually he turned his engine off, took his helmet off, just in time for Jill's roar of 'YOUR PTT SWITCH IS STUCK ON!!' to transmit right through Richard's headset and into ours ... how can such a small person have such a loud voice?!!

Replay of 2007 again - magnificent flight over Cornwall, seeing the peninsula narrowing, water glinting in the lowering sunlight, Dartmoor looking moody with long shadows.. then landing again in formation for 03 in light winds. One thing with this formation landing, and these larger airfields - I found myself doing long, gradual final approaches rather than our shorter, steeper ones to give the planes in front plenty time to clear - airliner landings!



We all parked and efficiently set to unpacking the planes and setting up the tents, before joining the locals in the bar, and calling a taxi for the Blisland Inn. Much more relaxed now, familiar territory, enjoying the beer and the feeling that I'd actually DONE it!



The Inn was lively - we didn't think we'd get a table, but as we tried to squeeze ourselves round a small table, the people in the table we'd sat at in 2007 (!) got up to leave and gave us that... how good could this day get? There was a pub quiz going on, and I got a bit carried away when the announcer asked 'who fell asleep in the teapot?' and shouted out 'the dormouse!'... ooops! Too much beer and confidence I think! We had Beast burgers, and a chap in the next table started to chat to Jill as we more subtly whispered quiz answers to him. We only realised how friendly he was getting when he demanded some of her chips, without sauce if you please.....

We were glad we hadn't participated in the pub quiz as one of the prizes was a large potted plant and we would really be stuck to pack that into the space remaining in the planes!

Great evening - taxi back to the airfield, access to the clubhouse to wash with hot water and nightcap with Graeme's whisky, and snuggled into tents. It was colder than in 2007, but that suited me as it was nice to burrow into a warm sleeping bag. The wind picked up during the night, and we listened anxiously for creaking from the planes, but the 'fighter pilot' tie down method that Gordon had shown us stood fast - the planes were rigid, even though our tents were flapping and getting a good buffeting!



Day 2 - Bodmin to Lands End 55mins

Although we woke at 7am, by the time we got the bbq going, sausages and eggs cooked, then 4 planes refuelled (55l this time), Richard's tyre pumped up, called Lands End for PPR and a wonderful lady gave us clear and detailed instructions for calling Culdrose MATZ first for some protection from all the military traffic - pre-flight checks revealed both Richard and I were getting low on oil, and no one had brought any! Having only done short flights for the last year, it hadn't occurred to me that I might actually USE oil on a longer flight - ooops! Some more calls to find out the Cornish equivalent of what we get up north, and friendly Bodmin controller supplied us with top ups.



Finally off after 11am, as we took off 3 jets zoomed underneath us... gosh - calling Culdrose was good advice! Flew over the Eden Project, then St Austell, down to Mevagissey, and spotted the Lost Gardens of Heligan - not as impressive from the air as I'd hoped, as a lot of it is within trees! Tracked across to St Ives, and Gordon called Culdrose MATZ, armed with his transponder. Clipped female controller came back with 'station calling Culdrose, you are unreadable!'...!! Rubbish! We all heard him perfectly clearly... after t

rying again, we all fell silent for a bit wondering what to do. Eventually Graeme took the initiative and tried calling them, and they heard him fine - asked him if he was transponder equipped, and he took a bit of a breath and said 'yes'.. hoping that Gordon was hearing him! He read back the transponder setting, and Gordon thankfully tuned in as they then seemed quite happy. The ventriloquist act continued, with Graeme speaking and Gordon obeying! Finally passed onto Lands End, to be informed that the wind was 16kt down runway 07. I didn't find the airfield easy to spot, and lost my bearings slightly as the peninsula narrowed, so when I finally did spot it it took a few moments to



work out which runway we were using, but managed to follow the landing formation, and took the breathtaking long final out over the turquoise sea and white surf towards the strip!



We parked up and donned high vis jackets (Jill lent Richard her's, and we only had one between us, so the unjacketed people had to be 'escorted' to the buildings!).. lots of photos in front of

'Lands End Airport' sign, then into the Control room to pay landing fees, causing much interest as we all produced Scottish £10 notes with different graphics on them! We queued up at the cafe to order Cornish Pasties and sandwiches, and as everyone else moved outside to sit in the sun, Richard and I were treated to the appearance of a stereotypical Cornish 'Wrecker' chap (straight out of 'Poldark'!) coming out of the kitchen - twinkly eyes, wild hair and beard, missing teeth! We raised simultaneous eyebrows, and turned away giggling to join the others! The pasties were wonderful, and we finished off with Clotted Devon Cream Ice creams... and planned the next leg.



The wind was going to be against us - the rest of the country was light winds, but the Cornish peninsula was 20-30mph easterlies - directly against us the whole way back! We decided on Eaglescott, a small airfield just into Devon, and planned the tour along the North Cornish Coast.

Lands End to Eaglescott - 2hr 10mins



As we radioed in for taxi instructions, we were greeted by the wonderful voice of the lovely lady we had spoken to on the phone from Bodmin. We all agreed she was the BEST controller we had ever come across! She gave us detailed, clear taxi-ing instructions, explaining in good detail, but still professionally handling the stream of incoming and outgoing traffic around us. She apologised for having to hold us before we could take off, explaining why, and when we asked if we could track over Lands End itself before heading North, again gave us clear and detailed

instructions, and 'when you've seen what you want to see, if you'd like to follow the final approach path for 07 again while heading North, that would suit us very well just now'.... it was a delight to listen to her directing everyone, but being so friendly - someone saying 'sorry about my radio quality last time - I think it gets a bit tired like me'... 'oh yes, your radio is much clearer now, G-xx, we were just commenting about it in the tower here'!!

We finally took off one after the other, flew over Lands End, then back north, seeing the remnants of many tin mines on the far North tip of coastline. This leg was just glorious, despite the headwind. We had time to admire the coastline, many airfields, deserted beaches, St Ives, Newquay, Padstow, Boscastle, Tintagel castle, Bude... Richard had suggested tuning into Newquay frequency as we passed, so which we were glad we did - its a busy airspace there! Finally we turned back to microlight frequency, and we discovered that the power lead to my GPS was causin



g the interference - I pulled it out and relied on batteries, and blissful silence! The terrain was just full of flat, grazing fields, so there were no worries about emergency landings, and I'd also managed to find a spot for my headset connection which didn't get jogged about. By now we had perfected our formation - Gordon and Graeme would take off first, and hold back till Richard and I had caught up, then we would format

in either a diamond, arrow or rhombus - the idea being that we were all slightly off centre from each other so that we could all see each other. It worked well, and I felt so proud to be part of the 'microlight formation of 4' that we announced to everyone! Graeme looked back at one point and commented on the glorious sight of the wonderful coastline, and all our planes in perfect formation behind him!



We decided to give seeing Clovelly a miss, although it would have been lovely to see it was quite a detour from the direct track to Eaglescott and we were in a strong headwind. Again,



I found Eaglescott difficult to spot - in fact didn't really see it till Graeme announced he was overhead and descending deadside! A little grass strip, with a clubhouse, and Richard plugged his phone in to charge up while he made a couple of calls. The lady there then asked Richard to please unplug his phone - the whole building was powered by a single windmill, and that just provided enough power for the radio today!! Richard then felt slightly guilty that he was depriving the entire airfield of power...! We got tea, paid landing fees, and then started the discussion about where we could get to for the night. The headwind was quite punishing, and fuel consumption was going to be an issue - specially for us. Our initial hope of making Welshpool was definitely not going to happen - with only 2 hours of light left, we mused on a few options round Bath/Bristol, but then finally decided to get back to Dunkeswell, as we could be guaranteed fuel there, it would take us about an hour, and it was a bit further towards home. We called for permission to camp - no problem, and we could get fuel that night, so we could have an early start tomorrow for the long haul home. Sorted!

Eaglescott to Dunkeswell : 50 mins.

Another peaceful, evening flight - formation landings, and pulled up to park at our camping spot. Unpacked, then took the planes round to the fuel bowser - and Graeme's plane wouldn't start! Mike pushed him to the bowser, while we taxied over, and we all fuelled up and returned back to the campsite. Gordon suggested turning his prop backwards to 'reset the starter', and thankfully that seemed to work - obviously something going on with the starter, but as Graeme said, as long as it starts tomorrow a couple more times, we're ok and he can get it sorted when he gets back!



Richard and I went into pay for our fuel, and another 'stereotypical Somerset character' passed through the room causing more exchanged looks between us and giggles! As we were standing, Richard asked 'so why is Mike not flying?' I explained his situation, and Richard said 'well why don't you fly as my passenger tomorrow and let him have a chance to fly?!' Since we had the same headset system, we realised that could work, and he then warmed to his suggestion and started to tempt me with promises of Elgar over the Malvern Hills, and Fawlty Towers episodes from his new iPod installation into his plane! We came out to to make the offer to Mike, who adopted 'startled rabbit' look - not quite the reaction Richard had been expecting! However he thought a bit more about it, and decided to give it a go - I was easy either way - I was now loving doing the flying, but also liking the prospect of being Richard's passenger for a change and listening to Fawlty Towers and enjoying the views!

We asked the airfield what the village pub was like for food, and they said 'to be honest, the food is probably better here, and the restaurant is open till 9pm'. We were keen to sample another English Pub experience, and reckoned that if the food didn't look up to much, we could at least come back and use the restaurant here... so set off down the hill to the local pub. It looked promising from the outside, but was very quiet, apart from an ill looking cat perched on a bar stool, and yet another 'stereotypical local' perched at the end of the bar. Jill immediately started quizzing the barman about the cat, suggesting thyroid tests, and the 'local' butted in saying he'd stick a boot at it if it were his cat.... Jill retorted that she'd 'stick

her boot where the sun didn't shine in his direction'... and that rather set the tone for the pub! The beer was lovely, but the atmosphere was restricted to our table, and we decided to go back up to the restaurant at the airfield for food.

On reaching the airfield, the restaurant looked suspiciously quiet, and we found that the staff had all gone home because no one seemed to be eating tonight! Oh dear! We still had some sausages and eggs, and a bbq, but no bread - so asked the barman, Mick, if we could buy some rolls or bread or something? He said 'wait a moment', disappeared for a couple of minutes, then came back and said 'I can do you sausages and chips if you like?!' By this time the beer had taken its toll... sausage and chips would be wonderful!! can we help? 'I might call on you...' in the event another bar customer who was a chef went round to help him, and then the offer of eggs with it? yes please! What a star was Mick - some people are just so warm hearted and helpful! We had a lovely jolly evening in the bar, then retreated to all squeeze into Graeme's tent to polish off the bottle of wine that appeared out of Gordon and Jill's seemingly bottomless panniers - they produced all the home comforts from that plane, including a wind up lantern to light the tent! We tried to spread out the charts to plan tomorrow's route, but were getting wine spillages mixed up with the MATZ zones, so eventually called it a night and retreated to our tents!

Morning - 7am start and lit the bbq right away... we all promptly got up and started packing up, then found the parachute club toilet and shower block - if only we'd seen that last night, Jill and I sighed! No point in showering now as we were heading home..

... I asked Mike again if he was sure he wanted to do this leg - it was going to be a long one - aiming for Barton, Low level corridor etc... but he seemed to be up for it, and when Richard offered to trade his fuel cans and rucksack for 'woman', we packed them into our passenger seat and I moved my cushion to Richard's plane. We agreed that Wolverhampton could be a stop off before the corridor if required.

We ate our sausages, without bread but pooled Richard's croissants, various muesli bars etc and cups of tea for breakfast. Then were amazingly ready for off.. just after 9am!

Day 3 Dunkeswell to Barton - 3hrs 35 mins.

Richard led out for a change - but his call to 'Dunkerly' radio wasn't responded to - he had programmed the name in as Dunkerly and was reading off his radio! Finally someone responded (did they remember him from last time?!), and we taxied to the holding point for checks, waited for an incoming plane, then we were lining up and off!

The formation was more spread out this time, with Mike on the far left and seeming to disappear further left... we suggested he track right a bit to rejoin us, and were a bit surprised when he then shot across in front of us, not quite seeing where we were! He seemed to be bouncing around left and right, up and down like a demented bumble bee... and having difficulty seeing us... and Graeme called with some trepidation that we were descending to 1500 for Bristol zone.. if Mike wasn't seeing us, he could plow into us! We proceeded with some reservation.. Mike calling that he still couldn't really see any of us... I caught sight of him above us at one point but we're not quite sure what altitude he went through Bristol zone!

After that, we seemed to split into 2s... Richard and Graeme sticking together, and I could see 2 specs over to my left which I think were Gordon in front, and Mike behind him and above. As we passed Wells and then Bath, Richard set up the inflight entertainment(!), and we listened to a couple of Fawlty Towers episodes - a great way to pass a slow journey, although I hadn't realised that he'd disengaged the radio completely to damp down the

interference! It was nice to do the lookout but be the 'second pair of eyes' rather than the first... we were in formation with Graeme, and I could occasionally see the others in the distance. Mike mistook the Bath racecourse for a microlight airfield and thought that the microlight he was following might actually be nothing to do with our formation which concerned him a tad - but a radio call reporting Bath Racecourse from Gordon clarified and reassured him he was still part of the team and not chasing someone else entirely.

After enjoying 'Mrs Richards', and 'the Builders' episodes, Richard called back on the radio asking if we'd missed anything! 'Not much!' replied Graeme....

We approached Crewe, which signified that the Low Level Corridor was approaching, and we stayed at the back as the formation drew closer to traverse the corridor. We could see what I assumed was Mike weaving about a bit, but we were fairly far behind and busy looking out for landmarks and traffic, so didn't really think too much about it. We agreed that it was probably good we weren't going in first to Barton - the combination of the long flight, unfamiliarity (Richard hadn't done Barton, or 'Barnton' as he kept calling it(!) before), low level flying at 1200 ft, and busy airport - we were happy to leave it to Gordon and Graeme to lead the way!

The Manchester low level corridor is well named - under 1250 feet with Manchester below and with possible busy VFR traffic heading in either direction. Mike was clinging to Gordon's tail trying to avoid its wake turbulence and getting lift off the unforgiving concrete of Manchester with uninviting tall chimneys vomiting clouds of steam. It is best described like a WW2 movie of low level strafing runs through enemy cities - all we needed was Dambuster music. This was also the timely point when Mike's radio played up so he was only catching snippets of the ATC communication.

We spotted the airfield, Gordon called in that the microlight formation of 4 were approaching and we were instructed to join overhead at 2000ft for runway 27 Left, right hand circuit (! - there are 2 runway 27s.. one Left and one Right!)... another plane appeared in the circuit as well, and was advised of our presence, then kindly said he'd extend his downwind to let us through. Our circuit was smaller than his, and he announced he could see 3 micros in front of him. 'he hasn't seen us!' I said to Richard, and we decided to stay behind and come in after the fixed wing. As we were downwind, we suddenly spotted Mike, above us but in the downwind leg, doing a 180 turn and trying to exit the circuit to avoid running into the lead aircraft in what he described as being in a Quidditch match!





'What on earth is he doing?' and the controllers were asking the same thing - he was lurching about all over the place, and the controller asked 'G-EB is that you going the wrong way round the circuit?'.... 'er yes, I'm a bit confused about the airfield layout and getting too close to the plane in front.... '... We were now behind the fixed wing, but we were now the third microlight, so announced that we were now 3rd, hoping that Mike would realise he was behind us now. It was a fairly frantic final, flying over the motorway flyover, wondering where Mike was and aware he was very close behind coming out of the sun... but we landed, cleared and saw Mike coming in closely behind - the wind was very light, and he was lucky to avoid our wake!

We joined the others in the fuel queue, and a Barton official came up to us 'is that you that mucked the circuit up?'. 'no.. it was him!'. we pointed to Mike as he drew up to the fuel point. Words were had... we were all just relieved to be down in one piece... and it dawned on me that this had been a more stressful leg for Mike than we had ever anticipated.... and it had all come to a point in the Barton circuit. Human Factors indeed....

His fuel was almost out (3 hrs 35, but he'd burned 58l, and that was solo!)... so he'd been worried about that in the final stages, he found flying in formation really hard (we'd all had 2 days practice at it by now!) - we realised after that his thick soled MBT shoes meant he couldn't feel his foot throttle very well, and was continually trying to slow down but on full revs so having to weave back and forward trying to keep behind but coming uncomfortably close to Gordon's plane... this was magnified on the low level bit which was stressful enough, his altimeter was possibly not set correctly, his headset connection cut out as we approached Barton and he didn't hear the joining instructions properly... so he didn't really know what he was doing, and above all that had in his head that Barton, being a large airport in Manchester, would be tarmac rather than grass... so wasn't expecting to be overhead when he was.....and abandoned the circuit when he found he wasn't spaced out enough from the rest of us...

... A lot of lessons to learn. In retrospect putting in at Halfpenny Green, Wolverhampton, for fuel and a low level corridor, Barton circuit and formation briefing would have been sensible. In retrospect we should have persuaded Mike to do the final leg home to a familiar airfield rather than this leg (but he wanted to do something 'new')... he hadn't flown since May, and not much before that.. and although had been planning to try to fit in 3 landings during the trip, so that he could fly with me in the back, we really hadn't had any opportunity to do that... so he had resigned himself to not flying, and then suddenly an opportunity arose....

Sandwiches for lunch (no chips - we were chipped out!), and planned the next leg (with a wilting Mike exchanging Richard's fuel cans and rucksack back for 'woman' saw me flying again) over the Lake District if it was nice... we'd speak to Warton Military zone as we were passing close to them, and we knew they are friendly from previous experiences.

Barton to East Fortune 2hr 45mins



A lovely leg... back in familiar formation and Warton kept their tornados below us (yes, we saw them!), over Morecombe bay, and then the mountains of the Lake District came into view! We stayed at about 5,000 feet, but Gordon went below the broken cloud and skirted around the mountains - I was following him directly above, so was able to tell him in tourguide Barbie style which mountains he was looking at..! the

scenery didn't disappoint, and Graeme and I were able to reminisce about our trip a couple of months ago when we flew my son Stuart and his 4 geology student



friends around the hills they were mapping down there. It was a



glorious tour, and we tracked north after Blencathra towards the west side of Carlisle.. all picking different heights to catch the best speed. The headwind had died down considerably by now, and we stayed in formation all the way back to East Fortune. It

was only when we had landed that I think we realised how incredibly lucky we'd been with the weather - we really hadn't had to even think about it, apart from the headwind on the way home... but to get 3 days of clear skies and flyable winds after the summer we have had... Wow!!

