

STUNNING SEPTEMBER

At the start of 2014, I never imagined that on a Friday afternoon in September, I could drive 20 minutes from home, park up at the end of the runway at Bournemouth airport and then watch both the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight Lancaster PA474 "Thumper" and the Canadian Warplane Heritage Museum Lancaster KB726 (C-GVRA) "Vera" appear in formation over to the north of the airport, bank over Parley then treat me to a dual landing. The Lancaster's then operated out of the airport over the weekend of 12th-13th September. Also at the airport for the weekend were the newly formed 3-ship Midair Squadron, consisting of two Hawker Hunter T7's, XL577, XL600 and the worlds only airworthy EE Canberra PR9, XH134. In the late 1990's, Hunter XL577 was a resident at Bournemouth Airport, but it wore a civilian colour scheme with the registration G-VETA (rumor at the time said it stood for owner "Gordon's (Hannam) Very Expensive Toy Aeroplane").



"Vera" at Bournemouth

The sight of these three classic jets, each in a plain silver paint scheme with just RAF roundels and serial numbers to provide their identity, showed off these beautiful classic British jets to their best. After a formation takeoff using the full width of the runway, the trio returned shortly afterwards from

their display at Goodwood. They performed a fast low run and break along the runway and then provided the crowd assembled at the Parley end of the runway very low, fast and noisy approaches for landing. Could it get any better? Yes! The Canadians then treated us all to an afternoon of numerous taxiing out, take offs, landings, more taxiing, take offs, landings.....unexpected and wonderful to witness, what a perfect way to spend a Saturday afternoon. Parked over towards the rear of the airfield was the distinctive Conroy CL44 "Guppy", 9G-LCA, stored for many years at the airport, which is looking a lot better now, the four propellers having been re-attached and the aircraft has been stripped of the old Heavylift Cargo colours and is sporting a bare aluminium finish at present awaiting new livery (?). So, hopefully there is a future flying career for this unique aircraft.



Conroy CL44, 9G-LCA

Not satisfied after all the Lancaster action on the Saturday, I wanted even more and travelled up to Duxford at the crack of dawn the following morning, to queue up for limited tickets for the Autumn airshow at Duxford. This was to be the two Lancaster's only Buford appearance and word had got around! Hence the long queues at 06.30am for tickets on the day. As it transpired, the unexpected star of the show was a Boeing 727, G-OSRA, an Oil

Spill Response Aircraft operated by T2 Aviation and flown by Dan Griffith, who was once the Project Pilot for the QinetiQ Vectored-thrust Aircraft Advanced Control (VAAC) Harrier, mentioned in the Graham Tomlinson talk last month. A series of low fast passes and steep climbs by this rarely seen aircraft had the sell-out crowd captivated. Also, RAF Sea King ZH544 gave what was claimed to be one of the last airshow displays, the Sea King being due for retirement in 2015.



Canberra XH134 taxis out at Bournemouth

Any newsletter contributions, ideas or comments to:

Chris Gilbert-Norton, 12 Meadow Close, Burley, Ringwood, Hampshire, BH24 4EJ

Home number: 01425 403547

Mobile number: 07977 721503

E-mail: gilbey66@gmail.com