

A BRITISH/FRENCH GET-TOGETHER

A simple flying session somehow developed into a full-blown lunchtime banquet – Robin Holden provides the report and photos, while the necessary editing should be blamed on John Benzing.

I can't remember who it was who suggested we should gather a group of stunt enthusiasts together to have a flying session at the renowned Rouillé club located west of La Rochelle, but certainly John Benzing told me he was visiting the area in July and asked if a simple meeting could be arranged between the two of us. By coincidence it turned out that Peter Rabjohn and his wife were in the area at the same time and also two other ex-pat control-liners, ex Team Race exponent Peter Jones and accomplished stunt flyer and Rouillé club member John Seacombe, all of whom expressed an interest in attending this gathering. The party size was starting to grow!

As most of you probably know, the President and driving force behind the Rouillé club is the famous Serge Delebarde, and as soon as he heard that a party of Brits were going to be in the area and wanting to do some flying all the stops were pulled out. Several club members were enrolled to assist in providing the hospitality, so as a result our gathering turned out not to be about model flying but eating a lunchtime banquet, and boy, did they provide a memorable meal.



The two fenced circles at Rouillé.

We arrived at the site at about noon to be amazed to find THREE C/L areas – two fenced tarmac circles for Speed and Team Race and a larger tarmac covered area at the bottom of the site for Aerobatics (*actually intended for Radio Control – editor*). Immediately on arrival Peter R and John B set out their lines to get in some flying, but wild gesticulations from the clubhouse indicated that it was lunchtime, so instead of flying we went off to eat. And this was to be a lunch to remember – course after course was produced washed down with bottle after bottle of.....

Several hours later we staggered out to the flying area into a late afternoon which had turned out to be quite windy and far too challenging for my modest skills. Peter Rabjohn was therefore first up with his 'Oriental' powered by an OS 35 turning a 10 x 6 wooden prop. This lightweight model flew beautifully in the gusty conditions and Peter showed his expertise with no hiccups at all, a perfect engine run and the model back in one piece. I was looking forward to seeing John Benzing fly his 'Cardinal' and wasn't to be disappointed. The Rustler/Merco 61 started immediately and John proceeded to fly the schedule with authority. What a super airplane the full fuselage Cardinal is. I've recently completed a profile version but it's like comparing Manchester United with Chelsea, and we all know which is the better team!



Peter Rabjohn prepares to fly his 'Oriental'



Peter R and John Seacombe (centre) assist John Benzing as he prepares his Rustler/Merco 61 powered 'Cardinal'



Serge Delabarde prepares his Saito 56 powered 'Yak 55'

Serge was next up flying his Yak 55 powered by a Saito 56 four-stroke. One oddity is the fact that Serge mixes his own fuel, nothing odd about that I hear you saying, but Serge does it on the field just before flying! He really does like to fine-tune to suit the conditions.

Several other club members had a fly including Michel Maudet who was using an older Serge design called the K-RENT, short for 'quarante', which is French for 40. I do have some details of the K-RENT if anybody is interested, just e-mail me at: robinchristine@msn.com

So how would I sum up this first British Stunt invasion? Brilliant, very 'Entente Cordiale'. And we didn't mention Agincourt once!

But oddly enough just as I was setting off, Michel Maudet entered into a lengthy discussion about the hundred year's war between us and the French. Sadly neither of us could recall who won!



The Rouillé club members and British visitors pose for the camera.