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Euroflugtag 2008

By Bob Thompson

The Gee Bee racing team's Bob Thompson reports from the German show - 28/1/09

Most of you who go to the LMA shows and fly-ins have seen the Gee Bee Racing team - TeamGB as we were called until the Olympics nicked the name - which consists of LMA members from all over the country, but mainly from my club Nottingham Radio Control Society.

Last year we were honoured to be asked to display at the Euroflugtag show at Rheidt, near Cologne in Germany. We gathered together those pilots who could make the trip and set off, some to Dover, some to the Chunnel while Glenn



The GB Gee Bees await their slot

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Masters, Andrew Brown,
Alistair McCartney, Paul

Hughes and myself went to Hull for the ferry to Rotterdam. A very pleasant journey was had overnight on one of the largest ferries in the world, and then we were on the continental roads heading for Cologne.

On arrival at the site, we set up our tents on what was a cleared Rape field, not the best, but the club were full of apologies for this, they had run out of time to clear the ground properly. First night, we were taken by a specially laid on bus to a pleasant beer garden by the Rhine, a head scratching time trying to fathom out the menu, we would have been totally lost without Richard Wellborne, the ex-pat Brit who organised the show. The majority of the large amount of German beer consumed that night was paid for by the club and this was to be a recurring theme throughout the weekend.



Thursday morning, like the Wednesday, was clear and hot, over 95-degrees at one point. We got stuck in and did a bit of practice flying, and watched others doing the same.

A large contingent of Brits were in residence, Ted Cooke, Rod Brister and Steve Duffy (all Team GB members) as well as the likes of Ian Turney-White, Ali Mashinchy, Steve Bishop and loads more, all were soaking up that red hot sunshine sorely missed in the UK.

We picked up a couple of extra members to our team - a couple of German guys with

Gee Bees who slotted in perfectly - I would not be surprised to see a German Team GB there next year. A latecomer was Ian Redshaw, who's model trailer lost a wheel on the M25 and had to arrive without any models, but still made the journey!

The Friday was actually a show day, (dont forget that the entry to the show was free, sponsored by the local council) and was a very pleasant day of flying, with German efficiency on transmitter control. No-one was allowed to overrun their allotted time, which made for a perfectly timed show. The German idea is quite simple - entertainment!! I think a lot of UK shows could learn from this. We managed an extra slot on the Friday, as some of the pilots had not yet arrived.

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Saturday was cooler, with a fair cross wind (unheard of, according to Richard) which meant for a great deal of rudder control on take-off and landings. This made things a little rough for the (very) large WW1 models, including Ian T-W, the Team Italia with their ½ size Nieuports, the magnificent ½ size Sopwith Pups dropping live (yes live) bombs which blew the wax out of our ears and set fire to the stubble field!

Other models of note were the super, Super Constellations of the Connie Team, a magnificent Gilmore Racer, an all aluminium Beaver, (half size) and of course, the superb models of our home grown Ali Maschinchy.

Major losses that day were a superb F-22, and, a major blow, Steve Bishop's magnificent Hawk, flown together as a superb pair with his son, until a loose hinge on the flaps rolled the model in - a total write-off sadly.

Saturday night was the Pilot's Dinner in the marquee, all food (and a lot of the beer) being supplied free by the club, who took the word hospitality to new heights. A firework display and night flying brought proceedings to a close - after a bit of a knees-up for some of the ladies. You know who you are!



This all-aluminium DHC-2 Beaver was very impressive

Sunday was a bit threatening, but most of the heavy showers seemed to pass by, until the afternoon, which ended the show prematurely, not that we minded, we had seven slots in three days and all models survived despite one mid-air which chewed part of the tail from Rod Bristers Gee Bee, and poor old Rod again, a 'short' in his spare model which caused the hasty removal of the



wing to prevent it catching fire.

That night, after an evening in Rod and Steve Duffy's Hotel (posh flyers!) and a superb meal with a bottle of wine donated by LMA new boy Gerard Jordan, we retired to our tents. Middle of the night, the mother of all thunderstorms tried to take us away from Kansas to

somewhere over the rainbow.

Then it was pack away, and the long drive to Calais and a 500 mile trek home. Was it worth it? You betcha! If invited, we will certainly go back. Please forgive me if I have not mentioned all the UK pilots, there were a very large contingent. Finally, a very big thank you to Aero Club Rheidt, and Richard Wellborne in particular, for their wonderful hospitality.

Bob Thompson

Hopefully we'll see the Gee Bee team flying at this year's Cosford show - Ed.

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