



RIGHT ON TARGET

Flying conditions: perfect. Scenery: stunning. Good company, two dozen aircraft, a challenging array of tasks – welcome to a top weekend at the Nationals

FEATURE OF THE MONTH



**WINS A YEAR'S
SUBSCRIPTION
TO RUNWAYHD
FROM AIRBOX**

At the Cornish Capers round of the Nationals, Dave Robbins spotted newcomer Martin Jady having a ball, so he grabbed him and suggested he might like to share the fun. Martin is not only a newcomer to BMAA competitions, he's also only recently acquired his licence. Here's his story, with photos by John & Monica Rotaru

HAVING goals in life is pretty important. They don't have to be big or clever, just something good to look forward to or aim for.

Qualifying as a pilot is a pretty big goal, at the end of a string of smaller, but no less significant, ones. Each part of the syllabus, your first solo, first nav, general skills, they all add up to your licence and then, everyone's ultimate goal, to be able to just turn up and go flying.

So when that glorious moment arrived, earlier this year, and I thought about where to go and what to do, I realized I had to start setting goals again. And that's not always as easy as it seems.

Then I saw the calendar of National competitions and the Show & Tell event and thought: "Why the hell not!" Even so, I still closed my eyes when I clicked "send" on the email enrolling myself.

But it turned out to be one of the best things I've done. If you get the chance, take part. You'll fly some tasks, talk about others, ask about anything, learn a lot, and meet fab people. It was easy to click "send"



and enrol for the first comp of the year, Cornish Capers.

Five weeks later, as I flew my XL-Q to Over Farm for the 10am briefing, listening to plane after plane arriving, I began wondering what I'd let myself in for. The place was buzzing with aircraft and people: flex and fixed, old and young (aircraft and people), experienced and novice, solo and dual.

Looking at more than 25 aircraft as I walked down to join nearly 40 people for breakfast, I only knew two things for certain: I was the newest pilot with the oldest plane.

I soon bumped into some people I'd met at Show & Tell, and then into Richard Rawes, who was one of the instigators. He was to be my mentor for the event. Anyone who felt they needed a hand only had to say and an experienced person or two would offer to help. The briefing from Rob Keene was straightforward, outlining the weekend ahead and specifically the first task.

We were given a route to Stoodleigh Barton near

Tiverton and nine photos of places and things we had to spot along the way. A GPS logger, hired for a fiver, records your track accuracy, as you get points for that, as well as for each picture spotted. Simple! Take off as soon as you're ready, Stoodleigh in time for lunch and then a briefing for the afternoon.

"Having goals in life is pretty important. They don't have to be big or clever, just something good to look forward to"

It was a lovely day for flying down the Severn Estuary, crossing at the bridges, under the western edge of Bristol CTA, and over the Somerset Levels. It's all new territory to me and I had to keep remembering to ►

Facing page

Time for some mentoring and planning

This page

Spencer Harvey in his Nynja ended in a solid mid-table position; and stunning views unfolded throughout the weekend

Results: Nationals Round 2, Over–Cornwall–Over, 25-27 May

Pilot	Navigator	Type	Reg	1 Sausage	1a Spot	1b T/O over tape	Tasks 2 Where	3 Fishing	4 Fast/ slow	4a Precision landings	Turnpt chall.	Home to Over	Total*
Rob Grimwood	John Waite	SkyRanger Nynja	G-CGWL	1000	100	238	763	880	867	450	0	0	895
David Robbins	Paul Dewhurst	SkyRanger Nynja	G-CHFZ	733	100	250	679	864	861	100	0	400	831
Mark Fowler	Dave Lee	P&M GTR	G-HOTR	1000	100	183	368	782	749	400	0	0	746
Simon Baker	-	P&M GT450	G-CENL	867	100	250	447	526	597	450	0	0	674
Danial Subhani	Jiri	P&M Quantum	G-EEKS	1000	0	148	537	691	603	100	0	0	642
Jeremy Hucker	Jan Hucker	SkyRanger	G-CDKI	1000	0	242	447	538	675	100	0	0	626
Phil Hanman	Rees Keene	SkyRanger	G-CFNO	667	0	164	368	333	707	0	150	800	664
Laurie Hurman	Mary Russell	P&M Quik	G-CDAX	867	0	170	584	609	622	0	0	0	594
Chris Saysell	-	Evektor Eurostar	G-OCMS	800	0	137	521	682	577	0	0	0	566
Frank Hodgson	-	P&M Quantum	G-MCEL	1000	100	176	426	466	0	250	0	0	504
John Pearce	-	P&M GT450	G-CJGG	1000	100	238	184	695	105	250	0	0	536
Rich Rawes	-	Cyclone Chaser S	G-MYIL	933	100	198	105	776	552	0	0	0	555
Andy Fell	-	P&M Quik	G-GTFC	800	0	164	447	488	0	0	0	0	396
Martin Jady	-	Pegasus XL-Q	G-MWGR	667	100	176	329	568	0	0	0	0	383
Paddy O'Rourke	-	Quik	G-CDML	800	0	198	211	436	0	0	0	0	343
Spencer Harvey	-	SkyRanger Ninja	G-CHKG	600	0	198	158	687	0	0	0	0	342
John Gammidge	Damian McAuley	SkyRanger	G-CDFP	933	0	198	179	0	0	0	0	0	273
Chris Fenwick	Linda Moss	Evektor Eurostar	G-IHOT	400	0	141	184	553	0	0	0	0	266
Chris Wills	Claire Wills	Reality Escapade	G-ZHKF	1000	100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	229
Steve Turnbull	-	P&M GT450	G-GTTP	667	0	198	189	0	0	0	0	0	220
Tom Bearley	-	Thruster TST	G-MTNU	0	0	152	184	507	448	0	0	0	269
Stephen Sykes	Jim Taylor	SkyRanger	G-CCJT	667	0	124	105	0	0	0	0	0	187
Wayne Chang	Ben Killick	Evektor Eurostar	G-HOTA	400	0	148	0	415	0	0	0	0	201
Steve Bunce	-	Quik R	G-CGDL	400	0	198	132	0	0	0	0	0	152
John Rotaru	Monica Rotaru	C42	G-CH00	0	0	0	395	0	0	0	0	0	82
Grant Finney	Patrick Wallace	Evektor Eurostar EV97	G-CCWP	0	0	0	0	540	0	0	0	0	112
Bruce Drake	Kath	C42	G-CCFZ	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

*Normalized to tie in with scores from other rounds

“When it all went pear-shaped there was nothing for it but to just sit back and enjoy the view”

▷ look for the photos, as I was so taken with the view. I found Stoodleigh just fine and had a go at landing in the 100m box, for a few extra points.

After lunch the tasks consisted of taking off to clear a tape, more tracks with photos – including a curved one round Dartmoor at a declared ground-speed – and finally, a course to steer once you’d found a particular lake in a photo. That would take you to where we were staying for the night. Sounds complicated, but take it step by step and it’s a lot easier.

I’d never had to clear a tape before and wasn’t going to have a go until Richard encouraged me with “Just play it safe.”

Bathed in hazy sunshine, Dartmoor’s peaks looked like Tolkien’s Misty Mountains as they grew steadily larger in front of me. When they fill the view, turn left and start the next leg.

A curved clockwise course round Dartmoor at a declared groundspeed sounds daunting. But once again, just give it a go.

Ten minutes into the task I was gobsmacked to

spot a photo confirming I was on track. Ten minutes later it went pear-shaped and I had no idea where the track was. Nothing to do, but sit back and enjoy the view.

The sun was glinting off the channel to the south and so long as I kept flying with Dartmoor to my right I’d find Plymouth. From there it was easy to pick up the track and fly on to St Austell. I found the lake and our destination just south of Mevagissey quite easily and landed about 7pm. As a fall-back, you are given your destination in a sealed envelope, but you lose points for opening it.

During the evening barbecue and drinks, my XL-Q proved to be a good ice-breaker and everyone was sharing stories from the day. I was chuffed to find I wasn’t the furthest off track round Dartmoor, by a long chalk.

As a rule, if you thought it was rough, bumpy, cold, hot, short, sloped, difficult and hazy then others did too.

I had now flown further and longer than I had



ever done before and was on an absolute high I as returned to my tent pitched under the wing. This was the adventure I had dreamed of for years.

Saturday though, did not prepare me for Sunday's first task. "Predicted fuel use round a chosen number of headlands" is the blandest description of the breathtaking flight and pinnacle of the trip that it turned out to be. High thin stratus and few clouds at 3000ft, cool and smooth, I flew 2h round the coast to Perranporth.

With the whole of the southern tip of Cornwall laid out beneath me, I found myself constantly muttering "Oh my God!" in sheer excitement, just like I did on my first solo.

Richard said he'd flown in Cornwall for years, but had never been lucky enough to make Land's End. I believe that we make our own luck, to a certain extent, and I had put myself in a position to take advantage of that stunning day to fly round the coast of Cornwall.

Perranporth was the jumping-off point for me. I

knew I had to get back and Monday's weather was deteriorating. I was sorry to leave, but with a big grin and a new-found confidence, I had an easy couple of legs back to base.

As I write this I don't know where I came in the competition. To be honest that doesn't matter. I didn't go to compete, but I did take part and for that I'm proud of myself.

So, this summer, set yourself some goals: a trip to a new airfield, the Cross Country Challenge, a National competition. Just to take part is a big accomplishment, easily achieved. And you'll have a ball to boot!

Thanks must also go to another newcomer team of husband and wife, John and Monica Rotaru, who even found time to take the photos for this article, and many more stunning pictures besides. Like Martin, John and Monica can't wait for their next BMAA competition and fun-flying weekend and, judging by the many positive comments on the Microlight Forum, they are not alone! □

Clockwise from top left Not a bad spot to pitch a tent; time for a beer; and your photographers, John & Monica Rotaru