

# Jack Meaden - The Flying Years (2)

The sixties and seventies produced a lot of new activities and new types to try out - we can't hope to cover them all but hopefully what follows is a flavour. Once again the first mention of any particular registration is treated in bold type.

**1959** and a new destination for 'HCL was Strubby on 22.2.59. From 9.5 to 17.5 Jack was flying tugs at the Nationals at Lasham, including Tiger Moths **G-ALFG**, **G-AMJF**, **G-ANDN** and **G-APRA**, with a total of 37 aero-tows, 1 para drop and instruction as P2 in a T.21 **BGA856**. An RAFA display at Shoreham was visited 30.5 in 'HCL. On 29.8 Tiger Moth G-ANER was flown to Wolverhampton to perform a glider tow at another RAFA display. Luton and Stapleford were visited 12.9 in 'HCL, but Autocrat **G-AHAM** was used 11.10 to take his family for a ride. Jack then took 'HCL to Southampton for Christmas 24-27.12.59.

**1960** was a quiet year! With 'HCL he visited the Shackleton Sales weekend at Kidlington 8.5 and on 25.6 flew a Flt Lt Symons to Lyneham. Bristol-Lulsgate was a new target in August, while on 6.8 Jack flew to Elstree to give a local flight to Jack and Olive Beaumont (of whose Holloway Rd bookshop JM was probably the best customer!).

**1961:** Ford on 28.2 and Biggin Hill on 18.3 were new destinations in 'HCL. Jack was again at Lasham 13-20.5.61, this time using Tugmaster **G-ARGB** for 66 launches, one with the aviation photographer Charles E Brown as passenger. In 'HCL the Cardiff Air Races were visited on 3.6, other less familiar summer destinations included Lympe, Derby, Wolverhampton, Nottingham, Ringway and on 29.8 it carried a party of 3 to RAF Coltishall with fuel stops at Swanton Morley (out) and Sywell (return). Flight tests at Staverton were conducted for Monarch **G-AIDE** on 5.8.61 and the year ended on a total of 1,523 hours.

**1962:** A chilly early task was paratropping from 'HCL 27.1 with 3 drops from 1,500 ft in 40 mins with the same parachutist. Snow was a



**Above:** Tugmaster G-ARGB was flown at Nationals in 1961, 1962 and 1963; seen here at Blackbushe in 10.62. (via JM Collection)



**Above:** Miles Monarch G-AIDE, here at Biggin Hill in 1961, was the subject of an air test at Staverton in August. (Dave Welch via JM)

**Below:** Luton Minor G-AFIR was flown at Lasham in 1963. Second of the type, it was the first with parallel underwing struts. (Jack Meaden)



**Above:** One of Jack's favourite destinations for a day out! This shot of him at Sandown is undated however. (JM Collection)

**Below:** Autocrat G-AHAM, seen here at Teesside in 10.66, was used for a family trip in October 1959. (via JM Collection)



problem in late February and early March. A flight to Bovingdon was aborted 25.2 and RAE Bedford achieved in snow showers on 2.3. Locals at Staverton were just possible on 3.3 despite snowfall and 600 ft cloudbase! Trial flights in Piper Colt **G-ARNF** took place on 17.2, followed by 5 para drops in 'HCL. Bovingdon was finally reached 18.3, then Goodwood 23.4 and South Marston for para dropping 27.5. The 1962 Nationals were at Aston Down 1-11.6.62 and Jack towed mainly with Tugmaster 'RGB but also used **G-ARDX** and **G-ARXU** amongst his 94 launches. More paratropping in July, then to Hullavington for a BoB Display 15.9, to Shoreham Air Races 22.9 and Rochester for the Flying Club opening day on 29.9.

**1963** produced little early flying though Tiger Moth **G-ANEH** was in use on 30.3 and 21.5. The Nationals were again at Lasham 25.5 to 1.6.63 and Jack made 104 aero-tows in Tugmasters G-ARGB, G-ARDX, **G-ARXC**, **G-ARRX** and Terrier 2 **G-ASBU**. Between launches he had an opportunity to fly Luton Minor **G-AFIR** on 31.5.63. On 17.8 he took 'HCL to Middle Wallop to fly Rapide **G-AJHO** there for the Army Free Fall Parachute Assn, an activity which he repeated at Shobdon on 16.11. A BoB Display visit was made to Gaydon in 'HCL on 14.9.63.

**1964** was busier. Prior to the Nationals (back at Lasham 16-24.5.64) it was mostly local flying but this year he achieved 134 launches, mainly using Tugmaster **G-ASNB** but also G-ARRX. The 'extras' at Lasham included a flight in Motor Tutor **G-AKJD**. Next he tried out a couple of Piper types, Comanche **G-ARXG** at Staverton 16.6 and Cherokee 235 **G-ASLV** at Kidlington 11.7. In August South Marston and Netheravon were used for para dropping. On 12.9 Jack test-flew Rapide **G-AJSL** at Sywell for potential purchase by Airgeners Ltd and then delivered it to Staverton. Another Rapide, **G-ASRJ**, was flown from Middle Wallop via Manston to Dusseldorf 12.10, then Dusseldorf to Detmold 13.10 for para dropping for the Army PA at Detmold and Bad Lippspringe until 19.10. Back at Staverton a CofA test flight for Terrier **G-ASEG** on 8.11 and a test of Cub **G-AIHH** on 21.12 showed that Jack was now Airgeners 'chief pilot!

In **1965** Terrier G-ASEG was flown frequently with local paratropping throughout the year, but more notable was a flight into Brockworth to check the runway on 8.2.65 (The airfield had been sold in 1964!). Test



**Left:** The Motor Tutor G-AKJD, with 30hp JAP engine, which JM flew at Lasham in 1964, reporting a 50 mph cruise and 25 mph stall speed. He said later that it was the easiest aircraft to fly that he had ever tried, but it was written off in a crash at Dunstable the following month. (via JM Collection)



**Above:** Airgeneurs' Terrier 1 G-ASEG which was the company run-about but was also used for 1 and 2 man parachute drops, particularly in 1965. (Jack Meaden)

**Below:** Also extensively used for parachuting during 1965 was Airgeneurs' Dragon Rapide G-AJSL, seen here on a visit to Gaydon in September 1966. (Jack Meaden)



For the Skyframe Flying Display on 27.8 Jack flew the Rapide 'JSL' for parachuting and in formation with the Oxford and Anson. Monarch 'FLW' was flown to Shobdon on 11.12 so that six parachute sorties could be flown there in Rapide G-APJW.

1967 opened with Gemini G-AKEL on 3.1 and regular use of Auster 5 G-AOCU between February and August. In May the Nationals at Lasham involved 29 launches using the familiar 'RGB', 'TFR', 'TRG' and Tugmasters G-ARIH and G-ASTI. Cherokee 140 G-ATBO was flown on 17.6, Gardan Horizon G-ATDG on 5.7 and EP-9 G-ARTU on 22-23.7. Demonstration flights were made, presumably for Airgeneurs, in Proctor 5 G-AHBD on 15.10 and Reliant 'FVT' on 19.10, a trip to Biggin Hill on 30.12 in DR250 G-AVIV being necessary to bring the Reliant back to Bristol.

1968 saw frequent use of 'HCL', 'OCU', 'RTU', 'TSX' and 'TBO'. On 27.1 Jack test flew Fairey Air Surveys Rapide G-AHXW for a potential purchaser, other new mounts including Autocar G-APUW on 18.2 and Cessna 150F G-ATJU on 5.3. Chipmunk G-AOTY was flown on 29.3 having been acquired by local owners and the next two weeks were spent on type conversions for Dowty-Rotol Club pilots. On 3.7 he flew it on a day trip to Berck-sur-Mer via Gatwick both ways (try that today!!) and then on 30.7 to Jersey, Nantes and Bordeaux, on to San Sebastian next day returning from there to Jersey 2.8 and back via Bristol, mostly on instruments, on 3.8. Two new types sampled in August were Beagle Airedale G-AVKP at Perranporth 17.8 and Topsy Nipper G-AWJH 25.8. Airgeneurs closed down at Staverton during 1968.

1969 was to be Jack's last year at the Nationals, logging 62 tows between 19 and 22.5, in 'TFR', 'TRG', Tugmasters G-ARHM, G-ARXU, G-ASOC and Chipmunk G-AOTF. On 4.6 he left Staverton at 0630 for Poitouse, via Gatwick, for a day visit to the Paris Air Show, returning

flights for Airgeneurs included Jodel DR1050 G-ASRP on 2.3 and Cessna 172C G-ARWO on 12.4. In 'HCL' he visited Exeter 1.5, Biggin Hill Air Fair 15.5, Blackbushe 22.5, Denham 23.5 and Chester FC at Hawarden 4.7, interspersed with a day at the International Gliding Championships at South Cerney on 13.6. After a CofA test on Rapide G-AJSL on 22.7 Jack flew it for Severn Sky Divers on 21 different occasions between 30.7 and 19.12 (unfortunately with one fatality when a 'chute failed to open on 7.8.65). Proctor 4 G-ANZJ was ferried on a Permit from Bristol to Staverton 5.8 for CofA renewal and he managed a day's aero-towing at Haverfordwest in Tugmaster 'SNB' on 30.8. This year's BoB Display visit was to Ternhill in 'HCL' on 18.9.65.

**Right:** Miles Gemini G-AKEL seen looking a bit wrinkly at Staverton in the late sixties. Jack flew it on a number of occasions in 1967-9 including trips to Jersey and Ireland. (JM Collection)



**Right:** Another long-distance Gemini, G-AKGE is seen on the visitors' apron at Barcelona on 16.9.70. Like many of the aircraft that Jack flew it was made available by owner J M Biscoe who kept his aircraft at Staverton or Shobdon. (Jack Meaden)



**Below:** Campbell Cricket G-AXVK was sampled at Membury in December 1970. It is seen here at Sywell PFA Rally on 2.7.78. (Dave Partington)



just as Staverton closed at 2100! Visits in 'HCL were made to Old Warden 29.6 and Horsham St Faith 5.7; followed by several trips in Gemini G-AKEL including Jersey 9.8 and Cork 23.8. By the end of the year Jack's total flying hours had reached 2,500.

1970 featured less variety. Airtourer G-AWRT was flown on 3.5 and on 11.7 Jack took 'HCL to Membury to visit Campbell Autogyros. Several return visits were made during the year to sample Crickets G-AYCC (26.9), G-AXRO (5.12) and G-AXVK (12.12). On 15.9 Gemini G-AKGE was flown via Jersey to Toulouse, to Barcelona 16.9, and then back via Bordeaux, Jersey and Bristol 19.9 in 3½ hours.

1971. Further trips to France in Gemini 'KGE were involved with importing Jodel aircraft. On 25.3 it was to Meaux via Deauville and on 2.4 to via Jersey to La Rochelle to test-fly Sicile Record F-BMGU, returning direct on 3.4 with radio failure. On 4.5 it was back to Deauville to finalise arrangements for another Sicile Record F-BMGY which was then ferried to Le Havre for radio fit. From there Jack collected it on 13.5, flew to Gatwick and then delivered it to Staverton 16.5. F-BMGU became G-AYYT and was tested from 10.7 before he flew it to the PFA Rally at Sywell on 18.7. On 20.7 a Robin dealer brought Petit Prince F-BBBQ to Staverton for trial flights. Jack flew F-BMGY again on 29.8 by which time it had become G-AYZK.

1972 must have seemed quiet by comparison! Stampe G-ATKC was sampled on 22.4 and Cherokee Arrow G-AVYT on a return trip to Elstree on 23.7. Cessna 182F G-ASUL was collected by Jack from a Gloucestershire strip and brought to Staverton. SIPA 903 G-AWLG was flown 28.10 and 4 more times before the year end. Finally, Rallye 180 G-AZYD was flown on 7.12 and then used as a ferry to Coventry 9.12 where Jack collected Cessna 310B G-ATCR for the return.

In February 1973 the Dowty-Rotol FC's loyal Autocrat 'HCL was replaced by Rallye 100 G-AZZF which Jack flew to Jersey in 'ZYD to collect on 26-27.1.73. Pilot conversions made the next two months busy and on 31.3 'HCL was demonstrated to a buyer. Handling trials on Wilga G-AZYJ took place at Bickmarsh on 14.4 and Jack also sampled Jodel D140 G-ATKX at Redhill on 29.4. SIPA 'WLG was delivered to a strip at Wroughton on 8.5 (*Draycott Farm - Ed.*) and on 27-28.5 he made conversion flights on Pup G-AXOZ. On July 24th Jack made the first flight in locally-built Luton Major G-AYVN at Staverton, followed by performance test flights on 24 and 26.7. Something different on 8.11 was a flight as P2 in Jet Provost T5 XW294 at Little Rissington and later Jack flew Cherokee 140 G-ATJG at Elstree 10.11 and AA-5 Traveler G-BBGH at Staverton 25.11.73.

1974. With few exceptions most activity was local flying in 'ZZF. On 20.5 Jack took a passenger to Biggin Hill, Ostend and Grimbergen in AA-1 Yankee G-AYLM, continuing to Besancon and Geneva 21.5, Bourges and Toussus 22.5 and home again via Gatwick 23.5 - a total of 15 hrs 5 min flying. Some UK trips were also made in 'YLM later in the year. Less usual was a flight in Meta Sokol G-APVU on 7.6 and we note the CoFA test flight for Luton Major 'YVN on 22.9.74.



**Above:** Jodel DR.1050-M1 Sicile Record F-BMGU at La Rochelle in April 1971 where it was test-flown by Jack. (Jack Meaden)

**Below:** The same aircraft in 1.72 after it was imported for J M Biscoe and became G-AYYT based at Staverton. (Jack Meaden)



**Above:** The second Sicile Record import was F-BMGY, posed here with JM after arrival at Staverton on delivery 16.5.71. (Jack Meaden)

**Below:** Colin Gough's homebuilt Luton Major G-AYVN with 65 hp Continental A-65 fed from a fuel tank underslung below the port wing. Its first flight was on 24.7.73 with JM as pilot. (Jack Meaden)



**Above:** Cessna 310B G-ATCR at the fuel pumps at Staverton 18.4.73, was Guernsey-owned and was flown to Jersey by Jack in 1.75 though low cloud forced a diversion to Alderney first. (Dave Partington)



**Left:** In a gloomy Staverton hangar, Jack Meaden (right) exchanges reminiscences with Jack Beaumont while examining restored Tiger Moth EM720 (G-AXAN) during a visit on 2.8.88. In the background is DH Devon C2 VP955 (G-DVON). (Olive Beaumont via Jack Meaden)

**Below:** Jack carries out the pre-flight checks on the DR Flying Club's Cherokee 140 G-AVYR on 28.10.87 before taking the Editor for a flight over the Severn valley floods - with a half-hour flying lesson thrown in! (Dave Partington)

**Bottom:** Dave Welch's Luscombe Silvaire N1134K in which he and Jack enjoyed a flight together in September 1993. (Dave Welch)

1975. After a New Year trip in Cessna 310B G-ATCR to Jersey (diverted to Alderney 7.1 due to low cloud at Jersey) returning 9.1, most flying all year was in 'ZZF and 'YLM. A local flight in Cherokee 140 N3536K on 15.3 went into the log, as did a trip to Grindale, Yorks to visit air historian Stuart Leslie on 19.7. On 23.11 another new type was sampled at Staverton, Fuji FA-200 G-BBGW.

In 1976 Jack managed only 30 hrs flying. A couple of flights in March in Cherokee 140C G-BCPV, then a visit to Doncaster in 'YLM which was to be sold to a local owner and where Jack tried out AA-5A Cheetah G-BDLO. He delivered 'YLM to Doncaster on 16.4. A 'new' Autocrat G-AHAY was flown on 24.4 and Cherokee Six 300C G-BADO was tried out on 4.9.76, both at Staverton.

1977. Apart from a session in Cub G-ATKI on 20.2, the first few months were routine. On 11.5 he flew Cherokee 140 G-AVFP via Redhill and Lydd to La Rochelle, returning next day in FRA150L Aerobat G-BEOY (ex F-BTFX) to Coventry in formation with 'VFP. A few flights in 'BCPV, including one to Sandown 31.7, and a familiarisation flight in a CAP 10 G-BEXR on 2.9 completed the year.

1978 began in Twin Comanche G-ASOO on 19.1 from Long Marston to Coventry and La Rochelle. From there to Poitiers and back 20.1 for French licence formalities then on 21.1 Jack flew Reims/Cessna F172L F-BTFX from La Rochelle via Hurn to Coventry in formation with its sister F-BVBJ. (These two became G-BFKS and 'T respectively after arrival in the UK). A Grumman Traveler G-BEZG was flown to Sandown and back on 5.2, 'ZZF was flown frequently including to a Shuttleworth display 28.5, and on 18.6 Jack went to Dunkeswell to carry out a P to F test on Druine Turbi G-APFA 18.6.78.

1979 held few surprises. There was a familiarisation flight in Seneca G-AZIK at Oxford 31.3, check flights in Grumman Traveller G-BCCK in May followed by a trip to Exeter in it on 10.6. Most flying however was again in the Club's 'ZZF, including a trip to Lands End (St Just) on 17.6 and to Southampton 15.7 for local flying with family members.

1980 was mostly locals and cross countries in 'ZZF otherwise only a type check in Twin Comanche C/R G-AYXY at Kidlington 2.3 and a couple of flights in Cherokee Arrow 200 G-BHIR on 1.6 and 19.10 stand out as different.

1981 followed the same pattern. A total of 35½ hours all year in 'ZZF, a couple of flights in 'BCCK and another Twin Comanche C/R, this time G-BAXI, on 30.5 at Kidlington. Three sightseeing flights to Blenheim in Cherokee 140 G-AWBE no doubt enlivened 6.9.81. The year ended with another new type on 31.12, half an hour in Robin 2112 G-BIVA.

In 1982, after familiarisation flights in Mooney M20C G-BIBB, Jack tried his hand at microlighting. MEA Mistral G-MBKA was flown at Warren Farm 27.3, followed by a Breen Puma 2 on 3.4, Mirage II G-BGNL on 11.4 and Goldwing G-MBKV on 12.4, all at Enstone. New entrants in the log were MS.880B G-BIRG also at Enstone 11.4, Seneca G-BBZJ at Kidlington 27.6, and a two day trip to La Rochelle 3-4.9.82 in Cessna 310J G-ASZZ.

1983 saw the arrival of Cherokee 140 G-AVYR to replace the Rallye and this was duly checked out on 8.1.83 but Jack logged only 7½ hours flying in that year.

1984, and apart from flights in 'VYR Jack shared the flying in Twin Comanche G-BAKJ to Guernsey, La Rochelle, Biarritz and



Fuenterrabia on 14.4, returning via Nevers and Jersey 17.4. On 16.6 at Stoke Orchard Jack also tried his hand at Puma Sprint G-MNSB and Evans VP-1 G-BHKA.

1985 saw Jack arrive in 'VYR at the Air-Britain Fly-In at Middle Wallop 30.6 and the Shuttleworth display on 25.8. On 9.1 he went to Kidlington for Turbo engine familiarisation in Seneca 200T G-BCVY.

1986. Now retired, Jack was flying almost entirely in the Club's 'VYR apart from a local at Halfpenny Green in Seneca G-BATR 25.10. His activity in 1987 was more as instructor and check pilot, as in Robin Dauphin 80 G-BKDI on 22.9. On 28.10.87 he flew the Editor on a photo sortie over the Tewkesbury and Severn Valley floods in 'VYR.

In 1988 Jack's multi-engine rating expired and from then on the adventures also ended. His flying hours diminished, partly due to cost and partly to ill health. With only a couple of exceptions the Cherokee 'VYR was the only type flown and Staverton the only base - even though it changed its name to Gloucestershire Airport in 1991! Still he made an effort to attend the Air-Britain Fly-Ins, bringing 'VYR to Wellesbourne in 1993, 1994 and 1995. It was also at Wellesbourne that on 1.9.93 he made a trial flight with long-term friend and Air-Britain member Dave Welch in Dave's Luscombe 8AE Silvaire N1134K.

On 4.5.97 he was to fly as a passenger in Concorde G-BOAA from Filton with his son Rex - going supersonic after all those years! Jack flew one more time with his son, taking him on a local flight on 27.8.97, and then on 7.11.97 he touched down after a 40 minute flight in 'VYR at Staverton for the last time, some 3,547 hours after that first 1946 experience in Auster 1 G-AHKO.

I once subsequently tried to arrange to meet him at the airport instead of his flat in Cheltenham. "No," he said "I don't go there now that I no longer fly, it would have no interest for me at all". The Flying Years were over.