

Lundy Island....Before the cloud descended!

August 2026

The

Bodmin Flyer



Welcome to the August newsletter. Amazingly the weather is still great despite the school holidays starting, the usual cue for 6 weeks of rain and fog. Whilst the skies were blue here at Bodmin on Sunday 5th, Lundy Island had its own weather system that wasn't in favour of our Lundy Sunday event. It was still a great day though, and you can find out more in Pete's article about it is on page 4.

The newsletter contains our usual updates from Corinne and Arfur. Explorer Scouts from Bude visited us on the 9th July to learn all about aviation. We have a set program for visits like this and you can see it in full on Page 6-7 and possibly be surprised by how much we cover!

Pete White is continuing to delve into the history of unusual local airfields and this month it's RNAS Crugmeer (Padstow), yet another airfield I never knew existed. You'll find this on page 9.

Hopefully the weather will carry on like this and you'll all get plenty of flying in. If you're not a flyer, our next event is the Cornwall Strut Fly-in on the 12th September, but there is usually plenty to see whenever you visit, and our AeroDine cafe is the perfect place to enjoy a coffee and watch planes.

Fly safe,

David Young, Editor



Chat from the Chair

I'd like to say a big thank you to both James Hughes and Kevin Stewart for installing the new radio antenna on the tower roof. This began as a tweak to a loose connection and, as is the habit with quick repairs, escalated to a replacement antenna, new wiring and a lot of climbing in and out of the tower roof and up & down ladders. The result has transformed a very poor transmission into a far more user friendly communication, an essential tool for us all and not least for the students. This is just one of many technical tasks which they have undertaken on behalf of the club, for which the Board would like to express their grateful thanks. Kevin has given a detailed account of what they did on page 9. While on the subject our thanks also go to Alexandra Hunter and Greg Speed for mending the gate at the top of the steps. They, like many other public spirited club members contribute so much to maintenance of the infrastructure. If you can spare an hour or two now and again to do some strimming, weeding or painting your efforts will be much appreciated.

Corinne Dennis

Maintenance beyond the call of duty!

Bodmin airfield watch office/control tower often suffers from an invasion of flies and due to the height of the windows, the clearing of them can be a challenge.

So we called in *Pete's Window Cleaning Service* to address the situation and his top operative, Arfur 007 Bryant, handled the task with ease and his usual panache. Despite the obvious risk involved Arfur soldered on until the job was done...

The end result is a cleaner tower in readiness for possible future events of a matrimonial nature.



Pete White



July 2026 Newsletter – GOM and DTO snippets.

By Arfur Bryant

July has been a nearly perfect month for flying. The end of June was very good and most of July has been excellent, with just the odd day of strong wind and occasional low cloud. We will have had over 500 recorded movements by the end of July.

Just a few quick parish notices this month from me...

Ongoing IT changes... Ed has done a marvellous job in adapting the website and Flypro voucher system to a completely paperless process. Customers can now choose a voucher, write what they want the voucher to say, order and pay for it without any input from CFC. This has greatly reduced any workload for the VROs (Volunteer Radio Operators), Nikki and myself. Although Nikki is bearing the brunt of data-loading from the old paper systems to the new electronic systems. Once this hurdle is over, the entire process should be much more efficient and error-free. Also, Ed has installed a webcam which, in a week or so, will allow users of the website to monitor the weather at the airfield. It is a good system and one which I hope you will all find useful.

Reminder... Any pilot who wishes to be reminded of the renewal date of Medicals and Licence ratings should bring me their documents for scanning onto the Flypro system. They will then be reminded 30 days before the expiry of that renewal.

The Airfield is looking very tidy with the cutting and baling done in less than 4 days. Unfortunately, the meadow was cut without our knowledge and so the National Trust could not carry out their proposed second cut, which is a shame.

We have a new Tower radio antenna! There have been complaints about the readability of transmissions made from the Tower. I know Corinne will mention it but I am extremely impressed with the skill and knowledge demonstrated by **Kevin Stewart** and **James Hughes**, who gave up many hours of their time to inspect and replace the antenna and associated cables. Thank you again, guys.

Aerodine... Ed has a new member of staff – **Ruth** – who will help out at the café. This may mean that Aerodine will be open 7 days a week in the near future.

Finally, security... I have had to change the code on the main gate. This is because someone opened the gate (inwards instead of outwards!) and then proceeded to leave it open. Luckily, Ed turned up a few hours later and remedied the situation. There are certain members who may wish to gain access to the airfield after hours. Anyone in this category will be given the code on the understanding that the code is never given to a third party. This way, I can keep a handle on who has access. Please be diligent in this regard.

Fly safe!
Arfur Bryant
General Operations Manager and HoT



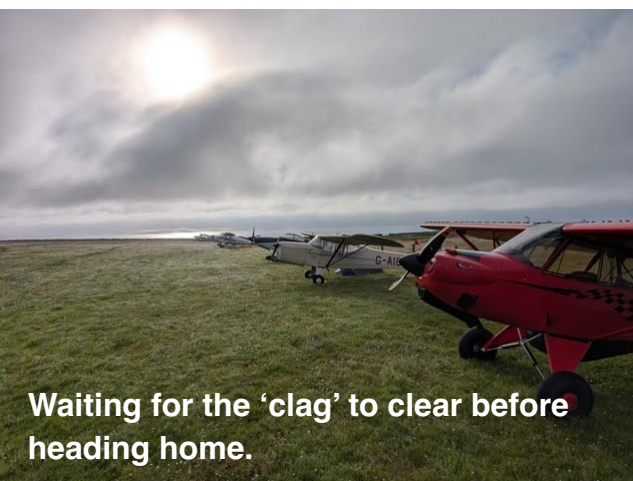
LUNDY SUNDAY 2026

By Pete White

A superb 67 aircraft of all types, sizes and colours were booked in for our 26th Lundy Sunday event taking place on that superbly beautiful and peaceful island haven situated just 10 miles of the North coast of Devon.

As is our usual plan a few of us travel over on the Saturday to check out the runway conditions and the preparations for what could be a very busy day.

This year was different to the usual format as our usual mode of transport, the Aeronca Chief G-IVOR was temporally out of action so I managed to hitch a lift with Mark Alberry from Turweston in his very modern and able Carbon Cub G-MACC. My partner in crime, John Colgate, who has assisted me with the management of the event for quite a few years now, was able find a seat with Richard Saw in *Austerity*, the J/I Autocrat G-AIGD based with us at Bodmin Airfield.



Waiting for the 'clag' to clear before heading home.



Photos: Tony Rees and Joe Drury

J3 Cub from Goodwood

Seven aircraft in all, had flown over from different airfields in the country to be on site to assist where necessary on the event day -Sunday



Lundy's Church

However Lundy can have its own weather being stuck out on its own, surrounded by water, and the 5th of July was just one of those days when the cloud base was welded to the island at an extremely low level.

We were all ready and as the mobile signal is virtually nil on the island it was difficult to ascertain whether our visiting aircraft were able reach us or not. However by some miracle we were able to log into Flight Radar 24, a system that can recognise and track aircraft if they are using some form of identification. This



J/I Auster Autocrat from Bodmin

showed several attempts to fly to our event but most were thwarted by the pesky cloud cover making it very difficult and unsafe to penetrate without first hand knowledge of the island's cloud base

However 5 aircraft did find their way through bringing our grand total to 12 flying machines.

The weather was deteriorating quite fast so we all scrambled in the direction of our home bases and luckily most were heading in an easterly direction which showed them more favour than those of us in the West.

I was the last to leave with Mark in the Carbon Cub and our home journey inspecting the Cornish cliffs lasted until Padstow and then the super 1500 feet a minute climb rate came into play putting us up into the glorious blue above a stunning blanket of white cloud.

Bodmin Airfield was now fully visible and a welcome site for us all.

We don't give up because the weather gods throw down a gauntlet of challenge, we just work round it so...the 2027 Lundy Sunday is now booked for 4th July. See you there!



Piper PA20 Pacer



Carbon Cub from Turweston



Luscombe Silhouette



South Lighthouse and harbour



Quantum 912 G-FESS from Baxterley



Some of the residents were not as interested in the aircraft



Seating for the rescue crew



BODMIN AIRFIELD – EDUCATIONAL LINK

The BUDE EXPLORER SCOUT UNIT visited Bodmin Airfield on the evening of Thursday 9th July 2026 to learn about aviation, airfields and pilots to help them attain their rare and coveted scout aviation badges.

Explorer Scouts, are aged between 14 – 18 years old and we had 14 of them and they came with 4 of their leaders. We split them all into 3 manageable groups and started the evening doing our best to cover the set programme below.

Station 1 – How Aircraft Fly: Aircraft & Flight (Hangar / Aircraft) **Tutors- Jon Parlour & Caroline Jennings in Hangar 1 & 2**

Objective: How an aeroplane flies.

- Identify the different parts of an aircraft.
- Name the main control surfaces and what they do.
- Explain how a wing generates lift.
- What causes a stall?
- Look around a real aircraft.
- Meet the pilot and ask about flying.
- Find out about one type of aircraft.
- (If available) sit in the cockpit and identify the controls.

Practical activity

- Walk-around inspection with the pilot.
- Identify each control surface on the aircraft.
- Start the engine?
- Use of flaps.
- Control check before take-off.

Station 2 – How Airfields Work: Airfield Operations & Safety **Tutors- Jay Gates & Neale Millett in the Tower**

Objective: How an airfield operates safely.

- Airfield layout (runway, taxiway, apron, hangars, windsock).
- Explain the rules for accessing an airfield.
- Know the dangers of an active airfield.

- Role of the airfield marshal.
- Plane spotting and identifying aircraft.
- Learn the phonetic alphabet.
- Send and receive a short radio message.

Practical activity

- Guided walk around the airfield.
- Demonstration of a radio call (if possible).
- Explain why pilots use the phonetic alphabet.

Station 3 – How Pilots Plan Flights: Navigation, Weather & Flight Planning (Classroom) Tutors-Nigel Ramsay & Jim Thompson in the Briefing Room.

Objective: How pilots make decisions before they fly.

- Read an aviation weather forecast.
- Difference between a standard weather forecast and a METAR.
- How weather affects flying.
- Flight time calculation exercise.
- Locate Bodmin Airfield on a chart/map.
- Discuss drones and the rules around them.
- Flight simulator (if available).

Practical activity

- Basic Navigation activity
- Calculate flight times:
 - 60 nm @ 90 kt
 - No wind
 - 15 kt headwind
 - 30 kt tailwind

A highly successful visit and it was a change to be hosting an older age group who were in fact on the threshold of their future working lives. At least two of the youngsters were seriously 'hooked' and are now considering the path of aviation for their future.

Our evening programme (see below) included a dinner break and Ed from AeroDine had stayed on to cater for everyone involved and this not only enhanced the evening, it satisfied the culinary desires of our young folk. (And some of us older ones too!)

17:30–17:40 – Arrival

- Meet and register
- Introductions

- Split into three groups
 - Airfield safety briefing
-

17:40–18:15– Session 1 (30 mins + 5 min changeover)

18:15–18:50 – Session 2 (30 mins + 5 min changeover)

18:50–19:15 – Dinner Break

An opportunity to:

- Chat with the pilots
 - Ask informal questions
-

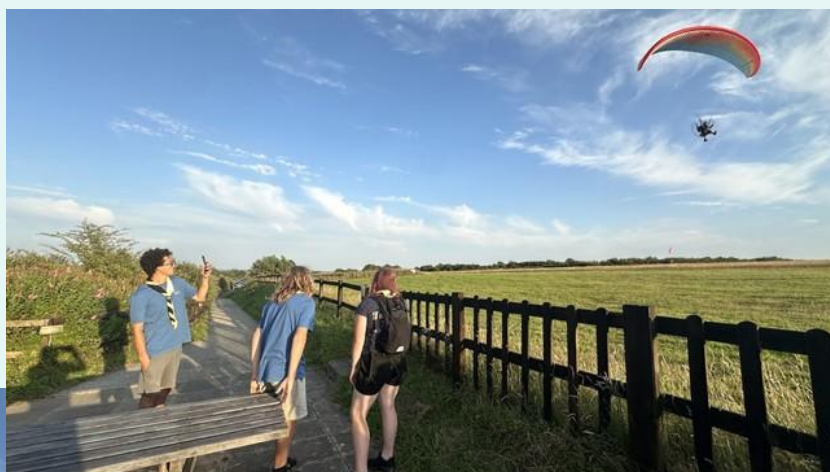
19:15–19:50 – Session 3 (30 mins + 5 min changeover)

19:50–20:15 – Whole Group Wrap-up

- Recap key learning points
- Questions and answers
- Group photo

My sincere thanks to our wonderful volunteers who are all listed above and it really is great fun, so do consider joining the team.

Pete White



No Good Deed Goes Unpunished

A Tower Antenna Tale. By Kevin Stewart

James and I had both noticed that radio transmissions from the tower on the air-to-ground frequency were not quite living up to their full potential. Range was limited, audio quality was poor, and the general impression was that our radio system was not performing its best.

The old antenna at half-mast.



In the spirit of investigation, I acquired a digital antenna tester and used it to check the antenna on top of the tower. The initial reading showed a VSWR of about 12. VSWR, or Voltage Standing Wave Ratio, is a measure of how efficiently radio-frequency power is transferred from the transmitter into the antenna. In simple terms, the lower the number the better: a high value means too much energy is being reflected back rather than being radiated usefully into the sky. A VSWR of 12 means that only a quarter of the transmitter power is being radiated.

Some careful repositioning of the antenna on the roof improved the reading to around 2 (90% radiated power), which suggested that the antenna itself, its mounting, or the cable arrangement was worth a closer look. Naturally, what began as a quick check was now developing into one of those jobs that quietly removes the rest of your afternoon.

At that point we accepted that the antenna was unlikely to be worth keeping and would probably have to be replaced. Before removing it, we tried to clamp it back in position, but the clamp was not quite the right size. The antenna then made a bid for freedom by sliding down inside the pole and vanishing from view. As the pole is over 2 metres

long, this left us with the slightly undignified task of working out how to push the antenna back up from the bottom so it could be retrieved from the top, a process that took rather longer than either of us would like to admit.

The clamping arrangement was modified to make it secure and the job was done, about 3 hours later!

After all that, a measurement of the VSWR showed that the antenna was still not performing very well and given that it was a legacy from the old portacabin tower it was certainly going to benefit from being replaced.

A shiny new Amphenol Procom CXL-3-1LW antenna was purchased and installed on one of the hottest days of the year.

Alas this was not the end of the story, since the VSWR was not as



James mounting the new antenna.

low as it should have been. Further investigation revealed a problem with the cable. A separate sortie to the airfield with new cable was hopefully going to finally resolve the problem. Part way through pulling out the old cable, we discovered an inline connection inside the mounting pole. Inspecting it and making some measurements revealed this to be the problem. We cut off the offending plug and fitted a new one. Finally we had a good antenna, a good cable and good connections!

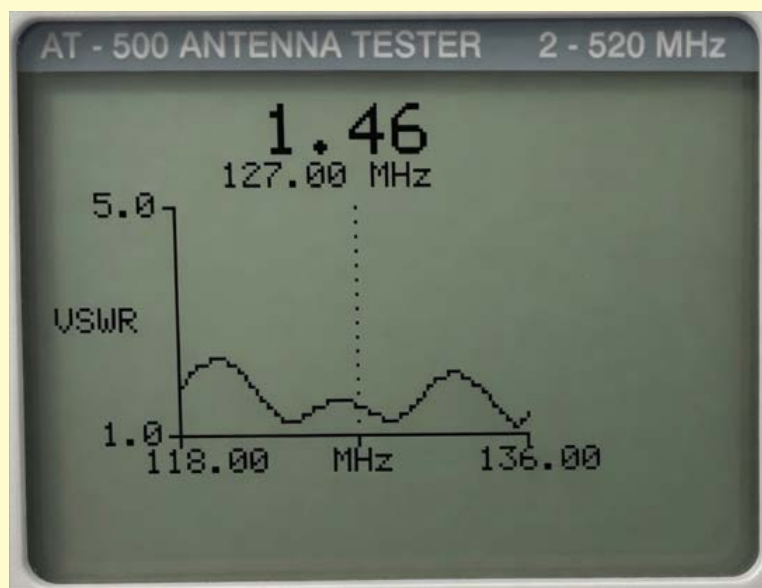
Interestingly, the fault in the old connector turned out to be quite subtle. The centre pin fitted to the cable core was undersized, so although it appeared to sit neatly in the middle of the female socket, it was not actually making reliable electrical contact. In other words, the connector looked assembled correctly while still leaving the radio signal with a poor path through the cable. This had clearly been the case ever since the cable was made up, which explains the intermittently poor radio performance we had been chasing.



Left to right: female socket, undersize centre pin, correct size centre pin.

Although it turned into rather more of a job than expected, the result should be a much improved and more reliable tower radio installation. Thanks go to my co-conspirator James for making the job a success.

The new 0dB omnidirectional antenna in all its glory



The final VSWR was a pleasing 1.46 in the middle of the aviation band. (above)



RNAS Crugmeer (Padstow)

By Pete White

By 1917, to provide aerial patrols off north Cornwall's coast the Admiralty was looking for a place to build an air station, but could find nowhere suitable for its preferred water-based aircraft. Consequently a search was made for a suitable field to serve as a base for land planes.

Just west of Padstow at the hamlet of Crugmeer, near the cliff top, a 50-acre site was requisitioned and a bumpy landing-strip marked out. Exposed to high winds, it wasn't ideal but the best the Admiralty could find in the area.



Several canvas aircraft hangars were put up, with wooden buildings and bell tents as shelter for officers and other ranks respectively. Later some brick-built huts were built, their roofs formed from curved corrugated iron. RNAS Padstow/Crugmeer was commissioned in March 1918 and it operated for just over a year as an anti-submarine and coastal patrol base before closing in 1919.

Small de Havilland DH.6 two-seat biplanes began to arrive and Padstow's complement grew to around 180 men.

On 31 May 1918, the airfield's No.500 and No.501 Flights began patrols; roughly a dozen aircraft were stationed there. One or two BE2c biplanes also appeared, a two-seater design stemming from pre-war days.

In May too a DH.9 flight formed at Padstow. The DH.9 was a better-built, more reliable aeroplane than the old DH.6; in mid-June the new unit was christened No.494 Flight. From August 1918 the Flight fell under No.250 Squadron RAF, at first led by Major R E Orton, but later by Major F Warren Merriam AFC who pre-war had made his name in Falmouth as a motor-car enthusiast.

This aerial view of RNAS Padstow/Crugmeer airfield was taken over the summer of 1918. The three canvas hangars were later joined by a fourth. To their left are lines of bell tents for the men, while 11 DH.6 biplanes rest on the grass and on the bottom right is the motor transport area. To the left of the station are farm buildings which are still there today.

(Some of the other buildings on site were from another era and were part of HMS Vulture, St Merryn and used in World War 2.)



Thanks to Peter London for information within this article.

RNAS PADSTOW (Crugmeer) 250 Squadron

Both units were part of 250 Squadron it was disbanded in 15th May 1919 and the aerodrome was closed.

Unit	Flight Detail	Aircraft Used	Duties
494 Flight	Light Bomber Flight	De Havilland 6 & 9	Anti Submarine Patrols Along the Bristol Channel
500 Flight	Special Duty Flight	De Havilland 6 & 9	Coastal Patrols & Convoy Escorts Duties
501 Flight	Special Duty Flight	De Havilland 6 & 9	Coastal Patrols & Convoy Escorts Duties

RNAS Padstow (Crugmeer)

Dates Stationed	Aircraft Used
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De Havilland 6 & 9

31st May 1918 - 15th May 1919	De Havilland 6 & 9
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31st May 1918 - 15th May 1919	De Havilland 6 & 9
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RNAS PADSTOW (Crugmeer) 2 views Taken in 1918

The 3 canvas Bessoneaux hangars were later joined by a 4th example and the officers and men lived in the bell tents adjacent to the farm (which is still there). The aircraft are Airco deHaviland DH6



RNAS PADSTOW (Crugmeer) Memorial on the actual site.



Aircraft types based at RNAS PADSTOW (Crugmeer) in 1918



Airco deHaviland DH6



Airco deHaviland DH9

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EVENTS

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