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L'anglais pour voler
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• www.anglais-pour-voler.com

Sywell AeroExpo 2015 Visit the UK's festival of aviation



Sywell, population slightly over 800, is a small village in the UK's East Midlands region, roughly 60 (statute) miles west of Birmingham and 75 (statute again) miles from London. A few facilities are listed on its Wikipedia article, among them a couple of pubs, a cricket club, and a country park ... So British! The village's main feature, however, is definitely its aerodrome.

Sywell aerodrome

The aerodrome opened in 1928 and quickly gained a good reputation among private pilots, as reflected in its publicity slogan of the time, "you can fly well at Sywell". During the decade that followed its inauguration, it hosted several aerial pageants, as they were called back then. In these early days, air shows allowed people to see the flying machines up close, sometimes they could even fly in one. The various displays by flying circuses, pioneer parachutists, or stunt flyers also made for great entertainment. In 1931, the female members of the local aero club even organized an "All Women's Flying Meeting", where all the participating pilots had to be ladies. In one of the events, the lady pilots competed in an air race. According to newspapers reports of the time some aviatrixes took to the race with a little too much enthusiasm and flew rather recklessly.

In the years leading up to the Second World

War, the Air Force established the 6th EFTS (Elementary Flying Training School) at Sywell. As a result, the aerodrome was used intensively during the war itself, both as an RAF base for Tiger Moth pilot training and as a center for flight testing and repairs of bomber aircraft. It was at 6 EFTS that the "Free France" volunteer pilots who had escaped to England from occupied France were stationed once they had mastered the English language well enough. There, they received basic flying training before being transferred to operational training units. After the war, the activity gradually went back to standard civil operations but an aviation museum, inaugurated in 2001, has been set up to help people remember this rich aviation heritage from the first half of the 20th century.

More recently, Sywell was granted the "2012/2013 best general aviation airport award" by the Airport Operators Association, a UK organization whose purpose is the promotion of UK airports. To keep the aerodrome alive and thriving, a number of events are planned from April to September (1), the highlight of the season being AeroExpo, "the UK's festival of aviation".

AeroExpo 2015

AeroExpo UK has been hosted at Sywell Aerodrome for the past 10 years and has gradually become the UK's main General Aviation showcase, with last year's event boasting an estimated 12,000 visitors. There are many reasons why this 3-day show is so popular: the aerodrome central location between London and Birmingham (the UK's two biggest cities); the impressive list of more than 200 international exhibitors, spread out in 3 hangars and outdoor static display areas; a pre-owned aircraft sales park; thrilling

flying displays; free seminars on a variety of topics which ranged last year from "infringing controlled airspace" to "how seagulls avoid mid-air collision"; a family-friendly atmosphere that warrants a lot of fun for everyone, regardless of age or interest. To bind it all together, a fly-in, which in 2014 saw more than a thousand participating aircraft, is organized over the week-end.

The fly-in

To encourage visitors to fly in to the show, pilots and passengers are given free entry to the event. With a fee of only £10 per day for a single engine aircraft, it's a bargain! As far as accommodation is concerned, camping under-wing might be the best way to make the most of the after-show parties that will be in full swing on Friday and Saturday night. For pilots who feel like tackling the challenge, the first step is to book an arrival slot online, then, once access to the aerodrome is secured, read carefully through the very comprehensive documentation on the AeroExpo internet site (2). The 26-page file, complete with charts and maps, covers all operational aspects, standard and emergency procedures alike. It provides all the information needed on arrival, departure and radio transmission procedures, noise sensitive and restricted areas, Lower Airspace Radar Service (LARS) sectors, taxiing, parking, and refueling. It even has a paragraph dedicated to suggested VFR arrival routes from overseas. Coming from France, needless to say that a flight plan is required, and so is a General Aviation Report form for customs (3) to be submitted, preferably online, at least 4 hours in advance.

So, brush up on your English, check your lifejacket, pocket a valid ID, and let the adventure begin! ●

VOCABULARY

a File.....	un dossier
a Highlight.....	un temps fort
a Pageant.....	un spectacle
Pre-owned, used.....	d'occasion
Recklessly.....	imprudemment, dangereusement
to See up close.....	voir de près
a Showcase.....	une vitrine
Statute mile (1609 m).....	mille terrestre
Nautical mile (1852 m).....	mille nautique, mille marin
to Tackle.....	s'attaquer à
to Thrive.....	prosperer

(1) <http://www.sywellaerodrome.co.uk/events.php>

(2) <http://www.aeroexpo.co.uk/getting-there/>

(3) <https://www.onlinegar.com/splash.olg?FromDefault>