



Jet Exploits by Martin Forrest

Hi Guys,

I have been promising to put something together for the club newsletter now for ages and never seem to get around to it, so with the bit between my teeth, here goes.

I am very fortunate in that my job as an Airline Captain for BMI Baby gives me the opportunity to travel to various Jet Meetings around the globe at concessionary rates, and so I try to get to as many as my leave will allow. This year I have been to the World Jet Masters in Hungary, the Mkuze Jet Meet in South Africa and Florida Jets.

I have put together some scribblings on the Mkuze Meet and will try to cover the others separately.

Mkuze is a virtually disused full size strip inland from Richards Bay, South East of Johannesburg on the East coast of South Africa. I have been 12 times now since 1998, and so have got to know many of the 20 to 30 jet fliers that usually attend, very well.

The flight from London takes about 11 hours, but being almost due South of UK, there is only a time difference of 1 hour and so no jet lag. Also the flight goes through the night so if you can sleep on the plane, no time is lost on the journey either, - fall asleep after the meal in the eve and wake up for brekkies an hour before landing!!
Nice!!!

Once in Jo'burg a further short hop by commuter plane sees you arriving on the coast in Richards Bay. This is the home of a great guy called Bruce Rattray who I formed a business partnership with back in the late '90s and who has become a good friend.



Bruce collects me from the airport and then its normally back to his place for a liquid lunch and a dip in his pool. Steaks are first class in SA and the beer is cold and very cheap. We always over indulge in both!!!!

No point in messing with small cans when you are thirsty!!

After spending a couple of days at Bruce's place, we met up with two other modelling mates, Gordon Trollip and Mike Leigh and headed off in Mike's Land Rover for a short safari and a night stop in the Umfalozi Game Reserve about 150 kms inland. We rented a chalet in the reserve, which enables us to do an evening Game Drive then head back to the chalet for a late night Braai (South African BBQ) before getting 40



winks. Then its up at daybreak for another Game Drive before arriving back at the chalet for a monster breakfast.



With about 400 photos of just about every animal that exists in the bush, it's finally time to drive back to Richards Bay to prepare for the trip to the Mkuze Jet Meet.

There are generally anything from 15 to 40 guys who turn out for the twice annual event and they come from as far a field as UK and Australia but

most of the fliers are from South Africa or Namibia. Unlike UK, most of the South Africans have purpose built trailers which hold 4 or more large jet models and all the support equipment. These are towed behind the car and are set up on the airfield to form a large communal pits area. The planes are then unloaded and the trailer's large roll out canopy which shelters us from the heat of the sun is erected. Once the portable Braai is set up and table and chairs are in place, flying can begin.



The ground is hard and dry with short grass and makes the perfect base for the pits area. The tarmac runway is long enough for a Boeing 737 to land and is only 10 yards away from where we all set up camp.

The occasional full size aircraft will arrive to deliver



and collect groups of visitors to the various local Game Reserves and so we always keep a listening watch on the airband radio and vacate the runway to allow full size planes to drop in.

The event is “Off the Peg” and is very relaxed. Pilots have voting slips and vote for who they feel has put on the best overall performance and the eventual winner is awarded a trophy at the end of the three days.



The first away was this brightly coloured Eurosport powered by a JetCat P120 turbine.

The long smooth runway, light warm breeze and cloudless sky make the 6000 mile journey to South Africa well worth it.

Gordon Trollip flew his trusty old Spectre over 20 times at the event, but still enjoys a slightly less relaxed sorty with his Avonds F104 Star Fighter. This model is now in its third season and is powered by a TJT 3000 turbine with one of our own GB Hobbies Turbine Control Units (TCU) on board.





Mark Savage, South Africa's top competition Jet flier, was in attendance with his Skymaster Hawk. The model looks and flies superbly as can be seen in the photos.



At 7 feet long the model is very stable in the air and as these pictures show, could easily be mistaken for the full size machine.



The very realistic smoke is produced by pumping diesel into the exhaust stream. The model is powered by a JetCat P120 turbine which as usual performed faultlessly throughout the event. Mark took first place with this model.



I was able to keep my hand in whilst I was in South Africa due to the generosity of Marcus and Bruce who allow me to use their spare models. Here the Avonds F-15 is seen on the takeoff roll.....



.....and here the L Cat, a Kangaroo with added booms and tailplane comes in for a slightly one wing low landing. This was actually Bruce's landing as I couldn't find a picture of mine - honest!!!!!!!!!!!!!!



Marcus brings his twin turbine powered Aviation Designs Rafale in on a high alpha approach to a perfect landing.

This is a very large model which flew superbly and represents a very large investment both in time and money.

Well I hope that you have enjoyed a brief glimpse into my Jet antics from the Southern

Hemisphere and I hope to be able to bring you more images from other meetings in future newsletters.

Happy Landings, Martin Forrest.