

Landaway in Killarney



It had been agreed in the spring that a trip to Ireland might be nice, and now that we were thoroughly familiar with BASH it was time to do something about it. The first weekend in August was booked and planning started. The first most people heard about it was me complaining bitterly that I had been conned 12 quid for an Irish half mil map with only 3 ATZs on it! hardly good value for money. Closer inspection showed that what it lacked in ATZs it made up for with an awful lot of mountainsgulp.

Destination was a toss up between Shannon, Cork and Kerry, and since Kerry was the cheapest we plumped for that. Careful study of the map showed that there was a good VFR route from east to west 15 to 20 miles wide between the Boggeragh and Mullaghareirk (so spell check that then computer!) mountains.

With detailed planning completed, and met checked we took off and headed for Ireland. 20 mins later, we landed at Old Sarum, not a good start! We had been bumping along the bottom of the cloudbase at 1200 ft, which would not give us our safety altitude at Bristol let alone over mid Wales. We knew we could not simply hang on and wait for the cloud to lift since we could not fly at night in Ireland (there is no such thing as special VFR) and bad weather was descending on us from the North east. After a cup of coffee we decided that an overnight stop in Salisbury did not appeal, so maps, GPSs, met. phones, wizzy wheels etc were spread all over the table and a new low level route to Haverfordwest plotted. We had at least 3 ILS equipped airfields within range of our fuel reserves, and Haverfordwest reported CAVOK so we felt quite safe in continuing.

Feeling a little self conscious in our life jackets, we took off from Sarum and headed out across the Somerset levels. As we coasted out at Burnham on sea the sky cleared and we headed up the Bristol channel in beautiful CAVOK passing Cardiff, Swansea, and Pembury on the way, and touching down little more than an hour late at Haverfordwest. With paperwork done and the flight plan filed (we had given notice to customs and special branch 2 days earlier) we headed off to find a cup of coffee. It took all Steve's tact and diplomacy to settle an argument which served to risk the entire schedule as to whether a Welsh cake was no more than just a thin scone. With honour satisfied Steve hauled BASH off the runway and set heading for Waterford.

Halfway across the Irish sea we found that we had lost radio contact and were no longer being hit by radar, we were all alone, is this how Lindbergh felt? One hour later we landed in Waterford, drank another cup of coffee, and topped up the tanks, for the next leg to ensure that if we were caught out we could just turn round and fly right back. BASH was immediately recognised by 2 Pophamites returning from Kerry who told us that the weather was OK and that Catherine at Kerry would do us a deal on a hire car. With the met being conformed officially we pressed on.

Again with Steve at the controls we headed West with the Comeragh and Monavullagh Mountains just inshore. The route to Kerry was quite picturesque almost idyllic as we flew over the pretty towns of Fermoy and Mallow, in an hour BASH was established in VMC on Kerry's ILS and touched down, followed shortly by a Boeing 737. The driver sent to collect us from the apron rushed off to book our hire car, and in no time we headed off to Killarney to find B & B. The first weekend in August is a bank holiday in Ireland, but we found accommodation and set off to explore the Ring of Kerry. We visited the Gap of Dunloe, and arrived at Glenbeigh in time to see a most spectacular sunset over the Dingle peninsular.

Steve Roberts at Kerry with the mountains in the background some 20 miles away





Next morning we awoke to find cloud shrouding the tops of Macgillycuddy's Reeks, but elsewhere the cloudbase looked OK. With met checked and TAffs for Waterford and Kerry we set off. The cloudbase was variable as we ploughed along just under the cloud. Steve had plotted all the mountain peaks on his GPS, and we were both involved full time in navigating and flying to avoid the Cumulo Granite clouds (That's an old one...eds). Imagine the horror on finding that low cloud had crept in from the sea at our destination. We had a low MSA for this sector so cautiously edged up the coast. Although Waterford gave an RVR of 10KM we could hear another aircraft positioning from the north for the ILS. At any moment we might have to turn

back to our alternate at Cork. At last, at a comfortable circuit height we reached Waterford.

A large mug of coffee was found while we fuelled up, and obtained more met. It was fine at home with CBs forecast for the afternoon, but we were stuck here with a 700ft cloudbase and IMC ratings which were not valid in Ireland. Our friend who had just flown the ILS offered to let us know the height of the tops, so we taxied out ready to depart out to sea under the clag. He reported tops at 2500 so we departed finding that the base had lifted a little. There were plenty of holes so we climbed up on top and headed towards Wales "sort of" VFR. 10 miles off shore the cloud cleared and we coasted in to Haverfordwest in CAVOK.

The rest of the trip was beautiful, and after a Welsh cake (with no arguing this time) and mug of coffee at Haverfordwest we set heading back to Popham and Pat's Irish brogue directing us to runway 26, a real home from home!

