

Chris and I met up at Andre's house just after midday to try to pack all our stuff into one vehicle and trailer. Destination? Ayrborne Aviators first PPG meeting at the Lubitz Flying Field. With everything packed we set off. We knew we had arrived when we saw the very professional event sign at the entrance.



We stopped to chat with our generous host – Ed Lubitz, a general aviation guru who owns and flies multiple aircraft as well as having his own airfield, then we headed off to set up camp.



By this time it was a bit windy and the wind was coming across the runway at an angle so there was some minor rotor at ground level. With this in mind I decided to go fly and climb away.



Noone else was keen to fly, so I went off to explore my new surroundings. I did a couple of take-offs and landings just to get some practice in, because it had been over a year since my last flight. Then it was time for food. This place had a full on kitchen right in the field and our excellent hosts were cooking us up some BBQ for the evening meal. After a refuel the wind calmed down a bit and the rotor from the trees was gone. It was now forward launchable and everyone was soon setting up for a nice evening flight before the sun set.



The sun went down, but the pilots did not. Not for another twenty minutes or so. Then it was time to get the beers out and sit around the fire (the instant propane gas fire – courtesy of Craig Brecken). Robin ten Pas who helped organise the event brought a guitar (although he doesn't play), and I butchered a couple of tunes while we watched the stars come out and tried not to get eaten by mosquitos.

Next morning I was up early after a terrible night of sleep on the hard, cold ground. I had forgotten to pack my sleeping mat. Since Noone was flying I seized the opportunity to wake everyone up! Just before sunrise I launched and was rewarded with a beautiful scene as the orange glow of the sun peeped over the horizon.... plus I was first in the air again :) I headed away from the field, gained altitude, and went exploring again just to keep the noise down a bit. A fried breakfast was served at around 9am and the weather was looking pretty good. It started to get really thermic by early afternoon and I managed to fly engine-off for about 20 mins in climbs of 2.5 metres a second all the way to 1600 metres. I was still keen to get practice with take-offs and landings and squeezed in 12 flights on Saturday (4 on Friday). All this flying was making me hot so I scouted out the local creek and later me and Chris went for a swim. It was beautiful and nice and cold. Saturday night was Karaoke night, courtesy of Ziggy Runzer who carted an entire car load of audio equipment to make it happen. I was tired at this point and headed to bed before Andre and Chris broke out the scotch. I had set up my hammock after last night's terrible sleep in the tent and was looking forward to a comfortable night of sleep. That didn't happen. At around 2am I was rudely awoken by a blast of air from a paramotor. Chris and Andre thought they would give my hammock an aerodynamic field test! Pretty funny.

Sunday morning rolled around and I slept really well, waking up to the sound of Craig Brecken firing up his machine.



Damn it I wasn't going to be first in the air today. He was soon up and buzzing around the field after a flawless take-off. I soon was in the air too. Then it was to pack and head home.

What a fun weekend.

