

“...a volcanic temper, ready to erupt.”



This page: dressed in Nazi uniform, the better to wind up Guernsey's authorities; as seen at flying events around the country, Maurice and his faithful Piper L-4 Cub; banner-towing ("Is it legal?" he asked the author, when the kit was seen in an old caravan by Maurice's house).

where he had travelled abroad. The eighth country had been part of the Communist Bloc, and Maurice's visit had been highly illicit. He was involved in a canoeing trip along the Rhine (easy stuff, after the Channel crossing he had already made) and had reached Austria. Rather than go on a trip to the opera in Vienna, Maurice decided he would visit Czechoslovakia alone. He had already observed one of the gunboats patrolling the river border, and noted that a bend in the river put it out of sight long enough for a man to swim across. Maurice did just that—but he had underestimated the current. On the return trip he was carried well downstream of his departure point and was met, naked and out-of-breath after the hard swim, by Austrian police. When they discovered his pre-war Voightlander camera, he was arrested. After much talking, he was thrown out of the country.

Despite the Czech adventure, Maurice did get a place in the University Air Squadron. Here he managed to do more flying hours than any other undergraduate, partly through the fact his exams took place earlier in the summer, and partly through his ploy of getting the other UAS students so drunk that the following day's hangovers left the field clear for Maurice. "I flew four different Chipmunks on one morning," he says.

Building up 130 hours on the Chipmunk, Maurice won the Cooper Trophy for aerobatics. As a result, he was invited to RAF Chivenor, where he enjoyed an hour and ten minutes in a Hawker Hunter jet trainer. "We did *everything*, including aerobatics and going supersonic," enthuses Maurice.

Was he interested in a military flying career?

"After that flight, I'd have signed any piece of paper they put in front of me!"

It was when he moved to Guernsey to join a vets' practice that Maurice's seemingly never-ending battle with the judicial system took off in earnest. "I was sent to prison over thirty times," comes his startling admission.

How on earth could a professional man end up in such extraordinary conflict with the island's authorities?

"The corruption in tax havens is in a different league to the UK," asserts Maurice. Catalyst to the whole problem was the mental illness of his partner in the veterinary practice. Maurice was appalled at the treatment the man received, and began "rattling the cage of a cosy environment". His protests took the form of digging up the island's uncomfortable wartime history—involving a rather greater degree of collaboration with the occupying Nazis than the latter-day authorities were prepared to admit—in a very public campaign that included stunts like Maurice publicly dressing up in SS uniform.

I asked him on what grounds he was arrested.

"Oh, I was framed," he shoots back airily, "framed and taken to court, and denied a lawyer from England."

Looking back on it, Maurice concludes that his life in Guernsey was "ten years of life wasted". Fixing me with his intense stare, he counsels me, "Never trust people born to privilege. On Guernsey they assumed I would join them..."

Asking who he means by 'them', it emerges that he is referring to freemasonry, or "evil devil worship" as Maurice terms it, absolutely straight-faced. Wrong-footed, I wonder for a moment if he is serious. In fact, there is no great trace of humour or irony in this whole discussion. Maurice means what he says; he *loathes* the island and the type of people he associates with his travails there, and his website bears testimony to these feelings to this day.

Rough School of Flying

When he returned to the mainland, it was for his flying activities that Maurice drew the attention of the British authorities. He was a devotee of "real flying"—aviation far removed from concrete runways, modern American aircraft and the whole drift toward greater regulation. "The last place you should take an aeroplane to is an airfield," he says, "where