

The information provided below should make useful reading for those wishing to organise or make future “cross channel trips” on their own. The flying is straight forward and no more difficult than a day trip to the Isle of Wight, except there are four more things you need to do in preparation. These are highlighted below with some explanation .

Outbound from UK :-

Immigration. There is no need to inform UK immigration of your departure from the UK but it is polite to include this info on the “return to UK GAR form” as boxes have been provided.

Flight Plan outbound to France. You need to file a flight plan when crossing any international boundary (e.g. UK to France). The Kent strut will do this for you today using the AFPEX flight planning system but it is more user friendly to use Skydemon or similar flight planning packages. (Note. Skydemon users you will need a full subscription and will need to purchase “flight plan credits” at 50p each once the five complimentary ones have been used.) If you have filed your flight plan out of a private strip you will need to “activate it” by calling London Information on 124.6MHz and requesting your “flight plan be activated”. They will ask for a departure time so make a note of this when you leave the ground.

Inbound to Abbeville France :-

Notice of arrival. You need to give French Customs airfield prior notice of your arrival (not all airfields on the coast provide this service so be sure to check). The Kent strut have done this for you today using the info on your registration form but you can e-mail your request to Abbeville at ab2ab@wanadoo.fr. E-mail addresses for Calais and Le Touquet can be found on the French SIA website (along with the notice requirements).

It is possible you may arrive at lunch time, the guy at Abbeville is at lunch and obviously cannot close your flight plan. If this is the case you **MUST** close your flight plan by phoning 00 33 3 810 837437 or 00 33 5 57 92 60 84 .They speak sufficiently good English to understand your request. (Do not forget to do this as they are really insistent upon it). If the immigration officer does not turn up within 30 minutes you are free to either go to lunch or continue your flights further into France.

Note. Since France is in the Shengen region you can now move to other Shengen countries (e.g. Germany or Holland) without the need for further immigration checks, but you still need a flight plan when crossing the international border.

Returning from France back to UK:-

Immigration. If you making a day trip to Abbeville then mention on your original fax to Abbeville you intend to return the same day and provide an estimated time of departure. The airfield operator will log your outbound immigration request and you have formally completed your duties. If nobody arrives at the allotted time then you are free to depart for UK.

Flight Plan outbound from France to UK.

You need to file a flight plan for your return to UK and the Kent Strut have filed this for you today. If you are only making a day trip we suggest you choose a suitable return time and file your return flight plan at the same time as your outbound one, from the comfort of your own home. This makes things much less stressful if you can't get a wifi signal in France or run out of credits when you are away. Don't be too concerned about leaving at exactly the time stated on your flight plan, you have an hour delay (possibly more) without causing problems.

Abbeville will NOT activate your flight plan when you depart so you will need to contact Lille approach on 120.275 and ask them to activate it please. Some people have problems raising Lille on the radio, try turning the squelch down, listen first and try not to butt into somebody else's conversation. If Lille won't answer then try Le Touquet tower on 118.45 and make your request, whatever happens you must activate your flight plan with somebody before you cross the border.

Inbound to Rochester :-

Immigration back into the UK. You will need to have given UK immigration 4 hours notice of your return. The Kent strut will have done this for you today. If immigration do not show within one hour it can be assumed that they are not interested and you are free to go. A copy of the GAR form will be provided (electronically attached), the e-mail address is in the top right corner and e-mailing the form to HMRC is free.

If you are using Skydemon and plan a route across an international boundary it will prompt you to submit a flight plan and a GAR form. The first time you try to send a GAR using Skydemon it will ask you which persons you would like to add and the selection will be blank. This is the point you need to add the people's details (and is best done at home the evening before). You get several prompts before you send the GAR so experiment in the comfort of your own home the night before.

Closing your flight plan back into the UK. The action of sending a flight plan informs the recipient airfield of your intended arrival. If you are excessively overdue the airfield will inform the emergency services who will make enquiries regarding your departure / progress and launch a full scale search if they think this is necessary. The emphasis in the UK is "only phone the emergency services if there is a problem" which means we do not have to close our flight plans when returning to the UK. Should there be a problem the distress and diversion cell at Swanwick who coordinate any rescue plans have a 24 hour contact number on 01489 612792.

Hopefully this info replicates what the Kent strut have done in the background to ensure you have an easy and pleasurable day.