

October 2014



SKYWRITINGS

Newsletter of the *Kent Strut*



Light Aircraft Association

Luscombe to Switzerland



Nigel Read - Editor

Contents

Swiss Trip part II p1

*Pietenpol progress
p5*

Tempsford Talk p5

Aviation Law p6

Christmas Dinner p7

Abbeville Flyout p7

Happy Birthday p8

Switzerland Ecuwillens R.I.O. 2.1 Old Timers

Fly-In (Rencontres Internationales d'Oldtimers)

Last month Simon and Mike described their flight through Belgium and Germany, now the arrival

Part 2 The Swiss Bit Simon Pratt and Mike Negus

The morning arrived and was looking good although there had been rain overnight which made the twenty euros worthwhile. Flight plan and customs formalities taken care of we prepared for the short flight to Ecuwillens in Switzerland. As with a lot of the legs we were at between 4000 and 5000 feet for most of the flight. It's wonderful coming over a mountain and

30th October Meeting

Tempsford- Special Operations Executive Secret wartime

airfield Fr. Peter Geldard

Cobtree Manor Golf Club, 20:00hrs ME14 3AZ

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then looking down into a deep valley with small villages and quite often a little river running through it. This is one of the times when you remember how lucky you are to be able to play the way we do. Ecuwillens was as welcoming as we remembered from three years before. We checked in with the flying club and were told that we had to go to the airport manager as there was no record of us filling in their customs form, luckily I had an email on my 'phone from somebody at the airport telling me that we didn't need to fill it in. We spent the rest of the day at the airport partaking of the free food and (soft) drinks. A few more aircraft arrived and there were some displays, there were old cars and motorbikes too but it was a much more low key affair than the last visit. We were the only Brits to arrive, the event not being too well publicised. A spirited display by the aircraft there included a Grumman Avenger, Dassault Flamant, Super Cub, Stearman and the kit built Storch to name but the few. Later in the afternoon we were given a lift to the local village from where we got a bus into Friburg (spelt a bit different and in another country). There is no change given on the bus, the driver gives you a card with the change credited onto it and you go to the bus station to cash it in, I don't know what you do if you get off the bus elsewhere. After a pleasant dinner at a pavement restaurant we walked back towards the hotel, a bar with live music beckoned so we entered, the band were just warming up. As we ordered a couple of drinks there was a noise from outside, thunder and rain, so we stayed a while even though we had to play 'name that tune' even when they were well known ones. We don't anticipate seeing them in the Eurovision competition anytime soon!

The morning was not as good as all the previous ones, in fact it was raining and low cloud. A cab took us back to the airport where we looked across and couldn't see

the Jura mountains, a bit concerning considering they're not far away and the crossing point is at over 4000 feet. Our plan was to go to Dole in France to clear customs and then up through France to arrive home late in the afternoon, this was not to be. The rain continued and no more aircraft arrived, the flight plan was filed and delayed as necessary. A call to Dole told us that fuel was only available until 12.30 local time and then from 20.00 although landing was possible between these times.

Eventually the weather cleared enough to make an attempt for France, there was still a bit of cloud around but it was very broken. We bade farewell to the club and took off, Mike was very quiet until we hit a clear bit of sky to get over the mountains. The flight was good after this until we landed at Dole. Soon after landing, and while I was in the office, Mike went back to the aeroplane, thunder and lightning started, a German PA28 landed and the rain fell, it really fell hard including hail. When he came back into the office, after the rain had stopped, Mike was wet from the knees down, the aeroplane leaks apparently.

As there was no fuel available at Dole until the evening we tried various ways of getting some. Did you know that France is closed on Sunday? There are two petrol garages just outside the airport, both closed. Phoning round other airfields got us nowhere so we resigned to booking a couple of rooms at a nearby hotel and after fuelling at 20.00 we got a cab there.

The morning was better than the one before and the rest of the flight through France was good. On approach to Abbeville there was a dark cloud off to our left, we landed and a minute later the heavens opened a bit like they had at Dole but not for as long. Standing under a fabric wing can be very noisy when it's raining heavily.





This trip took about 16 hours in flight time in a Luscombe with a 65hp engine and an endurance of 3 hours to the glide so most of you would be able to do it a bit quicker but we have loads of time to navigate. The cost of the accommodation was reasonable, in Germany at least. The rooms were found on [booking.com](https://www.booking.com). It's worth noting that nothing in Switzerland is cheap. The cost of the whole trip including fuel, accommodation, food, landing fees etc. is something we don't wish to dwell on but it was worth it for the experience. Mike wants to fly over the Alps to Italy next, so stay tuned.



Mike explained that a group of models were posing by each of the aircraft, hence the lady standing in front of the Luscombe on page 1 !

Pietenpol Air Camper continues to clock up hours

In McLeod's Piet and its Subaru engine have now totaled about 30 hours with several different pilots, mainly Jim Stevens. Reports indicate it is a docile handling machine. Ron Parker recently photographed it at Farthing Corner with Gary Smith at the controls, reacquainting himself with slow flight under a high, strut braced wing. More akin to his old Vagabond rather than his RV 9.



October meeting

This month, we have a talk on Tempsford Airfield near Sandy. Now disused but with a lot of history it was operated during the war by the Special Operations Executive and the last bit of England to be seen by many agents. Father Peter Geldard arranged a talk and visit for PAFRA last year and has kindly agreed to repeat the talk for us. Peter is the catholic Chaplin to the University of Kent and flies a Cirrus from Rochester. He is also a bit of an expert on GPS approaches!

Last month's meeting

Aviation lawyer Tim Scorer gave an informative and surprisingly interesting talk on how pilots can fall foul of the law and insurance pitfalls.

Liability notes compiled by Frank Lissimore.

There are four types of liability:-

Strict, Statutory, Civil and Criminal.

Strict liability crimes are crimes which require no proof of *mens rea (intent)* in relation to one or more aspects of the *actus reus (conduct)*. Strict liability offences are primarily regulatory offences often aimed at businesses in relation to health and safety. Also many driving offences are crimes of strict liability eg. speeding, driving without insurance.

Statutory Liability is a legal term indicating that any party may be held responsible for any action or omission due to a related law that is not open to interpretation.

Civil Liability- Legal obligations arising from private wrongs or a breach of contract that is not a criminal act (public wrong). Liability insurance covers usually only civil liabilities.

Criminal Liability- The liability that arises out of breaking a law or committing a criminal act. Liability insurance does not cover criminal liability.

Passengers would only be responsible for their injury if they contributed towards the accident - and then usually only a percentage - (*Contributory negligence*) - I suppose if they were told not to touch the throttle and they deliberately closed it causing the accident then they the pilot might escape liability! - otherwise the liability falls on the person in control.

Basically Tim said the cover for passenger liability cover should be substantial! And that liability for it cannot be excluded.

However he mentioned there may be a change in the law to cover flights in historic aircraft whereby passenger liability can be excluded.

Cheap insurance may take advantage of the minimum passenger insurance being £100k, based on airlines and set far too low by EASA. Third party limit being much higher at £1.5m but far less likely to be claimed against. A combined limit would add the third party amount to the 100,000 but even that would not cover the awards given for injury by the courts. Tim also described a case of a claim for a wrecked aeroplane which eventually arrived at the door of the individual who carried out maintenance work as an individual contractor rather than as an employee of the maintenance company!



Only two newsletters to the Christmas Dinner! (Including this one)

See the attached menu and make your choices! Cheques payable to LAA Kent Strut and sent to Gary Smith. The venue is again Newnham Court Inn which is next to Notcutts Garden Centre near junction 7 of the M20 just off the road to Bearstead. As you turn into Notcutts the restaurant car park is on the right. Raffle prizes too!

Abbeville from Gary Smith



The LAA Kent strut held their annual "end of season Fly-out" to Abbeville on Sunday 28th September. The success of the event is very much in the lap of the weather gods at this time of year and 2014 was no exception. Saturday's weather had been fine and promised to continue into Sunday but pulling the curtains back at 7am in North Kent revealed dense fog. I dozed for an hour or two wondering if the late season sun would make any impression before lunch and with no apparent change by 9:00 I contacted Graham intending to cancel.

To my surprise he reported "Headcorn and Rochester totally in the clear" so a swift gathering of flying equipment ensued and by 10:30 Brian and I were looking down at the fog bank laying across the River Swale and burying my house.

The trip was business as usual :- Coast out at Folkestone, call Lille Approach when mid channel (got no reply, but we are used to that), turn right at the BNE VOR beacon (just behind Boulogne) and go south until you get to the Somme river.

Gary Cameron was on the ground waiting for us with his Jodel 1050 and within 30 minutes we had a Percival Proctor Mk5, a Varieze, Jabiru 430, Sports Cruiser, Percival Prentice, a second Jodel 1050 and myself with the RV9.



10 of us sat down for lunch and Pascal (the restaurant owner) turned out his usual fantastic Sunday platter. Most of us have been visiting Abbeville for over 20 years and this was brought home when we were served by Pascal's

lovely daughter, once seen as a baby in arms and now a fully grown waitress.

All too soon it was time to return to "blighty" and the symbolic ending of another flying season. I hope the winter is kind to us and may we continue with our foreign flying next year.

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Mike Ropers 80th Birthday cake



Mike and Steve Brown's Long Eze on the cake. Apparently it went down very well at Farthing Corner.

(The cake that is!).

Congratulations Mike.

Dates for your Diary

30th October

Temsford SOE Airfield

Fr. Peter Geldard

27th November Strut meeting

Christmas Dinner :-

Saturday 6th December

Newnham Court Inn at

Notcuts Garden Centre

ME14 5LH

EGTO plan application MC/14/2914 is at <http://publicaccess.medway.gov.uk/online-applications/> email support to planning.representations@medway.gov.uk