



September 2010

# SKYWRITINGS

Newsletter of the **Kent**



Light Aircraft Association

## Leeds Castle – Success!

Leeds Castle held a 'Classic Cars and More' event. Steve Solley, as official Ice Cream supplier to the catering side managed to secure a pitch at no cost for an LAA stand. Meeting up with Steve, Marc Lehmette and the events manager Darlene Cavill on the previous Wednesday we viewed the site and discussed how we would get our display in.

I would trailer Europa GFLOX from Laddingford on Friday but Marc would arrive by flying his RAF 2000 in for each day. Steve supplied a gazebo and chairs (and some ice cream) Gary his quarter scale model Turbulent and Brian



*Leeds Castle*

### September Meeting

Thursday 30th September 2010 at 8:00pm

Special Branch on E borders

brought advertising and LAA flags from Turweston. The stand was additionally manned by my co-owner Tom, Glen, Martin, Simon and John from the committee and Paddy .

We attracted plenty of attention and photo taking, so a few more people have heard of the Light Aircraft Association. We took the opportunity to look



around the castle, get lost in the maze (I can get to the middle in under 3 minutes now) and watch the falconry display which is pretty impressive. The weather could have been better, getting soaked on Friday rigging the Europa. Saturday dawned better but with a poor forecast for the afternoon so Marc decided not to come being concerned about his return flight. Sunday morning came with low cloud, 600' at Southend according to the METAR and after meeting Gary at 0745 on site and sheltering in his car for a few minutes I decided tea from the exhibitor's tent was the best way to spend a few minutes.

Just as the tea bags were brewing nicely in the cups Gary's phone went - it was Steve checking to see if his text had come through - it hadn't but the message was Marc is on his way! We called him on the hand held to find he was a mile away. Leaving the tea to brew, rushed off to get his Hi Vis, I stopped a passing employee with a

walkie talkie to let Darlene know and rushed across to make sure the bit of tarmac Marc had identified as his intended landing was clear.



Unlike the helicopters from AV8 Rochester, landing vertically isn't normally an option. Marc had followed the valley south past Wye from his strip and avoided the low cloud sitting on the hills and never needed to go below 1000'. The arrival was fine of course demonstrating the effective braking from the rotors. Returning to the refreshment tent the tea being nicely brewed I made a third cup of tea. The castle had 3500 Visitors on Saturday and 6800 on Sunday.



## French Homebuilders Rally, St Yan 2010 by Gary Smith

My first visit to the French Homebuilders Rally (RSA) was back in 1992. Earlier that year I had been introduced to a group of "Popular Flying Association" (PFA) pilots and all of a sudden I

was in the spare seat of a “little red Jodel” on route to Moulins to my first flying Rally.

Things were easy back then, the cross channel route had just been abandoned, the French were still using the Franc and you were allowed to fly abroad from farm strips. The down side was that GPS was still being invented so your map reading had to be good.

I had been tasked to navigate and soon discovered that “Moulins” was off the bottom of our “slightly” out of date map. A grubby photocopy of the last 50nm was a cost effective “fix” and this practice was considered quite normal back then.

We parked the aircraft together, pitched our tents “Bedouin village style” and before too long all sorts of obscure foreign designs were arriving. This was aviation heaven. I returned with 10 hours “air experience” under my belt knowing that flying and touring was going to be for me. I took several other trips in the “little Red Jodel”, obtained my licence in 1994 and was soon flying myself to Rallies.

18 years passed and suddenly it was “French RSA Rally” time again. For the first time in many years the “little red

Jodel” was not available, so it seemed only right to offer my spare seat to my pilot friend who got me hooked all of those years ago. Flying has moved on over the years, the paper flight plan has been replaced by the computer based AFPEX system and you dare not fly without an up to date map or without NOTAM’s. Busting “transponder mandatory zones” gets you straight in hot water but at least we now have GPS to help. The planners of this years RSA rally were trying to market the event as a “European Oshkosh” with the expectation of thousands of arrivals over 5 days. Unfortunately due to the economic climate the ambience was hardly buzzing and the aero park was more than a little sparse. British aviators turned out in moderate force to take away a good selection of trophies and the trade stands were dominated by new kit aeroplanes, a few chattels but little else.

Unfortunately the weird and wonderful creations from yesteryear upon which we liked to marvel were sadly lacking. This used to be the best part for me. Despite the facilities being spread out (in anticipation of a huge turnout) I still really enjoyed myself and our return via Troyes was blessed with superb weather and crystal clear visibility.

This trip marked an aviation milestone for me. To take your friend flying when his aeroplane is not available is one thing, but to take the person who “kicked started” your flying career back to “where it all began” as the pilot and the builder of the aeroplane you are in, that’s really something special to remember.

### COMMITTEE:

A body that keeps minutes and wastes hours .

## Are we lost yet? Treasure Hunt 26th Aug

Brian Hope set a fiendish set of clues along with four photographs to identify along the route. Starting at Medway Services we had a tour along the narrow country lanes between Bredhurst and Hartlip on what had been quite a damp day, luckily drying off by the evening. Finishing up at the Crown public house in Upchurch to much relief! Fourteen 'teams' attempted the hunt but clearly those who were on their own were at a disadvantage to those with four pairs of eyes in the car. A page and a half of double spaced clues looked pretty daunting and it was not until we were a quarter of the way round that there was a 'positive fix' with a sign post, having missed all the previous clues! Gradually getting into Brian's mental process some became clear and the answers began to drop out.

First place went to Simon Pratt and Jim Stevens and their respective better halves, second was Glen and Liz Everett (and dog) with Liz, third Linda and Nigel, fourth being tied; all scores, apart from the winners being very close. Well done Paddy and separately Karl bringing up the rear with solo efforts. At one point we were supposed to find an Andean surprise - an Alpaca farm. It was not until we got home

and picked up the local paper to read a baby animal had been stolen from the farm on the previous Monday, fortunately it, was found and returned to its mother. I hope we didn't look like suspicious characters sizing up the joint! This incident maybe explained despite several neighbourhood watch posters featuring a picture of a hare, which we were expected to identify as a rabbit!. I hope we didn't look like suspicious characters sizing up the joint! It was found and returned to its mother.



### EASA Medical by Karl Martin

A few weeks ago, I met Helmut in Provence. His wife introduced him as a medical doctor. Thinking that he would be a good chap with whom to discuss evidence based regulations relating to gliding, I mentioned the topic of new medical requirements for pilots. He mentioned he was a neuro this, a neuro that, among other qualifications beginning with neuro. His chest inflated, so much that even with a high density altitude it seemed likely he would float away. Then he mentioned he was a life-long professional AME practitioner in and

### BEAUTY PARLOR:

**A place where women curl up  
and dye**

currently an advisor, oops I mean consultant, to a well known airline, no less. I wish I could say at that point he really did float away. Sadly, he did not. Here, briefly, for what it is worth, is the essence of the case he made in favour of increasing the standard of medical requirements (an irritating phrase as it implies nothing but goodness, who could possibly oppose increased standards. Truly excellent spin, however):

First, on “that island”, he could not bring himself to name it correctly (more spin, implies “little island” hence irrelevant), GPs are well informed about their patients. There is continuity of contact between GP and patient. Detailed records follow those who move. Hence the NPPL works because the GP knows the pilot’s medical history. Not so in many parts of mainland (big important mainland - you get the drift). Here, a pilot can seek a medical cert from an AME found in the yellow pages. The AME knows nothing about the pilot beforehand, so the pilot can lie about conditions which, if known, would prevent him from flying. Hence the medical check has to be more thorough to catch the rogue pilot. (Note the juxtaposition of rogue and pilot, without a shred of evidence. This is a classic slur, excellent spin and will be used by hacks everywhere.)

Secondly, there is the issue of liability of the AME. On “that island” the medic/AME is not legally liable for damages arising from an accident caused by a medical condition, the pilot is always at fault and if he is dead what more proof does one need, ipso facto. In mainland the AME is liable, (without any supporting evi-

dence regarding historical significance). So specific professional insurance is required and the insurance companies dictate the standard of investigation required from in order to be covered. Naturally, they set the standard as high as they can, for the purest of motives; self interest.

So, I said “You have a system which works, as do we. Why not recognise each other’s system?”

“Regulatory harmonisation” he said.

“That sounds like another magical, musical word which avoids looking at the evidence. Who could possibly object to “Harmonisation”?” I said. “More *“motherhood and apple pie”*, one can never criticise them”. Mary F Poppins rules, I thought.

Just then, Hans intervened to tell us about his experience. As a former astronaut, he had been tested for all known medical problems over many months. He had reached a conclusion about and their approach. He said: “like testing their subjects and are pleased when they uncover a medical defect, no matter how small. It makes them feel important and justifies their large fees and larger salaries”. “In fact”, he went on: “divide pilots into two categories: those who have been tested enough to find a problem and those who have not yet been tested enough.” This sounded like a well rehearsed punch line. It was funny, so I chuckled. But when I saw the apoplectic look on Helmut’s face, I could hardly contain myself. Now, this had become hilarious. Hans and I nearly floated away. Unfortunately, as matters stand, I cannot see who will have the last laugh. Of course, if mainland were to declare UDI, we would have a “Win-Win” outcome. That would be a laugh. (Names have been changed to protect the guilty)

## 'It's Not About the House'.

by Mike Tooze

As many of you may know I have been flying my Vari Eze G-EMMY for nearly twenty-eight years. When I finished her she looked a picture; like most women she has improved with the years. We have flown many happy hours since and still do.

But, some time back, someone decided to repaint a warbird near my hanger. The stripper wafted around the doors and attacked the beautiful finish, mainly to my left wing - and I've been patching and making-do ever since! Although fully airyworthy, it has spread to the point where I'll admit I became a bit shy of big fly-ins, which I had previously so much enjoyed. So time has come for the dreaded re-furb. The snag is that although I still have the house where I had built her, the workshop no longer exists. So, go back three or four years and there I was, the newly semi-retired me (never heard of a mathematician actually retiring?) sitting at my computer thinking 'I'll build a new workshop for the refurb'.

Now you can't knock down a house and just build a workshop (Local council etc. .. and I don't want to be thought of as odd do I?) So I started to design a house to go with it. Now designing and building a house and workshop is a bit of an undertaking but, to reassure you, nowhere nearly as difficult as building an aeroplane from scratch. - About 12:1 I would say. (If you drill a hole where a hole don't belong in your plane that could be 'it' but in a house it will hardly affect the aerodynamics nor the structure - unless it's a really big hole!)

*The Requirement.* I can't conceive of designing anything without a requirement

statement. So the first thing was to bash one out. Summarising this added up to three bedrooms plus study, dining room, lounge, nice sized kitchen with utility room, plus bathroom/ en suites and toilets. Major are low maintenance and running costs, incl. fuel



costs. So, all within a well-insulated envelope, large enough to house any 'eco bits' without encroaching on the living accommodation. However eco bits not to be included unless proven, to me, to be 'economic'. And, of course, a separate well insulated workshop.

*The Design.* My site runs pretty exactly North-South so I could design for a good solar gain for both the building and solar panels. (My spreadsheets OK'd solar hot water but showed PVC, solar electric panels, as certainly not worth a try.) Being of Stone Age physiology living in a modern world I had always been drawn to the simple early architectures. Not of Inuit descent a hemispherical structure, although very efficient, was beyond my capabilities as were the beautiful cylindrical bröchs of the Western Isles. However, the simple gable-ended tiny stone dwellings still seen in places like Ouessant, one of the isles of and that had caught my eye since I first visited in 'EMMY, sparked the basis for our house. Parallel to this I had seen magazine articles on eco houses,

greens, future fuel costs, etc. What I couldn't understand was why these 'modern', 'eco', houses have to look like overgrown shoeboxes! Why shouldn't an eco house have attractive proportions, such as after the Georgian style?

Investigating further I found that not only were Georgian houses well proportioned but that these designs stem from practical utilitarian requirements and needs. In some ways not a stone's throw from the little houses of Ouessant. Quickly re-calculating the Golden Ratio as  $(1 + \sqrt{5})/2$  and mouse in/under hand, I began what may seem the long road of detailed design.

I started, not with a cube being of good volume to outside area, but a rectangle, gable ended, with a ridge roof, running E/W, to form a base for the solar panels facing south. I later further narrowed the rectangle to reduce ridge height at the behest of the, very helpful, planning people who were otherwise happy with my planning application. I broke this rectangle into three similar sections, the middle being the smallest and the outer two of equal size, so as to maintain the symmetry that runs throughout the design. The two outer sections contain 'living areas' whereas the centre section contains 'services', from bathrooms, utility and 'boiler-room' at the rear to entrance, stairs and landing at the front. All rooms meet onto the landing or hall and all living space is at least two doorways from outside. This division into three meant that I could have effectively four 'gable end' walls so simplifying the roof structure by reducing the spans of ridge beams and purlins. The resultant loft, 'not inhabited' and under a 'warm roof', provides the much needed space for all the 'eco' type subsystems

which otherwise could not be accommodated in a modestly sized house. Rendered block/insulated cavity/block interior walls and an insulated ground floor of advanced construction match the insulated roof. As I drew more and more detail so I discussed and optimised ideas with my family but the basic design remained. I transferred each key dimension, ideally only once, from my drawing into my growing Excel workbook of spreadsheets so that if I *did* change something I only needed to alter one entry. Thus all the structural loading, lintel strengths, etc., material quantities, and thermal performance fell out from these entries into the appropriate spreadsheets. I must say I enjoyed that side of things ; ("I said he was odd")

I was pleased that the basic design passed the government 'SAP' thermal test but was amused to see that their calculation is wrong. Appealing to Kirchhoff, who else, I completed my own analysis, which is what I use in my thermal worksheets. Sub-systems including the electrical system, solar hot water, central heating and domestic hot/cold water, foul water, rain water drainage and recovery and whole house ventilation system, cctv and burglar alarm, computer/phone wiring, were designed on copied-over sections of the drawing and integrated, where appropriate, to operate together.

At some stage someone asked me, 'Are you going to build it then?' This came as a bit of a shock! You see, all my professional life I had dealt with aerospace professionals and their customer brass, so, I must say I was

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weary of having to deal with, frankly, 'builder bloke' types, what with all the rip-off stories abounding.- But I needn't have worried.

*Construction.* I must say that having managed the site myself, 'management with a broom' I think it's called, engaging contractors as necessary and completing a fair bit of the work myself, (mainly all of the subsystems listed above.) I can honestly say that I have been met with nothing but good -will, politeness, fairness and good humour. Not a single rotten apple - not what can be said of management in some of the larger organisations with which I have had to deal previously. I have also tried to employ 'local' tradesmen where possible.

So there we have it; soon to be complete, one house, one workshop and garden (with run-up area). By sheer coincidence I find that the workshop's just large enough to take G-EMMY fully rigged! I can't wait to start our re-ferb!

**Dates for your Diary**

Sept 30 Special Branch  
 Oct 3 Young Aviators  
 Oct 10 FlyOut to Abbeville  
 Oct 28 Thames Fortifications  
 Nov 25 Talk by D&D