



November 2010

# SKYWRITINGS

Newsletter of the *Kent*

## Strut Fly out to France

The weather did not disappoint on Sunday the 10th October for our annual end of season fly out to Abbeville for a meal in the airfield's restaurant. Filling out flight plans on Saturday and faxing details for customs did look to be a waste of time as the dull miserable day wore on with no sign of the promised break in the clouds. An email from weather man Simon Keeling promised much better weather for Sunday, backed up with the

**Glorious  
weather for  
Abbeville**



Nigel Read—Editor



*On the way back : how much further do  
you want to see?*

**November Meeting**

**Thursday 25th November 2010 at 8:00pm**

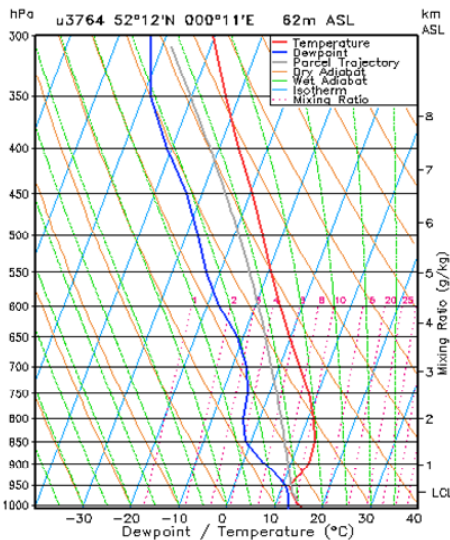
**Distress and Diversion**

[www.kentstrut.co.uk](http://www.kentstrut.co.uk)

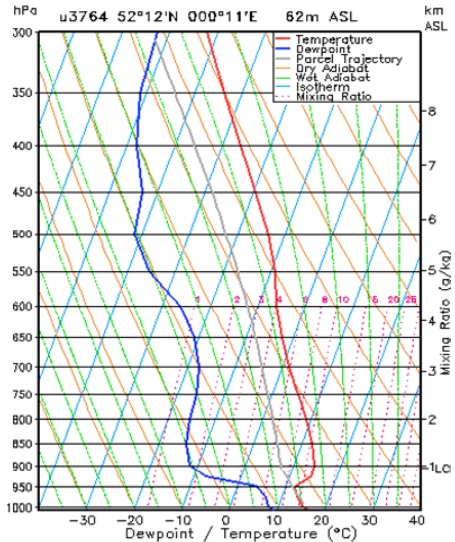
Skew-T predictions for both days at Cambridge. I don't know if Cambridge lived up to expectations but the south east certainly did....

"There is quite a dramatic difference on the skew-t forecasts for Cambridge between Saturday and Sunday.

Here is the first which is the prediction for midday Saturday. Notice the inversion at 950mb and how close the red temperature and blue dew point lines are?



that the dry air has had and how the red and blue lines have become separated, even though the inversion still exists around 950mb.



This translates to a much sunnier day than Saturday. It should be a good one for flying, although a little on the windy side. (You can say that again, 35kts tail wind on the way back!) Visibility is probably still set to be restricted by the haze, but overall it should be a pleasant day. (Actually, it was brilliant after a bit of early mist cleared).

Now, compare this to the next chart.

You can really see the effect

Skew-t's reveal so much information about the atmosphere and are the most useful weather chart a pilot can use

when planning days ahead. They reveal cloud heights, thickness, freezing levels, cloud amounts, risk of showers and thunderstorms, and much more”.



*Jodel's and Luscombe at Abbeville*

It did turn out to be a bit of a Stoneacre Boys Club do with Gary's RV, John Dean's and Martin Ferids's Jodels, Simon and Paddy in their Luscombe, Grahame and Shirley on their way home from holiday by road met us there and my Europa from Laddingford.



*Europa and RV9 at Abbeville*

Later, we were joined by the three canards of Jaime Foreman, Shaun Cockburn and Russ Machin, als arriving too late to enjoy a meal but providing plenty of amusement as Shaun made several

attempts to land. They were kind enough to come out to help when the Europas' wheel found the only hole in the grass runway after lining up and full power would not budge it! I think a fox had



*Cozi G-COZI,*

*Cozi G-BXDO,*

*Long EZ G-CBLZ*

been sharpening it's claws in the turf, creating the perfect wheel chock!



Passengers included Brian Hope, Frank Rothera and well me, as co owner Tom was flying.



### [Classic Wings Diary by John Woodcraft](#)

Not all our members get to operate their own aircraft and settle for just hanging around them and soaking up the atmosphere and getting the odd perk. Volunteers are always necessary in organisations like ours and otherwise commercial operations also need help to keep the costs of flying down. John is one such volunteer and this is his story:-

"I am a long term flying student and aviation enthusiast, who has never made it to full pilot, usual things, lack of finance, or time, and these days, brains. Volunteer at Classic Wings, do all the mundane jobs, oil top ups, flight safety briefs, pre-flight checks, general dogs body and gofer, but I get to hang about with the big boys and their big toys and see some old fashioned flying skills close up".

**Never squat with your spurs on**

Diary:-

Well sad to say it looks like a large chunk of this years best flying weather has now gone but hopefully we will have an Indian summer. Seeing things from a commercial prospective has made me realise just how precarious a living, running a small fleet of ageing aircraft and pilots can be. Fortunately I don't have to worry about the extensive admin side of things but can enjoy the luxury of watching these old legends perform in the glorious Duxford setting (I do mean the planes, honest Barry, chief pilot extraordinaire).

Messing up the cockpit video recorder in the Tigers can mean an instant loss of revenue for Classic Wings. Like everyone these days money has to be carefully managed and I have so far found most of the ways to waste it but after a while you become used to the beatings. Passengers also have a habit of wandering off just as we are about to board, which results in yours truly dashing round like a dog who's lost the bone, looking for them. Being a trolley dolly (poetic licence) in a narrow 1943 tail dragger is not as glamorous as some might think. Forgetting to connect the battery can also lead to an

undignified struggle on the floor amongst the legs of the passengers, although this is not always a chore it depends on the gender of the unfortunate passenger, another unwanted distraction for the pilot if he has to do it though. Irate customers thinking we can control the weather need to be handled diplomatically, as does the weighing in. This must be done in order to ensure we are within weight & balance. Surprisingly men are as sensitive about their weight as the women, although I have yet to see a commercial pilot overweight, part of the discipline of the job I presume.

Another of the pilots showed admirable flying discipline bringing in the fully loaded Dragon a few weeks ago on a particularly gusty day. Whilst reaching down to trim on short finals he was hit with a vicious crosswind, at the same time something sharp slashed the top of his thumb, he immediately carried out a go round. All done with the minimum of fuss and inconvenience to the passengers, who seemed rather pleased with the little extra. Before he had touched down again he had the presence of mind to staunch the flow of blood before the passengers were aware of his

discomfort, "looks bad old boy, blood all over the place", me. . . . , I would have probably wimped out and fainted.

Another good show of discipline was conducted, on the short hop to Shuttleworth - the Dragon and Tiger flying tight formation Red Arrows style, in the Tiger was the very attractive photographers assistant, one of the Dragon guys decided to revert to "stag party on the motorway" mode, where upon the pilot, ever the gentleman, smartly changed sides. The young lady was heard to remark "I was surprised to see a full moon so early in the day".

My last trip on the Dragon proved to be the most rewarding, site seeing over London. What a glorious trip, and the Dragon the perfect transport mode - slow with really excellent vision. From this vantage point London looks and is, a very attractive city, my only complaint being a sore neck from twisting and turning to see so many things, should have worn my "dog fighting" silk scarf, I guess.

Ho hum, another weekend over nearly, all the planes tied down and chocked, punters drifting home, suddenly over the radio I

hear a home based display team calling for landing instructions, permission given, there then followed a good natured (I think), bit of banter on who was going to do the "run and break". "You did it at the show, my turn in the spit"

Bloody Prima Donnas!!!!!!!!!!!!

P.S. Sharp edge sorted, pilot also taken to wearing gloves.



<http://www.classic-wings.co.uk>

### New Web Site

I hope you have noticed the new web address of the strut web site. Glen Everett has revamped the site and updated the back issues of "Skywritings" and added a comprehensive picture gallery.

### Next Months Meeting

Flt/Lt Martin Smith, the officer Commanding the D & D cell at Swanick will give an updated talk

on his work similar the one given at Duxford's Safety Bonus Day earlier this year. This should prove popular and if you have never tried a practice pan this could be an opportunity to find out exactly what happens back at Swanick and what they will do to help.

### GASCo Safety meeting

Rochesters' new Innovation Centre just inside the entrance to Rochester Airport was the venue for the first in a season of safety talks. The General Aviation Safety Council have taken over organizing these talks from the CAA.

Speakers included old friend of the Strut Andy Sephton and Nils Jamieson who are Regional Safety officers, split south and north and Jonathan Smith with another AWARE GPS to donate in a free draw along with some Pooley's goodies. We saw a more recent airspace incursion since our talk and some 'interesting' take off's and landing's videos!

Rule of thumb:-

If you have not achieved 2/3 of take off speed at halfway down the runway—abort!

Some interesting facts:-

For every accident there are 29 reported incidents, 300 Hazards & 1000 unreported. Unreported are important in statistical analysis or risks. (Heinrich's Triangle)

Hours to a fatal accident:-

Single engine Aeroplanes- 85,000, Micro Lights— 50,000 Gliders—40,000, Gyros- 2,500 Of course there are other pilots helping to tot up the hours— not just yours.

### Christmas Dinner—Sat Dec 11th

Don't Forget there is no December meeting but if you are coming to the dinner, and have yet to return the form and remittance then send to Gary Smith. Contact on the back page.



*AWARE GPS and accessories*

Also. Don't forget we are raffling the Aware GPS worth £149 at the dinner.



*AWARE GPS has all the CAA charts  
Visual warning and beeps can be heard with headsets on*



*AWARE's internal rechargeable battery lasts about one hour but provides a bright screen if out of sunlight and camera flash!*

**It's a bit early to mention the C word but:-**

**Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all**

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**Other Meetings**

RAeS Medway Branch  
 Wednesdays at 19:00:-

**Aerospace 2050**

Graham Roe FRAeS 24th Nov 2010

**Falklands Air Power**

Sqn Ldr Ian Thompson 15th Dec 2010

**Restoration of the Handley-Page Hampton**

Darren Friday 19th Jan 2011

**Gyroplanes**

Wing Cdr Ken Wallis MBE RAF (Ret'd) 16th Feb 2011

**Newsletter**

This is the last until January and the end of my first year as editor. Thanks to all those who have contributed but please keep articles coming as we are going into a quiet period!

**Dates for your Diary**

Nov 25 Talk by D&D  
 Nov 27 & 28 Flying Show NEC  
 Dec 11 Christmas Dinner  
 and AWARE GPS Raffle!  
 7pm for 7:30  
 Jan 27 AGM