



November 2011

# SKYWRITINGS

Newsletter of the **Kent**

## Editorial—so what happened in 2011

Welcome to the last Skywritings of 2011 and thanks to all those who have contributed. Can't do it without those interesting articles! We have seen 'Beryl' reach seventy and have her engine blasted with soda.

We have read about flying at Biggin, Jodels to Dunkeswell and Belgium. RV's in rough weather, Jaqui Clark made an honest man of Andy Sephton and Panshanger's fly-in.

We have had talks from Glyn Richards of the Tiger Club, Peter Kember on airfield planning, Dave Watts on flying his Europa, Justyn Gorman had some words of caution and the main talk of the year from Manuel Queiroz on flying the world with only an RV6 for company.

Driving Visits to the DeHaviland museum and NATS Swanick and chased after Treasure. Reports on Aero Expo and Sywell Rally, *see rally video on LAA website [Events]*.

Suggestions of places to fly and what to do there – Calais, Cambridge, Shuttleworth, Old Sarum, Gloucester, Chiltern Park/Reading, Sandown, Amiens, Lee on Solent, and Joined PAFRA on flyouts and their Nav Ex.

Articles on EASA licence changes and the Olympics not necessarily what we want to read about but can't avoid, although if you fly a permit aircraft with a CAA licence then you don't need an EASA licence!

We have enjoyed BBQ's at Ripple, Laddingford and Rochester.

In this issue we have part one of Gary's trip to Helgoland and a report on the biennial Hahnweide fly-in. Congratulations to Ian McLeod's Pietenpol which finally has had a successful test flight in the hands of Glyn Richards.

Keep the articles coming – places to go, projects, letters to the editor, suggestions... Merry Christmas from the committee (bit early but it saves postage).



Light Aircraft Association



Nigel Read—Editor

**24th November Meeting**

**General chat and slide show**

**10th Dec Christmas Dinner £20/head**

**Return your menu choice to Gary Smith**

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

**HELGOLAND 2011** by Gary Smith

Whilst visiting La Rochelle (France) many years ago I stumbled upon a concrete structure in the docks which turned out to be a block of German WWII submarine pens. A chance visit to St Nazaire on the way home took me past another set (open to the public) and I was intrigued to find out more.

Research several years later made mention of a third set of pens at “Helgoland” and having read its history it became a “must visit” location for me.

The two Islands of Helgoland (EDXH) are located at eastern end of the Frisian Islands, approximately 25nm from the bottom of Denmark.

There have been many historic battles around these Islands, we owned them at one point and swapped them for Zanzibar in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century. During WWI German battleships sought shelter there and the fortifications began. Commencement of WWII saw the fortifications increased significantly to include three submarine pens and this is what I wanted to see.

The German ICAO map showed a VOR beacon where the islands should be and only close inspection of the Bottlang plate gave away the fact that the place is absolutely tiny.

“Düne”, the more easterly of the islands is just 800m x 900m and is home to the airport. The three runways, laid out in a triangular pattern offer various lengths ranging from 350m (the longest) to 250m (the shortest). Putting this into perspective Rochester’s main runway is 1000m and is bigger than the whole of Düne Island. This trip needed some special planning as I did not want to get stuck on the Island due to bad weather, nor did I want an incident on such a short strip.

My friend and I loaded up the RV with essential gear and set off for our adventure in late August 2011. Having lunched at Midden Zeeland (southern Holland) we flew directly to Emden in Northern Germany for our first over night stop. As luck would have it the air traffic controller had recently returned from a posting on Helgoland and gave us the reassuring advice that the wind was always strong so you did not need much runway, and generally one strip was into wind. He phoned the Island, reserved us a parking space, organised duty free fuel (we later found out it was a tax haven) and competed a verbal flight plan. {Note: You need minimum 100hours P1 before they will accept you.}

The industrial town of Emden was very pleasant and probably worth a proper visit on another day. Saturday dawned clear and bright with light winds and we were keen to get back to the airfield, don life jackets and get going. 10 minutes after departure we passed over Borkum, the most popular of the Frisian Islands and then had our “eyes peeled” looking for the “grain of sand” to land on. We spotted a group of super tankers waiting offshore and when the islands did come into view they were actually dwarfed by the boats.

N54° 11.115´ E007° 54.949´ 10ft AMSL



*Both Islands, Helgoland with Düne on the right*

I have never landed on an aircraft carrier but this is as close as one can get. Slotting in “downwind” gave us the

opportunity to observe just how small the runway was and despite the overshoot and undershoot being “waterlogged to 50ft deep” I made a most respectable landing. The control tower and light house dominate the skyline since apart from the campsite they are the only buildings on the Island. There is precious little here except sand, tourists and nice beach walks. A one mile wide stretch of water separates the two Islands so we promptly took the little fishing boat and remembered “not to pay the ferryman until we got to the other side”, it was just a bit rough you understand.

Unlike the flat sands of Düne the main island is a huge piece of rock jutting 300ft in the air, but still only 1200m x 800m in size. To my amazement the place has been “developed” as a tax haven with lots of small apartments and a lovely village centre selling duty free every things. The local population of about 800 swells to 2000 during the summer and the tourist boats were arriving thick and fast in the beautiful Saturday sunshine.



### *Tax free shopping centre on*

We sauntered to the far end of the island along the cliff top path with my friend translating the signs and it became apparent that the place had been of great significance during the war. German radar sets were based here and it was a source of much pain to

the allies, sufficient that it got a regular bombing (crater can still be seen). From a northern viewing point the intention to extend the harbour walls right into the North Sea to form a huge protected harbour is clear to see. Alas the Germans ran out of money and it was never completed.



### *Harbour wall to north of main Island (partially completed)*

We sadly missed visiting the tunnels leading from the church down into the cliffs but did learn about the “Helgoland big bang”. Apparently in 1948 the allies, wishing to dispose of a stock of high explosive (HE) decided they would deny Germany any further use of the Islands... by blowing them up. Having packed 6500 tons of HE into every strategic nook and cranny (including the submarine pens) they lit the “blue touch paper and retired to a safe distance”. “Helgoland Big Bang” can be searched on Google to see the explosion but there was precious little left and alas, no submarine pens. The bang is documented as the biggest single non-nuclear detonation in the northern hemisphere....ever.

All too soon it was time to take the fishing boat back to the airport and fill up with duty free fuel. The opportunity to watch the fully loaded BN Islanders departure technique was very interesting: - hold full power against the brakes at the very end of the runway

until a sandstorm obscured the beach behind, make a dash towards sandbank at the far end of runway, as sandbank approaches hook the aircraft off and dive over the top to maintain airspeed, gradually climb away from something that I would best describe as an attempted “ditching”.

Our departure was somewhat more brisk and a “tour of the island” provided a fantastic photo opportunity and a time to reflect upon its troubled past. Should you be returning from a foreign trip in the area I would thoroughly recommend dropping in for a visit and some cheap fuel.

The assignment on our return journey was to photograph the Dams of the Ruhr valley. . . . *to be continued.*

### Hahnweide—Best Big Fly-in, EVER!

As September approached there were four big events on all within a week of each other. Three of them were, Tannkosh at Tannheim Germany, the

A friend had noticed my registration on their site and gave me a call to see if we could meet up. He is currently flying on an NPPL & is rather too large to squeeze into my two seater, so he booked a BA flight costing about £120.00 return.

Altogether 11 Brits had registered with only ‘vintage’ aircraft accepted at the field. If you fly something newer the organiser has arrangements for aircraft to land at nearby Naburn-unter-Teck and provides free transport between.

What makes this fly-in so special is that the majority of the aircraft attending are seriously old and for the most part have flown in; this made my fifty year old a veritable youngster. I am told if they want you for the event they’ll pay your fuel to and fro and provide accommodation. As mine was essentially a stocking filler I got a free entry pass for two, as well as a pass to the pilots enclosure where bratwurst (hotdogs), coffee and water were complimentary.



LAA rally at Sywell & the microlight rally at Blois France. All good events if you haven’t been before.

I had other plans, as I had pre-registered for Hahnweide, held at the glider site of Kircheim-unter-Teck just past Stuttgart. I had intended to go two years before as it’s a biennial event but unfortunately the Jodel was sick and I was stuck in the hangar.

Have a look at the list of participants at <http://www.oldtimer-hahnweide.de> [click Teilnehmer] - an impressive collection to say the least. [Click on the column header to arrange alphabetically, by type, registration or year etc. Look out for 1918 Bleriot, Slingsby Skylark 3 and an ex Air Cadet T21 Sedbergh. If there is a picture of the aircraft you can click to see that too. Ed].



The outbound journey was straightforward, Charleville-Mezieres on the Thursday for customs & fuel (lucky that a solitary club pilot was there and used his Total card in exchange for cash). Then direct to Hahnweide with Stuttgart control allowing me to route directly over their airport at 1000ft with Easy Jet and Lufthansa doing their thing below.

My friend picked me up in a hired car and we retired to a bar in the nearby village before finding an open air restaurant. Like me some participants had arrived early but this was a practice day and the event wasn't open to the general public until the next day and was due to go on for three days.

The following day the show was opened by several flypasts of 6 Junkers 52's in formation and my friend who had learned to fly on Tiger Moths turned out to be a walking encyclopaedia (self-confessed spotter!) as far as older



aircraft were concerned. He was actually able to pick out which mark, not just type a particular plane was as it joined the circuit.

Saturday was heaving and even though

everything seemed to flow with minimal fuss, I am sure the event was making money.

Unfortunately a check of the weather said a front was coming our way from the west. I felt that if I left around 16.00hrs I could get half way home to Sedan for the night with the worst of the weather passing over me during the night leaving flyable weather behind.

The control tower could not have been more helpful and found a slot for me to depart without interfering with the display. At the hold I had to wait for six Fiesler Storch to land, a replica Bleriot to finish his display and took off after a Dragon Rapide and a Bucker Bestman.



The expected front lashed down at Sedan through the night and would have got to Germany through the next day. Sedan is one of those places I have passed repeatedly but never ventured into, with the offer of a lift I took the plunge, rather than a 'little find' the place is at best non-descript.

The next day was one of those where it's ok'ish where you are but you're not quite sure how far you'll get, all at fairly low level. On reaching the French coast visibility & cloud base improved for an easy channel crossing, but the weather gods had decided that they had done enough for me and a diversion to Lydd was necessary but Lydd don't waive landing or parking fees for diversions.

I got the plane back a couple of days



later without problem.

In general I am not a great lover of big events, but as a fly-in and air show I'd



say this was the best I had been to, mainly because of the types of aircraft in attendance. Where else could you book pleasure flights in a Junkers 52?

If you fly an old bird and haven't been before, 2013 is the next event. For newer aircraft the courtesy bus from Naubern would work fine, with more hotels to choose from.



Camping is allowed by your plane at both fields.

But by far the cheapest option is commercial return to Stuttgart.—*Marty Field*

## October Meeting

Manuel Queiroz, our guest speaker for October was hoping to arrive at Rochester in his world travelled RV6 before giving his presentation to the strut in the evening. Unfortunately the British weather played its hand and a drive from Gloucester was the order of the day, less glamorous but more reliable.

Manuel's RV6 (G-GDRV) was built in Canada and imported specifically for the task of travelling around the world. Preparation included a new engine, beefing up the undercarriage, straightening one wing which had been built with 3 1/2° wash in making stalling interesting, constructing 4 additional fuel tanks, adding a pee tube and rebuilding the panel to facilitate HF radio and other instruments. The LAA permitted an increased MTOW to allow the aircraft fly with its new 450L fuel capacity. Most of the flying was done at 9,500-10,000ft and in order to keep transit permissions to a minimum he elected to fly over water wherever possible, crossing the Pacific at it's widest point.

The longest leg, 2100nm took 16 hours 20 mins and was from Bonriki across the Pacific to Hawaii. Honolulu were helpful with weather avoidance. Throughout the 168 hour trip he had three oil changes and services, took two spare litres of oil and brought one of them back unopened.

Having lost time due to bad weather the world record attempt was off, so a more relaxed return through Europe allowed him to visit his family in Portugal.

He took in Malta, Crete, Luxor, Saudi Arabia, experienced heavy rain on the way to Colombo, avoiding Indian bureaucracy and Vietnam who requested he fly at FL260! He carried just 3.7 kg of personal luggage. Having only a flying suit to wear made him a target for pimps in Manila!

Manuel had a weekend stop over in Bonriki while tracking down his supply of fuel which had been delivered to the wrong end of the island, there being no other avgas this caused some consternation!



*Circumnavigators Manuel with Pat Elliott and Linda Walker*

His Lycoming returned 19L/hr at 120kts and used very little oil after carefully running it in by seldom dropping below 75% power - i.e. thrash it to prevent the bores glazing.

Three of his scary moments were taking off in the dark with the taxi light only illuminating a small patch in front and the landing light the sky until the tail came up and an electrical storm with sparks around the fuel tank built into the passenger space alongside! From Hawaii to California there was icing, building up 1" on the HF antenna affecting the engine 1000nm from land which did not pick up until he was down to 5,000'.

Sometimes I Wonder...  
 "Why is That Frisbee  
 Getting Bigger?"  
 ...and Then it Hits Me.

The engine again suffered carb ice while taking off in California causing the take off to be abandoned.

An attitude indicator was replaced only to fail three hours into the next flight.

Finally, Manuel suffered food poisoning at his brothers home!

Many of the pilots in the audience were inspired by this fete of aviation and when asked if it was difficult Manuel replied, "nothing is difficult if you are determined enough". Never a truer word said.

A raffle was held, top prize being a signed copy of Manuel's book, Chasing the Morning Sun and won by Ron Parker. The book is available on line (ISBN number 978-1-908117-09-0)

49 people attended the meeting including Pat and Linda Elliot who have recently circumnavigated the world in their homebuilt Long-ez G-LGEZ taking a year and a day! On crossing the Pacific though, they had to ship the EZ across

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**Free Landings at Turweston**  
**Four Sundays 20<sup>th</sup> Nov—11<sup>th</sup> Dec**  
**See LAA Website**



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

from Taiwan to Vancouver. The plan had been to go via Japan into Russia and across to Alaska so they didn't have to have extra tanks - sadly the Japanese declined their entry request as the EZ does not have a CofA. China hasn't really opened up sufficiently yet so much to Patrick's chagrin they had to take the EZ to bits and container it across the Pacific. It still rankles!!

**Future Meetings for 2012**

First of course in January is the AGM. We need to address the cost of producing printed copies of the newsletter, particularly the postage.

In February we have a talk on the 'Medway Queen' paddle steamer that saved 7,000 men from Dunkirk and is due back in the Medway early next year. March we have a talk from David Brokelhurst from Lympne museum.

Don't forget the *Christmas Dinner* and *Raffle*. (top prizes!!)

**Dates for your Diary**

**24th Nov Strut Meeting**  
**26-27th Nov NEC Flying Show**  
**10th Dec Strut Christmas Dinner & Raffle**  
**26th Jan AGM**  
*RAeS Medway Branch Meetings*  
**14th Dec International Space Station**  
**18th Jan 200 years of British Aviation**  
*BAE Systems, Rochester, 19:00*