



January 2012

SKYWRITINGS

Newsletter of the *Kent*

Happy New Year



Light Aircraft Association

Welcome back after the Christmas break for the newsletter. Next meeting will be our AGM, not the best attended meeting but we have some important issues to discuss, namely annual fees. Due to the cost of producing and posting the newsletter it is proposed an increase in cost for those members taking printed copies by post rather than email. If you would like to switch to email please let us have your email address. Room hire at the golf club has not changed for years and some speakers make a small charge for expenses so we need to be able to meet these costs. Incidentally, Europa club have just increased their subs from £15 to £25 but we don't intend that much of an increase!



Nigel Read—Editor

So please come along to the AGM, if only to wish old friends Happy New Year! No doubt there will be plenty to liven up the meeting.

In this issue we have part two of Gary Smith's excellent article on his flight to Helgoland and visit to the "Dambusters" targets on Operation Chastise. There is a report on the struts spectacular win over PAFRA at Scalextric and a few recycled Christmas cracker jokes.

It could also contain *your* contribution on what you have done, built, seen, where you have been, fact or fiction, review any new product you have bought (or won) —just send copy to the Editor (bring it scribbled on a piece of paper to a meeting if you can't type / don't have email) so I don't have to pad out editorials!

**26th January Meeting
Annual General Meeting
Cobtree Manor Golf Club, 20:00hrs**

www.kentstrut.co.uk

Helgoland and Tour of the Rhur (continued from November issue).

Having just visited the Island of Helgoland off the German / Danish coast we decided to take in some more WWII sights on the way home. I had seen the film “The Dambusters” numerous times but it had not occurred they were so close. A quick study of the map showed them to be on a similar latitude to Kent but just 90nm into Germany, (or 300nm due east from Rochester).



Edersee

We headed south in fine weather and chose Bielefeld airfield as our night stop due to its “near town” location. Their 45 degree offset final approach was interesting but with plenty of runway to spare it turned out to be a fine place to stay and they were happy for us to camp. A group of guys at the residential gliding club invited us over for an evening drink and a merry time was had by all.

The morning arrived dull and overcast, the forecast was not promising and the main flying club was closed. Feeling that we had made a bad decision we sauntered back to the gliding club and to our surprise two extra places had been set at their table. It had been taken for granted we would return for

breakfast, extra food had been brought in and they would not take a donation. Excellent hospitality!

Our first “assignment” was to be the Eder dam, some 50nm south. The overcast weather upon departure promptly deteriorated into drizzle with a reducing cloud base and we were conscious of the approaching high ground (2000ft). Water enters the “Edersee” reservoir from the west taking many abrupt turns in the deep valley before approaching the dam.

As you progress east towards the “deep end” a large headland juts out from the right protecting the face of the dam and makes a “straight in approach” virtually impossible.

It is not until you have seen what was expected of the Lancaster pilots do you realise the achievement that was made. Getting down to water level in the narrow valley would be challenging enough since there is no straight stretch of water. As the Dam comes into view a pull up is required to clear the headland, then get back down to height, hope the speed is right, then release the bomb almost immediately. With the load gone a steep climb is required to clear the end of the valley as the river makes its abrupt turn down stream. If that does not sound challenging enough then remember its dark, locals’ guns are blazing, you are trying not to bump into other “kites” and GPS is still 50 years away.

Looking at the decorative face of the dam one can see an area of plain brickwork to the right of centre where the breach was repaired in a hurry.



North East corner of the Möhnesee

Having seen the challenge first hand I really take my hat off to them getting the job done at all.

The weather had begun to improve during the second “run” so we decided to head west over the high ground to the Sorpe dam about 40nm away.

The Sorpe reservoir resembles a Christmas tree with its single tapering waterway fed by an array of jagged side tributaries. Due to the shallow nature of the valley and broad earth dam it was decided to use standard bombs and drop them lengthways along the dam rather than head on. Apparently on “the night” fog blanketed the valley and bombers used the local village church spire as their bombing reference. The dam was hit but not breached. I believe we saw the church on our second run and noted a local seemingly waving at us. My German is not good but the international translation of a raised

fist being thrust airwards means “get orf my land”. My navigator put down his reconnaissance camera, shouted “tally ho” and in a cloud of dust we were gone.

The Möhne dam is probably the most memorable target due to its iconic watch towers straddling the parapet. The fresh water lake of the Möhnesee is the largest of the three reservoirs and could clearly be seen before leaving the Sorpe valley. With no obstructions on the lake pilots had 5nm to set up their approach thus giving them the best chance of success. (I have done a few “bomber circuits” at Rochester so considered myself well competent for the job at hand).

With one run under our belts and the weather vastly improving it seemed wrong not to have a second run....just for sheer devilment. One often feels detached from reality when flying but I was emotionally touched as we lined

Sorpe Dam

up for the second time. Had I been P1 in my Lancaster on that Sunday morning I really think I could have “done the Möhne”. We did a victory roll (in my mind as the RV9 is not aerobatic) and continued west towards blighty.

Routing north of Dusseldorf kept us clear of a huge thunderstorm and then contrary to the forecast it went blue sky, nil wind and was +25C as we landed at the gliding site of Aspenden on the German/Dutch border.

Technology is a wonderful thing (when it works) and using the clubs Wi-Fi connection and a PC notebook we accessed the UK AFPEX system and filed a flight plan for home. (That faxed flight plan lark is so outdated).

With lunch over and life jackets on we departed for the glorious flight back across southern Holland and down the Belgian / French Coast. We were careful to look out for Messerschmitts in the channel but with Manston on high alert and those welcoming white cliffs rapidly

approaching we knew were going to live to fly another day.

A truly monumental trip and one I would recommend for pilots to put on their “bucket list”.

2011 Charity Donation

The Christmas raffle at December’s Dinner raised £93. Prizes included Books, DVD’s, a Model and Pooleys goodies – diaries, a fuel strainer and cleaning kit.

With the Ripple BBQ donation and the surplus from the October meeting (Manuel Quiroz) raffle we raised a total of £337.90 for Aerobility, flying for the disabled.

PAFRA Scalextric Challenge

I contend that for a nation to try to tax itself into prosperity is like a man standing in a bucket and trying to lift himself up by the handle.

-- Winston Churchill



The strut received a challenge from the Pilots and Friends of Rochester Airport to some high speed car action at the 'Chequered Flag' 150ft 6 lane Scalextric track behind Elm Court garden centre, Gillingham. Hoping to avenge previous losses at bowling, PAFRA were only able to win by a narrow margin in a minor endurance race at the end, once again the strut were victorious in the main speed contest by a handsome margin!

Twenty one racers spent a grueling three hours taking it in turn, in groups of six, to drive or make tea, dispose of tins of biscuits and marshal (crash recovery).

Starting with straight forward speed, circuits were completed in less than 8 seconds. With computerized timing the LAA team was awarded 144 points against PAFRA's 85. A couple of PAFRA members were seconded to LAA to even up the teams. With



Individual results: 1. Harry Donovan 7.506 secs 2. Richard Solley 7.695 3. Keith Morrison 7.776

**How do snowmen
get around?**

They ride an icicle.

fingers poised nervously over triggers, just like full size racing drivers, we had to wait for the row of start lights to extinguish with any driver jump starting rewarded by a 2 second delay!

Fastest lap went to Harry Donovan from PAFRA, Richard Solley, consistently fast in his heats was second and Keith Morrison, on loan to LAA third. So some consolation for PAFRA!

Next came an endurance event where there were penalties for crashing – one of the required eight laps would be knocked off the total for each crash. Steady but brisk, being particularly careful on the inside lane during corners. Not too careful though as you would be disqualified for falling more than three laps behind. The system kept count of laps for each car, while



Car wheels were regularly cleaned on a block of reversed Sellotape and contacts cleaned with solvent.

marshals retrieved the crashed cars shouting out the colour of the car for the final reckoning! Paddy held the record for most crashes until Jim Merchant managed 50% more!

The track became more slippery as time went on – the scale version of ‘marbles’ with back ends skidding out on corners with the possibility of taking out a car on a neighboring track.

The results were closer with PAFRA team scoring 41 penalties to LAA’s 54!

Individual result, 1st Nigel Self, 2nd John Luck, 3rd Nigel Read.

Teams:

PAFRA

Terry Trott, Lyn Clarke, Alan Benton, Keith Stoten, Mike Bean, Martin Leusby, Jean Leusby, Nigel Self, Jim Merchant & Harry Donovan

LAA Kent Strut

RobTaylor, Stephen Solley, Richard Solley, Keith Morrison, Gary Smith, Nigel Read, Paddy Jordan, Brian Hope, John Dean, John Luck & Mike Negus.

Bring it on guys! What would you like to try next?

Total UL91 available at Rochester

Rochester have had Total Unleaded fuel available since November. 91 MON/98/RON with the same storage, quality control, vapour pressure and calorific value as 100LL approved for use in Rotax engines. See *Light Aircraft* Aug 2011 p34 for details of the fuel and usage.

What do you call a woman who stands between two goal posts?

:

Annette.

CAP 413

Radiotelephony Supplement 3:

Want to brush up on radio speak? A Reference Guide to UK Radiotelephony Phraseology for General Aviation Pilots can be downloaded here:

<http://www.caa.co.uk/application.aspx?catid=33&pagetype=65&apid=11&mode=detail&id=3749>

This includes audio technology which is only available on-line.

Places to visit in Cambridge

The Museum of Technology is a short bus ride (or slightly longer walk) from Cambridge airport along the Newmarket road not far from the large Tesco’s and adjacent to the river Cam. Based in the old sewage pumping station, which was closed down in 1968 containing the original steam pumping engines, gas engines, products from PYE of Cambridge, Letterpress-printing equipment, instruments from Cambridge Instrument Company and artefacts from local industries.

Up until 1894, untreated sewage was flowing into the River Cam through a network of collapsing and overused sewers.

When Queen Victoria was visiting Cambridge, she asked the master of Trinity College-

‘What are those pieces of paper floating in the river?’

The master replied

‘Those Ma’am are notices prohibiting bathing’.

Several methods of resolving the problem were investigated, varying from repair to complete replacement.

The method finally chosen was to deepen and widen the existing sewers and add a steam pumping station to pump the sewage to a new sewage farm.

The original building was built in 1894 and shows a progression of the development of power, from steam, through internal combustion, to electricity. The steam engines performed this task for 74 years, from 1895 to 1968.

The site is one of the earliest examples of recycling because the city's rubbish was burned here to produce steam to power the steam engines to pump the sewage.

www.museumoftechnology.com

Place to eat

Walking about a third of a mile NE along the Cam where you can see rowers out practicing in eights, past the new curved bridge and on into a park, cross the river and in front of you is the Green Dragon.

A point to bear in mind, if visiting during the week, the landing fee (or freeby) only covers 2 hours parking!

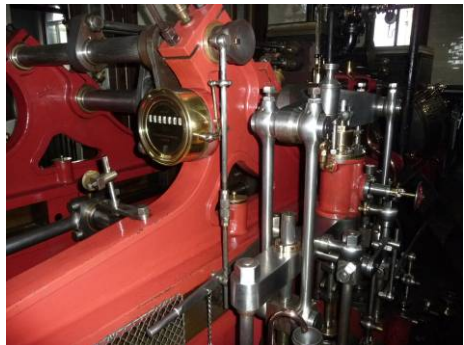
The Green Dragon—eating al fresco in October



River Cam, chimney is at the museum



Bear left and cross the river



One of two Hathorn Davey pumping engines. Two horizontal tandem cylinders (Ø22" & Ø44" x 4' stroke) oscillate a flywheel come crank to produce the vertical pumping action lifting 150 gallons 40'

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Beryl goes a yodeling! Hard as it is to believe, apparently Beryl, the Farty Luscombe had a trip to Switzerland and a report on this is in preparation.

Could it be fiction?

Dates for your Diary**26th Jan Strut AGM**22nd Feb Modern Pilot Training *Твс*

BAE Systems 19:00

23rd Feb Strut Meeting

PS Medway Queen

History, Restoration and

return to the River Medway.