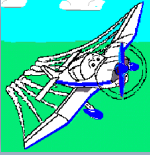


August 2012



SKYWRITINGS

Newsletter of the *Kent*



Light Aircraft Association

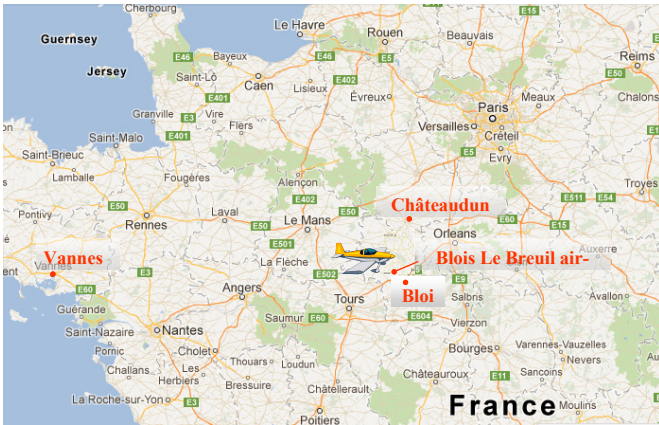
French Homebuilders Rally Blois 2012. by Gary Smith

For the second year running the French RSA (equivalent of our LAA) decided to hold their annual rally at Blois on the first weekend of July and a small group of Kent Strut flyers prepared for their annual adventure.

The weather was overcast on Friday 29th June and rather windy, but luckily it was down the strip for us. Overhead Folkestone the cloud cleared but the 25kt head wind made for slow progress all the way down to Abbeville. For the first time in years we were greeted by French customs who



Nigel Read—Editor



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were out justifying their existence (hardly surprising since the French authorities are looking to axe a load of their jobs in the autumn).

We believed a NOTAM (NOTice To AirMen) was in force to the west of Paris providing



**30TH AUGUST MEETING
BBQ ROCHESTER AIRPORT
FROM 18:30HRS £6 HEAD**



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a safe area for the “Bastille day air display practice” and pondered how to navigate around this over a baguette and café. The NOTAM wording was not clear and having phoned everybody and his dog, the control tower at Châteaudun, LFOC, confirmed it was finished and we were “good to go”.

A 5000ft cloud base, sunshine and smooth air were a small bonus for fighting the same 25kt head wind all the way down to Blois. Upon arrival we learnt that the weather in the rest of UK had not been good and many pilots had elected to drive or cancel. Eventually the rest of our group arrived (a Jodel 120, Jodel 1050 and a PA22 Colt) and we jumped a lift (15km) into Blois town for a splendid evening soiree.

Saturday was spent looking around the avian creations only the French are allowed to fly, the principle reason for the visit. My favourite was a home design whose wings used domestic ladders for main spars (the kind you buy at B&Q). The uprights of the ladders form the front and rear spars while the foot rests become the compression struts. Wing profiles are cut out of two pieces of foam and once bonded around the ladder they form the ribs. The Citroen 2CV engine appeared to provide ample power to what could best be described as an amazing budget flying machine. (There’s a decent looking British aircraft behind it!)

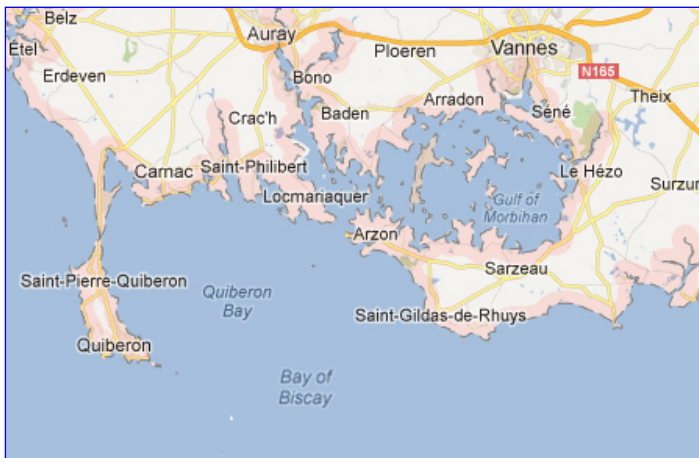


Sunday morning saw us busy diagnosing an electrical problem with the Jodel 1050. It transpired that this aircraft has two master switches, one of which had been accidentally knocked whilst loading baggage. With the electrical problem solved we departed for Vannes (south Brittany) in ideal weather conditions, but this was not to last. The town still has a large proportion of its medieval defences enclosing the traditional town centre and the surrounding gardens are quite splendid too. Monday dawned “liquid sunshine” and it certainly was not going to be a flying day. Everybody got soaked walking to the station only to find that getting a train to Quiberon (another place well worth visiting) was going to be an epic. We decided an enclosed boat trip around the bay of Morbihan would be the best way to dispose of the afternoon and if the rain had have stopped it would have been most pleasant.

The forecast for Brittany later in the week was poor and since we were in no rush to get stuck, decided to turn for home. A phone call to Abbeville (to reserve rooms at the airport) spelled disaster as they reported “all full” and that the “Tour de France” was in town. Anybody familiar with the cycling knows they have a huge following and one is unlikely to get a hotel room for probably 50 miles around. The fireman at Vannes airfield managed to get us a rooms at Amiens (30 miles south of Abbeville) and off we set with a proper tail wind this time (160kt ground speed at times).

As I have reported before, Amien is really nice with lots to see and makes a good alternative to Le Touquet. A hypermarket situated 5 minutes away makes it an ideal place for obtaining provisions when heading south and hotels at the end of the road or in town make it great for a “night stop over”.

Waiting at airfields is something pilots gets used to but eventually the cloud base lifted and we were able to get away, early enough for the weather to clear but not too late for it to deteriorate in the UK.



For anybody considering crossing the channel for the first time and requiring advice or assistance please contact anybody from the committee. We have a wealth of knowledge and experience and would love to help you open the door to the continent.



Summer Car Treasure Hunt 26th July 2012.

by Gary Smith

The down sides of winning the “Kent Strut Treasure hunt” in 2011 was being asked to set one for 2012, the time came around very quickly. There are a limited number of rural pubs in the Hartlip / Newington area which have not been used before but having studied the “O.S.” map and knowing the Harrow at Stockbury does excellent food I simply planned an interesting route back to the starting point (M2 services at Farthing Corner - London bound side) and looked for some “treasure” on the way.



The route was depicted using a little diagram for every road junction which negated the chances of anybody getting lost and the straight forward clues were reflected in the scores, ranging from 26 to 29 (out of a possible 31). The cryptic clues separated the brightest from the also drove, such as how long ago was Stockbury established, answering 1086 is wrong (read the question properly) should have been 2012–1086 and don't forget we haven't got to 2086 yet so it's 926 not 1026; how was Vivaldi influenced by the pub? Look at the four pictures on the front!

With a cracking hot buffet laid on by the pub and score sheets marked it gave me pleasure to award joint first prize to Simon-Fran-Mike Negus in the silver car and Brian and John Luck in the Red car, both with 29 points each.



Considerable effort is required to put on such an event and I would encourage members to come along next year and share in the fun, free food and hopefully similar lovely weather. If you don't fancy the hunt, come along to the start and get the final destination and meet everyone there.



Eagerly awaiting the scores

Open Cockpit Flying

It was the LAA fly-in at Dunkeswell; the plan was to go down for the weekend, avoid the first day of the Olympic fiasco and a last jaunt before the arrival of a new baby.

Well....it persisted down! So much so, that the flight planning had to be done inside the car; which is where the story starts.

With lines drawn, headings calculated after a 3 hour wait all optimism faded into the ether, the plane was tied up again and I returned home to watch the box.

The next day was much nicer, but as an overnighter in Devon was not possible I decided on lunch at Bembridge.

With everything checked and the 'CANOPY LOCKED' I remembered that the china graph pencil was still on the car seat from the previous day. A minute later I was back in the plane china graph in hand.

The take off was normal, as was the cruise but something wasn't quite right as I could hear & feel more air than normal. With the vents now closed on approaching Hastings I noticed that the catch on my side wasn't latched. No worries! The Sport-Cruiser is hinged at the front and with such a large canopy I could easily unclip the canopy just enough to push my side down.....WRONG!

It flew up violently and started to flap up and down a bit like a flag in a strong breeze. I managed to pull it down with my left hand, which stopped it flapping and flew with my right. At the same time I tuned into Lydd and asked for a priority landing, not a mayday or a pan. They were great, with genuine concern giving me a non standard join, I utilised the shortest route. On approaching the circuit I found I needed both hands so had to put up with the flapping canopy albeit at a somewhat

slower speed and now an almost surreal experience.

I wasn't sure what to expect in the landing configuration, so had to be ready for any eventuality. The actuality was that once at flap limiting speed, with full flap deployed the attitude changed, the canopy stopped flapping and I am sure I could have shut and latched it had I not been focused on the landing and getting down.

The fire truck met me, Lydd waived the landing fee, which they don't for weather diversions and I jumped back in for a pleasant lunch at Bembridge.

To sum up, no self-deprecation or sanctimonious observations, just one of those experiences I've had to learn for myself, instead of from someone else.

That is to say that open cockpit flying is better without a canopy attached!

Hitler's Stealth bomber

Keep in mind, this aircraft was built in the 1940's. It resembles Stealth bombers of today. Had Hitler got these into production sooner, the world wouldn't be what it is today.

With its smooth and elegant lines, this could be a prototype for some future successor to the stealth bomber but this flying wing was actually designed by the Nazis 30 years before the Americans successfully developed radar-invisible technology. Now an engineering team has reconstructed the Horten Ho 2-29 from blueprints, with startling results.



The full-scale replica of the Ho 2-29 bomber made with materials available in the 40's



The stealth plane design was years ahead of its time. It was faster and more efficient than any other plane of the period and its stealth powers did work against radar. Experts are now convinced that given a little bit more time, the mass deployment of this aircraft could have changed the course of the war.

First built and tested in the air in March 1944, it was designed with a greater range and speed than any plane previously built and was the first aircraft to use the stealth technology now deployed by the U.S. in its B-2 bombers. Thankfully Hitler's engineers only made three prototypes, tested by being towed as a glider and were not able to build them on an industrial scale before the Allied forces invaded. From Panzer tanks through to the V-2 rocket, it has long been recognized that Germany's technological expertise during the war was years ahead of the Allies. But by 1943, Nazi high command feared that the war was beginning to turn against them, and were desperate to develop new weapons to help turn the tide. Nazi bombers were suffering badly when faced with the speed and manoeuvrability

of the Spitfire and other Allied fighters. Hitler was also desperate to develop a bomber with the range and capacity to reach the United States. In 1943 Luftwaffe chief Hermann Goering demanded that designers come up with a bomber that would meet his requirements, one that could carry 1,000 kg over 1,000km flying at 1,000km/h.



© Arthur Bentley / Flying Wing Films

The jet intakes were years ahead of their time. Two pilot brothers in their thirties, Reimar and Walter Horten, suggested a flying wing design they had been working on for years. They were convinced that with its low drag such a plane would meet Goering's requirements. Construction on a prototype was begun in Goettingen in Germany in 1944. The centre pod

was made from a welded steel tube and was designed to be powered by a BMW 003 engine. The most important innovation was Reimar Horten's idea to coat it in a mix of charcoal dust and wood glue.

The 142-foot wingspan bomber was submitted for approval in 1944 and it would have been able to fly from Berlin to NYC and back without refuelling, thanks to the same blended wing design and six BMW 003A or eight Junker Jumo 004B turbojets. They thought the electromagnetic waves of radar would be absorbed, and in conjunction with the aircraft's sculpted surfaces the craft would be rendered almost invisible to radar detectors. The plane was covered in radar absorbent paint with a high graphite content, which has a similar chemical make-up to charcoal. This was the same method eventually used by the U.S. in its first stealth aircraft in the early 1980s, the F-117A Nighthawk. After the war the Americans captured the prototype Ho 2-29s along with the blueprints and used some of their technological advances to aid their own designs. Experts always doubted claims that the Horten could actually function as a stealth aircraft. Now using the blueprints and the only remaining prototype craft, Northrop-Grumman built a full-size replica of a Horten Ho 2-29.



Reimar and Walter Horten

Thanks to the use of wood and carbon, jet engines integrated into the fuselage and its blended surfaces, the plane could have been in London eight minutes after the radar system detected it. It took them 2,500 man-hours and \$250,000 to construct and although their replica cannot fly, it was radar-tested by placing it on a 50 ft articulating pole and exposing it to electromagnetic waves. The team demonstrated that although the aircraft is not completely invisible to the type of radar used in the war, it would have been stealthy enough and fast enough to ensure that it could reach London before Spitfires could be scrambled to intercept it. If the Germans had had time to develop this aircraft, it could well have had an impact, says Peter Murton, aviation expert from the Imperial War Museum at Duxford, in Cambridgeshire. In theory the flying wing was a very efficient aircraft design, which minimized drag. It is one of the reasons that it could reach very high speeds in dive and glide modes and had such an incredibly long range.

The research was filmed for a documentary on the National Geographic Channel.

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Strut are also looking to organise a visit by car to the Battle of Britain museum – contact any committee member if Interested.



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Sourcing composite materials?

While looking for a supplier of Araldite 420 and faced with about £120 for a 1.4kg kit I found a very helpful lady at Ami-Con in Dartford who was able to supply a 200g cartridge, although it will require a home made cartridge gun, the official one is very expensive!

Jane McIntosh 01322 224726



Dates for your Diary

- 30th Aug BBQ Rochester
- 31st Aug-2nd Sept LAA Rally Sywell
- 27th Sept Peter Gorman RV to South Africa
- 29th Sept Abbeville Fly-out
- 25th Oct Battle of Britain Museum Talk by curator Dave Brocklehurst,
- 29th Nov TBC
- 8th Dec Christmas dinner 7pm for 7:30