

January 2014



SKYWRITINGS

Newsletter of the *Kent*

Happy 2014!



Light Aircraft Association

Christmas Dinner

32 of us enjoyed our Christmas meal at Newnham Court Inn.



Down a bit on last year – was it the *X Factor* final or *Strictly* on the telly that kept people at home? Hope everyone had a good Christmas although it was difficult for some with the dreadful weather.

Mike Negus, paper hats optional, again organised the raffle raising £79 for the Kent Air Ambulance and some wonderful prizes for the lucky winners!



Raffle collection

If you didn't win there is another chance at the AGM.

Annual general Meeting



After dinner chat

Don't forget the AGM which will have a free raffle again with time for a social afterwards – then we can start looking forward to next season of interesting talks and good flying.



Nigel Read - Editor

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**30th January Meeting
Annual General Meeting (and free raffle)
Cobtree Manor Golf Club, 20:00hrs**

Dancing with Wind Turbines.

Martin d'Frinsted

I got an e-mail from a bunch of guys going to France for a few days, but had to say that this year's flying budget had been blown & that I couldn't go.

Their planned route was flexible, but one of them, an LAA inspector had to get to Marmande at some point to do a permit inspection. Coincidentally there was a tail dragger fly-in at Chatellerault, so it could be a logical stopover. With a forecast of wall to wall sunshine and being a bit like a pencil (i.e. 'easily lead'), the temptation was too much for me and I thought

I could squeeze in a last trip for the year, at least as far as the fly-in and back.

On reaching the French coast I realised that I'd forgotten my mobile phone - bad news! I couldn't open or close flight plans, access weather or generally contact anyone - my, how things have changed.

Unlike the UK, flight plans have to be closed in France and more often than not there is no one around at lunch times. Luckily I managed to persuade Lille to close my flight plan whilst I was still airborne.

After a nice trip down, I was welcomed by members of the aero club. My pals



Potez JD60. 1935

COLOMBAN MC-30 LUCIOLE



however, on getting no reply to their texts, assumed that I'd abandoned the idea of the fly-in and decided on a different route.

I had pre-booked a hotel on an industrial estate, a bit to the north of the town; unfortunately the airfield was on the other side to the south. The plus side was that the hotel was clean & cheap, with a triple room costing 33 Euro's. I was offered a lift to drop my bags off at the hotel & then to the centre of town. I would like to say it was a 'find' but even the narrow streets lacked something and I got the feeling it was more like a Disney version of what a French town should be, without the atmosphere. But if you're looking for cheap, it's a good choice.

The next morning I set out to discover how the bus system worked. You pay €1.10 & can travel on any bus for an hour, the only catch being that there isn't one out to the airfield at the weekend, so it was a taxi from the centre of town.

There must have been eighty aircraft, with a hangar lunch, the customary speeches and in the absence of any other G registered aircraft, I was presented with a T shirt for the longest flight.

After lunch I made the relatively short (1hr 15mins) flight to Bagnoles-de-l'Orne one of my favourite destinations, armed with the knowledge that the forecast for the following day was good. The airfield has been closed for a couple of years, but reopened last year, a definite must if you are passing nearby.

By chance I happened to have booked a hotel owned by a microlight pilot, who dropped me back to the airfield the next day and said he would be happy to pick up & drop off pilots staying there.

Unfortunately the weather forecast had lied. Well at least in part. It was fine at Bagnoles, but not too far en-route I was forced to divert back into Bernay, which at one time was another favourite. Nowadays, the airfield at least has lost much of its appeal, the nice restaurant closed some time ago and on a gloomy day it felt particularly desolate. There I found another British Jodel pilot on his way home, who had also been temporarily thwarted by the weather.

After about an hour and a half on the club's computer I convinced myself that there was sufficient improvement and took off for Abbeville, with the other Jodel following closely behind. We were relatively low, in reduced visibility for about 20 minutes, after which we were able to climb to around 1500ft in much better



Lake at Bagnoles de l'orne.

conditions. Rouen were very helpful and offered us a special VFR should we need to divert.

Ten minutes from Abbeville the weather worsened dramatically and we were now not much higher than the ever increasing wind-turbines. In the past I've considered them a pointless blot on the landscape, merely pacifying a need to be doing something, with their total cost negating any benefits. Now for the first time I had serious respect for their tentacles

reaching out into the cloud base.

With a clear sense that options were beginning to run out and ever conscious that the other Jodel was very close behind me, we weren't getting into Abbeville. The only direction now possible was towards Beauvais and bit by bit we tracked through the lighter bits and finally managed to thread our way into Amiens approaching from the East. I know Amiens quite well and some of the locals, so fuel, weather access and lifts were easier to arrange. The UK METARS were showing signs of improvement, as was Le Touquet, although it would mean staying low and there was no way of knowing what lay between us and the coast.

The other pilot felt under some pressure to get home that night. He had never been stuck before, which either meant that his weather interpretation was excellent, he had been very lucky, or he only flew in almost guaranteed conditions.

From my perspective it was tempting to make for home and had we had another hour or so of daylight I would probably have had a go. As it was, we had hotels and restaurants nearby, the plane was refuelled and we had a lift. The downside was the extra cost and work. The alternatives if we made an attempt, but didn't make it all the way home would be, Le Touquet, Calais or Lydd, all of which had associated problems, either with cost, finding accommodation, fuel and transport, but much worse was the thought of putting myself into a position where the options were running out for a second time in one day.

We spent a reasonable evening under the circumstances, then had to wait until after midday for the fog to clear sufficiently and flew with a misty back drop until reaching the Channel. Fully expecting to lose all forward visibility, I was most pleasantly surprised to be able to just about make out the English coastline from Cap Gris Nez.

My friends also had some eventful flying and finally got back a couple of days later in partial IMC.

Am I sorry I went? - Not likely, especially when I look out of the window and think of short days, long nights and little flying for the next few months.

What did I learn? - I don't like wind turbines!

Strut to the rescue *John Dean*

Monday morning, the phone rings and it's Brian, our illustrious magazine editor, wanting to know if I had Strut Member Ron Parker's telephone number. Fortunately, I was able to help and on enquiring the reason, Brian explained that LAA member Mike Hallam had had a total engine failure on Saturday near to Longfield in his single seat Rans S4. He had made a very successful forced landing in a suitable meadow without damage to himself or the aircraft and the farmer had been very helpful in moving the aircraft over a couple of fields to the farmyard where it had been secured for the weekend.

Mike was now looking for a means of getting the aircraft back to his strip at Jackrell's Farm near Horsham and as Brian was known to him and lived reasonably local to Longfield he had phoned for advice. Brian, knowing Ron had a suitable vehicle for the trip, put him in touch with Mike and at the same time I offered to help with the dismantling and loading, if needed.

Mike telephoned me later in the day to say that he had arranged with Ron that they would meet at the farmyard at 10:30am on Wednesday and would be very grateful for my help. The engine could not be repaired in situ and was making strange noises when the propeller was turned.

Tuesday dawned a beautiful day, sun shining and endless visibility. An ideal flying day - so I did!! Wednesday, however, was different. Very cold, very wet with the occasional hailstorm thrown in. Ron and I arrived at the farm at the same time to find Mike and the farmer, Bruce, had already started to dismantle the struts in preparation for removing the wings. Plodding through the muddy farmyard in the



rain, Ron and I undid nuts, removed bolts and supported wings and in no time at all (well, really a couple of hours!) and we had the aircraft ready for loading.

Ron's flatbed truck is designed for carrying cars with the bed being able to alter to move to a slope enabling the fuselage on its wheels to be easily pushed on.



There was then enough room for the wings to be placed level and strapped down.

Bruce then said it was time for a cup of tea and biscuits in the farmhouse. Who were we to argue about getting out of the cold and wet!

The journey down to Sussex and the unloading went without a hitch and the dismantled aircraft was soon in the hangar with Mike

looking forward to examining the engine to discover exactly what had happened and very grateful to the Kent Strut for their help.

Standard Rules of the Air - from next December.....

Presently the definition of VFR below 3000ft in Class D airspace requires aircraft to be clear of cloud and in sight of the surface. Under Standard Rules of the Air that changes to 1000ft vertically and 1500m horizontally clear of cloud. So with significant cloud at 2000ft, VFR aircraft will have to fly below 1000ft. Not a comfortable altitude to be at over Southend's built up area if they get their controlled airspace! *J.D.*

Some Q & A from Justin Willcocks' licencing presentation.

(1) I hold a UK PPL(A) with SSEA (or NPPL(A)) and a medical declaration and I fly a single seat Annex II aircraft, how do I achieve the one hour of dual refresher training? Can I do this in an EASA (Annex I) aircraft with an Instructor?

At present the answer is no, this question has been taken to EASA and the other Member States to see what their thoughts are on this issue. Further clarification will hopefully come from this. Obviously, you could conduct the dual refresher flight with an Instructor in a two or more seat Annex II aircraft.

(2) The holder of a EASA LAPL(A) who does not meet the Recency Requirements (FCL.140.A) do they have to do the flights with an Instructor at an ATO?

The rule states; (2) perform the additional flight time or take offs and landings, flying dual or solo under the supervision of an instructor, in order to fulfil the requirement. It does not state within an ATO. (Approved Training Organisations –ed)

(3) The holder of a EASA PPL(A) who down grades their medical to a LAPL Medical can they fly on this licence with this medical?

No, the privileges of the EASA PPL do not include the LAPL(A), so a separate licence will be required. Plus you would need to surrender the PPL(A) as the EASA regulations state that you can only hold one licence per category (category being aeroplane, helicopter, sailplane, airship and balloons). See the web site for Justin's power point presentation.

Click on the link under **NEWS** on the left hand side of the front page.

Three of the best M.F.

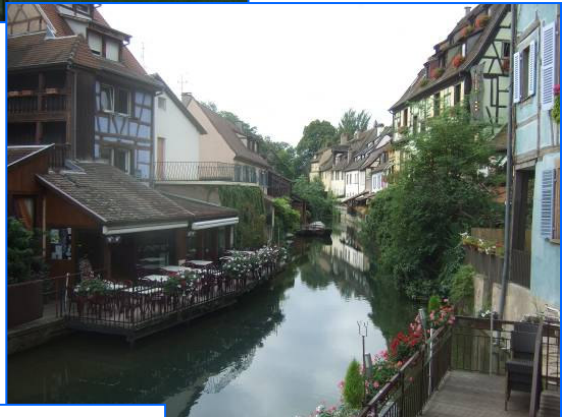
Photos from the album of a well travelled strut member illustrating three of his favourite fly-ins during 2013 and when the aircraft have been inspected you don't have to stay on the airfield as there is plenty to see a short distance away.

Heveningham Hall - Suffolk, England.

First fly-in this year was a huge success. Perfectly English, with Country Fair, several Jazz bands, old cars, bikes & tractors. Try shooting, delightful gardens, pleasant grounds, exhibition area and of course, afternoon tea.

Colmar - Alsace, France

Vintage fly-in & car tour taking in part of the wine route, with a stop for some wine tasting, naturally. Followed by a hangar meal. Don't miss a the beautiful town, often described as 'Little Venice'.

**Hannweide, Kirchheim-Teck - Baden-Württemberg, Germany.**

Biennial vintage fly-in at a glider site just past Stuttgart, with so many German and other rare airworthy Warbirds. Good beer, what else? German hospitality at it's best, with the interesting town less than a 30 minute walk..

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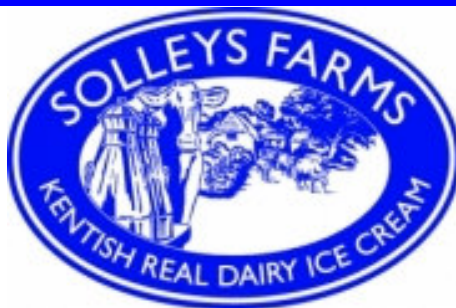
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Welcome New Members

Les Pluck, C150 Clippgate; Chris Read, student pilot; Martyn Dines, Manston — Touring & Building!



www.solleysicecream.co.



More Christmas Dinners

2014 Strut meeting Dates for your Diary

30th January Strut A G M

27th February	28th August
27th March	25th September
24th April	30th October
29th May	27th November
26th June	Christmas Dinner
31st July	December TBA