

June 2014

SKYWRITINGS

Newsletter of the *Kent Strut*



Bumper Summer Issue

BBQ1

This month we abandon the golf club to the summer golfers and head off east to the summer's first Barbie at Steve Solley's farm and Ice Cream factory. Bring cold boxes to take away tasty Kent ice cream! Directions on P11. The burgers are top quality and there is usually a few vintage cars visiting too.

PPR Steve if flying in **07836 653257**.

Steve also informs us he has an erection, that is a tower crane situated to the north west, just off the line of the short 350m runway. Should help find the strip!

Last month

Last minute change of meeting due to unavailability of our speaker (rearranged for September) to a general knowledge quiz thanks to our usual quiz master, Mike Negus. Ably assisted by his daughter, Danielle some proper brain tingling questions ensued.

The winners were the *UKIP four million* (actually only four in the team, Gary, Peter, Nigel and John Woodcraft). The other three teams had committee members too!

Not only did Mike come up with a quiz, he also produced most of the last newsletter. Don't be too shy to write something, anything interesting will be fine!



Nigel Read - Editor

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**26th June Meeting
BBQ and Fly or Drive in Solley's Farm
Ripple near Deal, 18:00+hrs**

www.kentstrut.co.uk

RV's summer holiday to Rome (2014). – Gary Smith

The UK Vans aircraft internet forum (rvsqn@yahoo.com) is not only a good place to post your questions but also provides a focal point for those with serious travelling ambitions. Back in 2011 a group of like minded travellers took their RV's to southern Portugal for a summer vacation and repeated the trip again a year later. In 2013 Peter Gorman (who had recently flown his RV6 to South Africa) led 12 aircraft to Sansepolcro (Italy) "In search of the perfect pasta" and some aircraft (including myself) visited Venice on the return leg.

General consensus this year favoured Rome because most of us still had current maps, had already flown most of the route and the city was renowned for being a Mecca for tourists.

In order to keep the trip affordable I found a co-pilot to share the costs (Kent Strut member Ron Parker), then set about planning the trip. I decided not the purchase the additional Italian maps too early (not wishing to get last year's edition) but with two weeks to go I discovered all of the maps I required were sold out and the new copy was not due for delivery until the day we left. Luckily I managed to get the "Rome" map from a new supplier in Italy but it was rather lacking in detail and not up to the usual ICAO standard.

The weather for Thursday 8th April was forecast to deteriorate rapidly from the west early morning and be unflyable for the rest of the day. Armed with this knowledge I brought the flight plan forward from 10am to 8am local and we departed at 08:10 heading east in light drizzle knowing there was no chance of returning to the strip. A call to Headcorn conformed they were closed due to poor visibility so we had been fortunate to get away just in time. Nick and Sean missed the early morning opportunity and spent the day at Headcorn looking at their RV8 (G-NISH), finally getting away the next morning.

The channel crossing was not the best I have had, fair visibility under a low cloud base is not so bad when heading east since there are no cliffs / high ground / aerials to bump into. By the BNE VOR the cloud base had risen and we were at 3500ft taking advantage of a 25kt tail wind all the way down to our first stop at Troyes (South east of Paris).



Several RVs were already on the apron with their covers on, the pilots obviously taking heed of the weather forecast and leaving a day early to ensure they beat the weather. The restaurant was closed - we had never known it to be open - so we filled up with fuel, had some of our packed lunch and continued south in clear skies, helped along by a nice tail wind.

First overnight stop was Cuers, about 30nm from the Mediterranean and east of the Marseilles zone. The airspace restrictions at the bottom of the Rhone Valley look mind boggling on the map but if you talk to a controller and ask permission you can basically go where you want, as long as you are in radio contact (this makes life so much easier).



Friday - flying to Rome. On last year's trip we followed the coast line heading east past Cannes, Nice, Monaco etc. but had to cut across the bay of Genoa due to low cloud. The net result was that we were over water far longer than necessary and clocked up additional miles that we could have otherwise saved. This year we decided there would be less risk if we took the shortest distance over the water (and at a safer altitude) and planned a straight line route to Grosseto (North of Rome). Soon after departing Cuers we were coasting out at St Tropez at 6000ft in gin clear blue skies. The flight to Corsica is 100nm over water but the visibility was



so good we could see the Island within 15 minutes of take off. Passing over Corsica to the north we observed snow on its 7500ft peak and 20 minutes later passed the Island of Elba where Napoleon was kept under guard during his later years.

Heading down the Italian coast under the control of "Rome Information" was somewhat amusing since he was not expecting 12 British registered aircraft in close

succession carrying very similar registrations beginning or ending in RV - i.e. G-RVIV, G-RVIX, G-RVRV, G-RCRV etc. Basically he got so tied up with who was who and who was where he should have just let us get on with it.

The airfield at Rome Urbe is just 4nm north of the city centre and being located in the bend of the river it is easy to find. The group of Italians who had previously volunteered to look after us abandoned their post (what a surprise) and left the whole job down to one young guy to whom we are very grateful. With landing taxes paid we jumped into taxis and experienced the Rome rush hour first hand. The Italians are not ones sit still in traffic, when the lights are red they creep forwards



Approach into Rome Urbe (Rome GA airfield)

into any little space, when the lights go green they just move into every space but ten times faster. As it happens the taxi ride was quite entertaining, surprisingly quick across the city and surprisingly cheap too (considering taxi prices in France). Saturday - Time to play tourist. The group, now numbering about 26 people, headed off to the Colosseum and in paying for the guided tour avoided having to queue for 2 hours to gain entry (good tip for fellow travellers). The Colosseum is a huge structure, built in just 8 years using slaves from Jerusalem and neighbouring regions. The guide explained that it was originally built on a river and the floor area was often flooded to allow the enactment of mock sea battles. The Roman Forum spreads over a massive area and would need several days to explore all of the old buildings. The Colossus Maximus is the chariot racing track located to the rear of the Colosseum and is in poor shape. The reason many ancient Roman buildings are in ruins is not due to war or vandalism but to "recycling". In years gone past when new buildings have been sanctioned the materials have been liberated by dismantling older ones (i.e. much of the Colossus Maximus went to build the Vatican City).

Sunday - We took a proper guided tour of the city and visited places such as the "Spanish Steps", "Trevi Fountain", "Hadrian's Fort" etc. and ended up in St Peters Square in the Vatican City its self. All of the main sites are within walking distance and for anybody who has not visited Rome I would encourage them to add this to their "bucket list".



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Gary outside St Peters, Vatican City



Monday was departure day with the 12 RV's going their separate ways. A large contingent headed for a health spar to the north (which turned out to be rather dull and expensive) but Ron and I decided to head North West to the Island of Elba for lunch. The guy manning the radio at "Rome information" had been anticipating our return for the last two days and seemed to be more on top of this game, actually making things safer this time. A nice flight up the West coast of Italy in clear blue skies was a pleasure, but this was overshadowed by the intimidating approach to Elba's tarmac runway. The runway is basically at sea level in the bottom of a valley



Approach into the Island of Elba

with a 3500ft peak 4nm to the left and a 1000ft bump equally close to the right. The approach is completely over the sea and 300m off the far end of the runway is a small mountain even the RV9 could not out climb, so it's a "one way in - one way out - no second chances" kind of airfield. Did I mention the runway slopes uphill which adds to the illusion of it looking somewhat short too.

We had a nice walk into town, took a paddle in the sea and had a tasty lunch whilst looking out over the bay. The cost of fuel is one of the few detractions of flying in Italy (3.55 euro / litre at Elba) so we filed our flight plan and departed for Calvi in northern Corsica.

There was a strong westerly air flow which surprisingly did not affect our departure from Elba (perhaps the 3500ft mountain gave us some protection), but the wind soon had us in its grasp. To the North of Corsica the finger of rock (4000ft tall in places) was deflecting the westerly wind upwards, at times we were up off our seats and I was fighting to keep the aircraft the right way up. Knowing that Calvi



Landing at Calvi (Corsica) note mountains at end of strip.

airfield was around the corner and fully exposed to the wind and the runway being surrounded on three sides by mountains did not inspire my confidence that we would be able to use the aircraft again after our arrival.

The landing turned out to be fine; we sorted a hotel right next to the citadel and had a nice walk around it in the evening sunshine before reflecting upon our most pleasant day.

Tuesday dawned sunny but with a cold fresh wind, a good day to ride around in a draft free hire car. Having spotted several Fiat 500's with "for hire" signs in the windscreen we performed the necessary transaction at the counter in the belief we would be getting one of these little beauties. Alas it was not to be. Cunningly parked around the corner we were introduced to our open top Citroen dune buggy affectionally badged "The Wally car". Our hearts sank as we asked how the heater controls worked, much to the amusement of the car hire lady.

So with myself wearing every item of clothing I owned and Ron sitting low in the passenger seat we ventured off slowly into the country side, pausing every 5 km to thaw out. Amazingly we parked back in town and met two RV pilots we had left behind in Rome, what a coincidence and an opportunity to celebrate the evening together...again.

Wednesday dawned with exceptionally clear skies and light winds but very strong head winds up to 45kt were forecast in the Rhone valley (the Mistral). We wanted to get sufficiently far up the valley to get out of the Mistral without stretching our endurance and Mâcon appeared to fit the bill as a good destination.

There are days when the visibility is so good it fixes in your memory - this was one of those days. Having left Calvi (north Corsica) and climbed to 6000ft it was possible to see St Tropez 80nm in front of us (west) and follow the coast around past Cannes / Nice / Monaco, across the bay with Genoa in the background, down past Pizza and back down the west side of Italy, truly amazing visibility.

Le Mistral was a 25kt headwind we could have done without but it was smooth and not at all unpleasant, Lyon were helpful as usual and by the time we reached Macon the weather was deteriorating as predicted and we were in need of the break. The town is typical of a river trading point, a medium sized town split by a wide slow running river and rejoined by several grand stone built bridges. Many people use



The bridge at Mâcon.



St Tropez, approaching from the east



Citadel at Calvi (Corsica)

the town as a north - south stopping off point and whilst it has sufficient hotels in town they often get booked up (meaning our intrepid aviators had to walk the 4km from the nearest hotel to get their dinner in town).

Thursday (going home day) the sky was filled with low broken cumulus clouds and did not bode well as there was rising ground to the north. Having found a hole in the cloud we popped up through, did a bit of "VFR flying on top" and by the time we arrived at Troyes for our immigration stop it had gone clear sky yet again. For the first time in all of the years we found the restaurant at Troyes open so decided to take lunch before heading out on the two hour return flight to Farthing corner.

In all the trip took 14 hours in the RV9 and out of the eight legs that were flown we were wearing our life jackets for six of them. Nick and Sean managed to depart from Headcorn in their RV8 (G-NISH) on the Friday and met us in Rome having done the full distance in one day. Next year there is talk of going back to Portugal and I hope a few new faces will join us.

I hope this article encourages fellow pilots to push the boundaries a little further, once you can fly you just need imagination and confidence. If anybody would like more information then feel free to contact me at gary.james.smith@btinternet.com

How many supervisors does it take to mend a mower?

And not one of them wearing a Hi Vis vest!



One Supervisor falls in!



Quick—walk away!

Pictures Mike Roper, keeping a safe distance behind the camera for 'elf an' safety!

SkyDemon on the iPad - Frank Lissimore

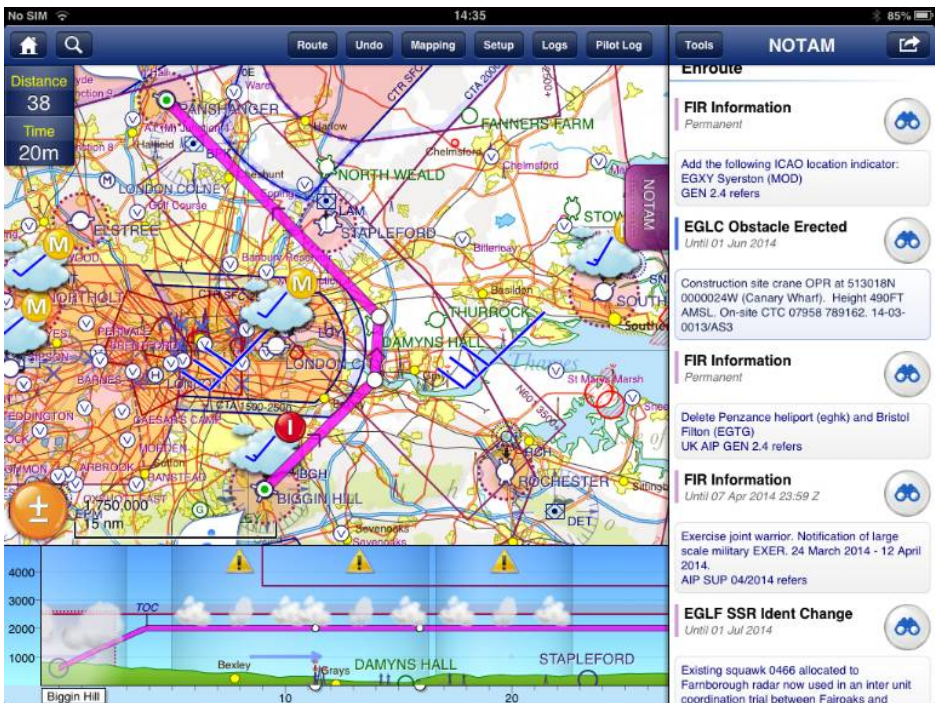
Our first GPS in Kilo Mike was a Garmin 196 - this trusted unit helped us on many flights over the years in the UK and Europe. Its black and white screen however was sometimes hard to read on bright days, so we took the plunge 3 years ago and bought one from Air box - with its colour touch screen and CAA maps we were excited! - our experience in practice was not so good - it was slow, hard to read and the screen we found almost impossible to use in flight.

In the meantime I had tried out the *SkyDemon* software for flight planning on a PC and was delighted when it first became available on an iPad. I installed it on my first generation *iPad one* and although I could see its potential, it would often crash, sometimes while in flight. I called the *sky demon* support line who were very helpful and explained they were finding a problem on the early *iPad* because of the lack of processing power. Also the *iPad* was too large to mount on the dashboard of our Jodel 1051!

So I bought a new *iPad mini* that had just been released - and what a great decision that was - apart from being perfect for business and home use, it would fit on the dashboard of the Jodel. Even in bright sunlight it is easy to read!

In use

In writing this note, I don't intend to go through all it can do - which is best seen by



A simple flight from Biggin to Panshanger is illustrated.

looking at it on the *sky demon* website and downloading a free trial of the software either on a PC or an *iPad* or tablet if you have one already - The PC version is very much what you get on the *iPad* version.

We are such fans of it because of its usability. Creating a route is easy and needs no computer skills, you simply touch "Route" at the top, then "start again" and then touch the airfield you want to depart from and then the one you want to land at. Easy - you can drag the line to take into account any waypoints you wish to add and areas to avoid. You can also create a route by typing in the airfield name.

If you are connected to Wi-Fi or have a sim card installed you will immediately be able to see the relevant *notams* and weather for the route. If you don't have a sim card in the iPad (which I haven't bothered to install) you can link it to any Smartphone, set up as a Wi-Fi hotspot. However I find that most airfields seem to have Wi-Fi available if you ask.



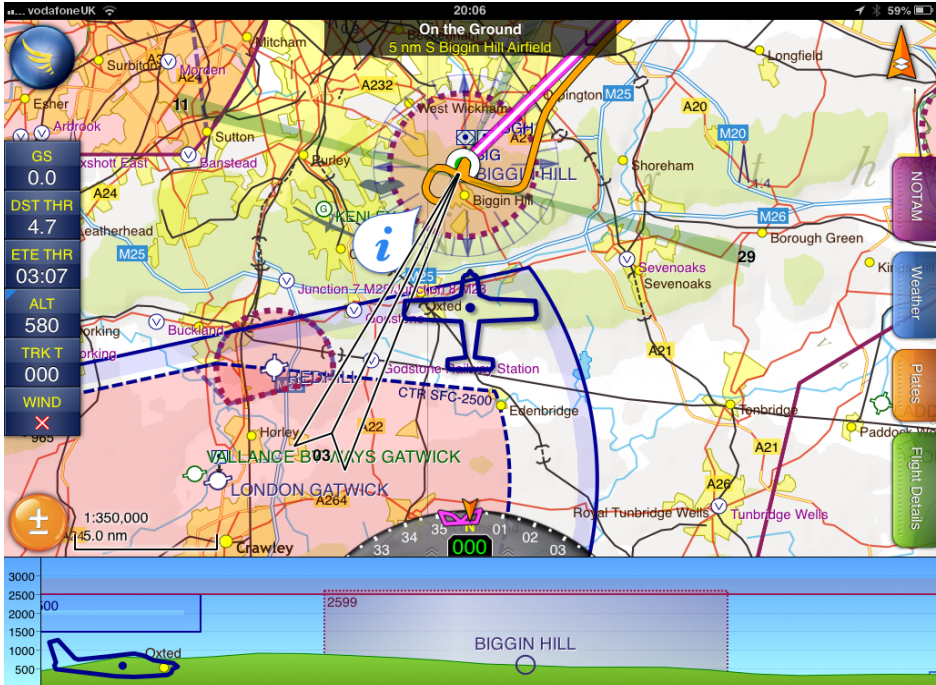
Flight Details	
Weight and Balance	>
Route	
Aircraft Default Aircraft (G-...)	>
Level	2,000 ft
Pwr/Speed 2400 RPM, 108...	>
Statistics	
Takeoff Unspecified Time (Now)	
Landing	After 20 min
Distance	38 nm
Fuel and Costings	
Required	38.4 ltr >
Fuel	120.0 ltr
Endurance	3 hr 10 m
Flight Cost	£19.00

Weather	
METAR for Biggin Hill (EGKB)	
06 Apr 2014 12:50 Z (52 min ago)	
	Wind: 220°, 15 kt
	Temp: 12°
	Dewpoint: 11°, RH: 94 %
	Pressure: 1013 hPa
Visibility 8000 m	
Broken at 500 ft	
TAF for Biggin Hill (EGKB)	
2 hr 44 m ago	
06 Apr 2014 12:00 Z - 06 Apr 2014 19:00 Z	
	Wind: 210°, 15 kt G 26 kt
Visibility 9999 m	
Broken at 1,000 ft	
Occasional 12:00 Z - 13:00 Z (30% chance)	
Visibility 5000 m	
Broken at 800 ft	

Weather and Flight detail tabs.

In flight

Once ready to taxi - clicking "go flying" it starts logging and besides measuring the full flight details, the warnings as you fly are excellent - it warns you as you approach notamed areas or of being too high as you approach a control zone - or any high obstacles - touching on an the airfield gives access to their plate and airfield information. As you get closer to your chosen airfield it clearly shows the runway's extended centreline - helping to avoid setting up an approach for the wrong one!



As you get closer to your chosen airfield it clearly shows the runway's extended centreline - helping to avoid setting up an approach for the wrong one! (This screen shot shows the aircraft at Oxted on the ground - not true I was in my house!) - but it does show the track of our actual flight path returning to Biggin and the runways headings from our last flight.

Which iPad?

The choice of which iPad (mini or full size) is very important if you intend to use it in an aircraft. Only the 3G (cellular) version has built in GPS. There does seem to be some confusion here as when my flying partner bought one he was told that he would need a Bluetooth or plug in GPS unit as the 3G model found its position using 3G - that was incorrect. He bought the basic model and a separate GPS which plugs in and although it works, its signal is sometimes flaky and it loses position, whereas

on the 3G model I have it has never lost its signal. He was also told the separate GPS unit would be more accurate - side by side ours run identically. In addition the extra cost of the standalone GPS means it costs as much as the one with it built-in - so be warned if you buy one! *(Currys/PC World would not sell one without a sim card! John Lewis did and include a longer guarantee! Ed)*

The App

Sky demon can be bought as an app through the "App store". It will also run on an iPhone which is handy if you fancy a bit of quick flight planning when on a train or just mooching about (and could be a handy back up unit while flying).

It cost £179 for the first year and £89 each year thereafter - it includes all updates and aviation maps throughout Europe and elsewhere. Pooley's or AFE airfield plates can be bought for another £25 (they are handy when planning if the paper version is not to hand and are instantly accessible in flight if they have been downloaded to the iPad).

Flying Abroad

SkyDemon is also brilliant when flying abroad. - Filing flight plans and GAR's are simple. - The flight plans cost is £1 each. It remembers regularly used information about you and the aircraft and takes seconds to file! We have used it many times without a blip.

The Kit

The cost of the cheapest Mini pad with Wi-Fi and cellular is £349. The retina screen version starts at £419 (the basic one seems fine to me, but I've never used a retina one).

It is a shaper image though—if you can justify the extra £70. It might be worth checking for lower prices on the earlier version from different 'resellers'. The retina display version has an A7 chip, same as iPad Air and uses GLONASS in addition to GPS. It is slightly thicker and heavier. Apple do not list the technical features of the standard display with cellular on their website! - Ed.

We bought a clip to mount the iPad in the Jodel for about £25

SkyDemon's iPad page: <http://www.skydemon.aero/start/ipad.aspx>

You can buy an iPad from the apple store and many other retail outlets as well as from John Lewis on line when you can then collect from your local Waitrose the following day! *(If you buy from the Apple Store at Bluewater they will demonstrate it, although you can book a free demo either way Ed.)*

SkyDemon also run on Android tablets and Smart phones in case you are that way inclined!

Ripple Fly-in Post Code CT14 8JL

From Dover Road in Walmer take Station Road towards Great Mongeham, continue into Ellens Road, straight over the crossroad. Turn left at the T junction, Mongeham Road. Turn left up Mantles Hill and first left into the drive.

If you like country lanes, from the Whitfield roundabout take the 1st exit- Sandwich Road then immediately right into Archers Court Road by The Archer Inn, continue straight on towards Sutton (Forge Lane and Vale Road) right into Sutton Lane and left into Mongeham Road. (At least that's what my new iPad suggests!)

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There are Maps in both June 2013 and June 2012 newsletters on the website.

Please display the attached poster for our big weekend! 2-3rd August.

*L*addingford Fly-in 26th July PPR
Dave Watts. 07712 502030

Apologies to new member Derek Goldsmith from Edenbridge—last line from last month's newsletter went missing!

Dates for your Diary

26th June Strut BBQ at Ripple

July 12/13th Heveningham Hall

July Strut meeting will be held over to the first weekend of August for a BBQ and fly-in at Rochester—2nd/3rd August.

26th July Kent Strut invited to

Laddingford Fly-in. (bad weather backup date Sun 27th)

PPR Dave Watts 07712 502030

1st August Young Aviators Day EGLG

10th August Panshanger Revival Day

16th August Combined Ops Airshow

Headcorn which will also feature the Canadian Lancaster with the BBMF

28th August Strut Meeting BBQ EGTO

25th September Strut Meeting,

Aviation Lawyer, Tim Scorer

30th October Strut Meeting

Tempsford SOE airfield

Fr. Peter Geldard