



November 2015

SKYWRITINGS

Newsletter of the *Kent Strut*



Last newsletter before Christmas Dinner!

Meetings

November

Steve Slater, the new LAA CEO is coming to tell us about what's happening at head office. It does not seem long since Phil Hall came to speak to us (March last year). So come and find out what's changed or changing. One thing the CAA have done is make it easier for small companies to get their designs approved at much lower cost. Brian has written a note for the newsletter on the new Wings Awards so come armed with questions.

December

There is no newsletter in December but we have our Christmas Dinner on Saturday the 12th December at the same location as the previous three years. A little



Nigel Read - Editor

Contents

*Christmas Dinner venue
map p2*

*New Met office Web
site p2*

Lucy's Italian trip p3

LAA Wings p7

26th November Meeting

Steve Slater, LAA CEO

Cobtree Manor Golf Club, ME14 3AZ 20:00hrs

12th December Christmas Dinner

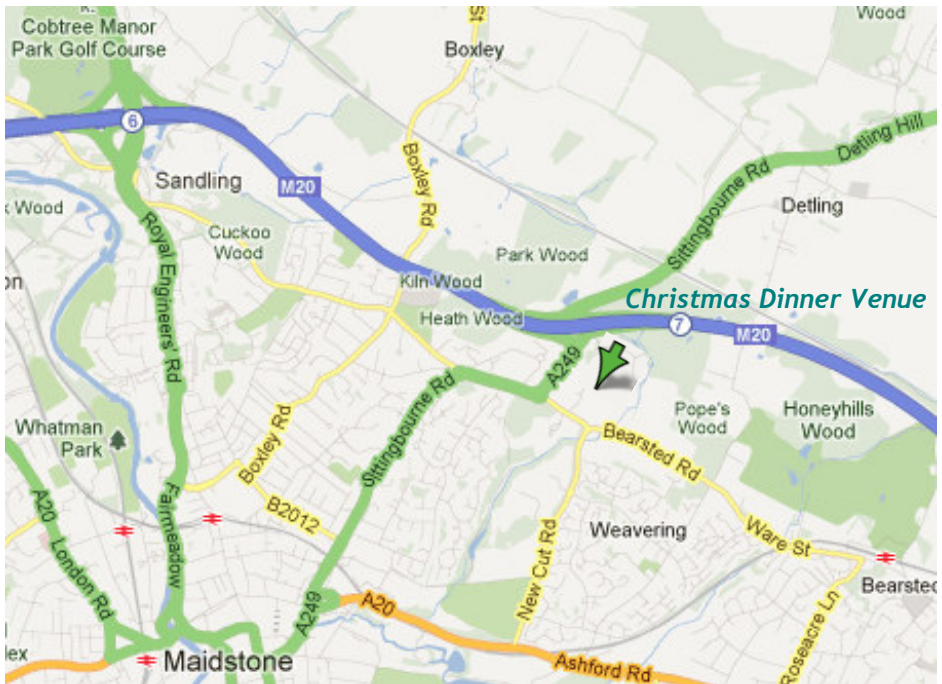
Monies and selections to Peter Huxley!

Newnham Court Inn, ME14 5LH 20:00hrs

www.laakentstrut.org.uk

disappointing for some last year but we were late starting so we shall see what happens this year. Plenty of atmosphere upstairs at this busy pub.

If you have not been before Newnham Court Inn is near Junction 7 of the M20, just one junction east from the usual Bluebell Hill turning for the Golf Club. At the A249, head towards Maidstone and left at the roundabout towards Bearstead. Newnham Court Shopping Village is next left and the Pub is to the right as you enter. If coming from the east on the A20 and Bearstead Road there is no right turn into Newnham Court, so double back at the roundabout. Likewise when leaving you have to turn left and double back at a small roundabout at the junction with New Cut Road to return to the M20.



New Met Office Weather Site

The old weather site is going and it is necessary to re-register for the new one to check those TAF's and METARS. Register at this web address:

<https://register.metoffice.gov.uk/WaveRegistrationClient/public/newaccount.do?service=generalaviation>

Is there a prize for registering at the first attempt?

Lucy's Landaways

As those of you who read last year's exploits may remember, we were in Switzerland and Mike said "Italy is just over those mountains, maybe we could go there sometime!"

Well almost a year later that's what we were planning, not over those mountains as Lucy is only a poor little 65hp Luscombe and we probably wouldn't have enough fuel to get that high.

We were told about a vintage fly-in at Montegnana so that would give us a reason to go. We had already made a rough plan to go to Genova and were told that this was only about half an hour further.

As the Luscombe only has a comparatively short endurance we were once again making plans to stop within 2 hours on each leg. The first stop would, as has become common practice, be at Abbeville where we would refuel, clear customs, remove life jackets, get coffee and do all the other things necessary at this stage.

Mike suggested that I go halves with him on purchasing Sky Demon as it would work out cheaper than buying the individual maps and has a lot of other benefits such as flight planning, Notams, well loads of things. Mike being the computer whizz that he is got me round to his place to show me how it all worked and to set it up on my iPad, or was it that he got me round to show him how to get it downloaded? Whatever.

Planning started in earnest. We had already borrowed some old maps from Gary Smith so that we could do some initial planning and therefore had a rough idea of what we were going to do. Lines were drawn on Sky Demon, then we rubbed the chinagraph off the screen when we found that it will work with a finger, and the rough route was planned. We would be going down through France and then from the south of France into Italy and then up through Italy to Montegnana, sounds easy doesn't it?

When doing a trip like this it's not a bad idea to ask around to get ideas and information from others who have been there and done it. We have a plethora of knowledge in the Strut and fortunately there is quite a lot of it at Farthing Corner where we are based.

The rough plan was to go from Abbeville down the west side of Paris then down to the Lyon area for an overnight stop and to continue the next day to Cuers then over to Albenga in Italy and up to Montegnana. Still sounds easy dunnit?



For some reason these trips seem to get planned to start on the night of the Ripple BBQ, this year was because I was to start a new job and this was the only time I could get away.

Sky Demon gives you lots of info such as letting you know that the route you've planned is covered by a big circle of TMZ, not a problem if you have a transponder but we don't so it was plan B. The next plan was to fly from Abbeville to Troyes to refuel. Nice airfield Troyes and the manager came out to have a look at Lucy commenting on how nice she is and that he remembered us going there last year. We decided that we should top up the spare oil supplies and got this from the maintenance hangar. They were very helpful there and a young lady helped to relieve us of our cash, not the cheapest oil but at least we could get some which can be a bit of a stumbling block in France. We were told that there is a good family run "cave" a few minutes drive from the airport where you can get good champagne very cheaply, we have also been told that the town is a very nice place to visit, maybe one day.

The leg after Troyes took us pretty much due south to Villefranche-Tarare. When doing this sort of trip I like to make sure that we can get fuel and whatever else we may need such as overnight stays etc. it's also quite a good idea to speak to areas where there could be restricted access. On this trip it was Le Luc airspace so I phoned them well in advance and they told me that there would be no problem. I sent an email to Tarare but heard nothing back by about a week before departure so I telephoned the airfield and was told that fuel and overnight was no problem. On arrival we met Patric the manager who made everything easy for us by booking a hotel while we went to the bar and then offered to drive us to the hotel and to pick us up in the morning. The hotel was about a 15 minute drive from the airport and there was a decent restaurant nearby and a really good patisserie across the road. This is in the Beaujolais region so I bought a bottle of 2012 Beaujolais Nouveau as Del Boy would say.

Next morning was the interesting bit, down the Rhone valley hoping that the Mistral wasn't blowing. Sorry, I forgot, there's this safety equipment called a transponder which lets everybody know where you are in zones which tend to be located in nice big flat areas, we don't have one so we get to fly over the 6000 ft mountains and valleys instead of down through the valley. It was a good flight, looking at the map shows lots of useful land features such as railways (not many in the mountains),

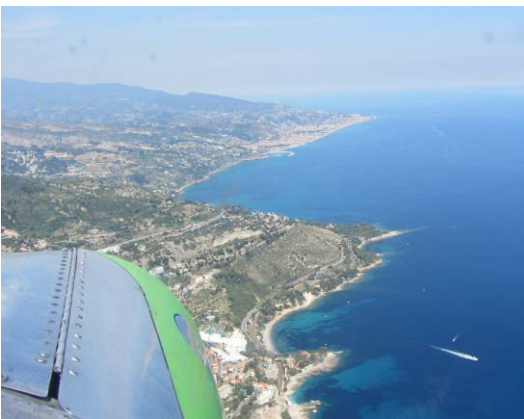


rivers (all dry in the summer), towns (few and far between in mountains) and roads (again, not many) so luckily we had GPS.

Next stop Cuers which is a part civil and part Navy airport. You don't get to speak to Cuers until you are nearly in the circuit as you are speaking to Le Luc which, when you are expecting to be landing at a busy airport is a little disconcerting. It turned out that Cuers isn't a busy place at all so we landed and taxied for fuel. Next little snag. This was when we were told that there was no fuel available for three hours as they were just getting a delivery and it needed to settle. Now, Albenga is about an hour and a half from here and Montegnana (remember we were told 30 mins) is over an hour and a half from there, plus, there's no fuel at Montegnana so it means another 15 minutes each way to get fuel. This was where plan C came in, over a pleasant lunch in the flying club where, as with a lot of French airfields, lots of locals also come for lunch. We'll go to Albenga and stay a couple of nights by the seaside.

Remember the bit about asking for advice from others, check it out.

We flight planned from Cuers to Albenga. There's a low level route along the coast past Nice, should be pleasant flying along the coast below 500 feet. We had taken advice on this and were assured by others who had been that way before that although it was class D airspace as it was a VFR route we would be ok without a transponder. After taking off from Cuers we called Nice info who were very nice but told us we couldn't fly the low level route, we had to go over the hilly stuff behind them, only about 4000 ft at the highest point. While we were going over the hilly stuff they kept asking where we were and if we were a bit out they told us, this means they knew exactly who and where we were by radar so why not let us go the safer way?



Once into Italian airspace we could fly along the coast at whatever height we wanted to but stayed at about 2000 ft. There's a lot of that hilly stuff along the coast and when almost at Albenga you still can't see it. We coasted in and hopped over a 2000ft hill behind which there's a valley with a nice big runway in it. Circuits need to be quite tight as the ground rises on both sides. We refuelled and organised 2 nights parking then got a cab into town, not Albenga but

Allassio. As Mike snores we always try to get separate rooms and the woman in the



tourist information office did all she could to sort this out for 2 nights for us. As there weren't 2 single rooms in one hotel for 2 nights we had to change for the second night to 2 separate hotels.

It made a change to have time in one place rather than just a quick overnight stop where all you really see is the airport and the hotel. Alassio is a very touristy beach resort and as far as we could make out most of the visitors are Italian, although we did meet a Dutch couple for a chat over coffee.

The trip home was via the same places as the trip there, the weather was good for the whole weekend, it was 35 degrees in Tarare, and everything went pretty much to plan.

We left on Thursday morning and landed back at EGMF on Monday afternoon just as planned and flew for around 9 and a half hours each. The cost was a little more than EasyJet but more fun.

Next year it could be the Scillies, Scotland or somewhere else in Switzerland. I think Mike likes places starting with S so I had better be careful that he doesn't plan for Sudan or Syria.

NO! I've seen the airspace warnings, I'm thinking Scandinavia.....Mike. (Simon also snores, it's a mutual decision!) - *Mike Negus & Simon Pratt*

I think this one is for the other member of the Lucy group!



DEVELOP YOUR SKILLS AND GET MORE FROM YOUR FLYING By Brian Hope.

During the summer, the CAA launched a pilot safety initiative they called PROUD. To be honest it sounds more like they started with the acronym and worked backwards, as PROUD stands for the particularly uninspiring - *Pilot Recognition for Operational Up-skilling and Development*. However, don't let the title put you off because this could be one of the better ideas the CAA has had with regard to encouraging pilots to take competence and safety more seriously. In line with the GA Unit's current philosophy of reducing regulation and letting the sporting bodies take on more responsibility, the idea behind PROUD is that organisations like the LAA devise their own on-going pilot mentoring or training schemes, which CAA will then give the PROUD stamp of endorsement. As LAA already has the Pilot Coaching Scheme (PCS), it was already part way there, and the head of the PCS, Jon Cooke, very soon developed LAA WINGS, and the scheme received its CAA PROUD endorsement certificate at the LAA Sywell Rally in early September.

LAA WINGS is open to LAA members and non-members alike and offers pilots the opportunity to get more from their flying whilst improving their skills. It also provides a competitive element in that pilots are encouraged to earn their Bronze, Silver and ultimately Gold LAA Wings by fulfilling a number of training tasks, flight hours and navigational challenges. Many new pilots fall beside the wayside after only a couple of years because taking your family and friends for a local jolly soon palls. The LAA WINGS scheme offers an alternative challenge which might just encourage them, and more experienced pilots, to continue development into more competent and experienced pilots.

LAA WINGS is designed to improve skill levels, either with mentoring from your local flying club or school, or via the LAA Pilot Coaching Scheme (PCS). Each level, Bronze, Silver or Gold, requires a rising level of completion of:

- Minimum flight experience (Total hours and PIC flown)

- Completion of a number of achievements (Night, IMCR, Strip flying, tailwheel training etc)

- Safety Event attendance (CAA/GASCo Safety presentations etc)

- Navigational challenges (Long distance cross-country flights)

Full qualifying criteria of what is required can be found on the www.laawings.co.uk website where you can download an application form.

Cost and complication have been kept to an absolute minimum. A fair number of pilots will already have sufficient experience to apply for Bronze LAA Wings. For example, if you have a minimum 100 hours flight time (50 PIC), have attended an approved Safety Event and have carried out a flight of at least 200 miles with two intermediate stops, then you can apply immediately! More experience, additional flying skills and higher achievements will enable you to move on to SILVER and ultimately those coveted LAA GOLD Wings.

Having downloaded and completed the simple wings application form, you simply present it, with supporting documentation, to a LAA Coach, LAA Strut Co-ordinator, or the CFI at a Registered Facility or Approved Training Organisation for verification

Committee Contacts**Co-ordinator: Gary Smith****Tel : 01795 422426**gary.james.smith@btinternet.com**Treasurer:****John Dean 01892 822776**john@jmdean.co.uk**Membership Secretary:****Stephen Solley 07836 653257**sc.solley@solleysicecream.co.uk**Newsletter Editor:****Nigel Read 01634 362375**skywritings@tesco.net**Committee Members:****Mike Negus 01634 364396****Mark Balding 01580 851112****Brian Hope 01795 662508****Simon Pratt 07973 402986****Frank Lissimore 07798 900220****Peter Huxley 07899 015287****Glen Everett 01622 858956**

Download a LAA
Wings poster and
display it in your
local flying club!

www.solleysicecream.co.uk

and send it to LAA HQ. It is FREE for LAA members, and costs non-members £15 to cover administration costs.

Provided the relevant requirements are met, the appropriate LAA Wings award will be issued to you, recognising your achievement. You'll receive a special LAA lapel pin accompanied by a signed LAA Wings certificate.

I have no doubt we have a fair number of pilots within the Strut who have sufficient experience to be Gold, Silver or Bronze LAA Wings recipients, and for those who don't, I think it is a worthwhile challenge to work towards.

Dates for your Diary**26th November Strut Meeting**

28-29th FLYER Live at

The International Centre, Telford

St Quentin Gate, Telford, Shropshire
TF3 4JH**12th December Christmas Dinner ...**

Newnham Court Inn,

Bearsted Road, Weaving,

Maidstone, Kent ME14 5LH

**Peter Huxley will be collecting
deposits:-**Peter Huxley, Flat 13, Trumpet House,
Godfrey Walk, Ashford, TN23 7XQ