

January 2016

SKYWRITINGS

Newsletter of the *Kent Strut*



Happy New Year and 70th for the LAA, 2016



Nigel Read - Editor

AGM

Now before you go looking for some lame excuse to avoid the AGM, Gary assures me it will be over very quickly and we have some film to show and have a good old natter afterwards.

Volunteers for the committee

Simon Pratt in his new role of Highway Patrol Officer has decided with shifts he cannot reliably find time to be on the committee and is standing down. So anyone who would like to join the committee have a think about it and let Gary or one of the committee members know either before the AGM or at the meeting. Meetings are usually on the Wednesday following our monthly meetings.

Skywritings 2015 started with articles in January from Peter Huxley (another this month) reports on the Canadian Lancaster visit the previous year (was it really that long ago) and a report on the Concorde talk from the previous November. February we had the Weslake Diesel talk, an article on the Goodwood Revival and the new website came online. March had more on the diesel and the e-Go and a bit of Qantas History. Malcolm McBride visited us in March. April's talk was from Air Commodore Bill Croydon on Eastchurch, there was a lot on Southend's Airspace and on Formation Flying. May had reports on Ian McLeod's Pietenpol, the history of Naval flying from Eastchurch and action during the First World War, various airfield visitors and bit of a quiz made up from a colourful photograph as it tied in with PAFRA's upcoming NavEx. It also doubled as the newsletter header. June saw our

28th January Meeting

AGM & slide show, Rare German WWII aircraft
Cobtree Manor Golf Club, ME14 3AZ 20:00hrs

www.laakentstrut.org.uk

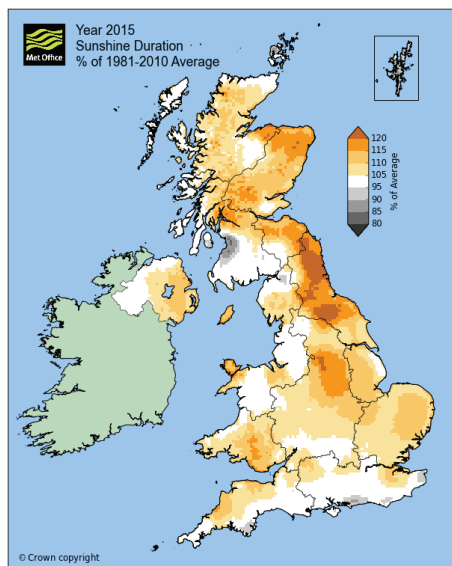
first 'away day' at Steve Solley's Ripple airstrip, Peter Huxley's first article on searching for an aeroplane and Peter Geldard's follow up talk to Tempsford on operation Jericho. And Gary received a Royal Aero Club Gong. July had reports on fly-ins and outs to Ripple (of course), Shobdon, Laddingford and Heveningham Hall. August had a report on Gary Smith's and Ron Parkers long trip by RV to Spain and Portugal and pictures of our strut fly-in to Rochester which was our July meeting but was held at the beginning of August rather than our usual last Thursday of the month. September reviewed Sedlescombe fly-in and our second trip to Rochester for the BBQ. It was also the month for the LAA rally. Russell Savory and Denis Stretton from Stow Maries came along in September with a demonstration of Drones and Octobers *Skywritings* reported this along with Mike Tooze's holiday trip to Amiens, the strut fly-out to Abbeville and the 'free the Jodel' fly-in at Lee on Solent. In November Steve Slater, LAA CEO gave a talk, the newsletter had Mike Negus' and Simon Pratt's Luscombe adventure to Italy. The new initiative to encourage 'up skilling' - the LAA Wings scheme was explained by Brian Hope. Who's the first strut member to apply for his wings?

Meetings Steve Slater, November 2015

We have just under 7000 members with 330 inspectors. "The inspection system is the Jewel in the crown of the LAA." There was talk of introducing a three year permit system like C of A aircraft with the inspector extending the validity each year. Most of engineering's time is taken up on mods. Various suggestions were made from the floor, Steve stating he was there to listen – to 6880 bosses. And the LAA is 70 this year.



Steve Slater

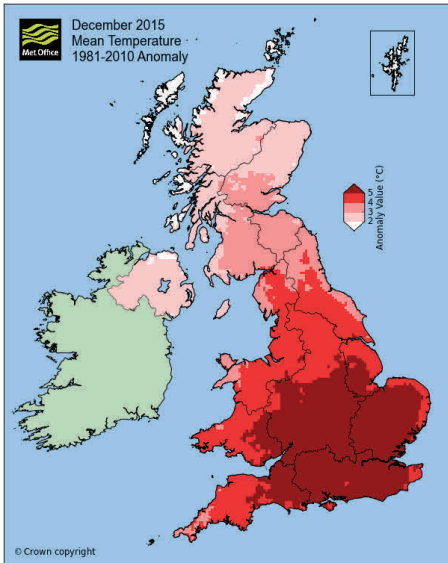


While reviewing 2015, I thought I would take a look at the weather!

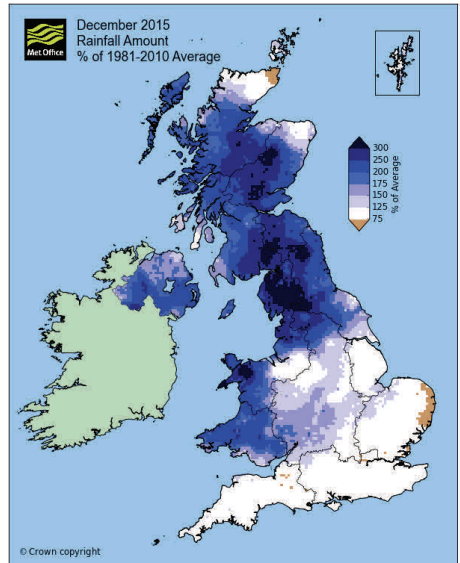
All the details are here :-

www.metoffice.gov.uk/climate/uk/summaries/2015

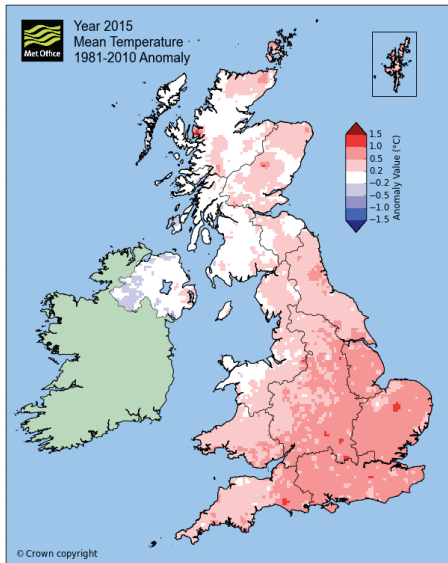
Lots of multi coloured maps, this one compares the amount of sunshine for the year as a percentage of the average for the years 1981 to 2010. So it was about average for us in the South East, not sure if it felt like that but they did well up north until the rain came. Presumably it is fairly easy to total up the number of minutes the sun shone or the inches of rainfall but how are the following charts of mean temperature arrived at? Average of Max and Min, measure every hour, anyone know?



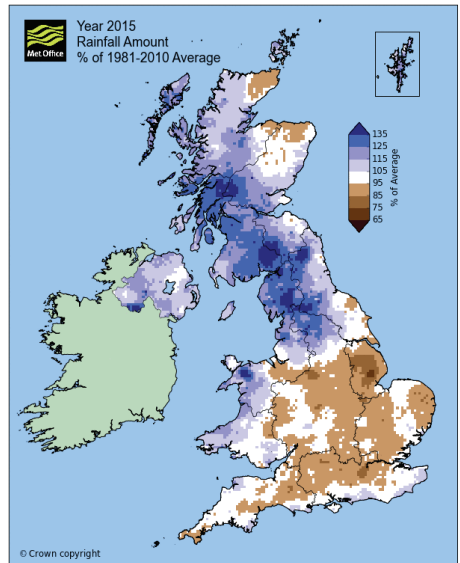
4 or 5° above normal in December



A very Dry December!



A little warmer than average for the year, warmer southerly winds filling in for the sun?



About average rainfall for the year for Kent, over a third more in the north West.



Copyright hjcurtis@aol.com, 2007 With permission Howard J Curtis

First Find a Plane Part 2 Peter Huxley

A few months ago (June) I wrote part 1 of this article which related a sorry tale of unfulfilled searching for an aeroplane and now the saga continues. After failing to negotiate a deal on an Emeraude and finding that the Jodel wasn't the right size for David, it was a question of seeing what might become available next. There was a Condor advertised but David wasn't taken with the idea but then another Emeraude came onto the market and again it was in the West Country. It was expensive but it had just undergone a total rebuild so it was worth a look and David drove down to see it. However, he was underwhelmed both by its condition and his reception. He thought the paint finish was unimpressive and there were no logbooks to see so again he was frustrated at having driven a long way for no reward. By now it was frustrating for both of us as the choices of aircraft were limited, in part because we had decided to restrict ourselves to certain types. We could have opened up the range to high wing and even tricycle undercarriage but neither of us was keen to own such a machine so it would be better to wait. David then decided to go back to the first Emeraude and see if he could negotiate a better deal. This coincided with a hiccup in my finances which might prevent me from participating in the deal, at least for a while but it also coincided with the seller deciding to reduce his price so that he could move on. David agreed a price but then double-checked with me to see if I was able to join him and fortunately my difficulties had been resolved and I willingly agreed. At this stage, neither of us had flown the aeroplane but as it was in use that seemed more of a formality and besides, both of us would need type training so we weren't in a good position to judge it. What was agreed though, was that we would arrange collection, which Jim Stevens agreed to do and he would check it out before

bringing it to Kent. Another difficulty was that while we had been trying to find an aircraft, I had been trying to find somewhere to put it and now the need was pressing. Some months before, I had asked to go on the list at Headcorn but there was still nothing available so I then started phoning round. I tried several airfields, both public and private but no-one had any hangar space. All of them had open air parking but that's not an option with a wooden aircraft and it was beginning to look as if we would have to delay collection, perhaps even buying it then keeping it at Dunkswell until we found a space. At the last minute Headcorn turned up trumps and we were able to go ahead. Jim was driven down and flew it, declaring it serviceable and brought it back one sunny day in July. His report on the aeroplane was generally favourable, though noting that the stall was quite severe as it would drop the starboard wing suddenly and to quite an angle; with its elliptical wing he wasn't particularly surprised, it just needed the pilot to be aware of it. He also noted that the dynamo didn't seem to be charging, an event that presaged another saga in itself.

The main thing now was for David and me to get converted to type but that's proved to be easier said than done. Both of us had much of our time taken by work but also the weather in August wasn't conducive to flying, at least not in a small aeroplane on a grass runway. We both managed a few flights but I was disturbed to find that any finesse I'd learned in order to land a light, low-powered aeroplane such as I'd learned on the Condor, seemed to have deserted me. Admittedly, that was five years before and I'd only flown Robins at Headcorn for a few months prior to this purchase but in the Emeraude I was downright clumsy. My basic flying was passable but my circuit work wasn't and Jim wondered if I was paying attention to his instruction as I repeatedly bumped it, off centre, onto the grass. Gradually I started to get somewhere near to being right but the flare was still catching me out until Jim had me try landing with only the first stage of flap. That made a huge difference as with the reduction of drag, the aeroplane didn't suddenly go to the wrong side of the drag curve as I eased the nose up, which had previously resulted in an undignified plummet to the ground. Perhaps it was only a foot but it felt like a lot more and on one occasion it was when I got out of sync with the procedure. No damage was done but with the change in flap setting, my landings were definitely improving, very much to Jim's relief as well as my own.

Unfortunately, through all this there were two technical problems which needed resolving. The dynamo, although it had been professionally refurbished a year before, wasn't working and then on another occasion David had been about to take-off with his instructor when fuel poured onto the instructor's feet. This was followed by an emergency stop and hurried exit but no damage was done. There had been a minor fuel leak from one of the pipes on the engine side of the firewall but that couldn't have accounted for fuel leaking to the cockpit. Also, it seemed only to happen if the tank was full. Gary Smith thought it might be from the filler neck which seemed to have been roughly made and might be leaking there. Both the fuel leak and the dynamo proved to be mini sagas with much work by Gary to find a cure, especially for the dynamo.

Flying had come to a halt through most of September as the permit needed to be renewed, during which time a replacement dynamo was found and fitted. It's not a particularly easy job, as anyone with a Continental engine will know, with the added difficulty on the Emeraude of having the engine quite close to the firewall,

restricting access even further. This wasn't the success hoped for and eventually another dynamo was found, along with a replacement for the regulator which eventually led to a combination that worked and we had amps! The tank seemed to be OK after some sealing around the filler pipe but next time David filled the tank for a flight, fuel again spilled onto the instructor's feet when the tail was raised and the only option was to remove the tank for a thorough investigation. It wasn't a prospect that we relished but there was no real choice; we tried getting a borescope into the space but that wasn't possible so the tank had to come out. Considering its position behind the instrument panel, the tank came out reasonably easily and on first inspection gave no clue as to the cause of the leak. There was no separate breather or overflow pipe, nor any obvious damage or crack in the tank. There were signs of previous repairs but nothing at first to give a clue to the problem. However, further investigation showed wherein the problem lay. The tank is almost flat-topped and in that area is a small well, in the bottom of which is mounted the fuel gauge sender. The gasket for it had deteriorated so that when the tank was full, fuel seeped past it and filled the well. When the tail, was raised, especially when accompanied by bumping along the runway prior to take-off, the puddle of fuel overflowed and dripped down onto the instructor's feet. The gasket was replaced and then the tank was pressure tested and declared serviceable, followed by the less than simple task of getting the tank back into its hole. It was fiddled back into place and everything attached, with some little troubles to overcome but at last we had, we hoped, a fully serviceable aeroplane.

To be continued—on p8!



Christmas Dinner revellers

*Christmas Dinner revellers -
Mike Negus in the spotlight
calling out the raffle winning
numbers*



*More Christmas Dinner
revellers and I didn't have
to say cheese.*



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

Reminder: Annual subs are now due in January, so if you have not renewed yet please let Steve Solley have your £20. If you have then thank you.

2015's charity donation

The Aviation for Paraplegics and Tetraplegics Charitable Trust at Old Sarum are the recipients of £558.91 from our fly-ins and Christmas raffle.
www.disabledflying.org.uk



www.solleysicecream.co.uk

Cont... from p6

Overall the work took four weeks as we fitted the task into work commitments but as we all know the autumn/winter weather had become at best, uninspiring and mostly unsuitable for flying. This was confirmed when the first booking was made to fly but Headcorn's runway was closed as it was water-logged. Since then the rain has continued, frequently accompanied by strong southerly winds, so that even if the runway was useable the crosswind would have been well beyond the aeroplane's capabilities, let alone mine in my current state of practise. I'm sure it will all come right soon although it has been a rough ride but at least I'm still laughing.

**Dates for your Diary**

28th January AGM and slide show

25th February

31st March

28th April

26th May

30th June—Ripple Fly-in

28th July or

?30th July possible alternative fly-in?

25th August

29th September

27th October

24th November

Christmas Dinner December TBA

Coming
soon:—Tea