



July 2016

SKYWRITINGS

Newsletter of the *Kent Strut*



Ripple BBQ a success for Martha Trust

Ripple BBQ Thursday 30th June

Steve Solley once again hosted the strut at his strip near Deal but also asked along his favourite charity, the Martha Trust, along with a local car club and his neighbours. Just five aircraft flew in, Rans Coyote II, Piper Sport, Reims Cessna Aerobat, Technam Sierra and Helicopter Exec 162F plus Steve's resident Jodel D112.

The Marha Trust provide inclusive, lifelong care for people with profound physical and multiple learning disabilities. £1100 was raised! marthatrust.org.uk

Cross Channel Trip

As you probably know by now, if you read the note at the end of the last newsletter the cross channel trip organised for the LAA as part of the 70th anniversary had to be cancelled due to poor weather forecast for the return trip. The backup plan for Sunday was also cancelled. A couple of keen flyers arrived at Rochester on Friday having left earlier before the decision taken to abandon things. John and Gary put a lot of work into preparing flight plans and GAR forms in advance but the eleven documents Gary prepared detailing instructions for cross channel flying will provide a basis for those pilots who registered to try again, subject to checking for currency. Like the decision in the next article it proved to be the correct one.



Nigel Read - Editor

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28th July Meeting

Social get together at Farthing Corner Airfield

A Natter with Tea & Biscuits from 7pm

www.laakentstrut.org.uk

Further Adventures of the Meandering Luscombe Simon Pratt (aided and abetted by Mike Negus)



Those of you who have been reading this publication for a few years will know about the Luscombe long weekends. Simon and Mike have been to France, Switzerland, Germany and Italy. This year it was decided to stay fairly local and just go to France. These trips have normally been blessed with pretty good weather, it couldn't last could it?

Having made some sort of decision on which airports to visit and what route to take it was time to look at Sky Demon to check on airspace. As most of you know, the Luscombe is a basic old bird with only enough electrics on board to power the intercom and emergency back up for the hand held radio, therefore no transponder. The French, in their wisdom, have decided to activate three large TMAs for the whole of the summer spreading across from Paris to the west coast and a bit further. This means that without a transponder the route has to be round the east side of Paris.

Route planned, Abbeville to clear customs and refuel then down to Troyes for fuel and an overnight stay as people had said how nice the town was. All went well thus far and going onto [booking.com](https://www.booking.com) found a two bedroom apartment for very reasonable money which was just a 5 minute walk from the pedestrianised old town centre. The town is very old with lots of interesting buildings and at least four big churches, not sure why so many churches.

Day 2 broke nicely and breakfast taken at a local patisserie. A short walk to Gare De Troyes station and a taxi back to the airport.

As some of you will have realised, when you call a taxi in France the meter starts from when they get the call so getting a taxi from the airport costs about double the amount paid when flagging one down to go back.

The flight to Le Mans went well but the vis reduced a little as it got closer. Just after arrival the sky began to clear and as fuel was not available for another hour and a half lunch was taken. On checking the weather, although it was starting to look a bit better, there was a forecast of some dodgy looking stuff coming in from the way we wanted to go (La Baule). The decision was made to return to Troyes and then head back home next day.

Calling Troyes brought a reply of "hello again" and instruction to land on 17. Having been watching smoke from various places all the way up it seemed odd that 35 was not the runway of choice but it's not always a good idea to argue with the flight info person and there was another aircraft positioning for 17 so there was no argument. Shortly before turning onto downwind for 17 a call came over the radio to use 35 so left base was called and the landing followed shortly afterward. A call to taxi to the fuel pump was answered with "Yes you know the way. I saw you here last year, is the aeroplane for sale?" He was told that it wasn't and he said that if it was at any time to let him know.

Back to town and found a hotel this time, it cost a bit more than the apartment but had wifi, breakfast on site and a bowl of sweets on the counter which reduced in quantity during check in for some reason.

At this point there was more checking on Sky Demon, this brought bad news. The weather was showing that the rain and storm was coming up and past Troyes that evening and possibly going to be around the next day. There was another minor snag. Sky Demon tells you basically what you ask it, until now it hadn't been asked about temporary airspace on 11th. Football doesn't appear to be followed by many pilots and due to a game or two being played in France there was another TMA to the east of Paris stopping access to Abbeville from Troyes until 13th. Another route was found which would mean going north to Belgium and stopping for fuel and customs at Kortrijk. This route has no bolt holes available and is very narrow so if weather becomes a problem it would be bad news. Speaking of weather, the forecast was looking worse.

Another evening in town and another very nice meal with, as you would expect in France, pleasant efficient service.

Some sort of decision had to be made, the options were considered.

Option 1. Stay another two nights in Troyes hoping that the weather is good enough on Monday to get up to Abbeville and then home.

Option 2. As soon as there's a window in the weather take the Belgian route.

Option 3. Go home by train and return at a later date to collect the aeroplane.

Option 4. Take up the offer from the tower to buy the aeroplane and get another one when we get back home.

Option 3 was the winner. A train was caught from Troyes to Paris Est. Paris Nord station is a 10 minute stroll from Paris Est so this was done and tickets booked on the next Eurostar out of town. Tickets on the Eurostar can apparently be purchased for as little as 35 euros, not last minute they can't, so after parting with 101 euros each the next stop was for lunch to fill an hour and a half before checking in for the train.

There are, unsurprisingly, lots of eateries close to Paris Nord station and a traditional pizza restaurant was selected. Following a light snack of 10 inch pizza with chips and a banana split for one and a carbonara and 2 boules of ice cream for the other the train was beckoning.

On the whole of the two train journeys the view from the windows confirmed that the decision to return home by land was the right one.

On arrival at Ebbsfleet, a mere 2 hours after leaving Paris, there was a car waiting driven by the ever helpful Jim.

An email arrived the next day from Troyes airport to say that putting the aeroplane in the hangar was a good idea as it has rained very heavily that day and night.

What to do about recovery, well look out for the next exciting installment of the Luscombe meanderings.



Things don't always go as planned -(should I blame Brexit) Frank Lissimore

June is the month for our annual week flying trip. Our Jodel 1050 G-BLKM has taken myself and Peter, the co-owner, to numerous countries in Europe over the past 11 years - including Corsica Germany Switzerland France Spain Sweden Denmark Scotland and Ireland - this year it was to be Italy.

Our plan was to leave on a Saturday - fly down to Avignon in France for the first night - then onto Pisa in Italy for an overnight stay - over to the Adriatic coast overnight - back across to the Isle of Elba then return via Cannes- well that was the plan and we had built in a few bad weather days just in case to be back 8 days later and return to work.

It turned out Peter was unwell on the Saturday so we could not leave in the end until the Tuesday, but we still had the chance of getting to Pisa at least-the first days route was to be Biggin -Troyes -Dijon and Avignon, about 6 hours flying in the Jodel - our preferred limit in one day.

I had checked that avgas was available at the airfields - particularly because of the industrial action that has been effecting France- - *SkyDemon* came in really useful here - with its easy use of notams and having all the French plates downloaded and available at any time. The weather forecast was not brilliant so we did not depart Biggin until 1pm - so we decided to stop and clear customs in Le Touquet - check weather and then fly onto Troyes for an overnighter. Having left Le Touquet with a cloud base about 1500ft but good visibility all was ok until 15 miles past Amiens when the cloud base started to get lower and lower. Once down to 900ft we thought time to turn around- so diverted to Amiens.

We had trouble communicating with Amiens as on Tuesdays it was French speaking only and with our lack of French and the person on the radios lack of English , but with the weather deteriorating we decided to carry on regardless, safety first and land! - Within 10 minutes it was pouring down

Once on the ground we were fortunate that an English speaking controller turned up and very helpfully provided us with avgas with payment by credit card - asked if we had made a diversionary bad weather landing and as we had- did not charge a landing fee. Then she ordered us a taxi into town. She then told us there was a music festival in town that night, so I booked a hotel and awaited the Taxi.



We had certainly chosen a great night to be in Amiens as there were bands and singers in almost every restaurant and bar as well as on various stages in the main streets. It really had a party atmosphere. Apparently, throughout France, many towns have a music festival of local musicians on the 21 June

each year- something to remember and it was great fun.

Amiens itself is a definite must for a return visit- The Saint-Leu district is lovely at night. The quaiBélu, famous for its restaurants and cafés, takes on a cosy atmosphere. Amiens and its region boast a number of world heritage sites, such as the Notre-Dame d'Amiens cathedral, the Lucheux, Doullens and Amiens belfries and the Folleville church.



Amiens waterfront restaurants

(The man in river is in fact a wooden statue l'Homme sur saBouee (Man on the Buoy) in Somme river. The statue was carved by German artist Stephan Balkenhol in 1993.)

The next day, the weather was initially poor; we waited a bit and then got a taxi to the airfield (it seems that every taxi in France to an airfield costs 30 euros) for the flight to Avignon via Dijon Darois.

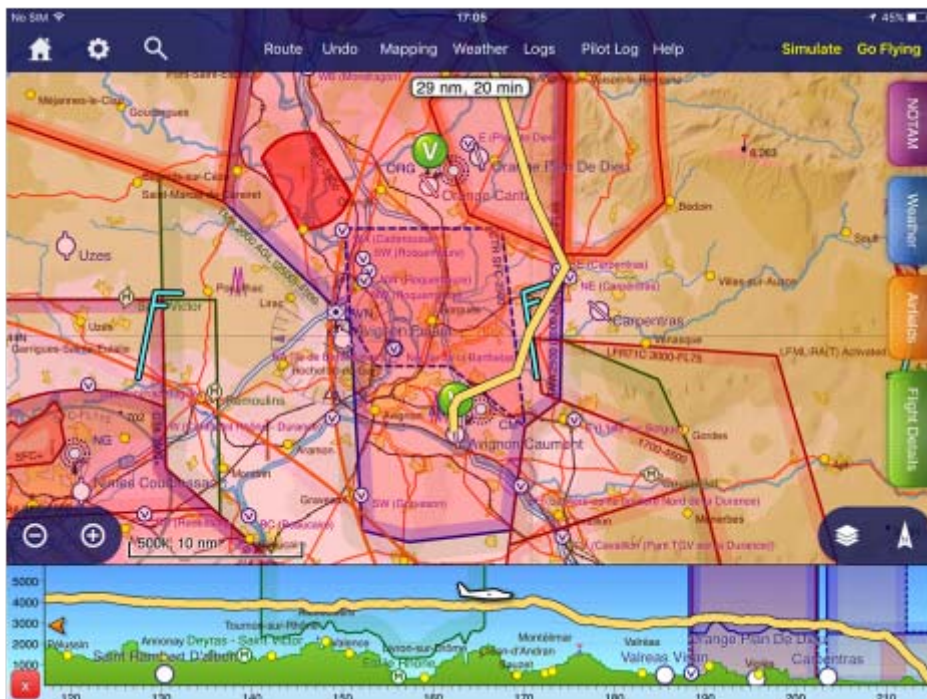
Two hours later we landed at Dijon - 193 nm with average speed 95Knots. The French controllers were helpful and I discovered a feature in *SkyDemon* that I had not noticed before, in that at the bottom of the screen - the virtual radar bit - it shows the frequency you should be speaking to and the next that will follow- very helpful.

Dijon Darois is where our Jodel was manufactured in 1963 - it's now the home of the Robin factory and it actually has a crossing over a public highway for aircraft to get into the Robin factory!

It's a small airfield - French speaking only, but they seemed quite happy that we had come to see them. Fuel was available immediately and the sun was shining- a quick turnaround and we were off to Avignon.

Although we have flown it a number of times before the route down south past Lyons, it always looks daunting - again *SkyDemon* make it simple with the notams popping up and active danger area alerts on tap. We routed to the east overhead

Macon then to the east of Orange. We were handed over to Orange approach and routed via the NE reporting point - again easy to spot on *SkyDemon* then over to Avignon Tower and on base leg and straight in on runway 17.



The magic of sky demon!

A great flight 215nm in 2hrs 15 mins.

The weather had been perfect and

there was a great forecast to the next day - Pisa was within our grasp!

Things then started to go a bit "off plan". The airfield called a taxi for us - it did not arrive - they called again - they called again - and again - Nearly two hours later it arrived - took us to the hotel (another 30 euro ride) to discover the room I had booked was no longer available! We found another hotel booked in and rushed out for a beer or three. Things were looking up.

The next morning, the weather was perfect but Peter felt unwell so we decided to stay for another night and have a tourist day.

Avignon is certainly a lovely city. The first place to visit was the bridge - so we could sing the song *Sur le pont d'Avignon!*

What we were not expecting was to get caught in a demonstration that seemed to come out of nowhere - I'm not quite sure what it was about but everyone seemed very jolly! Protest songs were sung and flares set off all along the bridge.

The historic centre of Avignon, which includes the [Palais des Papes](#), the [cathedral](#), and the [Pont d'Avignon](#), became a [UNESCO World Heritage Site](#) in 1995.

The next morning I was woken, by what as far as I was concerned was the disaster of Brexit - only then to discover that Peter was feeling much worse and needed to go home on the train - which meant me flying back on my Tod. Although I've flown abroad many times it's rarely been by myself and having checked the weather northwards, it did not look promising, that said, needs must. It felt a bit like an old Jeremy Clarkson Top Gear race with Peter getting a Taxi to the TGV station and I got one to the airfield. First one back to the UK wins.....

I was there by 8am ready to go, to discover the runway was closed until 9am for maintenance. I took off on the dot of 9am and routed the reverse of the journey down planning to stop again at Dijon then on to Troyes to clear customs and then straight back to Biggin.

Things went well, the weather was better than forecast and within 2 hours I was close to Dijon and then had a great plan - I could continue to Troyes, refuel, file flight plan and back to Biggin - I was definitely going to win the race! However 15



The demonstration!



The bridge - or what's left of it

miles from Troyes I ran into a wall of weather that was heading my way. Initially I thought I would divert into a small airfield nearby and *SkyDemon* was brilliant as I could check the details of the 3 nearby but in doing so realised that I might land and then be unable to get any fuel, so reluctantly I had to return to Dijon. So 3 hours after departing Avignon I was back on the ground at Dijon. Race lost!

Everyone at the flying club was talking about the bad weather heading towards the airfield, including a forecast of plenty of thunderstorms. The club offered me a place in the hanger, so at that point I decided to stay, get a taxi into town and explore Dijon.

I must say I would not put Dijon on my list of places to return to (apart from the airfield). The town was rather depressing and I was keen to get back to the airfield the following morning. That said if you do ever get stuck there I can thoroughly recommend the Kryiad Prestige Hotel in the town centre.

It was pouring with rain but I decided to go to the airfield by taxi and wait (another €30!). In fact I waited until 4:30 pm before it cleared. It did give time to read the entire *SkyDemon* Help manual - a worthwhile read!

I went for a walk and discovered an excellent local restaurant - La Montarge - about 20 mins walk away where I was served a huge goat's cheese salad for just €10, then back to the airfield.

Although the forecast was improving I decided to play safe and just fly to Auxerre-Branches, 70 miles and 45mins away where they had fuel, ATC, spoke English and had beautiful town, just a 30 euro taxi ride away...



Kilo Mike put to bed at Auxerre-Branches





*The town of Auxerre
was lovely*

It was now Sunday - Peter and I had been back home for 48 hours - I still had 290 miles to Biggin so the plan was to go west of Paris - direct to Le Touquet - file flight plan and then back to Biggin. The weather was ok - provided I was happy to fly at about 1200 feet. Then, about 20 miles from Le Touquet it

started to get a bit iffy and I was very pleased to see the airfield a short while later with the clouds at that point just up to circuit height!

Quick refuel, file flight plan care of *SkyDemon*, then a 55minute flight back to Biggin. Whilst at Le Touquet, the sun came out, the clouds vanished and I had a delightful final leg of the journey.

All in all a great flying experience for me - not so much for Peter (who I'm pleased to say has now recovered). There was some challenging flying at times, but I now feel a lot more confident, having made the flight back alone.

What a privilege to be able to have such a fantastic hobby and be able to fly our lovely LAA regulated aircraft!



Bit of a theme running through this edition of Skywritings but at least the weather held for the BBQ. Here is a selection of photos ..



Model T truck under restoration



Bruce heading home

Old and new Fire Engines!



Hillman Avenger Tiger



Jensen Interceptor III



Relatively modern cars

Souped up Beetle





What's the plan when it all goes up in smoke? Gary Smith.

If you were asked to name a piece of safety equipment most people would choose the fire extinguisher. The principle operation of the Dry powder, Foam, Carbon dioxide and Water extinguishers are to displace or cut off the oxygen supply and prevent further combustion.

Light aircraft have some unusual requirements when it comes to fire fighting equipment: -namely the need for it to be compact and light weight, suitable for use in confined space and not jeopardize the flight (if airborne).

Carbon dioxide Fire extinguisher. CO₂ gas contained under high pressure (1000psi +) in heavy metal cylinder. Discharge produces a cloud of white gas which will temporarily restrict the field of view. CO₂ is designed to displace oxygen so it must not be discharged in a confined space with people. Best suited to putting out engine fires as it leaves no residue, the gas is entrapped (not blown away in the wind) and there is minimal risk of asphyxiation.

Dry powder Extinguisher. Bicarbonate of soda powder is held under medium pressure (200psi) in thin wall metal containers. The powder settles so unit must be shaken before use to ensure the powder is free. If discharged in a confined space the large cloud of white powder will get in the eyes and throat causing incapacitation, visibility will go to zero and everything will be left covered in white powder (which is corrosive to aluminium).

Ground crew may select a Dry Powder extinguisher to tackle a ground based airframe fire (as the powder will remain in place) but is not a good choice for the enclosed cockpit.

Water Extinguishers are not suitable for carrying in an aeroplane as they are heavy and not suitable for electrical or fuel/oil fires. Ground based water extinguishers may be ok to "save the hanger" but be aware they may only last 30 seconds.

Foam extinguishers are not considered suitable for carrying in light aircraft due to the mess they make and their excessive weight /bulk. However, ground crew would select this type for fighting liquid fuel fires since the foam will retain its blanket coverage even if the liquid fuel begins to seep away from the wreckage.

None of the above extinguishers are particularly suitable for use in light aircraft but luckily there is an alternative. The Halon 1211 or BCF fire extinguisher was withdrawn from general use in the mid 1990's due to its affects on the ozone layer, but since it is the best fire suppressant known to man its continued use in aviation has been permitted.

Halon works in a totally unique way - by chemically disrupting the combustion process. You can have the full compliment of oxygen and fuel burning away but applying halon sparingly (in concentrations as low as low as 8%) it simply prevents the two chemicals reacting any longer and the flame goes out.

So firstly you do not need to discharge much halon for it to be fully effective and secondly since you are not trying to displace the oxygen it is permissible to use in a relatively confined space containing people. The fumes are not pleasant and it is advised to ventilate the area but there will still be sufficient oxygen to sustain life. The action of Halon to arrest the combustion process is just incredible, have a look on google and see for your self.

Halon is stored in a liquid form (compact), at medium pressure (medium weight container) but unfortunately since production ceased all remaining halon has to be recycled making it rather expensive. Expect to pay £200 to £300 for a 1.5Kg Halon extinguisher and it is unlikely you will be "allowed" to import one cheaper from USA.

Fire blanket. This is a mechanical way of isolating the combusting material from the air (oxygen) and is often overlooked. The blanket is a light weight item that is easy to stow and could buy you valuable time if you are trapped in burning wreckage. Deploying a fire blanket over such a person (and protecting yourself) whilst executing a fire rescue could reduce the level of burns received to both parties and buy valuable time to summons help.

Mounting of extinguisher. The location and mounting of the extinguisher is important, often dictated by the space available and aircraft weight and balance. Many extinguishers end up laying in their simple wire frame chassis, attached to the 2mm thick plywood parcel shelf with two self tapping screws. This is not sufficient. What is the point of having seat belts that can withstand a 5G crash, then having the 1.5kg fire extinguisher break free and strike you on the back of the head. It is advised to choose strong mounting points or use large reinforcing washers behind the parcel shelf to secure the extinguisher frame. Using nuts and bolts is better than self tapping screws and placing an "O" ring across the retaining fingers of the

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Strut meeting**Dates for your Diary 2016**

28th July 25th August 29th September 27th October 24th November

Christmas Dinner December TBA

www.solleysicecream.co.uk

frame will probably prevent the extinguisher jumping out accidentally.

Having pondered all of the scenarios whilst writing this article I would NOT carry a dry powder extinguisher with the intention of discharging it in my aircraft. The fire blanket is probably the best all round winner as it is light weight, always ready to use, low tech with nothing to go wrong, lasts almost indefinitely, can probably afford the best protection for the price.

The next best device is the Halon extinguisher. It is expensive but you have got the best tool for the job.

In flight fires in light aircraft are almost unheard of, but perhaps we should be more aware of what is going on around us at the airfield. An engine fire during start up (from over priming) is not so uncommon and as spectators we are more likely to see the problem than the pilot. Would you know what to do? Would you know what type of extinguisher to pick up? Do you know where your nearest extinguishers / fire blanket are? When was the last time they were inspected?

Have a plan for when things go wrong.