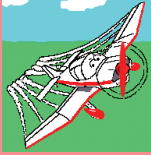


March 2018



# SKYWRITINGS

Newsletter of the *Kent Strut*



## Challenges!

### Dawn To Dusk Challenge by Nic Orchard

Like many, I suspect, I have been aware of this Challenge from way back, but I'd dismissed it as 'not for me' on the grounds that I fly slowly, avoid complicated airspace and prefer grass runways to tarmac, all limiting factors in some of the long trips I might have planned around a theme. It was only when my curiosity from the air led to some interesting mild research on the ground that I realised that I did, indeed, have a bit of a plan. The Home Defence of WW1, encompassing landing grounds, wireless stations, AA batteries and sound mirrors along the coast was what it became, with many solid days at the computer and in the library a year ago. Four months later and I was still going. If I was going to do this, I had to finalise my commitment by submitting my outline and pay the fee. That done, I couldn't waste that thirty quid, could I?

Choosing the day was easy, when in May a few days of high pressure looked promising. The days were nearly as long as those in June and if I stopped tweaking the waypoints I could name the date. I'd been half-waiting for the new quarter-



Nigel Read - Editor

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March 29th Meeting

The Last Dornier—John Franklin

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

[www.laakentstrut.org.uk](http://www.laakentstrut.org.uk)

mill chart to be published, but with the latest available for the SE, the East and the Borders, I had enough. The five legs were planned to be conservative and accommodate the early first leg by a return to Maypole for fuel. I rehearsed the noteworthy areas: the two danger areas at Lydd, my first waypoint, Southend, of which more anon, Humberside and Newcastle, with bird sanctuaries and one NOTAM for exercises at Donna Nook. If I left as early as planned, I could scoot over Lydd before they opened to get photos of the field at Dering Farm and the Dengie sound mirrors that show the principles of the earlier mirrors. Landing grounds all along the coast to Dover took in the balloon base at Capel, where the caravan park now denotes some of its original shape, then I was busy at the fortress that was Dover. Two airfields plus the seaplane base, batteries, wireless stations, followed immediately by the Fan Bay sound mirrors was typical of the strategically important areas as I headed north.

Before I reached Sheppey, I called Southend. I needed a crossing just to get to St Mary's Marsh, where the fort at Allhallows was part of important London defences; most of my route was low level so I could have slid around underneath apart from that. Maypole to Beccles, I said, via Leysdown, Sheerness, Chatham, St Mary's Marsh, Stow Maries and Osea Island... A quiet morning gave an immediate clearance to enter controlled airspace and I started Sheppey's extensive history tour at Leysdown and turned right towards Warden Point, where the remains of its sound mirror lies on the shore, near to the battery that has also suffered from coastal erosion. A call from Southend: 'Just call when entering'. 'It is a rather wiggly route, Sir', I replied, by way of justification. I had warned him.... The decision to deviate from the purely coastal route to go west of Southend to Stow Maries was a gamble that the challenge would be made on a weekday when the ranges would be hot and any crossing direct over Southend (that was RNAS/RFC Rochford) would be rather higher than I'd like for photographs, so I'd opted for the gem further west.

Harwich and Felixstowe were important waypoints, with much history I had to condense in my report, followed by Orford Ness, likewise. The third leg, from Beccles to Fenland, was the easy one, with only a handful of sites, ending with the wonderful history of Hippisley Hut at Hunstanton. From Fenland I chugged north to include Killingholme and the Humber estuary, a shrinking Spurn Head and Hornsea Mere, where the original buildings and slipways of the RNAS now serve the sailing club and boatyard. I landed at Beverley at 16:05, with time looking good. The weather had remained benign, with a light NW throughout. The final leg was the long one, over totally unfamiliar territory, so I was only too conscious that I would need to do FREDAs on both 'CC and me. A bit of task saturation around Newcastle caused a bit of a mental wobble and as I headed off towards Whitley Bay I told myself firmly that I'd just enjoy the view for five

minutes then reassess: I could easily turn left and call it a day. When I got there, though, I found the sites of interest without any bother and dipping my little tank proved I had plenty of fuel if I carried on. Besides, there were only two more sites! I picked up an odd tailwind, too. My last photo is of the site of the wireless station at Berwick, near the tiny hamlet of Goswick, passing en route Bamburgh Castle and Holy Island, where the seals outnumbered any gathering of creatures I'd ever seen. I resisted the temptation to go and put a wing into Scotland and turned back to head direct to Eshott, feeling most awfully high as I climbed to about 1500' for the only time all day to cross the eastern side of the highly coloured part of the chart. I landed at Eshott at 19:45.

Richard had cunningly decided to fly from fuel stop to fuel stop to provide buckets of tea and encouragement. 'CC was sporting Pilot Aware, so my progress was visible to him throughout, which went from 'creepy' to 'jolly useful, that tea waiting for me'. He'd also booked a room at Eshott Hall, a spot of planning I'd refused to entertain myself, being too superstitious. It wasn't far away, just half an hour's walk, he said. I make no comment on his aerial assessment of the distance, but if you stay there, allow an hour. Just saying. We'd missed dinner, but the sandwiches were made with wheat from the garden and cheese from the cows in the meadow (something like that) and I forgave him. Sitting on a comfortable chair and before I'd even started the large glass in my hand, I realised that I could still feel the vibrations of the Champ. Over ten hours in her finally showed.

On the next day I was treated to a dog fight with one of the Great War Display Team, who'd offered some WW1 presence to help my fundraising for the Poppy Appeal. We arranged a rendezvous via dodgy mobile phone signals and over Norfolk, with no comms between us, historically correctly, we played awhile. It was the centenary of the start of the first Battle of Britain.

Overall, the day went almost exactly to plan. Early fog was restricted to Folkestone and Dover, my fuel gauge, the Ford Model A, gave up early on, but the trusty measuring stick is always on board and I had got around the problems of out-of-hours departure and arrival in the planning stage. The decision to allow proper stops each time felt right for me. The hard work was converting everything into the final report: not just collating the photographs of a hundred sites into my pre-written account, but the timings and distances had to be meticulously recorded.

The results were months away at the awards dinner, at the RAF Club, on 2<sup>nd</sup> February. Expecting a wooden spoon for what may have been the shortest distance ever entered – 601nm, I was surprised to receive second prize, the Coventry Trophy and also the Bonney Trophy.



*Farnham*

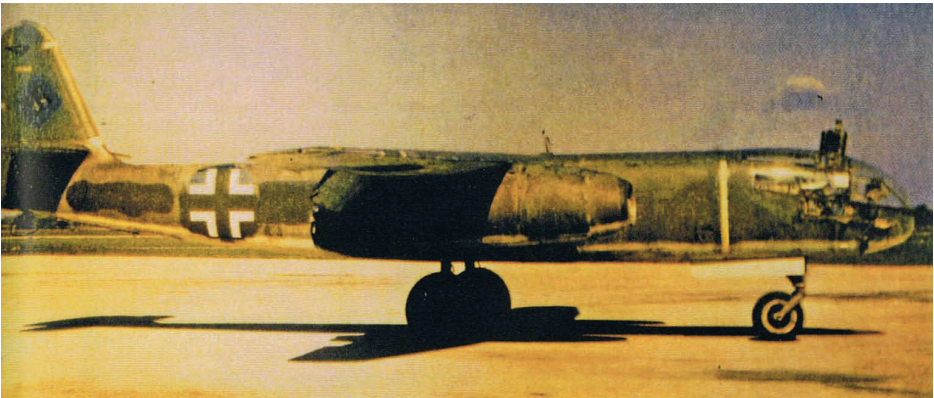
### Last months meeting

Unfortunately our speaker Mike miscalculated the last Thursday of the month which crept up quicker than usual leaving him on his way, but from Iceland. Should arrange to do his shopping earlier! We will save it for another time, however I have some info from Ian Park that may substitute for those wanting to find out a little more about the German's first jet bomber.

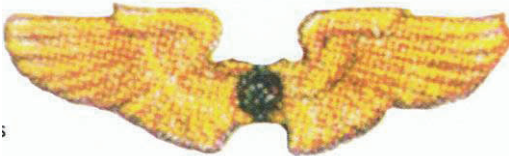
The Arado 234 jet bomber was designed and the airframe was ready in 1941 but it had to wait two years for the proposed jet engines to become sufficiently reliable to risk a maiden flight.

Over 200 were made but only one survives at Wright Field in the USA. That is despite the fact that the British, French and Russians captured most of them. The one below is that survivor in original German decor and later with US stripes so that it did not get shot down by friendly fire.

The American jet pilots cut the propellers from their battle dress insignia just to show how different they were from the ordinary.







*Detail of a painting by Australian artist Barry Spicer showing two*

*Ar234 bombers escorted by an Me262 and the original and modified insignia worn by the Army Airforce pilots who flew the Arado with the propeller removed, indicating no piston engine.*

### How do I know which airfield has changed to 8.33kHz? Gary Smith

**UK** light aircraft owners should be fully aware of the requirement to change their VHF radio sets from 25kHz frequency spacings to 8.33kHz (mandated as from 1st Jan 2018). The cost has been significant (even with the CAA subsidy) and the gain for recreational flyers difficult to fathom but there is a bizarre twist.

Having mandated that all aircraft shall be 8.33kHz radio equipped by 1st Jan 2018 the CAA/ EASA have then given ground stations a year to upgrade - at their leisure. For the casual pilot who looks at his 2018 paper map to clarify radio frequencies, its definitely out of date already and will be further outdated as the year goes on.

Ironically the CAA are at hand..... and have your best interests at heart. There is a quick link to obtain the latest frequency publication from the CAA website, it is the A4 summary sheet that often accompanies new maps. The link is [www.tinyurl.com/natsfrequencycards](http://www.tinyurl.com/natsfrequencycards)

I intend to print the latest frequency sheet at the beginning of every month and highlight those ground stations that have upgraded. In my mind I am looking at this like a long winded 12 month advent calendar. At present I have only coloured 10 of the 250 boxes, they are not doing very well. By Christmas 2018 I will have hopefully coloured all of the frequency boxes and will feel I am getting 100% value for money out of my £2000 new radio.

Rochester changed on 1st March. This link to the CAA also has answers to questions. <https://tinyurl.com/ydxoka7d>

Rochester frequency remains 122.25 but will show as channel 125.255

## Photos of the Dornier at RAF Cosford four years ago



Between March 2010 and June 2013 John Franklin was involved with a number of dive attempts on the German WW11 bomber Dornier Do17 that had been located lying on the Goodwin sand's. Working closely with the RAF at Hendon the teams from

around 25 divers brought up many loose components from the aircraft which lay in 60 to 70 feet of water. They also carried out a number of surveys obtaining measurements and reporting on the general condition of the wreck.

John is raising funds for The Blenheim Society, the wreck was initially thought to be a Blenheim until a diver found it had a twin tail.



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**HANGARAGE AVAILABLE**

**A rare opportunity has arisen as a hangar space has become available for a suitable aircraft at Farthing Corner Airfield. Please contact John on 07880 748064 or email [john@jmdean.co.uk](mailto:john@jmdean.co.uk) for more information**

The fuselage and wings were separated for transport from Ramsgate. The bolts were easily removed being almost as good as new. The photos show the parts upside down as removed from the sea, being sprayed in the poly tunnels with a weak solution of citric acid and other chemicals to neutralise the corrosive salts on the aluminium structure. This process was expected at the time to take two or three years so should be complete by now and on to the next

**Dates for your Diary**

29th March Dornier recovery

26th April

31st May

28th June

26th July

30? August

27th September

25th October

29th November

Christmas Dinner December TBA