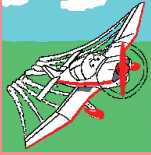


August 2018



SKYWRITINGS

Newsletter of the *Kent Strut*



Brave Aeronauts



Nigel Read - Editor

EFLEVA DAYS 2018. Sanicole Belgium 29 June - 1st July 2018 By Gary Smith.

EFLEVA is the European Federation of Light Experimental and Vintage Aircraft and has been in existence for more than 10 years. Its principle is to bring together a body of like minded people to tackle European wide issues, where one association is stronger than a dozen individuals.

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No meeting this month!

LAA Rally Sywell Aug 31st—Sept 2nd

www.laakentstrut.org.uk

There have been several low key EFLEVA gatherings in the past but in 2017 it was decided to hold a three day event in Belgium. Unfortunately the weather on Saturday discouraged many but the basis of the event laid the foundations for a repeat Fly-in for 2018.

In recent years (perhaps the last eight) many LAA aircraft owners have been put off flying in Belgium because of a rather onerous "visitors tax" of 70 Euros. This "stealth tax" was an unforeseen consequence of the authorities desire to discourage Belgian nationals from basing non Belgian permit type aircraft in their country. In reality Belgian pilots simply paid the 70 Euros and continued the practice whilst the "stealth tax" all but killed the foreign visiting aircraft trade.

EFLEVA campaigned hard for this "tax" to be rescinded and to demonstrate its negative effect, Philip Lambert (Belgian light aircraft designer) pledged to pay for all visitors to the 2017 Sanicole rally. The rekindled enthusiasm was overwhelming and shortly afterwards the tax was dropped (a vote for common sense) and the country became free to visiting permit aircraft once again.

Ron Parker and I took the RV9 to the 2017 event despite the drizzle and were first in the queue to book for 2018. Sanicole is situated to the eastern side of Belgium and sits within a military restricted zone. The organisers had put together a full arrival procedure (much like flying into the LAA rally) which simplified the route and with good visual reporting points along the way it was easy to navigate.

Last year we routed through Ostend (Belgium) thinking we would only need one flight plan for our inbound flight from England. It turned out Ostend enforce the requirement to flight plan out of class D airspace too, so with two "Skydemon credits" used there was nothing really gained.

This year we decided to route through Calais for simplicity and to check if their restaurant had re-opened. Apparently its doors will be unlocked early June / mid June / July / Augustdefinitely in 2018 So basically no it was still shut, lucky we packed les sandwiches.

In order to keep things hassle free we completed the route planning at home the evening before and even filed the flight plans (delayed for the following day). There is nothing worse than scrabbling around trying to get the WIFI to work, then waiting for flightplans to clear through the system. Doing it our way we simply departed Calais, asked Lille Approach to activate our pre-submitted flight plan, then hopped over the border into Belgium.

Approach to Sanicole, Danger area to the left

The whole outbound route was simple, depart Farthing corner 09:30, head east for 30 minutes, (a little longer for some *Ed.*) land at Calais. Then depart Calais, head east for a further 60 minutes (don't rub it in) and land at Sanicole. There were a few height restrictions (<1000ft) and a pinch point between the Brussels - Antwerp ATZ's, but generally lots of land marks and a large "Y" canal junction were there to keep you on track. Sanicole airfield is located inside the Beverlo military zone but since we don't fight wars at the weekend it was all closed. A military firing range to the north is best avoided (if you want to use your life again) and an ammunition dump to the south needed a wide berth too, to ensure a trouble free arrival.

We elected to pay for the "full weekend deal", 80 euros sounded a lot but you got dinner on Friday evening, Saturday morning breakfast, a fantastic BBQ on Saturday evening, breakfast again on Sunday and two nights accommodation in the local military "hotel".

Over 100 aircraft from Europe joined the party and even though we don't speak German / Dutch / Flemish / Swiss / Swedish we all enjoyed each others company.



The Sanicole clubhouse was paid for by a wealthy member of their association and it is a place to be proud of. A spiral staircase led up to the tower which provided a panoramic picture of the tents and reception area which had been laid on. At the bottom of the stairs a large bar area (essential for sampling the beers) welcomed you to the huge seating area for probably 150 people. To the rear was a lecture room where we were treated to a fantastic talk by the English guy who flew his Silence Twister (single seat home built monoplane) from the UK to Oshkosh taking in Iceland and passing over the 10,000ft polar Ice cap of Greenland.

Outside under the shade of the umbrellas they were selling Ice cream (take note Steve Solley *Author*), had a stand for Aircourtage insurance, one for Adams Aviation UK and they were running a raffle on behalf of EFLEVA.

One of the best ideas carried over from last year were the free bicycles. You simply gave your aircraft registration and took a bicycle for a ride. On Saturday Ron and I rode 3km down the main road to see a guy who owned a garage full of old cars. We bumped into him last year whilst trying to shelter from the rain and he showed us around his workshop. This year his wife was out so we had a proper tour of his "man cave" located under the house. To describe it as an Aladins cave does not do it justice, upstairs he had 20 fully restored cars from the 1930's to the 1980's (Renaults, original Fiat 500, Hillman Imps, Citroens, Jaguar, Suzuki 2 stroke race car, Ford Edsel etc) and in the basement he had enough spares to make another 20.

On Sunday we took the bikes out again and headed west into Leopoldsbury town. The morning boot fair in the town square was selling the usual old things but we found a map next to a WWII American tank positioned by

the train station and decided to find the local canal. A very pleasant hour was spent cycling down the tow path and then drinking coffee at the little harbour.



All too soon it was time to return the bikes and consider our return flight home, just 90 minutes away. What a brilliant weekend with great weather, great people and great organisation. The EFLEVA event will be held in France next year (date to be confirmed) but Sanicole will be holding its own flying event on 5-6-7th July at EBLE. If you want to share the fun then that's the place to be.

Ron standing by the Veerhees flying wing (and if you look to the left there is a far more sensible flying machine, Ed)



Schaffen Diest Mike Negus

I went over with Colin Ladd in his Auster on the Saturday as our planned departure Friday was deferred due to bad weather. We camped overnight Saturday and went into town for the evening and enjoyed a very nice bottle of white and a dish of mussels. The event was not as well attended as in previous years but we did bump into Kevin and Sally and Glen and his wife bless her having to do the heavy lifting as hubby had done his back in! Been there got the t shirt. Unfortunately none of us were aware that the others were going as it would have been good to have met up for the evening.





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www.solleysicecream.co.uk**Strut Fly-in**

Due to high cross winds and gusty conditions only two aircraft made it into Rochester, Steve Solley and Bruce Alexander. There were plenty of attendees by car so a good chat ensued.

Goodbye

Our strut AME, Dr Bruce Alexander will be leaving shortly for pastures and airfields new, Kent's loss will be Devon's gain. We wish him all the best and no doubt will meet at an airfield somewhere in the future.

Dates for your Diary

August no meeting - Rally

27th September Microlight School
Spain TBC29th September Abbeville end of
season flyout TBC

25th October Display Pilot TBC

29th November Airline pilot/
simulator instructor TBC

Christmas Dinner December TBA