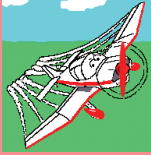


September 2018



# SKYWRITINGS

Newsletter of the **Kent Strut**



## Meetings return to Cobtree Manor

### Schaffen Diest 2

- Kevin Marks

*After Mike Negus' article in last months newsletter I have more from Kevin:-*



"My word this is a long runway". A bizz jet holding at Echo meant we'd have to exit at Foxtrot. Just that Foxtrot was not in sight and come to think of it, neither was the end of the runway.

Kortrijk's 1900m of tarmac is vast, though for us it was also a sight for celebration. It's not that we had shot a blind approach or navigated a series of tortuous airspace restrictions. This was our first channel crossing. GC, Sally and I had completed an international trip. Forty two minutes flight time is not long, shorter than all the legs on our recent Scottish trip but it seemed, well, longer.



Nigel Read - Editor



*Base at Kortrijk, hoping the engine doesn't stop*

**27th September Meeting**

**Airline stories and experiences—Peter Terry  
Cobtree Manor Golf Club, ME14 3AZ 20:00hrs**

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

The Schaffen Diest Old Timers Fly & Drive-In has a reputation as an excellent weekend expedition. With lots to see and do and an attractive town, it's central square also populated with some good restaurants. So I felt it a fitting destination for our maiden trip overseas. Although camping under the wing is permitted, I managed to book an hotel in the town centre the night before our departure. The plan was fly to Kortrijk to clear immigration. Then via the low level corridor between Brussels and Antwerp to the Duffy VRP thence on to Diest.

After our long taxi back from Foxtrot to the apron, Kortrijk suggested we park on the grass next to G-NETY a yellow Cub. The Customs was, as we had heard, very courteous, efficient and helpful. A quick 15 minutes saw us signed in and cleared to enter the Schengen Area. The landing fee is sent as an invoice to ones home address. I had filled GC's tanks prior to leaving Lydd, so we did not need to upload fuel. However should one require to, there is a self service 100LL pump that accepts normal credit cards.

On returning to GC we met the owner of G-NETY, a Belgian gentleman, also on his way to Diest with two fellow Cub drivers. I asked them as to the likely hood of a transit through the Brussels TMA, 'it is not possible' they chorused, 'the airspace is too busy and anyway', they said smiling, 'above 500ft we Cub pilots need oxygen'.

'Low and slow' seemed to be the order of the day. A quick review of the next leg and we saddled GC up for Diest. It didn't seem worth climbing too high, only to have to descend below 1500ft, so we levelled off at 1200ft. I eased all the knobs back to amble along at 100mph and enjoy the close up view of a rather flat countryside. All very different to the Scottish Highlands.

Duffy VRP is the small and rather insignificant town of Duffel. Far clearer to spot, west of the town, is the collection of just about every inland water feature you can imagine. Lake, canal, reservoir, river, pond, ditch, they all seem to be present and herald the adjacent VRP. This is the funnel of the low level route and with a popular fly-in at Diest, it was busy. However, Bussels Information were



proactive and helpful, providing traffic information all the time we were with them. A useful additional resource.

Diest is a large field. A paratroop training ground weekdays, the local Aero club have use of it during the weekends. Although the ravages of a hot and dry summer had taken their toll, the green grass on Google Maps replaced by a crisp brown, it was still obvious from some way out. We had picked up the ATIS prior to talking to Diest Radio, who efficiently organised the incoming traffic. We tucked in behind a Europa, to take our turn in the circuit for 24. From the threshold the field is uphill, so not much of a landing roll before we turned off to follow our allotted marshal vehicle. With GC locked, chocked and blocked, we left her flirting with the aviation paparazzi.



A gorgeous summer's day, lots of aircraft to look at, with a free landing and lunch, what more could one ask. Well, how about meeting some interesting aviators. First stop, two planes along, Fritz and his wife with their Emeraude. They had flown down from Hanover that morning. Regular attendees they were typical of the friendly aviation community present that weekend. We wandered the airfield for the rest of the day admiring some beautifully turned out flying machines and speaking with their proud aviators.

With hunger starting to make itself known, the 'C' tent became the next stop to arrange a taxi to our hotel. After a wash and brush-up the intention was to find a suitable hostelry in the town for a quiet evening meal. The organisers wife and her English speaking 11 year old grandson took us in hand. In no time the 'pilots' taxi arrived and whisked us to the hotel. For those who stayed at the airfield, a BBQ and live music were available throughout the evening.

Sea bass, sweetly seasoned, accompanied by saute vegetables and Belgium fries, Sally chose a potato puree as the low-cal version of fries.

The puree was indeed good but with cream and butter, definitely not the low-cal option. The sea bass had followed the Chef's entre of smoked haddock and a purple sprouting bean, similar to alfalfa but finer and with an intense flavour. Unfortunately my Flemish did not extend to determining it's name. We had stumbled across our restaurant, In Den Zoeten Inval, after wandering towards the rather beautiful Church at the north end of the town square. Quiet, cosy and with an excellent Chef we enjoyed a delightful meal that rounded off our day of international adventure.

Sunday dawned, breakfast was consumed and the 'pilots taxi' ferried us back to the airfield. At the hotel front door we bumped into a fellow Kent Strut member, Glen Everett with his wife. Theirs were the first of some familiar faces we were to see during the day.

We headed back to GC via the 'C' tent. Diest's pilot briefing area was a full service. Weather forecast, flight planning, internet access, all one needed for a successful trip home. Belgium and most of mainland Europe were in for more fine weather, for the UK and northern Europe a time of change was forecast. When that change would happen was, as usual, a topic of much debate. Not wanting to spoil an already excellent weekend we opted to depart Diest a few hours earlier than planned. We would retrace our journey, clearing customs at Kortrijk then back home to Lydd via the NDB ING.

This still gave us time to bump into another Kent Strut member, Mike Negus. The day before we had admired a G reg Auster, this turned out to be owned by a friend of Mike's, Colin Ladd. They had flown in on the Saturday and camped under the wings of the Auster after also dining in the town.



*Aeronca sedan and cockpit*





were, so we climbed, seeking some smoother air.

*Air Camper*



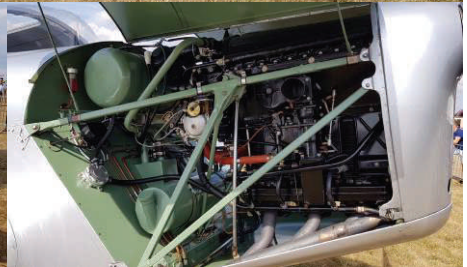
*Broussard from Yorkshire*



*Miles Whitney Straight*



*Praga Air Baby*



*One of several Stamps*

The White Cliffs of Dover are a welcome sight to the returning traveller, whether in the air or on the sea. For GC, Sally and I this was the first of hopefully many more such welcomes. Chatting at home that evening about our adventure, we were amazed it had only been two days. It felt so much longer, a week at least. Maybe this is how it is when one crosses international boundaries.



Strut Fly-in Mike Negus' notes

2 x aeroplanes, Steve Solley and Bruce Alexander flew in due to strong cross winds at other airfields and gusty conditions put people off but we did get a fair number by road so for those that came enjoyed the chat.



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*Rather surprisingly Lydd based  
Kevin's first trip across the channel.*

**Dates for your Diary****27th September Airline stories****25th October Display Pilot TBC****29th November TBA****Christmas Dinner 8th December****Newnham Court Inn 7pm****Peter Huxley will be collecting  
money, £15**