

November 2019



SKYWRITINGS

Newsletter of the *Kent Strut*

November meeting will be a talk from RiverOak



A relaxing day out Kevin Marks

Needles, for me, have always had a Pavlovian association of pain. I recall my childhood Dentist with benign smile and words of distraction, suddenly flourishing a syringe, which to all the world looked like a 6 inch nail inserted into a bicycle pump. Then as a teenager, after



Nigel Read - Editor



ILS approach going missed at about 1.5nm to threshold Lydd

28th November Meeting

**RiverOak: Manston Developments, Tony Freudmann
The Anchor Inn, Wingham, CT3 1BJ 20:00hrs**

www.laakentstrut.org.uk

being knocked off my motorbike, a tetanus injection. As those who have suffered this ignominy will know, it may be administered into the buttock. In my case at the Military Hospital by a half-crazed Nurse. Needles have a special place in my subconscious.

Today, I find myself in GC with gaze fixated on, yes, a needle. It twirls and dances before my eyes, taunting me, ready to jab if I get things wrong. I check the DI +10, Artificial Horizon wings level, pitch flat, the ADF -10, Altitude still 2100ft.

Artificial Horizon wings level, pitch flat, DI +10, ADF -8.... oops looks like the wind is changing, or is it, DME 5.5nm,

"G-GC final approach fix"

"G-GC cleared for NDB approach, Runway 21, report going around"

"cleared NDB approach, Runway 21, wilco, G-GC"

I had completed the approach checklist at the initial approach fix. Similar to a landing checklist but also including all the instrument approach checks and re-identing, in this case, the NDB and DME Morse codes. A quick glance at the NDB/DME approach plate, 620ft descent rate at 100kts ground speed, to intercept 1540ft at 4nm. My minimum descent altitude is handwritten in big numbers on the top of the plate, 620ft.

Throttle to 16 inch MP, check the Artificial Horizon, prop to full fine, check the DI +10, mixture full rich, check the ADF -10, yeah it was just messing with me, pitch and trim for 620ft descent per minute, check the Artificial Horizon wings level, pitch just below the horizon. Altimeter is starting to wind down, I bring the VSI into the already busy instrument scan, 580ft per minute. Ease forward on the yoke to get 620ft. ASI, just over 100kts, about right for 100kt ground speed. Check the Artificial Horizon, engine indicators all green, DI +10, vacuum green the instrument scan is relentless and especially on final approach track, a real workout for the eyes.

So far it had been a great day, the sun shining, clear blue skies and a new airfield in my logbook. We were sat enjoying the 100 dollar hamburger and mug of tea. My very experienced flying buddy, recalling an amusing tale from his previous life as a Gatwick ATC. The conversation meandered its way to precision flying and my desire to improve the straightness of my GPS breadcrumb trail. A formation flying course, I suggested, now that would surely improve matters. Steve's reply was measured and serious, "do your IMC, that will make you fly tighter and could well save your life one day".

That autumn, books in hand, it was back to the classroom and regular sorties with one of my favourite Flight Instructors. I had completed my night rating with him and now we were on the apron doing an A check in the fog. It seems, his is always a disembodied voice calling out in either the dark or gloom.

"It is forecast to lift, ceiling should be about 1000-1200ft. Ideal!", he exclaimed. With Biggin at 600ft we would be into it almost straight after take-off. Well, at least I won't need to wear that darned hood, I reasoned. It is not the most comfortable of aviation accessories.

Back in the classroom, hot mug of tea in hand, we reviewed the Standard Instrument Departure plate for Biggin and ILS approach plate for our destination, Southend. Then Biggin's Approach, Hold and ILS procedures for our return. It was going to be a full day. After departing Biggin, we planned to call Southend for a Traffic Service. Intercept the Detling VOR 270 degree radial. Then overhead DET turn to track the 010 radial. Establish a position fix 10nm north of DET using the Biggin VOR and from that fix request vectors to the Southend ILS for Runway 23. After a planned missed approach, take vectors for the non precision LOC approach for runway 23.

The return would involve working Thames Director whilst we track to the Alkin hold at Biggin. Complete two holds, at which stage request Thames to radar vector us to intercept the Biggin ILS at 1800ft and 5nm to run. It is then a quick swap to Biggin Approach to complete the ILS approach for runway 21. If we landed, a debrief and well earned mug of tea. I say if, because I had become so used to 'going missed' I felt sure I would just do that out of habit. We had slowly worked up to such an intense day's flying and this was my last flight before my IMC skills test the following day.

The DME indicated 4nm, Artificial Horizon, wings level, just below horizon, altimeter 1550ft, 10ft off, I'll accept that. The wind will ease off and back as we descend, so in anticipation I start to reduce the correction angle to +8, looking for -8 on the ADF needle. A fleeting image of my Dentist, nail and bicycle pump in hand, with the crazed grin of the Military Nurse superimposed on his face, appears on the ADF. I wipe my brow. It is amazing how hot one gets on these instrument approach exercises, or is it just the *Pavlovian* response.

The hood has been replaced by some natty American sunglasses, with paint over most of the lenses. I can see the panel and nothing else but at least they are comfortable. I am approaching my home base, Lydd, an EasyJet Captain in the right hand seat.

The ADF is an ancient piece of avionics, replaced first by VOR and now GPS, few aircraft give room to them in the ever cramped panel. The Procedural Service, NDB Instrument Approach is the Stonehenge of IMC landing techniques. No ATC radar vectors and ILS cross-hairs here, it's just you, a stop watch, altimeter and 'that' needle. Interpreting the wind and maintaining a mental picture of where you are is a skill earlier aviators mastered and utilised daily. It is an option in the IMC syllabus. There is little doubt that if you can develop the capacity to comprehend it, all the other IMC approach methods become so much easier to implement.

"G-GC going missed"

"G-GC break left, low level, left-hand circuit, runway 21, report downwind"

"break left, left-hand, 21, wilco G-GC"

Another tool in the box and like all tools you need to keep it honed, so you don't scatter breadcrumbs everywhere.

That final day into Biggin saw us break out of the clouds at 200ft AAL. Well below my IMC limitation but on my Instructor's Licence who is cleared to 0ft AAL. There is a special type of satisfaction when you drop out of the clouds and before you are the welcoming approach lights. PAPIs showing two and two, the illuminated runway reaching out, ready to accept you and your flying machine. On the other hand, some might consider it aviation flagellation.





Westfield Farm and Greenwood Farm Fly-ins

Ron Armitage and Sandra Davis (All photographs taken by Nic Orchard)

Two BBQs on the one day... the flyers from Maypole know how to enjoy themselves! On the morning of 15th September, a bunch of us flew to Westfield Farm, a very friendly little airfield on the Pevensy Levels, where we had been invited to a charity BBQ and were able to meet up with some old (and not so old) friends.



One of the visitors was Dave Ridley in G-BRAR, the Champ which he and his wife Caz had acquired from us just a few days earlier, and now lives in a beautiful new hangar at Deanland.

Later in the day we flew to Greenwood Farm, John and Anne Huggins' beautiful airfield nestling above the Alkham Valley between Dover and Folkestone. It boasts two runways, 05-23 (450 metres) and 18-36 (650 metres), both of which are manicured to perfection.

Late in the day, we were joined by Steve Hoskins and John Tiley in Steve's Technam. They apologised for being late, but had managed to get lost and wind up at Bodmin in Cornwall.

The BBQ was in aid of the Martha Trust, a charity which we are all very keen to support, and which provides help to some of the most severely disabled and life limited children in our society. Oh... and whilst we were there, we met Richard Tomas, who invited us all to another charity BBQ at

his airstrip at Hamilton Farm on 12th October (regrettably cancelled due to inclement weather).



John's hangar with some of the visitors



Ron in lustful mode with John's latest toy

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Order from Steve Hoskins,
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 under committee members. See
 last months newsletter. £15 ea.

November Meeting

Tony Freudmann, a director of
 RiverOak will speak to us about
 Manston, at the Anchor Inn
 Wingham. There will be a buffet.

Christmas Dinner 7/12/2019

Newnham Court Inn ME14 5LH

AGM in January is one week early!**Dates for your Diary 2019****28th November****Manston Developments**

Tony Freudmann,
 Director RiverOak

7th December

Strut Christmas Dinner,
 Newnham Court Inn

23rd January Strut AGM / Social**27th February**

Frontier Engagement Team,
 Rachel Marshal

26th March Microlights,

Paul Brooker