

March 2020

SKYWRITINGS

Newsletter of the **Kent Strut**

So, how is the social distancing going?



Light Aircraft Association

Has anyone kept a safe 2000' clear? Just as our airfields are drying out we are told to stay at home, only essential travel. I don't know how this will be interpreted by pilots eager to get flying, maybe solo or with a member of our family. We are all rusty and need to get current somehow, safely. Engines need turning over, permits may be running out, mine is out, (*LAA hope to continue their service on permits*) so is the instrument panel after having a new radio fitted. Thought it would be a good idea to change the fuel sight gauge, which needed rerouting and was quite discoloured. It's turned out quite fiddly routing it through rollover strengthening, past headset wiring and on to the breather. All on top of prolonged efforts to cure a fuel leak from the filler. Almost finished and ready to put the panel back, unfortunately a two man job and my oppo is well into the at risk group.



Nigel Read - Editor

It was nice to meet others at Laddingford and chat at a distance, the grass has been cut and the runway is drying out nicely. Yesterday an RV9 went for a test but the decision was it needed a couple more days to be sure it's ok, it has been completely under water. A bit of roof skylight in the hangar suffered in the winds. I understand some Class D has been suspended. Apparently its was shown on Skydemon, I've not verified that.

Not much to write about this month, meetings cancelled for now, perhaps we will be able to setup something over the web, I've been doing yoga with an instructor in Southend! We also have the WatsApp Group.

Next Meeting



www.laakentstrut.org.uk



Flight out of Laddingford a few hours before Boris' close down. The still soft patches shortened the landing. Pete Kynsey and Anna Walker

Kevin has sent a few words and photos the rest is going to be a bit of nostalgia.

Some thoughts and pictures on the weather and a flight or two!

Kevin Marks

Well it's that time of year. The days are short, night arrives halfway through the afternoon. It rains, boy has it rained. Then, when it wasn't raining, the wind made a big entrance stage left.

Needless to say, for aviators the weather has been garbage. Waterlogged strips, hangars awash and winds such that, if you did get up, you were a cork bobbing in the sea.

Well at EGMD we are blessed with tarmac, 1500 meters if it, with lights and aligned radio waves to make life as an aviator... well doable.

So with the earlier nights, GC and I were off gallivanting in the dark. It is surprising how far you can see on a clear night. The lights of London are

really quite discernable as one heads north from Lydd. Then on the return to base, those welcoming runway approach lights beckon you home.



Straight in approach runway 21, it is much easier to spot EGMD in the dark!

The wonder of aligned radio waves mean it is possible to find that island of tarmac when you cannot even see it. So we have enjoyed a few wanders away on those cloudy days.



Fully established on the ILS approach for Lydd's Runway 21.

5 miles out and cleared to land.



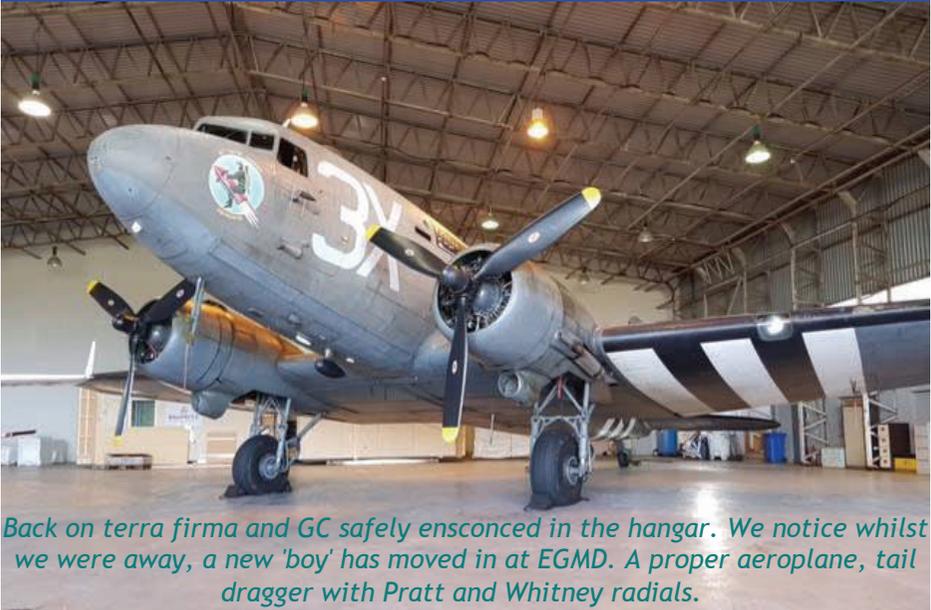
A glorious winter's day, a pearl in the sand, and a chance to view the ravages of the rain.

The Great Stour bursting its' banks south of Wye.

Then the best day of all winter. A crisp, crystal clear morning, the snow covered North Downs basking in the February sunshine. It's views like this that make you smile.



On the journey home, a stop at Ulm to admire the Great Minster (and climb to the top, 768 steps gets you to 469ft on the QFE.) It was in Ulm Rathaus I spied my dream aviation project. A semi aerobic ultralight. VFR only of course, would need a 8.33 handheld so I can call to cross Farnborough's class D air grab.



Back on terra firma and GC safely ensconced in the hangar. We notice whilst we were away, a new 'boy' has moved in at EGMD. A proper aeroplane, tail dragger with Pratt and Whitney radials.

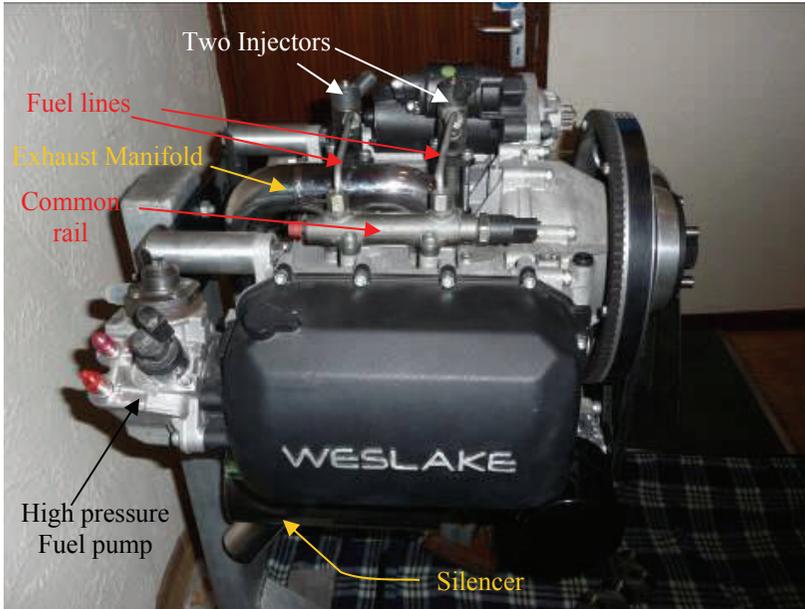


GC has asked if she can upgrade her Lycoming... erm maybe next year. I'll need to do the LAA metal work course first.

This article is laced with one deliberate error, if you spot it, pat yourself on the back and smile. If you find two, write to the Editor about atrophying journalistic standards. *(and tell me what it means Ed)*

Five years ago

The March 2015 newsletter was all about the Weslake diesel engine and the e-Go.



Gary went to a PAFRA meeting on the e-Go, despite the name it has an ICE (as us Tesla drivers refer to them).

Malcolm McBride gave the strut talk this month.

25 years ago

The Feb/March Skywritings was Bob Chequer's first newsletter taking over from I believe Neil Frazer and Martyn Snelling, yes there were two. The previous bumper Christmas issue had no date but an article dated Oct 94 on building a Europa, and I still haven't finished it.

John Paget wrote about his first channel crossing in a Turbulent:-

STONEACRE TURB GOES TO DIEPPE

The Stoneacre Turbulent, G-ARRU, finally emerged from its rebuild in August. Freshly permitted up, Nick and I have made full use of the turb since. Nick managed an amazing 8 hours in a day in an effort to top his flying hours up to a sufficient amount before his BCPL course at Prestwick (the Doctor thinks he'll be able to walk without pain early in the new year). I've tried to get to as many fly-ins as possible, with the highlight being the Children in Need day at Little Gransden.

Unfortunately, being based at Farthing Corner, the company you tend to keep will reel off lists foreign countries visited in light aircraft like the average person boasts of DIY achievements around their house.

I had tried to arrange a trip to Dieppe with Martin Snelling on a number of occasions, but had been frustrated by weather and red wine hangovers. Finally the opportunity arrived in November. Brian Hope and John Dean were going to Dieppe to arrange next year's PFA continental fly-out. Martin, in his recently acquired Taylor Monoplane and I were to follow them over and meet them for lunch.

The morning arrived, the view from my window confirmed that the trip was on. Unable to contain my excitement, I arrived at the strip at 7.30 and hauled all the aircraft out of the hanger. I was pottering around cleaning the turb, topping up with oil etc. when Brian arrived. Still no Martin, but Brian gave me a few helpful hints ('make your heading 130 until you get to the French coast then turn right') so I couldn't go wrong.

Brian set off just after 9.00, I'd filed for a 9.45 departure. By this time I'd had the expected 'phone call from Martin making some pitiful excuse about needing a bolt for the cowling on the Monoplane. At 9.30 I readied the turb for start up. After half an hour of sweating and swearing I'd not managed to get the engine started and was looking like giving up (been parked to close to G-BPOU).

A chap called Rob who is finishing his Avid in the hanger offered to have a go swinging the prop. Rob is the only person I've seen hand swing a VW engine and get the engine to turn through several revolutions on each attempt. The engine started on the third of Rob's power throws, it was now 10:20.

Donning my life jacket (£2 a day from Jim Stevens) I was soon taxying out across Farthing Corner's green expanses. As the turb is without any brakes I tend to perform power checks as I taxi out. This revealed normal rev drop on one mag, 1000 rpm drop on the other. At the hold, power back to idle, pop the belts, and swap the plug leads on the top right hand bank (I'd had the plugs out during the lengthy starting process). Power restored to normal, I was off.

The visibility was pretty poor, about 5km, cloud base probably about 2000ft. I reassured myself by listening to VOLMET south as chugged down past Ashford. Manston Approach asked me to report 'coasting out' which, if Brian hadn't explained to me earlier what it had meant, would have received the reply off 'you taking the piss out of my cruising speed'.

Crossing the coast, problem 27 arrived, Manston could not receive my transmissions. Luck was with me, a Cessna 172 on it's way to Le Touquet relayed my messages and agreed to relay my messages until I was across the channel. Finally I was over the water, bearing 130, no sign of the French coast, and worst of all no horizon. I began to get nervous, no external references, all my concentration was being used staying on my heading and keeping the wings level. Looking down I could see various ships in the channel and began to associate the position of these relative to my wings and found this to be the only way I could feel comfortable. Ten minutes into the channel my 172 escort relayed to Manston that I was halfway across.

Slowly the French coast began to appear, I was about 2 miles further south than planned but felt pleased with myself having finally made my first cross channel crossing. Turning right as instructed, all that remained was to follow the coast south until I reached Dieppe. A courtesy call to Le Touquet, over the Somme and follow the coast to Dieppe. The change in scenery was making a nice change from crowded southern England.

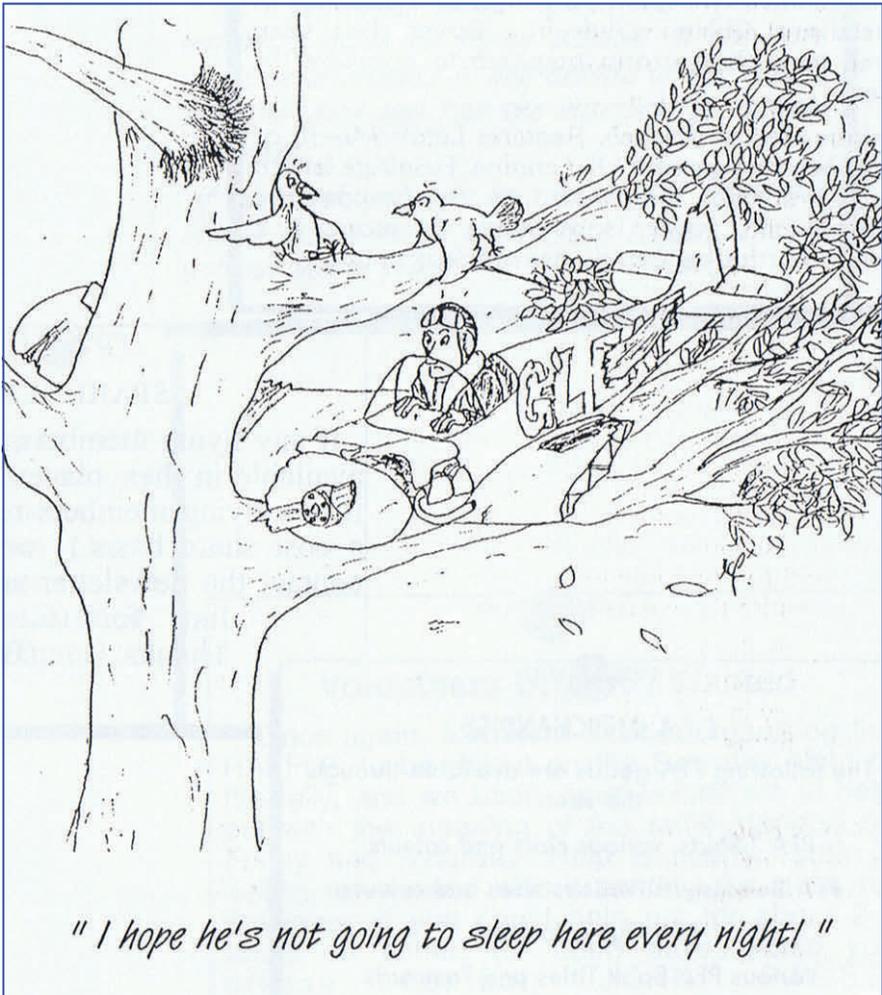
Calling for joining instructions in nervous anticipation of fighting my way into the busy Dieppe circuit, I received barely understandable instructions (crap lcom reception and French accent). I eventually understood runway 31 and call finals. On short finals it became quite apparent that the circuit was empty, the apron was empty, the car park was empty and, as I was later to discover, the coffee machine was empty. Worst of all, the chaps I had flown over to meet for lunch were nowhere to be seen (they had diverted to Calais).

Anti-climax. Ten minutes earlier I had been fighting back the torrents of saliva, thinking about dining on French cuisine and here I was in Nowheres-ville, alone, cold and hungry. Not even a cup of hot coffee could be found on site. So I filled up and came back. Twenty minutes after landing I was airborne and on my way home.

However, I did get a great deal of satisfaction from making the trip. The channel is no longer a barrier to heading east. I've bought the NW France map and Pooleys and will be using it as often as weather allows. Being an hour builder, I'm always looking for interesting places to fly to about 2-4 hours flying time away. Now I have a massive new area to explore and hopefully I'll be able to take in some of the classic Western European events that my peers at Farthing Corner rave about at length on wet Sunday afternoons.

John Paget.

There were even cartoons, penned I believe by Neil Frazer



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