



FRENCH LEAVE – CROSS CHANNEL FLY-OUTS RESUME

For the first time for nearly two and a half years, Stapleford's cross-Channel fly-outs have resumed.

In April, at last five of us in two PA 28s, made it across the channel for a very welcome return to the ever-popular destination, Le Touquet. It was the first time since November 2019, Covid-19 restrictions confining us to UK airspace. All that is needed to enter France is a Covid Pass as proof of vaccination status. Belgium requires a Covid Pass and Passenger Locator form, while Holland has now lifted all restrictions.



THE LE TOUQUET CREW

So armed with SkyDemons, we completed our General Aviation Report (GAR) Customs forms inbound and outbound and filed Flight Plans. Both weather and French Air Traffic Controllers (ATC) rose to the occasion and proved helpful.

French cuisine at the airport restaurant, L'Escale was particularly appreciated. Wine and French delicacies bought in the nearby Supermarche more than made up for the weight of fuel consumed outbound.

With such a long gap since regular cross-channel fly-outs, many recently qualified PPLs have yet to be cross-channel checked with an instructor. There are several very attractive destinations within easy reach across the channel, such as Deauville, Rouen, Cherbourg, Korkrijk, in addition smaller airfields available in France and Belgium but requiring clearance through a Customs airport like Calais or Le Touquet.

Forthcoming cross-channel trips will include:

June 7: Rouen via Calais (to clear customs)

July 12: Midden Zeeland (Holland)

Fly-outs offer the perfect opportunity for a cross-channel check. Fly-outs organiser, James Lee is

on hand to provide a briefing on the essential paperwork ahead of fly-outs. He is also offering one-off cross-channel checks, for those not available to join fly-outs.

The cross-channel check is mainly about the paperwork, the GAR forms, the Flight Plans, essential documents and equipment to be carried. There is a briefing on routes and French ATC procedures as well as advice on best places for lunch. Flight planning on SkyDemon makes the filing of Flight Plans and GAR forms easy.

To save money on the cross-channel checks two PPLs could pair up to fly with an instructor in a PA28, with one flying each leg to get cross-channel checked, even if they are not signed off to fly the PA28.

In addition to the fly-outs for Stapleford Flying Club members, James also organises bespoke longer trips over a few days specifically for hour-builders. Destinations include the remoter parts of the Scottish Highlands as well as various routes across Europe.

**For further information about fly-outs contact:
James Lee: 07922 614607 flyoutssfc@gmail.com;
or call Reception at Stapleford: 01708 688380**

CROSS CHANNEL FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Recently qualified PPL, Robert Harston gives his impressions of a first time cross-channel fly out from the back seat:

Having started training towards my PPL in March 2019, but with a full-time job only being able to do lessons on weekends, I considered myself enormously fortunate to have done my skills test (and passed it!) on Monday 23 March 2020, just a few hours before Boris sent the country into lockdown, and flying was thus off the table for me for well over a year.

Once it was possible again, I wasted no time to book in for a check flight and have since then been regularly adding new aerodromes to my logbook, though as always fitting in these jaunts alongside the day job remains a challenge.

For obvious reasons, the logbook has so far only been augmented with UK airfields, and I am looking forward to the opportunity of doing a cross-channel check in the not-too-distant future.

I was therefore more than a little chuffed when



ON THE CLIMB OUT FROM LE TOUQUET

regular fly-outers Sue Rose and Amy Chau enthusiastically agreed to my slightly cheeky request to back-seat with them in a PA28 on the recent fly-out to Le Touquet. *

Even though I was not flying I certainly enjoyed the day and above all gained valuable insights by observing from the back seat. I had the opportunity to watch the GAR forms being submitted and Flight Plans filed and to experience both flights across the channel, including the new (to me) terminology of "coasting out", "report mid-channel" and requesting a Flight Information Service rather than a Basic Service from French ATC.

The whole experience of flying somewhere as a group really made for a wonderful and stimulating day. Integral elements were also the lunch in the apron-facing restaurant, and the jolly trip to the Carrefour supermarket, from which we all emerged laden with goodies!

I would urge anyone who has recently achieved their PPL to make use of the opportunities these fly-outs offer. There is a lot to be said for a flight with a group of other pilots whose experiences on the same trip present another possibility to learn from each other.

***Editor's note: Robert was a most welcome and helpful back-seater, who understood French ATC when they were communicating in French and paid for our lunch and landing fee!**

OPEN DAY FOR PILOTS OF TOMORROW

Stapleford Flight Centre is holding an Open Day on 28 May to allow prospective students to get a clear idea of the high standard of pilot training on offer.

Admission is free and those attending will be able to see the commercial pilot training process all the way from PPL to theoretical ATPL ground studies, CPL, MCC and Type Rating courses.

Presentations will be given by Head of Training Colin Dobney on Stapleford's flight training courses and

Richard Pietz, Chief Theoretical Knowledge Instructor on the ATPL ground school courses. This is an open forum, with a question-and-answer session to follow.

A tour of the airfield will include a look at all the training aircraft, flight simulator facilities and the accommodation. There will be an opportunity to meet our staff and current students over a buffet and drinks in the Clubhouse.

The Open Day is free of charge. Anyone who is interested in attending should contact Lisa Wilkinson, Stapleford Course Co-ordinator on 01708 687103: lisawilkinson@flsfc.com

RIDELONDON ROAD CLOSURES MAY 28-29

Pilots planning to fly over the weekend of May 28-29, are warned that there will be road closures in the vicinity of Stapleford both days. It will be essential to route from the south and west via Abridge. The closures will affect the section of the A113 to the north of Passingford Bridge, Epping Lane on Saturday 28 May and the B175 London Road to the south, as well as a number of other roads in the area.

For further information and maps showing the road closures go to: <https://www.ridelondon.co.uk/road-closures/road-closure-information>

ATPL COURSES

The next ATPL ground school course starts at Stapleford on 5 September. It will be the first course involving Stapleford's new partnership with Bristol Ground School, which is replacing PadPilot as material provider.



THE ATPL GROUND SCHOOL COURSE STUDENTS

THE GRASS IS GREENER....

Longer sunny days offer up scope for exploring the delightful grass airfields within easy reach of Stapleford. What could be more appetising than fish and chips or an ice cream on Clacton beach?

Summer flying is a quite different experience for both pilot and aeroplane. It is an opportunity to add new air-

fields to your logbook while exploring the countryside and coast in the south and east of England. Many of the smaller airstrips are unlicensed but still require Prior Permission (PPR) and several will provide a helpful briefing. Otherwise seek advice from instructors or other pilots familiar with the airfield. Where there is no radio at your destination talk to local traffic on Safetycom: 135.480, unless you are being looked after by a local radar service, or nearby RAF station as is the case for Crowfield. The added attraction of Crowfield is that the airfield is attached to a micro-brewery, and the beer is on sale to visiting pilots (to be brought back as cargo!).

When flying into a small grass strip, it is essential to check the condition, length, slope and surface of the runway before calculating weight, balance and performance. This is particularly important on a hot day when aircraft performance is seriously degraded and when you are fully loaded with passengers.

Consider the headwind/tailwind components. Do not take more fuel than you need. Also take water for pilot and passengers as there is no guarantee of catering facilities at your destination.

An overhead join enables you to get a sighting of the airfield but a go-around is even better preparation for landing at a new airfield, allowing you to gauge the runway condition and spot any potential obstacles.



Here are some favourite airfields experienced by those of us who have logged 100 or more different destinations, In addition to the regular favourites like Earls Colne, Rochester and Headcorn recommendations include: Audley End, Beccles, Crowfield, Enstone, Fowlmere, Great Oakley, Little Gransden, Monewden, Old Warden.

What could be more appetising than fish and chips or an ice cream on Clacton beach?

Pilots are reminded that permission is required to fly to Clacton. If you are intending to fly there, please ask reception. You will be advised to calculate weight and balance, and performance for your aircraft as this is a challenging short runway with a footpath crossing it. Brushing up on short field landing and take-off skills is advisable.

It is well worth the preparation for this short and scenic coastal flight with a beach within a ten-minute walk and plenty of seaside cafes.

SHORT FIELD TAKE OFFS AND LANDINGS

Take-offs:

Before setting off check the runway carefully and select the point by which you need to be airborne or if not abort the take-off, allowing sufficient distance to abort safely.

Make the most of every inch of runway. Take one stage of flap; feet firmly on the brakes as you do final checks; go to full power, release the breaks. Rotate at 45 kts in a C152, 55kts in a PA 28 and go for best angle of climb up to 300 ft QFE, raise the flap and adopt best rate of climb

Landings:

Land into wind; take three stages of flap. In a C152 pitch for 55 kts; in a PA 28 pitch for 65kts. Aim for the threshold and be prepared to make a prompt decision to go around if you cannot be in the flare at the aiming point.

CUB SEEKS A NEW OWNER AS MAURICE STEPS DOWN

After more than two decades of instructing at Stapleford and introducing pilots to the joys of flying his Super Cub PA 18-150, G-BIJB, Maurice James is retiring. The Cub is looking for a new owner and operator.

Maurice enjoyed a career in aerospace development and flight testing. He started with Rolls Royce working on the Olympus 593 engine for Concorde then joined Pratt and Whitney in Montreal.

"I started my PPL lessons in March 1969 at the company Flying Club in Beloit, Quebec. It was a short gravel, north/south runway so the crosswind lessons started on day 1."

Back in the UK he worked for British Aerospace on the Jaguar and Tornado flight test programmes and continued PPL flying at Blackpool. When he moved to BAe at Hatfield in 1981 at the start of the 146 flight test programme Maurice did his PPL flying from Hatfield. After the club was closed, he moved to Elstree where he also did an IMC rating

I joined Stapleford Flying Club in June 2000 then embarked on my CPL and Flight Instructor Rating training part-time flying mainly with Yuri Milner and Annabel Winter for my CPL and Keith Pogmore for my instructor rating.

"I delivered my first lesson on 25 May 2002 and took delivery of the Cub on 21 March 2003. Since then I have flown two or three days each week. I have flown almost all SFC's aircraft and have taught the PPL syllabus in the 152s and Warriors; Aeros in the Firefly and Aerobat and tailwheel conversions in the Super Cub.

"I had reached the stage of seeing the end of flying and a recent medical problem has brought that date a little closer than I had anticipated. So, JB is now up for sale either to an individual or ideally to a syndicate here at Stapleford."



MAURICE JAMES WITH THE SUPER CUB

The Cub was made in the USA in 1980 and is thought to be one of the last Super Cubs made. It underwent a complete “makeover” in 2020, including a complete strip of the fuselage fabric, a structural clean, repaint and repair, new parts including a zero-time engine and propeller, firewall, lift struts, cockpit floor, control cables, as well as a new fuselage Ceconite covering and total re-paint.

Editor’s note: Flying the delightful little green and white Cub added an extra dimension to the Stapleford flying experience. Those of us who flew with Maurice as his students wish him a long and happy retirement. He will be much missed.

ELECTRIC MOMENT

Stapleford members of the British Women Pilots Association reflect on a briefing and trial flights in a Pipistrel Velis Electro, the world’s first electric-powered aeroplane approved for pilot training. Their instructor at Damyns Hall was Claire Bartlett, a former Stapleford flyer and first woman qualified to instruct on electric aircraft.

This is how their experience of flying a Pipistrel Velis Electro differs from flying a conventional SEP aircraft: While the checklist and walk around are much like any other aeroplane, the difference is the fuel/engine. There is no oil, but coolant levels need to be checked. Battery health and state of charge! (SOC) are important and are displayed and recorded in a Tech Log.

Inside it is much like any other small aircraft with similar speeds, as placarded. The run-up and pre-take off checks are the same, but the funny thing is that when you set engine to idle, the prop stops.

The Stapleford pilots found the Velis very light to handle and is only 600Kg maximum take-off weight. Gliding range is particularly good, thanks to the very long thin high aspect ratio wings with full length ‘Flaperons’ common to Pipistrel aircraft.

On the question of the range of the Electro and how long you can stay up in the air there are set limits for the state of charge (fuel) beyond which you need to be within

range of an airfield but with regular ‘FREDA’ checks, there should be no surprises.

Back on the ground, times and battery charge are entered in the Tech Log, then the aeroplane is plugged in to the dedicated charger, again noting various parameters in the Log. Charging from empty to full takes about an hour (depending on temperature). So far there are nine airfields within the Southeast which have the appropriate chargers, including Popham and Rochester.

The Velis Electro it is certified as an ‘SEP’ even though no pistons are present. The full differences training requires a minimum of four sorties, covering handling, circuits, emergencies, navigation and a ground school course and exam set by Pipistrel.

After achieving her PPL at Biggin Hill, Claire moved to Stapleford, where she flew regularly between 1999 and 2002. Recently she decided to train as an instructor at Andrewsfield, and now instructs at Damyns Hall, where the Velis Electro is based.



CLAIRE BARTLETT WITH THE VELIS ELECTRO

“I just happened to be in the right place at the right time to qualify to fly the electric aeroplane. It is still in its early stages of development and so far lessons are restricted to 45 minutes flying time, which focusses the mind. There is a good deal of interest in the electric plane and some students signed up for training.”

SUCCESS STORIES

Congratulations to all students who have flown their first solo and to those pilots who have recently achieved their PPL – onwards and upwards. Wishing them all the best for their future flying.

FIRST SOLO

Nihat Donmez, Martyn Oliver*, Daniel Edmonds, Jason Grandi.

SKILL TEST

Henry Archer, Claire Baycraft, Kyle Bhada, Paul Isherwood, Grant Marcus, Jaspreet Phull, Matthew Sellwood, Luke Taylor, Nicholas Taylor, Alexander Wall.

*Martyn Oliver did his first solo in G-BGAA the same aeroplane flown by his father Adrian Oliver when he took is General Flying Test in 1981. Adrian is now runs Stapleford’s Flight Instructor Courses.

TAKE OFF is edited by Sue Rose (suerose.pr@hotmail.co.uk) and designed by John Pasche. Please do send us your stories, your photos and your ideas.

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