



ROYAL AIR FORCE OFFICERS' CLUB

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BRYANSTON 2021

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RAFOC REMINISCENCES AND RAMBLINGS - WEEK 190

24th NOVEMBER 2023

GREETINGS:

Another week in Wonderland... but... SA proposes to cut diplomatic ties with Israel? Folly upon folly... and the Port of Durban, once in the "Top Ten" has slipped to the bottom of the major seaports of the world, with 63 ships waiting in the roadstead and a backlog of 71 000 containers to be unloaded... sorry about Christmas, Santa!... but take heart, Citizens - Minister in the Presidency Khumbudzo Ntshavheni says South Africa's economy "remains strong despite attempts by the private sector to collapse it". (commenting after Standard Chartered's manipulation of the Rand)... SIU report alleges SAA pre-business rescue fraught with financial irregularities of around R3.7 billion... gang leader shot dead outside Roodepoort gym... Phala Phala revelations far from over... Matshela Koko lashes NPA after his corruption case struck from roll... State's corruption buster vows to keep punching... merry-go-round continues in the City of Johannesburg council - African Independent Congress (AIC) Councillor Margaret Arnolds elected as the new speaker... Parliament: "suspension of senior officials" over the fire in 2022 "crucial for maintaining the integrity of the institution"... Ekurhuleni warns motorists to be cautious at drive-through establishments... Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife ranger on foot patrol killed by a hippo...

The international scene is equally bleak, with the ongoing conflict in Ukraine (out of the headlines) and the Middle East... Oi Vey!!... "What is truth?" asked doubting Pilate – and never waited for an answer... unremitting "woke" media campaign against Israel... the "hidden persuaders" hard at work in the murk... Israel and Hamas agree four-day ceasefire, release of 50 hostages... Czechs fundraise 'gift for Putin' to arm Ukraine against Russia... U.S. will supply the spare parts Ukraine's F-16s will need... Jeremy Hunt looks to cut UK taxes, 'turbo-charge growth'... Argentina's new leader is a snake-oil salesman with extreme views... Canadian former intelligence chief found guilty of leaking state secrets... Far-right party set to win most seats in Dutch elections... Binance: Crypto giant admits money laundering, to pay \$4.3bn"... you South Africans are a problem" - Tom Curry (He would know, wouldn't he?)

RAF'S PROTECTOR FLIES IN THE UK FOR THE FIRST TIME:



The Royal Air Force's newest aircraft has taken its first flight in the UK.

The Protector RG Mk1, a remotely piloted aircraft system, took to the skies from RAF Waddington, marking another important milestone in the delivery of the surveillance, intelligence, and precision strike aircraft to the front line. The first of 16 remotely piloted Protector aircraft arrived at RAF Waddington in Lincolnshire in September and is undergoing a series of rigorous trials and tests before entering the RAF fleet. Capable of operating across the world with a minimal deployed footprint and remotely piloted from RAF Waddington, it can operate at heights up to 40,000 feet with an endurance of over 30 hours. Equipped with a suite of surveillance equipment, the Protector aircraft will bring a critical global surveillance capability for the UK, all while being remotely piloted from RAF Waddington. Protector will be able to undertake a wide range of tasking including land and maritime surveillance to track threats, counter terrorism, and support to UK civil authorities, such as assisting HM Coastguard with search and rescue missions. "Achieving the first flight of Protector in UK Airspace is a fitting milestone for this phase of testing, representing an outstanding team effort. We will now build on this success and look forward to the next Test & Evaluation phase as part of our preparations for the In-Service Date later next year." Group Captain Rutledge RAF Programme Director for Protector (*RAF News*)

BFC FIELD GUN PULL:

Personnel from RAF Akrotiri pulled a 1300kg Field Gun over 10km of rough terrain for charity earlier this month.



Despite high operational requirements for personnel in Cyprus, there was a fantastic turnout to join the British Forces Cyprus (BFC) Field Gun Crew completing a testing 10km route around RAF Akrotiri in 1 hour and 39 minutes, in support of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity. Pulling 1300kg is difficult, more so when mixed with sand, the steep inclines of the Akrotiri cliffs, and the relentless Cyprus sun, yet this charity pull was a small insight into the events that unfolded during the Second Boer War when sailors from the Naval Brigade carried the guns over very difficult terrain. The BFC Field Gun Crew continue to train and hope to continue their winning streak after a fantastic performance at the prestigious Brickwoods Competition earlier this year where the team took home the Plate 1 victory. (RAF News)

RAF OFFICER EXCELS:



Squadron Leader Handley joined the RAF straight from school in 2003 at the age of 18, as a RAF Regiment Gunner. Following his commission into the RAF Regiment four years later, Sqn Ldr Handley became increasingly interested in his academic development and was awarded first place for his entry into the Junior Regiment Officer's essay competition in 2008.

In 2017, he received a First Class BA(Hons) degree in Organisational Capability Development. This service-linked Bachelor's programme delivered by Buckinghamshire New University, focuses on organisational strategy, HR management, and security strategy.

Completing this course meant that Sqn Ldr Handley not only gained an excellent academic foundation but also the confidence to pursue opportunities for postgraduate study. This led to him successfully applying for the Tedder Fellowship in 2021 to undertake an MPhil in Politics and International Studies from the University of Cambridge (Oct 2022–Sep 2023). “I have been incredibly well supported by the RAF in my personal and academic development and am extremely grateful for the opportunities afforded to me and others within the Service.” Sqn Ldr Handley.

EMBRAER KC 390:



Brazilian aerospace company Embraer will later this month demonstrate its C-390 Millennium transport aircraft to the South African Air Force (SAAF). The aircraft will be at Air Force Base Waterkloof on Friday 24 November, the SAAF said in a statement, where it will be shown to Minister of Defence and Military Veterans Thandi Modise; Chief of the SA National Defence Force, General Rudzani Maphwanya; and the Chief of the SA Air Force, Lieutenant General Wiseman Mbambo. Representatives from various government departments will also be in attendance, “as they will benefit from this multi-mission aircraft by requiring air mobility support.” The SAAF said the purpose of the event will be to showcase the C-390’s cutting-edge capability for air-to-air refuelling, humanitarian aid delivery, search and rescue and aerial fire-fighting. The demonstration comes after an April 2023 visit to Brazil to discuss bringing the C-390 to South Africa for testing and demonstration, the SAAF said. In May, Modise told Parliament her department hoped to soon publicly announce a partnership with Embraer but gave little further detail other than that it would include the manufacture and repair of aircraft in South Africa. Her comments came weeks after Brazilian Air Force commander Lieutenant Brigadier Marcelo Kanitz Damasceno told the Brazilian senate’s Foreign Relations and National Defense Committee that Brazil was negotiating with several countries to sell the C-390 to, including South Africa. (*DefenceWeb*)

KEEP YOUR PONY IN THE STABLE:

A plane was forced to return to an airport shortly after taking off when a horse got loose on board. A pilot says the horse "managed to escape its stall" on the Boeing 747, in an audio recording of his exchange with air traffic control. Around half an hour after leaving New York on its way to Belgium, the Boeing 747 cargo plane contacted air traffic control to inform them of the escaped animal. "Yes sir, we are a cargo plane," a pilot can be heard saying in an air traffic control recording obtained by Live ATC. "We have a live animal, a horse, on board the aeroplane and the horse managed to escape its stall. We don't have a problem as of flying-wise, but we need to return to New York. We cannot get the horse back secure." FlightRadar24 data showed the plane had climbed to 31,000ft before being forced to make a U-turn off the coast of Boston. The audio showed it then dumped around 20 tonnes of fuel over the Atlantic, to ensure the aircraft was not above the safe weight limit for landing. The pilot can then be heard asking air traffic control to request a vet is present when the flight lands at New York's JFK airport. 'We have a horse in... difficulty.' Upon landing, a control tower worker asked the pilot if they required assistance. "On the ground, negative, on the ramp, yes," he replied. The operator of the 9 November flight, Air Atlanta Icelandic, has been contacted for comment.

QANTAS' LATEST SPECIAL LIVERY: TWISTED SISTERS:



Qantas has unveiled the latest special livery in its Flying Art series with the rollout of its first Airbus A220. The new paint job features an intricate design inspired by a traditional indigenous story. The new livery is named after a piece of indigenous artwork named "Minyma Kutjara Tjukurpa" or "The Two Sisters Creation Story." The artwork tells the story of two sisters who cover vast distances through remote Australia to find their way home, stopping along the way to perform sacred singing and dancing. Like other designs in Qantas' Flying Art series, the livery was designed by the Australian First Nation design agency Balarinji. The artwork was created by Maringka Baker, a senior Pitjantjatjara artist from the remote community of Kanpi in South Australia. She is recognized

as one of the country's most accomplished artists and is known for inspiring a new generation of First Nations artists. Advance, Australia Fair...

SAAF CRASH AT LOHATLA:

Date: 22 November 2023 Embargo: None



You will notice the unusual prop configuration.

Subject: A SOUTH AFRICAN AIR FORCE CASA-212 AICRAFT CRASH LANDS AT COMBAT TRAINING CENTRE LOHATLA IN THE NORTHERN CAPE - A South African Air Force aircraft, Casa-212, from 44 Squadron at Air Force Base Waterkloof has crash landed at (Dippies Airfield) Combat Training Centre Lohatla in the Northern Cape. This happened on 22 November 2023 afternoon, after the execution of Air Force capability display during Exercise VUKUHLOME 2023. The incident happened as it was landing following one of the manoeuvres of dropping Para troopers. The members of the South African Medical Health Service were swiftly on sight to provide necessary medical support and all members on board the aircraft were confirmed safe, as there were no injuries sustained. A board of inquiry will be convened to determine the cause of the incident as well as the damage to the aircraft. ENDS. Issued by: South African National Defence Force. *(Defence Headquarters)*

HOW FAST IS FAST?



The supersonic Aérospatiale/BAC Concorde was an iconic delta-winged airliner that inspired the world during its 27-year commercial career. The jet was known for many things, but its blistering speed was one of the most critical factors differentiating it from subsonic aircraft. New York's John F. Kennedy International Airport (JFK) to London Heathrow Airport (LHR) was one of its primary routes, but how quickly did it connect the airports? *(SimpleFlying)*

- The Concorde set the record for the fastest-ever commercial transatlantic crossing, completing the flight from New York to London in just two hours, 52 minutes, and 59 seconds.
- Compared to subsonic aircraft, the Concorde offered a significant time-saving of over 50% on transatlantic flights, with typical flight times of around three and a half to four hours.
- While the Concorde's career eventually ended in 2003, demand for supersonic travel remains, and the Boom Overture is currently the most likely successor with a projected transatlantic crossing time of around three and a half hours.

CHEERS FOR TODAY:

Eagle-eyed readers would have noticed (well, one did, at least...) the wrong date in last week's edition... Our final event this year will be the **Ladies Christmas Lunch next Friday 1 (NOT 2) December 2023, 12h30 for 13h00**. Our guest speaker is scheduled to be **Rob Hersov**, who could not join us earlier in the year. His topic will be very interesting. He has it in his diary.

Price remains R250 per head and we request you to pay by EFT to our account - Nedbank - Melrose Arch - Br: 19 66 05 - Account 19 66 278 063. Use your name and "December Lunch" as reference, please...

Please also note that we are committed to pay for the number of meals booked. Bring your Ladies and guests along to enjoy a Christmas Lunch in convivial company – and an entertaining speaker of note. Look forward to seeing as many of you as possible as we are now on very Short Finals for the end of the year. This issue of Ramblings is longer than usual because of the pieces on Neil Armstrong, which has been doing the rounds on social media, and the Anniversary of the brothers Montgolfier and their balloons. Enjoy!

TAILPIECE:

Male and Female...

You may not know this, but many non-living things have a gender.

A Web Page is Female, because it's always getting hit on.

A Subway is Male, because it uses the same old lines to pick people up.

Ziploc Bags are Male, because they hold everything in, but you can see right through them.

Copiers are Female, because once turned off it takes a while to warm them up again. It's an effective reproductive device if the right buttons are pushed, but can wreak havoc if the wrong buttons are pushed.

A Tyre is Male, because it goes bald and it's often over-inflated.

An Hourglass is Female, because over time, the weight shifts to the bottom.

A Hot Air Balloon is Male, because, to get it to go anywhere, you have to light a fire under it, and of course, there's the hot air part.... (apologies to the Mongolfiers!)

Sponges are Female, because they're soft, squeezable and retain water.

A Hammer is Male, because it hasn't changed much over the last 5,000 years, but it's handy to have around.

A Remote Control is Female. Ha! You thought it'd be male, didn't you? But consider this - it gives a man pleasure, he'd be lost without it, and while he doesn't always know the right buttons to push, he keeps trying!

LIGHTNING FAST:



Lightning Hour... Prizewinning Photo from RAF Marham

MATT

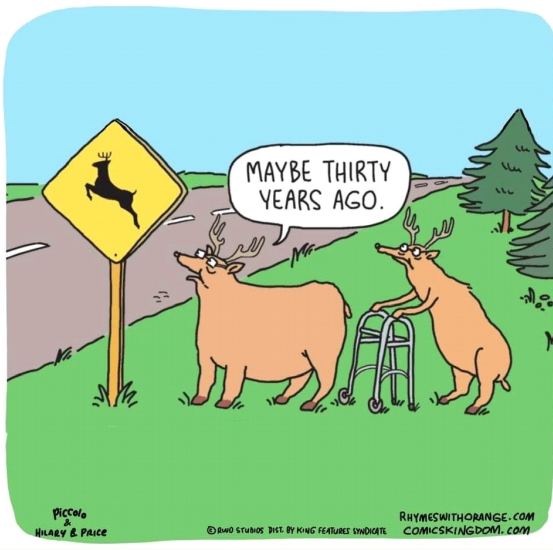


MATT



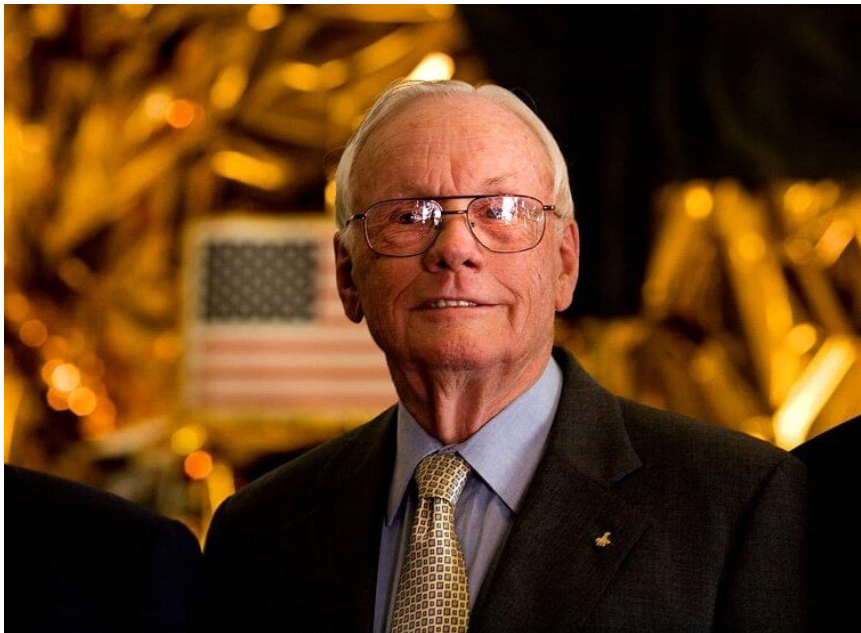
"The editor says the cricket is off-limits, don't even mention it. Write about HSBC instead"





NEIL ARMSTRONG:

Almost everyone has heard the name Neil Armstrong. It's undisputed that he is among the best-known figures of the 20th century. He was, after all, the first human being to set foot on our Moon. This achievement brought Armstrong international fame and adoration. But did it bring happiness? Just as there is a dark side of the Moon, it turns out that the experience of traveling beyond Earth's atmosphere cast a dark shadow over Armstrong's life. Years later, his family shed light on the toll the moon landing took on his spirit.

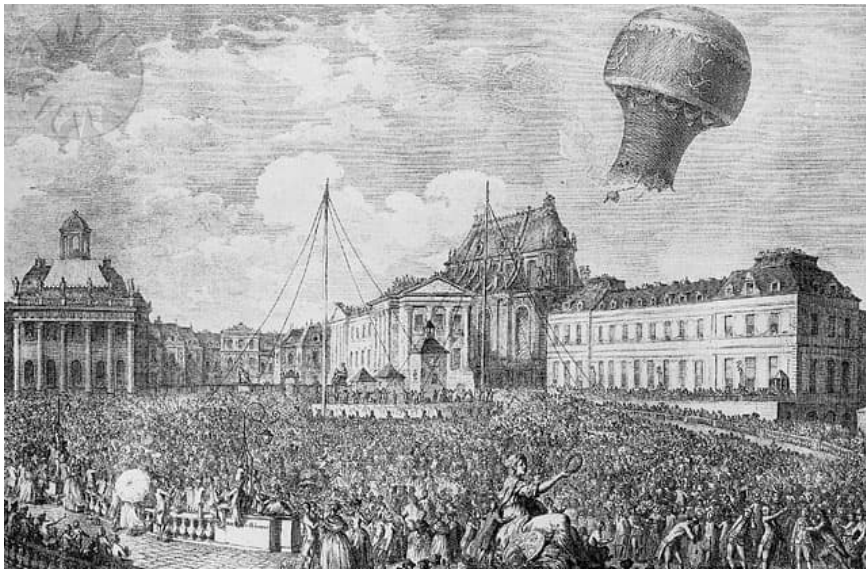


You might think that everything would be rosy in Armstrong's life after that pinnacle of achievement and the public adulation it elicited. But life wasn't so easy for the first man on the Moon. Many of the difficulties Armstrong was to face in later years were only revealed in a biography written by James Hansen, "First Man: The Life of Neil A. Armstrong" was published in 2005. In a 2019 interview with the British newspaper the Daily Mirror, Hansen said, "I've never met anybody quite like Neil. He had

no ego and turned down so many opportunities to make money. Many of the astronauts who went to the Moon also had some religious or spiritual epiphany, but nothing changed in his approach to life.” Sadly, though, things did change for the famed astronaut after that fateful mission. According to Hansen, Armstrong said, “I am, and ever will be, a white-socks, nerdy engineer, born under the second law of thermodynamics.” Nonetheless, there was something gnawing away at his psyche. It seems that the death of their infant daughter Karen had cast a long and irreparable shadow. After that gut-wrenching tragedy, Armstrong would never discuss the traumatic incident, meaning that his wife Janet had no choice but to grieve alone. Unable to patch things up, in 1990 Armstrong and Janet separated, divorcing four years later after being married for almost four decades. The same year, Armstrong wed again to Carol Knight. “People expected Neil to be sort of demi-God or hero, but he was different from other astronauts,” Hansen told the Daily Mirror. “He wasn’t at all the gung-ho, macho fighter pilot type, those often depicted as the guys with the ‘right stuff’.” Armstrong seems to have been a complex man, and not always a happy one. But his achievements were extraordinary. Neil Armstrong died in 2012 aged 82.

MONTGOLFIER ANNIVERSARY November 21st, 1783:

The history of ballooning is a fascinating one. It includes Benjamin Franklin, a couple of French paper makers, and a couple of barnyard animals. After many repeated experiments during more than 20 centuries, the secret of aerial navigation was discovered toward the end of the 18th century in 1782 when Stephen (Jacques-Etienne Montgolfier) and Joseph Montgolfier made their ingenious aerostatic experiment. Smoke from fire hovered over Parisian rooftops for hours before it ascended into clouds – this inspiration that led to an invention that changed our world forever!



The younger brother Stephen realized that if a light paper bag were to be made and filled with smoke or ash from their fire, then it would naturally rise up towards the sky. In November of 1782, in Avignon, the Montgolfier brothers built a light paper bag in an oblong shape with approximately 40 cubic feet of capacity and used it to test their experiment. The paper bag had an opening at the bottom, and when they applied fire beneath it, the internal temperature increased, causing it to rise. Their first balloon experiment rose to a height of 75 feet. Encouraged by their success, the Montgolfier brothers made their next experiment on a much larger scale. Their new envelope was 600 cubic feet in capacity and in a spherical shape. The shape of the envelope was designed after a large, short-necked glass bottle used in chemistry called a “Balloon.” When the heat was applied to the opening of the paper balloon, its strings broke and ascended to 600 feet above the ground.

The Montgolfiers were natives of Annonay and were the sons of a wealthy paper manufacturer who had retired from business and left it in their hands. From the history that is afforded of them, it appears that they were both attached to the study of mathematical science; but it seems they were not exactly acquainted with the true nature of the substance that caused the ascent of their balloons. They attributed the ascending power to a peculiar kind of gas that was emitted by the combustion of chopped straw and wool mixed together. This, however, does not in the least detract from the merit of their discovery. The success of larger hot air balloons gave Montgolfier brothers the confidence to build a very much larger balloon. This time the hot air balloon was 35 feet in diameter. On April 3rd, 1783, the balloon, after being filled and released, reached a height of 1000 feet and covered a distance of 3/4 of a mile. It was time for the Montgolfiers to show off their invention to the public. They built a spherical paper balloon with nearly 23k cubic feet and had a lifting capacity of 500lbs. The hot air balloon was released from its tether ropes and ascended to an astonishing 6000 feet above France. On the 12th day of September 1783, the day appointed for the first balloon flight exhibition before the members of the Royal Academy ascended with a load from 400-500lbs. Unfortunately, due to high winds, there was a violent gust of wind damaging the balloon. A new hot air balloon was ordered to be built in the same dimensions. The new balloon included a basket of wicker-work and was inflated in the presence of king Louis XVI and the royal family in Versailles. The French king suggested a sheep, a duck, and a rooster to be placed in the basket as the first hot air ballooning passengers. With these three living animal passengers, the balloon was launched into the upper air and reached an altitude of 1500 feet. The animals landed safely at a distance of 10,000 feet from the place of the ascent. The first official balloon flight was a success.



This was the first experiment in which any living creature ascended with a balloon envelope. Another was now constructed which was 74 feet high and 48 feet in diameter. With this large balloon, M. Pilatre de Rozier volunteered to make an aerial voyage. The hot air balloon had an opening at the bottom end 15 feet in diameter. Around the opening was arranged and fastened a gallery of wicker work three feet broad, and around the outer edge of this was a balustrade of the same material three feet high, and around the lower circumference of the balloon, and immediately above the gallery platform, port-holes were worked in it for the purpose of introducing fuel to the burner unit. The lower aperture of the balloon was suspended by chains to an iron brasier intended for the onboard heat source (fireplace). This meant the aeronaut could easily introduce fuel from the portholes as necessity required it. With this balloon, Jean-Francois Pilatre de Rozier made several ascents to the

height of two or three hundred feet with M. Girond de Vilette., while it was fastened with ropes of that length. On the 21st of November, he, in company with the marquis d'Arlandes. concluded that they would make an aerial voyage. Accordingly, the balloon was inflated, and the gallery was supplied with fuel. M. Pilatre de Rozier and the marquis d'Arlandes stationed themselves on opposite sides of the basket. At a given signal, the balloon was released from its moorings and left free in the air. It rose majestically amidst the shouts and applause of a delighted multitude until it reached a height of 3000 feet. The parties remained in the air for 25 minutes and encountered various currents of wind and changes in air temperature. During the hot air ballooning experience, there were several times in imminent danger by the balloon catching fire. The marquis became greatly agitated by this and desired to make a precipitate descent. Luckily M. Pilatre de Rozier was prepared and had brought along a sponge and bucket of water for an emergency. They raised and lowered their altitude multiple times in the atmosphere by regulating the fire in the brasier. They finally landed safely 5 miles from where they started after having sailed over a great portion of Paris. The original documentary account of the first hot air balloon flight was witnessed and given by none other than Benjamin Franklin. Given at the chateau of La Muette at five in the afternoon. Signed, Duc de Polignac, Duc de Guisnes, Comte de Polastron, Comte de Vaudreuil, Benjamin Franklin, Faujus de St. Fond, Delisle, Leroy, of the Academy of Sciences. "Today, November 21st, 1783, at the Chateau de la Muette, took place an experiment with the aerostatic machine of M. de Montgolfier. The sky was partly clouded, wind north-west. At eight minutes afternoon, a mortar gave notice that the machine was about to be filled. In eight minutes, notwithstanding the wind, it was ready to set off, the marquis d'Arlandes and M. Pilatre de Rozier being in the car. I was at first intended to retain the machine a while with the ropes, to judge what weight it would bear and see that all was right. But the wind prevented it from rising vertically, and directed it toward one of the garden walls; the roped made several rents in it, one being six feet long. It was brought down again, and in two hours was set right. Having been filled again, it set off at fifty-four minutes past one, carrying the same persons. It rose in the most majestic manner and when it was about 270 feet high, the intrepid voyagers took off their hats and saluted the spectators. No one could help feeling a mingled sentiment of fear and admiration. the voyagers were soon indistinguishable; but the machine, hovering on the horizon, and displaying the most beautiful figure, rose at least 3000 feet high, and remained visible all the time. It crossed the Seine, below the barrier of La Conference, valides, was in view of all of Paris. The voyagers, satisfied with their experiment, and not wishing to travel farther, agreed to descend; but seeing that the wind was carrying them upon the houses of the Rue de Seve, Faub. St. Germin, they preserved their presence of mind, increased the fire, and continued their course through the air till they crossed Paris. They then descended quietly on the plain beyond the New Boulevard, opposite the mill of Croulebarbe, without having felt the slightest inconvenience, and having in the car two-thirds of their fuel. They could then, if they had wished, have gone three times as far as they did go, which was 5000 toises, done in from twenty to twenty-five minutes. The machine was 75 feet height and fifty-six feet in diameter; it contained 60,000 cubic feet and carried a weight of 1600-1700 pounds."