



March 2003

# SKYWRITINGS

Newsletter of the *Mid Kent Strut* of the



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## Mike's Mutterings

Mike Negus -  
Editor



## Dawn of a New Horizon (Gardan)!!

John Luck has formed a new Group around Gardan Horizon G-GYAT now based at Rochester. The machine is available for hire and you are recommended to go to their web site on [www.gardanhorizon.flyer.co.uk](http://www.gardanhorizon.flyer.co.uk). There you will find pictures (looks very tidy in its blue scheme) details of the group, share availability, if any, hire details and various other links. Very professional worth a look as John is building up a portfolio of other Gardan's for the web site.



## Exchange Visit

We are hopeful that a visit to our Fly In on July 6<sup>th</sup> will take place by members of the flying club at St Omer. Brian Hope has contacted members there who are keen on the idea so we will embrace a bit of the old entente cordiale yet. This may lead on to a Strut fly out to St Omer.



## Did You Know

*That during the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War more than 500 passengers were killed in civilian aircraft flying to or from the UK - either shot down or as a result of engine failure.*

*Shortly before the outbreak of war all passenger and private flying was stopped. Then only Imperial Airways and British Airways were allowed to continue.*

*The fleet of flying boats were moved from Southampton to Poole for safety reasons, along with the rest of the passenger fleet which was moved from London's aerodromes to safer grassy fields around the country.*

*All passenger night flying was stopped and airliners had to fly between 1000 and 3000 feet.*

March meeting starts early

April is Quiz Night

## Lots to read this month

- The CAA Safety Meeting is usually very well attended. Get there early to get a good seat
- Pictures of Strut Aircraft particularly needed
- All material for publication welcomed



## Visit to D & D



March Winds



*“Use your Mode C  
Transponder at all  
times.”*



*Brian Hope's Jodel  
restoration. Much work done  
but lots still to do*



A small band of strut members met at the services at Clacket Lane on the M25 for the visit to the Distress and Diversion Unit at the LATCC at West Drayton near Heathrow Airport. All participants arrived promptly and after a quick coffee, the other cars followed Colin Ladd around the M25. Colin set a very brisk pace and with no holdups on the motorway we arrived in good time enabling us to have lunch in a nearby pub before checking in at security for our 2pm start.

The RAF officer assigned to show us round advised us that the usual presentation could not be made as the room used was otherwise occupied as they were very busy with the build up for the possible conflict in Iraq. We therefore went straight into the main radar room and given a very humorous explanation of the work of a military air traffic controller. There is no doubt that if you have a transponder in your aircraft, you should use it with mode C. It makes it much more likely that military hardware will not bump into you.

After a quick look at the civil controllers from a balcony we went into the D&D unit which is in a small room on the first floor and continually manned by two experienced military controllers. Their main duty is on uhf with the military and they have a large map on the wall which instantly displays the position of an aircraft as soon as they transmit. A similar system operates for civil aircraft on vhf but uses a television screen for display which can zoom in to show a very large scale map with detail such as churches etc showing. The help which D&D can call on in an emergency is very extensive. They welcome a call from you if you have a problem - the sooner the better!

Leaving at about 5pm even the rush hour on the motorway going home proved to be a non event and ended a very enjoyable afternoon on a good note.



Coffee at Clacket Lane Services

## Bald Eagles

There is another initiative afoot to give the opportunity to non owners or flyers to participate in flying with members who do own or have access to aircraft. This will probably take place at the Summer Bar BQ and hopefully on other occasions to be announced.

On the back of this it is noted that PAFRA organise week day flyouts monthly and we thought that if a series of destinations was set out say on a Sunday following the Strut Meeting it would give the chance for Strut people to Buddy Up and hopefully get more people airborne. Suggestions for destinations include Lydd, Arras, Brighton, Oxford, Old Sarum, White Waltham, Amiens, Sandown, Clacton, Ostend, Mitten Zealand, Antwerp and St Omer. This idea will be canvassed at the next meeting and list published, from then on it would be a case of same way, same day. Any suggestions ??

## March Meeting

CAA Safety meeting, come early, bring log books for stamping. This event will be popular and encourages a lot of non Strut members so make them welcome, lets see if we can recruit a few in to the fold.

## Another Step on the Ladder

One of our ex members Martyn Snelling has now taken up a position with Easyjet converting to the Boeing 737 with a view to operating the now defunct 'GO!' routes out of Stansted. Latterly he was flying 146's out of Southend for Flightline and although his membership has lapsed, must do something about that, we do keep in touch with his career. Best of Luck Martyn.

## Pre-Eagles

There is an initiative afoot to get some youngsters at Rochester Airport round about 27<sup>th</sup> April 2003 to get involved with a simple project of constructing and flying tissue balloons, hopefully inside the hanger, to demonstrate aspects of flight. This will also encourage team building and constructing skills with a small prize at the end. We will be putting some arms up backs for a bit of assistance to help supervise these activities. Before this happens if you are willing to help give Jaqui a call. This exercise will be a precursor to the main Young Eagles Day on the 18<sup>th</sup> May this year. Please do your bit to assist either on the ground or flying to ensure the success of this annual event.

## Strutting Around the Strips, Headcorn's Tiger Club

Graham Hammond has offered this insight in to the Organisation.

It seems to matter very little what strip you visit in the UK, the near continent or as far away as New Zealand, when you tell people that Headcorn is your flying base, they will say "The Tiger Club" and I think there can be little doubt that the Tiger Club would rank among some of the most widely known clubs in aviation.

With this in mind I thought I really ought to know a little more about the club, its history and its aspirations, so I arranged to have a cup of tea and a chat with Jerry Knight - the club's only full-time employee.

Jerry, a mild-mannered laid back sort of guy, whose main interest seems to be helping out other aviators, is responsible for the day-to-day running of the club with the assistance of an army of volunteers.

The club was originally started in the 50's by a handful of ex-RAF pilots, who felt they would like to do a few air displays and was first based at Croydon. It met with a considerable amount of success as it was one of the few non-military organisations doing air displays.

As the club grew, Norman Jones edited the club's own newsletter, that was eventually to turn into the Pilot magazine.

The club then moved to Redhill for a number of years and arrived in Headcorn in 1990.

Today the club has eight aircraft, all tail draggers, and boasts the oldest Tiger Moth in the

world - 70 this year (G-ACDC). The club has over 400 members from all walks of life. Members are encouraged to become shareholders and help out whenever possible. Formation flying is a out their aircraft to other airfields for pilots to fly.

If you feel you would like to "have a go" you can have a monthly membership for £20 and get the opportunity of flying some lovely aircraft, plus the kudos of saying "I'm a member of The Tiger Club"



*"What's his name, where is he and when??"*



*"Lashenden (Headcorn) Aerodrome."*





## Committee Contacts

### Co-ordinator: Jaqui Clark



New Orchard Farm,  
Sittingbourne, ME9 0QL  
Tel & Fax: 01795 - 830378  
E-mail: [JaquiC@pfa.org.uk](mailto:JaquiC@pfa.org.uk)

### Treasurer:

John Dean 01892 822776

### Membership Secretary:

Graham Hammond  
[Aviateur@pfanet.co.uk](mailto:Aviateur@pfanet.co.uk)  
01622 891466

### Newsletter Editor:

Mike Negus 01634 364396  
57 Ploughmans Way  
Rainham, Kent, ME8 8LH  
[Mike@negus8.fsnet.co.uk](mailto:Mike@negus8.fsnet.co.uk)



### Committee Members:

Mark Balding 01959 523825  
Brian Hope 01795 662508  
Mike Tooze 01634 861591  
Derek Browning 01622 736626

### Dates for your Diary

March 27	CAA Safety Evening
April 24	Quiz Night
March 2	Trip to Duxford
May 3 & 4	Cross Channel Fly Out
May 18	Young Eagles Day
July 6	Pancake Fly In

## February Meeting

Malcolm Moulton gave a talk on Kent Aviation History centering around the pioneers from 1909 and their early flights from all places the Isle of Sheppey - still hard to believe it effectively was the cradle of British aviation. Fascinating stuff well illustrated showing people like Wilbur and Orville Wright, notable for the centenary celebrations this year together with home grown talent such as Messrs Rolls and Royce. Mention was also made of a little known monument at Eastchurch Village commemorating those early days. Talk then developed to the history of Rochester Airport which prompted Jim Wraight to produce a photograph of himself as a young boy taken at the then new airport in 1934.

We were graced by a visit from Diane Earhart, our friendly American Traffic Controller/PPL, who is always welcome and was selling C.D's of her amusing anecdotes for charity. A number of strut members dipped in their pockets and bought copies.

## Duxford Trip

Several hardy souls ventured to Duxford by air, numbers were a bit depleted but it was one of the first shake outs of the year!

## For Sale

**Old Ferguson TEF Diesel Tractor. Needs a good home and a little maintenance . Offers to Graham Hammond [aviateur@pfanet.co.uk](mailto:aviateur@pfanet.co.uk).**

**CAA Safety Evening in March - Early start at 19:30 hours**

## Turweston v Microlight

Attention was brought to the Editor by one of our members that the new PFA Headquarters was to be based on an airfield unable to operate microlights and in an endeavour to clarify what is perceived at any rate to be a smack in the teeth we have sought clarification.

The following is the explanation which we have received.

Yes there is a microlight issue at Turweston, set by the planners in '92 and largely to address the then noisy weight shift fraternity. As you know things have moved on since then and 3 axis microlights are pretty indistinguishable from normal light aircraft. These types of microlight will find no problems when visiting Turweston. The weight shift variety have also been visiting (on the quiet) for a number of years now and the planners have accepted a review of the situation could be appropriate therefore it is anticipated that by the time PFA HQ has moved there and become fully operational various restrictions will not apply and at the very worst will not be enforced until the planners make it totally approved.

## Did You Know

*By early 1940 the carrying of all fare-paying passengers was stopped and you could only fly with Government approval i.e. VIPs, diplomats and military personnel (the Government paid the fare).*

*The countries you could fly to was greatly restricted and Lisbon became a major jumping off point. From there you were able to make your way to the States, Africa and some parts of the Empire.*