



November 2003

SKYWRITINGS

Newsletter of the *Mid Kent Strut* of the



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Mike's Mutterings

Mike Negus -
Editor



Fisher Super Koala Flies Again

November
Meeting –
Builders
Evening

Xmas Party
Almost
Here

Exciting things to read this month

- RV6
- Pictures of Strut Aircraft particularly needed
- Please let Editor Mike have your articles for inclusion in the Newsletter

At last my Super K has a prop that suits the engine (after two, slightly nerve-wracking, false starts). The Chris Lodge prop was beautifully made, but rather small diameter. This would be fine in, say, a Nipper, but the Super K has rather more girth (not unlike its owner) and the blades could hardly be seen sticking out the sides of the fuselage. This added up to a rate of climb that was somewhat underwhelming - at one point I turned right after leaving the strip at Throwley to find that, although the plane was climbing, so was the ground if you see what I mean. Thus there was little perceptible change in the distance between me and the countryside even at full throttle.

The next prop (Rupert) came from South America but, as Rodney Stiff, the Jabiru designer said, it revved like crazy but produced relatively little thrust. The final prop (so far!) is a GT optimised for draggy fuselages. This is just grand, and works



Koala at Throwley

better than the old geared Rotax 532 with all that torque. It's also a lot more comforting to listen to the Jabiru, rather than the deafening silence of a 532 when the throttle cable breaks.

That particular, rather character building, incident took place over Gillingham with Rochester in sight on the horizon. During the protracted glide (or so it seemed), Rochester moved up and down the windscreen depending upon the lift/sink from the terrain below. At one point, Rochester's imprecations included "keep it tight, Victor Lima". I'm still not sure whether they were referring to the circuit or my anatomy, but it seemed like good advice either way.

Anyway, Throwley International is now active again, as you can see from the pictures. Alan



*Fisher Koala landing at
Throwley*



*“keep it tight,
Victor Lima”. I’m
still not sure
whether they were
referring to the
circuit or my
anatomy!”*



*Paul Newman's Vaga under
restoration*



Bennett-Turner is in regular attendance, and the barn is now filling up with old Continental engines in various states of restoration.

The next stage is to start a programme of streamlining. Francis said that he thought that my round lift struts created as much drag as a biplane, but without the advantage of the extra wing. If you've been reading your Popular Flying, you might have spotted the designer comment that round lift struts can produce up to 100 times as much drag as correctly streamlined struts.

Of course, there are some problems to all this, and I can't just put in a call to the factory for a new set of streamlined struts (Fisher don't go in for that sort of thing). Some people seem to think that aeroplanes, like cats, all come in kit form. Anyway, all the hassle of getting the wing stress analysed and approved is not to be chucked away lightly, including the subtle 3 degree bend (suitably stress relieved) in the lower welded strut fitting. Probably the easiest route is to glue and shape some plastic foam onto the struts, but I have fears of some enthusiastic ground helper grabbing them and leaving indelible dents in my handywork.

I'm also working up to installing a proper electric trim system. This could make flying rather more relaxing, because the current forward C of G at present means that, if I let go of the controls for a couple of seconds, the Super K rapidly copies the Stuka (with that thin, high pitched scream coming, on this occasion, from somewhere inside the cockpit).

All in all, I've got a number of ideas for improving the Super K, none of which involve a box of matches. In fact, flying could be fun again if I persevere. The biggest problem right now is that with my past disillusion for all things aeronautical, I started building a boat in the hangar. Actually, this is now not far off the point where it can be launched, clearing the way for a whole series of aeroplane mods. I'm also still quietly scheming away on my plans to visit Oshkosh via northern Siberia but that, as they say, is another story.

Alistair Malcolm

The early bird may get the worm, but the second mouse gets the cheese.

Last Months Meeting - Strathallan Collection

Those of us present for the October meeting enjoyed a well illustrated talk by Dick Richardson from Popham Airfield about his earlier career helping to form the Strathallan Collection which was the brain child of Lord Roberts. He by all accounts threw a lot of energy and money in acquiring an eclectic gathering of civil and military aircraft over a very short time. Fortunately most of which are still with us although with other owners and collections as the Strathallan project was as meteoric in its formation as its demise when the owner lost interest. When you hear of half a dozen Spitfires, flying and non flying, sold after the making of the Battle of Britain film in 1969 for what you would pay now for a ropey 172 or Cherokee it beggars belief and what of Charles Churches plans for Popham, 3 flying Lancaster's et al, sadly cut short when he was killed ironically flying a Spitfire. Fascinating stuff and Dick has promised to come back next year for another talk about other aspects of his life and times.

Next Months Meeting- Building Night

For all those interested in building your own flying machine a good opportunity as always to see how your fellow members are getting on and hopefully we will have participation to include wood, metal and composite construction including helicopter building and propeller problem solving.

If you have any thing you wish to bring along to show your admiring compatriots feel free to do so, parts complete or otherwise, plans or photographs of progress W.H.Y. This will be the last meeting before the Christmas Party so we look forward to seeing as many members as possible.

Christmas Party - 13th December

Change of format this year we are placing the emphasis on more of a dinner without the benefit of live music which although some members enjoy the majority prefer the more sociable opportunity to engage in conversation with their fellow member and guests. For your amusement we will have a magician to perform at the tables and having seen these guys in action a number of times before it's quite baffling, how do they do it? Dunno, see if you can. So please bring your completed forms and deposits, I'm sure Jaqui will be pleased to liberate your hand earned cash from your wallet, money belt or purse .

RV6 Thoughts

By Karl Martin



Build or Buy?

It seemed so obvious. We want to do an aerial tour of Europe, several in fact, so why not build an aeroplane. We have the skill set - both engineers. On an aerial tour of the Rockies we visited the Vans factory and after a trial flight we realised that deferred gratification was considerable for even a quick-build kit. A visit to Netherthorpe, where several had been built, confirmed that this was a non-trivial exercise. But boy, these machines were fun to fly - very vroom vroom.

This left us with the option to buy. Occasional RV6s were coming onto the UK market. We focused on them at the last PFA Rally, taking photos of panel layouts and talking to anyone with an interest in RVs. Then, quite separately, we made contact with Ian, the owner of G-RVIB and gradually induced him to part company with her as he's building an RV7. When the PFA inspection results came through (oops no deviation chart!) we began a flying programme with the owner to log enough hours to become insured owners in Sept.

How does she handle?

How the RV6 performs is well documented on the Vans website. So it was no surprise that like a well-known paint "it does as it says on the tin". Even with a fixed pitch prop, 160 hp gets airborne quickly. Climb out of 1500 fpm at 70 knots Vx is effortless. In the cruise, she covered the 150 Nm from Eaglescott to Slinfold Horsham in 68 minutes total engine time. It takes some time to become familiar with throttling back from cruise at 150 knots to flap operating speed of 90 knots. As for

Experience is something you don't get until just after you need it.

landing, one gets plenty of practice as the undercarriage is made of undamped spring steel rods! She is benign in cross winds and tracks straight without effort, once on the ground. Getting her onto the ground takes practice.

Future Plans

Our plan is to tour mainland Europe. To that end, we have begun research into regulations governing flight in the major EU countries. It feels like we are reinventing the wheel and hope to enrol others in this exercise. Anyone with recent flying experience in Europe and current contact details for regulators is welcome to contact us for info sharing regarding regulations of pilots (we have FAA licences) and aircraft. Also we need to line up a PFA inspector, suggestions welcome.

Well Cross Farm

Currently based at Well Cross Farm near Horsham, we would ideally prefer to be in the western side of Kent. Anybody who knows of hangarage...



RV6 Panel



If at first you don't succeed, destroy all evidence that you tried.

Don't forget the Builders Evening - 27th November

"it does as it says on the tin"

Oops!

Slight error crept in last month referring to Strut Plans for a fly out to Caen in June 2004 to celebrate the 60th Anniversary of Operation Overlord , not Overboard ! Thank you to those members who gleefully pointed out the typo.



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Dates for your Diary

Nov 27	Builders Evening
Dec 13	Christmas Party
Dec 13-21	National Aviation Week
Jan 29	AGM

Gate Guardian

Disappointed that the Stoneacre Boys Club failed in their attempt to persuade British Airways to have one of the newly available Concordes as a gate guard for Farthing Corner which would have been one up against Rochester's 'new' E.E. Lightning currently undergoing refurbishment before display by B.Ae at their works. Oh well.

Talking of preservation are there any plans for the PFA to create a museum holding significant types such as the Taylor Monoplane the original first example is still flying and the Isaacs Fury. Surely at the end of their flying days there ought to be some permanent home for these and others of their genre. Not as glamorous some would argue as the various collections of preserved aircraft around the country but important in their own right.

Remembrance

In this reflective month it was sobering to read in the press there are only 27 survivors from the armed forces of Britain who served in the First World War. Three of these gentlemen were cheered on at the Cenotaph Ceremony this year whilst being driven in an open topped car down Whitehall one of whom served with the Royal Flying Corps as ground crew. He apparently was posted to the new



service from the Royal Navy having seen action at Jutland. Quite amazing. No aircrew are believed to survive, the last known fighter pilot, a Canadian to serve on the Western Front died in January this year. Where is this going, well I suppose obliquely out of adversity some good for those that follow on inevitably comes and for our generation who enjoy truly popular flying tangible reminders of conflict such as wartime airfields are sometimes left behind for our use. 60 years after the last unpleasantness they are still under threat but by our own beurocrocry which in its own short sighted way may ultimately deprive future generations of the spark of adventure and individuality which somehow reflect in our recreational sport. Nanny state, on bring it on! Our fight for our right to preserve what has been bequeathed to us by the wishes and sacrifice of others goes on as it seems every month brings further threat to another airfield. I know that Jaqui contacts as many members as possible as these issues arise and you are urged to support the cause when called upon.

Talking of Kits....

Contact FlugWerk GmbH Germany (www.flugwerk.de) if you want the ultimate kit. They are offering a new build Focke Wulf 190 fast build kit for \$525,000 which excludes engine and instruments, full commercial back up is offered and is stated to be the only warbird being able to be registered as an amateur - homebuilt kit plane. Dream on....

If Barbie is so popular, why do you have to buy her friends?

KR Project still For Sale
- All woodwork done with many parts - £1000

Phone Steve Solley on 01304 347100 for more details

Don't forget the

Christmas Party

on 13th December 2003.
Get your booking to Jaqui now!!



A conclusion is the place where you got tired of thinking.

