



February 2004

# SKYWRITINGS

Newsletter of the *Mid Kent Strut* of the



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## Mike's Mutterings

Mike Negus -  
Editor



## Young Eagle has Thrilling Time

**February Meeting – Touring Talks**

**Winter Almost Over??**

**Exciting things to read this month**

- Brian Hope's thoughts on EASA
- Pictures of Strut Aircraft particularly needed
- Please let Editor Mike have your articles for inclusion in the Newsletter



*Strut Member Martin submitted this one - Wonder if he really does like Kids?*



## Annual General Meeting January 2004



*Your Committee under  
Scrutiny*



*“ particularly for  
those of us  
knocking on a bit  
and we all get a bit  
mutt and jeff.  
Pardon ?”*



*Mike Holden and his two  
Lovelines*



Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> January 2004 apart from being the occasion of my wife's Uncle Roy's birthday and for those who got a copy of Eats, Shoots and Leaves for Christmas will see my appalling use of the apostrophe, was also the Annual General Meeting of the Mid Kent Strut. Not always an occasion for hedonistic or salty behaviour from the rank and file and so once again it proved to be, not. I sometimes muse on the famous or was it infamous AGM of many Winters ago which was a bit more lively but interesting .

The meeting was fairly well attended seeing that we had just undergone our annual cold snap which as usual caused a fair bit of unpleasantness to the travelling public, but it was good to see those who had braved the conditions.

Jaqui opened proceedings with an introduction of the existing committee and offered apologies for Graham Hammond currently on holiday in Spain and Mike Tooze who was not. Jaqui outlined the previous years business with the successful and not so successful activities in which the Strut has been engaged. We are without doubt one of the most pro active Struts in the PFA and the support of the members when called upon to assist in the various activities is in the main forthcoming. Of course we could always do with more....

We had a good Young Eagles, were hampered by weather for the fly-in, organised some spin-offs from Young Eagles involving ground based events, an eclectic mix of speakers one of whom Dick Richardson is booked for a return in April, a Quiz Night, Bar B Q and the Christmas Dinner. Whilst not a comprehensive report it nonetheless represents a lot of effort from the committee and membership so thanks to everyone for making it another busy year.

In the absence of the membership secretary Jaqui informed the meeting of a healthy number of members which has actually climbed above historical levels so we must be doing something right.

Treasurer John Dean gave a report on the financial health of the Strut which showed a balance of £2093.11 in the Bank. This is somewhat down on previous years but we have embarked on a major shift in having the Newsletter printed in colour and by a professional which although is carried out at a very competitive rate does mean it is being heavily subsidised. A motion was put to the meeting to increase the Subs to £15 per annum and was carried. This will be with

immediate effect. We also purchased a better microphone which has already been put to good use and the benefit will be with us for years to come particularly for those of us knocking on a bit and we all get a bit mutt and jeff. Pardon ?

Which brings us on to the Newsletter and in the absence of a new volunteer you are saddled with me once again. I have to thank John Dean for his expertise in actually formatting the copy despite some hairy deadlines usually because of my bit skidding in at the last minute but we somehow manage. Thanks also to Graham Smith our printer who also has pulled out the stops on occasion.

Mark Balding gave a short diatribe on arranging past and future visits which are always tricky given the various destinations and numbers but watch this space for future events and thanks for your time and effort, it is one of the more frustrating jobs on the team.

And so to the main event, the whole committee were happy to put themselves forward for re election and the vote was proposed and seconded and it looks like we are at it for another year. A Vote of Thanks to the Committee was proposed from the floor and gratefully received. The meeting closed and the more serious business of the night was gotten on with that which we do best, nattering and drinking!

## A Bolt from the Blue

Quite literally was an e-mail from our old mucker ( I choose my words carefully ) Mike Holden together with an accompanying photograph of the two out of three things he loves most in his life , his daughter and his aeroplane .

Mike was based some years ago at Farty Corner and then had an Acrosport G-BLCI nicknamed 'Bluebottle'. The Acro was his pride and joy and he was an enthusiastic member of the Stoneacre Boys Club and pivotal in running the Strut. Regrettably the aeroplane was subject of an arson attack which wrote 'CI off and although some of the wreck was salvageable it was obvious that any rebuild would be long term. In the interim Mike emigrated with his family briefly to Wales but ended up in the wilds of Lincolnshire where sheep have a different connotation and the weather is less wet.

Over the intervening years we have the odd update and the news that Mike has now laid down his own strip and having gone through one or two aeroplanes in the interim it was a very pleasant surprise to receive out of the blue the photo of his latest mount Acrosport G-BJHK looking very tidy.

**LET'S RE-INVENT THE WHEEL** *by Brian Hope*

Unless you have had your head in the sand or been living on a paradise island (no not Sheppey) for the last couple of years, then you will have had the acronyms EASA and NPPL thrust at you from every quarter. The former, the European Aviation Safety Agency, is the EU's effort to do what their earlier attempts with JAA patently failed to do – to provide a Europe-wide standard of aircraft certification, maintenance and licensing. On the face of it this seems a reasonable enough aim, if an aircraft is type certificated in Germany for example, why on earth does it need to have the whole process repeated in France, UK, Spain etc?

The problem though is that EASA is really geared to commercial aviation, Boeing airliners and the like, indeed it was Airbus Industries who pushed for a single standard. Trying to tag us little guys on the end invariably leads to anomalies and as far as the PFA is concerned factory-built aircraft on Permits – Jodels, Luscombes etc – is one such anomaly. Homebuilts will not come under EASA at all, but currently there is no procedure to exempt factory-builts on Permit, probably because when the documentation was established the originators didn't even realise such a class of aircraft existed. PFA, through our Ministry of Transport representatives and Europe Airports (an organisation that represents recreational flying interests) continue to lobby for all Permit aircraft to be exempt and are hopeful that the matter will be satisfactorily resolved in due course.

On a more positive note there is some optimism that EASA will adopt a Europe-wide Recreational Pilot's Licence using the UK NPPL as a model. It is still early days but the first Licensing consultation paper is due later this year, and if such a licence is part of their plans then it could lead to the NPPL being recognised throughout Europe. We can only hope that the UK's far sighted approach with its realistic medical requirements won't be killed off in favour of a JAR style over-regulated system.

NPPL in the UK continues to provide a cost effective licence for those who have no wish to fly outside UK airspace, and for those with difficulties passing the JAR medical an

opportunity to continue flying. It is fair to say though, that it has failed to encourage ab initio pilots. I believe this is primarily because the flying schools are not keen to promote it as a less expensive and easier to attain alternative to the JAR PPL. I doubt they see it as in their interests because they are in business to sell flying hours and instruction but I wonder how many of their students walk away through reasons of excessive costs, complexities and medicals who might otherwise have completed an NPPL. Let's face it if you walk into a Ford Garage and decide you cannot afford a Focus they'll try to sell you a Fiesta instead.

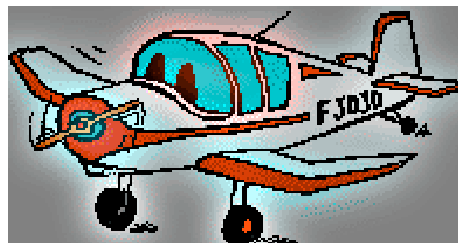
I think there is little reason to hope that the attitude of the schools will ever change en masse, better promotion of NPPL will help but I think the only way forward is for NPPL to become established as a totally alternative recreational flying movement. PFA has recently produced three papers which they are presenting to the NPPL Steering Committee. These aim to allow for ab initio training on Permit aircraft, from unlicensed airfields, by Flying Instructors who do not have to have a Commercial licence to be remunerated for their services. If these privileges are eventually granted then the formation of proper flying Clubs along the lines of those in France, rather than schools, will make flight training in the UK a far more affordable option. Imagine if you will a club based on a private strip, operating a Permit Cub and a Jodel, with a couple of instructors providing their services virtually for nothing because they love to teach and to fly. This is the type of enthusiast, rather than commercial led operation that happens in most other spheres of recreation, rock climbing, sailing, canoeing etc. I see no reason why it shouldn't work in flying training. It used to years ago and can again; we just need to re-invent that wheel.



*New Dutch 500 Euro Note*



*"NPPL in the UK continues to provide a cost effective licence for those who have no wish to fly outside UK airspace"*



**why you don't ever see the headline "Psychic Wins Lottery"?**

**Don't forget the Touring Tribulations Talks Evening - 26<sup>th</sup> February.**

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### Dates for your Diary

Feb 26	Touring Tribulations
Mar 25	Quiz Night
Apr 29	Dick Richardson Speaks

## Rochester and Those Landing Charges



*Rochester in December 2003*

As reported last month now the lease arrangement for the airport has enabled the situation to be stabilized a little. It is enabling the management to lay some plans which we will watch with interest. In the meantime PFA Members landing at Rochester can still on production of their current membership card secure a discount so grab it while you can. While you are there of course please support the Café Horizon which offers a splendid menu and can benefit with some midweek trade and is also open still I think on Wednesday Nights. Check on that before going.

### Errata

In last months Newsletter I inadvertently said that Gary Smith was building an RV 8 when actually it is a RV 9. Hopefully Gary is less confused than me ! Not difficult these days.

**Did you know there are more English speakers in China than there are in the United States.**



**37,000 accidents occur every year from the wearing of carpet slippers**



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### Pics

Here are some interesting photos submitted by Gary Smith



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