



May 2004

SKYWRITINGS

Newsletter of the *Mid Kent Strut* of the



Contents:

Florida Holiday	1
Weekend Jaunts	2
Precision Flying	3
Open House	4
Contacts	4
Diary Dates	4

Mike's Mutterings

Mike Negus -
Editor



Sun 'n' Fun

May Meeting – Sun n Fun & Florida

Winter Almost Over?? Yes! Yes!

Exciting things to read this month

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



Some of the Mid Kent Strut Members at Sun'nFun

Not wishing to pre-empt the talk at this months meeting I thought that I would give an impression on a first time visit.

As one who has endured endless droning on from fellow members a number of whom go on a regular basis the opportunity finally arose this year for me to combine a visit with a family

holiday to see what all the fuss is about. Anybody who has visited the USA will know that once past immigration and homeland security there tends to be a much more laid back culture with a very can do and have a nice day approach prevalent.

And so it was at Sun 'N' Fun. My companion



Sun at the Show



“ The museum contains some interesting aircraft”



Interesting Aircraft



and I arrived there on the Saturday and comparisons to the PFA Rally are inevitable. Sure there are fences and barriers to cross and there are volunteers manning the crossing but there is no sense of preventing anyone from gaining access you just pass through. Ability to wander through the parked aircraft, taking photo's and talking to people leaves one a bit bemused when suffering the state bordering on paranoia over our own sense of security at events at home and not just the PFA Rally. Have we all got so Health and Safety conscious that it starts to erode our pleasures but hey! here we are at Sun 'N' Fun.

Initial impressions are access with good roads and signage that left a little to be desired we soon found ourselves in a car park big enough to require a little walk past a few portaloos (how thoughtful) and eventually to the ticket office and onto the site. Well I know Sun 'N' Fun has pretty much got a permanent home and also things must happen now with all the running of a well-oiled machine and the standard of catering is very good. No real sense of a rip off here then.

Four buildings make up the core of the exhibition with other more temporary units for the rest but everything for the pilot and constructor is there.

The museum contains some interesting aircraft and is the venue for some lectures and of course there are the demonstration tents where hands on activities occur.

Out to the airside areas the aircraft have their own grouping kitbuilt, g.a. warbirds etc and blow me down if the microlights have their own strip. There did not appear to be as many aircraft in the park as I was expecting but having had no previous experience I had nothing to fall back on but there was still plenty to see. And of course the weather, what ever you do get a hat as I found to my cost, but its absolutely glorious wandering about in shorts and tee shirt savouring the experience and would I go again you bet!

Something for the Weekend Sir!!!

By the time you read this our Young Eagles event for this year would have taken place, weather permitting so a report on the outcome next time.

For the up coming Bank Holiday week end a number of members are planning to attend the PFA Scottish Rally which takes place on the 28/28/30 May. If you need more details of flying North of Watford try speaking to Brian Hope or John Dean who would be delighted

to give a few pointers in the right direction.

For those who, wish to stay a little more local we are proposing a 'loose' strut flyout to Redhill on the 31 May for the Southern Strut fly in. This would make an entertaining little jolly for those hiring aircraft.

Looking further afield for June it is proposed the Northrepps "International" near Cromer in Norfolk for a ladies fly in and crab lunch would be the next end of the month fly out on the 26th June. Closer to home again Rochester are planning a wings and wheels type event we understand on the 20 June and they are looking for PFA type aircraft representation. No doubt for the privilege a free landing may be negotiated if you form part of the exhibits but in any case they will be looking for volunteers to act as marshalls. Contact Rochester if this is for you.

To celebrate the 60th Anniversary of D. Day a number of events are planned around the Caen and Cherbourg areas and I know that Graham Hammond has been striving to find out what arrangements can be made to fly in and when, his last email on this subject did not look too favorable for the 6th but there is another event planned the following weekend contact Graham for details. As with all of these things contact telephone number are on the list at the back of the newsletter.

Next Meeting on the 27th May

Regretfully our speaker planned for that date was to be Dick Richardson from Popham who was to give a welcome return talk following on from his Strathallan adventures when taking up residence as Pophams manager. Plans were afoot with the late Charles Church to make Popham a centre for some exotic warbirds. Unfortunately this will have to wait as Dick suffered a heart attack recently although he is back on his feet and ok we send our best wishes and look forward to seeing him in the not too distant future.

Once more to the breach lads and to fill this gap we bring on the A Team in the form of Jaqui Brian and John who will between them give an illustrated lecture.

British Precision Pilots

Association Rally at Rochester.

By Nigel Read

PAFRA members received a general invite to join in with the BPPA on Sunday 25th April. With only a rough idea what would be involved I fancied a go, as good an excuse as any to go fly somewhere. I know now that our preparation could have been a little better organised. Tom Eaton my co-owner, has been doing an IMC so he was ideal for following the bearings while I did the mental bit. There are open and sportsman classes and as rookies were entered in the sportsman class.

Basically you declare a ground speed to cover the course, about 20 kts slower than normal cruise is recommended so we picked 80. The time to reach each checkpoint is calculated by the organisers and a GPS data logger and 250,000 chart section and location of check points is supplied. The course, consisted of 16 check points (road junctions, railway stations, masts, windmills, buildings ancient and modern etc) including the start and finish. Instructions are supplied 20mins before take off with the check points variously described as Lat/Long, bearings to or from, True or Magnetic in varying units Nm, Km, etc. – with only 7 minutes to get to the start from take off. Photographs are supplied that purport to be each checkpoint and you have to decide if true or not. In addition, there were 16 photographs of features no more than 300m off track that you had to mark on the chart as you found them, then after landing (spot landing that is) measure the distance from the last check point. (We didn't spot any and the one I already knew – the chalk crown at Wye- I forgot to fill in on the answer sheet.)

After much fluffing about, they couldn't find us, we could not find the key to switch on the GPS logger, I couldn't find the start point, (an arc and bearing wouldn't cross – surprising what a bit of pressure does) we eventually got to the start 52 mins late so no hope of doing well as we were going to lose points at every check point. We actually took 12 mins longer than planned which considering an error in the instructions that sent everyone the wrong way was not bad. Generally the first couple of check points are sorted then the rest done in the air. No chance, drawing freehand arcs, (they said a compass was required – not the magnetic sort – a pair of...) scales not set up for a 1/4 mil map – I hurriedly copied a km scale

Asking what a pilot thinks about the CAA is like asking a tree what it thinks about dogs.

off the map on to the edge of the instruction sheet, standard scales only assume use with a 1/2 mil map (too difficult even to double a number mentally in the air) I found all the points before starting only sorting out the bearings in the air. (note: if one seems to be off the map re check the one you are coming from).

It was fun, hard work, took 2 hours 10 minutes and I was beginning to feel a bit huey. The Europa is not ideal for spotting detailed ground features as the wings keep getting in the way and you also lose points for turning more than 90° off track but it was worth doing. As I understand it about 5 aircraft were to take part in each class.

I think most of the sportsman class struggled but after initial thoughts of giving up before even starting it turned into an interesting anticlockwise tour of Kent. You get a print out of the route actually taken, superimposed on the correct one, and times the check points were passed to the second. Every error results in points deducted so every one has a negative score ie the larger the score the worse you did. From memory the scores that actually got a mention (to avoid embarrassing some) ranged from about 8000 down to 1000 ish for the winner. They said we did very well, Tom said "they've written GOOD on the envelope". I think it was actually a number.
<http://freespace.virgin.net/bppa.orguk/>

Cyprus by RV6

Karl Martin reported us by email on the 13 May that he had arrived in Cyprus after 7 hops from the UK. Now that should make a tale! Rumour has it that he was attempting to reach Turkey for the Eurovision Song Contest to join the other four Irish supporters!

The Rally Web Site

Bob Chequer has the PFA Rally Web Site up and running and for all those eager for an up date log on to www.kembleflyer.co.uk Bob will update no doubt on a regular basis so keep in touch.

**KR *still* For Sale –
Phone Steve Solley on
01304 347100 for
more details**



Auster in Flight



*"Cyprus in
only seven
hops!!"*



Committee Contacts

Co-ordinator: Jaqui Clark



New Orchard Farm,
Sittingbourne, ME9 0QL
Tel & Fax: 01795 - 830378
E-mail: jaquiC@pfa.org.uk

Treasurer:

John Dean 01892 822776
john_dean@tiscali.co.uk

Membership Secretary:

Graham Hammond 01622 891466
g@twelveacrefarm.freeseve.co.uk

Newsletter Editor:

Mike Negus 01634 364396
57 Ploughmans Way
Rainham, Kent, ME8 8LH
mike@negus8.fsnet.co.uk



Committee Members:

Mark Balding 01959 523825
Brian Hope 01795 662508
Mike Tooze 01634 865516
Derek Browning 01622 736626
Bob Chequer 01634 668276

Dates for your Diary

May 23	Young Eagles
May 27	Sun n Fun in Detail
Jun 24	Watch this Space
July 29	BBQ at Rochester
Aug 26	Dinner Meeting
Sept	Strut Fly-in
Dec 4	Strut Christmas Dinner

PFA Open Day.

The first PFA Open Day took place on Friday 14th May at Turweston. Strut members John Dean and Frank Rothera flew up early in the afternoon and I joined them a little later, having knocked off early from work. Graham Hammond also flew up, so Mid Kent was pretty well represented!

I had arranged to kill two birds with one stone and met the UK agent for the Alpi Pioneer 300, who flew in with the UK demonstrator from his Welsh base. Look out for an article on this beautiful Italian kit plane in Popular Flying.

The idea of the Open Days is to allow members access to the staff, particularly those in Engineering. Probably about fifty to sixty people turned up and around twenty aircraft, so I think the idea can be considered as a success. Late in the afternoon a BBQ was organised but I missed that as I was talking to the chap from Pioneer UK. I did manage to get to the talk by Harrier test pilot John Farley though. John is an excellent speaker and with his PowerPoint presentation kept the audience of about forty people thoroughly absorbed. John spoke at length about his approach to test flying and drew parallels with the testing of homebuilts.

The next Open Day is scheduled for Friday June 25th when the guest speaker will be David Scouller, an ex RAF fighter pilot and a Harrier and Tornado test pilot. I'm sure it will prove as interesting a day as the first event, so why not make a date to attend.

Frank and I had decided to stay the night at Turweston and fly down to the Great Vintage Flying Weekend event at Abingdon, just south of Oxford, on Saturday morning. We had an excellent meal and comfortable room at a pub in the village a couple of miles outside the airfield, and PFA CEO Graham Newby kindly provided us with a lift both ways and joined us for

**Flying is the second
greatest thrill known to
man. Landing is the first!**



www.solleysicecreams.co.uk

dinner.

The GVFW was blessed with excellent weather and encouraged a record aircraft attendance and some fabulous vintage aircraft. But that's another story.

Some Aircraft Spotted at Sun n Fun



**See you at the Golf
Club on Thursday 27th
for the Sun'n'Fun
Presentation**