



October 2004

SKYWRITINGS

Newsletter of the *Mid Kent Strut* of the



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Mike's Mutterings

Mike Negus -
Editor



RV6 to Cyprus

October Meeting – Come and Enjoy

Cyprus by GA

Our meeting this month will feature Karl Martin telling us of his recent trip to Cyprus this Summer with his co-owner flying their RV 6 G-RVIB and no doubt we will find out about other trips of interest. I know that since acquiring the machine their trips have been prolific to say the least. I still find it quite amusing in a bemused sort of way when talking to Karl about profiles of some of his journeys, you know flying to Ireland in an hour and a quarter and going over the weather at 10000 feet especially when one is used to bumbling along at 80 kts and at 2000 feet. I get a nosebleed at the thought! Anyway should be fascinating stuff and not to be missed.



Exciting things to read this month

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



The only difference between a rut and a grave is the depth.

Novembers Meeting an Evening with Andy Septon

Andy as most of you will be aware is the Chief Pilot for the world renowned Shuttleworth Trust Collection based as it has been since its inception at Old Warden near Biggleswade in Bedfordshire. If you have never visited then put it on your list immediately. I will not go through the origins of the collection but there are some fascinating examples of British aviation spanning almost the whole of the 20th Century from an original Bleriot which is hopped under ideal conditions to the immortal duo comprising the Spitfire and Hurricane. Mix in examples from both World Wars and an eclectic selection of between the Wars light aircraft including the DH 88 Comet record breaker and you end up with a fascinating day out if you attend the flying days or just visit.

Andy has the enviable job of flying these venerable

Don't forget the October Meeting is about an exciting trip by RV to the Medditerranean island of Cyprus



Andy Sephton in the Shuttleworth Hummingbird



"Eurocontrol to charge for VFR flights"



Gladiator



machines to their best advantage along with his colleagues and having witnessed their flying it is obvious that the aeroplanes come first.

Having a long service career with the RAF he currently flies for his day job with Marshalls at Cambridge on test flying so an evening which will be of interest for all of us to note in our diaries.....see you there.

EC and Other Matters

Our Strut Coordinator Jaqui Clark was voted on to the EC on the 17th September and we all wish her the best and I am sure will represent the Strut with all the enthusiasm she is known for but the wider interests of the PFA.

Amongst the topics discussed was the EU proposal for Eurocontrol to charge flights that use en route navigation, MET or SAR services and under Jeremy Davey it is proposed to organize a members e-mail lobbying system to defend this issue. Watch Popular Flying for further details.

Talking of which the PF Mag is to go monthly from January 2005 which its ever popular editor Brian Hope has been advocating for some time and the economics appear to allow this to happen which in no small way is due to Brians total and enthusiastic approach to the Mag which I think nobody can deny is a credit to all involved and as they say, things can only get better.

Brian also has been co-opted on to the newly formed Rally sub committee which will steer the way to the new improved 'Flying for Fun' in 2005 and in view of the criticism visited on some elements of the Rally can only be an improvement so best of luck chaps.

One matter directly affecting yours truly is the proposed change to rule 13b which affects all pilots belonging to a group operating a Permit Aeroplane will have to be members of the Association which has produced disquiet in some quarters in that any lapses intentional or otherwise could invite prosecution from the CAA or invalidation of the Permit and insurance. I suppose one way to avoid this is to arrange for ones renewal to be by direct debitany thoughts?

Perhaps Brian can update us at the next Strut meeting as Jaqui cannot make this one.

Schaffen-Diest : Another Perspective

A number of members went to the Old Timer Fly In at Schaffen Diest in August and having been several times in the past I know how popular it is with the Brits and a warm welcome is always assured. This year was I am given to understand no exception and Simon Pratt has given his thoughts on the trip elsewhere in the newsletter but for those who have been and maybe those thinking about it again next year, I thought I would fill in a little bit of the history of this airfield and its activities in more darker times.

On the 10th May 1940 the airfield was home to Gloster Gladiators of the premier Escadrille de Chasse (La Comete) in the First group of No 2 (Fighter) Regiment and at the time 15 aircraft were on strength. Also on strength beside the Gladiators as part of Belgiums fighter defence was another British built machine the Hawker Hurricane belonging to Escadrille 2/1/2 of which eleven were serviceable. Finally forming part of the light bomber strength were Fairey Fox biplanes from Escadrille 5/111/3 and 7/111/3.



In the early morning of the 10th the alert was sounded and at 0300 hrs the commander of the 1st group 2nd Regiment Major Hendrickx ordered the aircraft lined up alongside the runway. The Hurricanes and gladiators were lined up wingtip to wingtip and although engines were run up nothing could take off due to dense fog throughout the area. The Fairey Foxes got away about 0420 to reconnoiter German troop movements near Liege but shortly after their departure fifty unidentified

I used to eat a lot of natural foods until I learned that most people die of natural causes.

aircraft swept over Scaffen and on his own initiative Capitaine Max Guisgand led his Gladiators into the air as the hurricanes started their engines but shortly after 0430 three Heinkel 111's strafed the airfield despite anti aircraft fire from the airfield defences and these were joined by Messerschmitt 110's and Dornier 17's who within minutes had destroyed or damaged 9 of the serviceable Hurricanes only 2 escaping the melee. One Gladiator had collided with a Hurricane whilst taking off but the remainder found and attacked with the remaining Hurricanes those bombers but with no recorded success, one Gladiator was however brought down after an exchange of fire with the bombers and the pilot Sergent Van den Broek had to make a crash landing.

After the initial onslaught three other Gladiators left Schafflen flown by some of the surviving Hurricane pilots whose own aircraft had been destroyed on the ground and the personal Gladiator of the C in C of l'Aviation Militaire was placed at the disposal of the depleted 1/1/2 albeit without guns! At the end of the morning only two Hurricanes and twelve Gladiators of the premier Groupe de Chasse remained. Over the next two days sorties were flown by the fighters in defence of the air forces bombing attempts to delay the German ground forces and suffered accordingly against the superiority of the Luftwaffe and the Messerschmitt 109's. So ended Schaffens part in the defence of Belgium but pilots that escaped back to England went on to acquit themselves within the RAF that was grateful to have them in its hour of need.

This is necessarily an abbreviated version of events and I acknowledge an article on the internet by HakansFlygsida on The Gloster Gladiator in the Belgian Airforce for the information.

Laddingford Fly In 12th Sept

Weather was not at its best but when has it been this Summer however a number of Strut Members flew in and several went by road. The chosen charity was the Air Ambulance which at the end of the day benefited by £300 from the event, a creditable effort all round and one the organizers can be justly proud.

During the day the air ambulance Helicopter

There are two kinds of pedestrians: the quick and the dead.

put in an appearance much to everyones pleasure and some of the Laddingford based pilots also gave air experience flights to the helpers, so not a bad day. If anyone has any photos from the day with a more comprehensive report you know where to send it.



Laddingford from the Air

Christmas Dinner 4th December 2004 at the Golf Club

In your envelope is the Menu and Price for the above which is our annual get together and an opportunity for wives and partners to join us for a convivial evening.

Brooklands Visit 31st October 2004

We are organizing a trip to the Brooklands Museum which will be on a car sharing basis so team up with your chums and make a grand day of it. Brooklands is another of those quintessential places of British enterprise and development for the motor racing fraternity and for aviation. Part of the famous banked test circuit remains and although the site will be no longer used for flying, I think last year was the last time light aircraft could use it, a museum of some note has been established and several restoration projects including the 'Loch Ness' Wellington are there. Examples of motor cars, aero engines, full size and model aircraft and most recently the arrival of a Concorde will ensure its place as one of those must see trips. If you need any more info contact Mark Balding on 01959 523825.

WOT , NO CAFF !

I understand that from the end of October the Horizon Café will no longer be operating in its present form which would be a bit of a disaster to say the least given that it is a haven for a lot of Strut members



Another Shuttleworth Aircraft



"weather was not at its best!"



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Dates for your Diary

Oct 28	RV to Cyprus
Oct 31	Brooklands Visit
Nov 25	Andy Sephton
Dec 4	Christmas Dinner
Jan 27	AGM

particularly at weekends and must be a draw for visiting pilots so not knowing the full story we can only hope this is a temporary glitch and that normal service will be resumed as soon as possible.

Just a Round Up

January Meeting will be the AGM so if you fancy a go and wish to join the Committee or put yourself up for any of the offices please make yourself known we are a very democratic bunch and welcome changes.

From my part if anyone fancies taking on the newsletter both John Dean and I would like to stand down from this part of the organization as new blood would benefit in our opinion. Give it some thought.

In case there is a radical takeover of the Committee we have fixed up February 2005 meeting with the welcome return of Dick Richardson, manager at Popham who gave us a very entertaining talk last time. If you want to know a little more about Dick please go out and buy a copy of this months Aeroplane Monthly in which there is a little vignette on his life and times.

Bad weather necessitated a last minute change in date for the end of season fly out to Abbeville but I understand a few souls braved it so perhaps a better day next year.

Books for the Christmas Stocking

Graham Hammond has put forward a couple of suggestions covering events from both sides of the fence as it were.

'FIRST LIGHT' by Geoffrey Wellum who was the youngest pilot to serve in the RAF during the Battle of Britain and is his own personal experience of those times and beyond. Most of the story is set over our own County, so familiar that you will find yourself flying with him. Graham says that it is by far the most captivating book of its kind that he has read and it will be a long time before you climb into your aircraft without a fleeting glance at the skies above to make sure they are all clear!



www.solleysicecreams.co.uk

'A SPITFIRE ON MY TAIL' by Ulrich Steinhilper and Peter Osborne is a view from the other side and not unlike the other book but told through the eyes of a Luftwaffe pilot. His progress through the ranks and attachment to his own Messerschmitt 109 that by coincidence having been recovered post war the remains can now be seen at the Hawking Museum.

Few books have been translated from the other perspective and the author has strong views on one of the main reasons for the Luftwaffes defeat in the Battle of Britain but you will have to read the book to find out.

Once again you have the added interest of familiar place names and for those who fly to the continent when you land at Abbeville, St Omer, Sedan and others you can reflect on the Luftwaffe fighter pilots that flew and fought there 60 years ago.

Happy reading!

Sackcloth and Ashes.....

Those of you attending the September Meeting will have spotted last months mistake in the Newsletter when the speakers were transposed in error so apologies if anyone was put out as a result.

Gordon McDill PFA Inspector and EC Member came to give a talk on the Rans types who he represents and the Rotax engines. Numbers at the meeting were a little down but it is hoped the enjoyment was not lessened.

Another little glitch was the inclusion of a photo of a Gloster Gladiator which was to have illustrated an article on Schaffen Diest to tie up with the recent fly in which Simon Pratt wrote about in last months issue but due to lack of space then it has been included in this issue. Now on to the business in hand.....

MID KENT STRUT

COBTREE MANOR PARK GOLF

CHRISTMAS PARTY MENU

STARTERS

CREAM OF VEGETABLE & TOMATO SOUP

DUCK & ORANGE PATE

SMOKED SALMON PARCELS

MAIN COURSES

STILTON TOPPED RIBEYE STEAK

ROLLED ESCALOPE OF TURKEY

MUSHROOM & NUT STROGGANOFF

(All the above are served with seasonal vegetables & potatoes)

DESSERTS

TRADITIONAL XMAS PUDDING

DOUBLE CHOCOLATE BAVAROIS

WOODLAND FRUIT CHEESCAKE