

January 2005

SKYWRITINGS

Newsletter of the *Mid Kent Strut* of the



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Mike's Mutterings

Mike Negus -
Editor



Island Flying - Tenerife Style

By Simon Pratt

During the time that I have been involved in GA it has come to my attention that from time to time (either to maintain domestic bliss or to let somebody else do the work for a change) that GA pilots do go on package holidays or

something similar. I found myself in just this position in October. We were going to Tenerife for a week of sun, sea and sand.



I remembered having seen an ad in a publication referring to flying while on the island, but as is always the way, couldn't find it anywhere. As we were checking that we had everything there was this question "Why are you taking your log book and licence?" The answer that I had been watching Airplane and was worried that the same might happen to us didn't seem to be believed.

As we were staying not far from Tenerife South airport (we were actually about one mile out on final) it was easy to just nip down there one morning to investigate the possibility of hiring while there. As I say, that was the easy bit.

Asking at the reception of the complex where we were staying led to the receptionist phoning the



**January Meeting –
Come and
Enjoy**

**Snow
Flying**

*Exciting things to
read this month*

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

**Don't forget the January Meeting is all about YOU and YOUR Strut.
It's the AGM followed by a Natter Night.**



Cessna in Tenerife



*" I normally use
360 metres not
3600"*



*Bembridge Airport from the
south*



airport and then phoning a helicopter sightseeing company at the airport. He came back with the answer that there were no light aircraft on the island. This seemed a little incorrect to me, as I had laid by the pool watching one towing a banner and at least one other coming in to land. There was an employee on site who seemed to be able to help with anything so I asked if he knew. He said he would see me in about ½ an hour, and he did. "There is a flying school based at Tenerife South on the left of the airport," he said.

Next day we went for the short drive to find it. Luckily it is only a small airport! We drove to the left hand end of the airport, which is the cargo area. Nobody there could help, or they didn't understand what I was looking for. Ok, let's try in the terminal. I asked at the information desk (good idea eh?) where the woman said, after a little thought, "go that way (pointing) and turn to the right just before the end."

There was no sign of anything in the terminal around there so we went outside as there was a door on the right just before the end. We walked around outside asking security guards and handling staff, but nobody knew of any light aircraft at the airport, (before you ask, yes they did speak good English) Back I went to the information desk. She looked at me and without me saying a word said "Oh you are back. I should have said that way (pointing to the opposite end of the terminal to before) and just before the end on the left."

There it was, a locked booth with the shutter down and a sign above telling us that it was Lanza Air flying school. I went to the phone box facing the booth and called the number shown half expecting there to be a ringing from behind the shutter. When the phone was answered it was in Spanish so I asked if he spoke English, to which he replied "I do today". Thank God I called today.

The rest was easy. The aircraft was booked for 11.00 on Thursday for an hour.

The aircraft was a Cessna Skyhawk II. Although it is a 4 seat aircraft they only allow it to go 3 up, one of whom is their pilot, but you do fly from the left hand seat. He asked if I wanted him to take care of the radio and that seemed like a good idea, especially as he did it all in Spanish, that way I could concentrate on the flying and looking at the view.

While taxiing out he asked what I normally fly. "A Luscombe" says I. "What's that?" he says. "The forerunner of the Cessna 120".

"How old is it?" he asks, looking a little puzzled "1941". "Oh I see"

After taxiing for some time I let him know that I was not used to so much runway. He told me that it was 3600 metres. I told him I normally use 360. He looked at me as if I was telling porkies.

We flew to the south coast of the island and along the coast and back, going past Los Christianos and Playa De Las Americas, and along to Los Gigantes which are cliffs at the waters edge a bit like Dover but still above us flying at 1500 ft.

Although there was a lot of messing about to

get the flight it was worth it. Maybe the same thing is available at other holiday resorts. Do you know? Maybe we could have a list just in case anybody gets withdrawal symptoms while away with the family.



This one was Lanza Air at Tenerife South Not sure which number is right but it's either 922 39 31 40 or 922 795 861

Annual Christmas Dinner at the Golf Club 2004

Once again the close of the years activities for 2004 saw a merry band of Strut Members and their partners and guests sitting down for a very acceptable meal provided by the Golf Club catering staff with a slight departure from the normal fare which was appreciated by most.

By consensus it was felt to be one of the best we have had and augers well for the future. In line with previous comments and feedback the 'entertainment' was a little low key comprising the house disco and allowed

those members of a younger disposition to imbibe a little post dinner getting it on down, quite literally at one point whilst those less disposed could enjoy a more leisurely conversation with their guests.

Thanks to everyone who contributed to the raffle both financially and with prizes which also produces a little bit of fun and with your support makes a worthwhile contribution to the Strut coffers.

Shuttleworth Rides Again !

There being no formal Strut Night scheduled for December the November meeting was the last of the year and what a finish as they say.

Andy Sephton, the Chief Pilot for the Shuttleworth Collection based at Old Warden in Bedfordshire gave a very interesting and entertaining talk on operating some of the aircraft based there.

Particularly noteworthy was the operation of the Edwardian era aeroplanes with their rotary engines , warping wings and blipping of engines to control power it looked very tricky but as our speaker said these machines were flown in their day by pilots with little or no experience and in some cases quite successfully and would be well within the capabilities of most modern pilots although the chance of any of us getting our hands on one would be remote to say the least! As Andy said they are not difficult just different but the Bleriot is something else being the oldest flyable aircraft in the collection and an original it is only flown, or hopped really, under ideal conditions and it was easy to see why by the video clips. Entertaining stuff indeed.

A cockpit eye view from the Spitfire V brought us up to the other end of the Shuttleworth spectrum and gave an intriguing insight to the display pilots' perspective to round off the talk. A brisk question and answer session was then enthusiastically fielded by Andy and members invited to purchase the calendars which were on sale and with a collection to aid the Trust coffers made during the evening a contribution was made to the Trust. If you haven't been before go, if you have been go again, it is a great day out either on the flying days or just to visit, you never know what you might see.

A clear conscience is usually the sign of a bad memory

Whilst the plaudits are being handed out, thanks to all our speakers particularly from within the Strut the standard has been exceptionally high this last year and the presentations ever more professional and from early contacts there are an equally good bunch being lined up for 2005.

AGM 27th January 2005

Business as normal and back to the Golf Club for the January Meeting for the Annual General Meeting which gives you your chance to kick us all out and change the Committee so be prepared to offer any new nominations on the night. We don't mind, honestly! Once the blood letting has subsided the evening will take the form of an informal natter with your mates. Lets have a good turnout please with lots of members old and new to get the New Year off with bang.

Those Gales

The recent high winds and rain whilst not as extensive as those experienced up North still caused some damage with a Cessna 172 at Rochester being flipped on to its back presenting its owner with an unfortunate start to the year.

I haven't heard of any others so hopefully it was an isolated case. As one who has also experienced damage after similar winds one can only sympathise when your pride and joy suffers the same fate. It is a salutary reminder of the power of the elements even in these temperate climes, but if this is what we can expect more frequently from the effects of global warning it may be prudent to check those tie downs particularly when away from base

Stop Press - For Sale

Paul Newman, no not that one, has reluctantly decided to put his Piper Vagabond currently based at Farthing Corner up for sale. For someone this will be the buy of the year as no effort or expense has been spared to bring it up to the high standard it is currently in. Unfortunately I do not have any more details as we go to press but if you think this could be for you contact Paul on 07971 433959.

When everything is coming your way, you're in the wrong lane



Laid up for the Winter!!



"a cockpit eye view from a Spitfire"



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Dates for your Diary

Jan 27 AGM & Natter Night
Feb 24 Dick Richardson

Megeve

by John Dean

I have recently been forced to go skiing in the French Alps and whilst the snow was not great, it was enough for our purposes. However, The clear blue skies and endless visibility persuaded me that a visit to the altiport would be a good idea especially as you can ski to within a few hundred yards of it.



Megeve Altiport

The very nice lady at the club's reception desk told me that there was no aircraft available that afternoon but that I could be fitted in the following day with a suitable instructor.

The next day dawned bright and sunny again and arriving at the altiport the following day, the Jodel Mousquetaire was ready and waiting. Surprisingly, there would be no problem for THREE of my skiing friends to come with us in the rear seat. This from a base altitude of 5000ft and on snow!! What wonderful machines these Jodels are.



Jodel Panel

With no wind to speak of, the takeoff downhill was uneventful and being on skis instead of wheels seemed to make little difference. The runway has only about an 8% slope compared with the 18% at Courcheval. What they have in common is a mountainside facing you as you land making a go around



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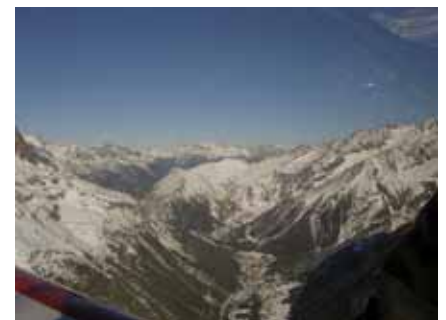
impossible.

The flight around the peaks and valleys was breathtaking and makes you realise how close many of the Alpine Ski resorts really are. There was to be no landing on a glacier due to the poor snow covering and our heavy weight but at times I felt our wingtip must soon hit the mountainside.



Spot the Glacier

The landing, with an expert on board, was easy but more power was needed than when on wheels to reach the apron and it was necessary to push the aeroplane round ready for its next detail as sharp turns on skis are not easy.



Flying the Valleys

Certainly, it was a flight not to be missed.

**A conscience is what hurts
when all your other parts
feel so good.**