



April 2005

# SKYWRITINGS

Newsletter of the *Mid Kent Strut* of the



**Contents:**

Propellers	1
New Engine	2
Sun n Fun	3
Last Meeting	2
Contacts	4
Diary Dates	4

## Mike's Mutterings

Mike Negus -  
Editor



# The Black Art of Propeller Making

**April Meeting – Come and Enjoy**

**Andrew Moore PFA HQ**

*Exciting things to read this month*

- Sun n Fun!
- Pictures of Strut Aircraft particularly needed
- Please let Editor Mike have your articles for inclusion in the Newsletter

One of the delights of going to the annual Sun n Fun in Florida in April (apart from the usually good weather!) is the remarkable variety of things to keep you occupied. The Propeller machine in the photo was for sale at an almost reasonable figure and could easily provide a new occupation for you. It works on the same principle as the pantograph drawing machine I had as a child, the prop to be copied being used to carve the blank to the same specification as the original. Having watched this happening, we were delighted when one of



*Propeller Machine at Sun n Fun*

our party (Bob Hallam from Cheshire) said that he had to go to the Sensenich propeller factory in Plant City to collect two props that he had ordered and which were ready for collection. Plant City is only a few miles from Lakeland where Sun n Fun is held and Bob arranged not only to collect the props but also a tour of the factory. We arrived the following day to be greeted by Charley Denney who was to show us round. He explained that they only made wooden

props at Plant City with the metal ones being made by a sister company in the north. They have also recently started making composite props and he had a new innovation to show us later in the tour. We started our visit with the raw wood and this is usually white beech. Planks can be glued together in any direction to make the right size and even at this early stage they try to make sure the prop is balanced. As well as aircraft props they also make ones for Air Boats and military drone aircraft. They

**Don't forget the April Meeting is a visit by Andrew Moore - Head of Engineering at PFA**



*Hand finishing Prop at Senenich*



*"Co-ordinator Jaqui wins the Quiz yet again!!!"*



*Turbine Engine for Luscombe*



have two machined for carving the props, one works in a similar fashion to the machine at Sun n Fun with the other being a much more modern computer controlled machine. The final finishing is all done by hand with spokeshaves and constantly checking the profile at various stations throughout the length. One man can complete about three props per day. They then go for finishing.

One fact I found interesting was that they stopped using two pack varnish and went back to marine varnish as a superior product for the use. Props can be painted any colour you wish and have resin or metal leading edges. The new composite props are made from resin impregnated cloth in moulds under high pressure and whilst their venture into aircraft props is relatively new, they have been making ones for airboats for some time. They have also developed a ground adjustable hub which alters the pitch on both sides at once without the use of a protractor. We certainly enjoyed our visit and were very impressed with their professionalism.

### A New Engine?

Also spotted at Sun n Fun was a new turbine engine available in various powers, the lowest being 160hp. Small enough to fit in many PFA machines and it has an integral gearbox. With avgas at it's present price the cost of \$24,0000 seems almost reasonable. Wonder what PFA Engineering would say to it in the Luscombe!

### April Meeting and Back to Business

Andrew Moore from PFA Engineering will be our guest to answer all of your questions and from some of the advance topics it sounds like a lively evening in prospect. We hear of problems real or perceived with Engineering, personally I have always been dealt with fairly and promptly in the main so lets give the man a fair hearing as he has come to see us.

Andrew is now Head of Engineering at PFA HQ and gained a degree in Aeronautical Engineering at Hatfield Polytechnic and has since worked for Optica, Hawker DeHavilland Australia and Eagle Aircraft Australia.

### March Meeting and The Quiz

We had a very good turnout for our now annual quiz Night with well over 40 Strut

Members and their guests and it was gratifying to have the support as it is a bit of a departure from what we try to organize usually. The attendance broke down in to 6.5 teams due to a half time appearance from Paddy and family who joined in with enthusiasm although it was just for fun.

Once again for the umpteenth time our esteemed Co-Ordinator Jaqui was on the winning team operating as 'The Fab Four' and thus lead the field at the last with a score of 93 out of a possible 120 so not too bad. To be fair it was a lot closer this year and from a handicap point of view meant the level of questions was reasonable.

Anyway thanks to all for partaking, we couldn't do it without your support, to the prize donors and thanks to Mike for assistance in marking.

### Young Eagles - May 15th Sunday

Many of us will have already received an e-mail from Chris Reynolds requesting your help in providing your time and an aeroplane so if you can please support the effort which is put in by a number of Strut Members for this day.

For the record in 2003 826 Young Eagles were flown whilst in 2004 this number dropped to 720 so we need to be on top of the game to boost this up again. The numbers quoted were PFA Strut totals not just us but of these totals we probably flew not far short of 10% of those figures so we do our bit. Lets get behind Chris this year again!

### Mandatory Insurance Regulation (EC) 785/2004

You probably are aware or should be that the above regulation will come in to force on the 30<sup>th</sup> April 2005 and will mean a minimum level of insurance for 3<sup>rd</sup> party and passenger insurance will be mandated for flight in European airspace.

Our group has already been notified of the additional premium to cover the balance of our current term but we have also been in touch with Graham Newby as the PFA are trying to negotiate favourable terms with various underwriters .

Graham is requesting accident statistics

over the last 10 years to give the underwriters some background so if you need to report contact [graham.newby@pfa.org.uk](mailto:graham.newby@pfa.org.uk) for further assistance either way.

If you are achieving a reasonable deal with you insurers spread the word and let me know to put in the newsletter.

**FUN IN THE SUN** by Brian Hope

As many Strut members know, John Dean and I have been afflicted with the SNF virus for a number of years now, in fact 2005 recorded our tenth consecutive visit to Lakeland Florida for our annual fix.

Over the years a number of Strut members have come with us, and this time around was

no exception with Carl Martin and his RV6 partner Peter joining us. With a couple of friends from Devon, and another from Manchester, the shared rental of cars and a villa brings the cost of the trip down to a quite reasonable level - about £450 including the air fare. So, before reviewing this year's escapade an invitation, if you'd like to join us in 2006 then have a chat with one of us at the meeting.

This year we flew out via Cincinnati with Delta. I can't say that I enjoy the travel as all in all it takes the best part of 24 hours from the time I leave home to getting to our destination, but as ever the weather was perfect when we arrived and remained so all week. We stay in Kissimmee, which is close to the



*The Snow's all gone for another year?*



*"I can't say that I enjoy the travel but.."*



*A beautiful 1933 Curtiss Wright Travel Air on floats at Jack Brown's seaplane base at Winterhaven. Another of our 'non aviation' visits*

**Once over the hill, you pick up speed**

Rand KR2 For Sale - 1834Acro fuel injected engine.Cheap to run at 2.5gph - Cruises at 100K - Fixed undercarriage - Sensible offers Phone Stephen Solley on 07836653257 or01304374337



*The Venue for our June Meeting?*

## Committee Contacts

### Co-ordinator: Jaqui Clark



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

### Treasurer:

John Dean 01892 822776  
[john\\_dean@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:john_dean@tiscali.co.uk)

### Membership Secretary:

Graham Hammond 01622 891466  
[g@twelveacrefarm.freeseve.co.uk](mailto:g@twelveacrefarm.freeseve.co.uk)

### Newsletter Editor:

Mike Negus 01634 364396  
57 Ploughmans Way  
Rainham, Kent, ME8 8LH  
[mike@negus8.fsnet.co.uk](mailto: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  
Stephen Solley 01304 374337  
Norman Willoughby 01634 314739

### Dates for your Diary

Apr 28 Andrew Moore PFA Engineering  
May 15 Young Eagles  
May 26 Talk on "Events to Visit"  
June 26 Fly-In at Rochester

attractions of Orlando but about 50 miles from Lakeland. It takes about an hour to drive to Lakeland Linder airfield where a day pass into the show costs around \$25 if you are an EAA member, \$30 if you aren't. Reduced weekly tickets are available but fortunately I now get a Press Pass. We visited the show on five days this year but unlike Oshkosh, there is plenty of other entertainment in the area should you or your family wish to do other things. For our 'non aviation' day we went on a tour of the Sensenich propeller factory!

The one thing that really hits you with Sun N Fun is the sheer scale of it. Many hundreds of aircraft fly in and the range of vintage, classic, and warbird aircraft in particular is enormous. This year's star of the show had to be the Lockheed P-38F Lightning 'Glacier Girl' which was retrieved from the Polar Icecap and rebuilt to airworthy condition.

As in Europe there is fervent activity at the lightweight end of the recreational aircraft market. The new Light Sport Aircraft category is akin to our 450kg class and NPPL in many ways. To comply, aircraft have to have no more than two seats, a max all up weight of 1320 lbs, a max speed of 120 knots, and a stall speed of 45 knots. Pilots only have to have a Driver's Licence to prove their medical ability to fly. Naturally this brand new class has excited many kit manufacturers, not only in the US but also across the rest of the world. A number of aircraft we know here in the UK are attracting American buyers, I spotted the CT, Ikarus C42, and Eurostar amongst a growing number European designs.

It was also good to see Europa putting in an appearance. Andy Draper was busy promoting the new company on a low key stand with a local owner's part built kit. He was pleased with the interest

**For Sale - Sonerai 1**, total hours from new 65, 2 hours on new engine (VW 1834 Acro). Awaiting permit renewal £4500. Contact Tom Harrison 07768 660999  
[tfh@codsall-middle.staffs.sch.uk](mailto:tfh@codsall-middle.staffs.sch.uk)



[www.solleysicecreams.co.uk](http://www.solleysicecreams.co.uk)

being shown and recognises that the company will have to adapt the design to comply with LSA if they are to rekindle a strong demand in the US. To achieve LSA they will need to lose 50lbs and a few knots of top end speed. Stall also needs dropping a little. Most likely scenario is a slightly wider wingspan, extended from the root to also widen the flaps.

The buzz word amongst the fast glass and RV set is turboprop. A new name in the frame is Innodyn who have been flying prototype engines in an RV4, RV6, and a Super Cub. They plan to be flying an RV10 later this year. Power outputs range from 165 hp to 255 hp and, wait for it, prices range from \$26,500 to \$34,500, exceptionally competitive for a turbine. Who will be the first to try and fit one in the UK, it surely has to happen before too long?

There was of course much more to see, there are over 450 exhibitors selling everything from a nut and bolt to a complete aeroplane.

Another boom area is electronic display, or glass cockpits. Engine monitoring, flight instrumentation - weather radar, GPS driven navigation - all the electronic gizmos you could ever want. Five days sounds a lot but believe me you need it. Roll on Sun N Fun 2006, which will a week earlier, from April 4<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup>.

**Whatever hits  
the fan will not  
be evenly  
distributed**

**For Sale - Luscombe 8A** ragwing 2857TT built 1946 owned for last 15 years c/w 760 com & gps. £11500  
[richard@thomasautos.co.uk](mailto:richard@thomasautos.co.uk)