



November 2005

# SKYWRITINGS

Newsletter of the *Mid Kent Strut* of the



## Mike's Mutterings

Mike Negus -  
Editor



## Projects Update

*What's happening to builders projects*

As it is effectively the close season, several of our members have offered their musings on progress with projects so I hand over in no particular order to Messrs Brian Hope, Gary Smith, Ian McLeod and Graham Hammond.



### Sonerai by Brian Hope

Members may recall that I purchased a Monnett Sonerai 11 earlier this year and intend converting it from nose wheel to tail wheel, and questionable two seater to a single seater. Well, after a slow start, I have of late been making good progress. To be fair, this has a lot to do with

### Sonerai

Frank Rothera helping out and he and John Dean constantly chiding me for not getting on with it.

Cleaning all the paint from the steel tube fuselage was an awful and tedious job, but eventually it was

done and an epoxy primer and gloss top coat applied. This epoxy paint sticks like the proverbial to a blanket, and is not effected by the glues and dopes used on the fabric covering. By the time the fuselage painting was finished the colder weather was settling in, so the fabric work will have to wait until the spring-time.

Meanwhile I have been cleaning, painting, making and fettling various parts for the fuselage. As I intend using Leburg electronic ignition there is no need for a large inset box on the firewall to clear a magneto,



### *Working on the Glass Cowlings*

so I have made a new firewall from 26 gauge zinc plated steel sheet. Frank has concentrated on an instrument pod, which contains 2" altimeter and airspeed, plus an Engine Information System and some idiot lights, and a lower switch panel which will carry all the breakers and switches. Twin electronic ignition

**Nov Meeting at the Golf Club — 24th November**

with two batteries, and a comprehensive EIS with 2 x EGT, 2 x CHT, Oil temp and pressure, RPM, OAT, manifold pressure, carb temperature, volts, time since start, and total engine time, demands a level of wiring expertise and ability to fabricate that I cannot muster, so I am very grateful to Frank for his assistance.

Thanks also to Gary Smith, who had turned up various odds and ends for me, and also made a lovely job of flaring the ends of my ally fuel pipes the other day.

What was originally the instrument panel will now only carry the fuel level sight tube, and a slip ball.

I am in the throes of building up the 2180cc VW engine kit I bought from Great Plains Aircraft. Initially I was going to use the standard crankcase mounted oil cooler, but information from various VW aero conversion sites on the internet suggests that isn't really sufficient. I am now going to full flow the case and run a remote oil cooler sited below the engine. Full flowing involves drilling and tapping into the main oil gallery at the front of the case; I now have the tools and am plucking up the courage to attack my expensive crankcase.

Chris Lodge is currently making me a prop, so I hope to have a completed engine sitting on the firewall before Christmas.

Bob Hallam, a friend of mine from oop nooorth, let me have a mould for the top and bottom cowlings. The top will need modification, but as I write I have just returned from the strip where I pulled my fibreglass bottom cowling from the mould. I am very pleased with how it has turned out. I am also making a new pair of wing-tips from moulds Bob had. Which brings us to the wings.

I don't expect to have to do too much to the wings. I am fitting the wing fold mechanism, which will entail adding a bracket between the first two ribs,



### *Test Fitting the Panel*

and thus I'll probably have to remove the first rib to do it. I also have to replace the existing tips, which the original builder fabricated as extended tips, with the new ones I am making. Most of the rest of the work will be tidying up the surfaces and repainting. When will it be finished? I'm not committing to a date, but I will be disappointed if it doesn't fly during 2006. More later.

### **RV9** by Gary Smith

My RV9 project has been progressing, not as quickly as I would like but the secret is to do a little bit every day. The lower tail cone and the fuselage floor were built and connected together back in April. Shortly afterwards the fuselage side skins were attached and the firewall was inserted so instead of having lots of bits in the workshop I had a fuselage, something to sit in (carefully) and make noises. To the untrained eye it would appear

that little else has happened since but the build manual suggests that numerous sub structures be assembled and then removed to make other assembly easier. So as of November the interior is painted,



### *RV9*

flap mechanism is made, seat backs made, rudder peddles made, dashboard sub structure made and installed, roll bar made and installed, canopy latches made and I am just starting work on the canopy frame. The prop (variable pitch) should



### *Fuselage—looking Good!*

arrive this week and the engine (TMX-320) should be shipped from Mattituck in January. Progress to date is averaging 1.6 hours per day (I was aiming for 1.8 hours/day) and I am still hoping to be flying by late 2006.

### Further Progress Report (Another RV)

Nick Hampton and his flying partner started building an RV8 in Bearstead several years. Their build quality is really good but since it has taken a long time to finish the tail surfaces and the wings they decided to go for the quick build fuselage. Basically Vans ship your fuselage kit to the Phillipines where it is assembled for \$1 per hour and 6 months later you get a 60% completed fuselage delivered to your door. The quality is really very good and if you do not have the time or the space this is "quick build" option can really be a life saver. I told them they are cheats and they should have bough the flat pack kit and worked like a demon (like Mr Smith) but they did not seem to mind (such is aviation humour).

Karl and Peter are still endurance testing their RV6 (based at Farthing corner), I am sure they will be more interested in building once this one is worn out.

Following a landing incident at Clipgate Farm, Bob Nuns RV6 is presently undergoing repairs. A combination of a blustery day, soft grass and a desire to be stopped before the end of the strip resulted in a nose wheel "dig in / collapse" and all that goes with it (luckily it did not go over on its back).

I am happy to say that the number of Strut RV's is beginning to rival the number of Strut Jodels. Auminium corrosion I can cope with but you need ANRS head sets cancel out the sound of the wood worm chomping through your Jodel spars.



## Pietenpol by Ian McCloud

Progress on the project had reached a critical stage when Dave Machin's illness took its toll of his mobility so I was deprived of the inspiration that he always provided and at a time when I'd reached (passed) the limits of my competence. Luckily, an advert appeared in PF from a qualified person ready to assist with projects, so I'm now benefiting from



### Pietenpol

practical and other sorts of help from Dave Charlesworth.

The wings and empennage have been completed for some time bar painting. Fitting out the metal fuselage has taken longer than planned, partly due to the use of a Subaru 1800 cc engine with Australian reduction gear. I also had to modify the elevator bellcrank system as I was dissatisfied with the commercial product. PFA Engineering's requirements included testing the set-up with 200 lb force applied to both control columns simultaneously with the bellcrank fixed in its central position. The story of how that was achieved is an article in itself.

Chris Lodge came up trumps with a fine propeller so that was a great step forward. The fuel tank was going to be a

composite item, based on Dave Machin's help, but in the end Dave's design has been completed in aluminium and will be ready to install mid-November. Work is now going ahead with cowlings and exhaust system. Still to decide are the ignition system



*Instrument Panel*

and the radiator size and configuration. With any luck it will all be on its wheels by mid-November.

I hope the panel meets with approval. The only fun item is a clock from a Mig fighter which is probably dangerously luminous. When asking D&D for a fix I shall suggest they use a Geiger counter instead of radar. Completion date? What a silly question.

### Changes to the Newsletter

One of the reasons for the raffle was to assist in the costs of producing the Newsletter. Since we went in to the present format it actually cost more to run it than we receive a situation that we cannot entertain for too long. Since Graham Smith gave up his printing business we have turned to a professional printer albeit at no signifi-

cant additional expense however it was decided by the committee that an alternative solution should be sought. We have therefore purchased a colour printer on which the newsletter will now be produced which will significantly reduce our costs whilst maintaining the colour format. What will change however will be the presentation which will go to A5 much the same as in days of yore if any of the longstanding membership still remember. The bald facts are that if it (the printer) lasts for six months we will have more than recovered the outlay and the expectation that it will be good for a lot longer than that.

There is a downside to all this of course and that is the workload will go up for some of the committee as the time to print, collate and pack for posting will be longer and require more commitment but we all hope the end result will be appreciated.

### Jumping With Clem

Best laid plans and all that .....

Jane could not come to the meeting held in October from the Headcorn Parachute Club but what a revelation in Clem who deputized with a fascinating talk on the history of parachuting from its origins up to the techniques of the modern sport. He demonstrated his Irish roots in that typical manner of having the craic and putting over the sport in such an entertaining way as befits the style of his countrymen. I was surprised at the number of Strut members who had actually parachuted before. I think the telling thing was the number of questions and answers that were asked all the way through, I can't recall there being such a level of interest before. A series of entertaining visual presentations rounded off a perfectly enjoyable talk.

## Bonfire Night at Farthing Corner

A goodly number of members and their families turned out for a splendid evening of fireworks and food on the Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> October and thanks go to Simon Pratt who basically organized and ran the show including a rather jolly nice bonfire made from old kitchens and storage pallets



recovered on his travels. Pity I got to it too late the one that went up in smoke was in better nick than mine at home. Thanks to all who supplied fireworks and food which ensured there was plenty on offer. The most enjoyable part was the weather which behaved impeccably with a starry, starry night until we were practically done and a hard rain began to fall.

## Collection for Dave Machin

Thanks to the generosity of the members when a collection was taken at the last meeting for Dave we as a Strut will be sending a cheque to The Friends of the Wisdom Hospice at Rochester on your behalf . You all gave generously and for this we thank you and are are sure the gesture will be appreciated.

## Raffle

A raffle was held for the first time on a regular meeting night and the winner of a bottle of scotch was Simon Pratt which apart from swelling the Strut coffers will no doubt be consumed as comfort as these dark Winter nights befall us. Enjoy!

## Novembers Meeting



Dick Richardson from Popham, long overdue it being two years this month since his inaugural talk on the Strathallen Collection and we now have the sequel to look forward to.

## And of Course .....ITS CHRISTMAS !!!!!

Or it will be soon so get your menu returned to Jaqui as soon as you can so numbers can be formalized .

## Royal Aeronautical Society

A talk on the Dam Busters given by Robert Owen opened this seasons series, well attended as you would expect given the subject matter and the remainder are set out below:

The Sea Vixen by Tony Butler  
16<sup>th</sup> November 2005

The Wright Flyer Replica by Duncan Simpson  
14<sup>th</sup> December 2005

Airships Today by Arnold Naylor  
18<sup>th</sup> January 2006

The Eurofighter Typhoon Enters Squadron Service  
15<sup>th</sup> February 2006

All Engines Out by Captain Eric Moody  
15<sup>th</sup> March 2006

Scottish Aviation and the Twin Pioneer  
by Dougal McIntyre  
19<sup>th</sup> April 2006

AGM plus talk on The Battle of Britain by  
Dick Collinson  
17<sup>th</sup> May 2006

Some interesting stuff there and good value if you are not a member ( better if you are of course )

## Le Touquet

Le Touquet's Control Zone has been reclassified from Category E airspace to Class D. Also many other changes in French Airspace.

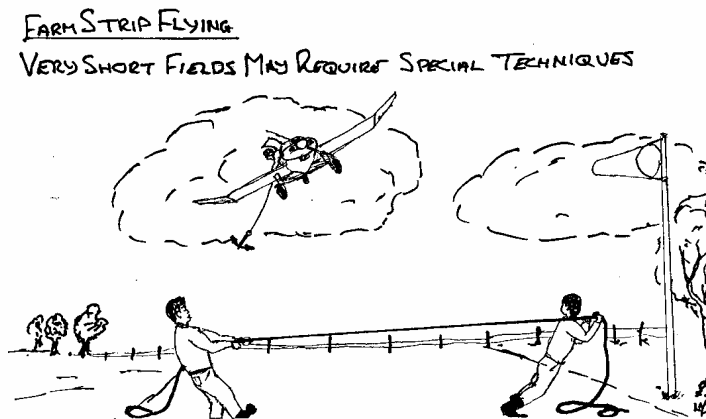
## From the Archive

Do things change? The following was taken from the Aug/Sept 1993 Skywritings

Is it worth it? A question that has been buzzing around in my head for several months. Since the demise of Papa Oscar I have had time to reflect on the cost, both financial and psychological on the trials and tribulations of owning an aeroplane.

The problem is that despite what you

**If you must choose between two evils, pick the one you haven't tried before**



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think and however good the aeroplane is it is still a bit like painting the Forth Bridge; it never stops! In my case in the attempt to bring the Luscombe up to scratch it has cost me almost every penny I had in the bank, new tyres, cables, partial engine overhaul, the list goes on and on, but of course it doesn't stop there.

Then you have to fly it, so you have to fork out on hangerage, insurance and fuel and when you get to where you're going then you pay landing fees, overnight charges, possibly hotel bills and of course food.

BUT, and this is the big but, when I think back over the last two years that Lucy and I had together she soldiered on and did everything I asked and took me and the people flying with me, safely to places that I would never normally have seen and bought us back again.

We had some great times and at the end, through no fault of hers, she looked after us in our worst hour. So, is it worth it? YOU BETCHA. Keep the hanger space free, I'll be back!

**I would rather die in my sleep like my Grandfather instead of screaming in terror like his passengers.**

**Dates for your Diary**

November 24 Dick Richardson  
 December 17 Christmas Dinner  
 January 26 AGM with Extras  
 February 23 Builders Evening  
 March 30 Exotic Trips