



March 2006

SKYWRITINGS

Newsletter of the *Mid Kent Strut* of the



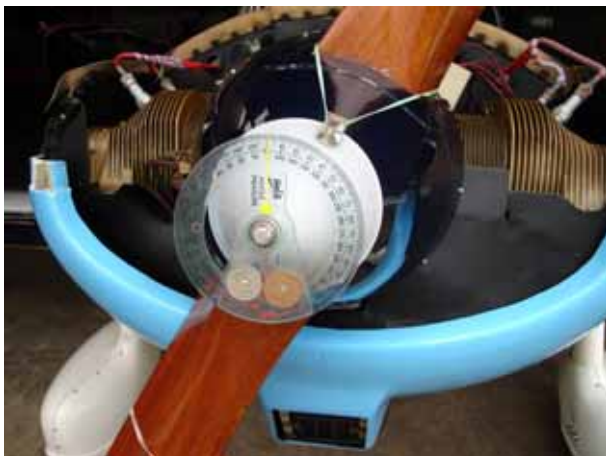
Mike's Mutterings

Mike Negus -
Editor



Magneto Timing

How long is it since you checked the timing on your magnetos? It's one of those jobs which is made much easier if you have the right specialised tools but as it's a job which is only done infrequently, it hardly seems worth spending the money. One such tool is shown in the photo on the right and was made by strut member Frank Rothera.



Commercially made ones are available but cost in excess of \$50. This is made from a protractor from W H Smith, a surplus model aircraft bearing, clock pointer from an old clock and a couple of coins to provide weight in the right place. Total cost is less than a

couple of pounds. In use the device is fixed to the prop with rubber bands and the engine turned to TDC and the protractor set at zero. It is then easy to turn the prop the number of degrees called for by the engine manual. If you have a specialised implement, please let the editor have details so that it can be passed on to other Strut members.

Our New Strut Coordinator



Derek Browning has been co opted as the new Strut Coordinator , a case of volunteers – one man taking one pace forward whilst the rest of us old hands smartly taking two paces back but nonetheless we wish Derek well in his exalted position. No doubt he will be backed up by the committee. Derek flies, as many of you know, from Rochester and is familiar with the management in that knowing way and as such it is beneficial to the Strut to have a foot in the camp Rochester being an important satellite of Farting Corner. Well that's how we misguided folk who live there think of it. Derek also has good contacts with the café of which more anon. As a stalwart in recent years he has supported many events particularly Young Eagles at

**March Meeting at the
Golf Club – 30th March**

which the PA28 or C172 he flies was useful as a load lugger of the youth and thus is well qualified for the role.

February Meeting

Weather was a bit miserable and cold which undoubtedly put a hex on the meeting resulting in a low turn out, much like the mid term local elections. However for those who braved the elements we were treated to a first class talk from four disparate, or that could have been desperate speakers bringing us up to date on their respective projects.

First up was the enthusiastic **Gary Smith** with an amazing array of kit and tools to entertain and amaze us with his riveting tale of building an RV, literally. Gary has given himself a programmed build time which he fastidiously maintains and as a consequence rapid progress is being maintained to the point where the engine has been ordered, delivered and returned due to some below standard parts but by the time you receive this tome it should be back. If anyone is contemplating an RV build then Gary is surely your man. I am sure most of us would have read a more in depth update recently in P.F.

Ian McLeod was next up for a very humorous take on completing the Pietenpol he has under construction which was under the wing of our sadly missed Dave Machin and with his passing meant unavoidably a glitch in the completion. Happily with a new inspector pace was picked up and its first flight is not far away and we look forward to seeing it based at Farthing Corner, sure to bring a ray of individuality to the otherwise preponderance of Jodel currently stuffing out the place. Incidentally have you noticed how these Jodels pop up in Popular Flying with alarming regularity, a little incestuous mais non. Bless 'em.

Our resident AME **Bruce Alexander** explained how things were coming along in the garage wherein lays the Rotorway Scorpion under construction and again how he finds the time to build Lord only knows but we do have these occasional updates which demonstrate the day is getting nearer to a maiden flight so if choppers are your thing then Bruce will no doubt have an opinion on all thing whirly.

Last but by no means least our very own PF Editor **Brian Hope** waxed enthusiastically over the Sonera 11LT currently under a conversion from a two to single place aeroplane. Brian is certainly practicing the concept of affordable flying by bringing this project including capital cost of the airframe in under £8000 and again I commend you to read about this more fully in March's edition of Popular Flying. Being a non-builder myself and absolutely without ambition to be one I nevertheless doff my cap to those who try and those who succeed. Thank you gents for your time and effort.

Future Entertainment

This month March 30th we have another in house talk by fellow member Karl Martin about his latest long distance whiz round Europe in his co owned RV 6, you will no doubt recall with amusement the tale of the flight to Cyprus and back, this time the tale will be of the journey to the North Cape and back via the Baltic States, fully illustrated by lantern slide, defi-

Don't forget the talk at the march Meeting. A Trip to the Arctic Circle and Beyond by RV6.

nitely not one to be missed.

April 27th we are keeping our fingers and toes crossed to bring to the meeting a familiar face off the telly to give us a talk on the weather and participate in a question and answer session on the subject after. Watch this space next month! Other talks to be announced as are planned trips of which the first is highlighted below.

De Havilland and the Mosquito Museum - Strut Visit 2nd April

Salisbury Hall was home to the de Havilland Aircraft Company design team in 1939 and will be the venue of our next Strut visit on the 2nd April.



Together with the prototype Mosquito that was originally built on this site, the museum displays over 30 de Havilland types, complete airframes to cockpit sections and fuselages. Most de Havilland types are represented from the Hornet Moth, Rapide, Heron, Dove, Vampire and

Flashlights are tubular metal containers kept in a flight bag for the purpose of storing dead batteries.

Comet to name but a few. Remember that the venerable Chipmunk celebrates the 60th anniversary of its first flight this year, several events taking place both here and abroad, see PF where to go for details.

Located off junction 22 on the M25 near London Colney, transport to the museum will be by own car and if you would like to join other Strut members on this trip and would like to share your car please contact Mark Balding on 01959 523825. With the museum opening at 10.30, aim to arrive for 11.00am

Further info

www.dehavillandmuseum.co.uk

G-Vese



News from mike Roper on the Varieze G-Vese is that over the last year they have fitted a spin-on oil filter assem-

Try to stay in the middle of the air. Do not go near the edges of it. The edges of the air can be recognized by the appearance of ground, buildings, sea, trees and interstellar space. It is much more difficult to fly there.

bly, electric carb-heat, and fiddled about with ram-air carb-air induction. The aircraft is really starting to move out!!

The spin-on oil filter assembly designed by Steve Brown is the one mentioned in



Brian's Mag and is working beautifully with no problems to date and none envisaged.

The electric carb-heat, also designed by Steve, has performed excellently over the winter months so far and its performance is still being monitored.

The ram-air induction has proved to be a bit of a saga to optimize. We now appear to have reached a point where we are satisfied with the aircraft's performance. However, this doesn't mean



we've switched off our brains.

We also treated ourselves to a Gary Hertzler 'Silver Bullet' propeller and fitted, at long last, the spinner and flow guide which we had delayed fitting until we had finalised which prop we were going to use.

Our next mod, PFA permitting, is the design and fitting of electronic ignition.

As you can see, a lot of fiddling about but that is the beauty of homebuilt aircraft and the freedom that can be obtained from the PFA providing any mod is well thought out, engineered and fitted well using good aircraft practises.

Yes, it's a flying bike!

THIS is the first picture of the world's only flying production bike! The Ultralight Flying Scooter is based on a Honda Zoomer, and uses a propeller and a parachute canopy to get off the ground. It's capable of air speeds up to 27 mph. It can climb up to 300 feet in a minute, although with no safety harness you won't want to fly too



high! Because the Ultralight is classed as a paraglider, you only need a National Private Pilot's Licence which costs £135 and needs 32 hours of training before you can take your test. After that, you're free to fly anywhere except built-up areas and near to commercial air-space. The kit costs around £2600 including VAT, but you'll also need to buy a Y2005 Honda Zoomer to attach it to. Check out www.ultralightflyingscooter.com

PFA Rally 2006 - Let's do our bit to help. From Brian Hope.

At the National Council meeting on March 11th, which was attended by yours truly and our new co-ordinator, Derek Browning the chairman of the PFA Rally Team, Cliff Mort, gave an update on how arrangements were progressing for the 2006 event. As I hope you all will by now know, this year we are moving away from what has become the traditional Rally period of the beginning of July, and the event will be held at Kemble on August 18th, 19th, and 20th.

I believe it is very important for members to understand just how close the Rally came to extinction. After far too many years of making substantial financial losses, the Executive Committee had got to the point of scrubbing the event for good. It was only when members of the Rally Team put together a 'low budget' proposal after attempts to hive off the Rally to a third parties had failed, that

When one engine fails on a twin-engine airplane you always have enough power left to get you to the scene of the crash.

they, albeit reluctantly, relented. However, we are very much in the realms of the 'last chance saloon', and if the event takes another nosedive this year, I fear it will be beyond redemption.

Of course, mistakes have been made in the past. The early Rallies were very low key events, with volunteers carrying out the majority of the tasks required to make the weekend tick. As the association grew, so did the Rally, and sadly so too did the health and safety regulations that had to be complied with. Over the years, many volunteer functions were replaced by contractors, and inevitably costs rose accordingly. There was also a desire to be more 'professional', and the Exhibition lost its rag-taggle of tents and caravans to be replaced by slick stands and huge marquees. Yet more costs.

In an effort to cover the increased costs, attempts have been made to broaden the appeal of the event, often incurring yet more expense, but I think it has now been realised that the PFA Rally has a niche market and it is not generally of great appeal to the non aficionado member of the public who might otherwise attend a typical wham bam thank you ma'am type air show.

So, now that the lessons have painfully been learned, Rally 2006 is to be a low(er) cost option. The expenditure budget has been cut by a third, down to around £127K. Still a lot of money, but considerably less than has been spent in

If the wings are travelling faster than the fuselage, it's probably a helicopter -- and therefore, unsafe.

recent years. By all accounts the cost targets are being met, and expectations are high that at last we are headed in the right direction.

There will be a need for the Struts to become more involved, just as they were in the past, and Derek and I discussed the possibility of Mid Kent taking on a role. Derek will raise the question at the next Strut meeting, and I hope it will be greeted with enthusiasm. Helping at the Rally is certainly not a chore, it is a great way to meet people while doing something positive to help our association. I hope you can all find the time to contribute a little effort to the cause, and in your own way help preserve our annual event for future generations of members. I've been a member now for thirty years, and every year (other than when Foot and Mouth caused its cancellation) I have enjoyed the Rally immensely. I cannot envisage not having a Rally, and I hope you all feel the same way, and feel it strongly enough to help keep it alive. I hope to see you at the next meeting.

Chipmunk at Sixty

With all the heavier stuff beginning to line up celebrations with that recently of the Spitfires first flight another no less significant event takes place at the lighter end of the aviation spectrum this year this being the 60th first flight of the Chippie. Having flight experience with the Air Cadets in the Chipmunks at Manston and Summer camps at Coltishall, Abingdon and others I thought I would look up a few facts on the web. Delta Aviation provide a potted history on their website www.deltaaviation.co.uk so I acknowl-

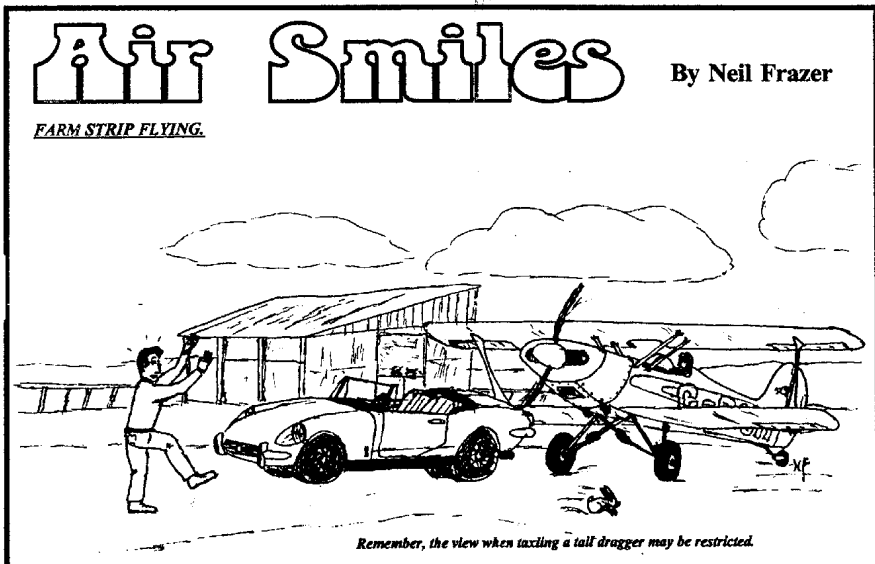
edge drawing on this article for inspiration. Delta operate the type so rides are still available in this most British of light aircraft, or not quite.



Whilst it is true a considerable number were built in the U.K. the aeroplane was in fact the first indigenous design of de Havilland Aircraft of Canada as the DHC-1 Chipmunk it was designed to replace the venerable Tiger Moth from the same de Havilland stable but that of course was a home grown design. The prototype first flew at Downsview, Toronto on the

22nd May 1946 and was put through its paces by test pilot Pat Fillingham from the parent company at Hatfield. The machine was powered by a de Havilland Gypsy Major 1C of 145 hp whilst later production examples were powered by the Gypsy major 8 producing a performance of a 90kt cruise and a climb rate of 900ft/min.

The two place tandem aeroplane was evaluated by the Armament Experimental Establishment at Boscombe Down and resulted in an order being placed to spec 8/48 and the type put in to production at Hatfield and Chester in the U.K. others produced in Canada where 218 examples were finally built. The RAF and other branches of the armed forces operated 735 for the 17 University Air Squadrons then in existence various Volunteer Reserve Flying Schools and no doubt eventually finding their way as squadron hacks in later years. The



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type was also built under licence in Portugal who operated the Chipmunk with the Air Force there until 1989.

Other operators world wide ranged from Burma, Chile, Denmark and various middle east countries. Post service with the RAF saw a number coming to the civil market where a healthy population still exists throughout the world and plans are afoot to mark the first flight both here and abroad with one of the most popular being the Chipmeet at Zoersel Airfield (EBZR) Belgium taking place on the weekend of the 25/28th May 2006 so you may wish to find further details on www.chipmeet.com.

Check our own Popular Flying for events in the U.K. where no doubt a considerable number of the 1291 built may be on show.



Now, THAT'S a Bad Landing

Dates for your Diary

March 30

Arctic by RV

April 27

Talk on Weather