



April 2006

# SKYWRITINGS

Newsletter of the *Mid Kent Strut* of the

POPULAR  
**flying**  
Association

**Mike's Mutterings**

Mike Negus -  
Editor



## All You Need to Know About Flying Weather

As we sat in the caravan at Farthing Corner on Good Friday watching the weather deteriorate as we had planned to pop to Rochester for the spot landing competition thoughts turned to the next Strut Meeting being very timely as we have an ex Met Office speaker, arranged through Steve Solleys contact, by the name of Dennis Horton so we look forward to that to refresh our latent memories of the teachings of Birch and Branson. A reminder of how it is easy to get caught out even flying locally as we heard whilst listening to the scanner on the same day an aircraft trying to reach Rochester was reporting 1 mile north



### *"Beryl" in the Gloom*

of the field and at 1200 ft in cloud was calling for the weather details. Obviously he was unable to get in despite several attempts and was understandably beginning to sound rather concerned, a classic case of we were glad to be down here wishing we were up there rather than the other way round!

## Sun n Fun 2006 by Brian Hope

As many of you will know, John Dean and I have made Sun N Fun something of a regular destination, and this year we were joined by fellow Mid Kent Strut member Frank Rothera and his wife Claudine, and Bob Hallam, a friend of ours from Manchester who flies a Europa and a 172.

This year the event was held a week earlier, April 4 - 10, to avoid the Easter weekend, and we flew out on Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> with Continental from Gatwick, via Newark. Direct flights are prohibitively expensive, but even

indirect routes have suffered large increases due to rising oil prices. We paid a little over £400, almost £100 dearer than last year. Sharing a villa and car hire makes the rest of the trip reasonably affordable, and living expenses in the US are not excessive.

I thought the show was a little quieter this year, but there was still plenty to see. For anybody building, the trade exhibition is a real treasure trove. Numerous stands sell everything from screws and rivets to engines, avionics and complete aircraft, and the prices are so much better than we have to pay here in the UK. I wasn't after anything substantial this year, but being able to get AN fittings, stainless hardware, and oil cooler hoses at bargain prices will



*Hummelbird*

move the Sonerai project along nicely.



**BK1**

The 'in' thing in US aviation right now is the Light Sport Category, a new and less regulated approval and licensing system not dissimilar to our NPPL and 450kg microlights, although the max weight is heavier at 1320lbs. Rather like taking coals to Newcastle, many of the aircraft on offer in LSA are of European descent, the Tecnam, Flight Designs CT, and Eurostar for example being well known to us. A new Italian design, the Aerolab Lo Camp Sport Camper, made its debut and looks set to carve itself a steady market share. It is a tandem two seat 1930's style aircraft, powered by the Rotec R2800 radial engine and was simply exquisite. Fuselage and empennage are of welded steel tube, and the wing is wood. Ailerons and flaps are alloy, and the entire airframe is fabric covered. The 80hp in-line Walter Mikron is offered as an alternate power plant, and high wing and biplane versions are on the drawing board. It is to be sold as a very competitively priced kit.

**Don't forget the talk at the April Meeting. All You Need To Know About Flying Weather.**

Genuine old timers were also well in attendance in the Vintage aircraft park. There were three fabulous WACO restorations, including this one-of-a-kind 1935 YPF. Powered by a Jacobs R755 of 275hp it cruises at 140mph.

At the complete opposite end of the spectrum was this very nicely executed tri-gear Hummelbird. Powered by a 1/2 VW it was finished in US navy colours and even had a few fake 'bullet holes'.



**WACO**

I'm sure many of us can relate to Bruce King, a Texan who has limited funds to build an aeroplane and felt that the kit plane explosion had left him behind. Bruce is a big guy, 18 stone and 6ft 4in, and after looking around for something he could afford, and fit into, and finding nothing to suit, he designed himself an all alloy, 1835cc VW powered monoplane. Called the BK1, it is suitable for the larger pilot, something many VW powered

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

aircraft are not, and has a useful cruise speed of 125mph. Plans are currently being drawn in CAD and are being proofed by nine experienced builders. They should be available by Oshkosh 2007. Bruce built the BK1, complete with brand new Great Plains VW, for just \$7000.



*Aerolab Lo Camp*

One of the advantages of Sun N Fun over Oshkosh is that Florida is very much a family entertainment venue, so family members not keen of aeroplanes can enjoy any number of other attractions. We spent four days at the show and the remaining two doing other things, but all too soon it was time to leave the 80+F sunshine and head back home, where I had to scrape the snow off the windscreen of my car. Reality really can slap you in the face sometimes! Roll on 2007 when Sun N Fun returns to later in the month, running from April 17<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup>.

**What is the similarity between air traffic controllers and pilots? If a pilot screws up, the pilot dies; If ATC screws up, . the pilot dies."**

## De Havilland Mosquito Museum Visit. By Paddy Jordan

I have always wanted to visit the Mosquito Museum as one of the wartime stories my Dad told me was related to the Mosquito. At the outbreak of WWII my Dad tried to join the RAF as he had always been interested in flying. He had no luck as he was only 5'-2", was 29 years old and did not want to be bomber crew, besides they discovered he was in a reserved occupation.

So he had to content himself with bomb reconnaissance for the Home Office. As time went on needed people were needed with his technical ability and so it was that he found himself building emergency runways. Whilst completing one of these a new type of aircraft needed to use it and every one was told not to look, so every one did. It was a Mosquito and so started my dads love affair with the "Wooden Wonder" which I can not help but think was to do with him being a carpenter joiner by trade. His enthusiasm and interest was passed on to me, so when Mark chose the de Havilland Aircraft Heritage Centre as a Strut outing I phoned up to get the details. I was looking for some one to share the drive with as my truck is getting on.



Mark had no takers so I asked around at the Strut night and found that Nigel Reed was also looking to see who was going. Meeting at Nigel's house I had a tour of his "Europa" project before setting off. The drive to Salisbury Hall was via the M2/A2/M25 and being Sunday was reasonable traffic behaving itself for a change. On reaching the museum and having paid entrance fee we decided to follow the suggested route. First on the route was the Comet 4 flight simulator nose cockpit section. Nigel made the comment that the instrument panel was very military in appearance, what struck me was the limited forward vision on a par with the Luscombe. Next was the Halford Hall which houses a picture board potted history of the aircraft company also a family tree. The tree had surprises, one being Olivia De Havilland the actress as part of the family.



From the Halford Hall we entered the Dove G-AREA and sitting in the pilots seat we found it to be very cosy for its size. Moving on we went next to the main hanger where examples of Mosquito, Queen Bee, Moth Minor, Humming Bird, Vampire, Chipmunk, and various engine bits and pieces. We stopped in the main hanger for a cup

of tea and biscuit as it had started raining outside, well what a surprise. Parked outside on route to the Mosquito Prototype hanger are various examples of de Havilland's Trident fuselage section, the four-engine piston Heron, Sea Vixen another Dove, and the twin jet executive 125. As you enter the Prototype hanger there is a Cierva Autogiro the only one to be built by de Havilland's, and there in bright yellow is the Mossie prototype which at present is undergoing refurbishment a truly historic airframe considering the survival rate of prototypes is pretty poor but obviously someone was far sighted enough to appreciate the potential significance which we can enjoy today. A shame the same cannot be said for the Spitfire and Hurricane both of which have not survived for posterity. However around the Mossie are various other exhibits including a Molins 6lb cannon that was fitted for anti e-boat and submarine work with some success when operating from airfields in Cornwall ranging over the Channel and the Bay of Biscay. At the back of the hanger is a section of a Horsa glider fuselage and cockpit, complete with a paratroopers folding bike.

They are still developing the site so the proposed memorabilia section is not yet open so our last section was the workshop. In the workshop they are rebuilding for flight a DH 89 Dragon Rapide and for static display a DH88 Comet racer, an ex-film prop. On chatting with one of the restorers he told us that since the Shuttleworths "Grosvenor House" landing

**Flying the airplane is more important than radioing your plight to a person on the ground incapable of understanding or doing anything about it**

accident it was highly likely that it would become a static display as the C.A.A had condemned the undercarriage as unsafe by design? The catering facilities being limited we decided to drop in to Stapleford on our return for a bite to eat. Good idea but have you tried to get to it from the M25! We finished up in Dagenham at a Pub where we settled for roast turkey and a pint. All in all it had been a very enjoyable day out many thanks Mark for the promoting the idea. Highly recommended for a visit, the museum that is not the pub!

### PFA Flying For Fun 18-20<sup>th</sup> August

The call has gone out for volunteers from the Strut to assist at an as yet unspecified task at the Rally and despite there being a bit of hard work on the day tasks can be staggered so that enjoyment of the event can still be experienced but also a sense of having done ones bit for the Association, so please contact Derek or any members of the Committee if you are so disposed. I did hear that latrine digging was definitely going to be a suggestion for us.

On Rally matters there came in to my possession a 1 pint beer tankard that was a souvenir of the 1992 Wroughton Rally which from memory was only held there once although I stand to be corrected and I got to thinking much like the rarity of prototype aircraft alluded to in Paddys article on the museum visit whether there was a market for PFA memorabilia

**"It is generally inadvisable to eject directly over the area you just bombed." - US Air Force Manual**

some of which must go back the 50 odd years and if any thought has been given to a collection of same at HQ. I can remember our Strut participation in the 3 year campaign to run the highly successful Raffle back in the last century which raised circa £50k which is quite staggering to think of now but we put on a corporate image with specially made 'Rally' baseball caps and preceeding that red Strut T-shirts were printed again to identify the troops at the Rally and other events.

Sadly I confess still having mine but sadder still is the fact I no longer cut the dashing figure I once (thought I) did and so they languish proudly but now unworn under my Pink Floyd, Rolling Stones and various other artists t-shirts it was necessary to have from those concerts. Will this PFA memorabilia be worth anything on e-bay I have asked myself or do I dutifully remain its custodian until a future day when a museum of popular flying may be their ultimate resting place that is unless you have a better offer!

### Scouting for Fun

Chris Reynolds our stalwart Young Eagles organiser has taken under his wing so to speak the opportunity to hold a Scout camp at Pent Farm and early negotiations are underway with the Kent Scouts whose counterpart has already visited Chris so thing should move along. The event will be held in July and is in line with the PFA Education push to replace Young Eagles in that format and will take on the form of a weekend camp which will be largely Scout organised and the PFA involvement apart from Chris' obvious commitment as host, will be the provi-

sion of aeroplanes and pilots not only to just fly but to educate on topics still to be formalised.

This will be developed over the next month so we should be able to update in next months issue so although numbers will be less than Young Eagles it will be necessary to commit for the day but will give a good opportunity for the Scouts to benefit and that has to be a good thing. However as Derek Browning our esteemed Strut Coordinator (didn't he do well at his inauguration) has pointed out there is another group also crying out for attention, being the Air Cadets who suffer greatly from defence cut backs and a shrinking RAF with the demise of Manston there is no local service facility for them to gain air experience so a suggestion has been made at committee stage that we may offer our services to fly them but we will keep you posted on this one. It has to be said we are very privileged and sometimes its nice to put something back.

### Chipmunk Footnote

Talking to Harry Foulds, the owner and farmer of Farthing Corner, the other day a little snippet came out in conversation regarding the DHC Chipmunk whose 60<sup>th</sup> birthday occurs in May as Harry once owned not only a Canadian built example but it was the well known G-AOTM the highly modified mount of Sir Peter Masefield whose recent demise was published in a number of newspapers and magazines. Amongst the mods to the aeroplane were an exhaust thrust augmentation tube, single piece bubble canopy, wing root fairings, wheel spats and larger wing tanks. This upped its speed by 20mph and in August 1964 was flown in to third place in the King's Cup

at 144mph. Harry owned it for four years before trading in for a Zlinn a type also operated by his great friend Neville Browning the flying farmer from Essex. The Chippies performance apparently did not detract from its short field capability as Neville's was about the same as Farthing Corner but with a much hairier approach to which Harry was a frequent visitor. **Authorised Medical Examiner - Dr Bruce Alexander**



### Medical Matters

We are pleased to advise the members that Bruce will now undertake UK, JAR, and South African Aviation Medicals and if you require his services contact him on 01227 832823 or mobile 07867 527726 and by e-mail [bruce.alexander@cheironmedical.com](mailto:bruce.alexander@cheironmedical.com) Bruce as most will be aware is a Strut member and co owns the Luscombe (sensible chap) at Farthing Corner and is also building a Rotorway Scorpion so has a good PFA pedigree.

### Last Months Talk

This entertaining diatribe on the trip by RV6 to North Cape was delivered in his usual laconic and amusing style by Karl Martin which was fully illustrated and gave a great insight in what was to be a fairly eventful trip.

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Taking in a number of gliding clubs on the way round being the theme of the trip, Karl being a fairly enthusiastic glider pilot of some repute he has several other trips up his sleeve involving this non-motorised form of flying the results of which we look forward to in the future.

However it was this element of the current trip which very nearly caused him a premature departure from this mortal coil but thankfully has not diminished his enthusiasm. Having reached their destination only to find the North Cape covered in cloud but a spectacular picture nonetheless their journey continued back through Finland and it was at one of the gliding fields Karl took a flight with one of the highly qualified and experienced instructors, who also happened to be the local heart surgeon. Having found some decent thermals it was decided to go cross country but as they got well in to the first leg the thermals decayed to a point where a landing out was inevitable and the instructor decided on a highly improbable field and the resulting prang left Karl briefly unconscious and when he came to had terrific back pain. After the mess was cleared up and a trip to the hospital it was fortunate that no permanent damage had occurred save for the glider which was written off and the attitude of the instructor being non penitent even after his lunch had been paid !!

**Dates for your Diary**

April 27	Talk on Weather
May 25	Notams & Airspace
June 29	Workshop
July 27	BBQ