



June 2006

SKYWRITINGS

Newsletter of the *Mid Kent Strut* of the



Mike's Mutterings

Mike Negus -
Editor



Young Aviators - Scout Camp & Flying Weekend

We are now getting close to the planned event at Pent Farm on the weekend of the 22nd and 23rd of July and need to appeal to the members for assistance on several fronts which can be set out as follows:-

Aeroplanes and pilots to fly the Scouts as part of their curriculum and the plan is to give the youngsters two flights if practical of 20/30 mins each so that practical handling can be experienced on one and a simple Nav/ex on the second. As the emphasis will be on giving one to one experience two seat aircraft will be more than adequate however the field is open to all types as it may be feasi-



Pent Farm Strip

ble to also include the adult Scouting supervisors the opportunity of a ride if possible. Numbers of Scouts are expected to be a maximum of 24 so we are looking logically at your help on say two Scout individuals i.e. 2 hours flying plus transit time. However any assistance is going to be appreciated and you are pre-

pared to 'sponsor' 1 Scout we will be grateful. At this time we feel that 12 aeroplanes could handle the detail and there is adequate room for this number as you can see from the aerial shot of Pent Farm. We are committed as a Strut and the PFA ethos to making this a success and the Committee on your behalf is fully behind Chris Reynolds down on the farm to give all assistance possible.

That's the one important bit now for number two. We need input at ground level to give mini lectures on meteorology, navigation, effects of controls etc details of which are being obtained by Brian Hope courtesy of PFA HQ Education Co Coordinator so depending on offers we need a couple of volunteers for Saturday and Sunday to take care of business. We stress these will be of a basic level and therefore the task in hand will not be onerous.

Thirdly any assistance will be appreciated on the ground or in the air marshalling or assisting in organizing the ground/air movements of the aeroplanes and just talking to the youngsters. As well as the aerial side to things they will be engaged on other typical Scouting activities around camping and the like. I intend making a weekend of it with my daughter who is in the Brownies so it will give us a chance to 'bond' and to introduce her to a few outdoor pursuits not to mention the very real threat from Chris to organize a BBQ on the Saturday Night.

At The June meeting we will explain further and very much look forward to a positive response despite being

in the middle of Summer (at last) and the holiday season it will be a good opportunity to give these youngsters a taste for flying at grass roots level and who knows some could become PFA members in the future. Any questions or comments feel free to contact Derek Browning or Mike Negus details on the rear of this newsletter.

May Meeting

Unfortunately I managed to miss it but I gather it was all rather informative so thanks to Merrick Cruschel for coming over to talk about airspace which I understand provoked a fair amount of badinage and good humoured questions and answers which I understand cleared up a few contentious issues. Anyway on to next moths talk....

June Meeting 29th June 2006 Places To GoThis and any other Summer

The talk in June will be given by several of our domestic luminaries based on their extensive travels by aerial carriage and should be well worth a listen particularly as the season is still in its infancy and I am sure there are a lot of plans still to be made. Make a date in your diary and we'll see you there...

And as a pre cursor to the evening we proudly present a small contribution from Simon Pratt about his first trip over the pond (this year) to that ever popular destination Midden Zealand

Wings and Wheels Midden Zealand June 3rd/4th 2006 by Simon Pratt

After the disappointing weather the previous weekend when we were all fired up to

fly down to Bernay for the Jodel Club Fly In and Dinner the weather for the following weekend could not have been more of a contrast and as the season is getting off to a start I thought that I should get off to the big bit of land over the water. I decided that a little trip to Midden Zeeland would be a good opener so all was planned. I have been to Midden Zeeland before a number of times and it is a pleasant enough run without breaking the bank balance so well worth considering particularly when hiring your favourite aeroplane and if costs can be shared it makes a good alternative to Le Touquet or Abbeville.

The planned flight was just over an hour and a half but this involves flying through the Ostend zone and as Beryl (Luscombe G-BSNT) is not equipped with a transponder, in fact it's not equipped with very much at all so it is



a very good idea to phone before departure. Having phoned Ostend and filed the flight plan and checked the

Don't forget the talk at the July-Meeting. BBQ at Rochester Airfield

weather, the next thing was the NOTAMS. These contained a piece of information which could have made life a little more awkward without. The airfield was to be closed at various times on Sunday for variable lengths of time, so would I be able to come home when I wished to? A phone call to the tower eased my mind as there would be no problems providing I picked the right time to go, and Saturday was ok. The flight over took a little longer than planned due to a head wind (as did the return flight. Why does it turn round like that?) but all went well. When passing Calais you MUST avoid the zit at Gravelines by either flying 5km off the coast or going inland. I always like to call Ostend approach as early as possible after Calais so that if they refuse transit along the coast there is still time to divert round the back, but so far this has not been necessary as they are very helpful. When I called to ask for clearance along the coast I was told that without transponder I should have phoned first, so I told them that I had (the message couldn't have got to the right place). Before leaving on Sunday I made sure I called Ostend and was on the phone for a while being passed around the airport, but it's



worth it to save hassle later. The event on Sunday was more of a car rally than fly-in but 5 German Piaggios (not scoot-

ers), a small Amphibian, a Mitchell B25 owned by the Duke of Brabants Air Force and popular participant at a number of UK airshows and a few other aircraft did show their faces. The closures were made mainly for parachuting and model flying which the crowd seemed to enjoy, as they did the fly pasts of the more interesting aircraft. This was the 18th Wings and Wheels event at Midden Zeeland and there were about 300 cars of all shapes and sizes from small sporty things right through the range to the big yanks (*American Gas Guzzlers, cars not people, Ed*) and a few Rolls (Royces that is). The cars took about an hour to file out of the gate from 11.30 to take a journey around the island until 16.00. Unfortunately the camera batteries decided to go flat so not many pictures got taken, never mind, I am sure it will be on again next year so we can all go and see them.

Midden Zeeland does sell mogas but it is over 1.5 euros per litre and I think the avgas is about 2.25. A taxi into Middelburg is just over 20 euros. There are a few hotels in Middelburg, 3 of which are just opposite the station. There is a hotel on the lake about 1.5km from the airport but this is 59euros per person for one night or 45 per person if more than one night (it's cheaper to get the cab into town and only pay 60 per room and there is a good choice of restaurants and bars). So if you fancy going Dutch give it a try!

**I was thinking that women
should put pictures of missing
husbands on beer cans!**

Eastbourne Airborne Thursday 17th August 2006-06-11

A bit of novelty here for all those who like to show off their aeroplanes to the assembled masses. As a precursor to the Air Show we have been invited to take part in a flypast on the above date and the organisers are looking for at least 20 PFA aeroplanes and up to carry it out. The fly past will take place at 12.30pm and provisionally take off will be from Deanland forming up line astern to do the flypast returning to Deanland where for those wishing to return to Eastbourne for the show a coach will be laid on, for those not wishing to go you will be free to return to home base. The time and place for briefing is still to be finalised but for those interested Committee member Steve Solley is heading up this opportunity and he can be contacted on 07836 653257. We discussed this at committee and a number of us are up for it so over to you...

July and August Meetings

For those of us whose memory fades a little with the passing years and those new members who have not passed a Summer season with us a gentle reminder that we have a BBQ at Rochester Airport on JULY 27th instead of meeting at the Golf Club and we return to Rochester this time for a sit down jobby on AUGUST 31st in the airport Café. Both occasions a usually well attended and are open to friends and family so it is a good opportunity to introduce your better halves and let them know where you really go to on that last Thursday of the month!

Talking of Better Halves

All best wishes to Mark Balding and his partner who are anticipating the pattern of tiny feet in the very near future so all best wishes.

European Luscombe Tour

The 11th and 12th of June were days planned for the first ever European Luscombe tour, put together by enterprising Luscombe owners from Bourne-mouth and coordinated by Nigel Barratt who had negotiated on the behalf of the group for waiving of landing fees at most stops and where this was not possible for a substantial reduction.

The first day began at Popham with takeoff scheduled for 09H45. However, Nigel let me into a secret which he unwittingly let out of the bag. Can you believe that the group was found sitting eating bacon and eggs well after ETD, no one was agreeable to for moving on in the direction of White Waltham until all was consumed! Despite the obvious attraction of the event, it was left up to me to represent the Luscombe Quartet- all other members having work or family commitments.

At around 11H15 my son Dane and I set off for the short leg for Farthing Corner to North Weald to join up with the tour at their second stop. With clear skies temperatures in the mid 20s and a south easterly of 20kt forecast, (which hadn't yet arrived at Far-ties) we lumbered into the air (my lad is not a light weight). What we were not aware of was that there was a fair going on at North Weald, which prohibited use of 13 which was almost

straight into wind. Instead we were directed to land on 02. Calling finals, we were given wind 100⁰ at 19kts which made me feel we were in for an interesting time! Fortunately once passed the turbulence generated by trees, buildings and hangars, the air smoothed out and the rest of the approach and landing was not too traumatic!

Once parked up we got acquainted with the 4 awaiting Luscombes and their owners and took some photos. Here we found out that the inbound 10



Luscombes were all running around 1 hour behind schedule, so more tea! An hour later, we had word of Luscombes inbound and for the next half hour or so we watched one after another arrive with only a few practice arrivals. Duly lunched and refuelled we set off for Old Buckenham in loose formation, using a chat frequency to keep each other informed, where another interesting crosswind arrival awaited, the wind only having abated by 2 or 3 knots. After more tea and chat it was off to Fenland where, they actually had a runway that pointed into the wind....well sort of!

The group had been unable to make up any time and so decided to miss out the next stop which was Leicester and pro-

ceed instead to the night stop at Wellesbourne Mountford. With Dane and me under pain of death to be home by 20:00 and a journey into the teeth of the wind we decided to leave the tour at this point, tanked up and set off. We were both rather disappointed with our 38kt groundspeed on climb out, however we were able to push it up to 60kt once levelled out in the cruise. 19:00 saw us back at Farties for an uneventful arrival.

For the second day the group's route was as follows: Wellesbourne Mountford, Lane farm, Shobden, Upfield Farm, Eaglescott and finally Farway Common. The group has a collection of really pristine Luscombes of all vintages and sophistications and an interesting website where I am sure load of photos of the tour will be published.



For those interested, the address is <http://www.europeanluscombes.org.uk>

Check out the Czech Republic.

By Brian Hope

It is over ten years since I had visited the Czech Republic, and as John Dean and Frank Rothera had yet to visit this former Eastern Bloc state, they readily agreed

to my suggestion that we make it the destination for our annual flying holiday. Bob Hallam, a friend of ours from oop noorth, made up the four and on



Saturday June 3rd our four aircraft, two Jodels, a Piper Colt and a C172, tackled the first, somewhat less than enormous leg to Calais. Confucius say that long journey starts with first small step!

As Bob's C172 is on the 'N' reg he was given a bit of a going over by Customs, but as he had his 'VAT paid' documentation they agreed not to cart him off to the local gaol. We also met a friendly bunch of French pilots from Chavenay on their way to Rochester for the day.

Next stop was Koblenz in Germany, routing south of Brussels in what at first glance looks to be a route through a complex set of controlled airspace but in reality is very straightforward. We night stopped in this very pleasant and historic town where the Rhine and the Mosel rivers meet, before heading off to Bayreuth for lunch and border formalities before crossing into the non Shengen Czech Republic. Though I had been twice to Czech, I had somehow managed not to visit Karlovy Vary, or Karlsbad as the Germans call it, so that was to be our first

port of call and our second night stop. KV is a famous Spa town, set in the Templa river valley and the spa water comes out off the ground too hot to touch - there is even a Yellowstone Park style geyser that pushes water and steam up to over twenty feet. A very pretty town, very touristy of course but highly recommended for a not overly expensive stay.

Next day we planned to go to Prague, the closest GA field being Letnany on the edge of the eastern suburbs. Naturally this is well within Prague's TMA, and to add to the delicate mix, the military airfield of Kbely is literally just over the road. However, Prague Info were first rate and routed us along the southern edge of the zone and handed us over to Kbely Tower to fly directly over their field and into Letnany, which is only



seven km as the crow flies from the centre of Prague. A three star twin bedroom in the heart of the city was just £50 per night including breakfast, and cheaper accommodation could be had if required. The major sights are within walking distance, and there are trams and a metro system for getting farther afield. We stayed two nights, spending a full day doing the tourist bit in the Old Town and the Castle, and even took a river trip. Truly one of Europe's most

beautiful cities, and if you don't want to fly yourself there, take a cheap flight with Ryanair. You won't be disappointed and you won't have to spend a fortune.

Prior to going I had checked out the internet for other places of interest and came up with Olomouc, near the eastern border with the Slovak Republic. We were the first Brits to land at the town's grass airfield this year, and the aero club members really went out of their way to help us. The town turned out to be far quieter and not nearly as 'tarted up' for tourists' consumption. Nonetheless the town had a lovely main square with an old Town Hall and a clock not unlike that to be seen in Prague. There was also a very grand cathedral and a interesting museum of religious artefacts.

Thursday morning we headed south to Kunovice, where the Czech Aircraft Works is based. We had arranged a visit the factory and following a flight in the SportCruiser, which was featured in the latest issue of PF, we headed to the main off - airfield factory for a tour of the works. CZAW is planning to move to a larger facility on the airfield within the next few months and will then be able to step up production. Also at the airfield, though we didn't find out until we were about to leave, is the Evector factory where they make the Eurostar. Another time perhaps. We arranged Customs and left Kunovice around midday on Friday for Vilshofen in Germany. This proved to be a lovely little airfield right alongside a river, but was difficult to spot at first because it was shielded by tree covered valley sides. After a late lunch and a refuel we headed farther west to Rothenburg, a well restored old

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walled city, for the night. The town and ramparts are quite magnificent, and as this was the first day of the World Cup, the home nation's first round win against Costa Rica set the local fans sounding off horns and waving their flags to lend the place a party atmosphere. On Saturday we headed for our old haunt of Abbeville, stopping off at Charleville en route. The motel and restaurant on the field never fail to provide excellent succour, and early on Sunday morning John was able to head for home for a prior engagement. The remaining trio headed off to St. Valery on the Baie de la Somme for a vintage steam train ride to Le Crotoy, before heading for home later in the day.

Around 15 hours and 1500 miles over nine days was very leisurely but good flying, all in good weather and with very helpful ATC when required. The Czech Republic has very reasonably priced hotels, restaurants and taxis, and Germany was also surprisingly reasonable. Put another way, I guess we are getting so used to high UK prices that much of Europe is now quite affordable.

Now where shall we go next year?

**Do not squat with your
spurs on.**

Dates for your Diary

June 29	Where to Go 2006
July 22/23	Scout Camp
July 27	BBQ
Aug 31	Dinner at EGTO
Oct 1	Abbeville Fly-Out