



June 2006

# SKYWRITINGS

Newsletter of the *Mid Kent Strut* of the



**Mike's Mutterings**

Mike Negus -  
Editor



## **Bar-B-Que Again Time for the Strut Barby at Rochester Airport!!!**

Make a note that as in previous years we temporarily decamp from the Golf Club due to the popularity of the golfers use of the 19<sup>th</sup> for a couple of months and thus the Bar-B-Q has become a regular alternative.

Start is a little earlier about 18.30 local and is £5.00 on the night. Now as always this is very much a social event and an opportunity to bring your better halves out for the evening and any guests you owe hospitality to this is a very cost effective way of reciprocating!



*Top Nav Competitors—See Inside for  
the Full Story*

If you are thinking of flying limited to I believe four after the airfield closes and then numbers are strictly your details should be logged with the tower during

the day and depart no later than 2100 local.

You will also be pleased to hear and I suspect not a little relieved that the cooking is being handled by the staff from the Airport Café and therefore the standard of fare should be somewhat improved from last year when it was still done in-house. As always drink will be restricted to soft drinks, tea or coffee therefore if you prefer a little libation you will be expected to bring your own, if you are not driving of course!

### August Meeting 'Strut Nosh Night' Thursday 31<sup>st</sup> August Rochester Airport Café

Continuing our Summer decampment from the Golf Club we will again for those who wish to avail yourself of the above be meeting up for a meal this time a sit down jobby And the menu is set out below:

Glass of house wine  
Pate  
Chicken Chasseur  
(Vegetarian Option available)  
Choice of pudding  
Tea or Coffee

All for a very reasonable £10.  
Contact Derek Browning to reserve your place. Contact details on the back of this Newsletter

### Last Months Meeting

Thanks to the two members Brian and Martin who provided on one hand a useful refresher on crossing 'La Manche' using Abbeville as a first

stop and the experience showing that even with airworthiness issues of ones mount in this aviation brotherhood there is always someone who will lend assistance.

Congratulations to Brian on losing his virginal status on Powerpoint Presentation and we look forward to other equally informative subjects illustrated in the same way. Martin, for it was he who had the misfortune to shed a shoe down near the Swiss border that formed the basis of his diatribe, has joined that merry band of frequent flyers to the continent and has proffered a useful idea set out in the next section.

### Matthew's Idea

Matthew has been approached by several pilots with nil exposure to the Channel Crossing who are interested in going to find out for themselves the joys and delights of ending up on a French pavement Café enjoying the culinary delights after a stress free flight over the oggin and the hassle of the flight plan but not necessarily to an organized fly in. He has offered to mentor these individuals and is asking if there are any other fellows out there who might like to take advantage of his offer. Please see below for his words on the subject.

### Novice Strut Fly-Out

After the strutt meeting last month I spoke to several members about arranging a fly-out to somewhere in France, specially aimed at those that may not feel confident in making the trip alone.

The plan is to fly to a French town, have a nice meal at one of the pavement café's, spend the night and then fly back the next day. For me one of the greatest joys of

flying light aircraft is watching the sun go down at a different destination over a bottle of wine, having flown there myself. To some of you this is a common event, but to others it is something yet to be discovered.

On the first few trips everything seems to be daunting, so what I propose is to take all the worry out of it all, flight plans, restricted air space, route, frequencies, we'll even try to pick a week-end with good weather!! If you have thought that it's too much for you, now is your chance to make a trip with lots of support from more experienced members. Everyone is welcome, if you are interested, give me a call, Matthew.

To conclude the story of my somewhat curtailed Swiss trip. The day after the Strut meeting five aircraft left for France with nine people on board to collect both mine and Gary Smith's aeroplanes, which had been also been left in France, near Paris.

At Brian Hope's suggestion we had an excellent lunch at Etaples, behind le Touquet airport, which made a very pleasant conclusion to quite a stressful situation, many thanks to all those that came along.

The leg has now been properly fixed and yes it's off again this week-end.

**Don't forget that the  
July Meeting is a BBQ  
at Rochester  
Airfield**

## TopNav 2006

I must confess when I heard Simon Pratt co-owner of our Luscombe G-BSNT at Farty Corner mention having been on this competition in 2005 with Paddy Jordan one of our other owners it had slipped my mind until Simon suggested that we pair up for another crack at it this year.

The event is run by The Royal Institute of Navigation and was held this year on 15<sup>th</sup> July at White Waltham. When our entry to the competition was made known to the other incumbents at Farthing Corner I was surprised and not a little disappointed at the scoffing at Simons choice of navigator namely yours truly. Certainly I have been known to become a little uncertain of my position on a number of occasions but I have always found my way



### *Turning Point*

home, a bit like a drunk does in some ways a bit unsteadily never quite knowing how but always finally with the key in the latch. To be sure I even attended a weeks course at RAF Finningley on navigation and got the certificate and class photo to prove it.

On relating this to Simon all doubts were

calmed and I was obviously first choice, actually I think I was his only choice and so it came to pass we would show these doubting Thomases and Brians what stuff we were made of.

The day dawned and the weather could not have been better with CA-VOK conditions with a steady 12/15 knot wind from the East we romped down to White Waltham for the briefing. Whilst refueling we were delighted to see the Miles Hawk Speed Six based there being prepared for take off to attend the Miles employees reunion at Shoreham where coincidentally Paddy was for his birthday treat an aerobatic flight and I know he is a big fan of the Miles breed. The competition costs for a two man crew £60 to enter and for this you are given a cost free day viz a viz landing fees and refreshment so on landing and having refueled and reported our arrival to the reception committee we repaired for a bacon sarnie and a cup of tea. Having collected the initial paperwork we looked at the other Competitors and found that fellow Strut Member Richard Warriner in the Rans with his Nav was there and another microlight entrant but out of 20 crews that was the sole PFA contingent the rest being made up of spam cans and one helicopter. We will try and redress this

They say if you play a  
Microsoft CD backwards,  
you hear satanic messages.  
That's nothing. If you play  
it forwards, it installs  
Windows!

imbalance by getting some advance publicity to our sister publication Popular Flying in time for next years comp.

The competition is generously sponsored by a number of aviation companies and the whole thing had a good feel about it, definitely something to bear in mind . Simon and I had a meeting on the Monday before and as he had the experience I keenly listened as we worked examples and drank beer and it all seemed straightforward but of course all this drained away along with the beer and we had a quick refresher at White Waltham. Essentially there are two routes a short and long being approx 100 miles and 200 miles respectively and through fuel considerations we went for the short route. Navigation aids can be anything you wish to declare GPS, VOR or VME/DME or any combination of them all or as we did simple map and compass as you are handicapped on the level of equipment used. After a splendid buffet lunch when you feel ready you apply for the sealed envelope containing details of the waypoints you are to find.

The first Woodley is a given but being only just over 4 miles away trying to sort out the course for the next waypoint means a quick bit of work. After receipt of your sealed instructions you have to be airborne within 15 minutes so not too much heads scratching time. To quote from the briefing notes' waypoints will be given as VOR-VOR, VOR-DME, and Lat/Long co-ordinates and each entrant is supplied with a RadNav VORTRACK kit which will identify waypoints and monitor track. Also supplied is a paper computer with the waypoint information and a system for recording Dead Reckoning, a real time log, ATC scribble pad radio codes and a basic airborne check list. Back in the air the workload on the navi-

gator intensified with the pilot demanding a new course after each waypoint is reached whilst trying to complete the log, keep check on the time and try to identify what the organizers are calling the waypoint, oh and taking photographs of same which have to be submitted within 3 weeks of the event as backup to your navigation record. To be honest I thought we acquitted ourselves pretty well only supplying Simon a bum steer on one occasion but a course correction half-way through the leg brought us back on track.



### *Another Turning Point but where is it?*

Finally we returned to White Waltham and handed in our sheets and swapping notes with Richard to find not a great deal of commonality whilst we got to the waypoint there was a dichotomy as to its identity. We did get a short de brief on these waypoints and I think whilst we were close it will be a case of no banana. It became clear that you do need to work with all references i.e. we used the half mill for the competition but had on board the quarter mill which we should have used maybe to aid a more positive appraisal of what was intended. For example the final way-

point turned out to be a gasometer which is point whiskey one of White Walthams reporting points but after a bit of discussion we settled for a flyover the R.P was in our joining instructions so I think you have to be a little open minded.

No excuses we were up against some crews who probably have entered every one of the 28 years of the competitions existence and know all these little nuances but lessons have been learnt in case we have a crack next year. I was pleased that at no time were we uncertain of position ( alright briefly once) but we got to all the waypoints the one positive confirmation was Newbury Racecourse half way round which was bang on track but we await final adjudication to see where we end up in the pecking order. The whole thing was very well organized and friendly but it would be good to see a few more PFA types enter but we will try and get advance info to you for next year.

### **RSA Vichy**

After the PFA Rally the one event I really wouldn't want to miss is the French Homebuilders Rally, which always throws up some interesting aircraft. This year the event was at Vichy, in central France, its third different location in as many years. Vichy proved to be pleasant enough, not as elegant as other spa towns I've visited, but with a number of parks and the substantial river Allier flowing through it, there was an open airiness about this town that during WW11 housed Marshal Petain's unpopular right wing French Government. With my usual travelling companions John and Frank unable to attend, I set off after work on Thursday

afternoon for Abbeville alone, to meet Gary in his Vagabond and Richard Wariner in his Rans S6. Apart from a line of low cloud along the coast at Dover, which I overflew, it was an uneventful trip, and I heard Graham Hammond and Shirley leaving Abbeville in their Jabiru as I made my way in. Plans to continue on to Chartres, SW of Paris, were almost thwarted when I had to change a tyre, which thankfully was the same size as the micro-lighters use, but with Gary's assistance this was achieved quickly and we made Chartres by about seven in the evening. No room at the inn though so we had to camp.

Friday was a bit grey to start with so we didn't push off until about eleven, but other than it being a bit murky around Orleans, we had a good run to Vichy, where Karl Martin had landed in his RV6 just half an hour or so earlier having flown direct from Farthing Corner in just under three hours.



*The Mignet Pou de Ciel concept is still popular in France. This Pou derivative was a single seater with VW power.*

Unfortunately the weather in the south of the UK and northern France was poor on Friday and prevented many people from making the trip, and ultimately had an impact on the number of visitors to the show. My guess is that there were half

the 1000 anticipated aircraft in attendance by Saturday evening, which was a shame because the organisers had gone to a lot of trouble to provide reasonable facilities this year. Nonetheless there was still plenty of interest, with a number of one-off designs and such luminaries as Michel Colomban, Jean Delemontez and Chris Heinz in attendance.

It has become our usual practice to leave the Rally late Saturday afternoon and stop en route for home at an interesting town, and this year we dropped into Avallon. Nice hotel, excellent restaurant, and a lovely old town with ramparts and well preserved old buildings. Well worth a visit, and you can walk from the airfield into town in about twenty minutes.

We came home via Abbeville on Sunday, up the eastern side of Paris this time, and apart from blustery winds from Abbeville onwards, and a bit of cloud on the Channel coasts, we had a good run home. Hopefully the RSA will make Vichy its home for a while, it is a nice part of the country and an easy run from the UK. This is the first time the event has come before our own Rally, so let's hope it's our turn for the best weather this year.

## Flapper Makes History

I picked up , I don't know if anybody else reads the Toronto Star but on the 9<sup>th</sup> July at 7.19 am aviation history was made when an ornithopter known as the Flapper made the worlds first recorded flight of 14 seconds by a manned flying machine with flapping wings. The designer James DeLaurier

was delighted as he congratulated test



pilot Jack Anderson even though a cross wind put the machine on its nose after the 14 sec 2 meter altitude flight eclipsing by 2 secs the Wright Bros first flight. The jet powered craft looks like a cross between between a kind of conventional plane and a Canada Goose . Another of Leonardo Da Vincis principles proven although I can't see it getting past PFA Engineering.

### **Congratulations !! It's a Boy**

Well done to Mark Balding and Mandy who have successfully got to know each other and beget in the biblical sense a 7lb 10oz bouncing baby boy who has been named Christopher. I understand that mother and baby are doing well but Mark you did look a little phased the other night but worry not it only gets worse before it gets better! Both have also recently moved house together I hasten to add so we all wish you the very best and enjoy.

You know, I spent a fortune  
on deodorant before I  
realized that people didn't

### **Eastbourne Airborne Thursday 17th August 2006**

Arrangements are firming up on the proposed PFA Aeroplane fly by as part of the Eastbourne Air Show so if you fancy taking part please contact Steve Solley on 07836 653257 who is coordinating our Strut participation. This is not a formation fly by but aeroplanes will be dispatched at intervals to ensure separation at the point of display. As I say contact Steve for the full SP but if you are planning to go point of assembly will be at Deanland and you are advised to check in POOLEYS for procedures at the airfield. By the way Austers are acceptable!

### **Strut Aeroplanes**

It has been a while since we have done anything on Strut aeroplanes of which I know we have quite a selection and although we have drawn attention to members projects some have now come out of the project stage and are flying .It would be good to update the fleet database, plus the fact it would be good to feature some photographs in the newsletter together with a potted biography of the owner/builder/pilot(s). Lets 'ave 'em so we can let the wider membership see your pride and joy.

### **PFA Flying for Fun—Volunteers**

You will have heard the clarion call at the last Strut Meeting, in the Newsletter and indeed our sister publication Popular Flying for volunteers to man the gates selling tickets and I know there was a fairly positive show

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of hands so if you could let Brian Hope know, contact details on the back of this newsletter or in PF he would be pleased to take details and assist him to organize a roster to enable a fair share of duty.

**And Talking of FFF**

Bob Chequer one of the unsung stalwarts and supporters of Flying For Fun who spends an inordinate amount of time behind the scenes setting up the unofficial website of the event has advised that this will again be up and running for the event. Almost without exception if you have flown in your aeroplane or other classification of aerial carriage it will be featured on the site which can be found at [www.kemble.flyer.co.uk](http://www.kemble.flyer.co.uk) so look it up either during or after the event.

**I thought about making a fitness movie, for folks my age, and call it "Pumping Rust."**

**Dates for your Diary**

July 22/23 Scout Camp  
 July 27 BBQ at EGTO  
 August 16 Eastbourne Airshow  
 Aug 31 Dinner at EGTO  
 Oct 1 Abbeville Fly-Out