



September 2006

SKYWRITINGS

Newsletter of the *Mid Kent Strut* of the



Mike's Mutterings

Mike Negus -
Editor



Exciting Talks arranged For the Autumn Meetings

Summer is almost over and we are in the season of mists and mellow fruitfulness. Your committee has been working hard to try to provide you with a series of interesting and informative meetings in the period before Christmas.

The September meeting will be a talk by Neil Foreman on building his Rotorway Executive Helicopter. The PFA do not have a remit to deal with helicopters and they must therefore be constructed under the direct supervision of the CAA and when finished will have a CAA permit. No doubt there were many trials and tribulations during the build



A Day at Little Gransden

See Inside for the Full Story

and it will be interesting to compare the two systems. Start time is 20:00hrs as usual.

The October meeting will see a visit by Roger Hopkinson from the PFA. Roger is Chairman of the Executive Committee which is responsible for setting policy matters for the Association and individual members of the committee do a tremendous amount of work in ensuring the continuance of our flying rights. The excellent paper on Mode S in answer to the proposition from the CAA is only one of those items. If you have not read the paper it is available at <http://www.pfa.org.uk/modeS.asp> No doubt Roger will enlighten us with his thoughts on the future of the PFA.

The November meeting sees a visit by Mike Turner for a presentation on Airspace Incursions. The talk will be fairly wide ranging on the subject of CAS infringements. The scale of the problem, their effect in busy airspace, what happens after an infringement has taken place, advice on how to avoid infringing and also the best course of action if one does infringe. It will include some radar replays of actual infringements. You will be encouraged to be interactive so it should make a very interesting evening. Mike is an air traffic controller at The London Terminal Control Centre where he is valid on the Heathrow Approach positions and also used to do Gatwick Approach. He is also an ATC instructor and examiner and a current PPL (and PFA member) flying out of White Waltham and Blackbushe. He has owned shares in a J3 Cub and a Chipmunk although is shareless at the moment.

Your Village just called....Their idiot is missing

Little Gransden Charity Fly - in

Little Gransden has hosted a charity fly in over a number of years for the "Children in Need" appeal in support of the BBC TV event hosted by the ever genial Terry Wogan and Gabby Roslin. Interestingly it would seem that despite being one of the major events in terms of organisation which is not to belittle all other efforts, smaller or otherwise, this fly in never gets a mention.

Paddy and I were looking for somewhere to go on the weekend and toyed with the idea of going to Basingbourne, which was subject of another charity fly in hosted by the local Air Cadets. Basingbourne was subject to a glorious history during the last unpleasantness when home to the 8th Air



Force heavy bombers such as the B17, and post war ultimately ended up as an army base. Our old chum Martyn Snelling and family have a house backing on to the airfield so we thought it might be feasible to land somewhere usually inaccessible and pop over the fence for a cup of tea. The latter clearly was not going to happen as we discovered on meeting Martyn at F.F.F. he was going on a boating holiday during the time in question, but nonetheless Basingbourne still sounded an attractive

proposition so we thought, pop into Little Gransden and then to Bassingbourne literally a couple of miles to the east would be OK and then on to somewhere else.



For once the day dawned bright and reasonable, cloud base steady at about 3000 feet but a north wind which gave a crosswind take off at the strip inevitable so picking up Paddy at Rochester was a given. Of course the natter and tea factor came in and by the time we had fuelled and checked with our destination time had marched on. Little Gransden had said that arrivals would be accepted up to and no later than 12.30 - 12.45 as the airfield would close to incoming at 12.45 for the air show. Having the two of finally emplaned at Rochester we took off and readily became obvious that with a headwind component and the GPS showing a groundspeed of 65 - 70 knots, and the diversion around Stan-

**Don't forget that the
September Meeting is
a Talk at the Golf
Club**

stead our arrival would be somewhat later than planned. No surprise there then.

Visibility was absolutely superb and as Little Gransden hove into sight the proximity of both Bassingbourne and the gliding field to the north became obvious and care was taken in avoiding overlying and clashing with the gliders and tugs who were taking off in our direction. An uneventful circuit and landing led to us parking alongside the run way alongside half a dozen recent arrivals, spamcans various, Stearman , Cub and the like before we went to book in.



I was not prepared for the scale of the event which I assumed to be more of a fly in but this was more of a mini Biggin Hill with attractions for the paying public taking the shape of all sorts of stalls and refreshment facilities and gatherings inevitably of vintage and veteran cars, motorbikes and steam engines. Truly a country fair feel and atmosphere.

The Line up of aeroplanes was very mixed ranging from the heavy end represented amongst others by Rob Davies and Maurice Hammond with their P.51's and the Peter Vacher Mk1 Hurricane last seen at F.F.F. right down to the Tiger Club Turbulent Team. Given the time of our arri-

val and the bother of re-fuelling to get away before the field shut we elected to stay for the show and were not disappointed.

Spirited performances by the Mustangs with a very capable display from the Hurricanes and an evocative fly past and display from the BBMF Lancaster with a tribute and dedication by the local British Legion to the memory of fallen comrades, from Bomber Command added poignancy to the proceedings. Things lightened up by the Tiger Club display of balloon bursting and flying under "goal posts" with elements of the "flying circus" comprising a Chipmunk, Tiger Moth, Jackaroo and an Auster performing similarly to the Turbs but in close proximity, it was very spectacular. Aerobatics from Chipmunks, Yaks and a locally based Extra along with other eclectic types old and new finishing with an RV4 display that concluded an interesting afternoon.

Fellow Strut Member Richard Warriner was also present (not in the display) we having bumped in to him at various times when we faced a conundrum of how to extricate the aeroplane in order to leave, as we had to re-locate before the display and they were rather hemmed in. We should not have exercised ourselves over it as there was no great problem and all aeroplanes were dispatched efficiently and within half an hour we were on our

A fine is a tax for doing wrong. A tax is a fine for doing well.

way, this time with a tail wind component all was well until our checking the fuel level over the Thames, we appeared to be running too low despite a physical check on the ground before we left. Common sense told us that we had gas in the tank. Prudence prevailed so in case a go around was required back at F.C. due to the crosswind we felt obliged to land at Rochester. As it was after hours and no fuel available we elected to picket down and return to Farthing corner during the week.

Talking to Richard he had been to Little Gransden to the charity fly in before and could see the attraction. So if this is your gig you could do worse than put it in your diary for next year and help "Children in need" into the bargain.

Hanger Dance, Rochester

A number of strut members attended the Hanger Dance led by the John Miller Dance Band and what a good evening it was. The weather outside was warm and balmy which made things in the hanger comfortable and a very convivial time was enjoyed. It was good to see the large numbers of people throwing themselves into the 1940's spirit with a variety of the three services being represented in uniform together with our American allies, although the gentleman in full Luftwaffe dress uniform complete with jackboots with Oberleutenant rank looked a bit uncomfortable at times. Some of the life jackets sported by the wannabee RAF Fighter pilots looked a bit

Change is inevitable, except from a vending machine.

Virgin Atlantic rather than Mae West but who cares about such things.



Catering was good, the bar not overly expensive and the band superb. Best of all £700.00 was raised for the Kent Air Ambulance. Well done to Rochester for the organisation and we look forward to next year.

Eastbourne Fly By

Good reports have filtered back on the fly by and apparently we had good commentary as the aeroplanes went past the crowd so the point was made. The feeling in the camp is we will probably be invited to do something next year, so hopefully this will come to pass and we can get an increase in numbers over the eight who participated.

August Dinner at Rochester

A disappointingly low number of people turned up for the dinner, which was a pity as the girls put up a good standard of catering and considering it included a glass of wine was very good value. Nevertheless those of us who went enjoyed an excellent evening of badinage with our fellows and we look to a better level of support next year. Thanks to Rochester Airport Café staff for a smashing night.

Dover Coast Guard Visit - 20th October, 1400 hrs.

The 20th is a Friday and potentially there are 12 places available. Mark Balding has been in touch with Spike Hughes, the coordination manager at the rescue centre and as such will offer a fascinating insight as to the operations and working of the unit. Whilst not strictly an aviation facility for those of us who fly the channel these will be the chaps responsible for coordinating a rescue should a ditching ever occur therefore I suspect the facilities offered will be of more than a passing interest. Remember the places are limited so please contact in the first instance Mark on mbalding1050@yahoo.co.uk, or through any committee member, details on the back of this newsletter.

Air Cadet Fly In, Rochester Airport, Sat 14th October

Following our successful weekend flying the Scouts at Pent Farm attention has turned to the local Air Cadets who benefited in the past from the Young Eagles event and as a spin off we took a decision to offer a limited flying experience to the Air Cadets as their opportunities again are fairly limited. Arrangements are now in place at Rochester and a number of members have offered their aeroplanes and time, however we still need several more. If you feel altruistic please let Derek Browning know.

Abbeville Fly-Out

We are holding our ever popular fly out to Abbeville for lunch on the 1st Oct

and those of you that have been before will know how enjoyable it can be. For those who have not ventured across the channel, your committee is very keen that every help should be given to those who are a little unsure of what to do and how to do it.



A flight plan will be needed and proper permission obtained for customs. A specimen flight plan is enclosed with this newsletter and has to be faxed to Heathrow FBU on 020 8745 3491. If you do not have a fax machine you can phone them and dictate the information to them on 020 845 3111.

If you would like to speak to a “mentor” to help you, please give Derek Browning a ring (contact details on the back page) and he will put you in touch with an appropriate person.

A Piper Fly-in - In a Jodel!

For years Frank Rothera has suffered the indignity of being dragged off to Jodel fly-ins in his Piper PA22 Colt, the ulterior motive of course being that John Dean and I had rather hoped he would see the error of his ways and buy a Jodel himself. Thus far he has failed to see the light, in fact worse still he is fighting back and

decided to drag us off to a short wing Piper fly-in. It was our turn to play the bridesmaids.

John somehow wangled his way out of it, but I wasn't fleet enough of foot and a couple of weeks ago I found myself with Frank and Graham and Shirley Hammond (Jabiru) en route to Le Plessis Belleville on the north east corner of Paris. We routed via our old favourite of Abbeville for Customs, and then took the low level (max 1200ft) route down past Creil, following the high speed train route. Overshooting the destination wasn't an option as it meant you'd be mixing it with the jet traffic going into and out of Paris Charles de Gaulle.

Fortunately it wasn't a problem, and we landed to find a half dozen or so Pipers, mainly Colts and TriPacers, already littering the field. Le Plessis has a number of ex pat Brits in residence, and they and the locals made us very welcome. A BBQ was laid on for that evening (Friday) and we had a most entertaining evening before retiring to a local hotel. This was a relatively easy decision as the forecast was pretty poor, and thankfully sufficient room was found in the hangars for all the visiting aircraft.

The plan for Saturday had been for a low level flight around Paris, but the poor weather persisted and we were all shuttled down to the Musee de L'Air et de l'Espace at Le Bourget instead. A real treat, though the best

The things that come to those who wait will be the things left by those who got there first.



Exhibit at the Le Bourget Museum

aircraft in the collection, the prototype Jodel D9, was not on show! After the visit we went to a local Moroccan restaurant for couscous, something which, I have to admit, I wasn't particularly enthralled about. However it turned out OK and I rather enjoyed the meal.

Back at the airfield a group from the UK Aeronca club had arrived and we launched into yet another BBQ, we certainly didn't go hungry on this trip. Next morning we bade farewell to our new

friends and made the low level flight down the eastern, southern and western sides of Paris before heading off back to Abbeville and home. Sadly the weather was not good enough to see much of the Parisian skyline but it was good practice for a future foray.

Literally a day or two after we got back, I heard of a 60th Anniversary Jodel fly-in to Le Bourget, where M. Jean Delemontez, now well into his eighties, will be present. This is an opportunity not to be missed and I

Light travels faster than sound.
This is why some people appear
bright until you hear them
speak.

The shin bone is a device
for finding furniture in a
dark room.

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and John have registered our intent to attend. It may well explain the absence of the D9, perhaps it is being tarted up for this event. Fingers crossed for fair weather so we can get back to the norm - Frank coming to a Jodel fly-in. This time though he'll have to leave the Colt at Lognes and jump in with me for the short hop into Le Bourget.



Piper Colt

Dates for your Diary

Sept 28	Talk on Rotorway Helicopter
Oct 1	Abbeville Fly-Out
Oct 26	Talk by PFA Chairman
Nov 30	Airspace Incursions