



September 2006

# SKYWRITINGS

Newsletter of the *Mid Kent Strut* of the

POPULAR  
**flying**  
Association

**Mike's Mutterings**

Mike Negus -  
Editor



## A Postcard from a Strut Member in the USA

Hi Mike,

I came here to Minden-Tahoe with a Bronze badge, gained in Arizona and Florida last year, so there were lots more FAI awards to get for altitude gains, distances and duration.

Luckily, the weather conditions were good, with strong thermals and cloud streets. During my first few solos I managed flights of five hour duration, 50 km distance and height gains of



*Karl at Minden-Tahoe, Nevada*

**October Meeting - 26th October**

**Don't forget that we have the Chairman of the PFA coming to address us at the Golf Club at 8pm.**

[www.midkentstrut.freemove.co.uk](http://www.midkentstrut.freemove.co.uk)

1000 and 3000 metres. With a flight logger and an official observer I had done enough for a Silver badge and done two out of three tasks towards a Gold badge.

Great stuff I thought, apart from the serious low temperatures at high altitude, this looks promising. With these conditions, ten days remaining, a bit more practice with oxygen systems and thermal gear, there was a real possibility of getting cross-country Gold (300kms). Maybe I could have a go at a Diamond altitude gain (5000metres) in wave, for which Minden is famous.



Then the weather changed. The next two days flying were cancelled due to high winds, 50mph and greater with altitude - enough to scare the instructors. Thereafter, the cloud streets disappeared and blue thermals were small and tricky to find in mid afternoon only. With weak westerly winds, wave never appeared. I lacked local knowledge of hot spots and resorted to flying different types of single-seater glid-

**Those who live by the sword get shot by those who don't.**

ers including an LS3, LS4 and Grob 102. I had many enjoyable flights exploring the 10,000 foot Pinenut Mountains, 12 miles away, but no attempts at long distance flights or the remaining Diamond altitude gain.



Many flying hours later I was none the closer to more badges and left promising to return next year during the high summer season. In all, I logged 40 hours in four types of aircraft and had a great time with other foreign pilots. Local restaurants run by a long-standing Basque community provided an interesting difference from ubiquitous US food outlets.

Regards  
Karl

### Last Months Talk - Rotorway Helicopter Building

I really felt for the bloke after listening to the tale of his attempt to master the inner workings of the C.A.A. in trying to get the paperwork approved to enable test flying the Rotorway Scorpion he had been building with a great deal of care to produce a wonderfully finished product which was well illustrated by the slides shown at the meeting. There the project has stalled despite languishing at Stanstead for a con-

siderable time awaiting this approval. Neil Foreman, for it was he that is suffering owns a kit car business and the similarity in car and aeroplane building has been drawn before in our sister publication 'Popular Flying' in the issue publicising kit cars, which attracted criticism from some members at the time. The fact that Neil is a qualified helicopter pilot and builds cars and latterly a helicopter goes some way to corroborating the theory.

His experience was of interest to Bruce one of our members who is building a similar machine and this will hopefully coming on stream in the not too distant future. As Neil's father, also present said, his son would have been quicker building an aeroplane and given his dad is an ex Hurricane pilot he is probably biased but probably right although some members with experience of PFA Engineering might draw parallels here. Anyway we wish Neil all the best and when news arrives of clearance for the test flight we will advise. Talking of the PFA this brings us nicely to the October Meeting subject matter ...

### **October Meeting 26<sup>th</sup> October 2006 - PFA Chairman Roger Hopkinson**

Roger is doing a Cooks Tour of Struts at this time and no doubt Mid Kent will be present in numbers to hear what is going on in and with the Association and of course you will be able to put any questions or comments to him following his presentation which I am sure will be very informative.

**If the shoe fits, get another one just like it**

### **C.A.A. Safety Meeting Staplehurst Village Hall 9<sup>th</sup> November 2006**

Graham brought to our attention that the above evening will take place if you are so disposed full details can be obtained from Mary at Headcorn Aerodrome details I am afraid unavailable to me but no doubt easy enough to find. Always interesting and well attended so suggest you find out earlier than later.

### **Final Word on Eastbourne Airborne**

Steve Solley received a very complimentary letter from Eastbourne Council complimenting the Strut contribution and extending an offer to participate in next years show which I am sure we will take up this time weather permitting with greater numbers.

### **Christmas Dinner at the Golf Club 9<sup>th</sup> December 2006**

I know, I know we are just leaving summer behind and entering the season of mellow fruitfulness but with the shops starting to stock Christmas goodies in earnest and street decorations beginning to make an appearance it will soon whiz round. A debate was held in Committee on the format and venue for this years bash with several variations on the theme propounded however we are returning to the Golf Club and enclosed is the menu and booking form. We are throwing the evening open to other factions at Rochester, PAFRA and the Microlight Club to see if they wish to join us and early indications are there will be some take up. Some of our Members are with PAFRA

anyway so it is a logical step. We are asking for a £10 deposit per head and this year we are doing it all for a very reasonable £19.95 per head so put the date in your diaries and pass your deposit to any committee member.

### Wedding of Mark and Mandy

We are pleased to offer our best wishes and good luck for the future to Mark Balding and soon to be Mrs. Balding on the 19<sup>th</sup> October as they have decided to tie the knot. Destination of the honeymoon unknown therefore opportunity of an apple pie bed passed.

### Regret

It is with regret to report that Brian Hopes Mum died on the 14<sup>th</sup> October. Brian has been extremely supportive of his Mum since his Dad died several years ago and those of us who knew them over the last couple of decades saw a devoted couple who quite often popped up at various Strut events bringing their own sense of humour. Brian being the butt of some of it much to the amusement of anyone in earshot. We send condolences to Brian and his family on their sad loss.

### Stoneacre Boys Club Clubhouse

We've finally got a new HQ. Those of you visiting Farthing Corner were until

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

recently entertained in the old caravan that has been there for the last 20years and thanks to a tip off from Graham Hammond, Frank Rothera arranged the purchase and delivery of the new one and what a grand piece of accommodation it is too.



As this is the meeting place of the committee it currently has a double function and will no doubt serve us well in the future as well as being a useful bolthole should a row with the old lady dictate a short absence from the marital home! Thanks to Frank for organizing it and for those at FC for getting it hooked up to the mains etc.

### Plane Crash in Manhattan

No doubt everyone saw recently in the news about the baseball star that spectacularly crashed in to a Manhattan tower block and interestingly was reported in the Daily Telegraph as a Cirrus SR20 four place aircraft built in 2002. Not being familiar with the type I looked

**Change is inevitable, except from a vending machine.**

up on the website and discovered there are a number on the British register as well as the States of course. It looks a particularly handsome aeroplane but in this instance produced



the worst sort of publicity for our type of flying.

### Royal Institute of Navigation - Navigation Competition White Waltham 2006 - Winners

It wasn't Simon or !!! Oh well roll on 2007

### Magic Carpet to Marrakech

"Hi!" I said to the friendly-looking girl sitting next to me having breakfast in the July sunshine on the balcony at Waterford Flying Club. Ah, well, one thing leads to another .....

Tracey Birchall was with her husband Mike in the elegant Alpi Pioneer 300 G-YVES at the Waterford fly-in, they were looking for suggestions for somewhere to go in Ireland on such a sunny day, before returning to Upfield Farm.

"Um ... let's think ... how about Bantry?" I suggested - so off we both headed to EIBN, in G-RVIB and G-YVES.

Reader, you may wonder what this has to do with Marrakech - patience.

At Bantry we went into town for lunch, where we reminisced about past trips to faraway places. Mike mentioned a group from the "Flyer" forums who were discussing a trip to Marrakech, and I expressed interest in joining the trip. I had flown before in Spain and looked out over the Straits of Gibraltar, but I had not flown in Morocco and thought it might make a good destination.

Plans gradually took shape for a trip in mid-September. The timing wasn't ideal for me and I thought the Moroccan weather might be too hot, but on the other hand going with a group might be more congenial .....

I applied to the Moroccan CAA to fly a permit aircraft in their airspace. Getting no reply after several weeks, I wrote more urgently, pointing out that while their government had published ambitious plans for more tourism, and I was keen to do my bit and become a Moroccan tourist, my request for flight permission remained outstanding. As usual their eventual reply was followed by irritating requests for documents I had already sent.

The Spaniards to my surprise replied quite promptly this time. Things were starting to fall into place, I got the required permissions for Spain and Morocco (though not Portugal, which I had also requested in case of diversions - the Portuguese finally replied after I got home!).

As departure day approached my intending passenger pulled out due to an unfortunate family issue, so I was left with a choice - scrap the trip or go

alone. As it happened, one of my sons developed an educational crisis, and there was water leak in my attic, so I decided to delay and go a week after the others.

In due course the RV-6 G-RVIB left Kilrush into an uncharacteristic clear blue sky on the morning of 16 September, and went to Haverfordwest where I had given advance GAR notice. As usual, my sole reason for going there was to enable me to land anywhere else in the UK for weather, otherwise I couldn't give the 12 hours notice required to enable some functionary somewhere to check that I'm not a Bad Person (re the peculiarly-named Terrorism Act 2000). The forecast for the south coast wasn't too good, I decided to see if I could get to Dunkeswell, where I landed in the afternoon. However METARs/TAFs for northern France were still not good. I waited .. and waited ... no improvement so I gave up and got a B&B locally.

Next morning was foggy - very foggy. Eventually after lunch I departed in somewhat murky conditions and zig-zagged my way over/under/around low level clouds across the Channel to Caen. BI\*\*dy airway N866 impedes making cross-channel trips at a sensible altitude in VMC. Fuelled up at Caen, I was all set to depart when by strange coincidence G-UTSY and G-YVES, the original Marrakech group, arrived and we had a brief chat. By this time it was getting late, I decided to treat myself to a modest gastronomic experience at Bagnoles. So a brief flight to Bagnoles, where I checked in again at the idiosyncratic Hotel Beaumont and went off for my promised meal at the Café de Paris. Two days' flying and I had only reached northern France - Bah!

The following day I experimented with getting the weather via

<http://activitae.com/pda> on my Palm via mobile phone (GPRS) - providing the phone has a strong signal this works very well (how did I survive for so long without it?). Would I go west of the Pyrenees or east? Or over the top? West would be shorter, but I didn't have any weather data. So I chose Brive as the next destination, Brive makes a nice equilateral triangle with Biarritz (western route) or Perpignan (eastern route), and it has a meteo station.

Off to Brive then, flying gradually higher as the cloud tops rose as I went south and the day advanced. Brive's weather station gave me an excellent briefing, and indicated there should not be weather problems flying direct towards Madrid. Bravo Brive! So I chose Pamplona as my next stop, filed a flight plan, had a nice poulet rôti for lunch, and headed south west. Gradually I climbed up to FL105 south of Pau. Commercial traffic seemed to be curious about me, there was a regular conversation going on in French with the controller at Pau "*C'est quel type??*"; "*je crois que c'est un monomoteur!*"; "*Je l'ai au visuel!*"; etc. I didn't see much of the Pyrenees, cloud covered the ground below. Arriving overhead Pamplona at 8,000 feet at the same time as a commercial turboprop, the controller invited me to make an expedited descent - *Wilco* - a nice 150 kt dive - *no problema!!*

After a rather close encounter with a large bird of prey while leaving the

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





*RV6 at Cuatro Vientos Airport, Madrid*

Pamplona zone, the afternoon was spent grinding my way across northern Spain over various shades of dusty beige, towards Madrid. Readers may know much more about this than me, but if you look at the Madrid area chart the city is almost surrounded by "No VFR" areas, Danger areas, military areas, etc. Lacking local knowledge, the only clear way I could see of getting to the GA field (Cuatro Vientos) was to approach from the west. Doubtless whoever decided to leave some chinks of VFR airspace avail-

able west of Madrid was not concerned that there some pretty high mountains out there. The approach from the west is at about max 1000 ft agl (3500 ft msl) through a gap in the mountains, not an entirely comfortable place to be for an extended period approaching a large city; who sets these figures anyway? After 6 hours' flying that day, Cuatro Vientos was fairly friendly, if pretty commercial and busy, and my stay there was notable only for a tussle over whether my orange hi-viz jacket ("*orange*,

The 50-50-90 rule: Anytime you have a 50-50 chance of getting something right, there's a 90% probability you'll get it wrong.

Give a man a fish and he will eat for a day. Teach a man to fish and he will sit in a boat all day drinking beer.

**Committee Contacts****Co-ordinator: Derek Browning**

Tel : 01622 851273

Mob : 07885 298484

**Treasurer:**

John Dean 01892 822776

[john\\_dean@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:john_dean@tiscali.co.uk)**Membership Secretary:**

Graham Hammond 01622 891466

[g@twelveacrefarm.freeserve.co.uk](mailto:g@twelveacrefarm.freeserve.co.uk)**Newsletter Editor:**

Mike Negus 01634 364396

57 Ploughmans Way

Rainham, Kent, ME8 8LH

[mike.negus8@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:mike.negus8@blueyonder.co.uk)**Committee Members:**

Mark Balding 01580 851112

Brian Hope 01795 662508

Jaqui Clark 01795 830378

Bob Chequer 01634 668276

Stephen Solley 01304 374337

John Knight 01322 529079

Simon Pratt 07973 402986

[www.solleysicecreams.co.uk](http://www.solleysicecreams.co.uk)

colour of Spain's national fruit") was acceptable on the ramp - I was compelled to buy a green one so as to comply with "normas europeas" and blend in with all the other personnel. Ugh.

Flight plans are required for every flight in Spain. Doing battle with the flight planning computers at Spanish airports is another peculiarly Spanish skillset, along with bullfighting and flamenco. Airports with commercial traffic will not let you through security without an officially-stamped flight plan. Then I recalled what I should have been aware of, to file a flight plan from Spain to Morocco you have to give 24 hours notice (this is a Moroccan requirement, maybe it's to deter - er - illegal immigrants).

*Will he make it to Marrakech or will he be foiled by the bureaucrats? Final episode next month.*

**Dates for your Diary**

Oct 26	Talk by PFA Chairman
Nov 30	Airspace Incursions
Dec 9	Christmas Dinner at the Golf Club
Jan 25	AGM



MID KENT STRUT CHRISTMAS DINNER  
COBTREE MANOR GOLF CLUB  
9TH DECEMBER 2006

GARDEN VEGETABLE SOUP  
WITH CRUSTY RUSTIC BREAD

OR

DUET OF MELON WITH WILD BERRIES AND MANGO COULIS

---00000000---

ROAST NORFOLK TURKEY WITH BACON CHIPOLATAS AND HERB  
STUFFING

OR

GIGOT OF LAMB WITH MADEIRA JUS ROSEMARY AND  
REDCURRENTS

OR

COUSCOUS FILO BASKET WITH ROASTED PEPPERS AND PINE  
NUTS

---00000000---

TRADITIONAL XMAS PUDDING WITH BRANDY CUSTARD

OR

STICKY TOFFEE PUDDING WITH FRESH CREAM

OR

CONTINENTAL CHEESE AND BISCUITS

---00000000---

COFFEE AND MINTS

£19.95 PER HEAD  
( MUSIC INCLUDED )

£10 DEPOSIT TO SECURE YOUR PLACE

---

	Starter	Main Course	Pudding
Member :			
Guest 1 :			
Guest 2 :			
Guest 3 :			

Please Return Your Completed Slip and Deposit to Any Committee Member (details on the back of the Newsletter) or the next meeting.