



June 2007

# SKYWRITINGS

Newsletter of the *Mid Kent Strut* of the

POPULAR  
**flying**  
Association

**Mike's Mutterings**

Mike Negus -  
Editor



## Safety over Water

As the season really gets underway a lot of flying will occur over the Channel and other stretches of water where life preservers will be worn and John Knight has kindly updated and put in to words the recent talk from the RNLI so over to you John .....

Mike has requested that I write some follow up notes regarding the very interesting talk given by Guy Addington, Safety Manager for the South East of the RNLI [http://www.rnli.org.uk/rnli\\_near\\_you/east/stations/RamsgateKent/](http://www.rnli.org.uk/rnli_near_you/east/stations/RamsgateKent/), during the March STRUT meeting about the "Maintenance and Operating Procedures" of various marine safety equipment that was also applicable to aviation.



**June Meeting - 28th June**  
Evening Picnic & BBQ at Ripple, Deal.  
Fly or Drive In - See inside for details

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

It was clear from the start that Guy's knowledge on this subject was extremely comprehensive and he was able to present this subject in a very clear manner with a pragmatic approach that sometimes contained very chilling facts about his job with the RNLI. He was also able to demonstrate the practical use and maintenance of a range of maritime safety equipment in common use today.

Derek Browning kindly "volunteered" to assist with a demonstration on the practical use of a lifejacket that is typically used by STRUT members. Unfortunately I do not have any photographs of this event that involved Derek sitting there wearing an inflated lifejacket for at least 15 minutes, looking most uncomfortable and gradually changing as red as the colour of the lifejacket - well done Derek!

Both the talk and demonstration generated a lot more questions from the audience, which Guy was able to answer as well as pass on a lot more other very useful information to them. I am quite sure that there is still a lot more to be learned if we wished to pursue the subject even further and it would be nice to get feedback from STRUT members if they would like this to happen.

Some of the key points that I personally took away with me were -

Always use a lifejacket rated with a buoyancy factor of at least 150 Newton's for an adult to wear.

**I've got a free landing fee for there - that's where we'll go!**

Regularly maintain and check the life-jacket for any defects, such as defective stitching or tears, and if in doubt seek professional advice and repair or replace it.

Make sure that you fit the correct weight CO2 cartridge during maintenance or after use of the jacket.

Fitting "thigh" straps to a typical life-jacket, if not already fitted, greatly reduces the tendency for the jacket to ride up over the body.

Using a "Spray Hood" while immersed in the sea greatly reduces the amount of water swallowed by waves breaking over your body, which can cause severe discomfort and possibly secondary drowning even after being rescued.

Survival time if ditched in the English channel were a lot longer than I expected, typically 30 - 45 minutes, thus giving you a real chance of being rescued alive. My own personal view was that you had 3 - 4 minutes and that you were doomed to suffer from hypothermia from the moment that you ditched!

After ditching allow the first 3 - 4 minutes in the water for the body to adjust to the shock of being immersed in cold water. Guy says that the RNLI crews take cold showers at least every 6 months to condition their bodies for this kind of shock!

Make sure the jacket has fluorescent strips fitted to it as these can be spotted more easily during poor light conditions.

Keep up to date with training!

One of the more practical things that I

did after hearing this advice was to upgrade my Lifejacket, see the enclosed picture of the type of lifejacket that I use, by purchasing a set of "Crewmaster" Thigh Straps and a Spray Hood from a ships chandler. The total price that I paid for this upgrade was £22.75, and after hearing Guys talk I feel this was worth every penny. If you do fit these straps I recommend that you try donning the life jacket on in private for a few times as you may find that the jacket now takes a bit longer to put on, due to the thigh straps needing to be straightened out and adjusted when fitting the life-jacket.

This I learnt after a very embarrassing situation on the apron at Rochester Airport where it took me at least 10 minutes to put on my life jacket and keep asking if "my straps were straight!"

A company called "Crewsaver" runs a WEB site that I also found very useful for information on marine safety equipment. Their site can be found on <http://www.crewsaver.co.uk/Crewsaver> that you may also like to look at.

**Why, Why, Why do we press harder on a remote control when we know the batteries are getting dead?**

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



*Where is this Strip??*

### **June Meeting at Ripple Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> June commencing 6.30pm**

As notified the next 3 months sees our meeting venue departing from the Cobtree Manor Golf Club to other locations so watch this space!

The Golf Club gets very busy over this period and the bar in particular which can be a disruptive influence on our meetings hence the temporary location. Plus la change.

Steve Solley has kindly offered the use of his strip and facilitates down at Ripple just outside of Deal and whilst this may be perceived as a little trek for some of us members in North and West Kent it does give the members closer to the East end of the County a respite coming as they do in the other direction. Apart from that those who have been to Ripple know it is in a very attractive location and being close to the longest day it makes a nice run out for the evening by road or by air and also gives members the opportunity to take family or friends to ostensibly a more social gathering and with the prospect of sampling and purchasing some of Solleys world renowned ice cream

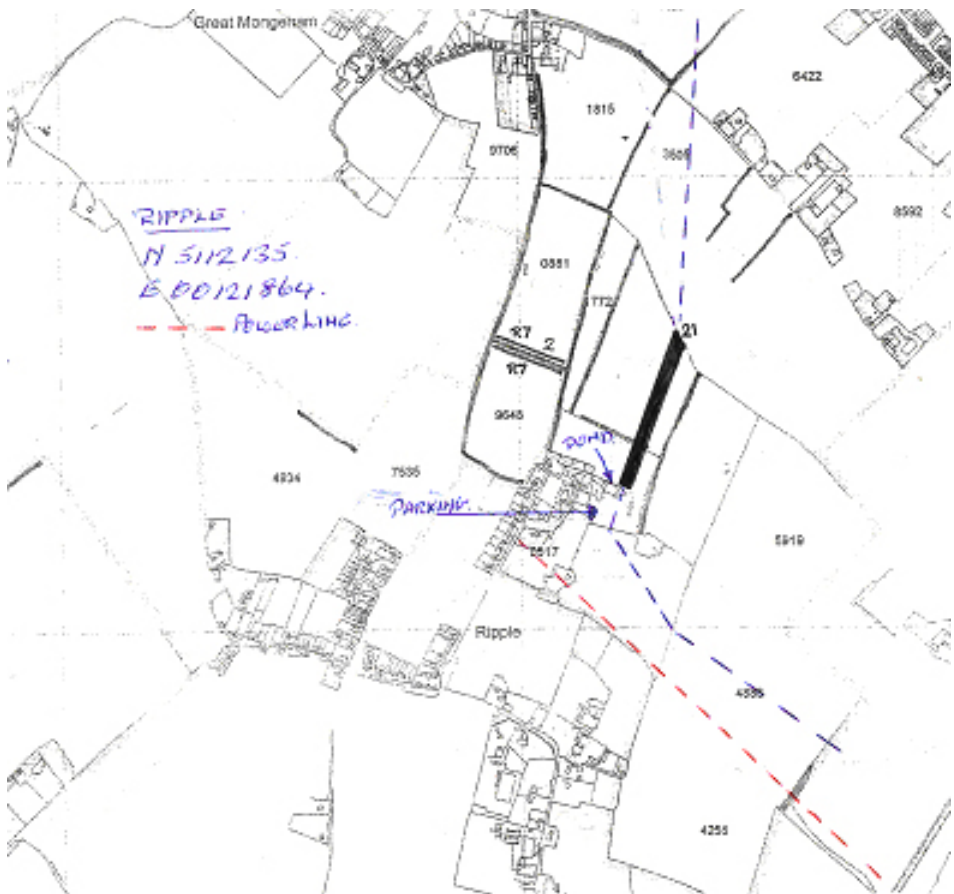
(available in many delicious flavours) what could be better than that. As I say this date is only 1 week past the longest day so assuming reasonable weather daylight should not be a problem.

For those with suitable aircraft and strip experience it is a delightful and easily located chance to go somewhere a bit different and details are published elsewhere in the newsletter. At the last event at Ripple 2 years ago 6 aircraft made it in so it would be good

to see a few more For those wishing to go by car directions are also given.

Steve has very kindly offered to lay on a Bar-B-Q so this really will be an evening to look forward to so see you there. Details of how to get there by road can be found at <http://www.solleysicecream.co.uk>

Please phone Steve on 07836 653257 for PPR if flying in. Sketch map of approach is below.



## Polly Vachers Airfield Fly Round 2007 -Peter Pilch Recalls a Similar Flight

*From the note in last months newsletter about the attempt by Polly Vacher to fly in ( and out of ) all of the 206 UK Airfields listed in the Jeppesen VFR Manual this prompted an e-mail from Peter Pilch about a somewhat similar attempt but all in one day for the 'Dawn to Dusk' competition from which we have had previous input from a number of other members on their attempts , however I think you will find the following again of interest by showing the innovation extracted from those who put the time and effort in to take part.*

Out of interest I flew 26 Airfields in one day in 1989. I had decided to take part in the Dawn till Dusk Competition that year and chose as my theme " **Flying the Alphabet**" The idea being to fly to and land at the 26 airfields between Dawn and Dusk on the same day.

We flew up to Andrewsfield in the afternoon of the 18th July 1989 in the Club Cheetah which had just arrived back from France after a 4 day trip. We gathered what weather info was available for the next morning which in those days wasn't a lot !! We slept in the Clubhouse which was brilliantly lit by a full moon, so our hours of sleep were fairly low.

We awoke at 0330 hours to be ready for a 0430 start. There was FOG we hung around til 0530 hrs when a call to Cambridge (the only local airport open) advised us it must be very local. With 270 hours logged flying time and

being reasonably current IMC we lined up and took off at 0559 hrs to break through a 100 feet a pocket of fog lying over the airfield.

By prior arrangement i.e. lots of phone calls and letters we had made prior arrangements with the following airfields Bourn, Cambridge, Duxford (no one there), Earls Colne, Framlingham, Great Yarmouth, Hadleigh, Ipswich then the July Strip of the Jockey Club at Newmarket, Knettishall, Little Snoring, Swanton Morley, Norwich, Old Buckeham, Peterborough Q wait for it, Old Warden ??? Why? Full of Queer Quaint and AntiQuated aircraft then Riseley Sywell, Turweston, Upper Heyford (very disappointed here after Many phone calls and letters one to America we were refused a landing EVEN after pointing out it was English Territory!(I had already landed there the previous year for a safety day!!)Velcourt, Weston sub Mendip. EXeter (?) Yew Tree Farm (way up in the Welsh Valleys) and then finally Weston Zoyland at 1939 hours

A long day a total flying time of 8.3/4 hours A very hot day unbroken sunshine. There is not much ventilation in a Cheetah we flew with the canopy slightly open, which helped. The biggest problem was the DI packed up at Framlingham so we flew on Compass and dead reckoning NO GPS in those days.

We submitted our log with photos and write up and attended the prize giving where we found we were 12th out of approx 35. But sadly so much depends on the log and its presentation these days. We handed over to the RAF Benevolent Fund £1400 which I collected as sponsorship. However we did get 6th, Place in 1990 and the long distance medal for a flight of 1600 miles and

flew Heathrow to Munich and Augsburg to Glasgow called "Flights for Peace-that failed.!! Thought this might interest you.

Peter P

*Phew, quite a trip !! Incidentally Polly started her attempt on the 21st May and was scheduled to complete on the 31st July and scheduled for week commencing 17<sup>th</sup> June was the Welsh leg so we watch with interest and remember it is all for charity. As an aside an enquiry was received about making Farthing Corner one of the stops however the organisers were informed if she did it should be scheduled as the last stop as whilst the Cherokee would get in it certainly wouldn't get out again at least not unless it was on the back of a lorry.*

*Anyway all the best to Polly she is certainly one helluva flyer and to Peter for his reminiscences, a feat no less for all that, I doff my cap to both.*



20:05 - PETER, MALCOLM AND "KV" ON THE GROUND AT WESTON ZOYLAND

## Last Months Meeting

Our resident A.M.E. Dr Bruce Alexander gave a timely talk on first aid and some tips on accident prevention slanted at operations on airfields and highlighted some of the risks and causes of accidents around airfields and aeroplanes. Some of the illustrations raised from the gruesome after effects to the lighter side of accidents more to machines than on these occasions to personnel.

Faced as we are with whirring propellers and rotor blades these are prime risks but dealing with fuel loading, hand starting and passengers unfamiliar with the environment leads to a potentially hazardous situation. Familiarity can lead to accidents and misinterpretation of actions by two parties used to flying as a team can be a potential area for concern as well as comfort.

Bruce highlighted the issues once an accident has occurred in the 'golden hour' of keeping the victim alive by preventing swift and heavy blood loss, the airways clear and the patient comfortable until professional assistance arrives. The importance of avoiding shock and with fractures keeping the limbs in the normal position allowing blood and nerve tissue not to suffer further trauma.

A reminder was also delivered on sur-



vival in a more hostile climate than the wilds of Kent or Sussex but as a proportion of our members range far and wide across Europe it is not hard to imagine this scenario could arise given the wide range of geography across this region. As always the talk was given with much proficiency laced with a generous dose of wit and humour to leaven an otherwise serious subject.

### Dates for your Diary

The PFA Regional Rally scene is now well underway with the Sywell Revival Rally kicking things off and by the time you receive this missive the Robin Hood Rally at Hucknall will also have taken place in June as has the Northern Lights at Wick, which reminds me I must ask Brian for a report as he made the long trek to the land beyond Hadrian's Wall !

But, still to come in the ensuing weeks July 1<sup>st</sup> the Old Warden Rally at the Shuttleworth Trust with the PFA Fly In with the Southwest Regional Rally on the 30<sup>th</sup> June to 1<sup>st</sup> July at Dunkeswell hosted by the tour de force Devon Strut contact Dave Silsbury on 01752 690538 or check their website on which you will find all the details and certainly looks like it will be well worth going, they are pulling out all the stops. The following weekend sees the PFA@Popham Fly In at the ever popular venue of Popham this being on the 7/8<sup>th</sup> July.

Slightly further afield and ahead the Jodel rally at St Omer will be on the 1/2<sup>nd</sup> September but if you can put up with the sight of so many Jodels in one place is well worth going being it is only an hour or so flying but they do put on a grand evening on the Saturday night with Moules coming out of your ears. Pity this clashes with the family hols,

next year then. Anyway all these events and others can be found listed in our sister publication Popular Flying.

From the Mid Kent Strut perspective in the months following and after June's trip to Ripple we will be having the ever popular Bar-B-Q at Rochester Airport in July on 26<sup>th</sup> July which will be presented by the staff at the Airport Café. Cost will be £5.00 per head and once again family and friends are welcome. Bring your own alcohol.

August 30<sup>th</sup> will see the last of our months absence from our usual venue when we meet at the Rochester Airport Café for a very informal meal again open to family and friends so we look forward to a pleasant Summer out. Lets hope the weather is a big improvement on the June we have experienced to date !

### Martin Sargeant

Martin as we all remember died when the Spitfire he was displaying at an airshow at Rouen in Northern France crashed following engine trouble. As reported in the Daily Mail on the 15<sup>th</sup> June an inquest reported a verdict of accidental death after hearing that he had been unable to use the designated emergency landing strip after the French authorities had allowed the public to populate the area during the display. The inquest was told by other pilots how Martin had tried to nurse the aeroplane back to the display line but failed to make it. He had undoubtedly put the lives of the people in his way and the aeroplane that he loved to fly in the forefront but because of poor management at the airfield paid the ultimate price.

**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.freeseve.co.uk](mailto:g@twelveacrefarm.freeseve.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

Nigel Read 01634 362375

Stephen Solley 01304 374337

John Knight 01322 529079

Simon Pratt 07973 402986

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

Martin was known to a lot of Strut members and was a generous host on the open evenings held at the car restoration business at Goudhurst that some of us were privileged to attend. His son Carl, who remains a Strut member paid tribute to his dad at the inquest which had taken 6 years to be held this blamed on the French authorities by the coroner who apologized for the delay. Hopefully this gives some closure to the family to whom we send all best wishes.

**The Name Debate***Hi Mike,*

*I support a change from "Strut" to another collective label. The name "Strut" does not capture the imagination nor is it a good descriptor of what is going on, viz flying. It is about as evocative as "Widget". It should be dumped.*

*I suggest either :**1. Flight or 2. Wing**Thanks for MKS newsletter.**Rgds Karl ( Martin )***Dates for your Diary**

Jun 28	Picnic at Ripple
Jul 26	BBQ at Rochester
Aug 30	Dinner