



September 2007

SKYWRITINGS

Newsletter of the Mid Kent Strut of the

POPULAR
flying
Association

Mike's Mutterings

Mike Negus -
Editor



Luscombe Rally - Oaksey Park Success

We had a good time at Oaksey at the Luscombe Rally which perchance was the first time for me, Simon having been twice before and for the first time for it seems forever this 'Summer' it appeared that we would have a clear run for the whole weekend. Our erst-while friends and colleagues the ever popular editor of our sister publication Popular Flying and stalwart John Dean also decided it would be worth visiting and with the prospect of wall to wall Luscombes to salivate over the pull was obviously irresistible.



Line up of Luscombes at Oaksey

September Meeting - 27th September 2007
Golf Club at 8pm
Talks on Summer Trips

www.midkentstrut.freemove.co.uk

Meeting at Farthing Corner about 11 am to discover Brian and John in their eagerness were already airborne we pre-flighted and were soon en route ourselves from Rochester as the wind was not favourable for a two up departure from the home base, the wind blowing a steady 15 kts from the west beat our over ground speed back and as Blackburne hove in to sight a discretionary stop to uplift fuel was made.

Soon back in the air we eventually slotted in to the circuit and declared our interest to try for the spot landing which we subsequently achieved a third place, remarkable as we weren't quite sure where the line was until late on finals.

We parked along with the other 22 examples of the breed and signed in catching up with Brian and John at the fine Bar-B-Q on offer. After sustenance we watched other arrivals come and others attempting the flour bombing competition before walking around the park to look at the spectacle of these very attractive aeroplanes assembled in two rows looking like birds of prey straining at the leash to get back in to their natural element ...magnificent!

John was down for the day and having sated himself, reluctantly left the spectacle and returned back to Stoneacre whilst Brian decided to stay and enjoy what the rest of the weekend had to offer. Whats this a ride in an AN2 and for a bit of cash the chance to have a pole round in the largest bi plane in the world, too much dude says Simon, I'm up for a bit of that and clutching his headphones he waited excitedly for the big Ant to come to a halt whilst passengers demounted. This is a familiar machine to those visiting Popham where it is based and as it was one of

the weekend attractions a number of people took advantage to have a ride. Brian and I were encouraged to have a pop at the flour bombing and having paid our entry money were issued with CAA authorized missiles whereupon the rules of engagement were explained and we were off. It must have been 10 years since last flying with Brian and I was impressed how his nerves held up considering, I think the sheer joy of flying in one of the most aesthetically pleasing aeroplanes on the British civil register diverted his thoughts to more pleasant things.

But on, on around the circuit lining up for the run both of us confessing this was virgin territory for this sort of thing but under directions from the bombardier and a last minute attempt at a 'Stuka' approach it would appear that our bomb undershot. Round again having got our eye in we once again lined up, once again our missile flew This time an overshoot.....Dambusters we ain't !! Oh well back to the burgers.

Simon returned enthusiastically from his trip in the Ant wondering what Harry would want for hangerage for one back at Farthing Corner , plus necessary mods to the hanger, pity the wings don't fold. Oh well lets put up the tent and have a natter with some of our fellow guests. We were shown a very

**A bicycle can't stand alone;
it is two tired**

**In a democracy it's your vote
that counts; in feudalism, it's
your Count that votes**

innovative mini camera small enough to poke up hollow spars and struts and all those other inaccessible places that need a look at from time to time. It was very innovative and is similar to the technology used when examining drain pipes and could also record to tape or disc for record purposes. The afternoon wore on and as proceedings wound down for the day we were treated to a flying display by Nigel in his concours G-BRUG flying some manoeuvres that I did not think possible in the Luscombe but not forgetting it is aerobic but not cleared as such in the UK however let us say it was a highly spirited and skilled display which rounded off the days flying.

And so to the evening and the consumption of several pints of 'Luscombe Ale' proving very popular and running out quite early, much like myself departing to the tent for a bit of shut eye but not before enjoying a very nice meal prepared by the unsung helpers which all events like this rely on so much. After a fitful nights sleep it was up for more food with a grand fry up, just the thing to get the day underway whilst watching more comings and goings. Eventually it was time to pack up and refuel for the trip back but not before Simon expressing his desire to have a go at the flour bombing so this time it was me acting as bombardier and off we went. Lining up on the target we let fly but the impression was an early release resulting in an undershoot so round again for another crack. This time was a slightly higher

approach this time for a toss bombing attempt but could not observe the final result so up to height and settle in for the cruise home with an anticipated tailwind, of course no such luck the wind direction having swung round during the night left us with a slow run home. Hey , but who cares we had enjoyed good flying, good company and good hospitality It doesn't get better than that !! (Apart from that when we met up with Bri back at F.C. he said our bombing efforts had brought a ripple of applause good effort or sympathy he would not say)

As a footnote despite the preference for fast cars James May of Top Gear is now the proud owner of a Luscombe based currently at White Waltham so can we expect a road test on the box one day ??

Down the PAN by Richard Warriner

A funny thing happened on the way to the Devon Strut fly-in at Watchford Farm. I'd decided to go via the Isle of Wight, as the visibility inland looked rather poor. As the Solent appeared through the haze, a pall of black smoke became apparent. 'Someone needs their main engine injectors overhauling'; I've been on ships like that myself.

As I got closer it became apparent that the smoke was coming from a motor cruiser which was on fire. There were plenty of yachts and motor boats around, but none getting too close. Probably sensible, anyone know how far an exploding propane cylinder will go? There was no sign of the RNLI or any other res-

The guy who fell onto an upholstery machine was fully recovered.

cue service, so it seemed like a good idea to tell someone. As you will know, London Info on a summer afternoon is complete mayhem. People calling coasting out, coasting in, turning here and there; people on board, what they had for breakfast, etc, etc... The only thing for it was to try a PAN call.

It worked like magic. The frequency went eerily quiet. "Golf Whiskey Kilo, pass your message". I told them what I could see; they asked me to remain overhead so that they could get a fix from Solent Radar. After several attempts, they passed me over to London Centre on the dreaded 121.5mhz. I was expecting a chorus of disapproval from the Guard Police, but heard no one other than the Centre Controller.

I held position over the boat and kept them informed as the fire spread from the stern to cover the whole deck. I suspect the crew of the motor cruiser had long since abandoned ship. Eventually the Controller told me that the Search and Rescue helicopter from Lee on Solent was on the way, having got a position fix. I was released to continue en-route. By the time I left the boat was starting to sink, which would at least put the fire out. It seemed to have taken for ever, but when the GPS track was down-loaded, it was less than fifteen minutes from the first call to being on my way again.

The Watchford Farm fly-in was good too.

Comings and Goings at Farthing Corner

The much travelled RV operated jointly by Peter Gorman from his strip

at Kilrush in the Republic and Karl Martin who kept it at F.C. when it was over here have decided to dissolve the partnership, Peter having bought out Karl the aeroplane will now reside in Ireland whilst Karl is looking at further opportunities. There now being an opening Gary Smith is now to base his RV at the strip so remarkably it is one in and one out.

Book Review : Kent's Forgotten Airfield Throwley 1917-1919 by Anthony J Moor

Reviewing books is not normally a feature of this newsletter but as we are a Kent based Strut I thought the local feel of this tome may commend itself to some of the membership, one in particular I feel. Some years ago and several Luscombes ago some repairs were being undertaken to our craft at the time by Alan Bennett-Turner and he was using a facility owned by Alastair Malcom at Throwley where he has a strip from whence he flew his Fisher Koala. I had of necessity to make the trip to Throwley on a number of occasions and on several of these Alastair and myself engaged in conversation about local airfields from the Great War period and found him not only very hospitable but knowledgeable and the old Throwley Airfield featured but he told me it was not on the same land as the current strip but about a mile away.

I happened to be in the Rainham Bookshop in Station Road, Rainham a month or so ago and chanced upon this book. Throwley rang a bell and so flicking through the pages revealed a stunning little history of an airfield, one of a number mostly extinct, created to defend the southeast against marauding Gotha's and Zeppelins raiding at night so

its existence really was quite short lived , however the book is packed with photos plans and facts about a very local piece of history. The research on things this local from the distance in history we are now is all the more remarkable and in soft back for £12.99 is value for money indeed.

If you are interested contact the Rainham Bookshop or the publisher Tempus Publishing Ltd at Stroud in Gloucestershire both of whom no doubt have websites or give me , Mike Negus a call.

**He had a photographic
memory which was never
developed**

Europa/Mid Kent Strut Fly - In Laddingford Saturday 22nd Sep- tember or Sunday 23rd Septem- ber weather depending

One that was missed that should have been publicised in the August newsletter was the Laddingford Fly-in to which we of the Mid Kent Strut have been invited. This is essentially a Europa Club do but generously Peter Kember and the crew down there have invited us and you should have received a flyer regarding this a couple of weeks ago so take advantage of the hospitality food and drink will be available and come by air or road and enjoy the day. Amongst the objects of the exercise is to give fellow members the opportunity to have a look at the various Strut members machines of which we are fortunate to have a variety and perhaps go for a fly



Laddingford from the Air

to see if it is of interest particularly with the crop of kit built there will be the chance to talk to the builders and see if it is for you. If you have any doubt on the weather affecting the date give any Strut Committee Member a call and we can advise so hopefully the weather will continue to behave and we will see you there.

Air Cadet Flying - Rochester Saturday 13th October

Now, we are calling for volunteer pilots and aircraft and it would be good if we could have some fresh faces for this one to undertake some air cadet flying on the above date for Julia's squadron of the ATC Julia as you know is one of the controllers in the tower at Rochester and is also a member of the ATC and has asked for some assistance. If you can do but one sortie it would be helpful to spread the load as there is generally a hardcore of people that put themselves forward and it is very rewarding as we all take it for granted but for these youngsters for a lot of them its what they join the ATC to do - fly. If you are able can you let John Dean know, contact details on the back of the newsletter and he will collate those interested parties or speak to any committee member and we can forward that on.

Last Months Meeting

Unable to attend myself , due to holidays, the last meeting away was at the Rochester Airport Café for an informal sit

**If you jump off a Paris
bridge, you are in Seine.**

down meal which I understand went very well with some two dozen members and guests coming for the evening. I understand there was somewhat a mix up on the times to assemble, put it down to pre holiday excitement. We had three new guests which may result in new members, we hope so.

Next Months Meeting - Back to the Golf Club Thursday 27th September 7.30 pm Talk on the 'Summer's' Trips

Several of our notable travellers are to give a chat on their experiences of this seasons trips which in some cases will be trips that I should have been on! Nonetheless I know there have been some interesting runs out and we can all benefit from the tips and experience of our more seasoned travellers. It promises to be illustrated as well on the lantern slidecertainly something to look forward to.

So make a note it's back to the ranch , Summers nearly over so normal service will be resumed , see you there .

Late Summer Fly Out to Abbeville Saturday September 29th (Sunday 30th if weather in- clement)

As is the custom of the last few years we hold a fly out to Abbeville as an end of season rite and has proved very popular dependant on weather there have been as may as twelve aircraft down to the other year at only one due to poor weather and Brian only

got there as he was coming up from a trip in France. The way the weather seems to have settled down over the past few weeks you never know we might just yet have a final excursion with bumper numbers.

Pupils flying high over their school.

Pupils from Hilltop primary school, Frindsbury, enjoyed a flying visit to Rochester Airport on Friday 13th July. The 12, year six youngsters were given a guided tour of Rochester Airport including MAP's (Medway Aircraft Preservation society) workshops and then taken on a flight over their school in Frindsbury. This was under Young Eagles scheme run by the PFA.

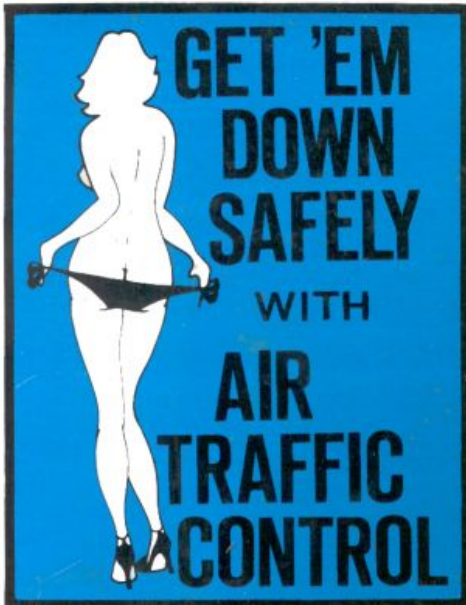
Headmaster John Allen said, "The children were absolutely delighted with

their flight. The looks on their faces said it all". Millen Corporation sponsored Phil Jones to pilot the DA-40. Derek Browning using a hired C-172. Unfortunately Medway Council's rules did not permit the other 2-seater aircraft to take part. We would like to thank all those who offered and made arrangements to support this event.

Following the children's flight Clive Denny was returning from a display at the Kent County Show Detling in the Spirit of Kent Spitfire, when Jim asked if he could return to Biggin Hill via Rochester as we had a school visit.

Mr John Allen added, "This was definitely the high light of the day. We are extremely grateful to all at the airport who made this memorable event possible".

The Young Eagles Certificates were awarded to the children during their last school assembly, where one of the children thanked the Headmaster on behalf of the others for such an enjoyable memorable day.



When she saw her first strands of grey hair, she thought she'd dye.

The short fortune teller who escaped from prison: a small medium at large.

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**Rochester Night Flying- 30th
October to 19th December from
18.00 to 20.00**

From the Rochester Newsletter the advice on night flying if you wish to keep your rating current there will be a full FISO and licensed service available reviewed on a daily basis according to weather conditions so if you wish to take advantage of this please contact Rochester direct for further info regarding fees and availability.

Rochester Airport Lease

There is just over a year to run on the current lease and negotiations are in hand but optimism is that a new five year lease will be negotiated on the current terms so we wish the Management Team the best of luck in their endeavours and the wider aviation community await the outcome with interest.

Dates for your Diary

Sept 27	Trips we have done
Sept 29	Fly out to Abbeville
Oct 25	Talk on Aerobatics
Nov 29	Ken Craigie from HQ
Dec 08	Christmas Party