



October 2007

SKYWRITINGS

Newsletter of the Mid Kent Strut of the



Mike's Mutterings

Mike Negus -
Editor



Young Aviators at Rochester Airport

An event that benefited from a window in the weather was the flying of some 28 Air Cadets drawn from Maidstone and Headcorn Squadrons of the Air Training Corps which took place at Rochester on the 13th October 17, 2007 and was organized by Julia the FISO at the Airfield who is also a NCO with the Maidstone Squadron.

We as a strut had been asked to help out with aircraft and pilots whilst the air cadets would deal with the admin side of things which in these



Loads of Admin as well as flying

October Meeting - 25th October 2007
Golf Club at 8pm
Talk on Aerobatics

litigious times inevitably requires a certain amount of paperwork. This starts with approval from the Kent Wing HQ to allow such an event, the cadets then have to have an approval form signed by a parent or guardian agreeing to a flight in a non service/commercial aeroplane. As PFA members when flying people on this type of event organized under the auspices of the PFA we are insured but we have also to have written authority from the parent or guardian on our form so that is two bits of paper. As Non PFA members were also involved there is a form whereby the pilots can be signed up as one day members thus satisfying the legal aspect on all counts. Pain in the butt but necessary all the same.

Access to their flying is usually restricted to glider flights at Kenly or air experience flights at the nearest RAF base which are some distance away due to the closures of Manston and West Malling. By this very nature flying experience is very limited so any additional opportunities are warmly welcomed. Chris Reynolds who has been our mainstay for a number of years organizing the Young Eagle events has taken his local ATC Squadrons under his wing so to speak and now arranges things on a local level so the Strut as a whole can count itself fortunate to have a pool of members willing and able to assist when called upon.

We duly mustered at Rochester to find the weather a lot better than anticipated which enabled a good turnout of aircraft with 4 seaters based at Rochester wading in including a C172, Cherokee Arrow, Cirrus SR22 amongst others and 2 seaters from Farthing Corner, Laddingford and Richard Warriner up from Sussex we managed to turn the

flying around in a couple of hours and everyone got to fly and from the timings had a pretty good run round. Last aircraft to arrive was a Rochester based Yak 18T 4 place tricycle undercart radial engine machine the pilot of which also offered his services but by then all the cadets had flown but he generously offered to fly the adult helpers and thus yours truly was able to take advantage and go for a fly.



Yak 18T

One of my companions did not have a PPL and thus he sat up front next to the driver whilst we two settled down in the back seat and put on our cans. It is a big machine and very spacious internally and were it not for the fact it was designed in a communist state it could rank as one of the great gentlemen aerial carriages. After lengthy checks at the hold acceleration down 02 was impressive as was the rate of climb but I suppose compared to the sedate performance of our 65hp Luscombe it was bound to be. Levelling out Hugh, but I

**Chaos reigns within.
Reflect, repent, and reboot.
Order shall return.**

am afraid did not get his surname, dealt with all the usual questions and is obviously delighted with the YAK most of all he admitted the look of it was a key factor, I know what he means. We had a very nice tour of East Kent and returned to Rochester and a jolly nice landing to finish which rounded off a pretty rewarding day for all. On behalf of the organizers thanks to all the pilots and aircraft for taking part and of course the adult helpers from the Strut and elsewhere. A big thanks to Rochester for waiving the landing fees which does help grease the wheels on these occasions.

Europa/Mid Kent Strut Fly-In at Laddingford - Saturday 22nd September

Fortunately the weather was benevolent on this occasion and Peter Kember and his associates put on a magnificent day complete with Bar-B-Q to which a number of strut members attended and with



the recent problem with the Europa seemingly sorted which involved a wing modification the number of type attendees was very gratifying. This mod is still working its way through the inventory as Nigel Reads Laddingford based example was undergoing work on the day of the



Europas lined up at Laddingford

fly-in however I was pleased to note that Nigel was able to bring the aircraft to Rochester for the air cadet fly-in held on the 13th October but only after his partner had chased up to Turweston by road to retrieve the new Permit in time. Being resident I asked Nigel for a report on how things panned out and he set out the facts as below.

Some facts, 17 Europas, 46 a/c in total both including residents. £400 was raised for Kent Air ambulance. There were 40 air experience



Nigel working on the Europa Mod

flights. Those flying in were either Europa Club Members builders/flyers, Mid Kent Strut or owners of the airfield such as the Miles Messenger which came from Biggin.

Furthest was probably from Wiltshire, nearest Old Hay plus of course the usual suspects from Farty (*Farthing Corner avoiding the colloquial. Ed*). This was the best turn out we have had and probably beat some regional flyins thanks to being lucky with the weather.

From my perspective, it had a very good atmosphere and made a very pleasant day out so thanks once again to the Laddingford 'Crew' and for Nigel on the update.

Pssst...Anybody Want A NPPL ?

By Karl Martin

I have three of them. OK, it took three attempts by the CAA to get one right. This was because a staff member at NPLG Ltd is "geographically challenged" ; Dublin Ireland was part of the UK about a hundred years ago, but not any more. I could have let it pass but imagine a ramp check in Wales "Don't you know your geography? This licence is invalid, boyo!"

This minor experience aside, I can recommend the NPPL for being an ideal licence for those who fly exclusively in the UK and or for those who have difficulty getting medicals to satisfy the CAA, FAA or other regulatory authorities. Many PPL licence holders migrate to NPPLs when the hassle of getting PPL medicals becomes too onerous in terms of medical tests, consultants etc and or expensive.

In short, according to the CAA, if your GP says you satisfy DVLA requirements

**Windows XP has crashed.
I am the Blue Screen of Death.
No one hears your screams.**

to drive a car you may fly solo, satisfy requirements for a HGV licence and you may carry a passenger. My GP charged me £20 for the medical paperwork (one ticked box and his signature). How much did you pay for your last medical? And for pilots under 65 years of age, it lasts 5 years.

Since inception, nearly 3000 UK NPPLs have been issued. EASA plan to have a European equivalent within two years, permitting flights throughout all EU air-space.

Contact Karl on flyerkarlmartin@aol.com for pointers in finding out more about the advantages and limitations of an NPPL and how to get one. PS - My spellchecker suggests NPPL should have an "I" as the second letter and an "E" at the end. Whatever next?

Next Meeting at Cobtree Manor Golf Club 25th October

Mr Tony Richards based at Headcorn formerly 'Utterly Butterly' driver as well as aerobatic competition flyer will be coming to give a talk on some aspects of what I am sure has been a fascinating career so definitely one to look forward to. Tony has a long history of aerobatics so should be well positioned to answer any questions on this aspect of flying so if any of you wish to find out more then make sure this date is firmly in your diary.

**The short fortune teller who
escaped from prison:**

a small medium at large

Last Months Meeting

Subject for the meeting for those unable to attend was trips made by members during the 'Summer' and encompassed diametrically opposed directions basically North and South.

First up to the line was our Hon Treas John Dean to give a very erudite account of the Stoneacre Boys Club (and affiliated members) trip to Corsica which was illuminated on the lantern slide in most graphic detail routing down through France and across the Med to the North of the island and then down the coast to their intended destination.

Unfortunately I neglected to take notes on the night so have quite forgotten where it was by the time I get round to the newsletter but it sounded nice. The return trip was direct to the French coast some 180 miles, too much for my nerves, but fascinating all the same. The redoubtable Editor of our sister publication Popular Flying, Brian Hope, next explained how he decided to fly North for the regional rally at Wick which is just about the most Northerly airfield on the U.K. mainland and is about as far in distance as Barcelona is to the South! As befell a lot of events this year the weather was not kind and kept numbers down but this did not deter our Brian and he arrived flying the Eastern route but returned via the Great Glen down the West coast to avoid the worst of the weather thus almost circumnavigating the U.K.

Final epic was down to Andrew Pearson whose Robin is based at Rochester and who teamed up with his chums to

fly to Morocco. Andrew left his aircraft in the South of France whilst the party flew on in a Cessna to their destination and this time they had decided to have a week site seeing so had hired a vehi-



Jamie Foreman

cle and guide who escorted them around the country and fascinating it looked. At the end of the evening it had seemed to whet the appetite of a number of our touring fraternity, Andrew being engaged in deep and meaningful conversation.

Thanks to our speakers for a most illuminating evening.

New Members

It is with pleasure that we welcome to the Strut three new members one of whom has been captured on film so that he can be recognized at the next meeting so first up is Jamie Foreman whose father Don, is one of our well respected PFA Inspectors with a long history in building in the composite medium. Jamie has recently gained his PPL after a long gestation a familiar story to a number of us but now finds himself at the crossroads whether to hire club, build or join a group and no doubt will be given all kinds of advice and help

from the sages within the strut.

Thomas Turner who operates as a FISO at Rochester and has a CPL with an interest in vintage aircraft and touring, you're leaning at an open door on both counts, recently joined as has Paul Smiddy who also flies out of Rochester and has an interest in a Glastar, more details please Paul. We have quite a number of mem-



bers who operate out of Rochester and the Strut does have a very good relationship with the Airfield Operators who are very supportive of activities held by us when using their facilities so it is always good to have more members from there. Anyway up a warm welcome to you all and we look forward to seeing you a lot more in the future.

Gary and The RV 9 Build

We have all been entertained in the past by Gary Smith and the several talks he has given to the Strut on building the RV 9 and the end result is there in the flesh

**Yesterday it worked.
Today it is not working.
Windows is like that.**

so to speak for all to see. One of Gary's other (numerous it seems) talents is building aircraft in miniature, anybody that has seen his scale flying model of the Vagabond will know what I mean and this and an encounter by Graham Hammond with the Maidstone Modelling Club gave an opportunity for Gary to give them a talk on building full size and thus it came to pass this month when several of us accompanied Gary to their meeting.

They, the modelers are a pleasant bunch and in many ways are kindred spirits operating at a more affordable level. I was amused at the end of the talk when someone retrieved an electric powered helicopter from its carry box and proceeded to fly it around the room of the Club where the meeting was held.

Gary of course gave an amusing and well illustrated talk which was well received and by the amount of questions leveled at him at the end he had obviously generated a high level of interest. Well done Gazza.

A Bit of Good (Overdue) News

Many of us will recall a very interesting and informative talk on the building of a Rotorway Exec by Neil Foreman some time back when the machine was to be transported to I think Stanstead where it was to undergo its test flying. Literally heard courtesy from Graham Hammond who was informed by Neil that the chopper had received its permit and was cleared for flight and Neil was undergoing conversion training. I gather he is delighted and rightly so this has been one protracted story and if you feel up to it Neil please feel free to update us

on what has happened.

Housekeeping and Forthcoming Dates for your Diary

November 3rd Rochester are holding a Fireworks Night and members of the Strut are invited. This is not a public event but by invitation only so I am sure if you contact the Airport they will advise on timings but you will be expected to bring along a few pyrotechnics as a contribution.

November 29th The irrepressible Mr Ken Craigie is due to pay us a visit for what is always an interesting evening particularly for those builders amongst us which gives a good opportunity to get info from the horses mouth so to speak and has proved a very popular visitor in the past.

December 8th Yes ...its Christmas, very nearly and time for our Annual Dinner and Dance so put it in your diary. Within this Newsletter you should have the booking form with payment details and of course the menu !Last year was particularly well attended so book early for what should be our premier social event. Coupled with this do it would be helpful if anybody has anything they could gift as raffle prizes for the night, we have in the past had a generous response from various individuals, no pressure there then!!

January 31st 2008 The Annual General Meeting . Your chance to listen to the annual report and question the activities of your committee, voting off any undesirables (me please, please) and putting yourselves up for election. I think we

have had a good year so far in general and it is not over yet and the ground-work has been laid for further interesting guest speakers on a variety of subjects.

Just to remind you there will be no meeting as such in December so the Christmas Dinner will be the last gathering of this year.

Strut Fly-Out to.....

By John Dean

Saturday 29th September was the day we were to have the fly-out to Abbeville but the weather decided it was not to be and the fall back of Sunday was instituted.

The day in Kent dawned with a beautiful blue sky but accessing the weather for Abbeville on Meteo-France indicated thick mist. At the airstrip, Martin, Gary (with Brian as a passenger) and I gathered and a phone call to the ATIS at Le Touquet told us that it was CAVOK there. However, Abbeville was improving but still unacceptable.

We decided to go to Abbeville in the hope it would improve but to divert to Le Touquet if it proved impossible to get into Abbeville.

Gary left first followed by me & then Martin. I had a good visibility all the way across the channel where the cloud cover became scattered some way below me at 3000ft. At this moment Martin came on the frequency

A grenade fell onto a kitchen floor in France and resulted in Linoleum Blownapart.

Acupuncture: a job well done

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asking Lille Info for an update on the weather at Abbeville. The answer came back that it visibility was 1800 metres and with 300ft cloudbase. Martin made an instant decision to divert to Le Touquet but I decided to carry on in the hope it would improve and anyway I was enjoying the flight. The cloud cover increased to broken and as I came to within two miles of Abbeville a large hole in the cloud enabled me to spiral down to try to get beneath it. Arriving at 600ft and still not below the cloud, I circled upwards and diverted into L2K. Shortly afterward I heard Graham Hammond in the Jabiru and Andrew Pearson in the Tin Robin also advising Lille of their intention to divert.

So it ended up that the five of us (Graham & Shirley, Martin, Andrew & I) having an excellent lunch in L'Escale with a delightful and uneventful flight back across the channel.

Dates for your Diary

Oct 25	Talk on Aerobatics
Nov 29	Ken Craigie from HQ
Dec 08	Christmas Party
Jan 31	AGM

MID KENT STRUT CHRISTMAS DINNER
COBTREE MANOR GOLF CLUB
8TH DECEMBER 2007
7.00 FOR 7.30

WINTER VEGETABLE SOUP WITH CRUSTY BREAD

OR

BAKED CRISPY CAMEMBERT WITH REDCURRANT CHUTNEY

OR

DUET OF MELON WITH BERRIES AND MANGO COULIS

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ROAST NORFOLK TURKEY WITH BACON CHIPOLATA AND HERB
STUFFING

OR

GIGOT OF LAMB WITH MADEIRA JUS ROSEMARY AND
REDCURRANTS

OR

ROASTED VEGETABLE CREPE AU GRATIN

---00000000---

CHRISTMAS PUDDING WITH BRANDY CUSTARD

OR

SHERRY TRIFLE WITH FRESH CREAM

OR

CHEESE SELECTION WITH BISCUITS

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COFFEE AND MINTS

£20.00 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.