



October 2008

SKYWRITINGS

Newsletter of the *Mid Kent*



Light Aircraft Association

Mike's Mutterings

Mike Negus -
Editor



YOUNG AVIATORS DAY

By Joseph Derrick Jnr

Many years ago as a young 14 year old and a proud member of 343 squadron Air Training Corps my first chance came to fly with some volunteer pilots from Biggin Hill. Unfortunately my Dad thought it was too risky so I was grounded for the next 20 years until I could afford to learn myself.

Being an eternal optimist, I am sure that had I learnt to fly as a youngster and become a commercial pilot I would probably have been working for Excel when they went under. When was your first flight? A commercial to Majorca with Dan Air or a flight



Nigel Read about to commit aviation in the Europa G- FLOX- with his Young Aviator

October Meeting

30th October 2008 - Cobtree Manor Golf Club - 8pm

John Thorpe from GASCo talks

www.midkentstrut.freeserve.co.uk

in a Tiger Moth from a sleepy grass field? It is one of those significant events that we all remember.

For many of us this pastime of ours is not just a hobby, but more of a passion and the opportunity to pass on one of the only things that a bunch of ageing, grey haired men are likely to have in common with teenagers is one not to be missed. About a 15 of us from various airfields over the county succumbed to the temptation and we duly presented ourselves at Rochester, to show these youngsters that there is still life in these 'old dogs'. We may struggle with the video recorder and maybe we don't know the latest shortcuts on Vista, but we like to think we can propel a machine into the sky and bring it back down again without incident.



For 36 young air cadets the events of 18th October 2008 will be remembered forever, not necessarily the date itself but the fact that this was going to be their initiation. What luck with the weather, wind virtually down the runway, good viz and a cloud base of over 3000 feet.

They had been assembled long before we arrived, each one waiting apprehensively for their name to be called. Did

they like the look of their Biggles version of Victor Meldrew? Which plane would they get? What would it be like in the air in one of these small machines that they were watching stream in one after another?

As the first of the cadets started to return to terra firma full of the elation of probably their most exciting experience to date, it was evident that the event was going to be a resounding success. (At 14 I would like to think that the most exciting experience of their lives was still some time ahead). Bit by bit we managed to wade through all 36, but with almost as much enthusiasm from the pilots as there was from the kids, it was no hardship. All those expressions of uncertainty soon turned to wonderment, a feeling I am sure that we all still feel from time to time.

As the admin team were so well organised, just after midday the mission had been completed, with certificates prepared.

Thanks to all the pilots and volunteers that took part, it is an event Julia assists us to organise every year. For



Strut Coordinator, Gary Smith and his "victim".

anyone with access to a plane and who would like to show off a bit to a totally captive audience, come along next year and feel the infectious excitement of youth, if only for a while.

Last Months Meeting - Brendan O'Brien

Well, we did so enjoy that didn't we! Brendan certainly brought with him those presentational skills that have served him so well on his TV and air show commentaries which I know has enthused a number of members to get some aerobatics in to their log books. Me I am not so sure, I had a go both with the Air Cadets, of which more within this issue, and with the RAF on various aerobatic sorties but came down on all occasions an unattractive shade of puce. I am told with practice this can obviously be overcome as Brendan ably demonstrated on the video clips and his presentation.

Behind his amusing slant on things of course there remains a serious undertone, by pushing your personal envelope in to areas that you normally would not be in ones level of experience and therefore competence is enhanced and if for no other reason aerobatics are a good thing. One good tip was never exceed

50% of your personal capabilities and if you find yourself in a situation where you are then retreat from it at the earliest opportunity!

Of course even the experts can come unglued and the reasons for this can be manifest but ego was cited as a classic when performing in front of ones peers, however an hour with Brendan flying in one of the varying types of aerobatic capable aeroplanes at his disposal on a lazy Summers day could be highly rewarding I suspect, who will be first in the queue ?

Next Months Meeting - John Thorpe GASCo Thursday 30th October 2008 7.30 pm

John is due to be with us to discuss flight safety and we all know this is a most important aspect of our flying so we will all , I am sure , look forward to listening with great interest to someone who has his finger on the pulse so to speak. For those of you who have not visited their website I urge you so to do and if you want to know 'what is GASCo' the description reproduced from there and published below encapsulates the aims of the organisation very well.



**There are two ways to
argue with a woman.
Neither of them work!**

About GASCo

GASCo was founded in 1964 to provide a forum in which all of the General Aviation organisations could meet to share safety information. There were only a few members in those days but today almost every organisation that represents those who supply, maintain, control, support, regulate and, most importantly, fly each and every kind of flying machine is a member of GASCo. They meet to share experiences and ideas for the improvement of flight safety. GASCo is a Charity funded by the member organisations, pilots and aviation authorities and have a direct interest in the role of GASCo Board.

In addition to the Council Meetings for the member organisations, GASCo sends its magazine *GASCo Flight Safety* free to all UK aircraft owners and flying instructors (and to others for a small subscription) and organises seminars and flight safety events

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As an example of what can be found the following items again reproduced from the GASCo website pick up on

**A dwarf, who was a mystic,
escaped from jail.**

**The call went out that there
was a small medium at large.**

matters that may not be generally known

406 MHz Replaces 121.5 Alerting

Satellite detection of 121.5 MHz ceases on 31st January 2009. Thus for detection you will need a beacon that has 406 MHz; which includes 121.5, used for homing by helicopters, lifeboats etc and be monitored by over flying aircraft. The 406 beacon **MUST** by law be registered with the Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon (EPIRB) Registry at Falmouth (phone 01326 211569). Aircraft 406 ELTs and PLBs must also be registered, it is free. Full details are provided by the manufacturers with the beacons.

Each beacon contains a 15 digit unique code which is picked up by a global satellite, the first step used by a UK Mission Control Centre in verifying that it is not a false alarm. They then phone the contact details (which can be several users) provided when registering. Another satellite system will plot the position of the signal.

Depending upon the position and passage of these satellites, the alarm will be raised in between 10 minutes and 3 hours. Thus you should have a life raft and/or immersion suit if over water. The beacons sold in this country are coded 232 for UK, so if you buy one from

**There are two rules for
success in life:**

**Rule one: Don't tell people
everything you know....**

abroad it will need to be re-coded noting that some cannot be re-coded. Why has all this come about, because 98% of 121.5 alerts were false.

Briefly, as from 1st January 2009 all aircraft flying in French airspace **MUST** have either an ELT or PLB able to transmit simultaneously on 121.5 and 406 MHz and be registered with a designated authority. Passengers must be briefed on its use. A number of aircraft including amateur built, orphan, kit built, microlights, restricted C of A vintage aircraft and gliders are exempt. The full details can be checked in French AIC 10/08 available in English via this link www.sia.aviation-civile.gouv.fr

Note that other countries in Europe may have similar regulations, it is the pilot's responsibility to check. On the AIS website click on Links and scroll down to 'Eurocontrol Web Links to Foreign AIS' and click Europe. There is then a list of countries. You may need to inhibit your pop-up blocker.

Help Swanwick D&D Cell

The Distress & Diversion Cell at Swanwick Air Traffic Control Centre have mentioned that they are not getting enough practice PAN's from GA pilots. They need to validate new staff members and your calls would be much appreciated.

The membership reads like a who's who of aviation organisations and as you can see from the above information this is a website well worth saving to your files for checking out on a regular basis so don't miss this important meeting.

Future Meetings November and January and a New Year Dinner

November we have Peter Harvey from LAA HQ coming for a talk and we should be able to catch up with the latest gossip from there including preparations for a possible return to a National Rally.

There will be no meeting in December but we will return for the AGM in January of which more in our last Newsletter of the year published next month. This year there will be no Christmas Dinner in December. Oh No!! I hear you cry what shall we do! Fear not we have due to a clash of dates arranged the dinner for the 31st January 2009 which will be the Saturday following the AGM so put that in your new diary if you will, who knows we might not have turkey.

Abbeville Flyout Saturday 27th September 2008

Well despite my efforts to confuse matters by cocking up the dates I am pleased to report that a respectable number of pilots crews and aeroplanes did make it for lunch at Abbeville and for once the weather behaved itself for possibly the last run across the Channel



this year. At least our guys crossed in conventional style unlike the Swiss pilot Yves Rossy who achieved his ambition, albeit several days late due of course to the weather, what else, to complete his journey by rocket powered flying wing . Plus ca change "The more things change, the more they stay the same"!

Bonfire Night and Bar-B-Q Saturday November 8th 2008 7.00 pm

All Strut Members and families are welcome to Farthing Corner for the bonfire and bar-b-q with hot soup from his extensive RAF repertoire by Chef Allen Jubb and a selection from the larders of your committee and their butchers will be cremated, er created, in to a cullinary

feast by Messrs Bournier and Assistant with their helpers (arms yet to be put up backs).

There will be tickets for sale prior to the do at a very reasonable £5.00/person and bring a firework for the enjoyment of all.

This is very much a family do so bring the kiddies but keep them safe under your control and the same advice goes for the adults.

If there are any vegetarian requirements let me or any committee members know and we will do our best to accommodate these poor misguided souls. Please see your friendly committee member for tickets at the next Strut meeting on the 30th or contact one of us by e-mail or telephone details at the back of this Newsletter.



Farthing Corner Airstrip is just off the M2 close to the Medway Services.

How to get to the Bonfire Night at Farthing Corner Airstrip

Members Aeroplanes



Ivor Phillips , one of those I tried to confuse on the Abbeville fly-out , sent in a pic with the comment ‘this a picture of my aircraft Europa XS G-IVER , she has flown 100 hours since her first flight from Lydd on May 21 this year’

Medway Branch of the RAeS - Future Lectures

If you are looking for an outlet to tide you over to the next Strut meeting you could do no worse than to attend the Winter lectures given by the R Ae S. Held in the canteen at BAE Systems at Rochester Airport dates of which are published on their website.

TAMMY (age 4) was with her mother when they met an elderly, rather wrinkled woman her Mum knew. Tammy looked at her for a while and then asked, 'Why doesn't your skin fit your face?'

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www.solleysicecreams.co.uk

New Members

We are very pleased to welcome new members and past members in to the Strut and look forward to seeing the fruits of your labours in due course. Don't forget for this article starved Newsletter any communication however small or large is most welcome. If you project warrants an up date or a picture or two of work in progress I and your fellow members will be pleased to see it. Elsewhere in the Newsletter there are examples be seen.

Martin Payne (hope I got the name
 right Martin !)

Ernie Steel (Building RV7)
 Robin Vince (Has a Luton Minor)
 Laurens van Cleef (Rebuilding Lancair)
 Maarten Tonsbeek (re-joined)
 (Hopes to build RV)

Dates for your Diary

Oct 30	John Thorpe Talks
Nov 8	Bonfire & BBQ
Nov 27	LAA CEO
Jan 29	AGM & Natter Night
Jan 31	Strut Annual Dinner