



November 2008

# SKYWRITINGS

Newsletter of the *Mid Kent*



Light Aircraft Association

**Mike's Mutterings**

Mike Negus -  
Editor



## LAA CEO to visit Kent

For our final meeting of the year we will be very pleased to welcome Peter Harvey who for the unsure of us is the CEO of our organisation the LAA. Visits from Head Office are always well received and it gives us out in the boon-docks the opportunity to throw questions and seek answers to the issues that some of us are keen to explore.

The following resume is reproduced from the Flyer website [www.flyer.co.uk](http://www.flyer.co.uk)

Peter Harvey, the recently appointed Chief Executive Officer of the LAA (formerly the PFA), has been awarded



*Peter Harvey*

**October Meeting**

**27th November 2008 - Cobtree Manor Golf Club - 8pm**

**Peter Harvey—LAA CEO**

the Silver Medal of the Royal Aero Club. Peter has for a long time been part of the hang gliding and gliding worlds. He won two golds and a bronze with the British team in World and European Hang Gliding championships (as well as setting several records) before turning to gliding. In this discipline he has won the British Standard Class, Open Class and UK Overseas Gliding Championships. Internationally he won Gold Medals at the 2005 and 2007 Europeans and Bronze at the 2006 World Championships, and has been selected for the UK team for the 2008 Worlds. He is also a coach the BGA Junior International teams and a powered pilot.

So it appears he has a lot of experience in most of the areas our strut operates in as I know we have members with interest in all of the above so I hope we attract a good turn out.

### Carrot & Coriander - It's Soup, really good Soup!

As aviators we have an unnatural fascination with the weather, mostly because we may want to get somewhere. The strut bonfire BBQ was to be another occasion where the weather was to dominate proceedings, not that it was actually bad on the night, but because of the forecast.

I think many of the people who had intended to come along, listened to Caddy and chose to sit in front of the TV with the fire on and watch X Factor or Strictly Come Dancing instead. For the event itself the weather held off long enough to eat, drink and set off most of the fireworks. There was a specially appointed person to make sure that common sense prevailed as far as

safety with the fireworks was concerned. He did a great job by blending into the background and kept a watchful eye on events and I'm glad to say that his presence was as superfluous as unseen.

For nearly 40 strut members and



guests the hangar at Farthing Corner had been transformed from a workshop to provide something close to gourmet cuisine. Four courses, wine, soft drinks tea and coffee all for £5.00 - Ok maybe 4 courses is a bit misleading, there was



*The Chefs with our Coordinator*

soup to start and I mean excellent homemade carrot & coriander soup, courtesy of Alan Jubb; then as a second

course a generous tuna salad followed by lamb burgers and pork sausages straight from the farm, cooked almost to perfection by Allan Bourner. It was the desert that was a bit of a cheat, just doughnuts! A lesson was learned and next time Simon, who did a lot of the behind the scenes organising will be making profito rolls, an aviators 'death by chocolate'.

Oddly enough one of the main points of conversation was the cutlery, our genuine plastic, fake solid silver knives and forks gave everyone a feeling of luxury and well-being. The event was a great success and as the strut now own their own gas BBQ the plan is to hold future events for 2009 at Farthing Corner, particularly when we can't use the golf club on club nights and the weather should be more predictable.

I would also like to extend the usual thanks to all the helpers.

### Last Months Meeting

John Thorpe from GASCo gave a most informative talk on the statistics of safety of GA over the last 20 years or so with some interesting results which of course revealed how accidents occur and the reasoning behind. For more details go on their website [gasco.org.uk](http://gasco.org.uk) I do urge you to make this a frequent visit as a number of topics are relevant to us all. Typical of subjects posted is this little gem which may be relevant to some of our members.

### IMC Survey - Important

EASA seem to be intent on getting rid of the UK's unique IMC Rating, an important safeguard in our rapidly changing maritime climate. On page 19 of the Autumn

issue of Flight Safety there is a simple survey that can be sent Freepost back to us. In spite of lobbying from a number of organisations, apathy could allow EASA to think that UK pilots don't care. **Please make sure you complete it so that we can gather evidence to pass to EASA.** With acknowledgement to GASCo

### CAA Safety Meeting

Rochester Airport are organising a CAA Safety Meeting on the 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2009 so for more details contact Kelvin Carr of RApC on 01634 869969 who will no doubt be pleased to pass on further information.

### Update on Roger Chaplin

It would be good to end the year with some up beat news on Roger who we remember had an accident some three months ago. He has endured a painful journey supported by his partner Kim who has been by his side all this while. Those following his progress will know it has been fraught with problems which are being dealt with by the medical team as they arise and I would not wish to go in to detail here, but preparations are being made to get Rog home for Christmas albeit as I understand for a couple of days be-

Apparently Tesco are recalling all of their tins of alphabet spaghetti.

There are fears that terrorists have put bombs in them - if one goes off, it could spell disaster!

fore returning for what will be a continuance of a very long journey.

I am sure you will all join the Committee in sending all good wishes for Christmas and a speedy recovery in 2009.

## End of Year Thoughts

As the Luscombe nears the end of a protracted period out of the air with a heavy schedule of planned maintenance it is difficult to believe another year has nearly passed. We still have a number of projects in the Strut inventory to make their maiden flight which is all very exciting and hopefully we can bring some pictures and information when this happens. After a year without flying our group of Luscombeers will be keen to get cracking again I know.

I think we will all take with us the memory of a pretty lousy summer weatherwise although May and October didn't turn out too bad, it was the big bit in the middle that we missed. So many events and airshows disrupted or cancelled including a number of our own LAA flyins, but there is always next year and maybe the return of the Rally so come to the meeting and find out the latest LAA thinking from the horses mouth.

As there is no meeting in December it behoves me on behalf of the Commit-

Between 2 evils, I always  
like to pick the one I  
haven't tried before

tee to wish all our Members, Family and Friends a very Happy Christmas and a safe flying New Year.

## You want us to help you do what?

By Brian Hope.

You know it sometimes surprises (and worries!) me that I've been kicking around the PFA/LAA for over thirty years, I guess it somehow gets into your veins. I've got to know a lot of people in that time, and am privileged to be able to call a lot of them friends. As with all friendships though, you sometimes wonder if maybe you push things a little too far.

A few months ago I got so ticked off that we (the LAA) had not delivered on providing skills training courses for the membership, despite employing somebody to specifically take on the task, that I stuck my hand up and said I would give it a go. Almost immediately four of our Strut members agreed to help out arranging courses, Don Foreman, Steve Brown and Mike Roper will be hosting a composites course - and who better in the entire country? They have a combined knowledge of the subject that is second to none. And Gary Smith agreed to help out on a working with aluminium course. All we needed now was somewhere to hold the courses.

It just so happened that Turweston had

What's the difference between a  
rhinoceros and a barrister?

One is thick skinned and charges  
a lot, the other is a pachyderm  
mainly found in Africa.



*It'll never be as pretty as a Jodel but it was cheap and is now fairly cheerful.*

*From left, yours truly, Gary, John, EC member Mike Barnard and Frank. Oh, and the sign was made by yet another Strut member, Alan Bourner. Picture taken by none other than our esteemed chairman, Roger Hopkinson.*

replace a couple of rather dilapidated Porta-cabins with nice shiny new ones, and the best of a bad bunch could be ours for the princely sum of £100. We decided it was a goer, despite the fact that it was missing a door and a window, had holes in the floor and ceiling and was generally very tired. I had three weeks to knock it into shape.

One Sunday at Farty Corner we were having a quiet cup of tea when I just slid the need for a bit of help with the cabin into the conversation, "it's not bad, just a lick of paint and knock up a few work benches' - didn't want to frighten them off. And so it transpired that Paddy Jordan, John Dean, Richard Warriner and I made our way up to

Turweston one cold and blustery day to start turning a cabin that had been destined for the tip, into a thing of beauty and practicality... ok then... a thing of practicality.

That first weekend we did well, fixed the holes, painted the inside and ended with a secure and waterproof unit. Paddy had also made up half a dozen benches in flat pack form which we assembled on site - it was starting to look promising! The following weekend Gary Smith came up and sorted out the wiring, being a certified (certifiable?) electrician he was able to give everything the H&S ok, always a good thing when you're working with the public. Meanwhile I was trying to tart up the

exterior, though every time I rolled on some paint the rain would start and wash it all off again.

Week three and it had to be finished. Frank Rothera, John Dean and Gary came up again and by the end of play we had it ready for the first courses to be held there the following weekend. Gary did a cracking job plumbing a pneumatic system into three of the benches for air tools, and with a few pictures supplied by the guys in Engineering to brighten the place up, we had a workshop fit for purpose. It still needs more exterior tidying, but that can wait until the weather improves - I'm not fussed if I don't see another paint roller for a few months. And best of all my mates are still talking to me, albeit in rather hushed tones! Thank you one and all, your did a great job and the first two courses ran like clockwork - you can read all about it in Light Aviation next month but for a taster the teacher's view is.....

### LAA Education Trust takes another step forward. By Gary Smith

Offering members a chance to broaden their skills by running "hands on" practical courses has been on the LAA's wish list for a long time. Until recently there were three major hurdles to overcome :- a place to run the courses, people to teach the courses and someone with the "staying power" to make it all happen. The first hurdle was overcome when the old control tower at Turweston aerodromes (a rather worn out protakabin) became available, so we had a potential venue. Our very own Brian Hope (of Jodel fame) stepped forwards with the enthusiasm and assisted by a few dedicated strut members the building was transformed into a workshop and classroom. A set of six courses was envisaged of one day du-

ration. These would cover working in wood, aeroplane electrical systems, welding, engines etc and the first course was to be working in metal (aluminium). So we just needed teachers. Having spent several PFA rallies riveting and dimpling aluminium in the "home builders tent" and completing my RV9 last year I must have been an easy target for the rather imposing and persuasive Mr Hope. I let my defences slip for a mere second and before I knew it I was a metalwork teacher.

The courses were offered in LAA magazine and the metal work class was a sell out before some people had even received their magazine. A second day was offered, then a third, fourth and fifth. So before dawn on Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> November I loaded my car with tools, flip charts and everything I imagined we needed (+ 2 kitchen sinks and a spare just to be sure) and set off for Turweston to start the first metalwork course. John Michie was going to be my right hand man. He was an old hand at this teaching lark and despite claiming to be shy, had organised the rally metalwork stand about 5 years on the trot. Three weeks previous John had flown his RV6A project for the first time. Norman Haines brought the number of teachers to three and having recently completed his RV9A was suitable qualified too. By 9:00 our 8 students (including one lady) had been suitably refreshed, were seated and digesting the formalities of our introductions and safety brief. During the morning we ran through the theory of building in aluminium, the pitfalls of the material and the skills required. Some were surprised that riveting was only 15% of the process of assembling an alumin-



*The Tool Box*

ium aeroplane. Gloster airparts dropped by in the late morning and gave a quick talk about the tools they can supply for builders.

Lunch in Turweston new airfield canteen gave us an opportunity to chat with the students to see why they came on the course. Some wanted to build RV's, one guy was looking to repair his existing aeroplane and another was designing his own aircraft from scratch and wanted more knowledge about working with aluminium. Suitably recharged we returned to the workshop to get on with the practicalities of "riveting". Luckily Vans (of Vans aircraft fame) supply a simple tool box kit which requires the uses most of the riveting skills needed to build an RV. Before an LAA inspector will

allow a novice builder to start attacking their newly acquired kit they will want to see some a demonstration of their riveting skills. A VANS tool box completed on an LAA organised course is the perfect "practice piece" to get you off to a good start. With

**Without question, the greatest invention in the history of mankind is beer.**

**Oh, I grant you that the wheel was also a fine invention, but the wheel does not go nearly as well with pizza.**

**Committee Contacts****Co-ordinator: Gary Smith**

Tel : 01795 422426  
[gary.james.smith@btinternet.com](mailto:gary.james.smith@btinternet.com)

**Treasurer:**

John Dean 01892 822776  
[john\\_dean@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:john_dean@tiscali.co.uk)

**Membership Secretary:**

Graham Hammond 01622 891466  
[grahamandshirley@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:grahamandshirley@tiscali.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  
 Derek Browning 07885 298484



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

our high teacher to student ratio it was possible to swap between people or groups and despite running past our tea time every body got to take their completed tool box home, mission accomplished.

We had really good feedback and the pleasure of doing it all again the following day. If you are interested in one of the courses then contact the LAA office and book your slot before they all go.

making a marriage last.....

Twice a week, we go to a nice restaurant, have a little wine, some good food and companionship. She goes Tuesdays, and I go Fridays.

**Dates for your Diary**

Nov 27	LAA CEO
Jan 29	AGM & Natter Night
Jan 31	Strut Annual Dinner
Feb 26	Builders Night