



April 2009

# SKYWRITINGS

Newsletter of the *Mid Kent*



Light Aircraft Association

## Mike's Mutterings

Mike Negus -  
Editor



## Reality Check by Gary Smith

It was my intention to fly to Turweston early one Saturday morning for an LAA meeting. The previous week I had dispatched my "moving map" GPS data card for updating and it's lack of reappearance by Friday evening left me considering my options. A high pressure weather system over the UK assured stable conditions but the horizontal visibility of 3nm, which had lingered for several days, was showing no signs of improvement. Should I fly without the GPS, more importantly COULD I still fly without the GPS. Had I become one of the GPS dependents and could I still come up with a "plan B" if I



April Meeting

30th April 2009 - Cobtree Manor Golf Club - 8pm

Talk on AFPEX, Notams & Touring

got lost. So I dug out the ARC-1 “whirly wheel” and prepared my log more accurately than I normally would (I had to read up on a few of the “wheels” facilities though). I remembered to start the stop watch as I passed through the strips “overhead” and was quite pleased to find the river Medway which is just 4 miles away (the vis really was not good). To my surprise I was very busy in the cockpit and was shocked how poor my accurate flying skills had become. The last time I had flown non GPS was at 75Kt in a high wing Piper which almost flew its self and I had lots of time to look out of the window and think. Now I was doing 130+Kt in a twitchy low wing “rocket” and it was hard work.

Stapleford was identified in the murk and I began to feel a little more confident but the anguish of not being able to get a GPS “ground fix” was never far away. I identified my turning point at north west London (Aversham VRP) but having turned for Turweston I allowed my heading to drift and temporarily lost my course. I used the “time fix” at Aversham to estimate how far I had flown down my line and quickly identified my position as 2nm west of track. I re-recalculated the heading at the half way point (as I had been taught in my PPL) and quite amazingly Turweston runway came straight up on the nose, perfect. The route timing worked out within a minute and that surprised me too. Whilst in the circuit I lost sight of the runway due to the glare of the sun and the poor visibility but was feeling pleased to have got there.

Only one other person flew to the meeting (due to the visibility) and the controller was most concerned that I had a) flown that distance in that visi-

bility b) flown without a GPS at all. Whilst he was rummaging around for a GPS to get me home I explained that we all used to fly without GPS and that EVERYONE should still be able to fly without one now. He agreed and stopped rummaging in his cupboard. The visibility never improved for the return flight and heading into the sun did not exactly help. I concentrated even harder to keep the heading and logged “ground fixes” every 5 minutes, just in case. 37minutes later I was back at the strip, certainly more fatigued than if I had used my GPS but still found time to reflect upon my experience.

My initial struggle to maintain an accurate heading demonstrated that I had probably been subconsciously following the line on the GPS and was probably about to join the ranks of the “GPS dependent”. Some may consider setting out in reduced visibility with no GPS foolhardy but this experience has emphasised to me the importance of the well prepared pilots flight log and that accurate flying needs continual practice. Perhaps you should try your next flight without the GPS to see if you still “have what it takes”. Safe flying, but don’t get complacent with the GPS.

## An Appeal for Rougham

Hi Folks,

Just in case you hadn’t noticed the appeals, Rougham needs our help. For many of us it has been one of our favourite venues, over the last ten years and GA airfields in Suffolk are now like hens teeth. (There were 32 of them in 1946!)

All they are asking you to do is send

photocopies of pages from your log books which contain entries for Rougham since 1999 (Unfortunately, in my case that was over 20 pages!) to: Peter Kember, Ridgers Barn, Bunny Lane, Eridge, Nr Tunbridge Wells, Kent. TN3 9HA.

This problem also applies to Bailey's Farm, Preston Cross and Damyns Hall. If you can include a few words suggesting why these airfields should be retained, so much the better.

All this is a pain when you have a busy life to live but if we do nothing and all the GA facilities are withdrawn, I guess we will then have more time to write letters of complaint!!

Please pass this email on to anyone for whom you may consider it relevant. Many thanks,

Alan T Gray [alantgray@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:alantgray@tiscali.co.uk)

### Information on Airspace at Amsterdam Schipol

VFR traffic under the Schiphol TMA has been instructed to switch off transponders because of constant TCAS alerts, but recently the Dutch government decreed that all traffic above 800 feet should switch on Mode S everywhere. On the first sunny weekend following the decree Schiphol was swamped with a blizzard of Mode-S returns. ATC tuned the text size down to the minimum but still couldn't see approaching CAT clearly. All VFR traffic was banned from a huge swathe of airspace around Schiphol as a result. Ary Stiger of AOPA-Netherlands is meeting the Dutch CAA and Schiphol ATC on Tuesday to start sorting out the mess. AOPA has been warning for years that busy airspace would not bear the weight of Mode S, and controllers have said they would be forced to tune out Mode-S re-

turns because of clutter (thus incidentally rendering the whole exercise futile for GA). For some reason Schiphol wasn't able to tune out Mode S when it happened, we don't know why yet.

The Schiphol issue was discussed today at the IAOPA-Europe regional meeting in Friedrichshafen . The UK CAA is aware of it, and has been preparing the ground for a couple of weeks for a change of heart on Mode-S; it is unlikely it will be adopted universally in the UK.

*With effect from April 4th 2009 This AIP Supplement introduces the special rules zones Schiphol and Hilversum . These SRZs are created as a result of the radar clutter due to the increased number of VFR flights with activated mode S transponder under the Schiphol TMA 1. The radar clutter is increased to such an extent that Schiphol Approach cannot properly provide air traffic control. This radar clutter is a safety problem and is, therefore, not acceptable.*

*Dutch aviation authorities have therefore decided to clear the area around Schiphol, including Lelystad and Hilversum, from traffic with activated transponder. For Lelystad and Hilversum , a 'transponder prohibited zone' is created. Around*

**Part of a flight attendant's arrival announcement: 'We'd like to thank you folks for flying with us today. And, the next time you get the insane urge to go blasting through the skies in a pressurized metal tube, we hope you'll think of US Airways.'**

*Schiphol, a special rules zone (SRZ) is created. Aircraft with a mandatory mode S transponder are not allowed in this SRZ .*

Read more here <http://www.ais-netherlands.nl/aim/misc/EH-eSUP-09-04-en-GBpdf>

### Last Months Meeting

Another fascinating talk given this time on the art of paragliding by John Finnegan. It was explained how John had come to the sport late in life being now in his 50's and participating for about 6 years. Enthusiasm for this ac-

tivity was obvious and the parent association can boast over 5000 members and as we heard around 20% are women. I must admit these extreme sports do seem to attract the opposite sex witness any summers day down at Headcorn when parachuting is in full chat and see how many girls are chucking themselves out of aeroplanes. Fixed aviation and the LAA end of GA still seems to be a male preserve in the main. Is it the expense the notion that we are all fuddy duddys and in the main a fairly individual pursuit carried out in ones and twos .

Whatever , this does appear to attract the sort of free thinkers who like to



*March Speaker - John Finnegan*

launch themselves in to the wide blue yonder from hills and mountains both here and overseas , the chief attraction seems to be the ability to take your parachute and harness wrapped up in a rucksack and unfurl it anywhere you fancy within reason and off you go. Of course as with all these things weather plays a big part and wind strength and direction in particular but it was fascinating to hear the relatively low wind strengths that one could launch in. Mind you the casualty rate did seem a bit of a thing to consider, as one of our members confided, it would help to have a rubber bum! Nonetheless a welcome insight to our new neighbours who operate from fields near Detling and Thurnham.

## Up and Coming Things to Think About

**Members meeting April 30th**  
AFPEX talk by John Dean.

John will bring us up to speed on getting across toe pond and related aviation topics. Always a god opportunity to get first hand information from one of our experienced travellers.

**Members meeting 28 May**  
Talk about Sun-n-Fun 2009

Several of our members make the annual pilgrimage to Florida for Sun'n Fun and will bring back their views on one of the greatest G.A. events in the world. Not to be missed for all the latest 'goss' from our American cousins.

**June meeting (25th June)**

BBQ at Ripple (fly in if weather is

good).Our host Steve Solley will provide his usual generous hospitality at his charming strip at Ripple. For those experienced 'strippers' with suitable kites a chance to visit with inevitably a Solleys ice cream reward!! Visitors by road are more than welcome of course.

**July Meeting (30th July)**  
BBQ Rochester or Farthing corner.

The residents of Farting Corner will play host to Strut members and their guests giving a chance to have some social intercourse with all your chums in the informal atmosphere of this hub of LAA aviation. Good food and conversation guaranteed.

**August meeting (27th Aug)**  
Treasure Hunt by car (10 miles approx)

Steve Solley steps up to the fore and is organizing our last away day event from the Golf Club prior to our return in September. Probably ending at a local pub.

**Notable fluouts**  
Flyout to Weybourne Tank Museum (Top of Norfolk) Saturday 9th May

A number of members have been up before and have suggested it's a good day out with the chance to see a lot of heavy kit some in action.

**22may - 24th May** Peenemunde fly out (Germany)

Peenemunde has been discussed in these pages before and looks to be one of those must visit trips to a historically important airfield used for development of Hitlers reprisal weapons the V1 and V2 amongst others. Latterly used by the East German air force finally for G.A. and club use. Plenty of people going

and plenty of help and advice available if you fancy the trip.

### 11-12 July French RSA Rally

Another annual pilgrimage for many and same comments apply, if you have never been plenty of willing help to assist you in your endeavours.

**25/26 July 75year celebration at Rochester**, Eastchurch 100years of flight celebration, Bleriots channel crossing celebration at Dover.

If anyone read the April issue of 'Flypast' magazine there was a very full report on the birthplace of aviation in Kent commemorating the 100 years anniversary this year with a lot of period photos

### Tiger Club Turbulent Display Team

This year the display team celebrates 50 years of operation from its first formation at Fair Oaks in August of 1959 operating with between 3 and 9 aeroplanes all over the British Isles, Ireland, France and Belgium in the intervening years.

Roger Druine was a young French aero modeller in the 1950s. He made increasingly big models, until somebody said predictably 'Why don't you build one big enough to fly yourself?' So he did. That was the D.31 Turbulent (a derivative of the original D.3), a very light, open-cockpit, single seater, usually powered by a Volkswagen engine of from 1200 to 1600 cc. It has wonderfully responsive controls, but is regrettably not aerobatic.

Hundreds of homebuilt Turbulents were constructed in France, Germany, Britain, Canada, Australia and the USA, but an English firm, Rollasons, built a couple of dozen production examples, including

three of a certified version (D.31A) with a strengthened wing spar which permitted limited aerobatics, but unfortunately the authorities required modifications to the flying controls which spoiled their lightness. Rollason Turbulents could have cockpit canopies, skis for winter flying, and enclosed cowlings. That renowned British flying club, the Tiger Club, has had a display team of Turbulents for over thirty years (longer than the Red Arrows) which still flies today. Their forte is tied-together formation flying. Roger Druine subsequently designed a two-seat version, the D.5 [Turbi](#), using Beaussier or Walter Mikron inverted in-line engines. Information courtesy of the SABC (Sport Aircraft Builders Club) website.

Hopefully we can get an up to date report from Headcorn on what they will be up to.



*Tiger Club Turbulent*

**MARC (age 4) was engrossed in a young couple that were hugging and kissing in a restaurant.**

**Without taking his eyes off them, he asked his dad: 'Why is he whispering in her mouth?'**

## Text of a letter from a kid from Eromanga to Mum and Dad.

(For those of you not in the know, Eromanga is a small town, west of Quilpie in the far south west of Queensland).

Dear Mum & Dad,

I am well. Hope youse are too. Tell me big brothers Doug and Phil that the Army is better than workin' on the farm - tell them to get in bloody quick smart before the jobs are all gone! I wuz a bit slow in settling down at first, because ya don't hafta get outta bed until 6am. But I like sleeping in now, cuz all ya gotta do before brekky is make ya bed and shine ya boots and clean ya uniform. No bloody cows to milk, no calves to feed, no feed to stack - nothin'!! Ya haz gotta shower though, but its not so bad, coz there's lotsa hot water and even a light to see what ya doing!

At brekky ya get cereal, fruit and eggs but there's no kangaroo steaks or possum stew like wot Mum makes. You don't get fed again until noon and by that time all the city boys are buggered because we've been on a 'route march' - geez its only just like walking to the windmill in the back paddock!!

This one will kill me brothers Doug and Phil with laughter. I keep getting medals for shootin' - dunno why. The bullseye is as big as a bloody possum's bum and it don't move and it's not firing back at ya like the Johnsons did when our big scrubber bull got into their prize cows before the Ekka last year! All ya gotta do is make yourself comfortable and hit the target - it's a piece of piss!! You don't even load your own cartridges, they

comes in little boxes, and ya don't have to steady yourself against the rollbar of the roo shooting truck when you reload!

Sometimes ya gotta wrestle with the city boys and I gotta be real careful coz they break easy - it's not like fighting with Doug and Phil and Jack and Boori and Steve and Muzza all at once like we do at home after the muster.

Turns out I'm not a bad boxer either and it looks like I'm the best the platoon's got, and I've only been beaten by this one bloke from the Engineers - he's 6 foot 5 and 15 stone and three pick handles across the shoulders and as ya know I'm only 5 foot 7 and eight stone wringin' wet, but I fought him till the other blokes carried me off to the boozier.

I can't complain about the Army - tell the boys to get in quick before word gets around how bloody good it is. Your loving daughter,

Sheila



Never squat with your spurs on.



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**2009 EVENTS AT HEADCORN (EGKH)**

**Vintage Aircraft Fly - In**  
 (In association with IMPS Military Show)  
 Sat & Sun 15<sup>th</sup> & 16<sup>th</sup> August 2009  
 Free landing & Free Entry for Vintage  
 or Ex Military Aircraft  
 Free Landing for all other aircraft

**Robin Fly - In**  
 Mass gathering of Robin & Jodel Air-  
 craft  
 Sat 11<sup>th</sup> July 2009  
 Free Landings / BBQ

**Headcorn Flying Proms**  
 Sat 25<sup>th</sup> July 2009  
 Air Display to classical music with fire-  
 works finale  
 Overnight Aircraft Parking & Camping  
 Free!

FOR ALL ENQUIRIES FOR THESE EVENTS  
 E-mail [flyin@headcornaeorodrome.co.uk](mailto:flyin@headcornaeorodrome.co.uk)

**Dates for your Diary**

April 30 Talk on Touring  
 (inc how to use  
 AFPex)

May 28 Talk on Sun n Fun