



January 2010

SKYWRITINGS

Newsletter of the *Mid Kent*



Light Aircraft Association

Mike's Mutterings

Mike Negus -
Editor



SNOW and more SNOW

The last few weeks have been a period when very little flying has been able to take place with even the Commercial Air Transport aircraft having difficulty with many airports closed for fairly long periods of time.

Most small airfields have been unusable but the exception has to be Headcorn where the Tiger Club dragged out one of its Turbulents and fitted it with skis to enable it to operate from the snowy field that that covered the aerodrome.

It is understood that on one day alone it did more than five hours in the air with pilots anxious to try a new way



Headcorn in the snow

January Meeting
28th January 2010
Annual General Meeting



of getting into the air. At many airfields in the south-east the aircraft parked outside were unbalanced by the weight of snow and tipped up into unusual positions

January Dinner

Our Strut Dinner was held over from December due to change of franchise at the Golf Club after which the previous incumbent threw away their diary thus putting our date and others in to disarray. Thanks to some fancy footwork by Gary, our beloved strut co-ordinator

**The only difference
between a rut and a
grave is the depth.**

the situation was retrieved and re-scheduled for the 16th January 2010.

Unfortunately some of those who had previously booked the prior date inevitably found that post Christmas engagements precluded them attending which was a pity. The number of attendees was around the thirty mark but the evening was no less enjoyable for that. The food I believe was some of the best we have had there and came in good quantity, indeed I actually left behind some small quantity of my main course to ensure room for the pud. Anyone who knows me would find it difficult to believe but there we are.

Especially pleasing to see were the folk that had travelled a considerable way to join us enabling catching up on the goss with friends old and new. A certain well respected test pilot seemed bent on flying his aerial origami projects

which seemed to come in a never ending supply. This was followed up with a quantity of balloons which flew around the hall in ones and twos but of course there are always those not satisfied with that and towards the end of the session multiple balloon formations were attempted with varying degrees of success, or not.

Personally I had a great time and thought it one of the best but I know to organise it had Gary fairly tested and on behalf of the Strut, well done I think you managed to pull it off in fine style.

January Meeting AGM

There being no meeting in December, the only gathering the Strut Post Christmas Dinner mentioned elsewhere and we resume with the Annual General Meeting and as always the opportunity to put your comments (constructive) or otherwise to the Committee and to carry out any de selection or re elections.

One post that needs filling will be the Newsletter editor as the present incumbent has resigned after 6 years and has run out of steam so we need a fresh blast of enthusiasm in to this role. I would like to thank all contributors and fellow Strut members for their continued support and back up. I can hear the rushing of footsteps eager to step up to the plate, hark I hear someone in the wings

All of us could take a lesson from the weather. It pays no attention to criticism

who has put his name forward, unless you wish to offer your services.

Strut Projects

News is filtering through on a number of new builds and potential first flight(s) again so we expect to see the Strut fleet growing and expanding the types operated by considerable numbers. There is even talk on an innovative microlight build so watch this space.

New PPL Martin Payne

Martin has been an enthusiastic member of the Strut for some time now so we were delighted to hear he now had a full license and is pursuing his ambition of owning and flying his own.

Martin is one of those involved in the new builds of the Sportcruiser which is a two seat low wing aircraft of all riveted aluminium structure, manufactured in kit form by CZAW in the Czech Republic. Establishing the type initially through Sprite Aviation they are becoming a very popular kit.

The fuselage is of conventional stressed sheet metal skin construction, with longerons, frames and stringers. It includes an integral fin. A one-piece canopy is fitted over the cockpit, hinged at the front, allowing straight-forward access to the side-by-side seating arrangement. The horizontal tail is mounted at the base of the fin trailing edge. The one-piece elevator has a trim tab on the trailing edge. The entire

tailplane is easily removable. The wing is a two-piece unit. Each wing panel has a main forward spar and a trailing edge spar, which are bolted to centre section carry-thru spars in the fuselage. The wing panels are fitted with single-slotted flaps and ailerons. A fuel tank is fitted on each inboard wing section, forward of the main spar. The aircraft has a fixed tricycle undercarriage. The main undercarriage is a one-piece glass-fibre/epoxy cantilever spring, while the cantilever sprung noseleg is made up 4130 steel tube.



The principal airframe structure is 6061-T6 aluminium alloy and 4130N steel alloy. The cockpit flying controls are 4130 steel, with 6061-T6 pushrods and bellcranks used throughout the airframe.

A Rotax 912-ULS engine is fitted to this aircraft using the standard installation given in the construction manual. The Jabiru 3300A engine has also been accepted using an installation designed by F.Sayyah. This installation uses a Sensenich Ez-pitch two bladed ground adjustable propeller.

With another in the pipeline we all look forward to seeing them join the Strut fleet.

Newsletter, a reflection.....

As those recipients of the Newsletter are aware we aim to ensure that all those members that like to receive electronically or hard copy see them at least a week before the meeting of that month and to this end I think we have mostly succeeded and we take pride in trying to offer as good a product within the budget as possible.

A fair amount of organisation goes in to this process and I rely heavily on John Dean for the actual production and Graham Hammond for ensuring the envelopes duly stamped arrive for me to put them in and post. My role really is to try and persuade the membership to provide me with something to put in it, sometimes needing more than a gentle nudge and to fill out the gaps and to ensure that up coming events are publicised.

The principal role of the newsletter is that, an organ of news. Fortunately within the Strut there is a small cadre of correspondents who can be regularly persuaded to contribute and some are very happy to do so without arms up backs so to speak. The Newsletter needs to hear from the rest of the membership because you are the news and believe me we all want to know what goes on in your world even if you don't think it is that interesting, it is. You are part of one of the most active Struts in the LAA.

**Why is it one careless
match can start a
forest fire but it
takes a whole box to
start a campfire.**

Perhaps a little bit of the history of the Newsletter might be of interest. I joined the Strut at a point where it was affiliated to the old SAS (time dims I think it was the Southern Aviation Society) so around 1991 and by a vote it was changed to become the Mid Kent Strut of the Popular Flying Association. The editor at the time was Brian Hope and as a newcomer I used to really look forward to receiving my copy, always full of what was going on and eventually I plucked up the courage to offer the odd article then before I knew it I was doing the editing whilst Brian went off to become Strut co-ordinator and a fairly vibrant committee came in to being with the likes of Jaqui Clark, Mike Holden, Colin Ladd and others. Strut membership was around the 80-100 mark and this seems to have generally held up through these years with of course the inevitable turnover that you would expect of any organisation or club.

From those days a number of familiar faces are still very active supporters and members and over time we have been privileged to welcome new members that have gone on again to become stalwarts.

During Brian Hopes stint as editor back in the 1990's the production and distribution was of course very different and would go something like this.....

Copy would be received either typed up, usually in different styles as it would come from varied sources and from Brian or handwritten in which case it would have to be typed up. In those early days we would assemble at the office where Colin Ladd worked and while Jaqui Clark would type up

any handwritten stuff Pizza's would be ordered from the shop below the office, not I hasten at Strut expense, meanwhile the process of copying up to a hundred copies of the Newsletter would go on page by page all the while praying the photocopier wouldn't jam or breakdown. Not unknown. As it all became copied it was then of course collated, stapled, folded and finally stuffed in the envelopes previously written out by hand and then the stamp licking and sticking of course. It wasn't unknown to stagger out at 2 o' clock in the morning. Phew!

Things didn't change much after I took over but then we elicited the welcome help of David and Margaret Craig, although not flying members were very active and always willing to help. I would turn up with rough drafts by hand which Margaret would type up never complaining even when I turned up a bit late needing it by the next day.

My stint ended in the mid 1990's and the baton was passed to others including Martin Snelling, Bob Chequer and then for some reason it came back to me and I have been the custodian for the last six years.

Production gradually improved from the single A4 sheets stapled together, the A5 booklet, all black and white of course and finally to its present format when the decision was to go all colour. Computers of course have brought desk top publishing to a point where if you understand it a professional looking product can be achieved. I don't understand it which is where John Dean's expertise comes in. I e-mail over the raw material and John converts in to what you see today. Having gone colour we had it printed professionally courtesy one of the Strut contacts who

kindly did it at cost until we took the decision to buy a printer capable of handling the numbers required. With the ability to e-mail copies to those members who prefer it does cut down on the postage and makes the whole thing viable.

I have enjoyed my time with the newsletter and sadly still keep copies up in the loft from those early days and look into them some times and rekindle half forgotten but always pleasant memories and chuckle at Steve Pearl's cartoons.

Time now to stand down and pass on the mantle to someone else but I will still look forward to making a contribution to the newsletter and to the committee, if I'm not chucked off. Thanks to all those who have contributed, regulars like, well I was going to put in a few names but they know who they are and whether it was a one off or a prolific contribution thanks for easing my passage, so to speak and I mean that in a manly way! See you at the AGM, try to make it as it is important.

Novembers (2009)Talk

Seems a long time ago already doesn't it.

What a way, though, to finish our programme of guest speakers. Stephen Hayman, commercial pilot and private flyer gave a very entertaining talk on the differences and similarities of flying the Airbus for his day job and his co owned Europa based at Rochester that he flies for pleasure.

Drawing parallels of knowing the performance of your aeroplane be it the

large passenger type or the permit jobs



we fly. Illustrated profusely with photos and performance charts loads may be different but the outcome potentially as disastrous if you get the sums wrong!

Behind The Painted Smile.....

The second in an occasional glimpse of the ATC people you may be talking to.

I'm Pat Sidders and my fascination with aeroplanes started in the late 40's in Ramsgate where my school was directly under the flight path of the USAF Thunderjets at Manston (lessons were suspended for 30 seconds or so every few minutes as another one passed just overhead.)

Also about that time Ramsgate civil airport was in full use for private flying with Moths Rapides and Magisters etc with me looking on over the fence for hours. I remember a lovely 1930's style terminal style buliding not unlike a small Shoreham.

National Service in the RAF saw me behind a Morse key as a trainee signaler in Ansons and Prentices at Swanton Morley in the absolutely freezing winter of 1953/54. Sadly Mrs Queen would not let me fly her planes so it was not until 1984 that I started out on my PPL at Headcorn with the Mike McRobert

organisation getting my licence early 1986.

After hours building in the Beagle Pup



'OJ' at Rochester I did my commercials and instructor rating in 1991. My first few hours as an instructor were at Manston on Cessnas under the kind watchful eye of Ted Girdler.

A further 300 hours approx as an instructor were at Farthing Corner on Super Cubs PA 18 - a very different type of aviation but a wonderful pleasure and delight particularly on a summers after-

**If quizzes are
quizzical. What are
tests.**

noon with the side open.

I started my own Registered Facility at Headcorn in 1994 and had a most enjoyable period teaching and building my experience on Robin DR400s.

I have now allowed my instructor/examiner ratings to lapse and amuse myself on the wireless at Headcorn , usually on a Tuesday.

Royal Aeronautical Society (Medway Branch)

During the close season it is good to have somewhere to go and the Society always comes up with interesting speakers and eclectic subjects as witness the following

Wednesday 20 January 2010

“The History and Development of Martin Baker Ejection Seats”

by Mr Tony Gaunt (Martin Baker Ejection Seats)

Wednesday 17 February 2010

A talk on A380 flight testing and entry into service (title to be confirmed) by Mr Mark Cousins of Airbus.

Wednesday 17 March 2010

“Fast Jet Testing at Boscombe Down 1958 to 1975” by AVM Alan Merriman

Wednesday 21 April 2010

“The Red Bull Air Races” by Mr Nigel Lamb (Still to be Confirmed)

Wednesday 19 May 2010

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Annual General Meeting plus a planned talk on Aviation photography (Speaker & Topic still to be confirmed).

These talks are usually of a very high standard and you don't have to be a member of the RAeS to attend. You will only be charged a small entrance fee if you are not a member.

For Sale

Subaru EA81 engine with
Amax Redrive and GT Prop.
Twin plug heads with second
plugs driven from magneto.
Electric start. 240 hours.
Approx 75-80hp.
Ready to fit with ancillaries
and engine mount brackets.
Glen—01622 858956

Dates for your Diary

Jan 28 AGM