



May 2010

SKYWRITINGS

Newsletter of the *Kent*



Light Aircraft Association

Volcano Ash – Blessing in Disguise

You would have thought that all this Volcano ash around the place would have been a huge problem for us Pilots. Well, unless you happen to have booked a flight to Sun n Fun on the heavy metal it may well have been. For those of us stuck behind in blighty it was a rare opportunity to have a practice at approaches on various London Airports.

By John Luck



Nigel Read—Editor



Stansted

On Saturday 17th April Simon and I set out in the Gardan Horizon, GYAT based at Farthing Corner, for the Duxford safety bonus day. I had planned to call for a direct route from Hanningfield expecting my request to be

May Meeting

Thursday 27th May 2010 at 7:30pm

Infringements - NATS

www.midkentstrut.freemove.co.uk



Gatwick

granted. What I didn't expect until I heard someone else call for it was to beat up the Stansted runway at 800 feet looking at all the grounded jets and the holiday makers.

On the Sunday it was the turn of Gatwick to get the sightseeing and practice approach treatment, with a direct route from Farthing Corner to Goodwood. We joined right base for 26 Left and listened to the "overworked" controller fending off all these requests for transit, orbits for picture taking, can I fly over my house transmissions !

It was only afterwards that I learnt there had been lots of noise complaint over the weekend. I suppose the Gat-

wick residents were just used to the whoosh of Jets going in and out in straight lines and not the random routes us GA pilots wanted to take on this, a once in a lifetime opportunity.

On the following Tuesday, although they still let me through direct and then through Southampton's overhead on the way to Pymore, it was "not below 2000" to stop annoying those on the ground who had been treated to the sound of proper aviation for a few days.

Any ship can be a mine-sweeper. Once.

Nigel's Natterings

Duxford hosted a safety bonus day on the 17th April with three half hour talks on collision avoidance (David Cockburn CAA SRG), Airspace infringements (Jonathon Smith NATS Infringements Lead - practicing for our talk) and Distress & Diversion (Flt Lt Martin Smith OC D&D).

The collision avoidance talk was illustrated by a number of slides of barely visible aircraft typically gliders - David having been CFI of a gliding club for 30 years. One picture, I think scanned off and old Sailplane & Gliding magazine showed a Slingsby Skylark 4 which brought back memories of my completing my silver 'C' in one 39 years ago to the day flying from Challock to Redhill and back again after tea in the Tiger Club. In those days it was permissible to fly a glider up to 5000' in the TMA. After a tow to 1500', the highest the tug could go at Redhill I took full advantage of the dispensation climbing to 4200' and was back at Challock in just over an hour having done the 70k flight to Redhill into wind using cloud streets - oh yes and I did have a bloody close air miss just south of Biggin with a light aircraft using the same street to climb!

**Whoever said the pen is
mightier than the sword,
obviously never
encountered
automatic weapons.**

Jonathon Smith presents his talk at our next meeting, so I will save that for 'Last Months meeting'. I did hear him say they have sold 800 Aware GPS devices. From 2005 to the end of Oct 2009 there were averages of nearly 600 low risk infringements each year, 49 medium risk and almost 8 high risk.

The D&D presenter produced a lively and interesting talk illustrated with a recording of a Tornado in trouble over the North Sea terminating abruptly with "eject eject eject!" Describing the equipment at their disposal he said they are more than happy to do training fixes and they do know the difference between practice and genuine lost disguised as a practice - but that doesn't matter to them, just call in plenty of time.

In another room there were tables set up for informal walk in sessions demonstrating the Aware GPS, AIS Notams, CAA, London FIR services, Carol Cooper from Andrewsfield, D&D again, AOPA mentoring and AFPEX. Various goodies and memory aid cards were available to pick up including a DVD from NATS "VFR Around the London TMA" this can be [downloaded from www.airspacesafety.com](http://www.airspacesafety.com) although you might want a faster broadband that Tesco supply me with! This all took place in the Air and Space hall so gave us the chance to look around the exhibits there. Over 40 aircraft flew in, many taking advantage of the clear blue sky and grounded commercial traffic to give Stansted controllers something to do, not to mention it was all free - apart from the café. Thanks go to

Duxford's airfield manager for organising this.

John Luck flew the Horizon in from Farthing Corner with Simon Pratt, Richard Warriner from Heathfield and Martin Leusby from Rochester were also spotted there. The Luscombe from FC failed to make it due apparently to the weight of volcanic dust on the wings.

Normal bonus days are £7 landing and £7 museum entrance, free for children. Others are 19th June for Cessnas, 24th July for Pipers (not sure if that includes SportCruisers).



Were these two deliberately parked next to each other?

G-GDOG & G-FELX

**Yea, Though I Fly Through
the Valley of the Shadow
of Death, I Shall Fear
No Evil.**

**For I am at 50,000 Feet
and Climbing**



A view inside the Air Space Hall,



Mosquito, Lancaster and TSR2 squeezed into one shot.



Stansted was quiet but not as many parked airliners as I expected.

Book Review

Kent Strut member Paul Smiddy has written an introductory book on all things flying. Titled “QuickLook at Flying” it is one of a small series of books that are available as downloads aimed at being just that - a quick read supposedly taking not much over 90 mins. to read (took me a bit longer as I didn't speed read or skim parts).

From history to the future covering how aircraft fly, types of aircraft, manufacturing, the airline industry, navigation and ATC, recommendations for someone's first flight, learning to fly and careers. Packed with well researched up to date facts and metrics, it obviously can only still touch on these subjects in one small volume but is an excellent starting place for someone starting out with a newly discovered interest in flying. Obviously missing are diagrams and pictures to illustrate points but these are in plenty of other sources.

The facts included may well put off anyone but the most enthusiastic and talented from starting a professional flying career but if they may not have thought of engineering which seems to be heading for severe shortages of maintenance engineers. On the history I was expecting to see a mention of Shorts but then I did my apprenticeship in what was the old sea plane works along Rochester Esplanade. The description of the twist along propeller blades could leave slightly the wrong impression as it doesn't relate forward speed to rotation and propellers have appeared at the front of autogyros in the past! Paul doesn't do justice to the latest sailplanes - they

do have much better glide ratios than 1:30. On the future of manufacturing Paul has found something called Additive Layer Manufacturing (bit like laying up composite layers) and suggests this could lead to 90% weight saving. I think it is really 90% material saving of a few smaller parts that normally require conventional metal removal processes, instead fusing layers of metal powder in numerous sections from a CAD model.

Reading this book certainly got me thinking - does a Harvard prop really go supersonic or is it transonic? I can't find out and don't know the engine revs or prop dia. but if its 2200 and 9ft that equates to 707 mph. The book being electronic, it's easy to lookup those long words you are not sure of the meaning (there were a few!) and at the end there are plenty of links for further reading.

Download from www.quicklookbooks.com for less than a magazine cost at £2.99

Last Months meeting - Quiz!

Five teams battled some quite demanding questions, embarrassingly won by the Gardan Leave team with 3 committee members but the fight went down to the last round of identifying various mug shots. Thanks to Mike Negus for organising this assisted on the night by Paddy's daughter Verity.

Next Months Meeting - Airspace infringements

Don't forget this meeting starts 30 minutes earlier at 7:30 prompt.

VFR Navigation and Use of GPS

Eight strut members attended the above GASCo seminar on 28th April held at the AAIB Farnborough. This proved a most interesting insight to GPS with top speakers from GASCo and Royal Institute of Navigators. We were told last year 300 million GPS chips were made - so many they now cost under £1! Back in 1970, the best automatic navigation equipment could place you within 10 miles, now it is 10 metres. 31 satellites follow 6 orbital planes inclined at 55° at an altitude of 11,000 miles remaining in view for 5 hours on their 12 hour orbits. They broadcast on an 8" wave length with a power of just 25w magnified 10 times by the aerial! This means they are very easy to jam!

Accuracy can be affected by the Atmosphere, Multipath (reflections), Ephemeris, clock errors (which was degraded for civilian use until 2000 and could be applied again if US military wanted to give selective availability), and interference. 4 satellites are required for 3D fix and a measure of accuracy is dilution of precision which should be below 5 and as well as the above is affected by the angles at which calculated lines intersect. Essential for IFR is a receiver that has autonomous error checking providing integrity and monitoring (RAIM).

The Russian system is GLONASS with up to 21 working satellites.

Back up can come from eLoran, Global Geostationary Navigation Overlay Service (GNSS-1) or GPS + GLONASS, if the receiver can operate on these systems. The European system is EGNOS - European Geostationary Navigation Overlay Service. Japan, India and China also have systems and there are augment ground based sys-

tems. By 2020 there are 152 satellites planned. The RIN web site has up to date info.

On using GPS, set up so you do not have to pass directly over the way-point otherwise you keep getting directed back to it. (Must find out how to do that on my old GPSIII). It is recommended to stay to the right of track if using aeronautical way points as someone coming the other way will be in direct opposition if they picked the same height!

The Aware from NATS was also available to play with. Available from www.airspaceaware.com at £149 if you can't wait to find out more at our next meeting! The basic version can be upgraded later after buying an unlock code.

The trip finished with a talk from a senior accident inspector and a tour of the hangar to view ongoing investigations, which have to remain confidential. Contact GASCo for future seminars which have to be pre booked.

The Unveiling

Kim my fiancé & I found ourselves at Farthing Corner on April 24th this year, whereupon I was directed to hold the corner of a very splendid dust sheet covering a bench situated on a fine new patio at the south end of the strip caravan. Cameras rolled, the sheet was duly removed from the new bench, & Simon, Paddy, Martin plus the two of us sat on or around it, chatting about, amongst other things, how it came to be there.

Some may recollect that I brought an aviation career spanning close to 30 years skidding to a fiery halt in the

cherry orchard adjacent to Farthing Corner airstrip on July 26th 2008, destroying my delightful Acroduster 2, G-BUGB, in the process, as well as bugging up Harry Fould's barbecue, whilst doing nothing to improve my physique and appearance either. (http://www.aaib.gov.uk/search_results.cfm will find the AAIB report).

As some may perhaps remember from Kim's ongoing condition reports, I spent a period as an in patient at the Chelmsford regional Burns Unit, followed by ongoing spells, largely at the renowned home of the Guinea Pig Club, the Queen Victoria at East Grinstead. Things are progressing steadily but slowly, with the goal of a cockpit, maybe even of an Airbus again, there as the target.

But it has to be pointed out that I would absolutely certainly have departed this earth on that July date, had it not been for the astonishingly brave and selfless actions of a bunch of kind and modest folk whose misfortune it was to be there on the day, namely Simon Pratt, Paddy Jordan, Alan Bourner, Bruce Alexander, plus Harry Fould's and his lunch guests, which latter put themselves at risk for a person they didn't even know, despite as Cheryl pointed out, the profiterole course being rudely interrupted by an unconventional gate-crasher!

So I felt that the least that could be done to mark these courageous acts



Roger Chaplin unveiled a bench he donated at Farthing Corner on Saturday 24th April.

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would be to put something of use at the strip for the benefit of all. Since I'm now unemployed - even a low cost Carrier feels it must draw the line on it's Captains somewhere - and so can't run to a fire engine, a comfy bench seemed appropriate. (& so involuntarily extending the hours of any impromptu 'fire crew', as they sit on it absorbing the ambience behind beers, teas or whatever!)

But much more importantly than any bench, the bravery of all those involved in my rescue was, and quite rightly, recognised by commendation ceremonies hosted in January 2008 by the Commissioner of the City of London Police, and on May 6th this year by the Acting Chief Constable of Kent Police, at a ceremony held at Force HQ in Maidstone. Kim, my step-daughter Nicola, and myself were privileged to attend as guests of the recipients. The citation was rather moving, and I felt very understated - to approach a burning aircraft wreck full of fuel to save a life requires courage of a higher order than any I possess.

So when you visit the strip, please do sit on the bench and take a few moments to reflect on those selfless acts.

But lastly, take my advice and don't crash!

Roger Chaplin

Dates for your Diary

May 27 Jonathan Smith NATS
Jun 24 Tea at Ripple
Jul 29 BBQ