

April 2014



SKYWRITINGS

Newsletter of the *Kent*



Is Summer on the horizon?

At Last our runways have dried out!

Laddingford was probably the last to be useable after being under water five times!

April Meeting

Air Commodore Bill Croydon will talk about the history of Eastchurch airfield. Air Commodore Croydon has been interested in the history of flying at Eastchurch for a number of years and giving interesting talks on the subject. He is an active member of the Medway Branch of the Royal Aeronautical Society and has written books on the early days of aviation on the Isle of Sheppey.

Last Month's meeting from Gary's notes:-

LAA CEO Phil Hall came to talk about the association and how it will develop in the future. Phil gave a talk about his flying career (basically started with gliding) and how he came to be in the CEO's position. He gave us an insight of where the association should be going and his aspirations. He felt the LAA was slipping away from the members and was keen to improve the links and focus more on the people and less on the procedures. Of the 8000 members only half actually fly and "we" need to have something for the non flyers.

We discussed the issue of "modifications", the fact that of the 140 modifications outstanding, 100 were actually awaiting more information from the applicant.



Nigel Read - Editor

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Phil Hall

24th April Meeting

Eastchurch Airfield, Air Commodore Bill Croydon (Ret'd)

Cobtree Manor Golf Club, 20:00hrs

www.kentstrut.co.uk

He discussed the pitfalls of having an “experimental” category (as in the USA), the problem being that the liability remains with the constructor throughout the life of the aeroplane.

3rd party passenger flying (young aviators) was discussed and the fact that by applying a more structured programme to the day the gliding community were improving their “take up” result from 1 in 1000 to 8 in 1000. Perhaps we (LAA) should be learning something from this.

Some interesting topics were debated and Phil came over as enthusiastic with new approaches and views to some existing issues.

Also, Bill Cole from Sedlecombe strip (Spilsted Farm) who built a Flying Flea, brought along some photographs of it and talked to a few people at the end.

I Learned About Flying From That by Peter Huxley

This tale goes back to the beginning of my flying, having only recently been granted my licence and all the privileges attached thereto. Apart from being eager to fly, I was also keen to take up passengers, to whom I’d bragged about my being a pilot, or just those who had heard and were willing to go flying. On this particular day I had two willing volunteers and I had therefore booked the aeroplane for the afternoon (or so I thought).

The flights were to be in a Cessna 150, the type I was familiar with, having trained on it and my first lesson was during the cruise/climb carrying the first passenger. Despite having checked the security of the seat, I almost fell victim to a common failing of the Cessna seat locking mechanism when, without warning, the seat slid back. In the instant it happened I remembered my instructors warning and let go of the yoke and so avoided pulling the aeroplane into a loop, or more likely a stall. The warning had only been mentioned in passing but it had obviously been taken to heart, so that it came straight to the surface of my mind when needed. I asked the passenger, a slightly older gentleman and quite calm, to hold the yoke while I secured the seat, then carried on with the flight.

The second flight followed immediately and this time with no trauma of moving seats and the possibility of losing control. This time however the weather wasn’t so benign and as we headed west there was a huge black cloud in our path, so I decided that the sight-seeing would be better to the south of the intended area. The flight proceeded normally, with the passenger happy at being in the air and seeing the countryside from above but the problems started as I returned to the airfield.

I knew where I was, at least roughly, and began to descend in preparation to join the circuit. Overhead joins were forbidden as parachuting took place from overhead and in its way, that helped me. I’d come down too early and from 1000 feet, all the trees looked much the same. My navigational saviour was the parachute club Islander, which I could see about a mile away getting ready to land. Now I knew where the airfield was, I headed towards it but all this time, the big, black cloud had been getting closer and its presence could now be felt in the form of strong winds pushing ahead of it.

Now I felt the training come in to play, for as I turned downwind, I felt that the aeroplane wasn’t responding as I thought it should. The wind was carrying me

sideways and I didn't seem to be turning as much as I needed to but again my instructor's words came to the fore, warning me not to over-bank in an attempt to increase the turn. The aircraft would get there in the end but at low level in strong winds, I appeared to be merely drifting, not turning. By keeping to the basics, I ended up going in the right direction and not making a hole in the ground!

Finally I was back at the airfield but far from feeling secure as I was a very low hours pilot and on final approach in the teeth of an approaching squall.

Remembering lessons from further back when I had done basic glider training in the air cadets, I added about ten knots to my approach speed, not only in order to make headway but to add to the control effectiveness. Concentrating very hard, I made a good approach and despite the turbulence, a quite decent landing, so that on rolling out safely I felt considerable relief, which I expressed with a huge sigh. Until then my passenger, in his ignorance, had been unaware that there was anything out of the ordinary and told me so!

Unfortunately that wasn't the end, as on returning to the clubhouse I got a telling off for over-running my booking. The two flights hadn't been particularly long but I'd misunderstood my booking slot, with the potential to inconvenience other users. In fact with the weather conditions it made little difference but I bore it in mind on other occasions.

So what did I learn? There were several things.

First, check and if necessary double-check the security of the airframe, and especially when there is a known weakness.

Second, check the weather is suitable for flying, even when you've only just landed and the next flight follows almost immediately.

Third, remember the basics of your instruction, it's from people who know what they're doing. Had I not, it would have been easy to tighten the turn downwind, possibly with disastrous consequences. The same thought applies to my final approach; seeing others follow me in who were trying to use their normal speed showed how marginal their control of the situation was; they were floating all over the place.

Fourth and finally, be careful what you say or how you behave in front of your passengers. It would be unfair to exhibit over-confidence and especially if you didn't feel that confidence yourself but my sigh of relief un-nerved my passenger and in a similar situation might frighten your passenger and add to the mistrust often unfairly felt by the public with regard to any or all flying.

The final chapter of this whole story, which shows how complacent I'd been when seeing the Cu-Nimb and also not checking the met forecast before the second flight, was on the way home. About twenty minutes after landing and only a few miles from the airfield, I was struck by a white-out and although it was a quite mild day in March, in almost no time there was an inch or more of snow on the ground.

SHARE WANTED:

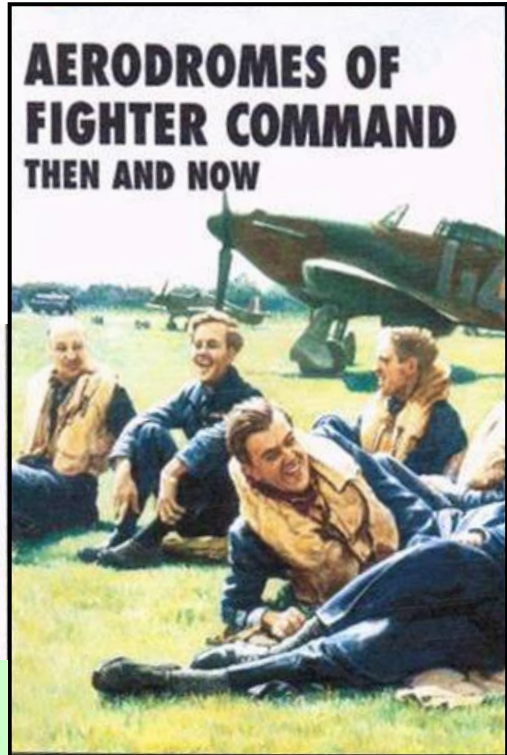
Looking for a share in a syndicate not too far from Ashford. Condor, Jodel, Emeraude or similar. I'm a 300+ hours pilot, though not current, looking to join a group or form one if that would suit and get my feet off the ground. If you have a share going begging or if you want to start a group and find your ideal aeroplane then call me: Peter Huxley 01233 879056 *Also wanted:- articles for newsletter!!! Contact editor.*

New Book

Local author and historian, Robin J. Brooks has written a new book 'Aerodromes of Fighter Command -Then and Now' which will be launched at Duxford Airshow 24/25th May. Priced at £44.95 as a companion to 'Bomber Bases -Then and Now' both published by 'After the Battle'. There will be a signing session with veterans in the aviation book shop marquee opposite hangar 4.

Formed in July 1936, Fighter command had several groups, No. 9 in the west, No. 10 south west, No.11 south east, No.12 east and Nos. 13 and 14 the north, all described in the book. Over 90 bases are described and illustrated, but like those of the first world war, having served their purpose many have returned to farm land, succumbed to housing or industry. However some have continued either for sport or business flying, major modern airports, taken over by the Army or even used by the ministry of Justice. Mouldering buildings remain as poignant reminders of the airmen and women who once inhabited them... now memorials to those who never came through.

www.afterthebattle.com



There are only two types of aircraft
-- fighters and targets!

Commercial Pilots: People who drive aeroplanes for other people who can't fly.

Fighter Pilots: Cold, steely eyed, weapons systems managers who kill bad people and break things. However, they can also be very charming and personable. The average Fighter Pilot, despite sometimes having a swaggering exterior, is very much capable of such feelings as love, affection, intimacy and caring. These feelings just don't involve anyone else.



Stained glass window at St Georges Chapel Ypres- Royal Naval Air Service and Royal Flying Corps. Photo Matt Lee

PAFRA Spot Landing Competition



Cub pilot demonstrating side slipping, determined to hit the spot!



Good Friday's competition at Rochester attracted some strut members but alas not amongst the winners who were:

- 1st Rob Taylor, CHEROKEE ARROW II;
 - 2nd Will Chesson, TB20;
 - 3rd Roger Seaward CHEROKEE WARRIOR II
- Who visited from Biggen Hill.
Simon Pratt brought Ron Parker over from

Farthing Corner in the Luscombe which Ron has spent some time working on its gleaming finish with soda blasting and elbow grease plus an engine problem.



Simon's Luscombe

Photo Ron Parker



Air Brakes are a big help for precision landings

Alan Mayhew's Super Ximango

Photo Ron Parker



Simon Pratt in newly polished Luscombe ready for take off

Cones on either side of 02 and a line of flour marked the 'spot' while judges checked where the main wheels touched.

Your editor thought better of attempting anything like a spot landing in a mono wheel Europa!

Cornwall Flying Club

All **French** aircraft
are invited to

Bonjour Bodmin

BODMIN AIRFIELD

May 3rd & 4th

All welcome!

*A Special weekend when all things
French will be descending on
Bodmin Airfield French
aircraft, cars, motorbikes,
well just anything from
France is invited*

.. and to add to
the fun why not
come along in fancy
dress with a French theme.

01208 821419 PPR Bodmin Airfield

07805 805679 Pete White

www.cornwallflyingclub.com

Food & bar available
Overnight camping

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24th April Strut Meeting

Eastchurch Airfield ,
A/Cdre Bill Croydon Ret'd

18th May Stow Maries WWI airfield

Medway RAeS talk from Roger
Smith BAE Systems 19:00

29th May Strut Meeting, Aviation

Lawyer, Tim Scourer

8th June de Havilland Day

Panshanger

26th June Strut BBQ at Ripple

**July meeting will be held over
to the first weekend of August
for a BBQ and fly-in at
Rochester—2nd/3rd August.
Rolls Royce cars on the
Sunday.**

1st August Young Aviators Day

Panshanger

10th August Panshanger Revival

Day

16th August Combined Ops

Airshow Headcorn

Which will also feature the
Canadian Lancaster with the
BBMF

28th August Strut Meeting

25th September Strut Meeting

30th October Strut Meeting

27th November Strut Meeting