

November 2014



SKYWRITINGS

Newsletter of the *Kent Strut*

Last newsletter before Christmas and Concorde lands at Golf club!

Not really but ex Concorde pilot Richard Pike has agreed at short notice to talk to the strut about flying Concorde. Richard also flies an RV8. We were hoping for a talk on a new engine but business commitments mean postponing until next year.

We have an article from Simon Pratt on the Mcleod Pietenpol which got lost somewhere between Simon's computer and your editor's which should have gone in last month's *Skywriting*. Better late than never.

Mike Negus has found a bit of nonsense which I hope brings a chuckle.

Into the slow months now, so any items for the newsletter would be most welcome!

Don't forget our next meeting is Christmas Dinner at Newnham Court Inn. If you haven't already done so, contact Gary Smith if you are coming. £15 a head.

There is no December meeting at the golf club, next meeting is the AGM in January.

Steve Solley our membership secretary is proposing changing the dates we collect subscriptions to all in January, as this will make it easier in the future to chase up forgetful members and make it easier on any future mem secs. Subs during 2015 will be collected pro rata to take members up to the end of the year. From 2016 all members subs will fall due in January.



Nigel Read - Editor

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under' p7*

27th November Meeting

Concorde pilot Richard Pike

Cobtree Manor Golf Club, 20:00hrs

6th December Christmas Dinner

Monies and selections to Gary Smith by 29th November!

Newnham Court Inn, 19:00hrs

www.kentstrut.co.uk

Gary Smith in the Piet.



Thoughts on flying Ian McLeod's Pietenpol by Simon Pratt

Back when the dinosaurs were young, or that's how it seems, a young man acquired a partially built aeroplane. He spent many hours toiling over the airframe and following investigation decided upon a converted car engine as the power plant. Regrettably his inspector passed away and he had to find another. In 2008 the aeroplane was at an airfield and awaiting permit to test. There were some engine problems which needed to be remedied prior to test and many more hours were spent on this. For various reasons it was decided to replace the inspector. The engine eventually, after suggestions from the LAA, was cleared for use with the aeroplane. There were still propeller problems though. The propeller was changed and tests were completed using a strain gauge. A considerable amount of ground running and taxiing took place before the permit to test fly arrived. There were a few pilots short listed to test fly and this began. There were some problems with the engine which again took a number of hours in the hangar to rectify. Eventually the aeroplane was declared fit to fly again. A volunteer was found to complete the test flying and after a few hours he said that he was beginning to enjoy it. With the test flying complete the aeroplane was now ready for proper flying, unfortunately the builder wasn't. The aeroplane had been built to a high spec and looked lovely. The builder had it insured and there were criteria for anybody who would fly it. This was built as a two place machine but the airframe is a bit heavy so unless the pilot and passenger are both very light it is basically a single seater. At the airfield there are some pilots who meet the criteria stipulated by the insurers of which I am

one. As a basically single seater there is no opportunity to be checked out in it so it's a matter of finding out as much about the characteristics as possible before strapping in. I spoke to the test pilot and was told that it flies quite similarly to a Super Cub, which I did my flight training in. I checked on the various speeds, I say various, most things are done at one speed, the cruise is a little bit higher and the stall a little bit lower. I strapped in, started the engine and taxied to the runway. The first thing to do was to get a feel of the handling on the ground so I did a fast taxi along the runway. Going back to the start of the runway I carried out checks and went for the take off. The climb was sedate, the cruise was sedate, the stall was sedate. I did a low pass along the runway and then another circuit from which I landed. When I stopped and switched off I was asked what it was like. All I could think of was 'it is a gentleman's carriage'. I have since flown twice more and another pilot has also flown it. The other pilot also enjoyed it saying that he had to remember to use the rudder as his own aeroplane doesn't really use much but there was a lot more time to navigate than in the RV. We would both like to thank Ian for the opportunity to fly Dame Flora and would be more than happy to put a few more hours on it for him.

Last Month's meeting

Father Peter Geldard, the catholic Chaplin to the University of Kent gave a very interesting talk on Tempsford, the secret Special Operations Executive's airfield near Sandy, where many SOE operatives left the UK for the last time. Next to the main railway line it was available to the Royal Family should evacuation become necessary. With a personal interest, Peter put together his father's work during the war, when as a civil engineer who knew how to build bridges (and presumably the best way to blow them up) the clues were there when as a young lad out on a bike ride, quite by chance came across a war time heroine, who enquiring about his unusual surname found that she had indeed known his father during the war. Luckily, the power point presentation having not been destroyed in Peter's office fire in Canterbury at the University, we had the opportunity to hear a most interesting and well researched talk from someone clearly used to keeping his congregation spellbound. Peter is currently planning a talk on the raid on Amiens Jail and we would like to hear it when finished. A slight correction from last month's *Skywritings*, Peter flies an Arrow not a Cirrus (although often seen getting out of one)!

This months Meeting

Richard Pike, one of Gary's RV friends and an ex Concorde Pilot is going to be telling us about flying Concorde.



Concorde in the Fleet Air Arm Museum, Yeovil. Also to be found nearer to home at Brooklands.

Research Into Early Aviation Sayings

 Courtesy Cyber Modeler On Line

The Windsock

By Professor D. Tweewitt

I have been interested in aviation language since my pre-adult age. Many facts I discover have I, but most interesting was origin of the Windsock.

In the very early aviation days when planes were fragile and could barely fly, aviators would hold their handkerchief up and if it barely stirred then flying would be. One day a pilot held up the handkerchief but not a man, it was a delicate ladies handkerchief.

This began a collection fad and on days when flying was not the handkerchiefs would be hung on a hangar in the flying shed. Much talking would disturb the air and in turn the handkerchiefs would flutter. Thus the term "hangar flying" was born. Please notice that hangar is spelt "ar" not the modern fashion of "er". Then one day a pilot simply glanced around and said "a light breeze from the south west, I'll fly." Amazed at the lack of a handkerchief fellow pilots quizzed him on how he knew. With a look born of fond memories the pilot pointed to the top of an aeroplane shed. There, on a pole fluttered a ladies silk stocking.

Ah you murmur, that is a windsock. But as the British say you "have jumped over the gun."

Soon every aeroplane shed sported at least one stocking and the local men began betting on which local lass supplied the stocking. An important man in those days was the bank manager called Mr. Grundy. I am not sure if his wife was who the famous Mrs. Grundy became. Mrs. Grundy was a huge woman, so big that bull elephants would mistake her for one of their females. This led to so many physically damaged elephants that circuses would avoid this town.

Mrs. Grundy ranted, raved and stormed so much over the morals of the aviators and their stockings that it soon became evident that she would make these people leave town. Now, for those who have been brought up on a diet of bikinis and G-strings, in early days of the 20th century women's undergarments were pantaloons. These were like long legged shorts ending just above or below the knee. These ends were frilly and tied with a red ribbon. For the impertinent those reading this no investigation have I made to find if these knots were slip knots.

One night one of these intrepid birdmen raided Mrs. Grundy's washing on the line and "borrowed" a pair of her pantaloons. (Early aviators were also called birdmen which is why so many aeroplanes would land in trees). These pantaloons were so honoured that a special place where all could easily see them was arranged. Though as yet not named the future windsock already had an honoured place on an aerodrome.

Walking in town one day an aviator saw Mrs. Grundy and gave her a knowing grin. Bursting to say something but knowing the danger, Mrs. Grundy reached into her shopping bag and stuffed a pair of her husband's socks in her mouth. When this episode was told much hilarity and downing of champagne took place. The words "sock in her mouth" and "windbag" were bandied back and forth until someone came forth with the name windsock. With wear and tear, aided by the propeller of a low flying plane, the pantaloons were reduced to one leg.

If you do not have faith in my research, go you and look at today's windsock. Is it not one leg of a pantaloon, even to the red ribbon on the end!

Narrow escapes 1 *(Remember this one?)*

Mr G P Aird AFC a test pilot with the De Havilland Aircraft Company, ejecting from Lightning P1B XG 332 on 13 September 1962. He was on finals for an emergency landing at Hatfield, following a double reheat fire warning about 15 miles north east of Hatfield. George was making a normal powered approach, unfortunately he had to position for runway 06 as the wind was from the northeast. The runway was short by service standards so the manually operated barrier had been erected at the north east end of 06. At about 10 seconds from



Test pilot George Aird flying a English Electric Lightning F1 - ejected from his English Electric Lightning F1 aircraft at a fantastically low altitude in Hatfield, Hertfordshire 13th September 1962 (Daily Mirror Reference MP_0018484.)

touchdown, at about 100 ft, the aircraft suddenly pitched nose up and since there was no response to the controls, he ejected. The aircraft crashed on the airfield, broke up and caught fire.

The wreckage of the Lightning can be seen just on the airfield short of runway 06 and just beyond the greenhouses in which George landed. Fire damage was the cause of this accident; the anchorage for the tailplane actuator jack had burned away, hence the loss of elevator control.



George landed in a greenhouse sustaining several fractures. The hole where he and the ejection seat went through the glass roof can be seen in the picture in the near end of the roof of the second greenhouse from the left. They landed in adjoining rows of tomatoes! The damage at the far end of the greenhouse was made by the arrival of the Lightning canopy. The remains of the Lightning can be seen on the left just into the airfield. George was back flying again within six months and on Lightnings a year after the accident. George retired from de Havillands (British Aerospace) in 1983 but continued executive and airline flying until his 65th birthday in 1993 eventually converting to a NPPL.

Narrow escapes 2

This was at the end of an aerobatic display at Shoreham in August 2010. You can read about this on the AAIB web site. No time to use a parachute here as it spun in from very low altitude but the pilot did survive. The glider G-IZII was a Swift S1 and part of a display with a Silence Twister.

An escape for one and not another?.....following page....

Latest from CAA: The TLAC are approved to supply factory built aircraft.

Guidance issued on restoring vintage aircraft.

Boost to UK experimental aircraft design.

SERA changes deferred, current rules stay.

Overflight restrictions removed for gyroplanes.



Bill Overstreet The P51 pilot who chased a Bf109 under the Eiffel Tower.



In the spring of 1944 Bill and his P-51C, the 'Berlin Express' were near Paris when the scene that is immortalized in the artwork by Len Krenzler of Action Art that leads this article took place. Bill had followed this Bf109 from the bombers he was escorting when most of the German fighters left. The two planes had been in a running dogfight. The German pilot flew over Paris hoping that the heavy German anti-aircraft

artillery would solve his problem and eliminate Overstreet and the 'Berlin Express', though Bill managed to get some hits in at about 1500 feet. The German's engine was hit, and Bill stayed on his tail braving the intense enemy flak. His desperation undoubtedly growing, the German pilot aimed his plane at the Eiffel Tower and in a surprising manoeuvre, flew beneath it. Undeterred, Bill followed right behind him, scoring several more hits in the process. The German plane crashed and Bill escaped the heavy flak around Paris by flying low and full throttle over the river until he had cleared the cities heavy anti-aircraft batteries.

William Overstreet Jr., a former captain in the U.S. Air Corps, passed away at the age of 92 at a hospital in Roanoke, Virginia.

Overstreet's famous flight in his P-51C beneath the Eiffel Tower in Nazi-occupied Paris in 1944, has been credited with lifting the spirits of French Resistance troops on the ground. For his valiant service, the French ambassador to the United States presented Overstreet with France's Legion of Honour at the National D-Day Memorial in Bedford in 2009. Before the ceremony, Overstreet had previously said that, if he lived long enough to receive the Legion of Honour, he would be accepting it in memory of his fallen brothers. In particular, he wanted to pay tribute to a friend, Eddy Simpson, who died fighting the Nazis on the ground so his comrades, including Overstreet, could escape.

Bill Overstreet is pictured at an event, Warbirds Over the Beach, in 2013

(via Fred Smith our US strut member)



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Dates for your Diary

- 27th November Strut meeting
Flying Concorde—Richard Pike
- Christmas Dinner :-
Saturday 6th December
Newnham Court Inn at
Notcuts Garden Centre
ME14 5LH
- 29th January 2015. Strut AGM and
social
Royal Aeronautical Society Medway:
BAe Staff Canteen at 19:00 ME1 2XX
- 10th Dec RNAS—Air Cdre Bill Croydon
- 21st Jan Simulators for GA—Max
Couch
- 18th Feb Bomber Command—
Steve Tindell