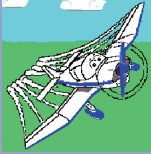


January 2015



SKYWRITINGS

Newsletter of the *Kent Strut*



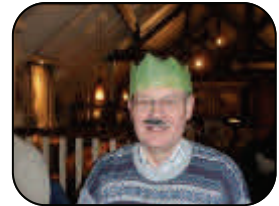
Happy New 2015

AGM

January sees the AGM and social chat afterwards. Graham Hammond has left the committee after many years as membership secretary, Steve Solley taking the reigns last year. With a year's experience behind him, Steve is proposing changing the date on which memberships are collected with 2015 being an interim period where memberships falling after January will be reduced pro rata to bring them all in line with a January renewal date in 2016.

Christmas Dinner

Once again, Gary collected the money, Mike organised the raffle and John chased up the food.



Nigel Read - Editor

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29th January Meeting
AGM and Social

www.kentstrut.co.uk

Chasing Vera Mike Negus

It may not have escaped the members attention but for two months this Summer we had the pleasure of seeing more than one Avro Lancaster flying in the skies over the UK due to the fact that Canadian Warplane Heritage Museum flew their prized aeroplane from its base in Hamilton, Ontario to be lodged temporarily with the RAF Battle of Britain Memorial Flight at Coningsby. This aircraft is privately owned and maintained in Canada and so was unique in being able to seek sponsorship for the trip principally from Thwaites Brewery over here, other private and corporate sponsors and from the Souvenir caravan which did a roaring trade everywhere it went.

Not without problems, one engine went tech during the tour but by a team effort from the BBMF, CWH and others she was back in the air with a borrowed engine. Given my predilection for this sort of thing, I was very keen not to miss the opportunity of seeing the 2 Lancasters flying together. Thwarted by getting my Summer holiday out of kilter I missed them on the Saturday at Headcorn, the weather misbehaving on the Sunday when I did get to Headcorn I had to lay plans.

They were due to display at Detling so at the appointed hour a gaggle of us at Farthing Corner, binoculars and cameras to the fore waited their arrival. When they appeared it was so far in the distance as to be nothing more than a fleeting glimpse between the trees, in fact it looked as if they were south of Detling. Blast, another missed opportunity. Meanwhile some of our more intrepid folk had actually got airborne for Airbourne (Eastbourne Airshow) that is and were able to ambush the Lancs, from a safe distance and so were able to view from a different perspective.

Nothing for it but to shell out money and go to an organised Airshow, Duxford, where they were billed to appear but as always weather and serviceability permitting. We were not to be disappointed and a couple of photos show what a lot of people were able to see. It was a privilege and billed as a once in a lifetime experience that I certainly wouldn't have missed. I can't imagine Vera coming back anytime soon, I don't know how many hours were flown but it must have taken a fair bit off the available airframe and engines. However, just up the way in Lincolnshire is of course Jane our other taxyable Lancaster which if a rich sponsor could put their hands in their pockets for about £3 million or so, who knows in 2 or 3 years we could have another once in a lifetime event. Just hope I am around to see it.





Concorde talk in November

Richard Pike, an ex concord co-pilot and RV flyer gave us an absorbing talk on his training and described typical flights in this iconic aircraft.

Training started with 6 weeks of ground school, 2 months on a very old simulator at Filton then circuits and bumps followed at Prestwick. Six exciting years as co pilot, then captain on 777 and 747. Richard said he was lucky to be in right place at the right time having started with BCal on 111's. There were 10 route flights, taking two years to feel really competent! 15 co-pilots in the group making it unique to know everyone.

Concorde carried 95 tons of fuel which was used to maintain C of G at 53.5% which is critical. Taxi is with the visor down, nose half down, 5° (fully down is 12.5°). Pilot sits 38 feet in front of nose wheel! Fly by wire was new to commercial aircraft then. Fuel burn of 25 tons/hr during take off, each engine! Tyre speed limitation 250 mph! Usual low level speed restrictions applied and had to keep to 250 kts at low level.

Drag increases at low speed. If really slow, it does not stall but pitches nose up with loss of elevator control, ending in a tail slide. Droop nose is raised when ATC release speed to 400 kts. Start moving fuel at Mach 0.7. It's necessary to warn passengers when reheat brought back in, in pairs (15 min limit). Reheat off at about 43,000 feet, aiming for Mach 2. There are various calls at different Mach nos. eg air intake ramps to slow air down to about 0.5 Mach. (The engines will not work with super sonic air, slowing it down in about 15 feet). 60,000' height limit.

40 % of fuel is used in the first 40 minutes!

At Mach 2, indicated airspeed is about 430 kts.

Navigation is by inertial system, and DME at either end.



A line up of three Concorde(s)

Max nose probe temperature is 127°C . Fuel is used to control cabin temperature – didn't want to cook the passengers and at the end of the flight with fuel used it was getting warm!

About 120 miles to decelerate and descend to get below Mach 1 to avoid sonic boom over land.

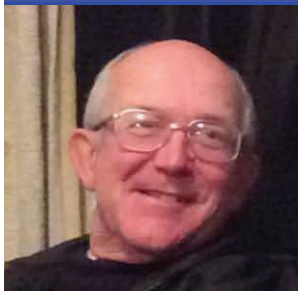
Approach is at 190 kts. No flaps are fitted just elevons (elevator/ aileron). At 500 feet speed is reduced to about 165 kts. Higher speed produces less drag and less power is required, hence quieter. Ground effect at 15 feet.

The last flight into Heathrow was on 24th October 2003.

The project seemed to go on for so long it seemed normal to refer to Concorde in the singular ie there goes Concorde, not 'a'Concorde. (ed) Photos from Richard Pike



Richard in the co-pilot's seat



Peter Huxley

Revalidating a PPL - Peter Huxley

My interest in flying, like many others, goes back to a very young age. Even as a small child I'd been interested in machines of all kinds, cars first of all, then ships but my interest in aeroplanes wasn't sparked until on one family holiday, I saw flights being offered. I pestered my parents to let me go, as indeed they did, leaving me to wait my turn for a trip round the harbour in an Auster flying out of Bembridge. It was still a grass aerodrome then, long before Britten-Norman took over.

I had to wait for some time as the pilot wanted to take two at a time and I was on my own. He eventually took pity on me and so I climbed into the right-hand seat and watched in awe as we prepared for flight. That was more than 50 years ago (!) and all I really remember is a brief look out of the window at Bembridge harbour and spending most of my time asking questions of the pilot about what he was doing with the controls. Brief though the flight was, perhaps no more than 15 minutes, I was enthralled and so began a life long love affair with aeroplanes and flying.

Later on at grammar school I joined the ATC and added to my experiences which included my first solo in a Cadet Mk III glider. Flying wasn't the only cadet activity I enjoyed but there was enough to keep the interest alive, with air experience flying at Manston in Chipmunks and also on annual camps. That was often in the station Chipmunk but also in things like the Varsity and on one memorable occasion, a flight in a soon to be time-expired Anson.



Unfortunately, poor eyesight prevented me having the chance to become a professional pilot and at that time personal finances precluded my paying for lessons. That situation continued although the dream was always there, which eventually became a reality with an inheritance.

As I lived near Maidstone, I could have gone to Rochester or Headcorn but by a slightly tortuous route chose Headcorn with an independent instructor, Bruce Abbott. His calmness and patience were of huge help and whilst not being in any way domineering, made it clear that as far as he was concerned, there is only one way to fly and that is properly. My previous glider flying, though many years past and only circuits, definitely helped and had shown me the basics of control. Bruce polished those skills as well as introducing me to the added complications of engine management, navigation and using the radio.

After little more than the minimum hours, I became the pleased as Punch holder of a PPL and started to build my hours. Fairly slowly as I still wasn't wealthy (nor am I yet!) but thoroughly enjoying being off the ground.

Fast forward a few years and I had moved to Dorset and with three others formed a

group, owning a Cherokee 140. It was a handy sort of machine, easy to fly and good for hour building, though not really a fun aeroplane. Thus after five years we looked for something else, eventually settling on a Rollason Condor. Within a short time all of us were converted to tailwheel flying, in both senses and really enjoyed the experience.

Fast forward another few years and for personal reasons, moved from Dorset and back to Kent. The trouble from the flying point of view was that being self-employed I had to re-build my business, unfortunately at a time when the country was declining economically so there was a long hiatus in my flying.

During that time I joined the Kent strut, partly just to keep my interest alive, helped by the occasional flight with another member. I'd hoped to be able to join a group and re-activate my flying that way but there were no vacancies available, at least in Permit aircraft, so the pause continued. Within a couple of years things were looking more hopeful but in talking to one instructor, I discovered that if I didn't re-validate soon I would probably have to take a lot more instruction to regain my licence and I could even lose my CAA PPL and have to resort to one of the new EASA based licences. My only choice was to get started as soon as possible.

Being near Headcorn, that was my obvious choice of venue, where I found that Bruce Abbott is still instructing, so once again I was ministered to by his calm, meticulous direction.

Having previously flown the Condor, my choice of mount was one of the Robins, rather than the Cessna 150 I'd previously used. It was only a little more expensive but this time I wasn't going to be flying it for 40+ hours (I hoped!).

A booking was made for the first lesson and even though it was late October, it didn't have to be changed and was in fact clear skies. The flight was general handling, where I discovered I hadn't lost the ability though very out of practice. That was followed by stalls in various configurations as well as recovery from a spiral dive which was something I hadn't done since basic training. A couple of circuits and touch and go concluded the lesson.

Bruce seemed reasonably pleased at how much I remembered and I felt pleased too. Not only at getting behind the controls again but also at feeling so comfortable with it, especially in a type I hadn't previously flown. The Robin responds well but after my previous flying the controls seemed heavy, especially in pitch and there is also the need to discover where the horizon should be on the windscreen.

My next flight was in similar weather, this time concentrating on practice engine failures, followed by some circuits. Most of the PFLs were done over Romney Marsh and that helped me as there are plenty of large, open fields to choose from so that if you aren't quite going to reach one there is a better chance of finding an alternate. Again we were both fairly pleased with my progress and I could feel my confidence building.

The next phase was navigation and here I was decidedly rusty. I've never based my flying on the GPS but also what flying I had done was short trips which required only a basic ability to read the map. This time my navigation was to be a proper, planned, line on a map, DR; plotted by headings, timings and waypoints. It was

only a short flight but encompassed all the basics of navigation. Bruce refreshed my memory as we went along, of what to look for and how to look for the right signs but whatever else, I didn't just dart from one landmark to another, something he told me would be a definite failure.

I had now done three flights, each around an hour and I was feeling quite happy with my progress. The next was to be a general revision of handling, which if acceptable, would show that I was ready for my skills test. Once again the booking didn't need to be changed, so at least the weather Gods were on my side. All four flights went ahead on their first booking, even though the first had been the day after a hurricane remnant had swept the country. It had been windy but not excessively so, nor particularly turbulent. So, after only four refresher flights, I was deemed ready for my skills test.

I met my examiner, Andrew Viall who agreed a date for the test and then gave me the route for the Navex. Thus prepared, I kept an eye on the weather and as the date approached it began to look as if my luck was running out. The forecast a couple of days before suggested that the day of my test could be at best marginal, or at worst, a washout. The day before my flight I rang Andrew to discuss it with him and he suggested we keep the original booking as he was going to be busy anyway later in the week and who knows what might happen after that.

When the day dawned the pessimism in the forecast was unfounded (*as it often is, ed.*) and it looked a very reasonable day. In fact, for the time of year, it was near perfect. The wind wasn't very strong, there was little turbulence, visibility was good, if a little hazy in the distance and the cloud base was about 5000 feet. There was some cloud at about 3000, which we climbed above for stalling but it was very broken, with more holes than cloud. Andrew made few comments during the flight as one would hope, even when the PFL didn't go as smoothly as it might.

I did all the right things except make a quick decision on my choice of field. It's not a good idea to just pick one and go for it no matter what but as you're descending fast there's little time to prevaricate and picking the wrong one can have dire consequences, as has been proved many times.

However, Andrew was pleased enough with my actions and decided I could be trusted to fly without endangering others or myself. I've now proved this by taking one of the club aircraft solo and again it was at the first booking, this time in spectacularly good weather, no cloud, thirty miles vis, light winds and no turbulence.

The whole exercise of getting my licence back took a month. It was a pleasant and rewarding experience and has made me even more determined to get into a syndicate and continue to enjoy the thrill of flight but at a somewhat lower cost.

If there's anyone out there who is worried that they would like to get flying again but is not sure if they can remember how, give it a try, you won't regret it.

parkrun

Trying to loose the Christmas pounds or worried about that next medical? Try a 5k run on a Saturday morning at 9am! At a park near you, (12 in Kent) register at parkrun.org.uk. It's Free! (you can walk, bring the dog or push a buggy round!).

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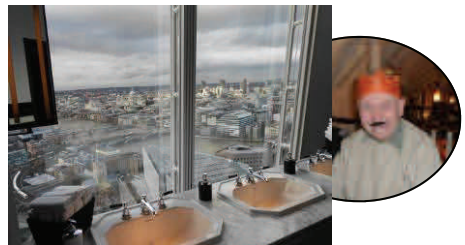
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Loo with a view! From Mike Roper at the Shard

**New Member:-**

Kevin Marks, a new PPL who flies from Biggin. Welcome to the Strut.

Dates for your Diary

29th January AGM and social evening

26th February Strut Meeting
Weslake Diesel engine
John Lamberton

Managing Director, Weslake

LAA Engineering—coming soon