



September 2015

SKYWRITINGS

Newsletter of the *Kent Strut*



newsletter

Sedlescombe Fly-in, 15th August

In years gone by the strip at Sedlescombe (near Hastings) has hosted some sizable gatherings, including aircraft from the Tiger Club, Utterly Butterly wing walkers and other display teams on the “summer circuit”.

The owner, Bill Cole, has been the custodian of many aircraft and started building his first aircraft, a “Flying Flea”, at the age of 14. His father forbade him to fly the creation but some years later, having graduated from aeronautical college with a much greater understanding of aerodynamics, he built a second “Flea” with the full intention of flying it. Those familiar with the “Flea” will know it attained a bad reputation pre-war which resulted in many crashes, and post-war the PFA (as it was then) refused to take it on. Bill went to the CAA, explained he believed the problem to be no limit stops on the elevator (top wing) and they gave him a sanction for test. Bill probably has more hours flying his “Flea” than anybody



Nigel Read - Editor

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September Meeting

Legal Commercial Operation of Quadcopters

Cobtree Manor Golf Club, 20:00hrs

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else (in the region of 70 hours) all without incident, so maybe his theories were correct. Bill's machine is shown below.

Bill was donated a second Flea which was built as a museum exhibit rather than a flying machine but I am convinced it would fly. Rather amusingly it has been fabric covered and the original construction plans doped on top, rather like some of the London taxis that are covered with a newspaper paint job (right top).



The pilot of a French Built Flea then decided to donate his machine (right bottom) to Bill when he hung up his flying goggles in the late 1990's, thus bringing Bill's collection to three.

In the 2000's some rather objectionable folk moved into the local village and decided to kick up a fuss about the noise of light aircraft from the established airstrip. Much anguish was caused but eventually Bill won the day and providing users follow

the noise abatement approach, things can continue as normal.

Bill wanted to revive a bit of 'yesteryear' and decided to lay on a summer fly-in/BBQ and invited pilots from the LAA Kent Strut. The date of Saturday 15th August was set much earlier in the year but unfortunately it clashed with several other events / local airspace restrictions, so attendance was lower than expected. The approach plate was attached to the strut newsletter and it was hoped the up slope to the north and the noise abatement procedure did not dissuade too many people from flying in.

Those who arrived by air or car were treated to a splendid spread of food and great hospitality, all laid on by Bill and his fellow pilots from the strip. Hopefully, if Bill holds an event next year, there will be lots more people to take wonder at his collection of "Flying Fleas".





Garden party atmosphere at Sedlescombe



Gary on short final in his Van's RV9.

Meetings

Last meeting BBQ 27th August



The Strut BBQ at Rochester was the first opportunity to use our new gazebo with a built-in control tower.

It may have been the poor weather forecast that put people off, but in the event the sun came out and it was a very pleasant evening. Unfortunately only a small number of members came along to Rochester to enjoy the last of the summer events. The BBQ took a lot of organising with transporting the gazebo and equipment to Rochester and clearing up afterwards.

The August fly-in at Rochester and the Sedlescombe fly-in invite were also poorly supported and the small group of volunteers that put these events on is beginning to wonder if it is worth the effort. If anyone has suggestions as how to improve attendance at events or meetings, whether it be about the content or the timing, please let a member of the committee know so that we can encourage better attendance.

Future Meetings: September

The **September 24th** meeting sees us back to the Cobtree Manor Golf Club on the Rochester/Maidstone Road following our summer break. The guest speaker for the evening, which commences at 8:00, will be Dennis Stretton, who will be talking about legally flying quad copter drones for commercial operations. With drones fast becoming the next big issue in recreational aviation, it should be a very interesting talk. Dennis is based at Stow Maries and it's possible that Russell Savory, who has been instrumental in the airfield's restoration, may also attend.

September 27th has been set for our annual fly-out to Abbeville for lunch. The restaurant at the airfield is excellent and reasonably priced, so come along and enjoy what for most of us will be the final cross-channel trip of the season. The plan is to get to Abbeville by around 12:00 local (11:00 UK) which means leaving by about 10:00 UK. If you are an inexperienced cross channel flyer then advice is available from John Dean or Gary Smith (their contact details are on the back of the newsletter). They can also help with the 'paperwork'. And if you have a spare seat, please let us know so that we can try to fill it.

October 10th - The LAA Annual General Meeting

October 10th is earmarked for the LAA's AGM in Sywell Aerodrome's Cirrus Room in the Aviator Hotel. I know that for most this is regarded as a bit of a yawn, but this year we have two very good speakers to entertain you, plus an open forum after the business of the AGM has been concluded. It really should be an interesting day out so why no car share and come along to see the whos and hows of the running of YOUR association.

The day starts at 10:00 for tea and biscuits before LAA Chairman opens the proceedings with a welcome to members at 10:45. This is followed at 11:00 by the first speaker, Dr. Paul Robertson from Cambridge University, who will give a talk entitled "Electric & Hybrid Propulsion for Light Aircraft" Paul has been working with Flylight and they have already flown a Honda and electric motor powered single seater.

After a break for lunch between 12:00 and 13:00 (bar snacks available in the Aviator and there's a café on site) we have the presentation of LAA Service Awards to those members who have given generously of their time and expertise, often over many years, for the benefit of their fellow members.

Between 13:30 and 14:30 there will be a talk by Desmond Penrose, ex RAF Vampire and Meteor pilot, De Havilland development test pilot noted for working on and demonstrating the Trident airliner with John Cunningham, Shuttleworth display pilot from 1964 to 2005, restorer of the 1932 Arrow Active racing biplane in which he came second in the 1980 King's Cup air race, and once owner of the ex Alex Henshaw Cape Record Mew Gull G-AEXF. Desmond has led a full and active life in aviation, having flown over 300 types.

The AGM starts at 14:30 followed at 15:00 by an open forum where members can raise any issues they wish to discuss with the Board. The meeting will be drawn to a close at around 16:00.

The above represents a good day's entertainment so I hope some of you will make the effort to attend. For those not able to come, there will be a Proxy Voting Form on the reverse side of the address sheet for the October issue of *Light Aviation* magazine which enables you to vote for candidates standing for election to the Board of Directors, and any motions for changes to the Association's Memorandum or Articles.

October & November. TBA

December

The Annual Strut Christmas Dinner will once again be held at the Newnham Court Inn at Notcutts Garden Centre, Maidstone, close to the M20/A249 (Junction 7). It is scheduled for Saturday December 12th at 8:00 for 8:30. The menu will be sent out with the next newsletter but the price is expected to be around £16. Places may need to be limited so please let Gary Smith know how many places you wish to reserve and send a £5 per person deposit.

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LAA Rally

This year's Rally was well received with around 800 arrivals despite somewhat autumnal weather



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on the first couple of days. A number of Strut members attended and particular thanks go to Gary who presented metalwork demonstrations in the Homebuilders Centre all three days. Star of the Show? The beautiful Fox Moth ZK-AGM restored by Jan Cooper's team at the Newbury Aeroplane Company.

**Dates for your Diary**

24th September – Meeting at Cobtree Manor Golf Club. Quad Coter Operations.

27th September – Abbeville Fly-out

10th October – LAA AGM Sywell

29th October – Meeting. TBA

26th November – Meeting. TBA

12th December – Christmas Dinner