



June 2016

# SKYWRITINGS

Newsletter of the *Kent Strut*



## Fly-ins and Barbie's ahead

### Ripple Fly-in

This year, Steve Solley is opening up the fly-in to his favourite charity, the Martha Trust and would appreciate some early arrivals in the afternoon. As usual, please contact Steve, on **07836 653257**. Remember it is a short strip about 350m so make sure you are confident with short grass strips, otherwise drive in. Ice cream will be available to buy from the shop so bring a cold bag!

### Strut News

You may have noticed in *Light Aircraft*, our own John Dean was awarded a Royal Aero Club Certificate of Merit for numerous past and present unstinting devotion to the LAA.

Last month's meeting was an outline of the strut organized cross Channel fly-out for LAA members as part of the 70th year celebrations and Mike Negus expanded on his trip to France described in last month's *Skywritings* in the footsteps of the Red Baron.

This month's *Skywritings* has a report from Paddy Jordan on his trip to Sun n' Fun combining his interest in aeroplanes, motor bikes, cars and a bit of a watery tale.



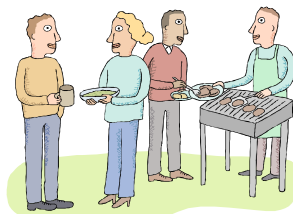
Nigel Read - Editor

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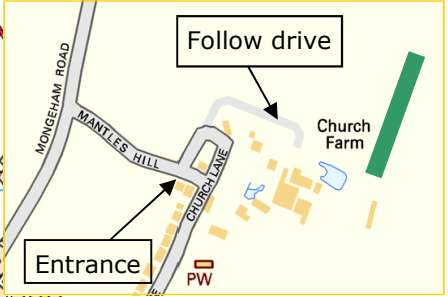
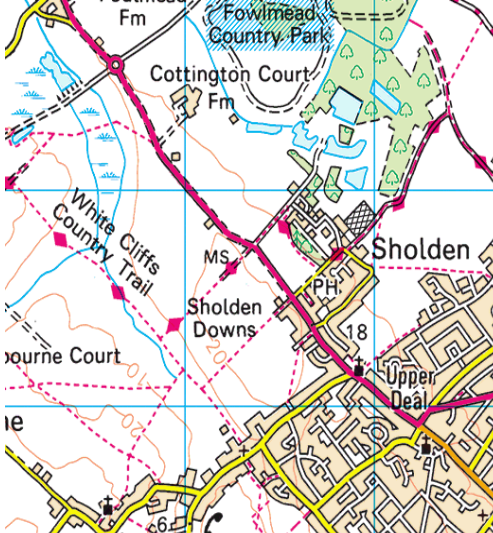


### June Meeting

Ripple Fly or Drive in BBQ

The Dairy, Ripple near Deal, CT14 8JL

[www.laakentstrut.org.uk](http://www.laakentstrut.org.uk)



Map of Ripple Farm strip PPR  
 Stephen Solley 07836 653257

We're between Dover and Deal.  
 Cut off the main road A258 at the  
 Five Bells pub in Ringwoud and  
 follow the sound of mooing . . .



Entrance

France →

↓ Dover

## Sun & Fun revisited 2016 Paddy Jordan

My last trip to Sun & Fun was in 2004, when on discussing my trip with an old friend who had been a professional photographer he suggested I ought to join the modern age and go digital, his choice was Nikon Coolpix arguing that for the majority of the time it was more than adequate. I sold my Rolliflex 35 mm complete with three lenses and motor drive for the princely sum of £30.00 not enough for the Coolpix, hind sight I should have kept it. I am still using the Coolpix to this day.

So when asked to contribute to the photo bank for Nigel and Skywritings I took the Nikon plus another digital camera as back up.

The lead up to the off had been a bit hectic as both Brian and I had to get our boats in the water early as our launching date was originally the day we were due to leave for Sun & Fun. I had a particular problem that having been one of 16 boats damaged by the actions of a so called "professional" skipper and river pilot of a 3600 tonne dredger in 2014 and despite the help of Ron Parker in carrying out the repairs, I had found more damage had come to light in the 2015 season so had catch up on the additional plus yearly maintenance.

The four of us meet up, John Dean, Brian Hope, Nigel Read and I at Farthing corner on the afternoon of Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> at a respectable 1600 hours. I say respectable as we stayed over night at the Hilton Heathrow after a meal in a local pub, catching the shuttle bus at 0330 the following morning or was it still night? (*slightly less respectable, Ed*) I though retirement meant you took life easy!!

I am not a great lover of commercial flying suffice to say we landed in Orlando after catching our connecting flight from Newark. After initial confusion as which Alamo outlet to meet at, Brian and John were at the booking desk, Nigel and I were I at the car booking out kiosk! This was bought about by my case taking well over twice the time of the others to emerge.

I had planed to purchase instruments for the Reliant Mini Max project, although on talking to Brian I understand as we will be diverting from the plans we have to call it some thing different, one suggestion is DBR1 (Dell Boy Reliant 1 and it can only be Yellow) plus a pair of heated handle bar grips for my Bonneville, as it has American diameter 1" bars and also a folding camping oven made by Coleman.

The oven dissuasion came about as a result of sailing trips with Ron and Brian, I would anchor up and Brian would raft up along side and we would use my cooking facilities for meals, the problem came when trying to cook breakfast for 3 on a two burner and grill stove, how do you keep it all warm with out drying it up?

I list all the above to prove that you should listen to the voice of experience, Brian and John have been going to Sun & Fun now for 20 years and Brian warned me to go on line and order what I wanted in advance! With all the panic I forgot.

Our first day at the show Tuesday consisted of getting our passes and welcome bags



*"Second to Non" awaiting installation of new mast along side mast crane*

from the media centre and a golf buggy ride to the main display area of the show. After a quick walk round to acquaint our self with the layout and in my case to realise I had left my hat and sun cream back at the Villa, you do need it 84°F clear blue skies.

With the constant nagging of Uncle Brian I bought a floppy wide brimmed hat and also a pair of dark glasses that I can wear over my normal specs and despite my initial cringe at the price of both, in the case of the glasses it was less than the cost of photo reactive treatment on one pair of glasses and as they are not polarised you can read LCD displays.

Wondering around the Hangers I came across this bi-plane, the photo says it all.



This one of the great advantages of Sun & Fun, you are treated as an adult and allowed to wonder virtually all over the field at all times including air side unless there is an air display on and although hi viz. jackets are every where it is not accompanied with the inane "Elf and Safety " attitude of Great Britain! A real pleasure, a can do attitude.

One of the other display aircraft that caught my eye was this early American experiment at vertical take off and landing just Imagine trying this for size. Similar to my early days of PFA rallies I remember taking school children around, the Americans do the same, working hard to encourage the younger generation to get involved.

There are work shops for wood, metal, including welding, fabric covering with some familiar faces such as Poly - Fiber, propeller carving and alternative engine sources - this was of particular interest to me but as apposed to the 850cc Reliant I am using, they are mainly working on V8's. One engine that was interesting was Pete Plumb's half 0-200 DP-1 which he is expecting will produce 57 hp, if you want to know more look up <http://flypegasuspower.com/> .

I finished the day with a trip to the component hangers to find an altimeter,



compass and airspeed indicator oh dear what did Brian say, ORDER BEFORE YOU GO!!!

Of all the stands I tried only one was at all optimistic, Lockwood Aviation Supply and they were basically Rotax Engine's.

First problem I wanted an altimeter in Millibars, America's are inch's mercury however the lady on the stand said that she would look that night when she went back to the shop, American service.

To save walking to far the show has a tram way using tractors and trailers to ferry you round, so hop on and back to base and home for the day.

Evening meal, the one thing I remembered about America was the beer!! yuk.

I used to crew on a cruiser racing yacht that belonged to an American bank manager so a lot of the time we would have the banks customers as crew. One I remember in particular as I had to apologise to Al for a comment that he was not like other Americans I had met, turned out to be Texaco's European finance director. Al had an interest in sailing and English beer so over the season we became friends and when I made a comment about American beer he replied "you English have some very quaint sayings Natts piss describes American beer".

I found the beer has not improved so plumped for sharing a bottle of wine with John and Nigel, the wine is good.

Wednesday at the show was a time to wander around the parking areas, now I am sure that Mike Negus will correct

me if I get this wrong but when would you see a collection of T28's like this in England. To assist in marshalling the aircraft from runway to taxi way or parking areas a local motorcycle club was being used as below, smoke is from Wright "Double Cyclone" not motor bike.



After our midday meet for ice cream, as we made it a rule to only have breakfast and an evening meal, although on my first trip I found I could not eat an adults portion of food and used to cause a lot of amusement

with the waitresses when asking for a child's portion this time I found the portions more manageable.

I returned to Lockwood's where the lady produced a compass and airspeed indicator, but no luck with altimeter but if I could wait until Friday she would try to locate one, American service again. I remembered when I was involved with

Luscombe G-BSNT ordering some new tail wheel springs on the Monday from the US and fitting them on the following Thursday in time for the Saturday Flying!! That's when I appreciated American service.

So back to the parking areas, as an ex part owner of what must be one of the most under rated aeroplanes a LUSCOMBE, I was on the look out for some, maybe just one or possibly two. As luck would have it on returning to the vintage parking, in taxied an 8F, followed by an 8A his friend who after their mammoth flight with umpteen refuelling stops to get to the show the 8A pilot put up the wrong card indicating that he wanted to take off again so had had to do another circuit to re-land.

Passing the time with the 8F pilot I commented that I had had to stop flying on retirement due to the cost, he then informed me he was having to consider his situation and to that end had come to the show to look at an example of the Merlin.

Look in the background of the Merlin picture, and yes its a set of floats!

**We will come back to them later.**

It would not be an American air show without what could arguably be the most successful fighter of the second world war, Mustang P51D, although built to an English specification the early variants had an Allison engine and eventually were fitted with a Packard Merlin after the RAF tried a RR Merlin which transformed it, an old friend who worked on both RR Merlin's and Packard Merlin's said he preferred Packard's as being mass produce every spare fitted out of the box.

One of the Jet attractions was a de Havilland Vampire described by the commentator as a wooden Jet. It was very difficult to get near it as it created a lot of interest, so I had to be content with a photo of jet and people! (*on page 11*)

This was Tuesday, weather was still bright and warm as can be scene from photos but Wednesday there was a possibility of rain so the decision was made to take a day off from the show, initially to go to Daytona race track as I had been talking to the Florida tourist and transport gentleman on his stand. It turned out we were both motor bike enthusiasts and jointly remembered when in the mid 1960's Triumphs campaigned a 500cc ohv bike against the 750cc Harley Davidson and won. But on looking up on the internet we could not see that the race track had a museum so abandoned the idea in favour of the Kennedy Space Centre.

Thursday and a cloudy sky with the occasional spot of rain so off to Cracker Barrel for breakfast, again listen to the voice of experience or there is no fool like an old one I tried grits and sawmill gravy. (*apparently this is food, Ed*) Brian and John why did you not stop me!

Kennedy Space Centre is, to use the American vernacular, *awesome*. There is a guided bus tour of the site which is well worth going on with all the bus drivers being stand up comics, is it the sun that makes them so happy!!



*Rocket Garden from the early days.  
Did they start as fireworks and get  
fed on Growmore?*



The launch track laying vehicle was massive and each link plate of the caterpillar track weights in at a staggering one ton but only travels at a sedate speed so it is all relative.

The fuel and rocket boosters for the shuttle again are enormous so when you consider the cost of just the fuel you can see why NASA is looking to the private sector for joint enterprises.

While we were there we were told of a launch to take place on the Friday of a reusable rocket by Elon Musk's Space X, which it was planned to land back on a barge at sea, which it did.

The tour and associated displays plus film shows were very impressive and the fact that they tell you about their failures as well as their successes I found very humbling.

Well worth the visit and of cause was the mandatory mid day ice cream.

Friday back at the show and off to Lockwood's and the lady had only managed to get an airspeed indicator in MPH and the compass but as Brian pointed out all the Mini Max performance figures were in MPH. Then to Air parts for some more shopping. Back at the flight line where I saw a B17 of what is now called the Commemorative Air force that was advertising pleasure flights, can you imagine the BBMF Lancaster doing that. As I was looking round one of the helpers asked if I would mind stepping over to the other side of the taxiway as they were due to start





up and that it created considerable prop wash. Remembering the days of the Sally B I was determined to get some pictures of start up as it can be spectacular. As I composed the picture I could see amongst all the burly men the slight figure of a lady.

Look for blue shorts this is the group of passengers being briefed you may need a magnifying glass to see but if you look in the nose of the B17 in the next photo there is the same blue shorts.

Back for mid day ice cream and Brian suggested we go to the Flea market to see if I can get an altimeter.

To enter the market you have to hand in your bag in exchange for a token. As I was handing over my bag I recognised the lady as the B17 passenger - a lady of mature years. Asking her if she had enjoyed her trip her face lit up, Brian enquired how much? she replied "well worth it". On exiting the market I asked again how much - \$850.



I offered to email photos, which I did on my return to which I received a "THANK YOU THANK YOU - I am booked next for a P51" What Enthusiasm.

Saturday is the main air show day and before the air show started I accompanied the illustrious editor of that well know magazine to meet a couple who were friends of Mike Roper, looking at the aircraft you can see why, very interesting way to spend retirement flying round the world.

Exiting the home builders section the air show commenced, watching some of the manoeuvres of the aerobatic aircraft you are left wandering how the wings stay on and also what is the position of the pilots brain in his skull, very aggressive. Red Bull were demonstrating their racing series so plenty going on. I have only once tried aerobatics and although it was very sedate doing a loop in a Chipmunk I decided it is not for me.



So back to the static display areas, there was a classic car show with a lot of American exotica but this caught my eye as back in the 1970's the firm I worked for had a Mini van and a mini pick up both of which I drove. (Photo Page 11)



It was surprising how many British cars were on display one which the owner said was a Nash I remember it as an Austin Metropolitan.

The representatives on this solar powered motor glider stand were cagey as to who and what it was to be used for but reading between the lines they were planning for long duration which would possibly make it a transmitting base for internet access avoiding the cost of a satellite. *(it's a scaled down version of what they have in mine. The shade is because the sola cells are only 22% efficient, the rest is heat, Ed)*. This use of a cordless drill proves there is nothing new, an old friend at the yacht club used the bottom bevel drive of a Segull outboard to do exactly the same job when he found it difficult to haul his dingy up the slip.

I paid a couple of visits to Paradise City in the hope of seeing Team Mini Max but unfortunately their stand did not appear.

This was an interesting concept a flex wing flying air boat. Walking back from the microlight area I decided to go back through the vintage camping parking area and was not disappointed. Another Luscombe had appeared also an interesting cabin craft, one for Mikes quiz questions perhaps?

Back in the main show area I came across this canard aircraft which according to Brian had been at the show last year but had not flown, this year it had.

The performance quoted was with a 180HP engine:  
 Speed Maximum at sea level 180 knots  
 Cruise, 75% @ 8,000 160 Knots  
 If you would like to know more their web site is [www.commcraft.com](http://www.commcraft.com).

After a very enjoyable day with very much aching legs I met back at the media centre to be thankfully driven back to the villa for a shower and out to a meal in the Red Lobster and what a meal, Lobster Langoustines Crab and something else can't remember but all washed down with a couple of glasses of wine, and then the sweet chocolate brownie and cream, I do need to



*One for Mike Negus a polished Aircoupe*



go on a diet.

Back in the Warbirds park I could not resist this one I am 5'- 8" standing along side this spectator I looked up to him so a good 6'- 0", as an old ex RAF friend who always wanted to fly one of these used to call them "bent wing bugger from Baltimore" they are big!

Sunday being the last day of the show when everyone is shutting up packing up to get home we decide to have a lazy day and go sight seeing. We had spoken about an air boat ride so out came the tablets again (computer that is) and found one in a place called Boggy Creek the name seemed more than appropriate.

The power for these air boats comes from a "short Block Chevy" driving a four bladed carbon fibre propeller, they only need 6" of water and have a completely flat bottom literally skimming over the water. At first I

could not understand how when turning they did not go sideways but then the penny dropped SECONDARY effect of rudder is to roll so putting the chine down into the water on which it turned. *(I think you need wings for that, Ed)* A very exhilarating trip belting around the fringes of the lake looking at what appeared to be a very tired alligator possibly stuffed! *(It moved, Ed)*

The afternoon we decided to go to Jack Browns seaplane base at Winter Haven. Well worth the visit, both Nigel and I had flights and considering my lack of currency I was surprised after carrying out a series of manoeuvres I was talked through a landing and take off and then allowed to do four myself.

Picture courtesy of John Dean I think the grin says it all!

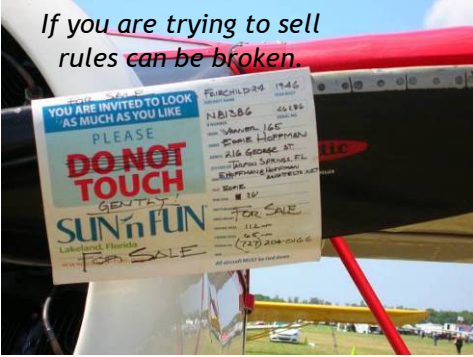
Monday we decided to go shopping and this is when I realised I should have pre ordered as neither Wall-Mart or Harley Davidson had stock.

In the case of Wal-Mart I was after a folding camping oven not stocked can only get to order!

Harley Davidson use 1" diameter handle bars the same as my modern Triumph Bonneville so I was after a set of heated handle bar grips but again although they



If you are trying to sell  
rules can be broken.



showed four sets in the catalogue none of which were stocked. (*apparently not worth having them sent, duties etc so it's cold hands Paddy, Ed*)

Last Supper was in the Red Lobster and breakfast in Cracker Barrel and back home to reality landing at Heathrow at six on Wednesday morning but not getting through immigration until 8 o'clock, you can't beat a bloody minded British Bureaucrat!!



Mooney Mite



DH Vampire



SnF Picture assortment



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The cross channel fly out for LAA members was unfortunately cancelled due to the possibility of CB's or poor weather on the return to blighty and their onward journey home. A shame.



[www.solleysicecream.co.uk](http://www.solleysicecream.co.uk)



Ford 4 wheel drive- using a double axle



Cobra

**Dates for your Diary**

- 30th June Ripple Fly-in
- 28th July BBQ