

October 2017



SKYWRITINGS

Newsletter of the *Kent Strut*

Sharper up your choppers for the Christmas dinner and don't miss the 'chopper talk this month!



Editor's twitterings and general page filling

This month we have articles from two committee members, Frank Lissimore and Mike Negus.

Frank writes about the Popham End of Year fly-in, always a popular destination not too far away, and Mike reminisces on his flying this year— so far — it's not over yet, despite Ophelia and Brian (who was that named after?).

At the golf club this month we have what should be a very popular talk from Mr John Bramfitt on his duties and stories of life as the winch man on our 'local' search and rescue coastguard helicopter.

Incidentally, how do you feel about the slight change to the newsletter font from Trebuchet in black to Verdana in brown?



Nigel Read - Editor

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**26th October Meeting
Lydd Search and Rescue Operations
John Bramfitt
Cobtree Manor Golf Club, 20:00hrs**

www.laakentstrut.org.uk

Popham End of year Fly-in — Frank Lissimore

If the weather is good this event always attracts a large number of aircraft of all types: Sunday 8 October – that's what happened.

Our journey started as usual from Biggin in Jodel D1050 G-BLKM. The plan was to visit Goodwood first – then on to Popham. Rugg with his 1937 Percival Vega Gull (also hangered at Biggin) was going to join us, where we would meet up with Nigel in his Percival Proctor – hangered at Headcorn.

The runway in use was 21 but the light crosswind of 290°@8 knots was not a problem—that said the closure of runway 29 will no doubt prevent us from flying on other windier days as our Jodel hates strong crosswinds from tarmac! No delays and we set off past Kenley to an ever lowering cloud base – until we passed south of Dunsfold when things brightened up. Joining in the overhead for Goodwood and landing on runway 32RH with its new bowling green like new runway was a delight.

Being a pre-1966 aircraft we have no landing fee – so the Bacon butty in the old control tower feels like a freebee! Rugg joined us and was followed in by Nigel.

We set off for Popham, which from Goodwood means maintaining the runway heading (apart from a slight right turn to for noise abatement) and its then a straight track to the Popham overhead. The wind being so light meant Popham were able to use 21 for landing and 26 for departures—making things run very smoothly.



Loads of aircraft!

The probable star of the event was the wartime Beechcraft Model 18 G-BKGK which is now based at Duxford and delighted the Popham visitors with its glorious roar from its Pratt and Whitney Radials as it departed and then flew overhead. *(Only just, by the look of it! Ed)*



We were delighted to see so many Jodel's and had the chance to speak to various owners and compare notes!



After paying the very reasonable £6 landing fee, we departed from runway 26 for a delightfully smooth and clear flight back to Biggin – passing close to a hot air balloon near Guildford (having been asked by Farnborough Radar to keep south of Guildford due to the high volume of traffic near Farnborough)

- overhead Kenley then straight to the 21 downwind leg at Biggin- long long landing with next to no headwind – quick refuel and Kilo Mike was swiftly back to bed in the hanger ready for the next flight!

Basically – a great days flying!



Reflections on the 2017 Season (Thus far) — Mike Negus

The year began, as with a lot of folk, with the aeroplane, our Luscombe G-BSUD in a state of disassembly for the permit to be renewed. As with these things the weeks turned into months before the permit was issued in April. Luckily the inimitable Ron Parker having thrown in his hat to our small group has led the charge on the polishing and other maintenance issues.

Typically my personal flying hours have been quite paltry over the last probably 15 years at least, given that I live only a mile or so from Farthing Corner where the aeroplane is based one would think access would mean more than the 12 to 15 hours I typically do. Working full time, family commitments and the weather all conspire to keep the hours down. Then of course when the odd opportunity knocks the Luscombe is at the back of the hangar and all the effort of getting it out seems too much for a little blatter round the manor so back home again. On the other hand I recall a pleasant Friday carrying out some light maintenance and chewing the fat with a fellow resident in the warm summer sun which brought much the same pleasure. Rob, the same fine fellow took me up in his Jabiru to one of the Duxford Bonus Days and whilst I don't actively seek out rides in other aircraft necessarily I accepted the invitation and was suitably impressed by the performance of said aircraft, sailing along behind 130 horses instead of the customary 65 of the Luscombe. Highlight of the trip for Rob I suggest was having a pre booked slot and actually landing on the tarmac runway to the minute. It was an enjoyable day.

This year I avowed to increase the hours flown and I am happy to say I am probably on track to go into 20 plus which I have been unable to do for some time. The total historically gets boosted by a trip away with Simon but the last two years even that has been thwarted by the weather and flight time truncated so for me to see my hours climbing has been all the more remarkable. Even so, one can still take the positive from events and during our French adventure we ended up diverting to a charming grass airfield which we had flown over or near several times before and met more interesting people. I have certainly flown on trips as P1 more times both ways with family members, Ron and other non-pilots as well as partnering up with Bruce and Simon on one way flights than other years. Flying to the Isle of Wight one Friday with my eldest, down from Uni for the Summer on one of those glorious days led to a chance encounter with Nick Hampton and his wife having passed overhead Goodwood in his RV at

the same time without seeing each other caught up with them awaiting a taxi whilst Danielle and I had lunch at the airfield café.

On another quite different subject I gave a talk earlier in the year about James McCudden WW1 flying ace and recounted an epic battle with renowned German ace Werner Voss who fought against him and six SE5's from his 56 squadron on the 23rd September 1017 until overwhelmed and shot down and killed. My friend and I visited the German cemetery near Ypres where he is commemorated and as I believed buried. Not so apparently as I found out recently, he was buried in a shell hole adjacent his wrecked aeroplane and in the ensuing battles as with so many his remains were lost so he has no known grave. Anyway, I digress.



Even now as I look back through my log book apart from our misadventures in France which have been recounted in the Newsletter a few issues ago, amongst others I have flown to Lee on Solent, Sandown, flew in to the Rally which I haven't done for many years since it was held at Kemble and Old Warden again not visited for a number of years. Equally trips that were planned to Amiens, Schaffen Diest and Farway Common were all thwarted by the weather otherwise my log book would have been filling nicely. Now to all you seasoned old hands that fly off many hours a year all this is probably tame stuff but at the end of the day when conversations are being had at the Golf Club meetings, or in your own airfields we all do it for pleasure and the love of it. So whether it's a hundred or ten and you still get the buzz what's not to enjoy.



The subject of the October meeting, S & R based at Lydd. Often seen in newsreel footage. Anyone know what that beaten up patch on the bottom of the fuselage is about?

Christmas Dinner

Don't forget about the Christmas Dinner coming up. Remittances to Peter Huxley. See separate menu with this newsletter.

As in recent previous years we are going to the Fayre and Square Newnham Court Inn restaurant next to Notcutts at Bearstead for it's central location near junction 7 of the M20. Map on page 8.

We will not be agreeing a change to a latter start this year!

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www.solleysicecream.co.uk**Dates for your Diary**

26th October Search and rescue

30th November Aerial Photography

9th December Christmas Dinner

Fayre and Square

Notcutts

Bearsted Road

Maidstone, Kent ME14 5LH

£15.00 per Person Please send your order to **Peter Huxley**: Flat 13, Trumpet House, Godfrey Walk, Ashford TN23 7XQ

