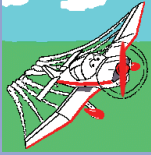


January 2019



SKYWRITINGS

Newsletter of the *Kent Strut*



Happy New Flying Year

A new addition to the “Kent Strut squadron” -
an Isaacs Fury. Gary Smith

Most people know Steve Solley not just because he is the Kent Strut membership secretary but because of his ability to make great ice cream. Quite a few have flown into his farm strip near Deal to have a “shopping trolley dash” around the freezers but he also is the custodian of a rather nice red and white Jodel D112.

For many years his son Richard has just been a passenger but in 2016 Richard gained his microlight licence (in Spain), upgraded to a UK group “A” licence and started hankering after something to fly.

Since “dad” had a nice aeroplane in the hanger and left the ignition keys hanging on the nail it was only a matter of time before “after work flying” became a regular occurrence for both of them. This arrangement worked fine until one sunny Saturday morning Steve went to the toy box to find the aeroplane missing. Richard had got up extra early to join the Headcorn breakfast patrol, had inadvertently drawn a line in the sand and landed on the wrong side of it.



Nigel Read - Editor



Christmas dinner raffle prizes - nice hat Mike

For more information on the Arado 234 read “Hitler’s Spyplane over Normandy “-
The Worlds First Jet by Philippe Bauduin ISBN 978 1 47382 339 6. £25

January Meeting AGM and Social
Cobtree Manor Golf Club, ME14 3AZ 20:00hrs

www.laakentstrut.org.uk

Cant be exactly sure what happened next, whether there was a desire for something more sporty or perhaps it was an impulsive mid night e-bay purchase (we all know how that can happen!) but Steve and Richard then announced they had purchased an Isaacs Fury, G-BKFK.



John Isaacs had based the lines of his single seat biplane on the 1935 Hawker Fury but in 7/10 scale. The prototype first flew from Thruxton in August 1963 using a 65Hp Walter Mikron engine but four years later he launched a MkII version. This was essentially the same light weight airframe but now fitted with a more appropriate 125Hp Lycoming engine instead.

The aircraft is 19ft long, has a wingspan of 21ft and a gross weight of 1000lb. Lots of wires and external bracings mean it is not particularly quick (100mph cruise) but its rate of climb and manoeuvrability is what makes it special.

Only 18 Isaac Fury's have ever been built so the aircraft is actually quite unique and being painted in the Persian airforce colours makes it more so. I was invited to ferry fly it back from Nuthampstead (north of Stansted) because they thought I did not mind the cold and could be tempted with Ice cream.... It worked.

My first circuit at Nuthampstead was a cautious one. Gently open the throttle was the advice given in the brief and with half power we left the ground with ease. The climb was impressive, the circuit small and performing a three point landing appeared to work. Now I knew the ropes

the second circuit was much livelier. Throttle went straight to the gate and on the count of five we were pointing skywards with the world below disappearing at a rate of 1600fpm. Another approach at 55mph finishing with a 3 point landing seemed to be the technique so the tank was topped up, I put on EVERY item of clothing I owned and headed south.

Farthing corner was on my route home so it would have been wrong not to give them a wave. A few steep turns in the overhead had people falling out of the caravan to gaze at this new wonder orbiting above, but I needed to get on and headed east for the last 30 minutes. I was starting to get a bit chilly at this point and wondered why people did not fit cabin heaters to open cockpit aeroplanes? The 3 point landing worked earlier so I stuck to the plan, took advantage of the southerly wind and lined up for the 350m super smooth grass at Ripple Farm (just behind Deal). There were no shortage of spectators at the runway threshold; a gentle flare had the aeroplane stopped within 200m which left plenty of time to open the side door and taxi to the hanger with ones arm hanging out, in true fighter pilot style (apparently).

Steve was true to his word, making me a nice cup of tea so I could warm my fingers and returned with ice cream to celebrate. Single seat open cockpit flying is not for everybody but I had a really great time. Richard was extremely pleased with his new "fighter" and as we looked around it became clear he really had got a lot of aeroplane for his money.

Richard has now flown it four times, Steve once and has got his Jodel back, having great fun flying in formation, a happy ending and a new beginning.



That Worst Day Ron Armitage

In fifty or so years of flying I have constantly been told that I must be daft because it has to be so dangerous. I have always replied that the dangerous bit is driving to and from the airfield.

Unfortunately for me this proved to be true because, on 13th January 2016, I had a very serious car accident on my way home from a wonderful day at the airfield. As well as a couple of spinal fractures, my right hip was badly smashed and I was taken to Kings College Hospital in London. An amazing surgeon and his team screwed in a lot of metal bits and eventually sent me on my way home via a number of lesser hospitals. I was unable to weight bear for three months, after which I thought things would get back to normal – or as close to it as would be possible. Unfortunately, my body had different ideas and I developed a heterotopic ossification of the right hip. This basically meant that my hip was totally fixed in a strange position, effectively shortening my right leg by about nine inches, but making it very easy to walk around in circles!

I was only able to walk with the aid of elbow crutches and, despite extensive physiotherapy; no real progress could be made because of the fixation of the hip. The pain was awful, but the worst part was being told by my then GP that I would probably never fly again because of what he called my 'life-changing' injuries. I guess you can imagine how that made me feel.

With huge support from my partner, I returned to driving and was able to get to and from the airfield, where our Aviat Husky and 1946 Aeronca Champion were languishing. Thought naturally returned to flying, but my GP's words kept ringing in my ears. I did not, at that time, have an Aeronautical Medical Examiner, as he had recently retired, but I was put in touch with a local AME who could not have been more supportive. He explained in graphic detail that there was no chance of me getting a medical back all the time I was taking a cocktail of strong drugs, and that the future was entirely in my hands. I now know how it feels to go 'cold turkey'.

Eventually the day came when I was drug-free and my AME said he would be happy to see me for a medical examination provided I had undergone a Medical Flight Review. I had been practising getting in and out of the Husky, which was pretty easy because of the huge door aperture, but there was no way I was going to get my body into the old Champ. Easy then – I would do this in the Husky, and found a very brave Instructor who was prepared to put me through my paces. He had previously done a

number of Biennial Flight Reviews with me and when he said that I did not fly any worse than I did before, I took it as a huge compliment! Armed with his completed report, I hobbled to my AME on two elbow crutches, with great fear and trepidation..... Leaving his house clutching my new Class II Medical was one of the best days of my life, and the takings at my local pub were raised immeasurably!

One hundred and fifty flying hours later, I still could not fit into the Champ.



The lovely people at Sandown even have a Disabled parking bay for aviators.

However, the day eventually came when my Consultant said that the bones in my hip had stopped growing and that it might be possible to replace the hip joint. This was duly done and, while I still walk with a marked limp, I am now able to get into the old aeroplane and she and I are now flying together again.

Moral: I don't know really – but

without the love and support of so many people, this story would have had a different ending. I have deliberately not mentioned any names, but you all know who you are. Thank you so very, very much..... and by the way, drive carefully and try to keep positive!!!

More on Ron's champ and his gliding in February Skywritings.

Airspace Infringement Peter Huxley

We all know there are tigers out there, waiting to get us. Normal pre-flight preparation will enable us to cope with most of them but there are often problems along the way; dealing with them is part of what used to be called good airmanship. Now it comes under threat and error management or TEM. It sounds rather like management-speak but unlike most of it, it is a direct statement of what to beware of.

One of the current headline problems is airspace infringement and I was unfortunate enough (careless?) to commit this sin on returning from the Rally at Sywell in September. During the flight I was not happy with my navigation and thought (not for the first time) that it was probably a good idea to use GPS rather than relying on my map reading skills. Any lingering doubts were dispelled when two weeks later I received an e-mail

from the CAA asking me to explain a suspected infringement of Luton's airspace. Having put up my hand to the offence it was decided that I should attend an Airspace Infringement Awareness Course and so I booked into one being held in Buckinghamshire in November.

The course is conducted in an open and friendly manner with no discussion about where and when we went astray, all they wanted us to do was be aware of what disruption can be caused and how great are the risks to other traffic that could be anything up to an Airbus 380! The major threat is to General Aviation because if ever there was a collision in controlled airspace caused by a puddle jumper blundering into controlled airspace unannounced, the likely knee-jerk reaction from the public and politicians would be ban light aircraft until all airspace was under full-time surveillance and flight plans were mandatory for all flying including circuit bashing.

Amongst the 12 people there taking the course, we talked about what we'd done and all the events were more in the realm of "There but for the grace of God" rather than intent. The causes were one of the subjects discussed and one of the biggest problems is distraction. Something like 15% of all of an average year's 1100-1200 infringements involve Flying Instructors. An FI is often distracted by his pupil so occasionally will lose track of exactly where they are. Of infringements generally, 75% are by SEP aeroplane, 85% are in good visibility, 50% are under an ATC service of some description and 74% had no GPS with another 13% having GPS but not using it.

There are, of course, many other reasons quite apart from bad or careless flying, including loss of position, faulty navigation techniques, lack of airspace knowledge, faulty use of altimeter settings and lack of meteorological knowledge. Inadequate pre-flight planning is another cause and so is a 'macho' attitude and other psychological traits. One of the attendees on the course suggested laziness as a contributing factor. In his case he was flying in loose formation with two other aircraft and so didn't bother to check the route, not expecting to get separated. When he did he was uncertain of his position or what airspace he might be close to.

Interestingly, or perhaps scarily, a senior flight test examiner told us on a video recording that of the people he is sent to see to assess their flying after a more serious infringement, he does not fly with about two out of three. This might be because of their attitude but also can be caused by their lack of knowledge or pre-flight preparation. I dare say many of us know someone who might fall into those categories. Their flying might be

good or even very good but their attitude leaves something to be desired, perhaps not checking the weather or Notams or even the aeroplane before getting into it, a too casual attitude that will work for a while but may eventually lead to big problems that others have to deal with.

The crux of the course is to guide people in the right direction to use strategies to avoid infringement and there were many useful ideas offered. Before flying, check Notams for your route, especially with regard to avoiding air shows and use the AIS Information Line to keep right up to date. It is a free service on 0808 5354802.

When checking the weather, use the official Met Office website and if in doubt, phone the office and ask to speak to a forecaster in order to clarify some point of detail. The number is at the bottom of Form 215 and by asking for clarification, rather than a forecast, you should not be charged for the service.

Use a current chart for planning as although the changes year to year may be slight, sometimes significant airspace changes are made. If you plan to use charts for navigation or as a backup, one useful tip, especially for longer journeys, is to fold the map into a fairly small size for ease of use in the cockpit but use old maps for continuing beyond the fold. If they are kept in the right order, it is relatively simple to move from one to the next and be aware of your position over the ground without trying to unfold and re-fold the chart while flying the plane!

If possible, keep at least two miles horizontally from controlled airspace and at least 200 feet from it vertically. Use listening squawks when available as it may help if you are heading towards controlled airspace. It is likely that a controller still won't speak to you until you enter the zone, especially when busy but they might try to warn you off before you infringe as it will save them a lot of time and effort later. Always turn on your transponder and set Mode C if available.

Try to manage your workload in the air and avoid task saturation and use Threat and Error Management before flying to help estimate difficulties that may occur once airborne. If you are using an airspace service of any sort, even listening squawks, then pay attention. A useful mnemonic that was offered on the course was NUTA; Notice, Understand and Think Ahead. Don't let a controller call you repeatedly before you answer, it gives entirely the wrong impression. Also notice what the controller is telling others. He or she may not be aware of you if you are just listening but what they say may alert you to the presence of other traffic or weather conditions. Understand what affect the information may have and think

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Headcorn frequency change to
 8.33kHz proper - 122.210
 Safety Com is now referred to as
 135.480

AIP Supplement 069/2018 has latest
 list and change dates:-
nats-uk.ead-it.com
 click on IAIP in top menu then
 supplements in side bar



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about what you want to be doing next and not just waiting for something to happen.

Finally, the CAA now consider that GPS has reached a sufficient maturity and reliability that it should be the primary navigation tool. With airspace becoming more constricted and especially in the South-East it is becoming easier to be caught out. With commercial operations being considered paramount, infringements are being taken more seriously than ever before. The consequences for GA from a serious Airprox or worse, a collision by an unannounced intrusion into controlled airspace could be catastrophic. We all enjoy our flying and long may it continue but too many infringements may lead to further restrictions and none of us want that.

Dates for your Diary

*30th January—Holiday Inn PAFRA
 Talk £5 non members. Bristol Scout
 Biplane David Bremner*

31st January Strut AGM and Social