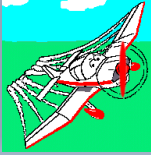


February 2020



SKYWRITINGS

Newsletter of the **Kent Strut**

Farnborough Airspace changes



News from the East

(not that far east, no virus)

East Kent Christmas - Ron Armitage

Down in the depths of Kent, where few care to travel, lies the village of Staple, and in this little haven is an old coaching inn called the Black Pig. *(Even Google had trouble finding it, give it a clue and start with Canterbury. Ed)*. It is here that the East Kent section of the Kent Strut had their Christmas dinner ... and a grand affair it was. As well as great company and good food, Santa himself was in attendance, bringing gifts to all the aviators and their partners. Paper aeroplanes were made, and of course flown in the intervals between courses, much to the amusement – nay, consternation of the other diners. Hopefully, next year, the guys



Nigel Read - Editor

Ron Armitage AKA Father Christmas



27th February Meeting
Frontier Engagement, Kent Police
Cobtree Manor Golf Club, ME14 3AZ 20:00hrs

www.laakentstrut.org.uk



Light Aircraft Association
Kent Strut

East Kent Division



and gals from Maypole and Ripple can extend their hospitality to those further afield.

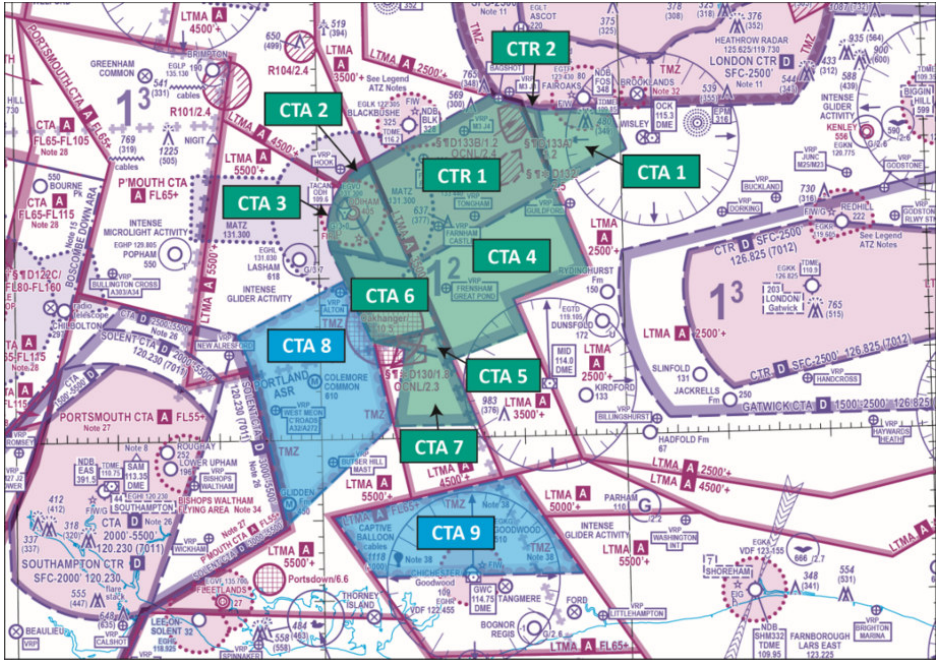
Like the rest of Kent all the rain has meant very little flying, I guess that's why we cheer ourselves up with Christmas parties.

*Andrew Pitcher's Sherwood Ranger
G-CIWD*

See Advertisement On page 8



Airspace changes—Farnborough



<https://airspacesafety.com/updates/>

for full details, effective 27th February. Blue is Class E with TMZ but base is 4500' or 5500'. Green CTA's are class D, various base from 1500 to 3500', CTR Surface.

Also, from 26th March the Class D VMC criteria are changing—the Clear of cloud and in sight of the surface is replaced by (SERA.5001): At and below 3,000 ft AMSL, or 1,000 ft above terrain, whichever is the higher.

Flight Visibility 5km **Distance from Cloud** 1,500m horizontally and 1,000 feet vertically. Spot heights in the vicinity of 919'.

The above link has much more information. Check it in case I have misunderstood!

Might have to have another go at learning French if not boxed it by drones.

CAA Safety meeting

The GASCo meeting at Bridgewood Manor Hotel, organised by Kelvin at Rochester Airport and PAFRA was well attended including strut members

and we came away with a better understanding of Perception vs Reality— recognising hazardous attitudes— and copies of the Skyway code and various check lists. See www.gasco.org.uk for information or remaining presentations. They finish in May and resume in October.

Adjustable propeller inspections, the LPIP inspection. Gary Smith

For those who fly behind fixed pitch propellers, which I guess is the vast majority of the LAA pilots, this article will be an insight into a parallel universe. For those who do run variable pitch (VP) propellers there is the possibility to make savings with the arrival of the LPIP inspection.

Traditionally, variable pitch propellers have been associated with light commercial aircraft with high performance, like a 260Hp Piper Lance, Britten Norman Islander or perhaps a crop sprayer. However, over the last 20 years they have been appearing on LAA types like Lancairs and Vans RV's and many more.

The Variable pitch propeller, as its name implies, has the ability to adjust the angle of the blades during flight. This has several advantages over a fixed pitch propeller :-

- a) upon take off the blades can be set at a low angle thus allowing the engine to achieve max RPM and maximum power output (a fixed propeller will only develop 80% power for takeoff),
- b) during the cruise the blade angle can be increased thus reducing rpm, cockpit noise and increase efficiency,
- C) during landing the prop can be selected to fine pitch again and acts as a very efficient air brake.

Unfortunately there are always downfalls. Manufacturers like the Hartzell specify their VP propellers need to be overhauled at 72 months or 2400 hours regardless of what it is fitted on (LAA or CAA). Unfortunately such an overhaul is not something an owner can carry out in his garden shed so it has to go to a certified propeller overhaul shop.

The price of £3000 sounds eye watering but the work carried out includes stripping the prop and hub, cleaning, paint stripping, stripping the metal plating from the blades, checking angles, blast cleaning, rolling of certain area of the blades, grinding the blades, ultra violet crack testing, replating, repainting, new soft parts, new hardware, reassembling, balancing, and finally issuing the Certified GR17 release form.

For a flying club whose aircraft fly 400 hours per year an inspection at 6 years will have seen the prop accumulate 2400 hours and a slightly

elevated hire charge of perhaps £2.00/hour will cover the overhaul. At 2400 hours it will definitely need reworking.

However for an LAA machine that spends most of its life in a hanger, flies once a week and is accumulating 50 hours per year, a full GR17 overhaul is a total overkill both financially and from an engineering point of view.

LAA have been aware of increased use of VP props in its fleet and have been working with MT and Hartzell to achieve a lighter overhaul requirement. Finally in October 2018 LAA released an Airworthiness Alert announcing the "Low hours Propeller Inspection Protocol" or LPIP.

Basically you submit your propeller to the overhaul establishment and if you meet certain criteria you can elect to have the LPIP inspection carried out instead. Things in your favour would be – fitted to a non certified aircraft, not used for aerobatics, utilisation less than 50% of overhaul life, kept out of the weather (i.e. always hangered).

The LPIP inspection is similar to the full overhaul in so much and the propeller is stripped and inspected but paint is not removed unless there is evidence of a problem. The soft components are changed i.e. "O" rings and seals, but the bolts and bearings have to live another day. Its still early days for the LPIP program but generally finding little mechanical damage but issues of corrosion are much more common for standing around. The LPIP inspection is around £800 (1/4 that of a full overhaul) and provides an alternative path for low utilisation aircraft. I personally feel that an LPIP inspection at 6 years and a full overhaul at 12 years would be most responsible and cost effective way of operating.





Gary's blades



Completed prop being balanced

Next Meeting

Rachel Marshall from the Frontier Engagement team, a part of Kent Police, will give a talk on protecting our coasts and airfields and how to report suspicious activity and what to look for. We are part of the team.

PAFRA Meetings

The Pilots and Friends of Rochester Airport have a series of talks, which sometimes don't clash with ours. Many strut members also belong to PAFRA but non members may also like to attend, the next one is about restoring the Mk1 Bristol Blenheim. A talk by John 'Smudge' Smith. Thursday March 19th, 7.30 at the Bridgewood Manor Hotel.

After 11 years of painstaking work, on the 20th November 2014, Chief Pilot John Romain and James Gilmour as Flight Engineer took Blenheim MKI(f) on a successful 26-minute maiden test flight at Duxford. "Smudge" has spent over 40 years of his career restoring & engineering these iconic airframes. His illustrated presentation will cover the painstaking restoration of this Battle of Britain workhorse, now the only airworthy Blenheim in the world.

Members of PAFRA free, Non-members £5.00



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Co-opted

Ron Armitage

Glen Everett has stepped down from the committee, who thank him for his time. Steve Hoskins is a permanent member now and we are joined by Ron Armitage, both from the mysterious East.



www.solleysicecream.co.uk

Coming soon, fly-ins to Ripple when the shop opens, PPR.

WhatsApp group. Please contact John Dean for information on joining the group for messaging about last minute fly outs.

FANCY SOME FRENCH LEAVE ?

THE COMPLETE PACKAGE FOR OWNER PILOTS
 £700 P.W BEAUTIFUL LOIRE et CHER



*Contact Andrew
Pitcher*

WWW.LACHAUMINE.CO.UK

Dates for your Diary

27th February
 Frontier Engagement
 26th March Kent Microlights
 Paul Brooker
 (East Meeting, Wingham)
 30th April Hawker Typhoon
 Preservation