

July 2020



# SKYWRITINGS

**It's Zoom this month**

Newsletter of the **Kent Strut**

Last Months Meeting



Light Aircraft Association

**W**e Had an interesting talk and slide show about the Vulcan XH558 and a new project on the English Electric Canberra WK163 presented by Dr Robert Fleming.

Purchased in 2005, the XH558 project received a £2.7m Heritage Lottery Fund award and had £1m of overhaul work done by Goodrich for free. The first back to the sky flight was in 2007, with the original first test flight in May 1960. The first display was at Waddington in 2008, the last being in 2015.



Nigel Read - Editor

Exfoliation of the spar was discovered during restoration, modern calculations showed a 10% reduction in strength would be acceptable. There was also corrosion in a false wheel well roof.

The first flight of the prototype VX770 was at Woodford on 30th August 1952, with the straight leading edges.

The aircraft is now used as a Green Technology Hub for children explaining how scientists, engineers and technicians can solve climate change problems, energy sources and the future of aviation, the power requirements of aircraft, power sources and the role of engineering.

Bomber command during the cold war: RAF's Finningley, Waddington, Coningsby, Cottesmore, Marham, Wyton, Honington and Gaydon.

**July 30th Meeting**  
**Zoom—Steve Slater LAA CEO 8pm**

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



Fatigue Life Extension Mod 2222 completed



*Spar repair*



*Larger than your average control surface*

Rectification...



Rebuild...

*One of the early test pilots, Roland Falk suggested fitting a fighter style control column instead of the more common bomber style yoke.*



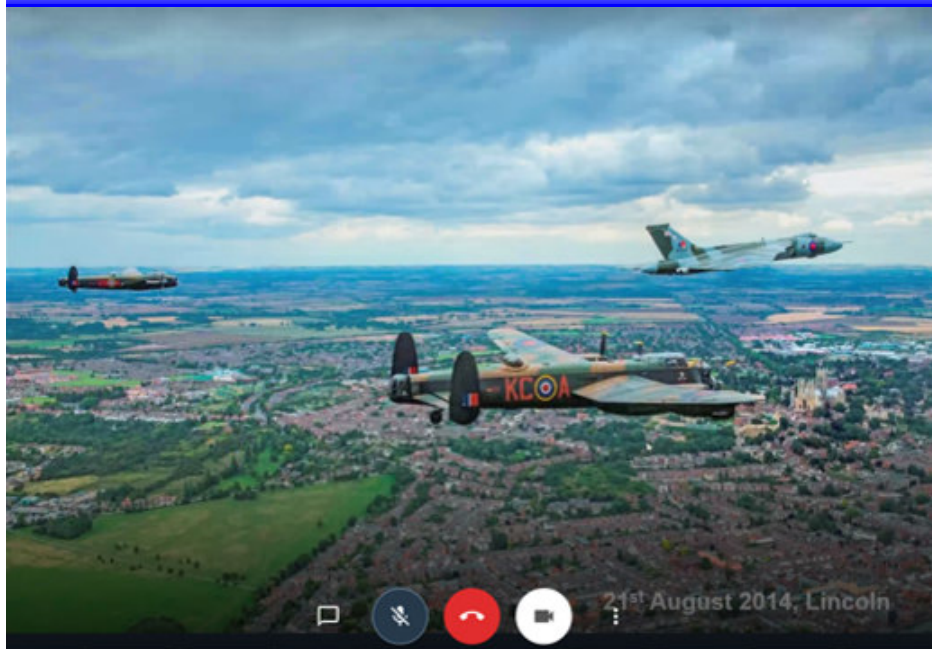
*Track of XH558 during its return to the air.*



*Transition to low level penetration role in the early 1960's*



*Operation Black Buck*



*Rear Gunner to Pilot, " I think we're being followed"*  
*Pilot to Rear Gunner , " not to worry, he hasn't any guns"*



18<sup>th</sup> October 2007

*First flight after restoration*



2007-2015—229 flights, 344 flying hours, £27m

*All pictures taken from Dr. Fleming's presentation*

## Old News from the east Ron Armitage

Sandra and I have been lucky. We managed to do a couple of hours' flying on 23<sup>rd</sup> March, the day before most of us were told to self-isolate at home. All non-essential travel was then curtailed and this, of course, included us aviators. Fortunately for us, however, the authorities made a dispensation in April, allowing flights for essential maintenance, and we were able to take advantage of this. Well, I was, because "passengers" were not allowed, even if you happened to live with them!! And so I flew to Thurrock (our normal maintenance base) on 23<sup>rd</sup> April, where they were still working, albeit with a much reduced staffing level. The 50 hour/6 monthly check was completed in a few hours and I was able to return to Maypole on the same day.

We continued to self-isolate but, on being told that we could travel any distance for exercise, thought that we would go to Maypole and clean the aeroplane (if you don't think this is exercise, you are very welcome to give it a try, as it requires much use of step ladders). This just happened to be on 15<sup>th</sup> May, the day we were told we could go flying again. And so, of course, we did. Since then we have flown about 20 hours and met a lot of friends whilst, of course, socially distancing.

Oh! And since lockdown started, we have not been near a supermarket. Our local pub just happens to have a shop with regular supplies from the local butcher, baker and greengrocer, plus regular deliveries from the Cash & Carry. Although the pub has been required to shut, the shop has remained open and they provide all our necessities, including food! We



*Photograph courtesy of Denis Collins*

email them a list of our requirements at the beginning of the week and we collect them on Friday. We have also had ice cream delivery from Steve Solley and are very pleased to report that he has now been able to reopen his airfield.

( Steve has monthly breakfast fly-ins now. PPR)

## Hinderclay Meadows Airfield Ron Armitage (East Kent Division scribe)

On the Suffolk/Norfolk border is this lovely little airstrip operated by the Suffolk Soaring Group.

They have a number of gliders, a Robin 'tug' and a self-launching motor glider based there, along with the owner's Minicab.

Over the weekend 20<sup>th</sup>/21<sup>st</sup> June they hosted a fly-in which was limited in numbers, but somehow, some in the East Kent Division of the Strut were lucky enough to be included (probably because they keep a lookout for these opportunities). Ron and Sandra in the Husky passed Nic Orchard (Champ) and Richard Warriner (Rans S6) just a few miles from the field, and John Coker and Hannah (Piper Vagabond) arrived a little later, having stopped for fuel on the way. A great day with proper social distancing, good company and super food and drink.



*Some of the visiting aeroplanes*





*John, Hannah, Ron and Sandra, all contemplating further nourishment*



*John Coker's Piper PA17 Vagabond*



**Ripple Fly-in** Ron Armitage (East Kent Division scribe)

Eight flying machines graced Stephen Solley's lovely strip at Ripple for his 'All Day Breakfast' fly-in on 11<sup>th</sup> July. The East Kent division of the Strut were very pleased to support the day in aid of 'The Martha Trust' (which you have all heard about by now) and were very grateful to the microlight flyers from Stoke and Linton for joining in. I don't know where all the other Strut machines were, but you all certainly missed a great day at Ripple with proper social distancing and the added attraction of wonderful ice cream. Please try and join us for the next one.



*East Kent Division members' second ice cream of the day (Richard is from the south, not even Kent)*



*A couple of visiting microlights*



*Visiting aeroplanes*



*The two Steves (Steve Hoskins is the greedy one)*

Great Oakley Ron Armitage

Tim Spurge has kindly agreed that we can have our postponed 'socially distanced picnic' at Great Oakley on **Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> July**. Please put the date in your diary – wouldn't it be great to get **all** the Strut aeroplanes together. There is more than enough room for parking and the social distancing. All we need now is for the weather to cooperate.

Sandra and I hope to be there by midday and look forward to seeing you all again – from a distance, of course. (Don't forget to bring your picnic, camping stoves, etc. etc.)

N51 54.74 E001 11.02		<b>GREAT OAKLEY</b>		60 ft AMSL	
3.5 nm SW of Harwich.				CLN 114.55 023 3.8	
c/s Oakley Radio 123.205 A/G - Blind calls if not manned.					
Southend RAD 130.780 (LARS).					

Rwy	Dim(m)	Surface	TORA(m)	LDA(m)	Lighting
04/22	600x22	Grass	Unlicensed		Nil
09/27	850x40	Grass	Unlicensed		Nil

<b>Op hrs:</b> 0830-1830.	
<b>Landing Fees:</b> £10.00.	<b>Customs:</b> Nil.
<b>Hangarage:</b> Available on monthly basis.	<b>Maintenance:</b> Nil.

**Remarks:** Operated by Mr. Tim Spurge, Great Oakley Lodge, Harwich, Essex, CO12 5AE.  
 Visitors welcome on prior permission at pilot's own risk.  
 Circuits: 1000 ft QFE. RH on Rwy 22 and 27, LH 04 and 09.  
 Please avoid overflying Great Oakley village to SE of the airfield.

**Warnings:** Powerline, 30 ft agl crosses Rwy 22 approach, 300 m from threshold.

**Taxi:** AZB Taxis Tel: 01255 504444.

<b>Fuel:</b> Nil.	<b>Tel:</b> 01255 880045 <b>Mob:</b> 07770 880145 <b>Fax:</b> 01255 880244 <b>Email:</b> tim.spurge@btconnect.com <b>Website:</b> www.greatoakleyairfield.co.uk
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Co-opted

Ron Armitage

**Dates for your Diary 2019****25th July Fly out to Great Oakley***From**Nic Orchard's D2D piece last month,  
Photo is of  
Ramsgate E. Pier  
and public Loos!*

Nic Orchard's D2D Challenge was to overfly Follies. Where's this?