



Newsletter of the Kent Strut of the



November 2021

Kent Strut Awards

Steve Hoskins

We have two Strut awards which will be presented to the lucky recipients at our AGM, which is on Thursday 27th January 2022.

- 1 The Phil Banyard Memorial Trophy. This award is given to the Strut member who, in the opinion of the membership, has given the most outstanding service to the Strut.



The Richard Warriner Award

- 2 A brand new award in memory of Richard Warriner: The Richard Warriner Award for Encouraging Fun in Flying. In other words, who in your view is the Strut member who has done the most to demonstrate, assist with, or promote **FUN** in flying. A deliberately broad definition.

YOUR TASK

Will each member please nominate a suitable recipient for each award, giving a brief reason for their choice.

Nominations for both awards may be made via the Strut email (laakentstrut@gmail.com) or via any Committee member before 31st December 2021.

THE KENT STRUT CHRISTMAS DINNER
will be at The Black Pig, Staple on
Saturday 4th December 2021 at 19.30 for 20.00

Kent Strut Christmas Menu

2 courses £20

3 courses £25

Starters

Homemade carrot & coriander soup served with a bread roll

King prawn cocktail served with multigrain bread

Chicken & apricot terrine served with granary toast

Mains

Hand carved roast turkey, sausage meat stuffing, a pig in blanket, served with a selection of vegetables

Prime sirloin steak grilled to your liking, served with a selection of vegetables (surcharge of £2.00)

Red cabbage & apple roulade with Brie and red onion marmalade, served with a selection of vegetables

Desserts

Xmas pudding with brandy butter

Eton mess cheesecake served with clotted cream ice cream

Belgian chocolate & clementine torte served with cream

Coffee and mince pie

Accommodation is available; contact the Black Pig direct to book (1st come, 1st served)

The Black Pig, Barnsole Road, Staple, Canterbury CT3 1LE 01304 813723

Please send payment and menu choice to:-

LAA Kent Strut c/o Peter Huxley

Flat 13

Trumpet House

Godfrey Walk

Ashford TN23 7 XQ

Please make cheques payable to 'Kent Strut' and send as soon as possible, but no later than 20th November.

Letters to the Editor

Nic Orchard sent the following:

The 'old men' bias mentioned by Peter in his fine piece of the Meet the LAA Day pertains, but in the course of the day I gave out the Airfield Adventure book to as many girls as boys and there was one young woman who returned to the stand to get details of the LAA and flying. Headcorn has more female pilots than most and I suspect future generations may be better represented. All-female airline crews still make news, though, so we have a way to go.

.....Oops

Regrettably, your Editor has to make a number of apologies:

- 1 There were actually five Kent Strut members who became fully fledged Community Police Volunteers on 21st September. I omitted David Smith, but have since bought him beer to mitigate my failure!!
- 2 The fine birthday cake seen (and eaten) at the Kittyhawk fly-in on 11th September was not just for G-TECC, but also for two other fine Champs built in the same year..... G-BRAR (Dave and Caz Ridley) from Deanland and G-TIMP (Rich Valler) from Goodwood.

Nympsfield Gliding

Nigel Read

A few weeks ago I visited the Bristol and Glos Gliding Club at Nympsfield. I put some photos on the WhatsApp page and it stirred a few memories. B&GGC host a heritage flight of Air Cadet gliders from the 'wooden era'. A few years ago through the wonders of the internet and Facebook I joined a group of old friends from 618 Gliding School, West Malling, now called Venture Gliding School and still in existence at Odiham.

Back in the late sixties I was a staff cadet at West Malling and from 1972 until 1979, a civilian instructor, leaving as an 'A' Cat, and continued instructing at Challock, and in the early nineties at Talgarth, where I had a share in a Slingsby T21. With Zooming becoming popular during lockdown, the 618 Facebook group started regular meetings and the Heritage Flight came up in discussion. A member of the group arranged for a visit over a weekend, starting as all good boys' nights out should, with an Indian meal on the Friday night. Some of us arrived early enough to fly on the Friday afternoon, and some also had their 'better halves'. There were a few fly-ins, some drove, some stayed in local accommodation, some in the clubhouse and some (me) camped on the airfield.

Both Friday and Saturday had beautiful weather. Sunday started misty and stayed pretty much that way all day. But we had our fill of nostalgia, reminiscing how ATC gliding had been so much better then compared to now. Kent was similarly poor on Saturday as the Colt returning to Headcorn found out.

The Heritage Flight has the four wooden Slingsby gliders in various states of repair, the T21 Sedbergh being the only glider we flew. The T31 or Kirby Cadet Mk III is nearly flyable and was removed from its trailer and rigged for us to see. There is a Prefect sitting in their hangar and, somewhere, a Swallow.



The Sedbergh landing with spoilers out



The side-by-side cockpit of the Sedbergh, ASI (thermal at around 30-35 kts), PZL variometer (calibrated in kts up and down) – 1kt being about 100 ft/min, Cosim Variometer in ft/sec, red down and green up and the altimeter. The yellow knob is the cable release – it can release automatically from a back release when winch launching. The blue tee bar in the centre operates the spoilers. The red wool is the slip indicator tied to the pitot! The small tube and knurled knob is to fit a tee shaped bar as an indication of where to keep the nose and wings level I never saw it used.



The Mk III parked outside the clubhouse. The nose hook is for aero towing, the winch hook is under the front cockpit. The red bracket on top of the tailplane is for a ballast weight for heavier solo pilots. The silver and dayglow is an earlier colour scheme.



The instructor sat in the back, generally shouting instructions, although 'Gosport Tubes' made an occasional appearance. Hiding behind the release is a lever for the spoilers. The square hole allows the instructor to put his boot through it, probably not the designer's intention, or was it?



The Prefect in the hangar, the Sedbergh goes in backwards alongside it. The canopy frame, still an open affair, lifts off, just a little more snug.



Modern two seater belonging to the club.
DG505 Elan



Electric self-sustaining, the battery lasts about 30 mins gently cruising and about half that, climbing.



Nympsfield



The Sedbergh about to launch, showing off its 54' wingspan. There's something about the shape of a Sedbergh I just love.

Ron Armitage

I know how Nigel feels about the T21B When I last wrote something in my glider log books some eight years ago, I had flown something like 45ish different gliders as PIC. My favourite two-seater by far is this one. I actually had a chance to buy the one and only T21C, which was the interim model that became the wonderful Capstan, but didn't have the money and so it didn't happen. I would love to have flown it.

However, I did manage to buy a T21 with about ten others and eventually owned it myself as the syndicate members dropped out. I have a little less than 4,000 flights in them. My favourite single-seaters are the Grunau Baby and the Featherlight Mucha 100. I still have a great affinity with wood and fabric aircraft.

As far as I can recall, my T21 was WB990 when in RAF service and became BGA 3189.



BGA 3189 seen here immediately before her 20,000th launch. Two of your Committee members looked very much younger then (but of course they were).



The same glider following recover and repaint.

When I joined 615 VGS my Commanding Officer was Alex Watson. In 1965 he edited a fascinating book simply called "The Gliding Book" and shown here is one of the photographs from the book. It is clearly staged, but shows the T bar mentioned by Nigel in his article (although in this picture it's on a Kirby Cadet Mk III). It was a very basic attitude indicator, but in my time with the ATC I never actually saw one being used.



Alex Watson gives a cadet his final briefing before he takes off on the first of his three solo flights

Thanks to the generosity of a Strut member, I have a spare copy of this book and it's free to the first person to offer it a good home.

Lydd

Kevin Marks



O-1 Bird Dog

An unusual visitor to Lydd arrived crated up from Australia. This 0-1 Bird Dog has a unique and interesting history. The full story can be read at HistoryNet:

<https://www.historynet.com/maj-buang-lys-daring-feat-to-save-his-family.htm>

Purchased in Australia this year, she was carefully dismantled, crated and packed into a shipping container and brought to the UK. The Bird Dog was then reassembled, checked and signed off as airworthy by Lydd's Eagle Aero Engineering.



Overhead radios, fuel selector and breakers



Utility panel for the Pilot in Command

All the systems are fully functional – yes, that does include underwing rocket launch tubes, and in beautiful original condition.



Starboard pair of fully functional rocket launchers

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Meet the Members

Planes I have known by Mike Fogarty

The first flight I made as a pilot was at the controls of a Dagling, an early primary trainer. I flew off a bungee and must have reached a height of 2 metres and flew for 30 metres.



Dagling in flight



Quite a difference from when, as a child of ten, I was put in the front of the controls of an RAF aircraft (in flight) and allowed to manipulate them.

My next opportunity to be a pilot arrived when I was given a flying scholarship from the school cadets and gained a PPL on Tiger Moths at Fairoaks.

Much later, while on a job promoting Nestlé, I was offered a two-hour flight lesson with Denham Flying School. I was captivated and renewed my PPL.

A period followed when I worked on getting an IMC rating.



My first plane was a Cessna 140, built in 1946 and still immaculate. On a visit to the US I found a tailwheel-dedicated flying school with a long-established teaching ethos, and a splendid 86-year-old instructor, Wally Olson, highly respected throughout north-west America. After this I spent a

month or so training and flying in the US every year, visiting airfields like Creve Coeur, St Louis, where I flew an AN2 and an SNJ (Harvard).



Wally Olson had run a flight school at Evergreen, Washington State, since 1946. He had had his pair of BC12Ds (Taylorcraft) since new and flew them continuously.

In the first three weeks I was there, I flew about 50 hours. The training was extremely thorough. Amongst other exercises I was expected to fly an accurate circuit with the instruments blanked out. On a cross-windy day I was told to travel the length of the runway with the with lee side wheel off the ground. Great tailwheel training!

Wally Olson

I progressed to turns on a point and flying a symmetrical slalom on a line in a crosswind. These demonstrations of skill had disappeared from the UK syllabus generations ago. We progressed to an instrument rating (night and day, of course), then to a twin rating on an Apache and eventually a single and multi-commercial instrument rating. Only when I had been cleared solo on the Waco UPF7 in 1993 was I considered to be a competent pilot.



Waco UPF7

There were of course many fascinating craft there. The one which is foremost in my memory is the Explorer which came in when I was doing a biennial in a Cessna 185!



Mike Fogarty. Explorer (flying caravan)



Inside the Explorer. Note the wicker sofa/double bed.

At home in England I flew the Cessna 140 around northern Europe. First landing was always at Ostend, where fuel was a remarkably cheap 18p a litre. In 1994 we met an asparagus field near Petersfield and, to my shame, total destruction of a splendid aeroplane.

A friend had seen my name on an old board in the hangar at Fairoaks from the days of the Flying scholarships. He took pity on my flight-free state and suggested that I might fly his Moni motor glider but only after I was cleared to fly solo in a glider. I did this and, of course, found myself more interested in pure gliding. This led to a decade of gliding, with flights in and across Europe and eventually from the Pyrenees to the High Atlas.



In 1997 I visited Mainz (Finten) near Stuttgart to see and buy a Cirrus glider with a 'Top' auxiliary bolt-on motor and test flew it. The round out and unforgiving landing un-nerved me sufficiently to think better of buying it!

I carried on to a stay with a flying friend at Schwäbisch Gmünd and he took me to a near-by glider field, Hornberg, where I had a test flight in an Astir that they were selling. A 90-minute flight and I had it wrapped up and in its trailer home to RAF Halton.



The Astir and I flew around the skies of England, but one day I landed it at Keevil, wheels up on tarmac.

I had it repaired and soon took the opportunity to go back to Hornberg to join up on the first of three aircraft repair courses:

1. Composites aircraft damage assessment
2. Auxiliary and prime aero engine servicing
3. Wooden aircraft repair and re-covering



The courses were in German and local dialect, and with some help in English I passed the exams at the end of the programmes. I belonged to the regional gliding centre (BWLV) for about seven years and flew with them every year either in Schwäbisch Gmünd where we had a few wonderful cross country gliding courses (Italy and back in a day!) or Sisteron in the Alps where they went with a set of gliders for a week or two every spring and autumn.

The training and experience enabled me to become an inspector and chief engineer with the BGA. (There were no equivalent courses in the UK at that time.) I had by then sold the Astir and bought an elderly Motor Falke which, with the help of friends at Halton, I rebuilt and re-covered. (I gather it is still there.)



During this period I had also flown as co-pilot to John Bally (champion glider pilot) who had various aircraft which needed to be flown for their Annual inspections to France and Germany. (It was a help that I knew a little German and French.) I made several trips in both Stemme SV and VT and Bulkow 208 to various airfields.

In 2016 I took over Les's Cessna 150 at Clipgate, and now I have a share in a Thruster, and have just enjoyed my first flight under a Paraglider at Glynde, Sussex (an hour of bliss).

Ripple Strip

Stephen Solley

With only a week to go before the clocks change, end of day flying is coming to an end. I managed to get a couple of trips in, one up to Chatteris and the other to Stow Maries. On the trip to Chatteris, I called into Fenland for fuel for my return journey. I arranged PPR for Chatteris, giving me strict instructions to phone before taking off from Fenland. Great - no answer as the controller was in the air, throwing out people with parachutes. The only option was to depart and call up whilst in the air. It worked and was advised to hold for a few minutes, which I did, to find I was orbiting the farm which I was due to visit. They had spotted me, thinking I was going to land outside their back door. No. that was not going to happen. After finally being cleared to land at Chatteris and following a sandwich

lunch, we went and found a suitable field I could use in the future. This will give more time and they can have fuel ready for me when I next visit.



My second trip up to Stow Maries pointed me in the direction of Headcorn for fuel and then, on the way, I slipped round the western side of the Southend zone using the listening squawk 5050. Once at Basildon, only six minutes, and then I was overhead, and I lined up for two zero. After parking in a long line of three, had a warm welcome from our hosts. After signing in, a coffee and chocolate cake went down very well. Time to return home, with John leading the way, followed by Nic and then myself. After levelling out I noticed to the right, I think, were four American F15s at a similar height. They must have been Nic's escort back across the river!

In all a good day out, with another one hour forty mins in my log book.

Monthly Strut Meetings

Our first ACTUAL monthly Strut meeting, since COVID began, took place on 30th September at the Cobtree Manor Park Golf Club and was extremely well attended. We were happy to have friends from PAFRA join us to swell the ranks.

Jeff Pacey and Henry Spurgeon, Air Traffic Controllers from Southend gave a very interesting and informative talk and answered our questions in detail. They promise that they are there to help us all – don't hesitate to talk to them.

Dates for your Diary

Thursday 28 th October	Monthly meeting at the Anchor, Wingham. 19.30 for 20.00
Saturday 4 th December	Christmas Dinner at The Black Pig
Thursday 27 th January 2022	Kent Strut AGM

WE HOPE TO GET THE NEXT ISSUE OF SKYWRITINGS TO YOU BY 26TH NOVEMBER

Can you please send your articles to the Editor to arrive by 19th November.

Notes from Farthing Corner

Mike Negus

Grass, or to give it its correct name, Poaceae or Gramineae. As we are heading into autumn the grass cutting season is starting to draw to an end. I understand when the mean temperature drops to 5 degrees centigrade or below it stops growing, but with the current wet and warm conditions there's no sign of it yet. November will more than likely be the last regular cut of the year. Thanks to the sterling efforts of a number of our more mechanically talented residents our ancient tractor and mower attachment is kept serviceable. We have a scheduled rotation of 'volunteers' listed by aeroplane, who take turns to cut the grass, which covers not only the runway but the taxiway and apron area. So recently I found myself at the wheel and pondered whether to mow from one edge across to the other or edge to middle and out to the opposite edge, or edge and edge working into the middle. I decided on the latter. It can be very cathartic and whilst achieving show court parallel lines as the undulating surface causing the tractor to buck about means the steering wheel pretty much does 180 degrees in your hand, however when you look back at the result it can look fairly presentable, you'd like to think.



Runway 06



Runway 24 and the trees ahead

This beautiful Luscombe, based at Farthing Corner, turned 80 in April. Is this the oldest aeroplane in the Strut?

Please send the Editor a picture of **YOUR** aeroplane – I have asked before, but it would be nice to have a response this time....

Thank you.



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With thanks to

Roger Bacon

and

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