



Newsletter of the Kent Strut of the



January 2022



**WE WISH ALL OUR
FLYING FRIENDS
A VERY HAPPY 2022**

Our first Strut meeting of the New Year will be on 27th January at:

The Cobtree Manor Park Golf Club, Chatham Road, Sandling, Maidstone ME14 3AZ

7.30 for 8.00pm

We will have what I am sure will be a most interesting talk from Deepak Mahajan on electric flight. This will be followed by our Annual General Meeting, the election / re-election of your Committee, and the presentation of the Strut awards.

You still have time to nominate a member for one of our awards or put yourself forward for possible election to the Committee – just contact the Editor.

Reminder from Membership Secretary, Stephen Solley

2021 is now drawing to a close and I hope you have managed to get in some memorable flying. Some good things unfortunately have to come to an end. It is time for you to renew your membership fee of £15 which falls due on January 1st.

BACs is the preferred method of payment.

Account name: LAA Kent Strut

Account number: 02402034

Sort code: 30-95-37

Lloyds Bank

Please use your surname as the reference.

Any problems, you can call Stephen on 07836 653257

My 1966 Gardan Horizon GY80

John Luck



Registered by me as G-GYAT in the autumn of 2002 after importing her from Germany.

After a few years of maintaining her at Deanland and then Spilsted under the supervision of the late David Hockings, after several years of knocking on a closed door, I managed to obtain a Permit to Fly so is still looked after by me and inspected by our own Gary Smith.

Quite a capable aeroplane with a 180hp Lycosaurus at the front and a fixed pitch prop is capable of 120kts and a MAUW of 1150kg, means I can lift 4 stout personages and 3/4 tanks out of Farthing Corner and with a range of 5hrs+ will fly further than I can manage without a pee break and can land at Stephen Solley's strip at Ripple without too much drama!

A request from the editor



WANTED

Having seen the article in last month's Skywritings, I am keen to acquire a kid's pedal car or tricycle in tatty condition (therefore cheap!) to form the propulsion for a pedal plane. I propose to make this over the next year with a view to participating in the 2022 meeting on behalf of our organisation.

Can anybody help, please? I am more than happy to collect.

The Editor's Christmas Quiz

The four members of our Strut (and one non-member) who entered my Christmas competition showed just how much knowledge there is out there. The standard was very high and I have therefore decided that each of them should have a prize so a bottle of wine will go to (in alphabetical order):

Colin Evans

Peter Huxley

Martin Leusby

John Luck

Nic Orchard

Thank you for participating.

The answers are:

- 1 Priory Farm Aviators
- 2 Harriet Quimby *
- 3 First lady pilot to cross the Channel solo * (and also the first lady to hold a US pilot's licence)
- 4 Bleriot Monoplane *
- 5 LET 13 Blanik *
- 6 GAL Monospar *
- 7 Miss Gladys Batchelor *
- 8 Newark Air Museum * (and also Egeskov Castle, Denmark) See below.
- 9 Mercury *
- 10 Maia *
- 11 Boeing Stearman
- 12 Beagle A109 Airdale
- 13 Yak 52
- 14 Acroport II
- 15 Aviat Husky
- 16 Acroport II
- 17 Jabiru J430
- 18 Robin DR400
- 19 Cessna 150
- 20 Falco
- 21 Pipistrel Sinus
- 22 Bellanca 7 SCA
- 23 Cherry BX2
- 24 Piper J3 Cub
- 25 Thruxton Jackaroo
- 26 Ikarus C42
- 27 Vans RV7
- 28 Miles Gemini
- 29 Auster (Beagle)
- 30 Beech Staggerwing

* These answers are all to be found in this year's 'Skywritings'.

The G A Monospar

Ron Armitage

I clearly made yet another rod for my back when I decided to produce the Christmas quiz. As questions 6, 7 and 8 related to the aeroplane that I wrote about in the May edition of Skywritings, I thought the answers would be simple.



- 6 What type of aeroplane?
- 7 What is the lady's name?
- 8 There is **one** remaining aeroplane of this type. Where is it?

Not so as a number of Strut members were “kind” enough to point out there are **two** G A Monospars in the world.

1 The Monospar in the Newark Air Museum (Monospar ST12) is of similar configuration to that shown in the above photograph, but is fitted with Gipsy Major engines. It was one of three examples sold to Australia for the Sydney-based company New England Airways.

Photo thanks to ‘Aeroplane’ and ‘Classic Wings’ magazines via John Luck.



2 The second Monospar (ST25) is at Egeskov Veteranmuseum, Egeskov Castle in Denmark, and is in a very different configuration, having twin fins and rudders. It does, however, have the Pobjoy Niagara engines. It was in use as an Air Ambulance until 1963.

PLEASE LET ME KNOW IF YOU WANT TO DEVISE A QUIZ.

More DC3 Tales!

Ron Loveday

See, it goes to prove what a good Editor we have for Skywritings.

Ron had found a library picture of one of the DC3s used by Saudia to go with my article about my experiences in a DC3. The aircraft in question was HZ AAX, which was previously President Roosevelt's personal transport (the first Air Force One?). I bet in reality, the President wanted a brand new DC4, so if he off-loaded his DC3, he was home and dry.

Of course, with these kinds of gifts, the recipient is left with a problem of what to do with it! Master stroke, start an airline. You get someone to look after it and you can jump in any time and use it as no-one is going to say "No" to the King! In fact that was happening even when I worked there in the 70s. Until he got his own 707.

I digress; The 5 DC3s were still in use in the 70s, flying to the airports in the boondocks and with gravel runways. One day AAX was landing (at, I believe, Hail) when it suffered a tyre blowout upon landing. The nose took up the rest of the landing run. It was decided a couple of 'shines' from the engineering office would take a look and assess the damage. After a quick look, it was decided the aircraft was repairable. The aeroplane was duly dismantled and stacked upon a pair of 'Queen Mary' low loaders and driven back to Jeddah. Upon arrival, the sheet metal guys came out to look at the job. Instant, 'you want us to repair that??? It's a write off!' etc. etc.!

Sometime later a person came up with a light bulb moment. "What about the Cambrian Airways DC3?" To explain, within Jeddah airport was an aircraft boneyard, which you could only reach by crossing the active runway. In this boneyard were the remains of several Chipmunks and DH Vampires. I noticed De Havilland were still using plywood! There were also a Convair 340, 3 Bristol Freighters, a DC4, B25 and a Cessna 170, which once belonged to a Prince who got involved in the attempted 'coup'. He was never seen again, but his 170 remained as his legacy. The Air Force officers who got involved were pushed out of the back of a C130 flying at around 3000', and the story goes their flying gear was left on the peg back at base, 'just in case they managed to get back!!!'

Anyway the Cambrian DC3 was dragged out of the sand and towed to the hangar. How this aircraft finished up in Jeddah escapes me. Maybe an internet search may explain.

The sheeties removed the nose section at the 'manufacture's break' just aft of the mail door and grafted this onto AAX. The mangled nose section of AAX was stripped and dumped outside the hangar. Understanding the significance of this particular aircraft, I wiggled into the wreckage and removed the control wheel, the only item left. It now resides in my garage, with other bits and pieces. It's even got a Pazmany as company!

The last I saw of AAX was on a return trip to Jeddah. It was on a stand hanging above the road outside the old Jeddah Airport terminal. The Saudis are good at that kind of art!

P.S I even have the landing gear control module from Donald Trump's L1011!! That is another story.



A library picture of a 'Cambrian' DC3, together with some of Ron's 'liberated' items.

Six inches from a disaster!

Roger Pearson

It was an indifferent Sunday morning weather-wise and a great many years ago at Manston. I was scheduled to take a pal up for a joy ride but to start with, we went to the café to try and work out what the weather was really going to do.

Then the sky started to clear and I took a decision. "We'll go for it, but if it changes we may need to come back a bit early."

With the old Cessna 172 fired up, I taxied to the threshold and lined up for take-off. It was about then Mark Girdler's voice from TG Aviation came over the radio warning anyone listening that the wind was picking up.

Bugger that! Too late. And how bad was it likely to get. By then we were on our way down the runway and then airborne. Very pleasant little flight round Kent and a happy passenger.

Headed back to Manston and called for re-join from Sandwich. Consent given for re-join and then – "You can use either runway."

That was a new one. "Say again."

"You can use either runway, the wind's straight across."

“Er, what sort of speed’s the wind?”

“30 knots.”

Bugger! Stay cool, don’t panic. I opted for 29 and realised on the downwind leg that it was a bit more than a light breeze – or come to that, than the proverbial ‘sporty crosswind’ people delight in talking about. It was blowing a hoolie!

But did I nail that centre line. Spot on, even though the plane seemed to be flying sideways. Smug or what, there was that centre line exactly where I wanted it. I’d cracked a 30 knot crosswind.

And then the wheels touched the ground. Several things happened simultaneously. The left wing hurled itself skyward, the right one hurled itself towards the runway and the nose seemed ready to plough up the runway.

At that moment my main, my only, thought amazingly was how the hell I was going to explain to the rest of the group operating the Cessna the damage that was about to happen. But amazingly the sound of grating metal on concrete never happened.

Maybe – no pretty certainly - by luck rather than judgment I had the plane back under control and taxied back to the Manston club house. On the way my passenger, not realising the traumas I’d just gone through and was still going through, was delighted with the flight and gleefully told me: “Do you know, that right wing tip was only six inches off the ground?”

I didn’t really want to know that.

And when I got into the club house, someone else added to my misery, saying: “Was that you just landed? I was waiting for the fire engine to go out. I was convinced you’d crashed!”

Of course, somewhere along the line when learning to fly, someone had said something about what should be done with the ailerons in a crosswind, but my jubilation at touching down on the centre line had driven that straight out of my head.

It was a hard lesson and the trauma of day took probably a year to get over, along with a number of crosswind landing lessons. It was a confidence shatterer of mega proportions.

It certainly taught me a lesson though and that incident is as vivid in my memory today as it was the day it happened. But it still sends shivers up my spine.

Solleys Kentish Ice Cream



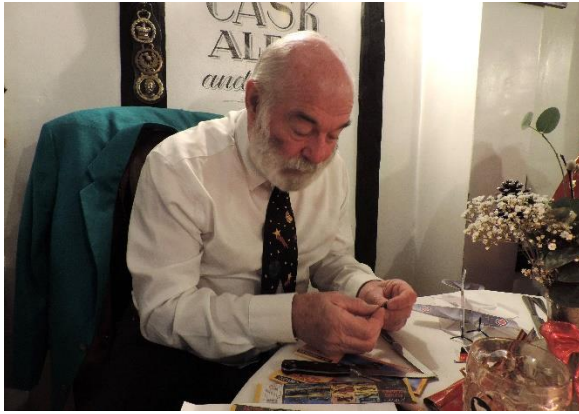
Amazing choice of flavours
Tubs, cups, scooping kits
FREE delivery service for much of Kent

Strut Christmas Dinner

Ron Armitage

The Strut dinner at the Black Pig at Staple was a super affair and we have passed on our grateful thanks to publican Reece Foley and his gallant 'slaves'. As can be seen from the photographs, we took over the entire restaurant, and the evening was 'enhanced' by a paper aeroplane designing competition organised by Nic with prizes being presented by the pub's own Stephen Bettles. Furthermore, actual flying aeroplanes were provided by the Editor and 'enjoyed' by the other pub customers as well as our own members and guests.





The Editor trying to work out what an aeroplane looks like ... ah, yes, he's got it!

Rocket's Rant (again)

Ofcom say that they are making communications work for everyone
what absolute drive!



As you will know, we are required to hold an "Aircraft Radio Licence" covering the fitment of radios, transponders, etc. in our aeroplanes. The licence for our Husky was due to expire on 30th September this year.

About six weeks before the expiry date I received a letter asking me to renew, and also advising that it would be an offence to operate my 'transmitting apparatus' without a licence. They also said that I could expect to get my new licence within 14 days, and so on 23rd August I sent them a cheque. This cheque was cashed by their bank on 7th September, well before expiry of my licence, and giving them ample time to send my new one.

I have now received the following:

NOTICE OF PROPOSAL TO CANCEL AERONAUTICAL RADIO LICENCE

Dear Licensee

According to our records your Aeronautical Radio Licence fee was due on 30/Sep/2021

The purpose of this letter is to inform you that due to non-receipt of the licence fee before the fee due date of your Aircraft Radio Licence, we propose to revoke the Licence. If we revoke the Licence, you will no longer be able to use the aircraft radio equipment lawfully.

Representations about this proposal should be presented in writing no later than 28 days from the date of this letter.

It is an offence to use Aeronautical Radio other than in accordance with the terms of the licence issued by Ofcom.

And this is despite my reminding them repeatedly that they still haven't sent me the licence that I paid for months ago!

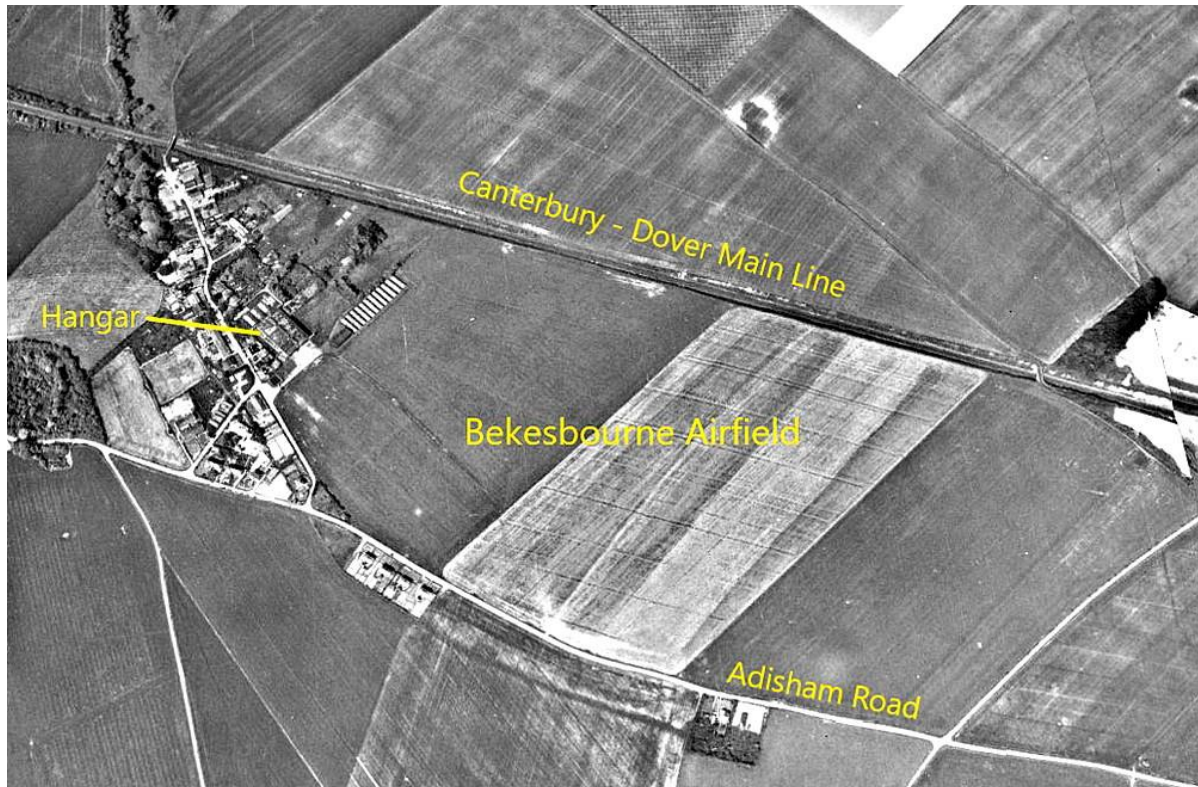
As my old mate, Brian Mayo, would have said: "Not only can't they run a business, they couldn't even run a bath".

Since I wrote this, my aircraft radio licence has arrived. I am sure that I am not the only person let down by this organisation – have any of you had a similar experience? Please let me know.

Defunct Kentish Airfields - Canterbury (Bekesbourne and Dunkirk)

Ron Armitage

Bekesbourne



This airfield started when the Royal Flying Corps requisitioned the land in 1916 as an emergency landing ground. With the Royal Air Force being formed in 1918, the airfield became RAF Bekesbourne and the two Belfast Truss hangars were built along with other buildings. The Commanding Officer from December 1918 until the unit was disbanded in 1920 was Major A T Harris, who was later to become Marshall of the Royal Air Force (i.e. "Bomber" Harris). Civilian flying then continued.

A notable occupant of the airport was Dr Edward Douglas Whitehead Reid, a senior surgeon at Kent and Canterbury Hospital. In 1919 he bought an old Airco DH6, which he kept at the airport – becoming the first owner in Britain of a private aircraft after World War I. He went on to own several further aircraft, all based there, which he used for visiting patients, touring, joyriding flights, and competitions. He became very well known in aviation circles, and when he was killed in a crash in 1930, one of the tributes at his funeral came from Amy Johnson.

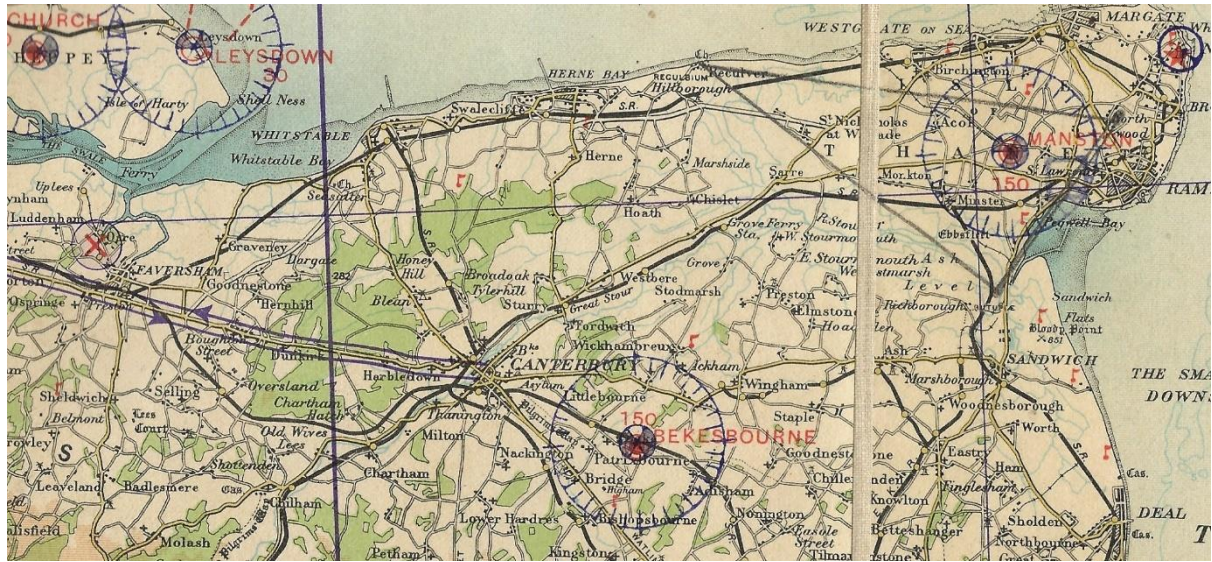
The Kent Gliding Club had a base here Dr Whitehead Reid was a member, and in 1930 became its president.

In 1930, landowner Robert Christian Ramsay set up Kent Aircraft Services. This company operated the airfield and built Avro 504K aircraft from spare parts. He also established Kent Flying Club in 1931, setting up a workshop, offices and a lounge and bar in the hangar. Their first aircraft were an autogyro, Cierva C19 G-ABUH, and a De Havilland DH60M Moth, G-AAKO. One of the club's first students was the owner, RC Ramsay, then aged 71, who gained his 'A' licence after 20 hours dual teaching from the instructor, Flt Lt J H Barringer.

Both organisations were transferred to a new company, Airsales and Service Ltd in 1934. The new company traded as aircraft dealers and as an aircraft maintenance and repair organisation. Aircraft ownership seemed to transfer easily between RC Ramsay, Kent Flying Club, and Airsales & Service, with most at some time operating with the club.

Much of the above information is courtesy of Wikipedia.

Archive film of the time (which you can easily find on Google) shows Bekesbourne and Kent Flying Club writ large on the hangar roof. In some circles the airfield was known as Canterbury, but a flying chart of the time, reproduced here, clearly shows the site as Bekesbourne.



With WW II and a ban on civilian flying, the airfield was closed in 1939. It was used briefly by Lysanders supporting the Dunkirk evacuation in 1940, but was not reopened after the war.

The actual 'landing ground' still survives (as farmland) along with a few of the Air Force buildings which have been converted into housing. The hangars were destroyed and the rest of the site has become yet another housing estate!



Bekesbourne Airfield site today

Dunkirk



I have not been able to get much information about this site, which can still be seen clearly from the air, and is adjacent to the A2 to the west of Canterbury, opposite the west-bound service area.

This was a very demanding site with the A2 at one end and a forest at the other. It was also undulating and the runway was crushed and rolled tarmac. I only flew in once, but of course, I didn't have the Husky in those days!!

I understand that the airfield closed in 1998, following an accident to a Piper Cherokee, which wound up in the woods on the opposite side of the A2 following a failed take-off attempt.

Amongst my artefacts I have a mug which you could then buy on flying in – and a business card from Gordon Janner of By-Air, who operated from the site back in the nineties. I was keen to fly an Auster that was based there, but every time I visited it was unserviceable.



PLEASE GET IN TOUCH IF YOU HAVE ANY MORE INFORMATION ABOUT EITHER OF THESE SITES.

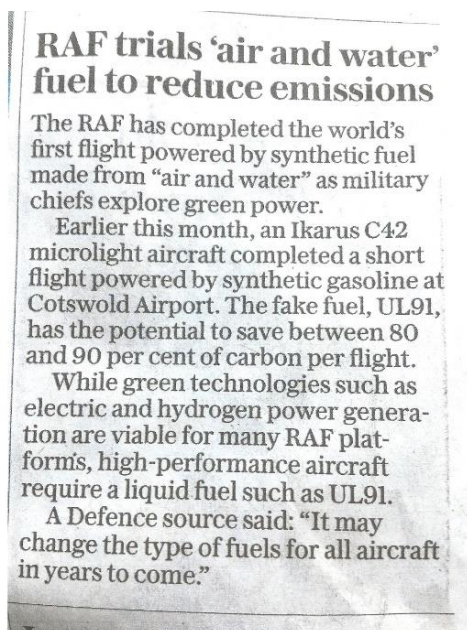
The oldest Strut aeroplane continued

In the last edition, your editor had the temerity to say that Luscombe Silvaire G-BSUD was the oldest aeroplane in the Kent Strut fleet. I was very pleased to hear from Jim Wraight, who said that the Luscombe is not the oldest aircraft in the Strut, but one of two, as his Cub was also built in 1941.



G-BREB in the hangar at Pent Farm. Thank you, Jim.

Does anyone else in the Strut have an aeroplane of this age? Or older?



Jim Wraight was also kind enough to send this cutting from The Daily Telegraph and simply asks: "If it is made out of air and water, why does it cost so much?"

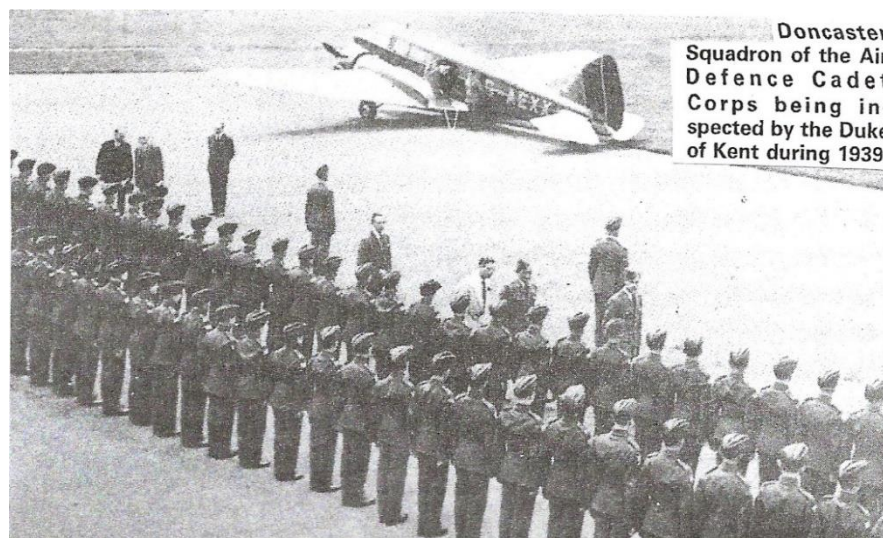
Answers on a postcard please!

Dinky Toy Aeroplanes

Ron Armitage

Back in 1938 Dinky Toys produced a little model of the Airspeed Envoy, which sold for sixpence and was available in a number of colours (the casting described it as a "light transport"). The most illustrious of the Envoys produced by Airspeed was G-AEXX, which was delivered to the King's Flight in 1937. It was resplendent in the red and blue livery of the Guards and used by the Royal Household until the start of WW II, when it was handed over to the Royal Air Force. Dinky made a model which they dubbed "The King's Aeroplane". The cost was nine pence.

Below is a picture of those in my collection, together with a newspaper cutting of the King's Aeroplane at Doncaster in 1938.



Thanks to 'Air Pictorial for this photograph

Of course, the Envoy was developed into the Airspeed Oxford, which was used in large numbers during WW II as a multi-engined trainer. Post war, most survivors were converted into the Consul and gave great service in the charter market as they were able to carry up to six passengers.

I am still collecting, if any of you want to part with your old Dinky toy aeroplanes.

The Editor would like to thank all those who so kindly took time to contribute to this edition of Skywritings. Thank you.

All contributions to the next edition should be with the Editor by 19th January please.

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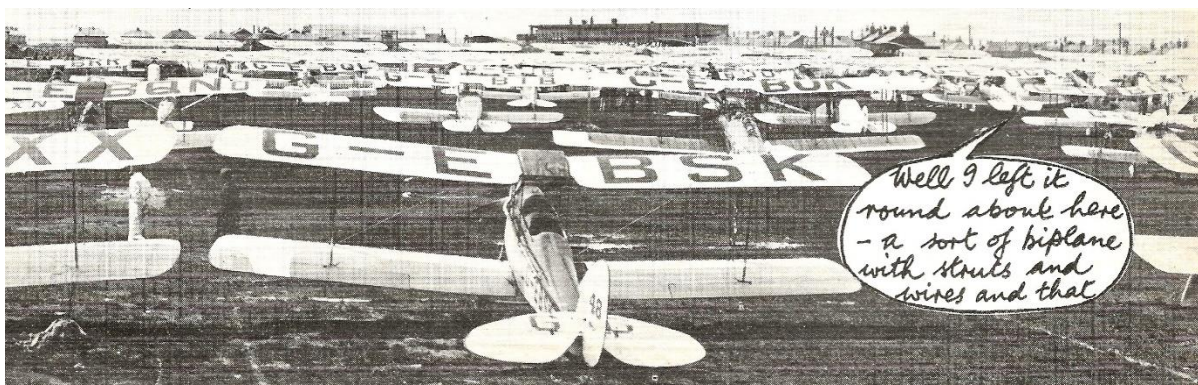
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With thanks to

Roger Bacon

and

