

# Skywritings

The Kent Strut Newsletter

May 2022



Light Aircraft Association  
Making Dreams Fly

# Editors Corner

I start by making an apology for the lateness of the May newsletter which is in part due to me recovering from Covid and waiting on some articles which never arrived. I present to you the new format of Skywriting's, the Kent Strut Newsletter. I'm sure the format will change a little over the new few months, but I welcome all constructive feedback as to how we can improve YOUR newsletter.

With world events such as the turmoil in Ukraine you can't have failed to notice the price of Avgas and indeed ordinary car fuel has hit some all-time highs. I recently purchased some Avgas which topped in at £2.65 per litre which made me ponder whether the increased costs might reduce peoples flying and in turn their currency as we approach the summer season. Maybe we can all share some flying and look out for each other until fuel prices stabilise, if they ever do.

In this month we have a write up from Nic Orchard of the March meeting with Jerry Abrahams which sounds like it was an awesome talk and another fantastic article from Ron Armitage on defunct Kent airfields. I hope both of these articles will become regular features each month in addition to a chairman's corner where I'll be pressing Steve for a few words.

Like many others I love seeing pictures of the strut out and about so if you're flying grab some pictures and email them across so we can showcase the strut and out activities.

I'm sure you don't want to just see my pictures and stories each month.

On a final note, subject to the LAA sending me a test permit before Saturday I'll be getting airborne in the Turbulent!

Please send all pictures and articles for next month's newsletter by 21st May 2022.

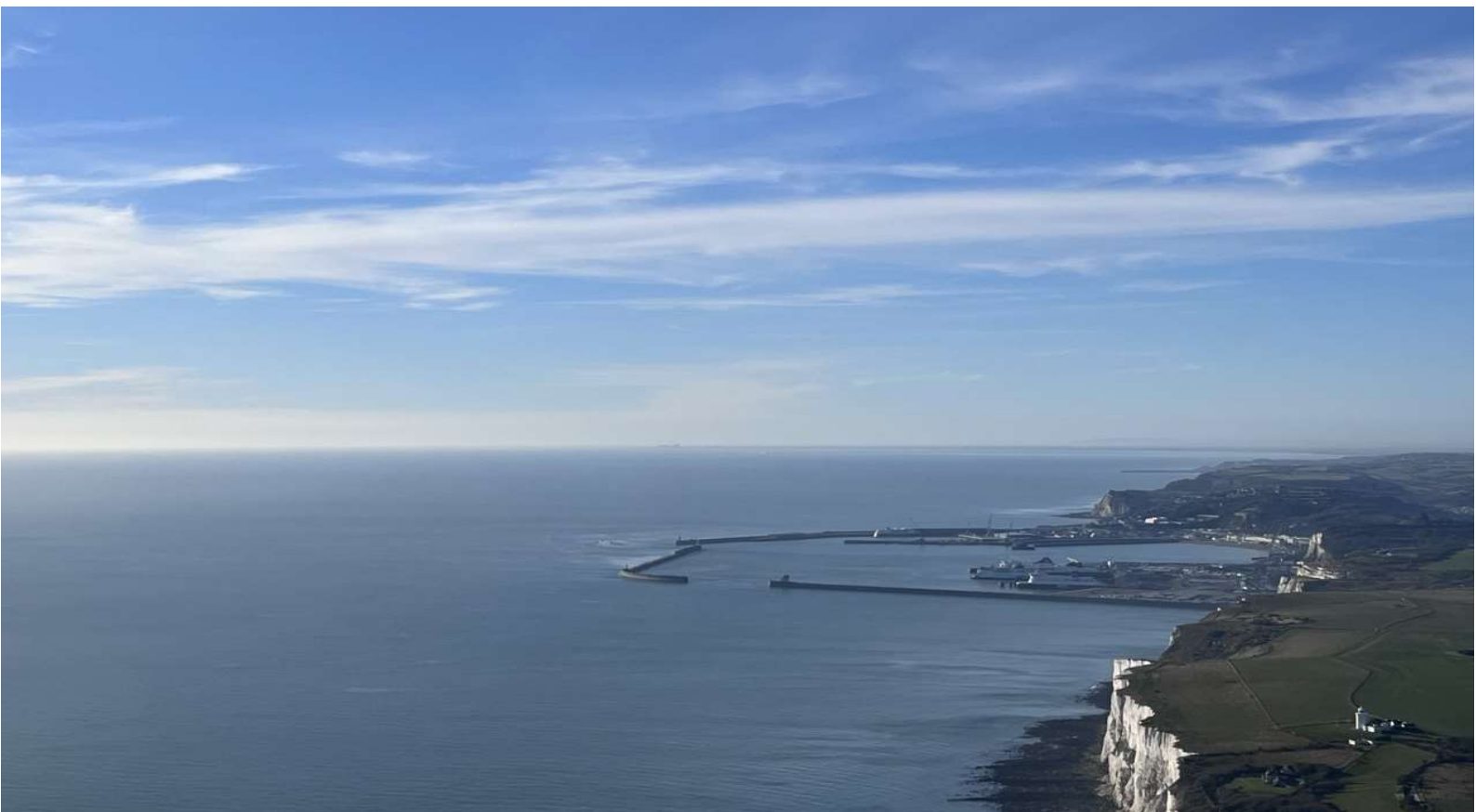


Photo: Adam Parnell



Photo: Bristol Wayfarer, BAE Systems Website

# March Strut Meeting

Article by Nic Orchard

Our March meeting was a rare treat. Despite wintry temperatures and forecasts to match, there was a good attendance at Cobtree to hear Gerry Abrahams' experiences in the Berlin Airlift.

I knew only the basics, so was intrigued to hear about the variety of civil aircraft involved and all the concomitant practical problems. Imagine a busy spell of LAA Rally arrivals, only with greater variety in approach speeds... Gerry flew a Bristol Wayfarer that was one of the Airwork's fleet. They were based at Blackbushe, where maintenance under the same name continues today.

The aeroplane's bulbous nose opening allowed transport of the huge Siemens transformers that needed transport. It was not a capacious machine for crew, however: there was room only for the pilot and R.O. The obstructiveness of the Russians seemed only too pertinent as we considered the current situation in Eastern Europe. We were fascinated by the memories of the hours of operations, together with the off-duty anecdotes.

What the audience wanted to hear as much as this history, though, was his previous experience, dropped in via a passing remark. Gerry was in Bomber Command, flying the somewhat forgotten Stirling and Halifax before taking command of a Lancaster. He survived thirty-one ops, the additional last one made to accompany a new crew, as was the practice.

If you missed this, I suggest you go to the Spitfire Museum at Manston on a day when he is volunteering. It is difficult to believe he is ninety-nine. By the way, he spoke without notes.

It seems wholly inadequate to say thank you for your service, Gerry.



Photo: Ron Armitage

# Defunct Kent Airfields

Article by Ron Armitage

## **Brenzett, also known as Ivychurch.**

Alongside the A2070 and bordered by the B2081 and a minor road twixt Brenzett and Ivychurch lies the site of this Second World War landing ground in the heart of the Romney Marsh, where it is extremely flat. The area was selected as an Advanced Landing Ground, along with another three sites in the immediate area (Newchurch, New Romney and Lydd-Midley – not to be confused with the current Lydd Airport). There were initially just two Sommerfield track runways (a light-weight wire mesh prefabricated airfield surface), two blister hangars and a few huts and tents. In September of 1943 Spitfires from Kingsnorth were based there for a few days, but it was apparently largely unused until 1944 when an improvement of the ALGs was undertaken and many improvements were carried out. I can't find out just how much the field was used during the D Day period, but it was much used a little later when the V1 rockets were launched against us.

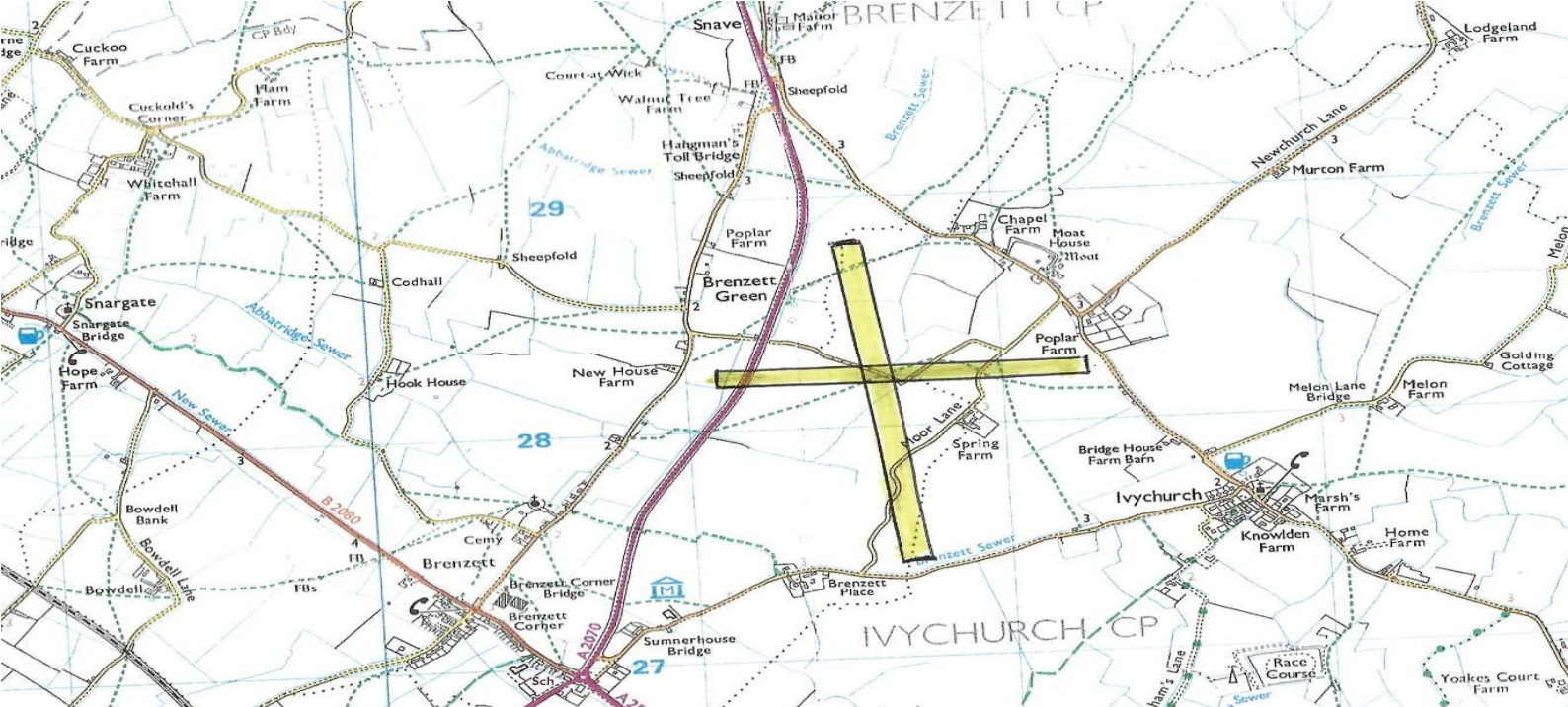
Aeroplanes from 129, 306 and 315 (Polish) Squadrons were sent to destroy these flying bombs before they could reach our conurbations.



Polish Ace Sqn Ldr E Horbaczewski (second left), CO of No. 315 'Deblinski' Squadron with fourteen confirmed kills and four V1s, poses beside his Mustang MkIII PK-G (FB166) with fellow countrymen at the Brenzett ALG shortly before being shot down and killed on 18<sup>th</sup> August 1944 near Beauvais, France.

Other operations were, of course, carried out, including long range bomber escort and Operation 'Market Garden' escorting glider combinations and transport aircraft to Arnhem.

The field was returned to agriculture in 1945 and there is now little evidence of its existence. However, see below.



Approximate orientation of runways



Photo: Ron Armitage

The Romney Marsh Wartime Collection is a lovely little museum sited just a field away from the site of the airfield in a building which was once used by the Women's Land Army. It was their job to produce as much food as possible for the country at a time of great deprivation and rationing.

The collection also incorporates the 'Brenzett Aeronautical Museum Trust' with many relics on display, including aero engines, aircraft cockpits and a 'bouncing bomb'. There are poignant displays of recovered aircraft wreckage, wartime uniforms and equipment and much personal memorabilia. There is also outside, a Vampire T11 which is unfortunately deteriorating, but gives a great opportunity to study its wooden structure.

It is open on Saturdays, Sundays, Mondays and Bank Holidays. It is well worth a visit and there is a very nice pub, 'The Bell' at Ivychurch, just a short distance away, where you can get a great pint and good food (closed for food on Mondays).

**ROMNEY MARSH  
WARTIME  
COLLECTION**  
Incorporating  
Brenzett Aeronautical Museum Trust



IVYCHURCH ROAD,  
BRENZETT,  
ROMNEY MARSH,  
KENT, TN29 0EE.

Website: [www.rmwcollection.co.uk](http://www.rmwcollection.co.uk)  
Registered Charity No: 297552



# Skywise Corner

I'll keep this as a regular article now, and just highlight a few things each month that I think are important, again if anyone needs help setting up Skywise just shout.



## SKYWISE

Tailored news, notifications & alerts  
from the **CAA**



## Infringement update: Causal factor analysis

Analysis of reports from 2020 identified poor planning and threat and error management as a cause in 62% of infringements while 54% of pilots reported distraction as a factor.

## Update of activities from GA Q1 2022

We are continuing with a number of projects including the Carbon Monoxide Detectors (CODE) project, publishing our Q1 summary report and seeking engagement opportunities including hosting Pre-Flying Display Season Symposium, meeting with LAA and working in partnership with the Department for Transport on a number of projects to support Historic Aircraft.

# LAA “Grass Roots Fly In”

Popham 2nd to 4th September 2022

I’m sure many of you would have seen the email from Steve Slater about this year’s grass roots fly in, but if you missed the email here it is. It sounds like an excellent idea and I’m sure many of us will be attending.

*The LAA will be heading for the green grass of Popham Airfield in Hampshire for a new event on 2nd, 3rd, 4th September 2022. The LAA Grass Roots Fly-In will on one hand take the Association back to its traditional roots, while continuing to offer the first chance to see some of the latest aircraft and products in the recreational aviation market.*

*A joint venture with Popham Airfield, the LAA Grass Roots Fly In will continue the theme of the recent LAA Rallies at Sywell, in particular as a social event bringing flyers from around the UK and Europe to meet fellow enthusiasts. The event though will be developed on a more intimate scale. The grass runways at Popham and the airfield’s famed rural ambience will mean that the event will focus on the fly-in and social element as much as on a large exhibition campus.*

*Said LAA CEO Steve Slater: “The LAA Grass Roots Fly In is going to be different to the LAA Rally and we’re still working on plans for the continuation of a larger scale LAA event in the future. Our move from Sywell though is a great opportunity for us to focus on creating a refreshing new take on the traditional LAA calendar fixture, something both different and at the same time taking us back to our roots.*

*“The LAA Grass Roots Fly In will make the most of Popham’s grass runways and its reputation as one of the most friendly and enthusiastic airfields in the country, to offer members and guests alike a great weekend at the start of September”.*



Picture: Flyer Magazine



# Flying Gallery

Don't forget to send your pictures for next month's gallery – you don't just want my pictures surely!



The editor enjoying some formation flying last month on the way to Compton Abbas

# Dates for your Diary

Please check with event organisers in advance for any changes. Please let me know of any events you think others might be interested in.

Items in green are Kent Strut events

14 <sup>th</sup> May	Vintage Piper Aircraft Club Meet Goodwood
28 <sup>th</sup> May	Aerobility Armchair Airshow
10 <sup>th</sup> -12 <sup>th</sup> June	Guernsey Air Rally
11 <sup>th</sup> June	Blackbushe 80 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary fly in
26 <sup>th</sup> June	Kittyhawk fly in and BBQ
30 <sup>th</sup> June	BBQ at Ripple
2 <sup>nd</sup> July	Enstone Fly In 2022
2 <sup>nd</sup> – 4 <sup>th</sup> September	LAA Grass Roots Fly in - Popham



JOIN THE  
**ENSTONE FLY IN 2022**

In Association with  
**TAKE FLIGHT AVIATION**

**FREE ENTRY**

**FAMILY FRIENDLY**

**2ND JULY 2022 - MIDDAY ONWARDS**  
ENSTONE AIRFIELD - NORTHSIDE GRASS  
VINTAGE AIRCRAFT - MILITARY VEHICLES - LIVE MUSIC  
CLASSIC CARS - BURGER VAN - TRIAL FLIGHTS  
FOR MORE INFO AND PPR CONTACT  
TAKE FLIGHT AVIATION - 01608 695896



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AIRSHOW.COM**

ONLINE FROM BIGGIN HILL  
SATURDAY 28 MAY



SUNDAY 26 JUNE 2022

**FLY-IN  
& BBQ**

BY THE PICTURESQUE SOUTH DOWNS, EAST SUSSEX  
WELCOMING GA VISITORS FAR AND WIDE ♥

**KH** KITTYHAWK AERODROME **SAVE THE DATE!!**

# Member Services

Drop the editor a line if you have a service or product, you'd like to promote including any items you may have for sale.



Solleys Kentish Ice Cream Amazing choice of flavours, tubs, cups, scooping kits.

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Glen Everett 07801 639489  
[office@flyingadverts.co.uk](mailto:office@flyingadverts.co.uk)

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