

Skywritings

The Kent Strut Newsletter March 2023



Editors Corner

I'm not sure how but I've managed 6 hours this month already and I'm really looking forward to a busy 2023 and some great flying adventures.

One last reminder for 2023 membership, if you have any concerns please contact Stephen Solley our membership secretary

If you were at the AGM you may recall Steve Hoskins reminder to get in touch if you aren't part of the strut Whatsapp group. Steve was talking about planning some scrambles on there so do get yourself added if you aren't part of it.

We owe a massive thankyou to Mike Negus and the RAF Manston History Museum where Mike gave an exciting talk about the Channel Dash which was well attended. In addition Mike has organised this months and next months event. If you have any ideas for events, please get in touch with the committee.

Thursday 30th March 19:30

Kent Air Ambulance which will bring us up to date on their current and future plans.

Venue; Cobtree Manor Golf Club, Chatham Road

Maidstone ME14 3AZ

We have another article from Ron Armitage on forgotten airfields of Kent. You may be able to help with his research so please take time to have a read.

I hope to speak to you all at an airfield soon.



A Request for Help (again)

Article by Ron Armitage

Since the dawn of flying in Kent we have permanently lost at least 80 flying grounds in the county, and that does not include all those small strips and private sites that are simply undocumented unless they are unfortunate enough to have a “newsworthy” incident. I am attempting to write a book giving brief histories of all defunct Kentish airfield sites, and also provide regular articles for ‘Skywritings’.

The military and major airfields are already well-documented, but if you are aware of any others or are able to give any information on the more obscure sites, I would be most grateful. I am also keen to beg, borrow, steal or even purchase any of your unwanted books that might help me complete the task.

I wrote this many months ago and guess what the result has been yes, you’ve got it – **zilch** (or as I would say it, bugger all).

PLEASE let me know what Kent airfields you have used **that no longer exist**, and if you could provide photographs, that would be wonderful. As an example, New Orchard Farm, near Godmersham Green, aka Jaqui’s strip, should be known to a lot of you – especially those in the Farthing Corner part of the world. I understand that Jaqui is/or was an honorary member of the Strut.

Then →



Now →



Photographs courtesy of Martin Leusby

Please go through your old log books and photographs. THANK YOU.



SKYWISE

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



Skywise Corner

I'll just highlight a few things each month that I think are important. If anyone needs help setting up Skywise just email the strut email address and I will try and assist.

GA Pilot Licensing & Training Simplification - Update

Following a consultation on the GA strategic pilot licensing and training project undertaken in the Autumn (CAP2335), the CAA has updated: Licensing & Training Simplification | Civil Aviation Authority (caa.co.uk)

We will be publishing a detailed Consultation Response Document (CRD) CAP in the near future. We welcome the clear mandate from the community towards proceeding with this project, as well as the strong support for our proposals. We look forward to working with the community over the next year in developing technical details across the various licences, ratings, certificates and training syllabuses in the scope of this project, and consult on these in early 2024.

February meeting at Manston

Nic Orchard

A trial run at our proposed new East Kent venue, the RAF Manston History museum at Manston, proved to be a great success. Mike Negus delivered a talk about the Channel Dash, 81 years ago, which was a disaster for the British despite some heroic efforts, tellingly honoured posthumously. Operation Cerberus was the German plan for three warships, the Scharnhorst, the Gneisenau and the Prinz Eugen to dash north from Brest, where they were effectively trapped, to their German base, using the most direct route through the English Channel.



So many opportunities to stop them were lost and the allied losses were appalling. If the Fuhrer's orders to return to Germany couldn't be disobeyed, neither could the order for the Royal Navy to deploy the Fairey Swordfish and Beauforts against the well-defended fleet. With the addition of poor weather that affected the accuracy of any attack from land, sea or air, radar jamming, logistics and the performance of the aircraft that were sent, what had seemed a daring 300 mile trip of the ships against the odds became a Teutonic triumph. The ships were removed from the Atlantic arena, but that was possibly the only positive aspect as far as the British were concerned.

The Museum's volunteers were splendid, opening not just the museum but also the café for our use. The second half of the evening gave us all the opportunity to visit, or revisit, the many goodies there and learn more about the work going on. The enthusiasm of the volunteers is infectious and seems a rare thing in today's world.

If you are reading this and haven't renewed your membership, consider that we had free entry to the museum, were given homemade shortcake biscuits, access to the café throughout and – great joy on a chilly night - the heat was on. Our £15 subscription is a bargain.

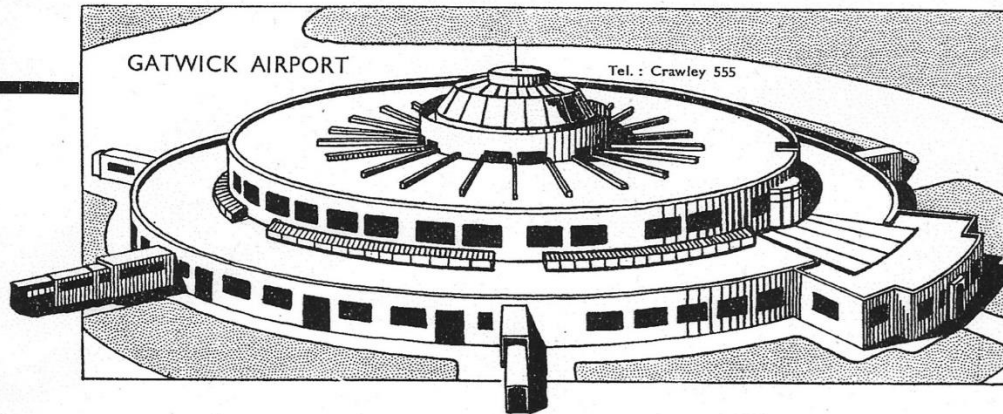
Rocket's Reminiscences

Article by Ron Armitage

Friends in the Suffolk Coastal Strut very kindly donated a large stack of pre-war flying magazines, which fit perfectly in my library, and which are fascinating. I thought you might like to see this advertisement for hangarage at Gatwick and Gravesend Airfields, showing how things were a mere 85 years ago.

POPULAR FLYING, December, 1937.

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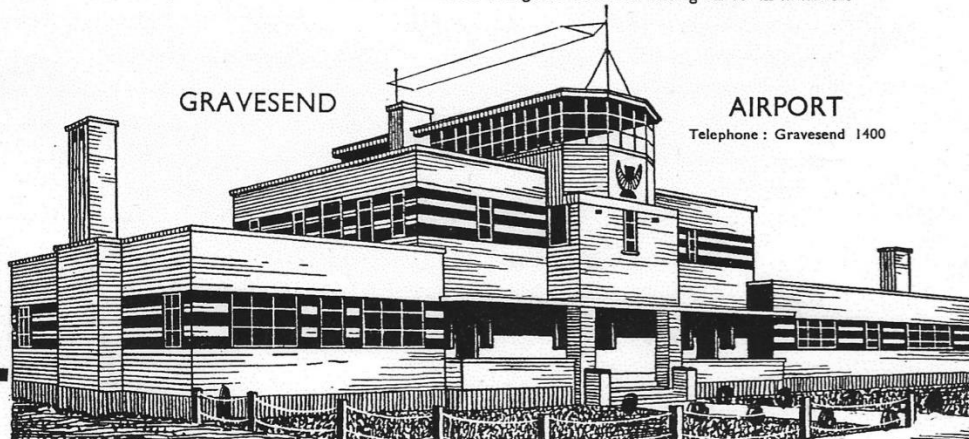
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LAA Appoints New CEO

"This is my dream role and I can't wait to get started!"

Simon Tilling has been appointed as the new CEO of the Light Aircraft Association. He will start in his new role in mid-April. Simon brings to the Association a wealth of leadership, general management and customer service experience gained in the technology sector including 'blue chip' brands such as Dell and Sony, together with a passion for sport and recreational aviation.

Simon is an experienced pilot who has owned various LAA types, including one of the UK's oldest Taylorcraft Auster aircraft. He's also a former British Air Racing champion and was from 2020 to 2022 the chairman of the Royal Aero Club '3Rs' committee for races, records and rallies, during which time he regenerated the appeal of air racing to new participants.

Eryl Smith, Chairman of the LAA said "I am delighted to announce Simon's appointment as CEO of the LAA and look forward to working with him to further improve the performance and standing of the Association on behalf of our members."

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

| | |
|---|---|
| 21 st March | Astral Aviation – Human Factor Single Pilot Resource Management |
| 30 th March | Kent Strut – Kent Air Ambulance Talk |
| 5 th April | Easter Flyin Event, Solent Airport |
| 22 nd April | Jodel Club Fly-In, -Popham |
| 22 nd - 23 rd April | Race School – British Air Racing, Popham |
| 22 nd - 23 rd April | Precision Flying – Intro Weekend, Conington |
| 27 th April | Kent Strut – Airfix Talk – How they are researched and made |
| 13 th - 14 th May | Vintage Aircraft Club Fly-In, Bodmin |
| 13 th - 14 th May | Pooleys Air Day, Compton Abbas |
| 28 th – 29 th May | Vintage Piper Fly-in, Popham |
| 8 th – 10 th June | AeroExpo, Sywell |
| 9 th – 11 th June | Guernsey Air Rally |
| 30 th July | Lundy Sunday Fly-In, Lundy Island |

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.



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If you are looking for new aircraft radios, transponders, GPS or spares, don't hesitate to contact
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