

Skywritings

The Kent Strut Newsletter May 2023



www.laakentstrut.org.uk



Editors Corner

Now the weather seems to have settled there's a lot of great flying ahead for us all, and the committee have been super busy organising more events to fill your busy flying schedules.

The big announcement is the next Manston fly-in on the 28th May.

**We need some volunteers to help marshal aircraft on the day, if you can help, please get in touch
Even if it's just a few hours.**

Do check out the dates for your diary at the back of the newsletter for other events.

Rom Armitage has written another fantastic article on defunct Kent airfields which I really enjoyed having not lived too far from the Guston site and Mike Tooze has written a piece on flying his Vari Eze. Thanks for the contributions to YOUR newsletter.

I'm unable to make Manston myself as I'll be at La Ferte Alais Airshow but would someone get some pictures and perhaps a small write up for the newsletter?

Our next meeting is:-

Thursday 25th May – Cobtree Manor Golf Club
Talk on WWI Coastal Aerial Defence

Finally, if you aren't in the Strut Whatsapp and would like to be, please email us and we can add you in so you're up to date with the latest news as it happens.



LAA “GRASS ROOTS FLY IN”



LAA
Light Aircraft Association

GRASS ROOTS

Popham Airfield EGHP
18th - 20th August 2023

Fly-In

LAA Annual Fly In. Vintage, gyros, home built and sport aircraft. www.laa.uk.com

Defunct Kent Airfields

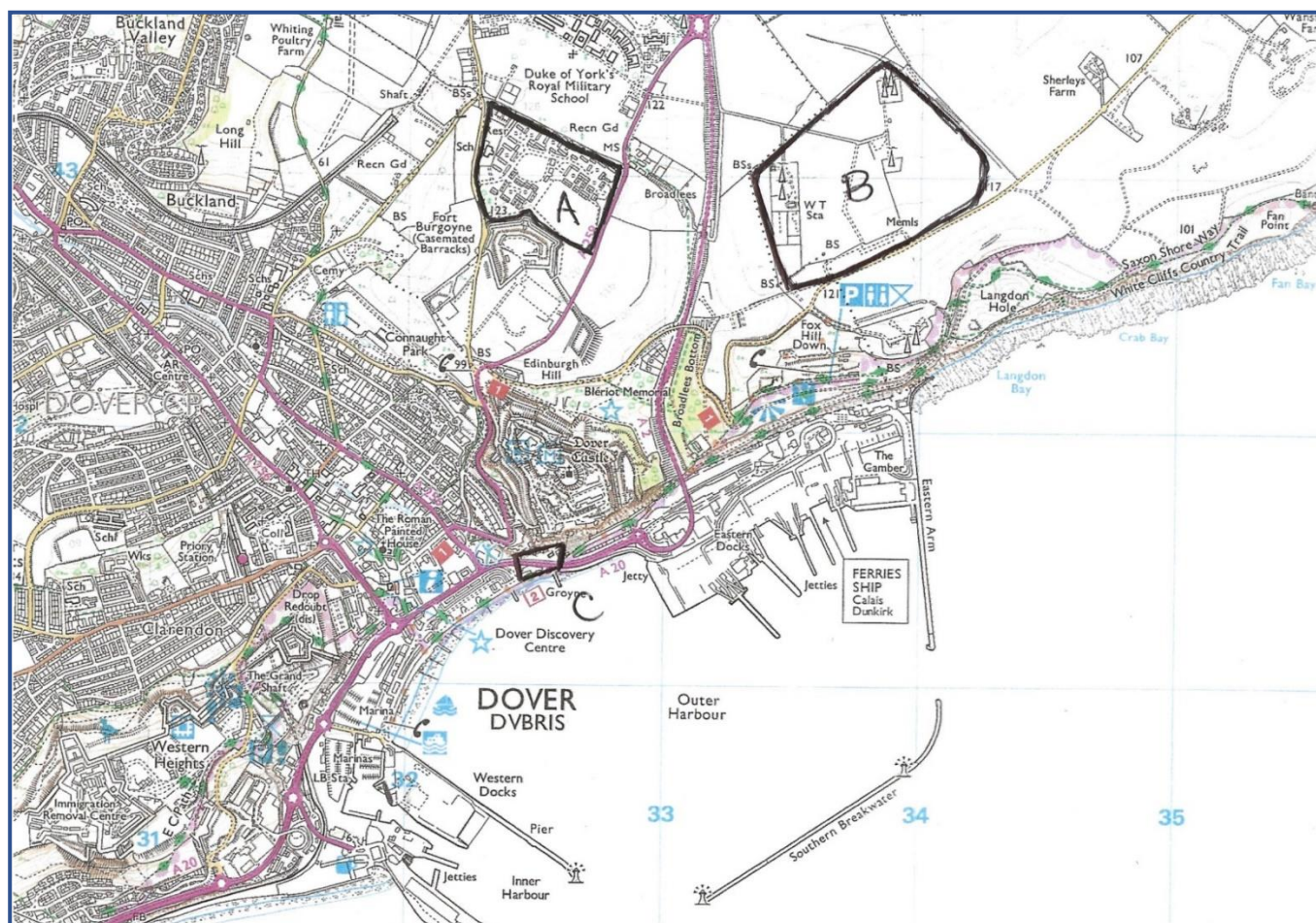
Dover (Part 2)

Article by Ron Armitage

In an earlier edition of Skywritings I wrote about the airfield at Whitfield, Dover – the home in 1910 of the Dover Aero Club, and the field from which Harriet Quimby became the first lady to fly across the Channel solo.

However, there were other flying grounds in the local area, which I have shown on the attached Ordnance Survey map:

- A Dover (Guston)
- B Dover (Swingate Down/St Margaret's, aka Langdon)
- C Dover (Dover Harbour Marine Parade)



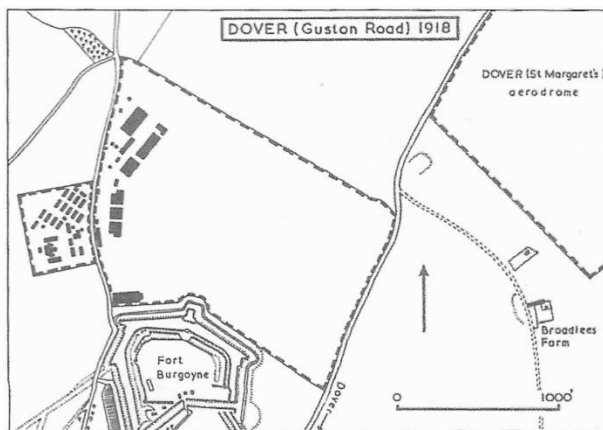
A. DOVER Guston Road

This was one of a number of naval air stations intended to provide protection for the Royal Naval harbour being constructed at Dover and the forces safeguarding the Straits of Dover. At the outbreak of the First World War work had not been completed, but by the end of 1914 seven aeroplane sheds and three Bessonneau hangars were on site with supporting accommodations.

Various squadrons went to Guston on detachment and the aerodrome was used to carry goods and personnel for the seaplane base being built down on the harbour. 4 Squadron RNAS was formed in March 1915 and the RNAS Aeroplane School a few months later.



*Guston Airfield in 1917. The Duke of York's School clock tower can be seen in the background.
Photo courtesy of Guston Parish Council website*



*Guston Airfield in 1918.
Illustration from Martyn Chorlton's book
"Forgotten Aerodromes Of WWI"
(Crecy Publishing Ltd)*

The airfield was used throughout the war and in 1918, 233 Squadron was formed, flying DH4 and DH9 aeroplanes on dedicated anti-submarine duties. When they moved to Walmer in 1919, work at Guston declined and with hostilities over, was closed in 1920.



The site today (Photo courtesy of Sandra Davis)

Article by Mike Tooze

Unavoidably I have not so far been able to attend our Strut meetings this year, I was particularly sorry not to be able to get to Manston for Mike Negus's presentation on the 'Channel Dash'. The title, for me, recalled my old Ranch mates from Biggin Hill jostling for position on the LeTouquet approach!

Therefore, struggling out from a bout of Covid, despite all the precautions, a pile of writing, some mathematics and 3D printing, I also finally had to figure out how to reproduce my four into one exhaust system. 'Clever' at the time but how on earth to replicate it all these years later with it passing so closely by the engine and under my tight cowls – perhaps not so clever!

Well, cutting a long story short I managed to produce a jig and patterns that enabled me to fly again without that nagging concern as to whether the old pipes would be repairable for yet another year.

I was therefore very pleased to find the Strut email telling of the Manston fly-in, mid-April, arranged by Steve Hoskins and the Strut, along with the Polar Helicopters. This was doubly fortunate as I had to do a test flight with the new exhaust system that co-incidentally also marked an important-to-me anniversary.



I know that the Vari Eze types are not appreciated by everyone, but as a chartered aeronautical engineer working in aerodynamics, flight control and systems design I felt more than able to appreciate Burt Rutan's design, obtaining his 'plans' within a fortnight of first issue.

I had called Manston in November last year to suggest that I fly-in to Manston to celebrate my very first test flight from RAF Manston. Unfortunately, at that time they had to reply that it was not appropriate.

However, this time I called Polar Helicopters and explain my situation. They were extremely co-operative even keen for my arrival /celebratory fly-by.

Thus, on Sunday the 16th April I arranged to arrive for midday when the circuit was clear and most of the Strut were either in the museum or eating; I called Manston Radio. They were very helpful allowing a little run-by by way of a 'sighter'. There I found due to the absence of fixed wing traffic that gulls had adopted the runway. They were using the rising currents from the runway as a free lift.

(This prevented me from waving as promised to Kevin and his wife, as I now had to dodge our feathered friends.)

Then I completed the circuit for a touch-and-go so recalling my never-to-be-forgotten first take-off in my own-built Vari Eze G-EMMY. Radio ok'd a final slip-by on a near closed throttle from where I pulled away to continue my test flight thanking Polar and Mansion Radio for allowing me to celebrate my just over forty years since that first test flight in my Vari Eze.

Many thanks to Steve and Polar Helicopters.



Military Civil Air Safety Day

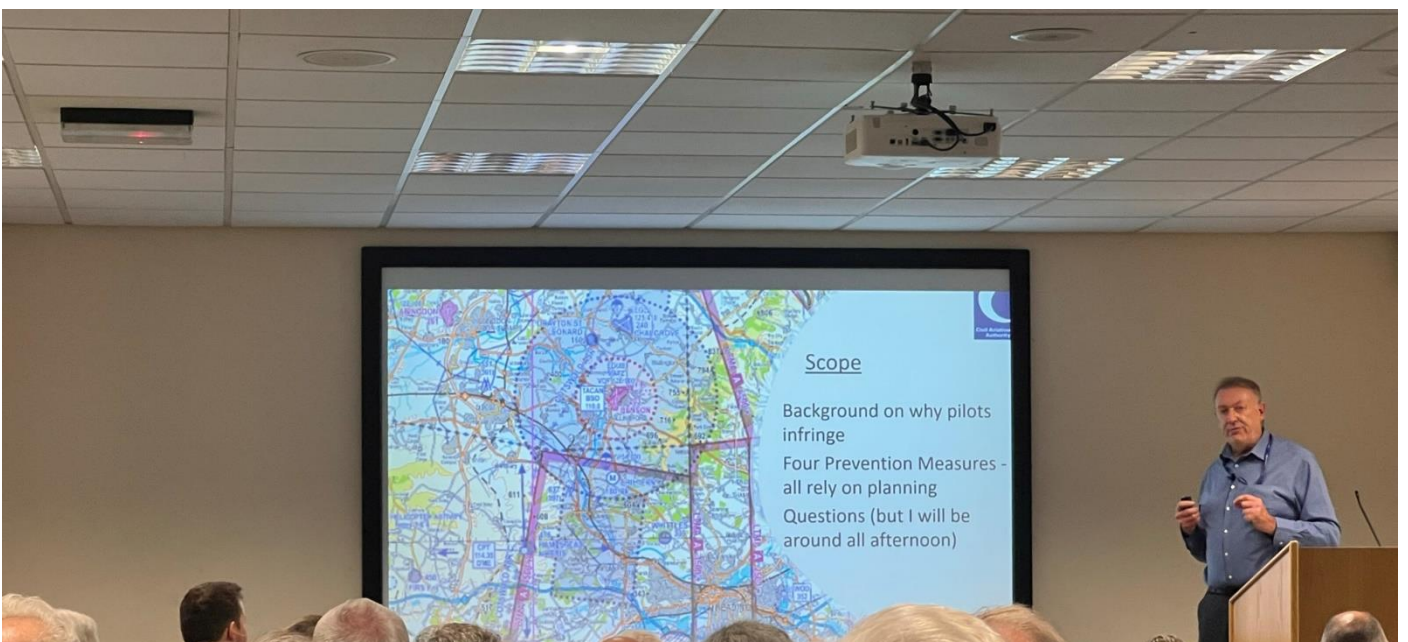


Apart from running safety evenings Gasco also run several other events, including Met briefings and Military Civil Air Safety Days.

I was fortunate to obtain a drive-in space on the RAF Benson safety which had over 300 people apply for a space, with just 21 flying spaces. As it turned out the weather almost precluded flying apart from a small band of brave aviators who were mostly local except for someone who flew in from Guernsey!

After breakfast and coffee which was provided, we were welcomed by the station commander, and various other officers including the officer commanding 28 squadron.

The day consisted of various talks by the based units which included the Thames Valley Air Ambulance, National Police Air Services, Oxford University Air Squadron and Air Traffic Control. It was interesting to see the mix of traffic, operations and information on the project marshal ATC upgrades occurring in the near future.



Despite all the work being done around Electronic Conspicuity (EC) it was interesting to hear some that operators were not ADS-B out compliant.

There was a talk by the Airprox board, Mike O'Donoghue from Gasco, and Rob Gratton from the CAA. Back to EC for a second some of the data presented by the airprox board highlighted the mess that is multiple protocols with the collective view in the room ADS-B out was really the right way to go.

After lunch there was an opportunity to visit various stands setup in the hangar, have a nosey around various aircraft and talk to other pilots and military personnel.

Each visitor was given a ticket for a raffle to visit the simulator suite which had limited places, being unsuccessful in the raffle OC 28 Squadron invited any instructors present on the day to join her and her instructor team at a meeting and presentation on instructional techniques. Having been voluntold I was going; it was an extremely good session where there was lots of productive conversation about techniques and methods including a talk about US military flying training by an exchange United States Marine Corps Pilot on exchange to the UK flying the mighty Chinook.





SKYWISE

Tailored news, notifications & alerts
from the CAA



Flying over gliding sites

Our [latest safety campaign](#) highlights the risks of **flying over active gliding sites** in support of the work of the British Gliding Association (BGA).

A [new animation](#) reminds pilots of powered aircraft to check the location of glider sites and the altitude to which a winch launch may operate when they are planning a flight and glider pilots of the importance of reporting.

More information including a link to the BGA's Winch Cable Warning Poster to download and display is available at www.caa.co.uk/glidingsites

New and updated Safety Sense Leaflet: Distraction

We've published an updated [Safety Sense leaflet](#) providing pilots with the right strategies to help avoid distraction and interruption, be more aware of the dangers and reduce the risk to your flying.

Consider mitigations within your Threat and Error Management (TEM) approach. More information on TEM can be found on the [Airspace & Safety Initiative](#) website.

This forms part of the popular [Safety Sense series](#) which the CAA is currently updating.

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

25 th May	Kent Strut – Cobtree Manor Golf Club Talk on WW1 Coastal Defences
26 th – 20 th May	Spamfield 2023 Sandown
28 th May	Kent Strut – Manston Fly-in
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
11 th June	Priory Farm Fly-in, Norfolk
30 th June	Kent Strut – Ripple BBQ Fly-in
9 th July	Suffolk Coastal Strut Fly-in
30 th July	Lundy Sunday Fly-In, Lundy Island
TBC July	Kent Strut – The Secret Nuclear Bunker Fly-in
18 th - 20 th August	LAA Grass Roots Fly-in Popham
28 th September	Kent Strut – Talk by Charlie Brown – Cobtree Manor Golf Club
26 th October	Kent Strut - Fireworks at Clipgate
30 th November	Kent Strut - One September Evening - The Greatest Dogfight of WW1
TBC December	Kent Strut – Christmas Dinner
25 th January 2024	Kent Strut - AGM

Ripple Fly-in

Don't forget to PPR with Polar Helicopters! Volunteers needed to help on that day, can you spare a few hours to help?

Ripple Fly-in

Stephen Solley has offered free of charge camping available for those wishing to try the new on-site bar.

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.

FREE delivery service for most of Kent

Stephen Solley 07836 653257
sc.solley@solleysicecream.co.uk



If you are looking for new aircraft radios, transponders, GPS or spares, don't hesitate to contact
Glen Everett 07801 639489 office@flyingadverts.co.uk

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