

Skywritings

The Kent Strut Newsletter August 2023



www.laakentstrut.org.uk



Editors Corner

It's been an extremely busy few months and it's been great to catch up with so many of you out and about flying. As always Ron Armitage has given us a great article on Defunct airfields of Kent (which he sent me last month – sorry Ron!) but it would be great to hear more about what you are doing also.

Our next meetings are:-

17th September – Manston Fly In – PPR with Polar Helicopters

28th September – The greatest dogfight of WW1 – Cobtree Manor Golf Course

Hangar space at Farthing Corner

There is a space available in the hangar at Farthing corner, for more information please contact John Dean on 07880 748064 or email john@jmdean.co.uk

Aviation Items for Sale

Chris Reynolds has a number of aviation items for sale including two Transair headsets, ideal for passengers of spares, tiedown kits, lifejackets and soft helmet to fit your headset. Sensible offers to Chris on 07850 628981

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.



Defunct Kent Airfields

Dover Harbour, Dover Marine Parade

Article by Ron Armitage



C. DOVER HARBOUR (Marine Parade)

When war was declared in 1914, Dover assumed a vital role in the defence of Britain. The huge Admiralty Harbour supported naval forces controlling the Straits of Dover and safeguarding troops and equipment going to and returning from France.



The port of Dover had been used by the early seaplanes, as can be seen by this Short S41 pictured at Dover in 1912, and it was thought that a permanent seaplane base should be built to support the fleet. The site chosen was the old Guilford Battery Grounds, where the Territorial Army Drill Hall had been rented out and become a very popular roller skating rink and dance hall.



The Royal Naval Air Service used the existing building for workshops and training, whilst hangars were built alongside. Initially, the seaplanes lay anchored in the harbour until the hangars were built, but even then, they had to be manually carried over the Marine Parade until steam cranes were moved in to do the job.



Seaplane being prepared for attack.

Note the new RAF logo on the wing.

Photograph courtesy of Dover Museum

Initially the aeroplanes were unarmed except for a pistol carried by the pilot and were used for observation purposes. Gradually, however, they became more capable and supported the Royal Navy throughout the war, with particular emphasis on anti-submarine duties.

Following the end of hostilities, the base closed in 1919. However, in 1928, the French company, Compagnie Aérienne Française set up the 'Channel Air Express' to operate a seaplane taxi service between Dover and Calais. By 1933 the company was carrying more goods and post than passengers and the company went into liquidation in 1937.

A CALAIS-DOVER AIR SERVICE.

PROPOSED START IN JULY.

PARIS, May 18.—It is expected that a cross-Channel passenger air service between Calais and Dover will start on July 15. The Compagnie Aérienne Française has been authorized to run a seaplane service, one terminus of which will be on the Calais dock, 100 yards from the Maritime Station, and the other within the farthest breakwater at Dover.

The service will run in connexion with the boat trains, and the crossing will take only a quarter of an hour. The fleet will at first consist of four or five small seaplanes each carrying two or three passengers, but it is hoped that later it may be possible to increase the number of seaplanes and run special trains in connexion with the air crossing.

—*Reuter.*



The site as it is today

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

| | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| 28 th September | Kent Strut - One September Evening - The Greatest Dogfight of WW1 |
| 26 th October | Kent Strut - Fireworks at Clippgate |
| 30 th November | Kent Strut – Talk by Charlie Brown – Cobtree Manor Golf Club |
| TBC December | Kent Strut – Christmas Dinner |
| 25 th January 2024 | Kent Strut - AGM |

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.



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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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