

Skywritings

The Kent Strut Newsletter June 2024



New feature! The Cover Caption competition...

From the Coordinator's swivel chair

June was far from flaming for much of the time but finally, summer is here. I look forward to reading and hearing about where you've been. What news from the projects? A stamped addressed envelope is enclosed for your contributions.

If anyone has ideas or contacts for winter meetings, please let us know. It may seem early now, but the summer equinox has noxed and we want to put together the calendar early enough for you all to be able to attend.

I was pleased to see that Manston now is confident no further challenges can be made and plans can make progress. Our relationship with the airport is good and we trust it will remain just as GA-friendly in the future.

I am looking forward to the July meeting, revisiting the Secret Nuclear Bunker. Our Weather Arranging Officer is sure to organise the perfect day for it. Watch out for e-mails and WhatsApp messages – and for scrambles, too.

Thank you for the excellent contributions this month.

Let's use the weather while we have it and even better, the sky has no elections.

Steve

Strut Barbecue at Ripple

A few not-very-good photos from Thursday 2th June. Live music, classic cars and decent weather added to the incentives. Will you be there next year?



A Lesson

Ron Armitage

Once again, the lovely people at Brooklands had been kind enough to invite us to one of their fly-ins. This one was on 12th April 2024. Plans were made, it's only a short flight. Headcorn to Sevenoaks, to go around the Gatwick CTA, and then basically follow the route of the M25 motorway to the Ockham VOR or Wisley disused airfield and from there into the Brooklands LFA, having previously spoken with them on their air/ground communication service.

Brooklands is located within the London Control Zone (CTR) and special procedures apply involving the activation by the Museum of a Local Flying Area (LFA) to permit flights to operate without reference to Heathrow Radar subject to the conditions laid out in a Letter of Agreement (LoA) between Brooklands Museum and NATS Terminal Control. Unless a specific clearance is obtained from Heathrow Radar all flights must arrive and depart from the south and at all times remain within the horizontal and vertical limits (maximum altitude of 1,500' QNH of the LFA). It is recommended that aircraft route via the OCK VOR. Pilots should be aware of the proximity of Fairoaks Airfield and associated ATZ/LFA to the west of Brooklands and Farnborough's "new" controlled airspace to the south-west. Before leaving, we checked the weather and NOTAMs as normal and spoke with Brooklands "Air Traffic" on the telephone to obtain a briefing on the current conditions. We were told that there was a gusting crosswind and that runway 19 was in use. As I had not landed on 19 before, I mentioned the 10 metre high poplar trees on the approach and was told that it would be perfectly acceptable to do an offset approach between the trees and the Brooklands Hotel. We agreed that if we were unhappy with the conditions we would simply overshoot and come back another day. The journey was uneventful, apart from some extreme gusts, and I simply followed our "Skydemon" route. I set up to join downwind for a right-hand circuit as instructed and, apart from some heavy turbulence just prior to downwind, all went well, with a perfectly normal approach and landing.



We had another super day at Brooklands, with the usual friendly banter with the volunteers and visitors (and of course the obtaining of their logbook stamp). All too soon it was time to depart and our journey home was uneventful.

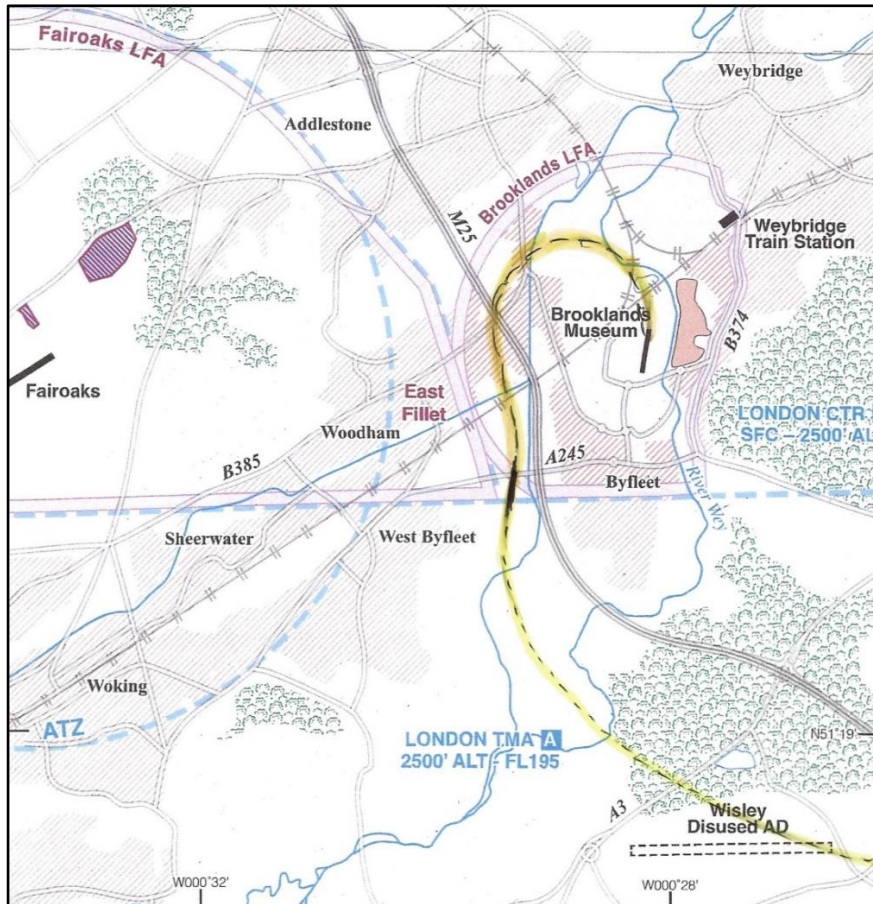
Some weeks later, I thought it might be a good idea to write an article about our adventure to Brooklands and made a start by looking at the recorded log of the flight on "Skydemon". Initially, all looked fine, but as it opened up further, my bowels turned to water as it seemed that I had INFRINGED the London CTR to the south-west of the Brooklands LFA. Clearly, this was not possible or was it? I tried to remember that stage of the flight and was aware that I was concentrating really hard on getting the circuit and landing absolutely right in what were quite turbulent conditions. Perhaps the trace was incorrect, and anyway, in the previous weeks no-one had been in touch with me, so I couldn't possibly have transgressed, could I? I had a very, very sleepless night.

The following morning, and with more than a little trepidation, I made a telephone call to NATS and gave them full details of what I thought might have been an infringement. Naturally, I was hoping that they would soon come back to me and confirm that nothing untoward had occurred. Once again I was wrong. A week or so later a very understanding gentleman phoned me from NATS to say that I had, in fact, infringed. They had a copy of the trace showing this, but it had gone unnoticed at the time and fortunately for me, had only been for a few seconds. Nevertheless, I would have to complete an Online Infringement Report, a copy of which would go to the CAA. He kindly told me not to lose any sleep over the matter. Some hopes! As OIRs are anonymous (but contain the aircraft registration), I was asked by the CAA to provide details of the Pilot in Command at the time of the alleged incident, and there followed a certain amount of communication. Fortunately, they were very understanding and the last line of their final letter to me read as follows:

“The CAA would like to take the opportunity to thank you for your honest and open attitude to reporting which the Team opined epitomised a Just Culture. The CAA now looks upon the infringement as closed; please confirm receipt of this email.

Yours sincerely,

Airspace Infringements Team”



The yellow line shows my approximate route and the infringement the black bar in the small triangle of London CTR. All I had to do was keep right of the M25, not keep the M25 on my right!

And it's not like I'm a novice. I have been flying over 50 years in both fixed wing aeroplanes and gliders. I have over 7,200 hours total time, have captained over 84 different types and was a professional gliding instructor for many years. And still I got it wrong.

This whole incident has left me chastened and embarrassed. I have written this as a lesson to show just how easy it is to get things wrong (equally embarrassing, my log books show that I have attended at least 23 safety evenings and several Infringement Avoidance Webinars).

All those involved, Brooklands, NATS and the CAA have shown great kindness. I am lucky. Thank you.

G-EVLE Rearwin Cloudster Update 2

This month I have continued to prod and poke about with the Cloudster, understanding the full extent of the damage. In order to park the fuselage up tight against the wall, meant I had to remove the fin, rudder, horizontal stabiliser and elevator. The fin having damage to the ½" tube radius and the rudder has broken hinges. I have carefully removed the Ceconite covering on these parts and set aside so I can ensure the same stitch pattern can be followed when its time to recover the repaired tubular frames beneath.

Trying to track down parts is proving a challenge, most of which being sourced from the US. Some companies respond fairly quickly with others not responding at all.

Propeller

A new 86" prop to the same specification as the original, was ordered from Sensenich in the States which was made to order. This arrived in late April and following a few days with it sitting on the dining room table so I could admire said bit of wood, I was duly told to put it in the shed. It really is a beautiful piece of craftsmanship.



Carburettor

I hadn't realised until after buying the plane, that the carburettor had been damaged in the accident. This was the first of the unforeseen problems and I doubt it will be the last. After scouring the internet, I managed to source an identical model (Bendix NA R 5A) on San Diego Air Museums' web page. Unfortunately, they don't ship worldwide so I had to get hold of a friend of a friend who lived in CA who could provide an address and forward shipping for me. The purchase was made and in less than a week, I received the replacement carb.



1 Replacement carb ready for refurb



Damaged mounting flange on original

I have managed to get hold of one of the previous engineers based in Somerset who has been involved with this particular aeroplane for over 30 years. I had a long conversation with him who clearly knows his way around this Cloudster and he has been very helpful in pointing me in the right direction for parts suppliers etc. So for now, the parts hunt continues.

That's about it for the time being!

Richard Solley

(A version of this may appear in the LAA magazine, but you have an exclusive preview!)

Yellow hands, (some) yellow cake and a large yellow thing in the sky

Manston (aka Mankosh)
The Kent Strut Fly-In 24-26h May

How often have you been to a fly-in where there's the room and the will to accommodate aircraft from the lightest flexwing to an Airbus? Where radio calls and joining procedures are kept simple? Where the public can see what we do and help us to raise money for charity?

Well, we didn't get to welcome an Airbus a400, although there had been a possibility, but at Manston, the Kent Strut volunteer team did get to say hello to a large number of pilots and their aircraft.

After last year's one day 'one-off' event at Manston and another, much quieter day, it had to be that this one would be the third last-chance fly-in before work starts there. However, this year we were dealing not with one day, but three. The decision from the latest appeal regarding the airport's future had been received just a few days previously, so the timing was fortuitous. For many locals, it was excellent news.

The fly-in was a Kent Strut event, with the invaluable assistance of RiverOak Strategic Partners, Polar Helicopters, the RAF Manston History Museum, so planning was extensive, if not military. Polar undertook the PPR and radio, the Strut predominantly the marshalling and organisation airside, the museum the landside arrangements, with all combining to design and agree the layout of the whole: moved car parking, traffic flow, public access, pilot access, camping, security, etc. The Council had agreed that to enable aircraft to be parked at the camping area and allow the public a better view, aircraft could cross the road, with traffic management to achieve this. That, if nothing else, was novel.

At a committee meeting, after a silence and in a moment of weakness, I offered to marshal the marshalls. If I can organise poppy appeal collectors locally, a few marshalls for a weekend had to be easy, I thought. Curiously, it took bribes and offers of unlimited cake to rustle up sufficient bodies, just. We needed high-vis vests, duly branded to eliminate any confusion; visitors would be advised they didn't. I was impressed that the museum crew had colour-coded high-vis, depending on their roles. In addition to the vests, I added some foam hands, which whilst intended to raise a smile, were proven to be invaluable. When pilots couldn't see the person too well, they saw the hands.

In the week before, weeds were hoed from runway and parking areas, fencing and tapes were put in place, charity fund-raising on site was finalised and we studied the weather...and it was looking good! PPRs, already healthy, rose steadily for all three days. Five minute 'slots' were reduced to two. As the weekend approached, Sunday looked less tempting, but it was evident that Friday and Saturday were going to be busy. All the plottin' and plannin' were going to be used! Was this a genuine turn in the weather this year?

Friday was a steady stream of arrivals from 08:00 as our team assembled, through to whenever. In all, there were about ninety arrivals that day, in perfect weather. The simple joining procedure worked well.



The shuttle bus across the road to the museum side was kept busy once it started, and there was a minibus bus each hour if visitors wanted to go to into Ramsgate, Margate or be lured by Hornby/Lego. Both Museums had enjoyed extra footfall, too. Jane Delamaine was to share her expertise on Amy Johnson on Friday and Saturday evenings, an ongoing passion and project of hers that attendees found fascinating.

By end of play the dozen campers were settled and we just needed to tidy up and get the Strut tent emptied overnight.



The prizes to be won there had grown as our members had arrived and couldn't be left out overnight. It was thanks (not for the first or last time) to the museum whose lovely people came up trumps. Our Borrow the Barrow sub-team became adept at negotiating gates and fences, the precious cargo perched precariously, and thus saved the rest of us much time and effort.

'That was fun', we said, over the first drink, having put up our tents and somehow found ourselves in the village pub. 'Let's do it all over again tomorrow'. It had been good to see such a variety of aircraft and when we could, talk to their drivers.



The PPRs for Saturday grew as Sunday's weather became clearer and plans were changed. The marshalling team gang was down by two due to illness, but it seemed to work, thanks later to a couple of pop-up volunteers just when we were flagging – not semaphore – and also Adrian, who'd worked at Manston back in the day and had the appropriate chocks ready for his special arrival, the Dakota, inbound from North Weald. The spotters weren't the only ones buzzing when it first called in. The whole airport seemed to be on high alert. G-ANAF did a low pass first, just to make sure.





Before and after, though, the arrivals stream spaced themselves out very well, mostly vacating as soon as they could, or when they found the marshal trying to look thirty feet taller. At nearly three km and wide to boot, even in its reduced state, the runway deceives many, no matter how much self-briefing has gone on. 'I'll land long', one says and does, only to find there's still a long way to taxi to get off. Fortunately, for much of the time we were using 10, which has 'only' 800m from the threshold to the taxiway... For us, it was simply 'deploy all hands' until such time as things eased up... chapeaux to the gang who went way beyond what they'd agreed to do.



A very welcome arrival was Amanda Harrison, together with copies of her book, Solo to Darwin. It was a pleasure to be able to tell pilots she was right there, at the tent, and if they weren't aware of what she'd achieved they could go and talk to her.

With Catherine Ruddick, who arrived in the Aerobility Tecnam, the BWPA and Aerobility were well represented by two of the best! Interactions

with pilots and public

It was very pleasing later to learn that Amanda, who won the Bear, is an arctophile and Manston J Wakefield, who remembered his name once he'd flown back with her in the Cessna 152, was last seen searching for helmet and sheepskin to enjoy some open cockpit flying.



For children, we had 'An Airfield Adventure' and a supply of chuck gliders, which gave the chance to evangelise about flying to young and not so young. One twelve-year-old went home with much more information, having approached with his father specifically to ask about becoming a pilot.

Simon Tilling arrived by Navion, although only those in the tent had time to chat. Sorry, Simon.



If the DC3 was the star of the show, there were undoubtedly many other contenders. The length of runway and taxiways ensured we had space enough to welcome all, with Saturday seeing not just the whole of Echo taxiway full of aircraft, but also each side of Alpha.

No photo shows it all, unless anyone has an aerial view.



Sadly, none of us managed to achieve that.

There was a trio comprising Dragonfly, Chipmunk and Cub (G-AEDU, GBXHA & G-BBLH), our local Isaacs Fury (G-BKFK) and the Isaacs Spitfire (G-ISAC). The international arrivals included a Chipmunk, Cub, two Bristells and a Beech Bonanza (F-GOAM) from Belgium, a Rouen-based Mooney (N1412M) plus a Quik microlight (G-LPIN) in via Calais.



Sunday was quiet, with much of the country weathered in. Rain overnight had left puddles in parts but the campers reported no ill effects and it dried up very quickly in the SE, if not elsewhere. The public was out in force, though, not realising the arrivals by air were likely to be few. The aeroplanes that made it in were most welcome and ushered across the road to minimise the walk for pilots and give everyone else real aeroplanes to see. The museum had a very good day.



Mini debriefs and one all-parties debrief have identified what went well, what ought to have gone well and what could be done better. 'No Battleplan survives contact with the enemy'. On the whole, it was a success for all and feedback has been positive. Three hundred aircraft flew in and three hundred flew out.

Airmanship was very good generally, although we will be less trusting about landing fees if we ever do this again. Some seemed to forget (not LAA members, surely). All the proceeds were going to our local Strut charity, Martha Trust and the Brain Tumour Research Organisation, the latter added as one of our members, Chris Knight is only

too connected to this since Carol was diagnosed. At the time of writing, there is £5,260 and possibly more if a pledge is match-funded.







Photos: Mike Fogerty, Nic Orchard.

For more like these,

<https://no7bcm.smugmug.com/Nicspics/Flying/Manston-Fly-In-Mankosh/n-MfnwXj>

For individual aircraft, there are some here: <https://www.aviationjournal.co.uk>
 (scroll down to Manston). Many thanks to Durran Hunt for the use of these.

The Strut cast:

Chris	Dinesh	Gary	John C	John D	John T
Lee	Mike	Nigel	Peter	Richard B	Richard Shone
Richard Solley	Simon	Steve	Stephen	Terry	Trevor
Nic					

Forthcoming Events:

July

If interest is sufficient, Steve will organise the trip to Damyn's Hall and the onward trip to visit the Secret Nuclear Bunker, postponed from last year due to 'summer' weather. A minibus full would make it work. Please wave via e-mail if you are interested.

August

The Rally at Leicester. Watch the magazine for details of booking in.

Gossip from the bar stools...

John Dean, our Official Weather Arranger, did wonders on Saturday 29th and was spotted at Heveningham Hall, proving it. CAVOK and glorious temperatures prevailed.

Stephen Solley has been welcoming visitors to his strip at Ripple for the BBQ and other fundraising activities for Martha Trust. The debate rages on the source of his energy levels and when we find which flavour ice cream is responsible, we are going to buy the lot.

Nic Orchard was heard to promise out loud that this year's Dawn to Dusk entry was the last ever and would no longer be pushing people to donate to Book Trust. As a sop, here's a link, lest she gets all fierce.

https://www.justgiving.com/page/nic-orchard?utm_medium=fundraising&utm_content=page%2Fnic-orchard&utm_source=copyLink&utm_campaign=pfp-share

And finally...



A lovely image from the Fury (with Stephen's Jodel looking socially distanced)

Kent Strut Committee Contacts

Co-Ordinator Steve Hoskins 07768 984507 hoskinsltd@outlook.com

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

Safety Officer Mike Negus 01634 364396 mike.negus8@blueyonder.co.uk

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

LAA Representative Kevin Marks 01622 850939 Onfinal@hotmail.co.uk

Committee Members

Nic Orchard 07759 535199 nicbearcraft@aol.com

Ron Loveday 07843 150430 ronloveday8@gmail.com

Gary Smith 01795 422426 gary.james.smith@btinternet.com

John Dean 01892 822776 john@jmdean.co.uk

Nigel Read 01634 362375 nread52@yahoo.co.uk

Brian Hope 01795 662508 bfjjodel@talktalk.net

Peter Huxley 07899 015287 peterjhux@gmail.com

Strut Instructors

Steve Hoskins 07768 984507 CRI(A)

Adam Parnell 07885 626858 FI(A) CRI(A)

**Contributions to Skywritings welcome via any of the above, or direct to
laakentstrut@gmail.com**