

May 2014



SKYWRITINGS

Newsletter of the *Kent Strut*



Previous editor dusts off keyboard!



Nigel Read - Editor

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I Love Lucy!!

Mike's shiny inspiration

It is no secret that I love Luscombes and have been fortunate this last 22 years to have been associated with four, why so many, long story, least said soonest mended, which brings me on to the subject of this piece.

Following the recent demise of number three due to a collapsed stub axle my partners Bruce and Simon and I sourced a replacement which was duly collected and flown to Farthing Corner late in the Summer of 2013. The chief difference between this and the other three, it is in a natural aluminium finish with a wooden prop, something I had always hankered after, this being back to a more stock look.

29th May Meeting

Quiz

Cobtree Manor Golf Club, ME14 3AZ 20:00hrs

www.kentstrut.co.uk

This Luscombe named 'Lucy', like its predecessor 'Beryl' is a rag wing so it was felt the amount of polishing would be not as onerous as if it was all metal. The aeroplane externally was to say the least a little tired, having spent most of its days tethered outside and on closer inspection a number of other issues were logged and a number now dealt with. The how and where of polishing came quickly to the fore and rather naively I thought it was a matter of a tin of 'Brasso' (other metal polishes are available) a soft cloth and a bit of elbow grease would be all that was required. I have to explain that within our small group I am not entrusted with anything too technical so the bodywork tends to fall to me. So, a trial buff soon proved the innocence of ignorance and there was going to be a bit more to it than that. Now, although Simon, Bruce and I are the owners we are fortunate that one of the Strut members, one Ron Parker takes a keen interest in the health of several aeroplanes at F.C. and has rather taken a 'shine' to the Luscombe. Not surprisingly as it is a wonderful machine which draws attention wherever we go as an antidote to these modern crates currently littering the place.



Now Ron has a business where he is involved with restoration of vehicles amongst other things and did some research on aluminium polishing which produced some interesting results. Required is an electric buffer, two styles of 'soap' which is a coarse and fine polishing medium, an awful lot of patience and a 'Ron' to provide it. As a result of 2 months polishing, mainly by Ron, the airframe has been lifted from a dull, lacklustre finish to a bright shiny rejuvenated aeroplane with which to grace the skies. The accompanying photo will bear testament. The trick is to keep it this way.

On a recent visit to Sun 'N Fun I took a particular interest in the natural metal finished aircraft and spoke to one or two owners on how they kept their aircraft looking as spectacular as they were. In particular a Beech 18 which had a particularly youthful looking owner, I would guess in his mid 30's, was parked on the apron and I took the opportunity to have a word. He recommended a product called Nuvite 'Nushine' which John Dean, whom had been at the show during the week told me about over breakfast that morning. The appearance of some of these aircraft can only be marvelled at and the care taken to preserve the finish truly awesome. Interestingly a couple of tricks of the trade were disclosed including

washing down after every flight with ionised water, a bit extreme, some of the underbelly and underside of the engine nacelles were sprayed with aluminium paint in areas hard to maintain. So yours truly went off to Aircraft Spruce trading on the field and purchased a tub of the stuff with which to try out on the Luscombe back home. So now to complete Ron's efforts we have to change the current 'Kermit' green trim for a more imperial red/maroon depending on your view on the original log. This should complete the external metamorphosis apart from a new prop maybe? Pass the polish Ron.....!! - MIKE NEGUS



Airbus E-aircraft

The E-Fan is one of several electric projects Airbus are following. Airbus have plans to build a production facility near Bordeaux to include a four seat trainer, E-Fan 4. There is also an E-Thrust. Production of E-Fan is planned to start by 2017 with a duration of 30 minutes. What next, an electric Europa? E-by gum!

Video on YouTube showing some of the build and workshop. Search EADS E-FAN



End of an era—Kermit Weeks Fantasy of Flight museum.

For those visiting Florida particularly to Sun 'n Fun you will most probably have driven past a DC3 Dakota on it's nose although latterly in a more horizontal position following calls from the public about a crashed aeroplane. Behind this can be seen the red and white water tower which marks the location of the Fantasy of Flight Aircraft Museum operated by Kermit Weeks.

It has been well publicised that the public access to the museum was to close on the 6th April 2014 as it was not an attraction that was popular with the majority of tourists visiting the area despite being close to the Disney/Universal Parks. For enthusiasts like us it was a must see when over there but on visits in past years the car parks bore witness to the visitors probably measured in scores rather than hundreds which is a great pity as there is a fabulous collection of fully restored original aircraft and a number of authentic replica/reconstructions. The mantra of the museum is everything restored will fly or be capable of flight, which is the other potentially more important aspect carried out by the restoration teams both on site and contracted out. Great attention is paid to restore these aircraft back to stock condition and if you get the opportunity to look close up this becomes evident.

For me it is always what is going on behind the scenes not normally accessible to the public that is the draw and latterly two large hangers were built as the 'Golden Hill' facility as a nod towards the Silver Hill storage facility of the National Air and Space Museum. These hangers were opened as an extension to the back lot tour where the public were allowed to see the restoration shop and some of the fabulous collection of engines, the majority of restoration projects tucked away in containers. Over at Golden Hill a real treasure trove is on public display such as a complete B29, B17 (which had suffered damage in the hurricane that caused the museum to relocate from Miami), Swordfish, Zero, P38, Hellcat and more modern jets such as the Panther, Vampire and Meteor as well as a number of light aircraft.

Therefore it was with great sadness that I heard the news of the closure in its present form, although Kermit has great plans for the future and will maintain corporate and other similar events, the restoration activities will continue so we look forward to some of these treasures one day taking to the air once again. As my family holiday once again took us to Florida and with this news in mind it was a must to be present for the last day and what a day it proved.



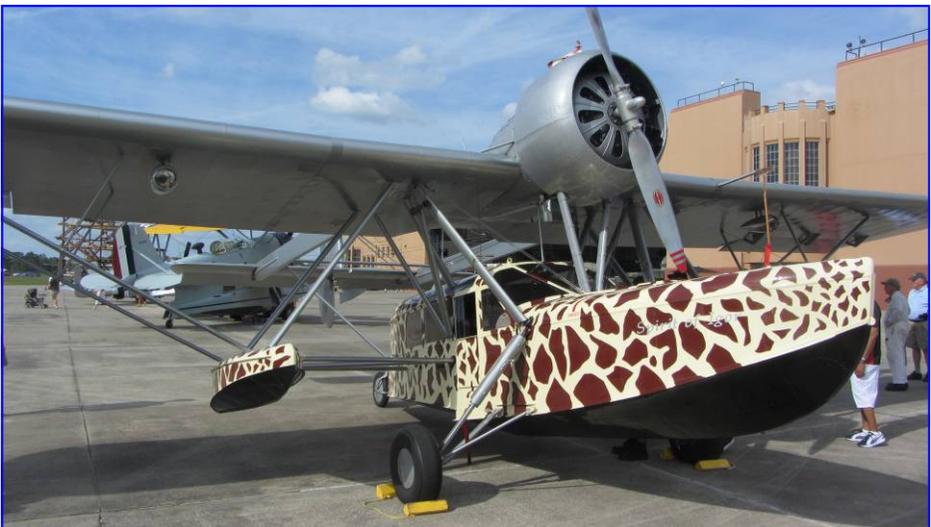
First up when we arrived the car parks were well on to capacity so the word had got out. We were delighted when one of the staff passed us two complimentary tickets, it was going to be one of those days! On a bit of a high and to keep my wife and two girls interest up, a flight in the Standard D25 biplane from 1929 (this one restored in the early 1990's), was booked and while we waited a couple of hours for our slot we were entertained by the great man bringing out a lot of his toys. He told an enthusiastic crowd 'I normally fly one demonstration a day but I will fly more 'cause I can'!

So we were treated to the spectacle of the Fiesler Storch, P51C and D Mustang, Grumman Duck, Sikorsky S38 Replica amphibian with its fetching Zebra stripes,

More pictures from Mike Negus' Sun & Fun picture gallery—see text



Grumman Wildcat and 1911 Curtiss Pusher Model D replica from 1983. So we ate hot dogs and nachos, drank coke with all this going on yards away with Kermit giving the crowd a debrief after every flight and then the aeroplane was turned over for photographs.



We went off for a 20 minute jolly over the Florida countryside enjoying the sensation of the open cockpit with a silly grin under the obligatory flying helmets and goggles until it was time to return and see more of the flying.



At the end of the day as things were winding down and Kermit looking forward to a bottle of bubbly it was clear that he still has great ideas for the museum but this will be morphed in to something unlike its present form and after taking a load of questions and answers we had a photo opportunity and wished him well.



Even my wife and girls got caught up in the sense of occasion and not one complaint of 'can we go yet' was heard, it was a jolly nice day!! - MIKE NEGUS

More YouTube—Paradise

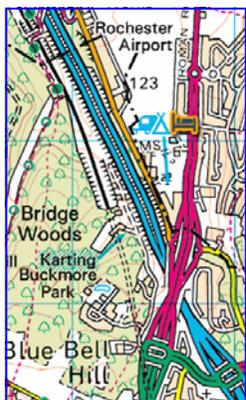
If you are not one of the 1.4 million who have already looked at this and the weather turns poor again, have a look at 'this is why we fly' - the one by MrGoodViews Person. Best seen on a smart telly rather than a poky computer screen! Approach into Queenstown NZ.



Burgers ahead!

As the busy season for golfers at the club draws near we get ready for Fly-ins and BBQ's. First in June it's Steve Solley's farm at Ripple near Deal. Drive or fly-in but make sure your short field performance is up to it as the strip is only 350m long! From Mongeham Road turn up Mantles Hill and Left into the drive at the top. Look out for Solley's sign at the bottom of the hill.

Second it's Rochester EGTO, first weekend in August (IN LIEU OF JULY MEETING) and thirdly at the end of August. More details closer to the events.



If you are unfamiliar with driving to Rochester, just head up Bluebell Hill from our usual venue at the golf club (J6 M20) towards Chatham, near the top of the hill get into middle or RH lane and continue under and over the multitude of roundabouts and the entrance is on the Left, also sign posted Hotel (just before the speed camera (40mph).



In support of these events the strut have purchased a super new pop up gazebo!

Next Meeting

Apologies but Tim Scourer the Aviation Lawyer who was due to speak this month has had to reschedule to September due to circumstances beyond his control (his wife has him booked for a wedding!). Mike Negus has stepped in at the last minute with his popular quiz, no doubt with fantastic prizes! Where would this newsletter be without Mike?

New Members

Welcome to Paul Anderson from Woodchurch, Bill Cole from Sedlescombe and Derek

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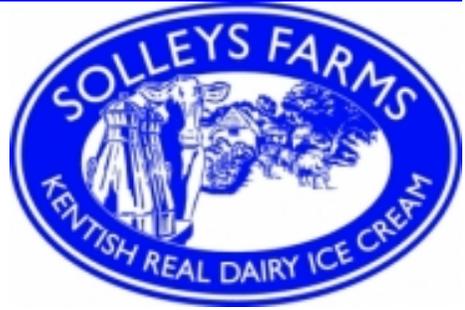
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In next month's *Skywritings*
Skydemon on an iPad mini + cellular

www.solleysicecream.co**Dates for your Diary**

29th May Strut Meeting—Quiz!

8th June de Havilland Day
Panshanger

26th June Strut BBQ at Ripple

July 12/13th Heveningham Hall

July Strut meeting will be
held over to the first
weekend of August for a BBQ
and fly-in at Rochester—
2nd/3rd August. Rolls Royce
cars on the Sunday.

1st August Young Aviators Day
Panshanger

10th August Panshanger Revival Day

16th August Combined Ops Airshow
*Headcorn which will also
feature the Canadian
Lancaster with the BBMF*

28th August Strut Meeting BBQ

25th September Strut Meeting,
Aviation Lawyer, Tim Scourer

30th October Strut Meeting

*Tempsford SOE airfield
Fr. Peter Geldard*

27th November Strut Meeting

December Christmas Dinner TBA