



**REPRESENTING SPORT & RECREATIONAL AVIATION IN THE SOUTHWEST**  
[www.devonstrut.co.uk](http://www.devonstrut.co.uk)

## **DEVON STRUT NEWS – April 2008**

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### **Welcome to the LAA Devon Strut: Co-ordinator's Comments**

**by Pete White**

As part of the celebrations for a recent 'milestone' birthday, I was extremely lucky to be bought by my wife Kate, a surprise 4-day break in Paris. Both on the way to and from this wonderful city the Eurostar (train that is), passed quite close to Le Plessis, a favourite little airfield that I have visited several times. I was very excited to see this little historic site with aircraft in the circuit and glanced around the carriage to find that no one else even noticed. Even Kate became more engrossed in her book once I started relating stories of the WW1 and WW2 aerodrome's history. Two days later Kate and I were on a tour of the towers at the magnificent Notre Dame and before entering the bell tower we were asked to wait for 10 minutes or continue the tour without visiting the bell. Six of us chose to delay our journey and enquire as to why we were waiting. Our guide explained that at 11 o'clock after the normal chimes there would be a 'mourning' toll for a full 10 minutes to honour the last French survivor of WW 1 who had recently died aged 110 years. The next ten minutes whilst the bell sounded its deep note was for all of us an emotional period and I was able to reflect on the honour it was for us to be there witnessing this piece of history. It has never happened before and will never happen again!

To draw a parallel to this but not to the same magnitude perhaps, as time marches on, we are all witnessing history. In fact, if you analyse our achievements, the Strut has been making history for many years, especially as we have amongst us some adventurous souls who are happy to pioneer new ventures and set new horizons for others to follow and enjoy. Amongst our band there are intrepid aviators who will travel to many countries in aeroplanes far older than their pilots. Some explore beaches and small fields which test and stretch their landing skills and others amongst us use their skills in rebuilding or constructing aircraft. Now, in my book all this and the other flying adventures we experience are no more than tomorrow's history that we may take as quite normal today but will be viewed later as intrepid.

So as you can see I'm a bit preoccupied with history this month but what I'm illustrating is that we have one of the best Struts in the LAA with which many of you are very proud of being associated. Yet we still have to use a lot of our valuable time chasing some of you for the annual Strut subscription! Please do pay your dues or let me or any member of the committee know why you do not wish to rejoin. Delaying the deed is of no advantage, after all it currently costs the same in January as it does in April and you could release your friends and colleagues from the onerous task of chasing for subs!

Our last talk at The Ley Arms by Bill Leary about the very capable AN2 biplane was well attended and opened our eyes to how time consuming it is to operate this monster biplane. Bill would be very happy to bring the AN2 to Dunkeswell for our SW Regional Rally and operate it on a cost-sharing scheme but he would need to have a guarantee on interested parties beforehand. An AN2 is not cheap to run so if you are keen to get involved please let us know. I'm pleased to see so many of you are now taking advantage of the food facilities before the meetings.



As a reminder from Sue and Steve of The Ley Arms, could you please settle your food bills etc before you go into the meeting as this has caused confusion in the past?

Now you all remember Chris Howell, the gent that was constantly harassed by a flying botheration with a yellow and black striped body. Well, he has teamed up with John Kempton to revive the Bolt Head fly-in, which takes place on Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> May, the day after our Bodmin event. The Strut is happy to back Chris and John at their event and I know they would be very happy to hear from anyone wishing to help in this South Devon revival. (Call Chris on 01548-531923 or John on 01548-842057)

On the subject of fly-ins, the Plymouth date has now changed to Sunday August 31<sup>st</sup> as the airport will be very busy handling traffic connected to the TransAt yacht race over the period May 4<sup>th</sup> to May 12<sup>th</sup>. Please avoid flying in this area if you can during this time especially over the Sound, which will be infested with rotary winged craft.

Our Scout Aerocamp takes place on the weekend of June 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> and although I have had some members volunteer their services already, we do need more help so please offer your time and have a fulfilling and satisfying time helping our youth at Belle Vue.

The 'jewel in our crown', the SW Regional Rally at Dunkeswell on Saturday 31<sup>st</sup> May and Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> June is well advanced in planning and the sub committee looking after this event have asked me to appeal to you all for help in most departments. I am running the marshalling team and need anybody that can waggle his or her arms in the air whilst wearing a hi-vis vest. It may seem that we are always asking for help but without your help we can not maintain the programme that you all enjoy and wish to be a part of... Remember the Strut is *our* Strut and **our** means all of us so let's get in there and enjoy it!

See you all at The Ley Arms on Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> April '08 when **Rob Midgely** of Shell Oil will entertain us with, Petrol and oil explained by Shell's technical expert.

All the best     Pete White

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## Reality Escapade G-MCUB

by Alec Janaway

*[Having exhibited his unfinished Escapade at our Regional Rally in 2007, Alec has made rapid progress and brings us up to date with the project - Ed.]*



Well, she flies! After a harrowing couple of months, meeting the needs of the CS-VLA and those of the then PFA, the Permit to test was issued for the Escapade VLA G-MCUB on 7 February 2008. After a briefing on the alien magneto-less engine and electrical emergency procedure, Dave Silsbury gave her a quick "shake down" on the afternoon of the 9 February. He brought her back to terra firma with what looked like a perfect landing on the short 17 runway at Dunkeswell with the video camera running to record the maiden flight. Dave's laid back comments were typical of the man. Does nothing faze him?

Up to writing this, I have clocked up over 18 hours air time and the aircraft is behaving impeccably. Twenty five hours are required for the engine to be cleared for a full permit and 5 for the aircraft at MAUW. Because the LAA requested a beefed up undercarriage which is still awaiting final clearance,

we are currently restricted for flight at 450Kg but should be all go for the full 499Kg by the time you read this.

Although the aircraft was thought to be ready last November, issue of the permit to test was delayed whilst a virtually 100% back up electric system acceptable by LAA was designed, tested and installed. This consists of a second battery and an in flight "Emergency" switch which enables engine restart and continued flight in the case of failure of virtually any major electrical item including one or all of main battery, generator, master fuse, fuel pump, 2 injectors (of four) and one ignition coil (of two). This is necessary because the aircraft does not have your antiquated magnetos but rather, a



computer controlled, fuel injected, 95 HP flat four power plant from ULP in Belgium. (In fact it is number one off the production line). The problem was, if the electrics fail, the engine stops. Advantages far outweigh the disadvantages however. No carb icing to worry about. No mixture to worry about and a perfect fuel burn at all times irrespective of OAT, air pressure, water content etc. To date it looks as if "mini cub" is burning around the 12 litres per hour in the cruise at 80 knots.

Handling is lively. The rudder is VERY effective and requires careful use during takeoff and landing. Climb with one up at 50 knots gives a very high nose attitude at full power and I must admit to bringing the throttle back for the climb outs for fear of going vertical, or so it seems. In the air she handles as one would expect. Docile and stable and once trimmed can be flown on rudder alone but open the gate and she feels like she would "do the book", reminiscent of a Super Decathlon I flew in the States a few years ago. We haven't done anything much yet, as it is very early into the test programme. (The kit manufacturer VLA (Terry Frances's) is due to conduct a spin recovery programme with the BMAA's test pilot next week we hope.) Stalls have been tried and found to be very stable, even to the point of being too stable as a clean slow entry just results in a "mush" and a parachute decent at around 300 ft per min with no wing drop. A fitted stall warning device has yet to be calibrated.

One of the requirements of the engine testing is a two hour endurance flight. This was carried out north of Taunton on a minimum vis day. I lost count of the number of times I flew over that nice long grass strip. If I was carrying a cricket bat, I could have knocked up my 100 runs !! Engine was throttled back to 2300 RPM and at 60 knots I just settled back and steered with rudder and did the Times crossword whilst listening to radio 4 on the in flight entertainment system. I did the required radio and transponder check out with Exeter though. Another box ticked!

All in all I am very pleased with the result of 18 months work and the cash outlay. G-MCUB will be the first ULP fuel injected Escapade VLA on the register and, I am led to believe, the first fuel injected VLA in Europe. With up to 78 litres on board and a fuel burn of, I hope, around 13 lph I should have up to 6 hours endurance at 80 knots, so going places for the weekend is for me now a good possibility. Does anybody know the endurance of the average bladder???? I knew I put that air vent in the door for a reason !!! We can drop dry sand or water can't we.

Not without problems though. The mod application for the wing tank fuel gauges, even though is an accepted mod on a similar set up in the Kitfox, took 5 and a half months. The requirement to meet the LAA's strict electrical back up system took a lot of head scratching and a specially made relay and split diode generator for the batteries' charging system. The supplied undercarriage was deemed to be too weak for the VLA version and had to be uprated. Flying wires for the tail were also deemed to be too

weak. The CofG was half an inch too far forward when the aircraft was totally empty (but fine with a pilot and or any fuel) but was deemed to be unsafe. (The second battery as ballast solved this).

The engine did give a problem when first fired up. It was firing at 40 degrees before TDC causing a consistent back fire but ran perfect when we did manage to get it running. Two trips by the manufacturers from Belgium solved the problem. The coils had an unknown safety trip which was dumping the HT too soon. They replaced both coils and never a problem since. An AD has now been issued to ensure future problems are not met. I bet Lycoming or Rotax wouldn't go to that much trouble for a customer. However, the engine is proving to be a good investment. Throttle response is consistent with no settling down time required. Where you put the knob is where the RPM goes instantly and stays there. Some new aircraft have cooling problems and so does "Mini Cub", except I have the problem of heating it up. After a full power climb to 4000 ft the oil temperature is still 30 degrees below normal so I have elected to cover two thirds of the oil cooler. Still to see if that works. Starting is a pleasure. She turns 4 times on the starter and instantly fires into life. Hot, cold, wet, dry and after a couple of weeks standing. Almost boring. The wonder of modern engines, eh !! Rated at 95Hp at 3300 RPM we are achieving 3165 full bore straight and level so nearly there. (Over-speed is not a problem as a limiter cuts in at 3360.) Mr Newton (*Alan – the prop maker*) got his calculations right there although we did do a bit of homework on another aircraft fitted with this engine.



Mini Cub is fitted with a Dynon EMU (engine monitor screen) which also records all engine data every 10 seconds and can hold up to 5 hours worth - like a mini "black box". As well as every conceivable pressure and temperature display, the Dynon also has user-defined pages for check lists, frequencies, fuel, clock, timers and Hobbs meter etc. It's all done through the PC and the data is downloaded in Excel format and sent to the manufacturers every so often. They are obviously interested and as they looked after me it's the least I can do.

In good Oscar award speech tradition. I must thank a few people for all their long suffering help; Dave Silsbury, of course, for his constant flow of coffee and expertise. Francis Donaldson and the LAA for making this aircraft the safest in the fleet, Terry Francis of Reality Aircraft who supplied a Microlight kit and ended up helping to turn it into a VLA, Allan Newton who specially made the two tone prop and of course my wife Christine who has allowed me to spend so much time and money on a mere (big) toy. We are now well on our way to full permit and hope this summer will bring many hours of enjoyable flying to far away places and rallies. With 20kg of baggage behind the seats, I envisage many a weekend away somewhere. If anyone fancies a go, I will be only too happy to bore you in a quiet, comfortable, side by side cub look-alike. I wonder if she will square loop !!!

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## Boredom Fighter Project

by Ian Law

My first few lessons were in a Tiger Moth in 1963. It was pure magic that I have always wished to be able to recapture. That is one reason why I decided to go for the W11 Boredom Fighter as a project, many years ago. Also, the W11 could be built in a small workshop. Back in the 1980s materials were easy to come by and fairly affordable. Happy days! I do prefer an open cockpit and a tailwheel. Progress continues slowly, as time, funds and circumstances allow.

Woodwork for the fuselage, fin and rudder is complete. Much of the metalwork in the fuselage has been done and controls and instruments have been trial fitted. An aluminium fuel tank has been made, but not yet pressure tested. The steel tube cabane was another project in itself for me, but was completed many years ago.



Most of the wing ribs have been finished. Very tedious work as they are small and fiddly to make. My wing spars will now be of Douglas fir after discussions with Lynn (Flitzer) Williams. I have followed his recommendations and have obtained the approval of LAA. Spar materials are on their way over from Western Aircraft in Canada. It will be good to resume woodworking operations when my garage warms up enough. I have prepared sets of CAD drawings for all the steel fittings for the wings and will be having these cut out for me by water jet, to save my blood and sweat.

The undercarriage is "work in progress". Most component parts are made up and welded. This has been a challenge for me and I'm not home and dry yet. Wheels and brakes are a veritable rats' nest of complications. I have a set of Cleveland 600 x 6s, a selection of "pull" type master cylinders and both weld-on and bolt-on axles and can't decide which to go for. The plans specify cable-operated brakes, which would be so much simpler and lighter but are now unavailable. This will have to be resolved soon; I want to get the thing up on its gear as soon as possible. Maybe this summer?



*[Ian's Boredom Fighter project has been a long time under construction but he is a stickler for detail and the attached photos don't do justice to his superb workmanship- Ed].*

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## News & Aeroletters

**Steve Wells and Ray Trute now own RV6A G-RVIA** at Belle Vue. Steve says "We're busy checking it's compliance with A/D's & service bulletins at present. It's a 150 hp & does 160 kts indicated at 2350 rpm at sea level although the GPS suggests this is actually 150kts. Let's hope 2008 is good for flying!"



Photo: Lucca Messer, website: [www.stevenmesser.co.uk](http://www.stevenmesser.co.uk)

Pete White, the SWAG members and Dave Silsbury have been working on Aeronca G-IVOR's engine reassembly, resplendent with a replacement crankcase.

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**News from Trevor Reed in Australia:**

Hi Mike, Thanks for the newsletter, good as usual. It is great to receive it here in Oz and it keeps me in touch. I am currently a bit poorly having contracted a virus, believed to be from a mosquito bite in early Jan, which has left me with aching muscles and stiff joints (what's new I hear you say!) and has prevented me from flying. There is no treatment and the symptoms can last several months so I am a little hacked off as you can imagine. Nevertheless, we are having our usual good time here and have taken the opportunity of exploring further south and west along the Southern Ocean coast. This is a superb area, quite unspoilt and with very little population. We travelled, with another couple, in two 4WD vehicles for safety and really experienced the vastness of this continent. I am sorry to hear G-VFWE is off this year, especially as I sent them a donation! I am back at the beginning of April and will get up to Watchford as soon as I can. Cheers and best wishes to all,  
Trevor.

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**Sam Lucas's diesel RV9a** featured in the March issue of Light Aircraft, with acknowledgements to other Strut members who provided assistance, including inspector Dave Storey and Brian Murray for the distinctive spray job.



Sam Lucas's RV9a



Ray Lewis's Jodel Mascaret

Photo by Jenny Coffey

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**Welcome to New Members**

Ray Lewis of Chippenham, Wiltshire. Ray is a CRE / PFA Coach, the webmaster for the Gloster Strut and keeps his Jodel D150 Mascaret G-BMEH (*above right*) at Garston Farm.

Jeff Houlgrave from Tiverton. Jeff shares the Eggesford-based Luton Duet G-AYTT with Richard Webber and the group-owned C182 G-BWMC. He also has the prototype Auster AOP9 G-BKVK WZ662 and PZL Wilga 80 G-EPZL ("Wilma") This squadron "thing" is rubbing off at Eggesford. RW has a lot to answer for!



Will Knowles of Stoodleigh, Tiverton. Will is a commercial pilot, runs the microlight school / club at Stoodleigh Barton, north of Tiverton, and owns C182 D-EJLY.

Barry Goose of Okehampton. Barry was introduced to the Strut last year by John Havers and has helped with marshalling at our fly-ins.

*Could any members who paid their subs before Easter but has not yet received a new membership card please contact our Membership Secretary, John Hope on 01392-271932?*

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**Steve Fossett RIP.** Following the closure of the extensive search for Steve Fossett, he has formally been declared dead. The remarkable adventurer and record-breaker's obituary appeared in the Telegraph online. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2008/02/18/db1801.xml>

LAA member Pete Diffey has created a **GoogleMap** of the locations of the Association's **engineering inspectors** that's accessible via <http://www.laa.uk.com/engineering/engineering.html>

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## **National Council Meeting, Summary Notes, 8<sup>th</sup> March 2008**

**Mike Mold**

**EC Report – Roger Hopkinson.** New CEO job offer imminent. New Training Manager (Ian Boys) has been appointed; functions to include ET fund raising. New Deputy Chief Engineer (John Viner) appointed to start on 12<sup>th</sup> May. RH is now chairman of the GA Safety Forum, a cross-industry strategic group. EC have offered new affiliations to the Auster Club, Luscombes and the British Women Pilot's Association. The Auster and Luscombe Clubs have accepted and BWPA did so previously.

The proposed LAA Shuttleworth fly-in is growing out of all previous expectations with many VIPs having accepted invitations to attend. Arrival slots are to be managed by invitation from a list of representative a/c types. Other applicants should be aware that they may be turned down due to limitations on numbers.

LAA needs to promote leadership in environmental stewardship. All of UK GA flying, including business aviation, contributes the carbon equivalent of every UK motorists doing 12 miles each annually (vs their annual average of 10 – 12,000 miles)

The Light Aircraft Pilot's Licence (LAPL) is being looked at by the National Pilot Licensing Group (NPLG) to see how best it might be handled. The European LAPL paperwork is working its way through the various halls of power.

8.33khz transceiver spacing has been delayed until 2014/15. Even then it is only expected to affect traffic at and above FL195.

**Marketing – Mike Barnard.** MB has taken over chair of the Marketing Sub-Group from James Tannock. Marketing is to be represented by the chairs of other sub committees in recognition of all our activities having impacts and consequences for marketing. Feb. 2008 was the 5<sup>th</sup> consecutive month of increased membership uptake. The rate of lapsed members rejoining has risen from 20% to now between 80 – 90%. Our aspiration is to double our existing membership of ca 8,000. Struts should aim to encourage all current Strut members to be LAA members (and all regional LAA members to become Strut members).

A strategic content plan for the magazine being drawn up. The membership survey produced good feedback. The magazine is working well and is always very well received. Some aspects of the day-to-day LAA operation came out less well, however. The EC is aware of and committed to address the shortfalls. It will report progress on them in the autumn. MB was heartened by the offers of help received via the survey. 120 members have responded to follow-up communication after the survey, reaffirming their willingness to offer their skills.

**Mode S – John Brady.** The current situation was described, as posted on the LAA website & in LA magazine. JB to summarise the LAA response to CAA and members to submit their comments by 31<sup>st</sup> May.

**Engineering – Barry Plumb** Relaxation of permit restrictions to fly in IMC and at night are being discussed with CAA. There has been a recent change of staff at CAA and this has not helped. There is still some residual resistance to the relaxation of “over flight” rules and this is proving a barrier to further IMC/night negotiations.

LAA is looking for a volunteer instrument engineer to help with the development and testing of a colour change test kit and an in-line electronic tester for ethanol and water in mogas.

Discussion took place on the scale of charging of orphaned a/c moving to PtF. Mike Barnard confirmed that the whole charging structure is under scrutiny and would be subjected to a transparent review.

MM (*on behalf of Chris Pidler*) queried the Fournier situation. BP said those on a LAA Permit to fly will be transferred to an EASA PTF as it is not possible to return them to a CofA. Those on a CofA must transfer to an EASA CofA as there is still a Type Certificate in place. He does not think this situation will change while the TC exists.

**Trophies and Awards – Stuart MacConnacher** - SM said many trophies exist. Struts & Groups may request their use at their events but they remain the property of the LAA. Some are in need of repair for which the costs needed quantifying. James Tannock suggested they should be considered part of our “heritage” and as such ET funding could be used for their maintenance. Roger Hopkinson felt use of trophies by LAA could be expanded.

**NC Review Working Group – Dicky Bird** The working group has yet to meet. DB has received suggestions for consideration, not all of which were constructive but were not representative of the views of the working group members.

**Proposal for a LAA “Virtual Strut” – Steve Neale** SN gave a presentation based upon the proposal to form a web-based virtual strut (as part of the LAA Bulletin Board) for members who could not otherwise attend a geographical regional strut. This was passed by a clear majority with only one vote against.

**LAA Heritage – Harry Hopkins** James Tannock suggested a group of people need to take responsibility for the trophies. Stewart Jackson, Stuart MacConnacher and Dave Thomas volunteered to help within the Heritage sub-committee of the ET.

**Branding** Marketing materials and designs need to be incorporated into Strut and promotional work. Roger Knights had produced a CD for struts to help with their “corporate image”. Copies were distributed to all members at the meeting. The format of the new stationery and more specifically the bulk of colour used raised a few questions from members present.

**Recruiting - Harry Hopkins** HH asked for ideas from struts. Sometimes struts may not have been sufficiently welcoming to new faces. It is important to introduce new people to the strut and for members to go out of their way to involve them.

**Other Matters** - Stuart MacConnacher displayed a sample of the new LAA aircraft photo archive that was under development for the Association website and for which there was unanimous approval. The plan is to get every LAA aircraft on there. Stuart asked for contributions to the album to be sent to him at Stuart {at} comper-aircraft {dot} co {dot} uk

## **April Free Landings**

**Pilot:** Bagby, Beverly, Donegall, Full Sutton, Hucknall and Sligo.

**Flyer:** Kilkenny, Panshanger, Redhill and Sandtoft.

**Today’s Pilot:** Andrewsfield, Beccles, Brimpton and Popham.

**RAF Red Arrows display calendar** has been published and checking this should be a pre-flight planning action. <http://www.raf.mod.uk/reds/displayinfo/>

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## Fly-In & Event Calendar 2008

April 13 <sup>th</sup>	Popham	Jodel fly-in	01256-397733
May 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Bodmin	Pete White	01752-406660 / 07774-017704
May 4 <sup>th</sup>	Bolt Head	Chris Howell	01548-531923
May 3 <sup>rd</sup> -5 <sup>th</sup>	Popham	M/L Fair/ & AeroJumble	01256-397733
May 31 <sup>st</sup> - June 1 <sup>st</sup>	Dunkeswell R/Rally	Dave Silsbury	01752-690358
June 29 <sup>th</sup>	Halwell	Keith Wingate	01548-857531
July 27 <sup>th</sup>	Branscombe	Bill Hayman / David Hayman	07920-263956 01297-680259
August 10 <sup>th</sup>	Lundy Island	Pete White	01752-406660 / 07774-017704
August 17 <sup>th</sup>	Treborough	Mark Weatherlake	01984-641179
August 31 <sup>st</sup>	Plymouth	Steve Leach / John Kempton	01752-696970 01548-842057
September 6 <sup>th</sup>	Belle Vue	Jim Gale	07887-906789
September 14 <sup>th</sup>	Watchford	Brian Anning	01823-601268

### Non fly-ins

May 10 <sup>th</sup> /11 <sup>th</sup>	National YA weekend
June 7 <sup>th</sup> /8 <sup>th</sup>	Belle Vue Scout Camp

Please contribute your **old southern England 1/2million maps for the Scouts'** take-away packs at the Belle Vue camp. Steve Robson (or any of the other committee members) will be happy to receive them at either of the April Strut meeting or by arrangement for collection at the airstrips around the region.

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## Sunrise by Rhymair

Sunrise patterns the sea with sheets of fire  
A thousand slanting shafts of gold  
A molten brilliance, too great for containing cloud, o'erflows to earth  
Aircraft immersed in this bright wonder  
Windscreens dancing with diamonds  
What can you say, seeing this?  
You say nothing.  
To speak is infantile in the miracle of this sky.

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## Next Strut Meeting:

**Thursday 10th April '08 Shell Oil's technical expert Rob Midgely.**

7.30 for 8.00 p.m. Ley Arms, Kenn, Exeter. <http://tinyurl.com/2zw3dq>

The Ley Arms is reached by exiting the A38 at the Kennford junction, adjacent to the Shell petrol station and following the minor road eastwards for 1km from Kennford into Kenn village.