



Fife Flying Club

Out of the blue

Issue 22 June 2009

Chairman's Welcome...

Hello folks –

Well, when I started work on this edition of the Newsletter the sun was cracking the paving slabs – during the weekend on 30th and 31st May. I noted it in case it was the only Summer weather we see this year! It was good to see many people taking advantage of the weather, and the Club did with an informal barbecue at Fife on the 30th. Lots of planes and sunshine at Fife, but not so many FFC members! The burgers were great (thanks Kate) and the sausages were described as the best some folk have tasted – so bear that in mind the next time and make an effort to come along. It's one of the things you pay your membership for.

I did a fair bit of flying over that weekend and had the added bonus of being there when Andy Reid said “anyone fancy dinner at Glenforsa?” Not being daft I volunteered and an hour later was scoffing a nice bit of gammon, chips and a fried egg in the Glenforsa Hotel, looking out over the sound, recounting flying war stories with Andy and Richard, with the planes parked on the grass not 50 yards away in the sunshine – heaven. That's another benefit of getting yourself to Club events and hanging around – you never know what opportunities might arise. The weather has gone downhill a bit since then, alas.....

See below for the Families' Day on the 4th of July – hope to see you and the family – we're trying to weather-proof the day (just in case) by basing a lot of stuff in Hangar 1. **Come along and support the event!**

All the best Alan Laing alandi@globalnet.co.uk

Families' Day – Saturday July 4th, 2009 11am – 4pm

A reminder – we'll be having an open day/families' day/ fly-in on the 4th of July. We will have a pile of things for the kids and grown-ups to do in Hangar 1 – under cover just in case the weather doesn't cooperate. We'll also have a collection of classic cars from the Stirling Classic Car Club, a Grob in the hanger so kids can get their photos taken in it, a tombola stall, a Warrior for pleasure flights (plus a spare instructor), a raffle for a model aircraft from Alistair Kirk of Altyre Models in Cowdenbeath (Alistair will have a stall in the hanger too), the Guide Dogs for the Blind Association will be bringing some cute trainee Guide dogs along, there might be the wee bouncy castle (we decided against a big one as we couldn't keep the Instructors off the last one); flight simulators, a rolling slide show of photos (we need your photos of Fife and Fife events of the past – ping them to me at the above email address); a display of radio-controlled model aircraft, a barbecue, and all capped off, hopefully, with some interesting aircraft flying in for the day. So get the date in your diaries and come along!



Fife Flying Club – Badges

The Committee has commissioned some badges – see photo above – that will be on sale as of the 4th of July Families' Day. Cost to members is £1.50, and to non-members £2. The badges are enamelled metal, 35mm long and have a safety brooch catch on the back. It's hoped that visitors will want one as a souvenir of their visit to Fife – and they take away a memento that will remind them of the airfield, the planes and the Club.

The Great Summer Fly-Out to Crail

I had a dream – half a dozen planes flying over to Crail on a balmy summer's evening, a barbecue, sunset, fun, flying, then home in time for beddy byes. I should have known better! 20kts gusting to 40, at 90 degrees to Crail's runway. So the trip was postponed on 18th June, **proposed next attempt is on Thursday 9th July.** Thanks to all who showed interest – between Fife, Dundee and Aberdeen planes, we'd probably have had a dozen planes at Crail had the weather played fair! We will get there!!!

Chart Changes

A reminder again that the three main 1:500,000 charts for the UK will all be updated this year:

Scotland: 2nd July 2009
North England and Wales: 4th June 2009
South England and Wales: 12th March, 2009

Make sure you've got a current version when you fly!

Fife Flying Club - Constitution

The Special General Meeting held on 21st May was presented with the redrafted Constitution and all but one of the attendees at the meeting voted to accept the new version. The key changes include Full Flying and Full Membership, both now at £48 (plus £40 insurance for the fliers of Tayside aircraft) and the change in tenure of some committee posts from one to two years. Thanks to all members who made the effort to attend the meeting. One point raised regards joint privileges with Tayside Flying Club will be explained in detail on the website – basically you have the same rights to fly Tayside aircraft here at Fife and Dundee, irrespective of membership of FFC or TFC.

Twelve Locker Landings

Many years ago when a friend of mine became an ATPL by the fast route – his Dad was a banker and very well off, and he went straight from 152's to a commercial flying school without slogging through the Flight Instructor route. I took him flying in a Pup one day, about a year after he started flying 737s, and he was like a kid with a new toy – he was in his element as he had forgotten what really flying a plane was like.

Stewart Webb, Senior First Officer, and known to many of you from his days as a Flying Instructor at Fife, gave a talk on his flying with Loganair in Saab 340s at the Topsy Nipper on 21st May. We had over 30 members attending - those of you who couldn't come missed a great night as Stewart regaled us with stories of flying the Saab, and previously the Dornier.

Stewart's flying remains very much "hands-on" and he tempered the fun, glamour and glitzy side of being a commercial pilot with examples of the paperwork, bureaucracy and security issues that keep him and his colleagues busy – and frustrated - every day. Amongst other things we learned was why the Loganair chaps always ask for the full weather before starting up the Saabs – they are fairly sensitive to variations in air temperature and the like and there is a complex performance chart that needs to be consulted before take off. So if you hear Stewart on frequency at Dundee some day when the sun is cracking the concrete, asking for the weather, that's why.

Stewart's talk was exceptionally well illustrated and he also produced, filmed and directed a couple of video sequences to give us an idea of what a "day in the life of" a Loganair pilot was like.

And - why 12 locker landings? Answer – that's the record for the number of overhead bins that have popped open during a "firm and positive" landing by one of Stewart's colleagues.

Stewart brought along a first day cover, carried on a Loganair inaugural flight and beautifully framed – there was a free raffle and Roger Archer was the lucky recipient.

What came over very clearly was that unlike my friend of many years ago, Stewart is still very much in touch with the aircraft when he flies, and thankfully he hasn't given up flying the wee single engined ones as well.

Thanks for one of the best talks I've seen at the Club, Stewart AL

Fly-Out Guidance Sheets

The Committee has produced a number of short documents with information about visiting some of the airfields which can be reached from EGPJ within an hour or so's flying time. They contain suggested routes, general information and an airfield plan. The notes are aimed at assisting pilots visiting Fife and local, recently-qualified (N)PPLs who would like to expand their horizons beyond a trip to Crail and back again. The documents are in PDF format and can be found on the Club website at:-

http://www.fifeflyingclub.co.uk/downloads.php?cat_id=5

The present list covers Eshott, Islay, Kirkbride, Oban and Plockton. More will be added in due course. Members comments on improvements, corrections or additional information will be welcome – post these on the club website.

(Many thanks to Stuart Chapple for all his work on these sheets – AL)

Fife to Tiree

Wednesday, 3rd June, proved to be a fine, sunny day with scattered cloud, well suited for a journey westward, where lies the more spectacular scenery. It seemed a good opportunity for a first trip to Tiree. After a quick phone call for PPR, G-BBTH set-off with Messrs Chapple and McKay on board.

Whilst a direct flight would have been the quickest option, the route chosen was via Kelty, Comrie, Tyndrum, Dalmally, Oban, along the Isle of Mull, then to Coll and finally south-west to Tiree. This offered a better chance of finding some flat ground, in the event of engine trouble, and also minimised the time over open water.

The journey to Oban was familiar ground, but the importance of preparing a PLOG for the journey was brought home when the GPS signals disappeared between Kelty and Comrie. In addition to the onboard unit, we had two portables and all remained dead for the remainder of the journey! They were OK on the return journey.

For the sea crossing between Mull and Coll, we flew at 6,000 feet to facilitate a nice long glide if necessary. As we passed over Coll, we could see the sandy beaches within easy walking distance of the airstrip and made a note to visit in the future. Scottish Information tactfully enquired when we intended to begin our descent to Tiree, so down we went, bidding them farewell, then announcing our arrival to Tiree Information. The Runway in use was 05 - not what we had expected - so there was a mad flurry of activity with the aerodrome chart to work out where to go. The stated wind speed was 10 knots, but full rudder was needed to line-up on final - there must have been quite a lot of variability!

As we landed and taxied to the apron we heard a Loganair Saab on final and we were able to watch its arrival from the terminal building. No sooner had it come to a halt, than there was frantic activity, with a pilot, fuellers, freight unloaders, security staff, firemen and an ambulance crew bustling around the aircraft; the last was either delivering or collecting a passenger - it was difficult to see exactly what was going on!

We were amused to see one member of airport staff busily unrolling two parallel rows of chain with alternate red and white painted sections. Its purpose became clear when a cabin attendant appeared leading a long crocodile of passengers from the aircraft to the terminal doors, all taking care not to stray across the chains. An 'Elf & Safety' idea, no doubt! A few moments later the attendant led the outgoing passengers to the aircraft and settled them aboard; the chainman busily rolled-up his chains. In no time at all, the engines were restarted and off they went. The whole process from arrival to departure occupied about twenty minutes, just as Stewart Webb said in his recent talk. Loganair certainly keep their people busy.

Soon the airport was quiet again and we climbed to the tower to pay the landing fee (about £16) and have a chat with the FISO. He suggested a short walk along the airfield approach road to the Cattle Market/Community Centre, where there is a small cafe, that seemed popular with the locals. The Bull Burger at £5.25 is recommended, but check the mass/balance before take-off!

Thanks to Stuart Chapple for this!

COMMITTEE NEWS

Next Committee meeting is on 25th June at 7pm in the Topsy Nipper. All welcome.

AWARDS



First Solos
Gordon Povey
Grant Stewart
Alec Stripe

PPL
Paul Hughes

Coll and Colonsay

Those of you looking for somewhere different to fly to might want to consider Coll and Colonsay. Both have relatively new 500m tarmac runways and a "terminal" building each with toilets and a waiting area. Colonsay was quiet the day I was there but Dave McKay and I had a friendly welcome from the aptly named Peter McKay and three of his kids when we arrived one gloriously sunny Friday a few weeks back. He even made us a mug of tea each. PPR for both is through Oban. Well worth the trip if you're heading west. AL

Aerobatics Success

Those of you who read Loop magazine will have seen that Fife's Colin Robertson won an aerobatics competition down south recently. We'll have the full story in the next edition of the Newsletter.

Provisional Calendar of Events - 2009

July

4th July – Fly-in and Families' Day. Lot of activities for kids, in a hangar so that there will be things to do even if weather is bad. Lots of activities for young and old alike – like "Pin the tail on the Cessna"! Visiting Pilots bring the kids! Volunteers needed to come up with stalls! See front page of Newsletter for details.

August

12th August - Planes 'n' Flames – barbecue and fly-about at Fife. A Tayside Engineer will be attending and we'll have the cowling off of a Cessna 152 so he can explain what the big oily smelly thing is that makes a noise in front of the instrument panel and behind the propellor.

September – still in planning, but hopefully the flying Treasure Hunt with a road-based alternative in case the wether doesn't cooperate.

October - A "Last of the Summer Wine Fly-in/out" – to be decided yet.

Possible "Air-to-Air" Photography presentation at a Club Night.

November

November – 7th November – Fireworks.

December

Eshott Fly-out and Wings Night. Dates tbd.

Student-Pilot Quiz Night

The 22nd of April saw the Student-PPL Quiz night in full swing at the Topsy Nipper. 14 members came along, and we had enough to form two "official" teams of a PPL and two students, and two unofficial teams of PPLs and others.

The Bumfitchers, led by Peter Crabb, the Maydays led by Colin Robertson, the "Katesyourauntie's" led by Kate and the "Goahelpus's" led by a coalition of PPLs spent two hours trying to get unused brain cells firing again to cope with Ian Thorogood's questions.

The teams were:

Bumfitchers: Peter Crabb (PPL), David Bennie, Bruce Duguid.

Maydays: Colin Robertson (PPL), Steven Russell, Gordon Bell

Katesyouraunties: Andy Reid, Kate Grant, Steven Hepburn

Goahelpus's: Stuart Chapple, Alan Laing, Trevor Harvey, Roger Archer.

The questions, presented in 6 different rounds, ranged from fairly in-depth navigational problem solving (needing map, CRP-1 and ruler) to simple general knowledge questions. I found it interesting just how much I've forgotten about basic flying stuff – adiabatic lapse rates and all that!

The Bumfitchers triumphed, with the highest overall score. The two student members of the team received vouchers for half an hour's flying under instruction, and the team captain received a token gift and a ton of kudos for leading the team to victory.

The Maydays lived up to their team name and crashed and burned overall, I'm afraid, but thankfully they came second in the "official" team category, so the two students got a voucher for 15 minutes flying each.

There was the usual grumbling from the ranks about iffy questions and even iffier answers at times, but no fights broke out and everyone looked reasonably happy so we declared the night a success!

AL

Flying in Florida

Some of you will have flown in Florida – it's a great location to get a PPL quickly, with pretty much guaranteed good weather, clear skies, few (no!) mountains and an awful lot of airfields.

I took the chance and decided to do some flying in Florida this February. I planned my trip to coincide with a Space Shuttle launch on February 12th

You can get a FAA licence on the basis of your UK licence – so, following instructions on the web, I sent a fax to the flying school at Ormond Beach, where I intended to fly, and £40 to the CAA in Gatwick so they would release my records to the FAA, and set off, intending to fly in the last week of my two and a half weeks out there.

I got to Florida via Washington DC, where I spent the best part of the day in the Udvar-Hazy aircraft museum at Dulles Airport. A fantastic place that I would recommend to any aeroplane-lover – there's everything in there, including the flight test Shuttle – Enterprise.

In Florida during my first week I was in a motel under the approach to Melbourne International Airport, and I could tell there was a flying school there as there was a constant stream of PA28s overhead all the time. So a week earlier than I planned, I went looking for a flight – and found the Florida Institute of Technology flying school. They only have 60 aircraft, predominantly PA28s, but a few twins and a 172 as well.

I arranged to fly with an instructor as I wasn't expecting my FAA licence to come through until the second week. By a fluke of booking, my first trip was in a brand new \$300,000 PA-28 – with a full glass cockpit and only 60 hours on the clock. We took it up to Merritt Island and did touch and goes just a few miles from the Shuttle sitting on the pad at Kennedy Space Centre. No-one in the tower at Merritt and no charge for as many t&g's as you want.

The following evening I flew my first night trip, and got 5 touch and goes done in the dark – amazing. The best part of the trip, though, was flying due east from the Florida coast – out over the Atlantic. After a few minutes we decided that it would be best to stop heading for South Africa as we hadn't fuelled up for that length of trip... I turned ninety degrees left. Showing 360 on the DI and compass, I looked out the window, and there was the Pole Star, right on the nose. Due north. Quite a magic moment, sitting there in the dark at 3,000 feet over the dark ocean, starlit sky above, with the brightly lit Florida coast way off to the west, steering a plane by the stars.

The next day I was back flying with the same instructor during the day, doing more touch and goes at Merritt but when we got back to Melbourne a cloud layer had crept in, 800 feet thick at 1,000 feet. Being an International Airport, we weren't allowed to do a VFR approach underneath – a GPS approach was required. So the instructor set it up, and simply fed me the numbers I needed and I flew the approach, through cloud. At one point I looked up while we were in cloud, and the sense of disorientation that came on was frightening – and very rapid. Looking back at the instruments cured it immediately – but it was a valuable experience, as much so as the instrument approach itself.

I waved goodbye to FIT and Melbourne and drove 80 miles north to Ormond Beach for the second week, to find that the FAA had no record of my application for a licence (our office fax had failed to send it!) So I settled for a very thorough check-ride lasting 90 minutes in a Cessna 150 over the glorious beaches north of Daytona, including what would have been a greaser of a PFL in the only field I could see in that part of Florida (the rest of the landscape was boggy and infested with alligators and mosquitoes).

The week wasn't a complete loss as I had accommodation in one of the houses Ormond Beach Aviation keeps for student pilots – so I managed to down a few beers, attend a few barbies and ended up playing first officer to a Welsh chap who was hour-building towards his CPL. We took a PA28 to – wait for it – Inverness. I'd been to Inverness, Florida, by car on a previous holiday, and wanted to say I'd landed there in a plane. We got there via overhead John Travolta's amazing house on an airfield (with his 707 parked in the garden, I kid you not).

Arriving at Inverness, again no tower, and no landing fee, just an old guy in the reception building who was friendly and unphazed by two celtic asking for change for the drinks machine before they hopped back into the plane and flew away.

Overall, my experience of flying in Florida is – it's a fantastic place to fly, the people involved with aviation are friendly and helpful, the flying is relatively cheap, and there are more airfields than you can shake a tow-bar at. ATC is extremely helpful (if a bit fast-talking and heavily accented at times) and the aeroplanes invariably immaculate and well-maintained. If you're going out there on holiday don't miss the chance. I can particularly recommend the Florida Institute of Technology flying school at Melbourne – friendly, very professional, plenty of planes and great instructors.

Oh –the Shuttle was delayed repeatedly, and ended up launching long after I came home to the UK. Next time.. **AL**

Tilting at Windmills?

Many of you will have noticed the appearance of an extra tower at the eastern end of the airfield – next to the Police radio mast. The new tower is a test tower for a possible wind turbine being planned by Bosch at their factory site on Eastfield Industrial Estate. The current tower is 165 feet tall. The proposed wind turbine (and planning permission is being sought) could be 400 feet high. Right on finals to runway 25, and well within the Fife ATZ. There are five requests for planning permission in with Fife Regional Council at this time which would all put another turbine within the Fife ATZ. Have a look on Fife Council's website at www.fife.gov.uk - there's not much there about planning applications and we'll be doing a bit more research and will have more on this subject in the next Newsletter.

Wind turbines springing up all over the ATZ could mean serious trouble for Fife Airport – our flying, and the livelihoods of the Topsy Nipper staff and flying instructors, and the benefits the airfield brings to the local community. Start asking questions of your local councillors and your local MP – there is plenty of room in Fife for the airfield and lots of wind turbines – they don't have to be plonked where they will be a hazard to aircraft. We were here first, and you would hope that local government will see sense – but who am I kidding?