



Fife Flying Club



Issue 25 February 2010

## Chairman's Welcome...

Hello folks –

Happy New Year to you all – yup, it is February already, and the days are already getting longer and the snow came and went and came back again... hopefully it's gone for good now.

Thanks to those of you who came to the AGM. Jim Watt, Managing Director of Tayside Aviation, was there and answered many questions regards Tayside, wind turbines, the future of Fife, etc and I've tried to cover off some of this in the articles in the Newsletter. A fairly downbeat financial climate has got Tayside girding it's loins like many other companies and Jim's prediction that drastic measures might come out of the Board meeting that was imminent manifested themselves in a substantial increase in hangarage charges for the private owners based at Fife. In addition, the landing charge for visitors is being increased from £10 to £15. As I write we're still waiting for the new hangarage agreements to be sent out and no doubt some owners will let Tayside know their feelings one way or another. It is an unfortunate situation but Tayside say they have acted to keep things going as best they can at Fife. Perhaps some sweeteners might be considered by Tayside – eg FFC members based at other airfields getting a reduced or waived landing fee when they pop in to buy fuel? The new landing fee could perhaps include a money-off voucher for food in the Topsy – when we had this system before, it attracted a fair number of pilots who came to Fife for a meal in the Topsy.

The Committee will be discussing ideas with Jim – Jim is the new Director rep on the Committee, replacing June Hepburn (many thanks for all your help, June).

I'd like to thank the outgoing Committee members from last year and introduce the new ones – Garrick Smyth, student, Karen Simpson, Student Representative, Roger Archer, and Peter Crabb (both PPLs). Greg Logan has joined us as Instructor Rep and Tim Humphrey remains with us as CFI. Stuart Chapple (PPL) and Stewart Webb (Commercial Pilot) have remained on the Committee from last year, as has Julia Grant. We will be posting a photo and short bio of each Committee member on the website in the hope that you might recognise us. Please stop any member of the Committee and speak to us – we are a friendly bunch and we are here to make the best of the Club for you as members. However, like anything, the more you put in the more you are going to get out of it. There's a good programme of events planned for the year and if there's anything else you would like to see on it, let us know.

All the best Alan Laing [alandi@globalnet.co.uk](mailto:alandi@globalnet.co.uk)

## Tayside News

- The main news is described above – Tayside have been forced to increase the hangarage charges at Fife considerably to boost income at Fife. This is in part due to a 54% reduction in flying hours at Fife in 2009 – no doubt a combination of weather and the financial state of the world contributed to this decline. The increase will not affect student rates by way of additional landing fees. A reduced annual rate can be obtained by paying the increase in a single lump sum.
- The landing fee for visiting aircraft at Fife will be increased from £10 to £15.
- John Stewart is moving on from Dundee and the new Head of Training there will be Ian Winestein. We wish Ian all the best in his new role.
- Some of the CPL training done at Dundee may get done at Fife this year but unfortunately the scholarship training done for the RAF cannot be done there owing to restrictions placed by the RAF.
- The rates for hire and flight training are under review and new rates will be posted shortly.
- Tayside are coming to the end of a re-engining programme – all the Grobs have been re-engined, the two 172s at Fife have, as have most of the 152s bar one. At £17,000 per engine, quite an investment programme!
- Another instructor may be taken on at Fife if business allows.

## Airfield Security

**Tayside staff will be more strict on security matters at Fife. The hangarage agreement states that all aircraft owners must be FFC members – no non-members should be airside at Fife, including in of near the hangars, without accompaniment by an FFC member, or without permission and knowledge of the Ops staff.**  
**Hangar doors are being left open by aircraft owners – and in some cases, after hours, when Ops staff have left the airfield. H3 for example has been left open or the entry door left unlocked for 24 hours at a time. The local youths will make short work of an aircraft and be away with expensive GPS sets – it is up to pilots to think and be careful. Leaving a hangar door open all day because you have taken your plane out at 9am is unacceptable – you should lock up behind you every time because you have no idea whether anyone else will be at the hangar after you. If you get stuck away from Fife, that door will still be open!**

## COMMITTEE NEWS

Next Meeting 25<sup>th</sup> Feb at Topsy Nipper – all welcome.

### AWARDS



#### First solo

Alastair Shaw  
Gareth Elliot  
Paul McDonald

#### NPPL

Alex Smith

Well done to all above, particularly managing to get anything done in the poor weather we've had over the past couple of months!

## Wings Night and Christmas Dinner

The Wings Night Dinner on December was a superb affair, with about 50 folk in attendance. Rumour has it that the Club Chairman was seen in a Dinner Jacket and sporting a bow tie but he strenuously denies this. The Awards went well, with Tim Humphrey officiating and the Student of the Year Award went to Alex Smith. The food was great and the atmosphere fantastic, and we all finished off with a bop at the disco and a rendition of "Auld Lang Syne" with occasionally too much showing from underneath some of the kilted attendees!

### FFC Badges

Have you got your FFC badge yet? Only £1.50 for members, £2 for visitors to Fife.



# Provisional Calendar of Events - 2010

Feb – 18<sup>th</sup>. Club Night: Colin Rodger on ATC and R/T. Update on ATSOCAS etc.

Feb – 22<sup>nd</sup>. Airfield closed 3pm 22<sup>nd</sup> Feb until close of play 23<sup>rd</sup>.

March - 13<sup>th</sup> – Fly-out and Time Trial to Crail. (possible alternative date – 20<sup>th</sup>)  
March – 17<sup>th</sup> Jim Watt on PFLs and Carb Icing – Long Briefings. Club Night

April 3<sup>rd</sup> – Easter Egg Fly-in.

April 15<sup>th</sup> – Club Night: Air Ambulance pilot. (tbc)

May 6<sup>th</sup> – Student-Pilot Quiz Night. Greg and Julia Quizmasters. Get your teams together – one pilot and two students per team. Flying time vouchers as prizes.

May 20<sup>th</sup> - Model Planes and Fireman night. (Altyre Models and local Fire Officer on Fire Emergency situations)

June 19<sup>th</sup> – Fly-In and Open Day (along lines of July 4<sup>th</sup>). Parachuting activities that day will be modified to assist with fly-in. Volunteers sought to help plan and run the day.

July 15<sup>th</sup> – Planes 'n' Flames at Crail.

August – 6<sup>th</sup>. Mini Summer Ball – Battle of Britain 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Theme.

September – 16<sup>th</sup>. Survival and First Aid Night – Surviving a crash landing in the Highlands. Speaker from RAF Leuchars tbc.

October 21<sup>st</sup> – Club Night – tbd. Stewart Webb follow up presentation.

November 7<sup>th</sup> – Bonfire Night. (Sunday evening).

November 18<sup>th</sup> – AGM.

December – tba.

More fly-outs and other events will be inserted into the programme (after next Committee Meeting).

Discussions underway with Edinburgh ATC to arrange visits there – watch for more info (and Scottish Info is a possibility too). A simulator trip to Dundee is being arranged. Possible camping trips and at least one overnight trip to be arranged (Colonsay beach?).

Another Engineer night – cowering off a plane – to be arranged.

Other dates will be added – eg more Planes 'n' Flames Barbecues as the year progresses and we see what the weather is doing.

The survival night with RAF Leuchars may actually be at Leuchars – we're discussing that with them now. Watch this space!

Suggestions for events welcomed from members to [alandi@globalnet.co.uk](mailto:alandi@globalnet.co.uk)

## Club Membership

The Committee revisited the question of a reduced Associate member rate and have concluded that the current rates are appropriate and will remain in place for this year – ie Full Membership for all is £48, Full Flying Membership for those wishing to fly Tayside aircraft is £48 plus the £40 insurance cost. (There is no "Associate Member" rate).

Have you rejoined this year yet? If not, speak to Julia at the desk in the Topsy Nipper.

## Long Briefings

The Club night on March 17<sup>th</sup> will be a presentation by Jim Watt – MD of Tayside, and also a qualified flying instructor. There will be two topics – Carb icing and Practice Forced Landings, based on the "long briefings" format employed by FIs. The evening will be a chance for students – and pilots – to have an update and reminder of what they need to be doing when carb icing appears – and a PFL might be the outcome from that. It should be a good, informal night where we all get a chance to think about some of the things we tend to ignore in the hope they won't ever happen.

# The Buddy Scheme....

After amassing less than six hours total flying in four months, with large "weather" breaks between lessons to really stretch the powers of memory, I found my enthusiasm was being tested to the limits. So a chance meeting with Alan Laing one Sunday was a very welcome event. I was hanging about the greenhouse in between lessons, when Alan asked if anyone was wanting to pop up in his TB-9. Did I hear correctly? The chance to get airborne, in a different aircraft, with someone other than your instructor? Affirmative!! Unfortunately on that occasion I couldn't go, but it did result in Alan telling me about the Buddy Scheme. Basically, there are a few lucky bods at Fife that own their own aircraft. And being keen pilots, are regularly taking to the skies. There are also some that like the opportunity to have an excuse to get airborne, and enjoy taking students up with them. This was what caused the Buddy Scheme to be born. Basically pilots and students can register their name and contact details with the scheme. The resulting database is then emailed to anyone registered and allows either aircraft owners to announce their intentions to fly somewhere, or students to email or phone around if they are going to the Club, to see if any owners will be taking to the skies and fancy some company. And this was what I was lucky enough to experience last weekend.

Alan Laing had emailed me saying he was thinking of heading to Oban the next Saturday, and asked if I fancied a trip. Put it this way, if emails were composed in ink, the letters would've been smudged in my reply. I jumped at the opportunity, and enjoyed being able to say "Next weekend? Oh I'm flying to Oban for the morning" to anyone that asked, and a few that didn't. In keeping with the tasty Scottish weather we all enjoy, it turned out to be a pretty dreich day on the Saturday. With the possibility of being grounded in Oban, Alan suggested we take a trip to Crail airfield instead - a place few students get to visit. At a stage in my training where nothing has yet become second nature, it really was a great opportunity to fly with someone experienced. Without the stress and pressure of being in a lesson, it was a fantastic opportunity to experience flying as 100% enjoyment. Alan was good at explaining everything as he went, which again was helpful for checklists to stick in the mind. And even just seeing places from above can help! Crail itself was an interesting airfield. Plenty disused military buildings to walk amongst. Having said that, the weather on this particular day was not conducive to spending much time outdoors! So we headed back to Fife, with Alan again pointing out handy reference points for future use. (And we had a quick low level pass up the runway at Kingsmuir as well).

This flying experience was also different to a lesson in that after returning to Fife, we ended up in the clubhouse, and of course, being with a member is the best way to get introduced to other members. And after chatting to some interesting people, I realised I'd been in the clubhouse for hours! So the moral of the story? If you hear anyone offering a seat on a flight, jump at it! One point for new students, if someone is kind enough to take you up with them, it is normal practice (good airmanship....!) to offer to pay for lunch / landing fees. Thanks again Alan for a fun flight!

**Thanks to Karen Simpson** for the article above – she volunteered to be the new Student Representative on the Club Committee and she will be in touch with all our students soon – it's your Flying Club and we want you to get the most out of it. Give your thoughts and ideas to Karen and she'll get them in front of the Committee.

One event coming up, which was popular last year, is the Student-Pilot Quiz Night on May 6<sup>th</sup>. One qualified Pilot and two student pilots form a team and a quiz, part general knowledge, part aviation-related, is being prepared as we speak. The students on the winning team will get a voucher for 30 minutes flying instruction each. The pilot leading (or handicapping!) their team gets the kudos of winning and a box of Quality Street. So get your teams together now. Anyone wanting the name of the Pilot who lead the winning team last year better start asking around now!



Crail Tower – ex Royal Naval Air Station

**RAF Leuchars – Fly-in 2010.** After last year's very succesful fly-in, organised by the Leuchars Flying Club, there is very likely to be another such day this year. The date is still to be decided but will most likely be in early August, possibly the 2nd. Over 60 aircraft flew in to Leuchars last year and enjoyed the various activities that had been laid on. Pencil in the beginning of August in your diaries – we'll let you know when the date is confirmed.

# The Ultimate Flying Machine.....?

If you're as old as I am you'll remember the days of the Apollo moon launches. I was 7 when Apollo 11 landed. In those days, travel around the world wasn't as easy or accessible as it is now and there was no way my family would have contemplated flying out to Florida to watch a Saturn 5 launch. By all accounts, with 7.5million pounds of thrust, a Saturn launch was something to behold. I settled for getting black fingers from reading and re-reading the Scottish Daily Express and poring over the photos in my Dad's newspaper. And thinking "I wanna do that".

Over the past 40 years I've kept a keen interest in the Soviet and American space programs and just never have seemed to have the time to get out to Florida to see the next best thing to a Saturn 5 launch – a Space Shuttle launch. I finally got round to planning a trip around a launch in February 2009 – and because of technical delays the launch happened two weeks after I came home.

So I decided to use more of my hard-earned business air miles and arranged another trip for the Atlantis launch planned for 2.28pm Florida time on the 16<sup>th</sup> of November last year. I would fly out the day before, allowing a whole week for the inevitable delays, and I kept my fingers crossed.

Four hours before the launch (with no delays predicted) I parked up in Titusville, on the grass embankment to the Banana River, with a clear view across the water to the Shuttle and the pad. Within a couple of hours, I was surrounded by more cars and folk from as far afield as Alaska and Arizona, and Sweden and the UK. The guy on my right had flown down from Philadelphia for the launch, despite him having lived in Florida until 1991 and he'd seen every launch until then from his back garden (including the Challenger disaster).

The guy on my left (who'd driven from New Jersey) told me that the launches caused the ground to shake "like an earthquake". I was a tad dubious – we were literally 12 miles away with a huge expanse of shock-absorbing water between us and the pad. "We'll see", I thought.

All the car radios were on, and we could hear the countdown – and at T-90 seconds the astronauts were told to close their visors and go on suit oxygen. They acknowledged, and the tingle that went up my spine told me that I was there, this was real, and the guy (and five others like him) who acknowledged was sitting in that thing way over there, and they were about to head for space.

At T-6 seconds the engines ignite and you see the smoke, but hear nothing. Then the Shuttle "stack" – Shuttle, Boosters and external tank, lift away and appear fully from behind the tower, and start to roll. All in complete silence, apart from the ooohs and aaahs of the spectators. Golden orange flame and huge amounts of smoke and steam spread out around the launch pad – for miles on either side.

But this flying machine, that weighs all of 2,045 tonnes – that's two thousand and forty-five tonnes - at ignition – rolls over on it's back and climbs. It goes up and up. It defies logic for a simple single-engined pilot because it goes straight up and instead of slowing down and stalling – it accelerates. And it keeps on going up and it keeps on getting faster. My head tilted back to follow it but my bottom jaw stayed firmly on the ground. And just for a moment I remembered thinking.... "I wanna do that...."

Then, about 60 seconds after the first puff of smoke – the noise arrives. And it gets louder. And – the ground shakes. Just like an earthquake. The video camera I had set up on the roof of the hire car on a tripod danced around to the vibration. And the voice on the radio is saying something like "The vehicle now passing Mach 2 and 19 miles altitude, 23 miles downrange...." and you think – what? How is that possible?

I was torn between watching and taking photos. But I was looking through the camera, through a 640mm lens when the unexpected happened – you can see the solid rocket boosters separate. At about 30 miles altitude and goodness what distance out over the Atlantic, you see the solids falling away. And still the little triangle of white dots, the three main engines on the Shuttle, were visible for another couple of minutes, between the high fluffy clouds, as they kept on going up and up. Eight and a half minutes after the first puff of smoke on the pad, the radio said the Shuttle was in orbit. Six blokes in space with a lot more to grin about than I had, I guess, but just watching it all happen was utterly amazing.

There are only five Shuttle launches left before they retire the Shuttle and go into another typical American hiatus before – maybe 6 or 7 years from now – they will have another manned-launch system. In the meantime that proud American nation will be relying on the former USSR to get men into space – and to the International Space Station that could not have been built without that ultimate flying machine, the Shuttle.

If you wished you'd seen a Saturn 5 launch, and have ever had a hankering to see a Shuttle launch, do it. You will not regret it. Was it all that this (forty-) seven year old hoped it would be? No. It was a thousand times more impressive than I could ever have imagined, and yet what I saw lasted maybe 4 minutes. But, what an unforgettable 4 minutes.

I came back to earth with a bump a week later, jet-lagged and freezing cold as I went back to work. Atlantis was another 5 days longer than my holiday in orbit before it came home.

Now all I need to see is a Shuttle landing.... and another launch maybe?

AL

**Newsletter – we have a new Newsletter Editor – Garrick Smyth. Please make material for the Newsletter available through the Chair's email address or to Garrick via the website.**

# Out of the Blue (Black and White) Colour Supplement

## Mark Pendelbury

Some of you will know Mark from your flight training here at Fife. Sadly, Mark is leaving us to take up a job with GAMA, who have the contract to run the Scottish Air Ambulance Service.

So Mark is swapping Cessna 152's, with 1950's cockpit technology, for a twin-engined Beech King Air with the full glass cockpit – EFIS and all. And he will be flying amongst some of the most beautiful scenery in the world – the Western Isles – transferring patients to and from the Islands.

Mark started flying here at Fife and got his PPL in 2006 – then went on to get his CPL before returning as a Flying Instructor. Just shows you what that PPL can do for you!

Mark has kindly agreed to come back to Fife later in the year and let us know what his new job is like. All the best, and thanks from all your students, Mark.

## Club Night – February 18th

### Colin Rodger

### Air Traffic Control Officer

### Edinburgh Airport

Colin is a full-time ATCO at Edinburgh and a part-time Radio man at Fife – he knows the industry at both ends, and his knowledge of ATC and R/T is unsurpassed. Colin's talks are always popular and this is a great opportunity for students to meet the voice at the other end of the radio and chat informally about ATC and R/T. Don't miss it!

7 for 7.15pm in the Topsy Nipper.

**All Club events are 7 for 7.15pm unless otherwise notified in the Calendar.**

## May 6<sup>th</sup> – Student – Pilot Quiz Night

Team Entry Form. Name of Team: \_\_\_\_\_

Team Members:

Pilot: \_\_\_\_\_

Student 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Student 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Please tear out, and complete and hand this form to Julia Grant at the Desk in the Topsy Nipper.

Get your articles and photos for the next Newsletter to the Chair or Garrick Smyth via the website as soon as possible, please!

Feb 2010 Supplement