

Chairman's Welcome...

Hello folks –

Well, Spring is here... and the weather has actually been quite reasonable the past few days... here's hoping it's a good sign for the rest of the year.

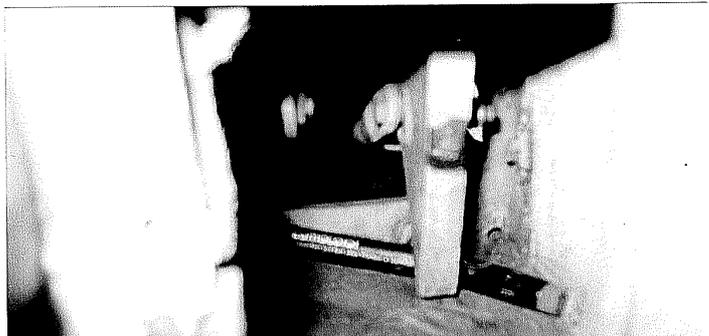
Thanks to all of you who signed up for the Buddy Scheme – there are over 20 on the list now and I know there's been some sharing of flights already, and again, let's hope we get the opportunities this year to do a lot more flying together as a Club.

In this Newsletter we have articles by Roger Archer, Stuart Chapple and Stewart Webb – many thanks to them all for sharing their flying experiences and maybe inspiring us all in different ways to get out there and fly. How about an article from a Student – telling us what it is like to be stuck in the cockpit of a Cessna 152, sweating away under the gaze of an Instructor? Any volunteers, let me know.

If you're like me, you'll have a spare pen or two in your flight bag (each back-up pen has a back-up, just in case!) Which is all well and good but would I notice if one of them had come adrift and I'd left it in the aircraft? I'm not so sure. The article below, about the Grob, is a timely reminder of what can happen with loose objects that get left behind in a plane.....

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

Loose Items – count them all in – and count them all back out again



The photo above shows a Staedtler felt tip pen – where it finally ended up in the control run of the Grob G-BVHE at Dundee recently. The Grob had been flown on an aerobatic instruction trip, then landed. A cadet was checking over the aircraft pre-flight when he noticed that he could not deflect the stick forward from the neutral position. When Tayside's Engineers looked inside the rear fuselage, the pen was found, jamming the elevator control. Had the aircraft been flown, stall recovery would have been impossible.

The moral of the story? Check what you take into the cockpit with you. Know that you've got ALL OF IT when you climb out. And, do a thorough pre-flight check for any loose items before you climb into an aircraft. And – particularly if you've been flying with passengers – check the aircraft thoroughly after you land to make sure they have not left anything behind.

(A recent incident in the Fife TB9 involved a full 750ml bottle of water being left under the passenger seat. The pilot (me!!) did not check under the seat pre-flight. On landing, the bottle shot out from under the seat and jammed in the rudder pedals during the roll-out. Luckily, a go-around wasn't needed – but if it had been...? The previous pilot had two "naïve" passengers in the plane – one of them left the bottle behind.) AL

Chart Changes

The three main 1:500,000 charts for the UK will all be updated at some time 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!

Big Boys' Toys

At the Club Night on 19th March, Alistair Kirk from Altyre Models in Cowdenbeath (his shop is on the High Street near the railway bridge) brought a ton of assorted Corgi Die-Cast model aeroplane models along and sold a few while members watched Bob Hoover and other aerobatic types flying every which way on a DVD. About a dozen members came along and had a few drinks, a bit of chat and watched the show. Thanks to Richard Street for doing the audio-visual display and to Alistair for coming a long, and for offering to donate a model as a raffle prize for the Families' Day in July. Alistair may also be along that day with a stall of models for sale.

ATSOCAS – by the time you read this, the new ATSOCAS changes will have come into play – so don't get caught out on the radio – remember you're asking for a **Basic, Procedural, Traffic or Deconfliction Service** now, rather than Flight information, RIS or RAS.

Fife Flying Club - Constitution

The Committee have tidied up the Constitution of the Club (last redrafted in 1993, we think). The new version will be put before a Special General Meeting of the Club shortly. Key points are: we are changing the membership subscription for Full members (who do not fly Tayside aircraft) to £48 and retaining the current subscription of £48 plus the £40 insurance waiver for Full members flying Tayside aircraft. The £10 Associate member rate will be removed. In addition, the Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer will stand for two years, to promote more continuity in admin of the Club, and the other Committee members will be re-elected on an annual basis after proposal, seconding and a ballot at the AGM. The bulk of the Constitution will remain the same. Copies of the draft can be viewed at the desk in the Topsy Nipper.

(NB the Chair, Treasurer and Secretary reserve the right to retire after this session given that the change in the Constitution has only just been proposed, decision to be made at a later date).

Buddy Scheme and Student – PPL Quiz Night

The Buddy Scheme is now set up with over 20 pilots and students on the buddy list. If you want to join, let Julia or Alan Laing know.

We are looking for teams of two students and one PPL or NPPL each to form Quiz teams for a Quiz Night on 22nd April. We didn't want it to be too easy hence the handicap of a (N)PPL on each team!!!! **Prizes will include money-off vouchers towards flying training for the first prize and second prize.**

Talk to your instructor, Julia or June and other members of FFC and get your team together. Join the Buddy Scheme – that might be the way to get your team together. As well as the usual Quiz questions, there will be one or two that might need a bit of flying knowledge to work out. Quizmaster Ian Thorogood is already working on his latest question set.... (and Ian is notorious for his devious questions...) Provisional date for the Quiz is 22nd April. More details nearer the time – watch the Noticeboard in the Topsy Nipper.....

Cumbernauld “Bacon Roll” Flyout. 7th March 2009.

The first of 2009's fly-outs was greeted with the usual dose of poor weather. A fast approaching warm front from the west bringing in rain and low cloud. Three of the four crews listed on the form in the greenhouse assembled at Fife 9.30-ish in order to attempt this short trip.

Trevor Harvey suffered a puncture in the back wheel of his bicycle on the way to get G-BKUR at Kingsmuir and so gave up on the idea.

So with a local cloud base at 1700 feet and a reasonable weather report from EGGP Alex Smith and I decided to attempt this demanding journey. Checks completed we notified Fife of our intended departure. A concerned Uncle Tim came on the radio to enquire if we had received appropriate weather reports. “Affirm” said we, plus reassurance that we would not take any risks, we declared ‘G-BITF rolling’.

Approaching Kelty it wasn't looking to good. Time to consider turning back? Kelty to Longannet showed signs of improving ceiling and better visibility. Stenhousemuir required a descent to 1200 feet to remain clear of cloud and there through the drizzle lay EGGP right on the nose. Since there had been no communication from the other crews, it was now that we realised we were the only crew to have made it.

Set up for final approach for runway 26, so far so good. Over the roof tops of the factory units that are beneath the flight path. Dramatic sink plus crosswind gave rise to right wing drop, making it look as though it was our intention to land in the car park of the factory. Being chased by the car park attendant who insisted we could not park there was the only exciting bit of the day.

However, reflexes developed over the golf course approaching 25 at Fife, with its sink problems meant this issue was dealt with instinctively and calmly. (Believe that bit and I know you can plait fog).

The remedial power input meant we now floated low and long, and flaring enticed a chorus from the stall warmer. Oh sugar! My brief thought was - “Flipper” strikes again. A gentle plop from about 2 feet and we were safely on the deck. Alex, commented in that ‘I've just swallowed my breakfast again tone’, “nice recovery”. After several Valium and half a bottle of brandy Alex's colour did return.

We paid our landing fee and went in to enjoy well deserved bacon rolls - after all that was the purpose of the exercise.

Now faced with the return journey to Fife. Alex consumed the remainder of the brandy and a few more Valium. (This excess was probably the reason for his delusions of isolated villages apparently being bathed in sunlight in the region of Oakley).

Before changing frequency to Edinburgh Approach, Cumbernauld enquired if my passport was in order for re-entry to Fife. Assuring him I am now an adopted Scot, with confirmatory “Ya ken ma maan”, he passed me on to 121.2.

Established on the downwind leg for 25 I noticed Alex's rapid genuflect (I didn't know he was religious). Then the bad news from Shona about the wind over the golf course.... But we made it down safely.

Lessons learned from the day:-

1. Margaret's bacon rolls are better at Fife.
2. It's surprising how far you can get locally with a cloud base of 1500 to 1700 feet.
3. When using runway 26 at Cumbernauld stay high over the buildings on the last part of final approach. Aim to land abeam Bravo, not the beginning of the runway. This will avoid the sink and the unwelcome excitement. It's the way the locals deal with this situation.

Well here's looking forward to the next Fly-out.

(We heard later that Andy Reid with Bruce Duguid and Peter Crabb set off east in G-WIFE and got lost somewhere over Largo Law. We thought everyone knew Cumbernauld is west and down a bit...).

“Flipper” (alias Roger Archer, and co-pilot Alex Smith)

COMMITTEE NEWS

Next Committee meeting is Friday 27th March at 7pm in the Topsy Nipper. All welcome.

AWARDS



Martin Ford – PPL
Ian Thorogood - NPPL

Solo Qualifying X-Country:
David Bennie
Andrew McCall
Stuart Batty

First Solos:
Martyn Sloss
Bill Bremner (at 72 years of age!)

CPL: Scott Nicol

Flight Instructor Rating:
Alistair Wootton
Danny Racionzer

New Hangarage Agreement

Private aircraft owners at Fife should have received a copy of the revised hangarage agreement from Tayside in the post recently. If you haven't, let Julia Grant know at the desk.

Check Your Documents

YES - this is a repeated article from the last Newsletter but the CFI and the Instructors have again asked that we repeat the message.

Have you checked your NPPL or PPL, Medical Certificate and Type Rating recently? Are they ALL still in date? And signed by the right people – including yourself? If not, and you get caught out by the CAA, they can actually wipe your logbook clean of any flights you made whilst not legally signed off. Makes you think, doesn't it? If you've got any doubts, check your documents with an Instructor or Tim Humphrey, the CFI.

Provisional Calendar of Events - 2009

April

4th April – Oban Fly-out for Lunch.

11th April – Easter Egg Fly-in.

22nd April – Student Quiz Night. Teams of two students plus one PPL each. Prizes – vouchers for flying time for the students.

May

30th May – Barbecue and Planes 'n' Flames Fly-About at Fife – 3pm onwards for barbecue.

June

18th June – Thursday Evening – Crail Planes 'n' Flames fly-out. (Arrangements will be made for Tayside aircraft to be involved). Barbecue at Crail, return to Fife before sunset.

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!

August and September – still in planning.

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

November

November – 7th November – Fireworks.

December

Eshott Fly-out and Wings Night. Dates tbd.

Treasure Hunt and Flying Competition days yet to be arranged.

I once was a Freight Dog – But I'm alright now!

Flying for Scotland's Airline is often referred to as many a would-be pilot's "ideal job". On the whole they would be bang on the money. Great established reputation, great aeroplanes, varied and challenging flying and without doubt some of the best scenery you'll ever get to see. When you add in better than average rates of pay, stable rosters and a smart uniform it really is a fantastic life..... Then there's the night shift.

What a lot of people don't know is that Loganair also have a successful cargo business mostly flying Royal Mail letters and parcels up and down the country. What many of you will know is that the vast majority of cargo flights operate in the small hours when most sensible people are tucked up in bed. Our cargo fleet comprises of older A Series Saab 340 aircraft. As a passenger aircraft they were always a little underpowered and slow and it's rare to see one still in this configuration today. They have a number of different features and different engines to the more common B and B+ models in general use. As such, the type rating is supplemented by a differences course which results in a Saab Series rating being added to the licence. I digress. Long past their usefulness as passenger aircraft many find themselves being converted in Sweden into cargo models just like the Loganair aircraft. All mod cons are removed, even the toilet so as much freight as possible can be carried. The cabin is split into bays each divided by nets which attach to the fuselage right up to the flight deck door.

I guess if I am honest I always quite fancied the idea of flying around with no passengers and into parts of airports, and indeed airports that many don't even think about, let alone see. So it's fair to say I was reasonably excited when my roster arrived as usual, but this time I would be working cargo. My very first cargo shift was due to start from Aberdeen at 9pm on Monday 6th October last year. The flight was due to leave at 21:40 and I couldn't wait. Gone was the blazer and neatly pressed black trousers and standard issue pilot's cap. In their place, padded winter trousers, a thermal T-shirt, Heavy NATO pullover, black waterproof jacket and woolly hat. Oh - and a High-Vis of course! I knew it would be cold but we weren't expecting the snow. And it snowed, and snowed and snowed, eventually closing the airport. Once we had a delay code from Royal Mail and had an idea of when the airport would reopen we decided and instructed the loading to begin. Sadly the guys who do the..... (pto)

Plockton at last!

Wednesday, 11th February was one of those extraordinary days with brilliant sunshine and a cloudless sky. It was particularly surprising as the intrepid duo of McKay and Chapple had booked G-BURD for the day - this normally guarantees low cloud and poor visibility!

A quick call to PDG Helicopters at Kyle established that the runway at Plockton was clear of snow and ice and that we were welcome to visit. After the usual checks we set off, initially towards Kelty. Parts of Loch Leven were covered in snow, where the surface had frozen in the recent cold weather

From Kelty we headed towards Comrie, Loch Tay and Rannoch Station, climbing to over 5,000 feet asl. When flying over hills in sparsely populated areas there is little enough detail by which to navigate. With everything covered by layers of snow, the major lochs were the only recognisable features, apart from the railway line at Rannoch.

Although we could have headed straight from Rannoch to Plockton - the Highlands Restricted Area (R610A) did not become active until 1500Z - we decided to head west to see more interesting terrain. Approaching Fort William, we had a bird's-eye view of Ben Nevis. Although it is the highest peak, it does not look exceptional, being surrounded by many other high hills. After passing Loch Shiel we had a good view of the Glenfinnan viaduct which featured in one of the Harry Potter films.

As we neared Arisaig, the hills on Rum appeared, with Eigg to the left. Turning towards Plockton and proceeding along the Sound of Sleat we were soon treated to an initial view of the Skye Bridge, seen between two of the peaks on the eastern side of the island. More distinct views were seen as we approached Kyle, where we detoured to the right, towards Dornie, to circle and photograph Eilean Donan Castle.

Heading back towards Kyle, then northwards, we had no difficulty in spotting the runway at Plockton. After making the appropriate radio calls to confirm that there was no other traffic, we soon landed and parked the plane. As expected, there was no-one working at the airfield, so we set-off for a gentle stroll into the village to have lunch, only to discover the cafe was closed for the week! Undaunted, we walked up the road to the Plockton Inn which was open and provided a friendly welcome.

After lunch and taking a few photographs, we returned to the airfield, checked that BURD was still in one piece and took-off for the journey back. Next time I think I'll use ten degrees of flap and a full-power standing-start: although we left the ground in good time, the end of the runway seemed just a bit too close for my liking!

As we climbed away, we were surprised to hear another aircraft announcing an approach from the direction of Broadford on Skye. We headed that way to have a look at that airfield, with a future trip in mind but, despite keeping a good lookout, we did not see it.

We returned by more or less the same route as the outward journey. Approaching Rannoch, the conical shape of Schiehallion was the most notable feature. Not long afterwards West Lomond was visible so navigation back to Fife Airport was easy. If only the same could be said for the landing. During our absence, the wind had strengthened and was coming from the north, so yet another crosswind landing! After a go-around on the first attempt, the second try saw us settling, fairly gently, on the runway.

Provided the weather is suitable, a trip to Plockton is highly recommended to any new PPLs who want to undertake a longer trip. The west coast scenery is spectacular and makes an interesting change from the routine of Crail and back.

Stuart Chapple

(freight dog continued...) ...loading also do the de-icing, so it was all hands to the pumps. I opened the cargo door and the mail guys starting passing me the bags - well launching them as fast as possible would be nearer the truth. Winded by 25 kilos of credit card bills and birthday cards I lay there on the floor of the aircraft covered in de-icing fluid, soaking, filthy and freezing and thought how many people see an airline career as glamorous, how we laughed. A cup of tea would have been a godsend at that point, but cargo flights don't get catered and if I were to try and tell you of my attempts to take a flask through, well I'd need a few more pages.

We departed just over 45 minutes late and set off for our long-haul destination. We arrived in Edinburgh 20 minutes later. We were quite pleased with ourselves having loaded just over 2 tons of mail in person and by hand and reckoned that with the weather and so on we had done a fair job. Seems the loaders at Edinburgh didn't think so. "Where the #%!* have you been?" Cargo ops are more than a bit different from normal daytime pleasantries it would seem. Anyway the aircraft was unloaded and it was just after 11pm. Only 5 hours until we leave on the next leg. Now if you've ever had to hang around an airport in the dead of night you'll know what it's like. Not a lot going on and little chance of any sleep. After all, we do all need to be reminded about leaving bags around and liquids and pastes and so on by tannoy every 5 minutes, right?

At 4 in the morning we were all loaded up and after some friendly chit-chat with the loading crews we were once again on the way. At last, some heat from the engines. This time we are off to RAF Kinloss, a journey of 40 minutes. We arrive in the snow and taxi past the Nimrods all parked in a line, some with nav lights on and clearly being de-iced just in case they need to go somewhere. We reach a remote part of the field and are met by more Royal Mail vans who unload and reload the aircraft in double quick time and before you know it we're ready to set off back to Aberdeen. It's just that it's still snow-closed. So we wait - on the aircraft - as to go inside requires an extra level of clearance we don't have. Eventually after our blood has almost congealed and I feel like a block of ice we get the go-ahead to return to Aberdeen. The taxi to the runway takes longer than the flight itself and after just 9 minutes in the air we are back in Aberdeen. Unloaded, closed up and paperwork all completed it's now 8 in the morning and I've been on shift for 11 hours and logged 1hr and 15 minutes in my book.

The next night we were off to East Midlands and then Belfast. I could barely sleep with excitement. So the next time you send Auntie Mavis her birthday card, think of what you get for your 36p!

Stewart Webb