



STAPLEFORD CELEBRATES 50TH BIRTHDAY WITH WINGS AND TROPHIES PRESENTATION DINNER



THE PILOTS WHO RECEIVED THEIR WINGS. PHOTO NADIA JANE PHOTOGRAPHY

Stapleford Flying Club's 50th birthday was celebrated in style at a glittering Presentation Dinner and Dance at Woollaston Manor Golf and Country Club on 23 November, attended by pilots, instructors, families and friends.

To mark the occasion there was a very special award to Managing Director, John Chicken who established Stapleford Flying Club 50 years ago together with his late wife, Tania. Guests expressed their great appreciation to John and his family with a standing ovation. Fittingly this presentation was made by his grandchildren, Sophia and Ollie Colkett.

Chief Executive, Pamela Chicken presented the Roger Frogley Trophy for Pilot of the Year to Sam Van Schijndel, described as "a pleasure to teach - a remarkable student". The John Chicken Trophy for Student of the Year was awarded to Becky Morgan - "a student who has worked so hard to achieve a fantastically high standard during training."

Pamela Chicken and Head of Training Colin Dobney jointly presented the Eric Thurston Trophy for Instructor of the Year to Mark Cozzolino, who had "shown great dedication to the job and to his students". Ian White received the Tania Chicken Trophy for Part-Time Instructor of the Year "for his enthusiasm and dedication to all his students". It was presented by Alan Turner.

This time the Lux Aviation Award for the Longest Trip was hotly contested with many enterprising long-distance adventures undertaken. Conrad Collinson and Josh Holby Knight received the trophy from Patrick

Rushmore for a trip to Salzburg under no supervision.

Lucie Harrison, a frequent and very skilled pilot, who has landed at more than 100 different airfields since gaining her PPL and provided an inspiration for other club members, was awarded The Take Off Trophy for the Most Enterprising PPL.

Wings were presented to pilots who had achieved their PPL since the last dinner. Those collecting their wings were: Dominic Carroll, James Casey, Conrad Collinson, James Harper, John Hewish, Steve Jenkinson,

Alex Kneafsey, Paul McGovern, Ken Marlow, Matthew Maxwell, Carl Miller, Becky Morgan, Shane Moroney, Maxim Morozov, Chandra Nauth Misir, Arik Rubinstein, Paul Saggars, Aaron Smerald, Stephano Sparcio, Mohammed Talha, Liam Tilley, Rob Thomas, Sam Van Schijndel, Ross Woolner.

IR REMINDER

A timely reminder for IR (instrument rating) holders from Head of Training, Colin Dobney:

As from 26 August 2020 instrument ratings will become invalid without the Performance Based Navigation (PBN) endorsement built into the IR.

If you do not have PBN endorsement you will need to complete a theoretical knowledge and flight training course and obtain a course completion certificate. This will be sent to the CAA with the normal renewal/revalidation paperwork. The PBN endorsement can be added on to the current IR and will expire when the valid IR runs out.

It can be completed in the simulator if your aircraft is not equipped to fly RNAV approaches.

IR(R)

Instructor Rob Forster adds: For those considering whether to train for the Instrument Rating (Restricted) formerly known as the IMC rating, the CAA has confirmed that they will continue to endorse these ratings onto EASA licences issued by the UK CAA until 8 April 2021. The IR(R) is a national rating and is not valid outside the UK.

THAMES FLIGHT GETS TWIN STAR RATING

Harry and Felix Marsh, 11-year-old twins from Balham describe their first experience of flying in a Stapleford PA 28 to the Thames Estuary and back:

When we first met Sue ages and ages ago at a coffee shop with Grandma and Grandpa she told us she was a pilot and flew little aeroplanes. We have been on big aeroplanes on holiday before - to Italy, Spain and even once to New York when we watched films all the way. But we imagined that Sue's aeroplane might be more like the Spitfires the Air Force pilots used in the war.



HARRY AND FELIX TAKE CONTROL. PHOTO AMY CHAU

Early one Saturday morning mum said we were skipping football and going flying instead, which was a surprise and sounded really exciting. We had jam bagels in the car and tried not to make too much mess (but failed!) and by the time we got to the airfield, which was like a mini airport but with grass instead of concrete, Sue was there checking the aeroplane.

We met her co-pilot Amy who explained all the things they have to check around the aeroplane to make sure it's safe, like having enough petrol and making sure nothing is loose. We had to smell the fuel, which wasn't very nice, and then we climbed into the back seats and put on our big headsets so we could hear what Sue and Amy were saying. Harry sat on a really cool Storm Trooper pillow. The plane was called something like Golf Charlie Charlie.

We drove slowly up the hill, turned around then took a big run up and flew up into the air! We gave mum a wave as we swooped off and everything got smaller and smaller. Sue was doing most of the driving so Amy did most of the talking, and we headed south towards London. Soon we could see the River Thames, Canary Wharf and the building where Grandma and Sue both live. We did lots more waving and took loads of cool pictures on Amy and Sue's phones. Unfortunately, Grandma was out otherwise she would have been out on the balcony waving back at us with a tea towel or her hanky.

We could not go any further because Amy explained we were getting close to City Airport and we could confuse the air traffic controllers and the other pilots.

We had to turn around when we got to the Queen Elizabeth II Bridge because there are lots of special rules and restrictions about what aeroplanes can fly above central London. After about 20 minutes it was time to turn back and it felt like the plane was tipping sideways which was a little bit scary but kind of cool. Before we knew it, we could see the green airfield coming into view again and we slowed right down for a bumpy landing. *

People kept saying it was a once in a lifetime experience but we really hope that's not true because we definitely want to do it again and fly our whole family somewhere really exciting like the Serengeti in Africa where we could see all the wild animals running below us and flying with us.

Thank you, Sue and Amy for an amazing day, maybe one day we will be the pilots and can return the favour!

Editor/pilot's note: Bumpy landing eh? Yes – perhaps not one of my best but it was 03!

FROM THE RIGHT SEAT

Instructor Roy Copperwaite reflects on winter flying conditions:

I am writing this article while sitting in the crew room watching another deluge outside. For those of you not aware, the airfield is becoming more and more saturated! At some point this will lead to a call for "hard surfaces only". In the past we have seen this call lead to some confusion. I will attempt to clarify.

The Diamond Twinstars, Piper Senecas and Arrows have a problem when the ground is soft. This can be due to being heavy, having smaller wheels or the risk of mud clogging the retractable undercarriage bays. The Cessnas and Warriors are less affected. When taxiing therefore, please give way to the twins and heavier aircraft.

When at the hold for 21L you can give way by taxiing to the eastern side of the runway while an aircraft is backtracking, but make sure base and final are clear before moving off.

When the grass is saturated the use of brakes becomes less efficient, so please do not attempt a tight turn as the wheels will lock and the grass and mud will be churned up. Also, wet grass and mud have less friction co-efficient, so give yourself plenty of room.

To maintain hard surfaces only operations on runway 21L you will need to backtrack the runway after landing. If another aircraft is on final approach while you are backtracking, you are occupying the runway and have priority. Do not vacate the runway and risk getting stuck. Similarly, if you are on final approach and an aircraft is backtracking you must go around.

Needless to say, this will all lead to delays, so please remain patient. The alternative is to close the airfield!

IT ONLY TAKES ONE CALL

NATS D&D gives a reminder to pilots to complete their radio calls and explains the services on offer from the Distress and Diversions Cell at NATS

The aircraft is safely back at the home airfield and as you close the doors you think "what a great flight." A quick mental debrief, as sorties go that was excellent. Or was it.....?

The last Lower Airspace Radar Service (LARS) unit that you spoke to didn't get a call to say you were en-route changing frequency. That could've happened for numerous reasons: the controller was extremely busy; you were too low to get radio reception or simply forgot.

This seems a minor thing in the grand scheme of navigating around some of the busiest airspace in the world, however this perceived minor issue can create a lot of concern down the line. The LARS unit you last spoke to has a duty of care to ensure that you landed safely at your destination or you have transited safely en-route.

This is where the Distress and Diversion Cell (D&D) is utilized. D&D is a NATS funded, Military operated Cell that has numerous roles. Where an aircraft has not 'signed off' from frequency, D&D can use various methods to find aircraft and ensure the safety of the occupants. For example, scanning live radar feeds for Mode S data or contacting different units to see if they had provided a service, are the basic and initial ways to try and find an aircraft.

D&D has access to a database of contact numbers consisting of owners and operators. In cases where we are unable to establish the outcome of the aircraft's whereabouts, we can utilize this list to ensure a safe outcome. We have even been known to use Facebook to trace pilots! The task is easier if you're landing at a known airfield. Finding the whereabouts of an aircraft and ensuring the safety of its occupants quickly is the priority.

What can you do to help? Let D&D know you've gone en-route from that LARS frequency. The easiest way of doing this is with a phone call to the LARS Unit or D&D.

There is also a perceived misconception that 121.5 is the emergency frequency and therefore can only be used in an emergency. This is simply not true as it can be used for practice Pans and training position fixes. If you do suffer navigational issues don't delay a call to us as we have all the technology to get you back on the right track and avoid an unexpected transit through controlled airspace, potentially facing a fine and even the loss of a license. D&D are there to help you, no matter the situation.

Training fixes and practice Pans are welcome 24/7, 365 days a year. They allow the D&D operators to hone their skills and allows you as pilots or trainee pilots to practice a vital skill. Practice will give you the confidence in the services available because we have the ability to quickly locate your position geographically and get you to your destination. If you're in a real situation of having an emergency or being lost this will decrease the chances of panic or uncertainty.

We would encourage anybody who has the ability to monitor 121.5 in their aircraft to do so, it will help us if we need to call your aircraft for any reason and if you were to suffer an emergency in class G airspace with no ATC contact you can quickly contact us on 121.5 and call an emergency. We at D&D have direct access to emergency services and will ensure that in the event of a forced landing all relevant agencies are mobilized to assist in any way possible.

SUCCESS STORIES

Congratulations to all students who have flown their first solo and to those who have recently achieved their PPL. Wishing them all the best for their future flying.

FIRST SOLO

Danyal Aziz, Giliano Bazili, Miles Cleave-Wallace, Fajr Fahd, Matt Goddard, James Hunt, Ziggy Keane, Michael Mugo, Cameron Quinn, Aaron Treleaven, Carlos Valencia.

SKILL TEST

Kristoffer Ahlner, Laurent Brel, Samuel Coote, John Haile, John Hewish, Alex Kneafsey, Barbara Lane, Thomas Levine, Ben Miller, Sheikh Mohammed, Pepe O'Mahoney, Andre Ricardo, Thunvir Shahul Hameed, Adam Warwicker, Waleed Ishaq, Ross Woolner.

THE BIG BALKAN TRIP

By far the biggest of the Stapleford fly-outs in the past year was a 32 hour, 2,834nm trip to the Balkans, visiting 16 airports in seven countries. This was undertaken by James Barker and Jason Wright, along with Instructor and fly-outs leader James Lee who describes the adventure:

Day 1: Weather for the duration was looking good and the initial plan was to get down towards Salzburg on the first day. Unfortunately, due to a minor tech issue we only managed to get as far as Freiburg, about two hours short of Salzburg.

Day 2: We set off for Meulenhof - a cheap fuel stop at a local flying club before the short hop to Salzburg to comply with customs requirements as Croatia is not within the Schengen zone. From Salzburg we routed south towards Pula in Croatia with the climb to 10,000ft taking an hour. We picked our way through the peaks getting more down draughts than up draughts whilst thankfully the bubbling clouds failed to appear.

The further south we flew the mountains stopped looking quite as big. As we passed the boundary into Slovenian airspace, we gave a little sigh of relief as the barrier to the Balkans had been crossed. Soon enough the Istrian peninsula came into view and we were directed into Pula airport via the easy to follow reporting points. After customs and some more fuel, we decided to push on to Dubrovnik. Flying down the Dalmatian coast late in the day over its hundreds of islands and blue water was one of the best routes I have ever experienced.



Day 3: The weather was behaving so we booked our slot into Sarajevo. Soon we were climbing up to 5,000ft out to sea so that we could clear the mountains that tower over the coastline. There was nobody else on frequency with Banja Luka Info that morning and I suspected that we were the only GA aircraft in the entire country.

Sarajevo cleared us straight in from about 10 miles out for runway 30. The airport is surrounded by mountains on all sides thus making the approach a bit more interesting. We had our passports stamped as we were now outside of the EU and my contact, Vedran, who runs the only flying school in Bosnia, SBA Aviation, met us for coffee. He had been a great help in advising us on flying in Bosnia.

Before I became a Flying Instructor, I was in the British Army and I had served here as part of NATO during darker times in the 90s during the civil war. I had visited Sarajevo numerous times in the back of a Chinook and by road. It was good to see that normal day to day life had returned.

The next leg took us to Zadar back on the coast and over familiar ground as I recognised where the front lines had been between the forces of the Croatian HVO and Serb-backed Republika Srpska troops. I saw roads that I had driven up many times and villages that had been burnt out and devoid of life but now were inhabited with farmers working the fields. It was quite a surreal experience for me to be flying over this part of Europe. It only felt like yesterday that it was in the news every evening.

The plan was to get to Fano on the East Italian coast by the end of the day as there was some bad weather forecast for Croatia. We had to clear back into the Schengen zone via Portoroz back up the coast in Slovenia before our 70nm hop across the Adriatic for an evening pizza.

Day 4: Saw a long leg across the Italian mainland and the Côte d'Azur for a fuel stop at Carpentras. James and Jason both wanted to get Chambéry in their logbooks, so we popped in and did a few circuits. Chateauroux with its 3500m runway was the final stop for the day with G-SACI parked next to a 747.

Day 5: After stops at Cherbourg, Alderney and Deauville just to get a few more airports in the logbooks we finally made it back to Stapleford.

THE SKY AT NIGHT

Winter weather may present plenty of problems for GA pilots, but a big plus is the delight of night flying and the opportunities to enjoy the London night sky. Often conditions at night are calmer and visibility great. So, now's the time to add a Night Rating to your PPL. An essential for CPL students and all those aiming for a career in aviation, but also a worthwhile rating for PPLs intent on adding to their flying experience.

The Night Rating takes five hours minimum. At least three hours of this must be with an instructor. Solo time requires five take-off and full stop landings. There is also a requirement of at least one hour of cross-country navigation with an instructor including a flight of at least 50 km (27nm).

Those pilots who already hold a Night Rating and feel a bit rusty are advised to book a flight with an instructor to re-familiarize themselves with the rather different experience of flying the circuit at night. Remember that if you are carrying passengers at night one out of three take-offs and landings within the preceding 90 days must have been made at night.

Official night for aviators is defined as 30 minutes after sunset until 30 minutes before sunrise. Pilots at Stapleford without a night rating need to be on the ground 30 minutes before sunset. This can abbreviate a planned day's flying. Darkness doesn't suddenly happen, it gradually occurs.

Courses at Stapleford last from November to the end of March and can be booked via reception. Courses cost £1035 for a C152 and £1175 for a PA 28, including VAT, lights, fuel surcharge and circuits.

Stop Press: The CAA have just announced an amendment to the Regulations. Applicants for a Night Rating shall have completed a training course within a period of up to six months. For courses started before 11 November 2019 and completed in more than six months, candidates must ensure that the CAA receives their application by 31 March 2020. We are advised by AOPA also that students must complete their PPL course and pass the Skill Test before commencing training for the Night Rating.

RALLYING CALL FROM REX AND KEITH

Keith Cullum and Rex Levi are organising another Rally and Spot Landing competition for Stapleford pilots on Friday 27 December. Plans are well advanced. Rules and application form can be obtained by emailing your name and email address to n79pl@btinternet.com

TAKE OFF is edited by Sue Rose (suerose.pr@hotmail.co.uk) and designed by John Pasche. Please do send us your stories, your photos and your ideas.

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