



LFC Newsletter

The Newsletter of the Limerick Flying Club

www.limerickflyingclub.com

Jul 2012

Hayden RIP ✈ ...

In mid June a great pilot and an old friend of Coonagh died in his home in the UK.

Appreciation by Foncey Hobbins (June 2012)...



Hayden Lawford

I took my first flying lesson in a Champion Citabria, EI-ANT in 1966. The instructor climbing into the back seat was one, Hayden Lawford, a tall gentle giant of a man who must have endured a lot with the likes of me skidding all over the runway at Coonagh as I tried hard to master the mad little tail wheel. I never remember a cross word, only encouragement or a quiet smile at my confusion. I was quietly asked on climb out one day if I had checked the oil and replaced the cap, I answered in the

affirmative only to have the controls taken from me and the fastest circuit completed before my startled eyes! I had not replaced the cap properly and the beautiful engine was covered in greasy oil but I was forgiven easily and went on to eventually master the art of learning to fly. I had the pleasure of working with Hayden in Shannon Flying Services at Coonagh where I took bookings, washed and refuelled EI-ANT and EI-AMS Tri-pacer, a type I enjoyed flying. We had a grand trip in that one Sunday, Coonagh-Cork-Dublin-Coonagh all paid for by RTE, a very nice cross country indeed.

And then he was gone away to fly over the Aran Islands and help to set up the airline that still operates the BN Islander to those Islands off the West coast. The rest they say is history. We lost contact to some extent over the years but not totally and we it resumed by emails and occasional visits, like last year when Hayden arrived at our Fly-in where we had a pleasant evening. I am not a flying instructor but if I was I would like to be as good and as patient as he was. I am sure that his early lessons with me and his companionship as my boss at SFS Ltd helped to introduce me totally to the world of flight. For that I thank him. He was a fine person and a very fine pilot. He wrote a very enjoyable book called 'In Galway Skies' and also one about his father's early flights. He will be sadly missed.

To add to Foncey's very nice tribute I would like to add that I only flew once with Hayden when he checked me out for a solo flight in the old Oranmore field sometime in 1973, and I have to agree that a finer gentle person could not be found, God rest his noble soul.

Of course I flew as passenger with him many times during my years of duty with Radio na Gaeltachta as we did several broadcasts from the dreaded Aran Islands and he as 'BN Islander' Captain was equally gentle and kind to all, a true and perfect gentleman always. I



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never saw him in bad humour no matter how frustrating things became.

We should also acknowledge that while on a departing flight to Galway, he witnessed the crash of our EI-AUJ by Michael Traynor in Inishmaan and he returned to the Island to offer any support and help that he could.



This help subsequently involved airlifting Michael and his passengers to Galway from where they could travel home on the night of the incident.

What a change has come over the attitude of the Aer Arann personnel since then! Most of the present lot won't attract many such glorious tributes when their time comes to pass on. ED.

Wash-out ...

Commiserations must go to Foncy and to the other club members who were disappointed on the last weekend in June. The very interesting fly-out to Haverfordwest had to be cancelled due to the very unfavourable weather. On 30th June there was an occluded front sitting a few miles East of Coonagh at the time of the planned departure, and to make matters worse it was moving East at about 10 Knots. This meant of course that there was low cloud, rain and poor visibility and that situation was likely to

last all day. Even if the flight was carried out the weather in question would have reached EGFE about the time of arrival so the festivities there were likely to be cancelled or seriously curtailed in any case. The return flight home would also have been ruled out due to another occluded front which arrived around Coonagh and moved East from Sunday 1st July morning. This led to IMC conditions around EICN and EINN all day Sunday and well into the night.

It is very dis-appointing for Foncy and the other pilots who had put time and effort into planning and preparations for the trip. Of course the people in Wales are also disappointed and there were matters of having to cancel hotels etc, a bit of a nuisance. The good news though is that even if all the aircraft and pilots were IFR equipped the journey would probably have to be called off in any case due to bad weather at the destination. EGFE of course does not have any published Instrument approaches. Also since the trip was meant to be fun, what was the point of travelling if the festivities at the other end were to be limited or cancelled? Another matter to add to the consolation is that the month of June this year has produced three times the normal rainfall for the month, so the prospect of getting two consecutive fine days was never much on the cards. Perhaps another trip will be planned soon and we may all get another bite of the 'upper air'.

Is this a bad dream, or what

By S N Walsh

After the dramatic collapse of ECA, the real 'professional' training organisation in Cork some years ago, can it be possible that it has happened again? Ironically this problem is also on the South coast this time it is Waterford.

Even if the Pilot Training College, PTC survives the present upheaval in any case its training licence has been suspended by the IAA. This measure of course could be a very temporary



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restriction, but in this country 'temporary' arrangements have a rather nasty habit of becoming permanent.

One would have to feel sorry for the 80 or so students who are likely to lose quite a lot of their €80,000 if indeed not all. Of course one would always have to question the wisdom of putting such a large sum of money up front into a project which at best has a very unpredictable outcome. The very best that the student can hope for is the grant of a Pilot's licence. Then the real work begins, how or where to get a job. Indeed even when one is found there is likely to be considerable extra expense to achieve type ratings etc within the prospective airline.

There is an old saying 'if it ain't broken don't fix it'. This applies to adequate training facilities like Limerick Flying Club, which over the years had the ability to train multi-engined, instrument rated commercial pilots. Indeed there are Airline captains flying around today who were trained ab-initio and qualified at LFC and it would have been nice to have been given a good answer to the question, what was wrong with that? The JAA and IAA in their wisdom took the air from under our wings and ended a perfectly functioning operation. We can't even train our own Instructors now. The LFC training may have had some limitations, in the eyes of the 'elite' but at the very least nobody was ever 'screwed' out of lifetime savings, and people did actually qualify. We could not offer anybody a job, but unlike other organisations we never tried to promise that we could. It's a little sad!

What about Galway ...

By S N Walsh

I was driving past the end of the runway at Galway airport last Sunday 23rd June at 13:30. A Cessna aircraft did a touch and go and it was also very obvious to me that the aircraft was carrying out circuits. We seem to be under the impression that Galway airport is totally locked

down at weekends. So it seems there is another 'Irish solution for an Irish problem'. If some people can fly at Galway when we think it is closed why can't the rest of us. Is this a case of a set of rules dependant on who you know or who you are? It does not seem fair that our tax money has been granted to EICM on a couple of occasions and then somebody has the authority to prevent us using the runway, when it is quite clear that others can do so.

This is of course symptomatic of how aviation is run in this country. Everybody seems to be in a position to re-write the rules and make up some more just in case the law of the land is deficient. In fact even in this Newsletter there is a good example of local 'rule imagination'. Another is of course the efforts by Aer Arann to control the entire VFR operations in County Galway as far out as the off-shore islands. The amazing thing is of course is that the rest of us are prepared to go along with the arrangements and fail to do a proper questioning of the legitimacy of the authority being exercised.

My friend learned to fly from that

By S N Walsh

As many know multi-engine aircraft have toggle switches to switch the mags rather than the key that is used in most single-engines. In training for the rating you must stop an engine and re-start it in flight. Generally this is not at all an intimidating experience, but it can go wrong!

A very strict rule is that you don't stop the good engine. To guard against mistakes it is normal practice to switch off the mags one at a time on the dead engine and check. However one day we had an engine stopped with its propeller feathered and to my horror I saw four fingers reach and simultaneously switch off all four mags, oh sh1t! As you know it may damage an engine if mags are switched off and on again at high revs even in a ground run-up but in this case no alternative was available. From 3,000



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feet we probably would not get the feathered engine back and even at the risk of damage all I could do was switch on the mags on the good engine, before it threatened to stop also. It would be embarrassing to glide into a field with both engines stopped especially since we were only training and there was not actually a real engine failure emergency. Wow the things that students do to Instructors occasionally!

The fly-in August looms near ...

By Mark Burkley

The Limerick Flying Club annual fly-in and barbecue will take place on Saturday and Sunday the 18th and 19th August. We hope all members will be able to attend. Full details of the event will be included in the next edition of the Newsletter and on the club Website nearer to the time. For now, be sure to mark your diary.

Articles

The LFC Newsletter is published monthly, in the first week of the month. All articles, letters, etc. must reach the Editor at least two days before distribution. All club members, and non-members who are interested in our club, or flying, are invited to publish articles. Please submit your article by email to newscoonagh@gmail.com or in person or by post. They may on any subject you wish, information, gossip, fun, logistics, or anything else.

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