



LFC Newsletter

The Newsletter of the Limerick Flying Club

www.limerickflyingclub.com

February 2016

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IN THE BEGINNING-

From the Limerick Leader, April 24, 1946 the following extract appeared under the title-'Civil Flying'-

'Local Aero Club's Enterprise'- "like a tiny-winged-vehicle resembling a moth cruising smoothly through a greyish mist, a plane appeared in the sky at 7 minutes to 4 o'clock on Saturday evening at Rineanna(Shannon). Nearer it came to the now famous air base for observers to discern that it was not an inbound Constellation or Skymaster, but the cream-coloured little two-seater which had been purchased by the Shannon Aero Club Ltd. Gliding majestically in the breeze, as it hovered over Rineanna, in another few minutes it touched down with perfect precision and Messrs St.J.Kearney, the pilot and Mr Robin Ryan, his assistant alighted. They received hearty greetings from the Deputy Mayor, Ald.D.Bourke, TD, the Acting City manager and others who had travelled from Limerick for the historic landing. Some of the members of the club present were-Capt C J Hanrahan, P.Duggan, A.Toppin, to greet the plane on it's arrival from Leicester, where it was purchased.The club was the first in Ireland to have its own plane-an Auster two-seater, made by Taylorcraft Aeroplanes.The plane will be parked at Rineanna for the time being, as the club was seeking a suitable site near the city for an aerodrome".....

and so Coonagh airfield was born and the rest as they say is history! That's only about 70 years ago and we are still flying at Coonagh. Not bad, I'd say!

THE JEFF WALTON CROSS COUNTRY FUND-

Our former insrtuctor, Jeff Walton has very generously donated his flying credit to our club and is to be distriuted to' new PPLs. In the following way-

1. Each 'NEW' PPL shall receive 2.5 hours(€325) credit to their account, to be used for cross country flying only.

2. The flights MUST be to an airfield or airfields at least 25 nautical miles from Coonagh, and be conducted in a CLUB aircraft.

3. If these conditions are NOT met during a flight then the credit cannot be used for it.

NOTE: To qualify for these grants Finian Gaule(Treasurer), myself or some other member of the committee must be informed in order to distribute the grant. Jeff will also be advised and will contact the pilot concerned.

COONAGH VISITOR



PA-28 Archer F-GIEK of Lorraine Aero Club at Coonagh 2015.

MEMBERSHIP 2016- This is now due and a gentle reminder to renew if you have not already done so. You must be fully paid up to fly the club's aircraft and use the facilities.



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FROM THE CHAIR-

Now that Christmas is well and truly over two things are on the way! The AGM, and hopefully the end of the winter (and lets hope I'm not talking too soon). With regard to the former I would like to invite any club member who wishes to contribute to the club during next year to make himself or herself known to a committee member or an instructor. This may be as a committee member or if you feel that's not for you, maybe you would like to lead an initiative or help out with a sub committee such as the social committee or the field maintenance group. I would expect the AGM to take place in early to mid March and we will send around notices as soon as the date has been set. We had a great response from the members forum last year and we hope to have another one of those soon after the AGM this year, so lets agree a date for that at the AGM.

With regard to the latter (the wishful thinking part) I would like to thank all of you, and especially Gerry for the work done clearing the moss from the runway, taxiways and paths, fantastic work done both week-ends, and nice to see a great turn out of members to an appeal for help. The IAA listed this item for attention on their last visit and we all know it was becoming a safety issue. This should serve us in good stead as we look forward, and live in hope, for better weather to come. While the salt has by and large been visibly washed from the runways by the rain, it is still present and so can I urge you to protect our investment in the Tecnams by giving them a quick wash before putting them back in the hanger. This will be required for at least another month until the salt clears from the environs of the airfield. It's especially important to rinse it from the underside, the undercarriage, the leading edges and the prop.

I would also like to thank Foncy for organizing the repairs to hangar number 2 and to Dave for the base station radio work. In general the airfield inspection went well and we do have a list of sensible jobs to get through, but the good state of the airfield and the recent works, were favorably received and remarked upon. Our usual IAA inspector is moving on to a new opportunity and a different climate so on behalf

of the club I would like to thanks him for all his good advice and suggestions over the years and wish him the very best of luck with the move. That's it from me, onwards and upwards.

Malta Flight

Luqa Airport, Malta's international airport is a busy place and the Maltese cross is evident on the national airline's jets as they busily arrive and depart, mixing it with many airlines from all over the world, Ryanair included. I had arrived on the island the week before for two weeks holiday and having done my homework had decided on Buzz Flying as my preferred choice for sampling a bit of local flying. They offered an Ikarus C42 micro-light and I had booked it for an hour. I was looking forward to a new type for me, and a new entry also in my logbook.



I arrived at the airport with time to spare and a short phone call brought Mark Busuttil, the instructor, who collected me and drove us to the security area. They were expecting me and within a few minutes we pulled up at the company's hangar. 9H-ULM was rolled out, pre-flighted and I clambered aboard this interesting type and settled myself in the very comfortable seats and as we taxied out I reflected on the fact that more than seventy years earlier this very site had been bombed constantly for two years in the siege of Malta during World War Two, becoming one of the most bombed places on earth by the Germans and Italian Air Forces. The RAF



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and local people who suffered many losses just managed to hold out, heroically defending the island, eventually turning the tide and securing the island for the Allies. I was to find out more later about that fateful period in the island's history as we climbed into the hot sky.

The Ikarus C42 is a side-by-side German microlight and is considered one of the best in that category of aeroplanes, powered by the ever-reliable Rotax engine. They have become widely popular and many of them are flying, a good number of them in Ireland. The controls are somewhat different and I felt a bit at sea for a few minutes as I adjusted to the different layout. We climbed out over the sparkling sea and turned towards Gozo, the second island in the Malta chain, a bit like the Aran Islands! The crystal clear, almost green water on the island is famous for diving and I banked steeply for a better view as my instructor clicked away on my camera!



The island was the scene of Angelina Jolie's latest film; worth a fortune to the local economy they told me. I'd say Brad enjoyed it too! We made an approach to the island's heliport but decided the runway there was without doubt only suitable for choppers! Having enjoyed the sights of Gozo I was eager to see the capital Valetta from the air. It has one of the finest harbours in the world and a few minutes later I banked over it and gazed down on that very historic place and was happy to hold as ATC at Luqa vectored an Airbus for landing ahead of us.



We were cleared in after him and our long approach allowed more fine views and I handed control back to Mark, who soon discovered some quirky wind as he flared, struggling to land in what had been light winds. As he said-you never stop learning when you're flying! The hour had literally flown by and I had enjoyed another flight in a new type in a different country. Good stuff!

A few days later I paid a visit to the aviation museum at Ta'Qali, a former RAF base on the island and felt at home surrounded by many Nissen huts, similar to Coonagh's! I explored the small but friendly museum with many interesting exhibits and was impressed by their fine new hangar which housed many aircraft including Spitfire, "Mary Rose",



the mount of Wing Commander R.Berry and also a DC3, Hurricane, Tiger Moth and more. Malta has a fascinating history in many ways and is worth a visit.



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I enjoyed sampling flying there, which was relaxed and enjoyable, they even have Tecnams too-next time!

F Hobbins

NEWS-

- **PAST CHAIRMAN RECEPTION**- Member and former instructor Sean Walsh has researched and collated a list of past Chairmen of the club and it is intended to have a reception in their honour, probably on the 14th May-(to be confirmed) of this year at the club with food and drinks provided. Their families will be invited as well as all members. Sean has put great effort into all of this and it is his project. We will keep members posted on this and we thank Sean most sincerely for his fine gesture in remembering those who served the club, both past and present. Keep this date free in your diary!
- **AGM**- Will be held in late March, date to be arranged. Only current paid up members are eligible to attend and vote at the meeting.
- **FLY-IN**- will be held on 20-21 August.
- **FUN RALLY**- this navigation competition, devised and organised by Malcolm Evans, friend of LFC and member of Pembrokeeshire Flying Club, will hopefully take place at the same time as the Fly-In and will be offered to outside competitors also. It will involve flying a specific route and identifying landmarks from photos supplied my Mal to each crew before take off.
More details later-Ed.
- **CORK AIRPORT**- The runway headings at Cork Airport are due to change in April to 16/34 from 17/35 so be aware of this if flying

to that airport. New approach/visual charts will be issued by the IAA shortly so watch out for this.

OFF TO THE RACES (RENO)- Sam Swift

My wife and I have been attending the National Championship Air Races in Reno (Reno Air Races) together since 1999



She actually started going years earlier with her father, and subsequently introduced me to them a month after we met. Having gone for the last 16 years, we've built up friendships among racers and crewmembers that have stood the tests of time over the offseason, only to rekindle every September like we'd never been apart. Aside from my day job of flying for the airlines, my background for the last 20 years has also been as a tail-wheel instructor, teaching in nearly anything that had the small wheel in the back. Among those, I've had the privilege to fly several models of the Pitts' line of aircraft, namely the S-2A, S-2B, and the Model 12.

As an example of the small world we live in, two of my sisters-in-law [when they were still teenagers] used to work with a gentleman that now races at Reno in the Biplane Class. His name is Jeff Lo and he works for Intel as a semi-conductor marketing guru. Last year, we were able to meet face-to-face at the races and made the connections. We kept in touch through Facebook over the last year and since he knew that I had experience in several different models of the Pitts, he asked if I would be interested in ferrying his Pitts S-1S from his home 'drome in San Jose, California over the mountains to Reno-Stead Airport for the 2015 races. Let me think...definite YES! There were going to be some logistical hurdles to overcome, as I live in Nashville,



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TN and work out of Newark, NJ but those are minor. My wife said I absolutely should do it, as it would be another foot in the door toward racing one day. I arrived at Jeff's home airport (KRHV-Reid Hillview) in San Jose on Friday September 11. He handed me the keys and said, "Go out, do some aerobatics, and come back for some landings. You'll be fine. Wheel landings at 90-95mph and 3-point landings at 80-85mph." Ok, off we go. The Biplane Class [at Reno] requires a parallel-valve O-360 engine that normally runs 180hp in the stock configuration. Jeff's "*Miss Dianne*" is modified to include fuel injection, high-compression pistons, cold-air induction, and turns 3200 rpm with a dyno-indicated power output of 240+hp!!! Yikes. You can really feel it on take-off, as it accelerates like a rocket. I worried about not screwing it all up upon landing on the 950m (3,100') paved runway at RHV with such limited forward visibility and high approach speeds. The first approach resulted in a go-around, second approach was a passable wheel landing, third approach was a go-around, and fourth was a passable three-point landing. Better to quit while I'm ahead, I was thinking. I taxied back and we refuelled *Miss Dianne* for the 1+30 flight over the mountains to Reno-Stead Airport.

The flight eastbound across the California central valley started at 5,500' MSL and I was instantly uncomfortable in the plane. With a full 5-point aerobic harness, a secondary lap belt, the parachute, and my head quite literally against the canopy, I was firmly planted on the plywood seat with only a thin piece of foam between my posterior and the plywood. I managed to text my wife to tell her that I needed a chiropractor upon landing in Reno! Approaching the mountains I climbed the Pitts up to 9,500'. That gave me just over 1,000' terrain clearance for the route. As beautiful Lake Tahoe passed to my right, I turned the plane north to proceed to the dry lakebed that lies just west of Stead Airport. "Race Control, Biplane Race number 6 is over the lakebed at 8500', with information Hotel". They cleared me straight in to Runway 08. I was thinking that with over 2,300m (7,600') of runway ahead, I would have to make a better landing than I did back in RHV. Wrong. It was certainly passable, but nowhere near "good". With a field elevation of 5,050' MSL, the true airspeed was quite high on landing (and thus, the groundspeed). The little short-coupled Pitts was a squirrel on

landing! Safely down, I texted Jeff and told him all was well, nothing was bent [except for possibly my spine] and I'd see him in about three hours when he arrived in the support truck.

I spent that night in Reno and the next morning, I jumped on board a flight home to retrieve my family and baggage for the trip back for the big event.

PART 2

At the National Championship Air Races (NCAR) there are six classes that race around the pylons: Biplane, Formula I, T-6 Texan, Sport, Unlimited, and Jet. Given the weather extremes in Reno, the Biplane and Formula I events are generally early in the morning when the winds are light. That means even earlier crew/pilot briefings before each day's race.

A very thorough Tech inspection was performed on Saturday and qualifications were supposed to begin on Monday. Unfortunately, the winds were so strong and the smoke from the forest fires in nearby California blew in causing the course to be unsafe. Qualification would have to wait until the next day. This year, there were only 14 Biplanes entered. The fastest eight qualifiers would be locked into the Gold races for the week. The remaining six would be locked into the Silver races all week.

Tuesday came with somewhat better skies, still windy, but with better visibility. The strong winds on Monday blew a lot of the smoke out, thankfully. Jeff Lo took *Miss Dianne* around the pylons for a decent qualification lap of 1:03.055 around the 3.3417nm course. That translated into a speed of 190.788 mph, good enough for 7th place and locked into the Gold race. The still-high winds caused everyone's speeds to be down from the previous year.

Throughout the week, each day would have a Heat race for the Gold and Silver airplanes, respectively. Your finish in the Heat would determine your starting position in the next day's Heat. This jockeying for position lasts up until the final race on Sunday for the Gold and Silver racers. By Saturday, Jeff Lo and *Miss Dianne* managed to work their way to fifth place for the start of Sunday's Gold race.

The racing was intense in Sunday's Biplane Gold race, with lots of passing between *Miss Dianne*, Tony Higa's *Tiger Tiger*, and Casey Erickson's *She*



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Wants Revenge. Higa's *Tiger Tiger* made the pass around *Miss Dianne* but was ultimately disqualified for low flying (below the pylon height of 50'). Casey Erickson managed to stay past Jeff Lo to hold onto fourth place. *Miss Dianne* came in 5th place, her best finish ever at Reno! Tom Abele, flying his custom-designed Phantom, won the race. Second and third place was Jake Stewart's *Bad Mojo* and Jeff Rose's *Reno Rabbit*.

Monday September 21 was go-home day for the racers and families. My family and I met Jeff Monday morning at 0900 to get the support truck loaded and the plane ready for the trip back to California. I kissed the family goodbye, and as I strapped on *Miss Dianne* I pondered the thoughts of running a half-lap around the pylons upon my departure. I needed to make a left turn out to depart anyway and the temporary control tower was no longer in operation, so why not? Once the engine was up to temp and all checks were complete I added power and blasted off. I did manage to round the pylons to get a little taste of the racing before easing back on the stick to climb out of the pattern. Fun!

On the way westward I decided to overfly Lake Tahoe and do a little bit of aerobatics over the lake. It's a picturesque backdrop for some aeros. I must have been anticipating too much the cramped confines of the Pitts' home office, but I actually didn't feel nearly as much discomfort as I did the week before. I enjoyed the pleasant 1+30 flight back to San Jose. Dreading the thoughts of landing back on the relatively short runway at RHV I mentally took note of how much remaining fuel and daylight I had, just in case I was in the pattern for a while trying to get safely back on the ground. As luck would have it, I absolutely greased the first approach on. Best one yet! I even had almost half the runway remaining!

Reflecting on the week, it was the best Reno experience my family and I had ever had thanks to the generosity of my good friend, Jeff Lo. He certainly had no good reason to offer me the opportunity to fly his plane over, as he had done it himself the previous twenty years he has raced there. He knew I just needed a little nudge with a foot in the door to get my racing juices flowing. Throughout the week, I received many comments

that I needed to join the racing next year. Jeff even graciously offered the use of his precious *Miss Diane*



for me to use next summer for Pylon Racing School (PRS). PRS is required for new racers, or racers that haven't raced in three years. Subjects taught are formation, aerobatics, wake turbulence ops, emergency procedures, and general race operations. Again, my wife and son were giving me enthusiastic "DO IT!" I would still need a plane to actually race in September, but at least it's a start.

I heard a few rumours that Casey Erickson could be persuaded into selling her Pitts *She Wants Revenge*, as she is interested in moving into Formula I. When I first asked her she told me that she had a few more tricks up her sleeve for the airplane and wanted to come back even stronger next year. After a little bit of smooth talking and annoying persistence, I won out, and we have struck a deal for me to purchase her beautiful red Pitts.



I hope to pick it up in November and begin working on it asap for my PRS debut next June, and Reno Air Races debut in September!



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Sam Swift is a commercial pilot and an associate member of the club based in the USA.

Thank you Sam!



STORIES/ARTICLES WANTED- Please send in an article, story, incident to do with flying-why not tell us about your-

- First Solo for instance-we all remember that day!
- Or taking up your first passenger after gaining your PPL.
- Your longest flight to date.
- Flying Abroad.

We need other contributions on anything to do with aviation-let's have them! –Editor.

<http://lists.limerickflyingclub.com/cgi-bin/mailman/listinfo/members>

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 newsletter@limerickflyingclub.com or in person or by post. They may on any subject you wish, information, gossip, fun, logistics, or anything else.

Disclaimer

The articles, opinions and ideas published in the LFC Newsletter do not necessarily reflect the views of the Limerick Flying Club (Coonagh) Limited Committee or its officers, who accept no liability for the articles or for any statements made.

- **SOME EVENTS 2016-**
- 14 MAY LFC PAST CHAIRMEN RECEPTION
- 4 JUNE ENNISKILLEN FLY-IN
- 5 JUNE BALLYBOY FLY-IN
- 17-19 JUNE GUERNSEY RALLY
- 25-26 JUNE ILAS-WEXFORD
- 17 JULY FOYNES AIR SHOW
- 2 JULY FINN VALLEY FLY-IN
- 23-24 JULY BRAY AIRSHOW
- 20-21 AUGUST LFC FLY-IN