



LFC Newsletter

The Newsletter of the Limerick Flying Club

www.limerickflyingclub.com

Jun 2010

Limerick Flying Club goes 'North by Northwest'

By Harry McNamara

One hopes the late Alfred Hitchcock would forgive me for using the name of one of his greatest movies in the title of this article. As the reader will see the geographical references have certain significance.



In March I was elected to the committee of Limerick Flying Club. At the first meeting I was asked to organise a fly-out. In early April I checked the long range weather forecast and consulted with the Weather Gods, and proposed the weekend of 22/23 May for the said fly-out. As ten aircraft are currently based at Coonagh and 'Hum' nearby in Brittas, it was decided to apply the Party-Whip and encourage people to sign up for a reasonably

ambitious away trip. Limerick Flying Club has a tradition of organising fly-outs to nice places with potential for craic. In recent years we have had six aircraft to Bantry overnight and as many more to fly-ins, notably Birr and Kilkenny. However the CFI Brendan Beegan made my task a little more interesting, by suggesting we might go to Enniskillen. Nothing too challenging he said! Yeah I replied!

A quick survey of the members and owners indicated that there would be enthusiasm and support for such a trip. The decision was made, Saturday 22nd May Limerick Flying Club was heading for Enniskillen, a place renowned for its beauty and the hospitality of both airport management and the local population. The initial plan was for an overnight stay in Enniskillen, but when it came to finding a hotel it seemed that everyone and his brother (or sister) was getting married there that weekend, so I could not find a hotel with sufficient available rooms, especially when there was a risk of cancellation due to adverse weather. Plan B was to overnight in Sligo but not before we sampled cross border flying with the

additional motivation of uplifting Duty and VAT free AVGAS. Hence EGAB remained our first port of call. It was then decided that since we were so far north we might as well include a 'quick' diversion to Donegal. Eventually the routes were agreed **EICN – EGAB – EISG** on Saturday, and **EISG – EIDL – EICN** on Sunday. Planning the trip required a number of logistical resolutions such as hotel (the excellent Radisson in Sligo), PPR for three airports (provided enthusiastically by return) and perhaps the most complicated issue, the General Aviation Report (GAR) form. The flexibility received from the PSNI was most helpful. Once it was explained who we were and what our intentions were they indicated



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that they would be disposed to taking all the standard information on a single Excel spreadsheet. Brilliant, I no longer had to worry about completing an individual GAR for each aircraft.

Once the trip was publicised through the club's excellent bush telegraph (email, forum, word of mouth, tom toms and the messaging service of our online reservation system), bookings for pilots and aircraft started to flow in. Perhaps the most challenging aspect of the planning was arranging a seat allocation for everyone. There were nineteen souls to accommodate on three club and six privately owned aircraft. After several permutations taking account of additional bookings, I as 'CAG' for the trip, assigned seats in a manner which I felt was fair and varied. Suffice to say everyone got to fly left seat for one or two sectors and the instructors got to check the cross country skills of students and PPLs alike. The good news is everyone is still talking to me, so I must have got the seat assignments reasonably right.

The planning done, all we needed was that the Weather Gods would deliver their promise of good VFR conditions, and anyone who flew in the Shannon FIR on the 22/23 May realises the Gods had delivered in spades. Saturday morning at 0930 we gathered at Coonagh like excited children going on a trip to the beach. Tecnams EI-LFC and EI-JPK, Koliber EI-DOY, Jabiru G-CCMC, Eurostar EI-DRW, Aeronca EI-DDD, Cherokee N277SA, Cessna 172 N172AM were pre-flighted, fuelled and prepared for departure. Gerry and Harry Humphreys arrived in Coonagh at 1000 in the RV 7 EI-HUM, the last of our nine ship squadron going "North by Northwest". At 1045 the largest mass departure from EICN in many a year commenced. The aptly registered 'LFC' rolled down Runway 10 leading the way with student Christy Reynolds and Instructor Neil Rankin aboard. Within an hour all were airborne and on their way. In superb CAVOK

we made our way north to EGAB landing an average of 75 minutes later. Within minutes of completing post landing checks, the good folks at Enniskillen were refueling our thirsty aircraft with Avgas at £1.19 per litre, which was in sharp contrast to the €3.00 per litre we paid to refuel in Donegal on Sunday.

Having refueled the aircraft we proceeded to 'Café St. Angelo' for some 'Ulster Frys' and other refreshments and then took some time to discuss the next leg. It was agreed we would all fly northwest along Lough Erne to Bundoran and route into Sligo via Mullaghmore. On the day, that was a beautiful trip of about 35 or 40 minutes with the colours of Donegal Bay a spectacular aqua marine. Within an hour or so we all landed safely in Sligo with pints now on the minds of many. Pdraig in ATC made us all very welcome and directed us to the grass area West of the terminal. Once all were parked, we made our way to the Radisson and we put our feet up and had a few drinks on the hotel's terrace overlooking Sligo Bay under the warm afternoon sun. Idyllic!

That evening the hotel set us up with a large table in the restaurant and provided an excellent meal. Afterwards Club CFI Brendan Beegan waxed lyrical about the camaraderie such trips bring to a club such as ours as well as the valuable experience it provides for pilots, both students or fully licenced. The formalities were concluded with a 'Wings presentation' by Brendan and former CFI Tony Doyle, to two recently qualified PPLs Mark Lloyd and Jacik Rosik,.





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Sunday dawned (painfully for some) with more amazing blue skies and warm sunshine. Three of our aerial armada had to return home early while the rest headed north for Donegal but there was a frustrating delay at Sligo Airport.



As we tried to gain access to our aircraft we were ordered to wait for ten or fifteen minutes while the security staff were processing an Aer Arann flight, which had not even landed at that point. One whole hour later, ten minutes after the ATR had departed, we were finally allowed airside. If the powers that be read this article, they might please try to find an effective way of avoiding such disruptions to private pilots using Sligo. It was the single biggest problem we encountered all weekend and it did detract a little from our visit there, because it was overkill and totally unnecessary, in our opinion at least.

Once the pre-flights were done and the mandatory group hug was recorded for posterity the six remaining aircraft departed Runway 29 with right turnouts for EIDL. On arrival at EIDL we noticed with concern, a bank of fog and mist lurking off shore. Thanks to the delays at Sligo, our stay in EIDL was going to be curtailed. With landing fees paid, some aircraft topped up and after a quick cuppa we were quickly on our way South again. Our departures were not a minute too soon

because the fog and mist were getting very close to the airport, so we could have got stuck there within another half hour.

For the trip home we varied our tracks crossing through or skirting East or West of the Sligo zone. Due to line traffic most of us routed East of the Connaught approach stub. From there we basically flew IFR (I Follow Rivers) down the Shannon all the way home to Coonagh taking the bones of two hours. One crew however opted for the more scenic route along the west coast to Clare before turning for base. All aircraft were safely tucked up in hangers or tied down by 1630 with nineteen tired but happy pilots were on their way home to bed, some via our local.

Over the weekend the fleet carrying 25% of the club's membership flew some three dozen flight sectors with each aircraft averaging 4.5 hours in the air. Apart from the departure delay at Sligo everything went like clockwork and was thankfully free of technical problems. ATC at Shannon, EGAB, EISG, EIDL and EIKN were all most accommodating. A special word of thanks must go to the girls at AIS who had their workload increased by processing the large volume of flight plans both mornings. Unfortunately this was increased further due to flight plan delay notifications as a result of what happened in Sligo.

Landing fees varied but were fair. EGAB charged us for only four aircraft at £12 each in part due to a fuel uplift of some 550 litres of AVGAS. Sligo was also generous with a reduced rate of €15 per aircraft including overnight parking. The charge at EIDL was €12 each.

As an aside the Met briefer in Shannon asked that we let him know when we next planned a fly-out on this scale so he could book the day off to take advantage of the good weather. He simply could not believe we had hit on such



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fantastic weather by having stuck a pin in the calendar seven or eight weeks earlier. I mentioned having inside information but I don't think he believed me.



In conclusion, we live in a fantastically beautiful country with an amazing GA infrastructure to be both availed of and enjoyed, and especially when the weather is like that which we got on the 22/23 May 2010 things could not get any better. On that note, the final word of thanks goes to the Weather Gods who did make good on their promise to me all those weeks before.

The Young Eagles fly again

By Events Co-ordinator

The Young Eagles flight day is arranged for 20th June between 1400 and 1700. This is a project by the EAA based in Oshkosh in the USA to encourage young people to gain an interest in flying matters. Pilots worldwide volunteer their services and cover the cost of a short flight for persons between the ages of 8 and 17. Coonagh has been participating in this project with enthusiasm for some years and there is always a great buzz around the field on the flight day. However there is also a great need for several volunteers on the day. Those include team co-ordinators, pilots, ground

handlers, registration, safety and crowd control and catering, in order to ensure that the unusually large gathering of people is kept safe and well.

To nominate a child for a flight please contact Jane Magill at littlepitfire@gmail.com. To volunteer your services Jane is also listening or text Harry at (087) 2449034. Signup sheets are also available in the clubhouse. Whichever one you choose please do sign up very soon.

This year one YE flight has already taken place on 30th May and a very keen Josh Delaney has been awarded his EAA certificate and logbook. We hope that by the end of 20th June there will be about 40 additional children taken up in the air and when back on the ground, will be given their documents.



For more details about the Young Eagles project visit www.young eagles.com.

Don't visit Sierra Leone

By S N Walsh

Reports have it that our former chairman 'Flash' was kidnapped in Sierra Leone recently. He did manage to be freed by local security but other than that he is saying nothing. Reports also suggest that he lost a lot of money.



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The 'FP' raffle

The raffle was properly conducted and duly carried out on Sunday 30th May at the club. The proud winner of the one hour flying prize in any aircraft of choice was Bob Martin. He looks happy and is almost already claiming it.



A State within a State!

By Aggravated Aviator

The club members ordeal at Sligo Airport makes one wonder who is in charge of this state. Nineteen properly licenced and identifiable pilots were most inconsiderately inconvenienced by airport security and denied legitimate access to their aircraft on the Sligo ramp on Sunday 23rd May. The writer of the lead article has described the one hour delay as overkill and indeed it is. The aircraft on the ramp, for which the airport had collected landing and parking fees, were all registered and fully legal to operate within the Irish state so why should security choose to segregate our pilots from access to their machines in favour of Aer Arann, who after all are just another legitimate and legal aircraft operator? It would appear that security are a law unto themselves and they can decide what to do regardless of any democratic rights or IAA and JAA licences or registrations. This is a very

sad state of affairs and one wonders if the Irish state had suffered some knocked down skyscrapers like the USA did would any citizen even be allowed to go to the toilet anywhere in Ireland for the foreseeable future. Indeed by now I have lost so much toothpaste, shampoo and medical supplies by now that I wonder why I should even fly to anywhere any more. I was of the opinion that the liquids ban was to boost the trade of the airside shops at large airports but that would not seem to be why Sligo airport has to be so inflexible. Shame on all you fools.

Treasure Hunt of the Air

By Foncey Hobbins

The treasure hunt is now re-scheduled for 26th June between 1000 and 1700. This event was cancelled some time ago due to adverse weather so everyone hopes that it may happen this time. The event is open to everyone both club members and private owners. However you will need a certain amount of map reading skills in order to make the journey worthwhile. Anyone who had registered for the previous event is still on the current list.

Extra Red Tape in Aircraft Logs

By Aggravated Aviator

As most of you know by now there are extra entries needed in the aircraft log and sign out. This will include some information about the flight destination intentions and ETA, and what exercise is being performed. The IAA it seems are trying to make sure that everyone lets them know where they are and what they are doing at all times. To some extent it is 'big brother' flexing some more muscles but it may also have some beneficial aspects such as in the event of an accident the club and the emergency services have a good idea where the aircraft may be. Also the information may help to avoid false alarms or any unnecessary callouts of rescue services. The attitude to the way of making private flying more bureaucratic.



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Round the world by Autogyro

The Northern Ireland cancer survivor, Norman Surplus has set off to fly around the world. The project is to celebrate his defeat of cancer and also to raise money for cancer research.

The latest news from the attempt issued on 31st May was that repairs are almost complete in Thailand following an emergency landing soon after takeoff there a couple of weeks previously. It is hoped that the flight can continue in the near future. Details of the trip plans which were announced by the Belfast Telegraph are provided on a link to that paper on our forum 'General Chat & Debate' section.

Anybody interested can monitor the progress of the flight on <http://www.loop.aero> find the autogyro entry and then surf to the blog section.

Lets go Underground Instead

By S N Walsh

The tunnel under the river Shannon just beside the Airfield will be opened for public pedestrian access on Saturday 19th June. About a week after that the tunnel will be opened for normal motorway traffic. Following the successful fly-out event perhaps some members may like to get together and go for a walk under the river, it would make a change from flying over it.

Where are the Ashes?

By Aggravated Aviator

Do you all remember the major fuss and Europe wide flight disruptions that happened in the latter days of April and early May. One must wonder what has changed since, because the volcano is still erupting and putting up dust and ash. The situation in the early days of the 'scare' seems to have all the hallmarks of yet another scheme by civil servants and the 'big brother' to close down

everything with a stroke of a pen. It is sad to think that flying which has the outward look of being totally regulated can be so vulnerable to foreseen circumstances. Volcanos erupt often.

It is also very interesting to note that although officialdom made bad decisions, they walked away from the cost implications and put the total burden of compensation back on the airlines from whom they had denied operating rights and consequently their revenue.

What a busy Spider

This cobweb was spotted over the kitchen area of the clubhouse in the past couple of weeks.



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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