

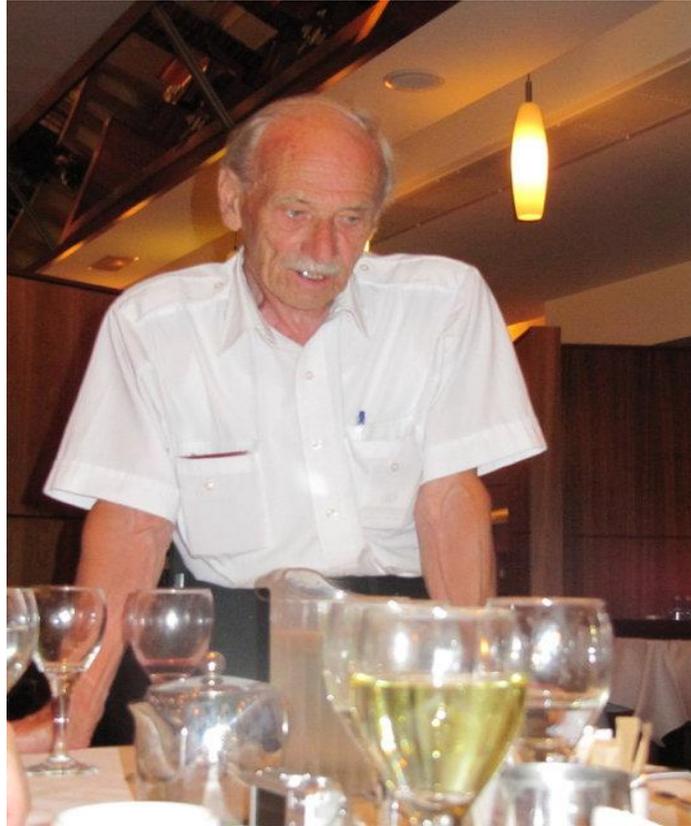


LFC Newsletter

The Newsletter of the Limerick Flying Club

www.limerickflyingclub.com

November 2015



Tony Doyle Special Tribute Edition

Tony Doyle-An appreciation

I have a photo in my album of Tony Doyle standing in the grass at Coonagh, anxiously watching the sky, waiting nervously for the appearance of Rallye EI-AUP on finals to land on runway 09 as it was then. The student on board was on his first solo flight, that special day when the instructor climbs out and sends you aloft on your own, your very own flight all by yourself and now you had to land it without breaking it! The student that day was myself in February 1977 and Tony was my instructor. I managed a reasonable landing and soon was surrounded by many well-wishers as I nearly burst with pride, Tony among them. Another student he had inherited and trained into a fairly competent flyer. But there was a lot more to come and plenty of flying and study and one day when I was struggling with landings he uttered the immortal phrase-“stick is speed, throttle is height”. I never forgot it. From that day on flying made a lot more sense and when I got my PPL Tony was there too. I got to know Tony Doyle well, over many years at the Limerick Flying Club and we became friends. He had the uncanny ability to assess matters in a clear way and even when

we ran into trouble of various sorts he would usually have a sensible solution. Whether it was a dodgy engine, a spongy undercarriage or a mutiny on the committee he seemed to get us through it all with some wise words. As time went by we all got older and hopefully wiser and Tony continued to fly, enjoying especially his use of Eurostar EI-DRW in which he was part owner. And when he developed his own airfield at Lissenhall near Nenagh that was a treat for him to fly there, which we both did one day and after leaving we flew across Tipperary to Pat White’s airfield at Fethard. That’s where we are photographed together with ‘Romeo Whiskey’ and I remember enjoying the feeling of pride as we flew, the former student and instructor, now both pilots enjoying the freedom of the skies. I received some very sound advice on occasion from Tony when I was in need of it and he was a very interesting person to listen to on almost any subject. It was difficult to watch him struggle in his final days but to those of us who appreciated his skill and wisdom and quiet and dignified manner we will not forget him. He is gone West as they say-safe flying Tony.

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Brendan.

I first met Tony in 1977 he was CFI at the time having returned from Luxemburg a few years previously.

Tony was a soft-spoken man and always took his time to reply to any question. He would stand looking down, light a cigarette take a deep draw of the cigarette. We used to say that he drew the smoke down to his toes. Then he would give a complete answer and explain whatever you needed to know. He trained too many PPLs to put a figure on and also all the instructors in the club, I remember him spending a lot of his time with me when I was doing my instructors rating, he encouraged me on every occasion to build my confidence as he did with everybody.

He had a vast knowledge of all topics not only flying. I remember John Keane used to joke not to ask Tony about Michael Collins or we would be there all night! He was the one person in any heated committee meeting that kept his cool and would find a solution that solved the problem.

When he moved to Crete he loved it and he became like a native and endeared himself to the people. He even started learning Greek. He started growing vegetables for the locals. The good things about Crete he told me were the people, cheap cigarettes and the wine. But he also loved coming home visiting his family and Coonagh, flying his beloved Eurostar. He also always had a good tale to tell of his travels.

We will not see his like again.

Brendan Beegan-CFI

Maurice,

Patrick Anthony Doyle was one of the great genius quadrumvirate who by sheer guts, personality dedication and ability won for non-commercial flying in Ireland some recognition and opportunity in the confused aviation scene in the post WW2 era.

The other three were, of course, Percy William (Darby) Kennedy, Denis Terry Rowan and Thomas Colum Killeen.

Ireland was at the unique disadvantage that we did not have a legacy of airfields, airmen and equipment from that war.

Tony was utterly unique in that he enjoyed royal status in the fields of piloting, navigation (he steered a legendary mini-visibility cross-water flight with a jammed compass by keeping the the relationship between aircraft fin and the moon constant,) meteorology, air traffic control, engineering the drafting of neat, simple useful and effective aeronautical regulation.

He sacrificed career advancement for the lure of the sky and of Coonagh and passig on the gift, wisdom and glory of flight.

Now his maker has called him and it is certain that the good lord – who, we should remember, was once CFI on Mt.Tabor-will find him wonderful company!

MHRC(Maurice Cronin)
NZAA

Above all he led by example -
The Shepherd at the head of his flock

Joe,

It is not very long ago that I attended Dan Lehane's funeral with Tony Doyle. We walked up behind the hearse together. We talked about Dan and what sort of a man he was. I didn't expect to be writing this so soon after that event. Even though I knew Tony was not what you might call young, he never seemed old to me, maybe that was because he was so active, and young in mind and spirit.

As a long time Coonagh member I am very much the product of the Tony Doyle era. I learned to fly when Tony was CFI. The words "**Don't get too low too soon**" are burned into my brain, for which I have one of our other contributors to this edition to thank, and another Tony era stalwart, so thanks Maurice.

Those words served me well during many a practice engine-out, and during one that was very real and even may have saved my life.

The training at Coonagh has always been excellent, and an exemplar in professionalism. This is in no small way down to Tony Doyle. Tony was an immensely gifted and hardworking man, knowledgeable and well travelled. He was a great storyteller and he would captivate groups of souls at Coonagh on any given Saturday, as he regaled them with hair-raising tales of transatlantic crossings from his time in ATC. He was always generous of spirit and I never heard him say a bad word about anybody, often going out of his way to find something positive to say about someone, (unless you were a Turk, but given that he spend a great deal of time in Crete we can give him that one).

I knew him as my instructor, CFI and latterly as a friend and member of the Eurostar group, which he was instrumental in forming, going as far as visiting the factory in the Czech Republic to ensure the build quality was good enough for all of us. Tony had his priorities set, and loved his family, life, Coonagh, flying and of course those bloody *Rallyes*.

I don't pretend to know him as well as some of other contributors here, these ramblings are really just my recollections and I'm grateful for them and to be able to



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express them. He was a wonderful role model for every aspiring pilot and airman. He was the *consummate* airman and the airman's airman and in my opinion a total gentleman, and we shall all miss him very much.

On behalf of the club members and all of us who love Coonagh, I would like to extend my deepest sympathies to Tony's family but especially to Tom who is a long time member here.

Joe Sullivan – Chairman

Tony's Planes



Swallow EI-AFF



Tony flew this aircraft from France to Coonagh.



Echo November Uniform at Carrickfin on the club's fly out to Donegal



Eurostar 'Romeo Whiskey' on finals at Coonagh



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Formation Flight Tribute to Tony.



Farewell Tony

