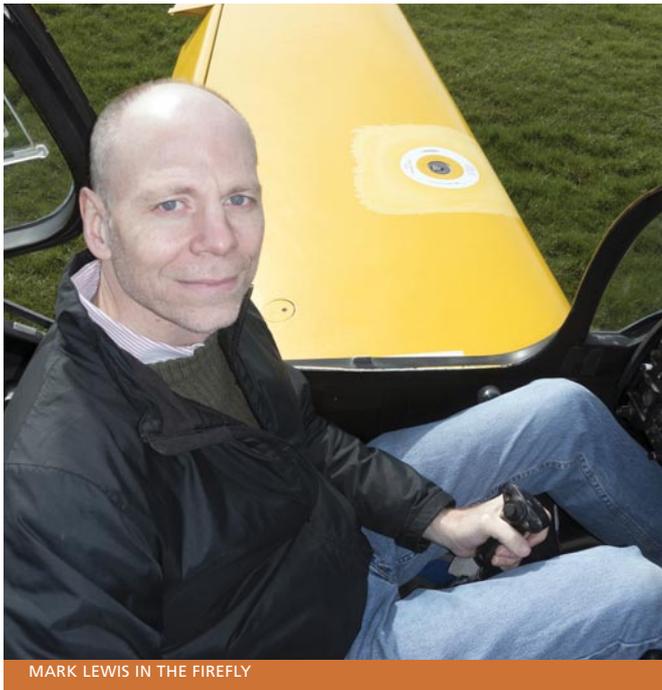




THE PLUS FACTOR – A POST SPINNING SMILE

Stapleford PPL, Mark Lewis, describes his experiences on the PPL+ course and how he got that “post-spinning smile”:



MARK LEWIS IN THE FIREFLY

Somewhere around Abberton Reservoir, climbing through 4,000 ft. I began to wonder if this was such a good idea. I knew that the last hour of the PPL+ course would be spin training but I had tucked that bit of information into the part of my brain reserved for remembering distant aunts' birthdays and train schedules.

At 70 hours past my PPL I started to get restless. I'd visited nearly every airfield within easy reach of EGSG, plus a few in France but I now wanted to push the envelope a bit. Stapleford's PPL+ offered just such an opportunity.

Any foolish notion on my part that it was going to be a gentle review of what I'd already learned was quickly swept aside by my instructor, Roy Copperwaite. After a few demos by him, I found myself coming in from a ridiculously high base on a glide approach with no flaps and side slipping down to a greaser.

A bucketful of crosswind landings later it was out to Hanningfield for stalling. Standard stuff until the “plus” part kicked in: 60-degree banking turns with the stick pulled back, surfing the stall warner all the way around a tight 360 degrees.

Advanced stalling complete, I was back in the classroom for a pre-flight briefing on the confusingly named “constant aspect PFLs” taught by the RAF. Roy took great pleasure in randomly pulling the throttle back, saying, “Your engine just went ‘bang’, land in the field beneath us.” Once you get the hang of it you wonder why they would bother teaching anything else.

For “upset training” I was handed off to aerobatics instructor, Tony Glover. I found myself levelling off over Abberton, cinched up tight in a five-point harness and questioning all my life decisions up to that point. “What people find frightening about aerobatics,” Tony said, “is that they think the plane behaves randomly. It doesn't. When handled correctly, it's completely predictable.”

With that, he flipped us into a spin. The sky vanished, replaced by green fields, then sky, then fields. Tony's recovery was smooth and precise. My turn.

Nothing you read can prepare you for the first time you take control of an aircraft and deliberately put her into a spin. It's not violent or frightening, just very, very, abrupt. I counted two rotations then pushed full opposite rudder, stick forward, spin stopped, wings level, eased the nose up; straight and level again but 1,700 ft closer to the ground.

I would have quite happily spun the rest of the day away. Apart from the unreservedly brilliant feeling of twirling a plane around in the sky, the Firefly is simply a beautiful aircraft to fly. 260 horsepower of pure, bright yellow joy.

Later, in the clubhouse, an instructor said to me, “You've been up in the Firefly haven't you? You've got the post-spinning smile.” Pushed out of my comfort zone, made to work harder to fly better and still smiling over a post-flight cup of tea, that was the PPL+ course for me.

PPL+ is a short course that comprises 5 hours flying and 8 hours ground tuition. It is designed to encourage and enable PPL holders to expand their flying skills and broaden their experience. Spinning is highly recommended but not mandatory. The syllabus can be tailored to suit specific requirements. For further information please contact Stapleford Reception (01708 688380).

STAPLEFORD'S BEST KEPT SECRET

What better way to unwind after a hard day's work, than to take to the air on an early summer evening. Stapleford remains open until sun down, and offers plenty of opportunities for flying when there is little traffic and the circuit is relatively quiet.

Weather conditions on a summer evening are often better than during the day. Temperatures are more comfortable, thermal turbulence subsides and winds reduce to a gentle breeze. So don't miss out on this special treat. And longer flying hours also offer an opportunity for exploring further afield during the day.

AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION

Flying offers us great scope for aerial photography and many Stapleford pilots and their passengers make the most of their opportunities to capture the spectacular landscapes, cloudscapes and seascapes during flying-outs and local trips.

Take Off is launching a competition for the best aerial photo taken by an amateur photographer – pilot or passenger - on a flight originating at Stapleford. The closing date is 26 August. The winning entry will be published in the autumn issue of Take Off. The prize is a half hour pleasure flight over London or a bottle of champagne.

Stapleford plays a key role in facilitating professional aerial photography, attracting leading photographers like Ian Hay of Above All Images. Ian Hay and Stapleford Chief Executive, Pamela Chicken will judge entries.

All entries should be emailed to Take Off Editor, Sue Rose at: suerose.pr@hotmail.co.uk

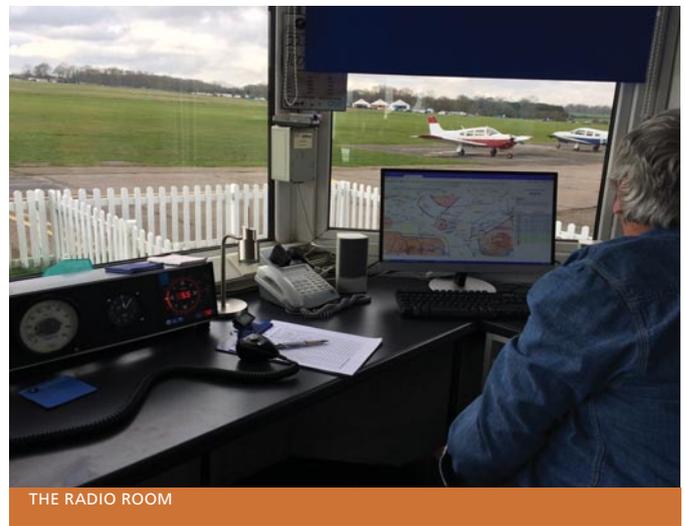
RADIO CHECK AND AIRFIELD INFORMATION....

A major refurbishment of the Radio Room at Stapleford has now been completed. It will significantly enhance the service offered to pilots. Jim Carlarne, who is in charge of the Radio Room describes the impressive new facilities:

"We now have installed an Icom IC-A210 base station with a range of more than 30 nautical miles (nm). In addition, we have a flight radar system, which gives the duty radio operator a cover of more than 20 nm, helping them identifying arriving and departing aircraft as well as traffic in the circuit."

The programme was written for Stapleford by one of the radio room staff, Roderick Groeneveld, a keen PPL, and winner of the Roger Frogley Trophy at the 2014 Stapleford Awards Dinner.

Another important addition is access to NATS AFPEX for filing flight plans for cross channel flights and for using airways. And there is now base camera giving a 360 degree view of the airfield.



THE RADIO ROOM

The Radio Room plays a vital role in the safe operation of the airfield and provides us all with an invaluable service. Now they will be able to keep an eye on us anywhere in the vicinity and provide helpful advice while we are on frequency.

"Stapleford Radio – this is Take Off Editor – Thank you!"

SUCCESS STORIES

Congratulations to the students who have achieved their PPL, and to those who have flown their first solo.

SKILL TEST: Husham Al-Nuaim, Sakariye Farah, Jacob Hannis, Jack Harper, Haydar Kale, Maurizio Liubich, Michael Wilson.

FIRST SOLO: Rayan Beckmezci, Steven Cheung, Abdul Ma'ani, Franko Ngan, Mohammed Talha, Chris Thorn, William Tuffin.



RAYAN BECKMEZCI

ELECTRONIC BOOKING

Stapleford has now introduced electronic booking for slots for lessons and PPL hires. Laura Ward, Stapleford's General Manager explains: "The new automated system is much more efficient. We are now able to send automated emails to students when they make the bookings." Pilots will no longer be able to help themselves to the booking sheet and make their own bookings. All requests for slots and for aircraft hire should be routed through reception staff or one of the instructors who manage the new system.

STARTING FLYING LESSONS?

Not always easy at first – but stick at it. It gets better. Elizabeth Wehrfritz offers some words of encouragement for beginners:

Getting going with flying wasn't easy. As my early problems are apparently not uncommon, the following might hopefully help new students who are finding it challenging. Problems do pass, can be resolved.

To begin with, why is it one can become so forgetful when first 2000ft up? One trial lesson I 'lost' my left from my right. Then, ability to do simple mental arithmetic disappeared – doing 180° turns I had to ask 'What's 21 take away 18?' And carefully memorised manoeuvres would vanish in the air; visual imagination helped, 'seeing' the controls and landscape when practising in my head.

Misunderstanding instructions coming into land and having not yet figured out how the dual control system worked, I made the ultimate mistake of holding the control column too tightly. Fortunately the instructor recovered very expertly.

One lesson seems to go really well. You think you're getting somewhere until, discouragingly, the next falls apart. Over time you realise you actually are making progress, albeit slowly, even with Christmas and winter weather breaks.

Learning to fly is not like learning to drive – mostly done in a car with an instructor – it needs far more home study. A flying instructor can't teach everything. Pooley's Flying Training was initially daunting for a non-scientist with totally mystifying diagrams, a foreign language only making sense after more flying. Having tuned in to the way it talked, writing very brief lists gave some chance of memorising manoeuvres.

The instruments were confusing, increasing in different increments and dropping differing numbers of zeros – especially the altimeter with its three needles. Straight and Level wasn't so hard using the horizon but, struggling to read the altimeter, I zigzagged hopelessly. Obviously this wouldn't do. Practise on cardboard cut-outs with moveable pointers sounds like nursery school stuff but resolved the problem. And photos of BNUT's radio panel helped sort out all those knobs and buttons.

When first out of its case, the CRP was a mystifying mass of tiny lines and numbers. I started by working through Pooley's text, agonisingly slowly putting my CRP in the same positions as in the pictures, working through methods, finding how they got answers, then moving on to exercises and exam revision guides. Three weeks before passing the exam it suddenly 'clicked':

This is a mere fraction of my early flying problems, things no one wants to admit to at the time but no longer matter. Early struggles having drifted into memory with the help of an endlessly patient

instructor, Roy Copperwaite, I'm really glad I stuck with my flying.

Roy's advice to new students is: Instructors can only teach a finite amount during flying and ground briefs/de-briefs. For some students this may not be enough so they need to spend a lot of their own time studying to keep up. We as instructors will not give up on students but the more work you do on the ground the less money you spend in the air.

FIRST FEMALE FIRE FIGHTER

Stapleford now has its first female fire fighter, 18-year-old Paige Carlarne-Hall. Paige is following in a family tradition in joining the airfield's Rescue and Fire Fighting crew at weekends. Her grandfather is Airfield Maintenance Manager, Jim Carlarne.



"I have been coming to the airfield with my Grandad since I was very young. When I left school I was keen to join the fire crews so with my cousin, Archie Leighton, I was trained as a fire fighter. When we are not required to deal with emergencies we help out with general maintenance duties," says Paige, who has not yet been tempted into flying.

During the week when she is not on fire-fighting duty, Paige is at college studying animal management. And Archie is a new recruit in Jim's smart updated Radio Room.

LUCIE WINGING IT.....

Lucie Harrison, keen Stapleford PPL and co-owner of the PA 28, G-GUSS, is to take on the challenge of Wing Walking to raise money for charity and she is appealing for support:

"Having lost a bet with my sister, I now find myself booked to do a wing walk at Damyns Hall Aerodrome on Sunday, 5 June. As it will take rather a lot to get me ON TOP of a plane I want to mark the event by raising money for Home-Start, Brentwood, a charity that supports families with young children through home visiting for 2-3 hours per week.

"I would be grateful for whatever support you can give. Please visit my dedicated website at <http://www.justgiving.com/owner-email/pleasesponsor/Lucie-Harrison1> or send me a cheque (made payable to Home-Start Brentwood)."

FLYOUTS – UPWARDS AND ONWARDS

The 2016 programme of Stapleford fly-outs to destinations in France, the Channel Isles and the UK got underway in March when half the group made it to Le Touquet, despite less than perfect weather across the Channel. The rest opted for Goodwood.

The destination for April was intended to be Deauville but the threat of stormy weather along the French coast caused fly-outers to switch to Bembridge with five crews enjoying good flying conditions and wonderful views of the English coast.

Making the most of the long summer days, destinations in June, July and August will include the Channel Isles, Cherbourg and Rouen, with a possible trip to Belgium in the offing. As usual when the weather is unsuitable for planned destinations across the Channel, then every effort will be made to find appropriate alternatives, such as Great Massingham in Norfolk; Coventry; Compton Abbas, or the Isle of Wight.

Fly-outs, usually on the second Wednesday of the month, are preceded by a briefing at Stapleford at 19.00 hours the previous evening, for route planning and completion of Flight Flights and GAR (customs) forms.

It is recommended to fly with an instructor on the longer trips to the Channel Isles or Normandy. Each crew member and passenger will require a life jacket (available to hire at Stapleford for £11), and one PLB (personal locator beacon) is needed for each plane. These are available for hire for £25 (with a £100 deposit).

Please contact Asad Sher, Instructor in charge of fly-outs, if you would like to sign up for fly-outs on flyoutssfc@gmail.com or call Stapleford: 01708 688380

MORE WOMEN PILOTS

The British Women Pilots' Association (BWPA), chaired by former Stapleford Instructor, Julie Westhorpe, is making a significant input into increasing the number of women pilots flying professionally. Industry-wide the proportion of female pilots has remained at around 5 per cent of all pilots for decades.

Earlier this year the BWPA announced its three scholarships for aspiring pilots. In addition, BWPA is collaborating in the EasyJet Amy Johnson Flying Initiative, the first part of the airline's long-term strategy to increase the number of female pilots by underwriting training loans for six new entrant pilots.

Julie Westhorpe said: "The BWPA partnership with

EasyJet represents a step change in the promotion of flying careers to women. We believe this will make a real difference in supporting the entry of more young women onto a career path where a significant barrier to entry has been financial, not aptitude."



JULIE WESTHORPE

Julie started flying in her 40s and worked as PPL and CPL instructor for PPL and examiner at Stapleford, before joining ScotAirways as a First Officer, based at London City.

The very lively Essex branch of BWPA, based at Stapleford, and run by Stapleford pilot, Amy Chau, meets monthly. All women pilots, students and aviation enthusiasts are encouraged to join and enjoy the opportunities for flying and socialising with fellow pilots.

For further information about the BWPA go to: <http://bwpa.co.uk>. For information about the Essex branch contact Amy Chau: chauamy@bcs.org.uk

LONDON TO PARIS BY BIKE SUPPORTING ESSEX AIR AMBULANCE

Having flown from Stapleford to Toussus Le Noble (Paris) in 2 hours 35 minutes on a club Fly-out, Amy Chau is now cycling the 480 kilometres from London to Paris in July to raise money for Essex Air Ambulance. By bike, covering the same route will take 4 days! Her route will take her via territory familiar as a pilot, including DVR, Calais and Abbeville (ABB).

Amy has undertaken many extraordinary cycle challenges to raise funds for charity, mostly notably around the Great Wall of China, and cycling in Nepal, Madagascar, South Africa; Central America, Argentina, Chile, Vietnam and Cambodia.

She is also an accomplished photographer, and when on a local flight always takes her camera and frequently her bike for exploring at ground level.

If you would like to support Amy and Essex Air Ambulance please go to: www.justgiving.com/amychau-paris.

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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