



STAPLEFORD'S DOUBLE CELEBRATION:

ERIC THURSTON 100

Pilots past and present gathered in the Clubhouse on 22 August to celebrate the legendary Captain Eric Thurston's 100th birthday.

Countless tributes have been paid to Eric, acknowledging his remarkable contribution to aviation and to Stapleford in particular. Among those sending birthday wishes was politician and pilot Norman Tebbit who recalled the fun he had flying with Eric.



MANAGING DIRECTOR, JOHN CHICKEN CONGRATULATES ERIC ON HIS 100TH BIRTHDAY. PHOTO: NADIA JANE PHOTOGRAPHY

Eric's impressive CV is vast and wide-ranging. He began as an engineer, and first tried flying in the late 1930s, before being called up for active service. He took part in the D-Day landings and he received from Field Marshal Montgomery a mention in despatches for his contribution to military transport.

In 1953 when the Herts and Essex Aero Club moved to Stapleford and Eric's engineering business was thriving, he decided to take up flying. The following year he took over the maintenance facility at Stapleford while subsequently achieving his Instrument and Instructor Ratings and his Commercial Licence in 1966, when he became a member of the Professional Pilots Committee of the Ministry of Aviation and subsequently the Advisory Committee to the CAA.

That year he signed off Douglas Bader to fly a Seneca - just one of his many famous students and passengers. Over the years they included politicians, like Prime Minister Harold Wilson and Sir Geoffrey Howe, pop groups - The Beatles, The Rolling Stones and The Who, as well as leading lights in sports and show biz.

At the age of 65 Eric became Chief Flying Instructor at Stapleford and held the post until October 2000.

STAPLEFORD FLYING CLUB 50

After he stopped flying, he continued to instruct in the simulator for a number of years. Far more than a Pilot and Engineer, Eric had a large role to play in the development of the requirements for licensing, the foundation of good training and the development of General Aviation in the UK. His ambulance flights around Europe earned him The Order of St John "for his commitment to making life-saving flights whenever he was asked to". He was also a pioneer in air taxi and charter work.

Eric's formidable contribution to aviation has been recognised by an OBE. He was a founding member of the British Light Aviation Centre (now AOPA), a member of the then Guild of Air Pilots and Navigators (GAPAN) and was awarded their Sword of Honour. Founder of the Aeronautical Masonic Lodge, Eric has continued to be a familiar face in the Stapleford Clubhouse, a great raconteur and fount of aviation wisdom.

WINGS DINNER

A Dinner Dance and Wings Presentation on 23 November will provide the culmination of Stapleford's 50th birthday celebrations. The event is taking place at Woolston Manor Golf and Country Club, Abridge Road, Chigwell.

Wings will be presented to all those who have achieved their Pilot's Licence in the past five years. Achievements will be celebrated with a number of Awards to pilots and instructors. Nominations are invited for the Eric Thurston Award for the Instructor of the Year and for the *Take Off* Award for the most enterprising PPL. Other awards will include the John Chicken Award for Student of the Year; the Roger Frogly Trophy for Pilot of the Year as well as an award for the Part Time Instructor of the Year.

This year there will be fierce competition for the Luxaviation Award for the Longest Trip, following an adventurous year of Fly-outs to far-flung destinations, and some very enterprising hour-building flights. The very active Essex branch of the British Women Pilots' Association will also present a trophy for Outstanding Achievement.

Tickets (£55 a head) and table reservations are available from: Penny Hodges: penny@flysfc.com or reception@flysfc.com. Please send your nominations to: Penny Hodges or Sue Rose, Editor, *Take Off*: suerose.pr@hotmail.co.uk

STAPLEFORD RADIO – THE INSIDE STORY

John Cullis, former PPL provides some experiences and thoughts of a Trainee Radio Operator.

My regular drive from my home in Coopersale, near Epping, to Stapleford Flight Centre takes only 10 minutes, sufficient to get my brain into gear for the trials and tribulations of learning the workings of Air to Ground Radio.

For many months I have been fortunate enough to observe numerous radio operators, all of whom have given generously of their time, knowledge and expertise, advising me continually as I try to understand the complexities of the comings and goings of light aircraft and helicopters.

Stapleford's Radio Room is small but consists of the Radio Equipment, Transmitters, Receivers and a Crash Alarm. No headphones are in use, only a small microphone. Wind Direction and Speed Indicators are displayed and a small new Aide Memoire Board, above the telephone, shows the date, Runway in use, the QNH and QFE. Three screens, one displaying numerous Flight Plans for activation, the second showing Radar/ATZ and flights in progress and the other showing the approaches to the two main runways - 21 Left and 03 Left, as well as the position of parked aircraft across the Airfield. Thanks to a recent upgrade/new camera equipment, it is now possible to see aircraft lining up for take-off as well as those on Final Approach.



JOHN CULLIS CLIMBS ABOARD GPJCC

The Radio Room itself can become congested when Instructors and pilots enter to enquire about Flight Plans, conditions, meteorology, cloud base, QNH and the runways in use. Routine navigational and operational information is available from 8.00am until 6.00pm - (2 Shifts: 8.00am -1.00pm and 1.00pm - 6.00pm). A telephone is connected to Reception and Landlines.

A Grass Cutting Machine (Call Sign: "Grass Cutter One") makes regular sorties across the entire airfield and the effective Fire and Rescue Team are constantly on call. This is essential work, not least for clearing the runways of debris from bird strikes and other such matter, often reported by pilots underway.

Each day a Logbook is used by the Operator on duty,

who enters/records the daily activities in The Radio Room. The rear wall of The Radio Room displays a detailed Map of Controlled and Uncontrolled Airspace across the UK. Other Notice Boards show Helicopter Landing Fee exceptions as well as the names of Operators covering the various Shifts on a daily basis.

My time in the Radio Room is most enjoyable. Following my wife's sudden death earlier this year, returning to Stapleford, 20 years since receiving my PPL has been a lifeline. I am grateful to the Management for the opportunity to make so many new friends as well as to learn the essentials of air to ground radio.

FROM THE CFI'S OFFICE

Continuing his series of articles Stapleford's Chief Flying Instructor, Jon Onsloe poses a question – which way to turn to fly inbound to a VOR.

You have decided to fly inbound to a VOR with a magnetic track of 200 degrees. You have tuned the VOR, and identified it, and set 200 degrees. Is the VOR ahead of you, or behind you? Should you turn left or right to get on track?



For the answer turn to page 4

FROM THE RIGHT-HAND SEAT

Instructor Roy Copperwaite provides advice on Summer flying and thermals:

During a recent conversation in the crew room it was surprising how many IR and CPL instructors agreed on qualified pilots' lack of ability to maintain level flight or maintain a heading on a consistent basis. This then brought about the subject of the thermals that we have all experienced recently.

Let's assume a thermal increases your altitude by 150 feet. The answer is not to push! On a recent flight a student did just that which resulted in yes, a reduction in altitude but also a significant increase in the Indicated Airspeed (IAS). He then levelled off but did not realise that the aircraft was gaining altitude all over again. Remember that if the aircraft's speed (V^2) increases lift increases.

If you experience this situation, power reduction should be your first action. Remember in a climb or descent it's power for height, elevator for speed.

By reducing power, the aircraft will descend. The speed will remain the same. Then apply power again about 50 feet before the desired altitude. Do not begin any other tasks, i.e. chart reading, radio calls or FREDA checks, while you are correcting for altitude.

Of course, you can prevent this problem by pushing against the thermal when you experience it. Pitch for altitude. It will result in a temporary IAS increase so DO NOT retrim. For those wishing to improve their flying skills, take some time and work hard at trimming as accurately as possible, check the aircraft is in trim with no control input and monitor the aircraft's movement against the horizon.

Finally, wait for the airspeed to settle before trimming and then check. Once in trim trust your trimming. Do not retrim unnecessarily. It makes flying an aircraft so much easier.

SUCCESS STORIES

Congratulations Kristoff Ahlner, winner of the Air BP Private Pilots' Licence Award who went solo after a mere 5.5 hours flying. And to all students who have flown their first solo and to those who have recently achieved their PPL. Wishing them all the best for their future flying.

FIRST SOLO:

Kristoff Ahlner, Kashif Din, Harry Dyer, Robert Harston, Valeed Ishaq, Callum Knight, Ka Ng, Anna Orlova, Stephen Reck, James Sapwell, Thunvir Shahul-Hameed, Rares Turco.

SKILLS TEST:

Baris Aksoy, Florian Bourgue, James Casey, Mei Chan, Andrew Dutthorn, Craig Farthing, Alex Holder, Mustafa Karabeyez, Samuel Levick, Paul McGovern, Kevin Ragi, Masoud Ranjbari, Maxime Roux, Stefano Sparcio, Ozan Suslu, Audrey Teo, Joe Tinsley, Jason Wright.

HAL CELEBRATES HIS SUCCESS FIVE YEARS ON

One of the guests particularly keen to attend Stapleford's 50th Anniversary Dinner and Wings celebration on 23 November at Woolston Manor Golf and Country Club will be Hal Albani. He received his Wings at the 2014 Dinner. Earlier this year he achieved his Cessna Citation rating and now flies a Citation 650 for Air Ocean Maroc. "I want to celebrate my success and say thank-you to my instructor Sue Royse, who did so much to help me." says Hal.

Hal did his PPL at Stapleford, before completing his professional training in eastern Europe and the USA. While his job now takes him around North Africa, Europe and the Middle East, Hal is still a Stapleford Flying Club member and returns to Stapleford to keep his Single Engine Piston rating current.

FROM TWO WHEELS TO TWO WINGS

Robert Harston who just soloed at Stapleford describes his twin passions for cycling and flying around Essex.



ROBERT HARSTON CELEBRATES HIS FIRST SOLO

I am certain that for many of us, it has always been a dream to learn to fly, and that was surely the case for me. I have been lucky enough that various friends with PPLs have taken me up in planes, and there was never any doubt that I would want to do my PPL at some point.

I work full time in the administration for the London Symphony Orchestra (based at the Barbican Centre). It's a very busy and varied environment, with every day bringing its own unique challenges, so it's all the more important to do something completely different when there is some "downtime". One of the things I enjoy doing to switch off from the "day job" is to go cycling and to be out in nature, and over the years, I have been for many lovely rides in the nearby countryside, mainly Essex and Kent.

When for the umpteenth time I was cycling underneath the final approach path for runway 21L, it suddenly struck me that I should combine my rides with flying lessons! There's nothing quite like a morning flying lesson, followed by a leisurely pootle around the local lanes to the north and east of the aerodrome, and that ease of combination was one of the factors that convinced me that now was the time. That, and the fact that I have been able to save some pennies, as it certainly ain't cheap...!

Four months into tuition, and I did my first solo a few lessons back. My wonderful instructor Sue Royse had been enquiring with ever more insistence as to how I was getting on with my Air Law, so once I'd passed that, I certainly knew that going solo could be imminent. "Just three good landings", I thought, so I was chuffed when on the actual day, after what felt to me like three somewhat rubbish landings, Sue turned to me and cheerily asked: "So, would you like to give it a go on your own?"

Needless to say what followed was the most fantastic experience (even though I should have been anticipating it, I was astonished at the greatly improved performance of the aeroplane without a second person on board!), and it was immensely gratifying at the end of the solo circuit to feel the wheels of G-HFCT touch down very gently on 03L. Definitely my best circuit of the day!

I'm now very much enjoying doing Navigation and seeing the landscape I've cycled through so often, from above. Many a time have I cycled past Hanningfield Reservoir en-route to Maldon and beyond; little did I realise I'd one day be practising stall recovery above it...! Or the other day, when we were doing Practise Forced Landings, and the perfect field lay not far from Mountnessing Windmill, complete with a cricket match in full swing in front of it!

I cannot wait for my next lesson, and to get my PPL in due course. Whilst I don't see myself flying the orchestra anytime soon on one of its many tours around the world, I am enthused by a certain conductor, who has in his spare time become a pilot for Air France!

ATTENTION ALL PILOTS: DON'T CUT CORNERS

In the interests of noise abatement and out of consideration to the neighbours, pilots landing on 03/L or 03R are urged to take care to ensure the base turn is flown **overhead Top Golf** to avoid overflight of the residential area indicated in the circuit pattern. Do not cut the corner.



FLY-OUTS CHANGE DIRECTION TO BEAT THE WEATHER

Stapleford's ever popular fly-outs have continued throughout the summer despite weather challenges. Making the most of the opportunities on offer, the intrepid fly-outs relished many last-minute changes to scheduled destinations, discovering new and interesting airfields across the UK and Europe.

The trips to St Truiden in Belgium (May) and Texel in Holland (July) went ahead and presented pilots with challenging airspace and interesting destinations. However, weather intervened, and a longer trip planned for Ireland changed to a visit to Scotland and a planned excursion to Monchengladbach in Germany finished up with a most enjoyable flight down the French coast to Abbeville.

The planned fly-out to Deauville in August was forced by storms across the channel to change direction and four



GBTGY FLYING DOWN THE FRENCH COAST TO ABBEVILLE

PA28s headed off to Welshpool, enjoying beautiful visibility, scenery and photo opportunities on the Welsh Borders. In September there will be a short trip to Cherbourg (10th) and a longer one to Bosnia and Croatia (15 – 20th). The October short trip will head for Dieppe, having first cleared customs in Calais.

"If you have experience of interesting airfields you have visited or would like to visit, do let me know, and we will do our best to accommodate your suggestions. Let us know if you can't manage the scheduled dates and we will see what we can do" says James.

Those interested in booking up for fly-outs should go to the website: <http://www.evansabove.us/flyouts.php> and sign up; contact James Lee at flyoutsfc@gmail.com or call Stapleford Reception on 01708 688380.

THE VOR – THE RIGHT WAY TO TURN:

You should turn right, and the VOR is behind you! The deflected needle to the left doesn't indicate turn left, as this is not a command instrument. The deflected needle to the left means fly a heading that is left of the desired track you have set to the top. We can see that a heading of south is to the left of the top of the card, we can also see turning towards south is a right turn using the DI

The "TO" flag that is displayed is indicating "should" you fly a good intercept heading to fix this needle, you will be going towards the VOR. Looking at our DI we can see that the good heading is behind us and therefore the VOR is behind us.

Where most confusion lies is that this instrument has no idea of what you are heading and only knows where you are. Should you fly a 360-degree turn, the instrument will not change its display.



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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