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The Edinburgh and Fife Aero Club

# NEWSLETTER

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Autumn 2025

# Editor's welcome

Chris Gordon, Newsletter editor

*"I have control!"*.



It's with great honour and pride to be stepping into the role of editor for the Edinburgh and Fife Aero Club newsletter, taking over from the previous editor, Alan Laing. I'd like to extend a massive thank you to Alan for all his hard work over the years – his newsletters have been excellent, and I'm excited (and a little humbled!) to be following in his footsteps.

I've been a private pilot and club member for about 20 years now, and flying has taken me to places as close as Inverness and as far away as San Diego. At the moment I'm grounded due to some health issues, but I'm hopeful it won't be too long before I'm back in the cockpit. When I'm not thinking about aviation, I work as a software engineer and spend a fair bit of time making music.

I look forward to meeting and chatting with fellow club members, building new connections, and continuing to develop the newsletter as a platform that celebrates our shared passion for flying. As part of this, I hope to introduce some ideas to aid

collaboration and production, and to get things started, we have created a new dedicated email address specifically for the newsletter i.e.

[newsletter@edinburghandfifeaeroclub.co.uk](mailto:newsletter@edinburghandfifeaeroclub.co.uk)

For all suggestions, articles, ideas and feedback, please email us at this new address.

Thank you, *Chris*.

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## Secretary's jottings

Chris Anderson

Club membership has increased to **180**, up from 160 since the last newsletter in December 2024. Fife-based aircraft have ranged far and wide throughout the UK and beyond.

On 22<sup>nd</sup> February club member **Derek Pake** gave a presentation about his entry in the 2024 *Dawn to Dusk* competition for which he won **1<sup>st</sup> prize**. We had a very successful Fly-In on 11<sup>th</sup> May to commemorate the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of VE day. Read all about it in this issue. On 29<sup>th</sup> September we held a BBQ followed by a talk by Bob Perry, a flight instructor from southern California. He was a very entertaining and interesting speaker. In addition, from time to time throughout the year we have had the benefit of Jim Watt's excellent Safety Briefings.

Our student members have been making great progress too. The roll of honour includes:

### First solo flights

- **Matt Banks**
- **Matthew Beaton**
- **Alex Beynon-Davies**
- **Jamie Crerar**
- **Craig Henry**
- **Orla Lennon**
- **Aaron Leslie**
- **Rory Maddocks**
- **Liam Mitchell**
- **Stephane Murphy**
- **Paul Ritchie**

## PPL Qualifiers

- **Wilson Diack**
- **Stephen Docherty**
- **Sherjeel Riaz**
- **Jamie Saunders**

## IR(R)

- **Nadanai Laohakunakorn**

Congratulations to all our students on their successes; they are a credit to themselves and to our excellent team of instructors.



*Alex Beynon-Davies solo was the first in the Elixir. No doubt the first of many.*

## In memoriam

Chris Gordon

### Remembering Shona Walledge – A Pillar of Fife Flying Club



It is with deep sadness that we mark the passing of **Shona Walledge**, who left us on Friday 19th September 2025.

Shona was a much-loved member of our community and will be remembered by many former members of Fife Flying Club (FFC), where she served with dedication as Chairperson. Her impact on the club and on those around her was immense, and her loss will be felt across the flying family she helped to build.

An enthusiastic aviator through and through, Shona embodied the very spirit of flying. She was integral to the operational heart of Fife Flying Club, often found on the radios, guiding and supporting pilots as they came and went from the airport. Her calm presence and keen efficiency ensured that everything ran smoothly, no matter how busy or challenging the day.

Beyond her skill and commitment, Shona brought people together. She loved to celebrate flying not just as a pastime but as a way of life, hosting warm and lively parties for family, friends, and fellow aviators. These gatherings reflected her belief that aviation was more than aircraft and airfields—it was about community, friendship, and joy.

Though diminutive in stature, Shona was a force to be reckoned with. She was strong, capable, and remarkably effective in everything she did, but always with kindness at the core.

For many, Shona will be remembered as the voice on the radio, the organiser behind the scenes, the host who welcomed all, and above all, a true friend. She leaves behind a lasting legacy in the history of Fife Flying Club and in the hearts of all who knew her.

Blue skies and tailwinds, Shona—you will be greatly missed, but never forgotten.

# We're getting better weather!

Chris Anderson



We have fitted a new weather station. The existing one was “dropping out” of our website and out of the console in the radio cabin from time to time. The radio operators (and everyone else) need reliable weather information at all times so we had to take action. It is a “Tempest One”, solar powered with no moving parts. It uses an ultrasonic doppler shift to measure wind speed and direction. (No, I don’t know what that means either!) So far it has proved reliable. The information it produces is very extensive and you can access it on your device at:

- [www.tempestwx.com/map](http://www.tempestwx.com/map)
- <https://fiferadio.avwx.live/>

It is also on the EFAC website and on the screen in the reception area.

We hope you get all the info you need for planning a safe flight - as well as a lot of data you didn’t know you needed!

## Being a passenger can be interesting too

Chris Anderson

I gave up flying a couple of years ago. The advancing years slowed the reflexes and I reckoned it was time to pack it in. I have 400 hrs in my log book. I enjoyed every minute of it but some interesting air experiences were as a passenger and I’ll be a passenger from now on. Club members have kindly offered to take me flying so I have enjoyed some great flights recently.

### First passenger experience



The first flight I made was in a DC3. In the 1950s and 60s British European Airways (BEA) utilised a number of war surplus DC3s, called Dakotas in RAF service. BEA called them Pionairs and they used them throughout the 1950s and early 1960s. We lived in South Uist at the time and I flew from Benbecula to Glasgow Renfrew in

1961 or '62. I was about 15 and this must have been one of the last DC3s in service as they were phased out in 1963. It was a tail-dragger and I recall walking "uphill" to get to my seat. Not only do the Pionairs no longer exist, neither does Renfrew Airport.

## First light aircraft experience

My first flight in a light aircraft was soon after my Pionair experience. It was the first of several air experience flights in a Chipmunk courtesy of the Air Training Corps. (Later renamed Air Cadets). It was at RAF Kinloss in 1962. During the safety briefing we were exposed to the usual joke. *"If the parachute doesn't work, bring it back and we'll give you a new one!"* As it was my first flight the pilot was not too keen on subjecting me to aerobatics but he was persuaded and it was brilliant. Kinloss no longer exists as an RAF base.



At that time the ATC was an excellent organisation that introduced thousands of boys (it was only boys then) to the thrill of flight and taught them much else besides. We could expect two air experience flights a year: one at our nearest RAF station and one while at summer camp.

**'If the pilot says "eject eject!" don't hang about'**

The ATC summer camp in 1963 brought an unforgettable air experience. We were at RAF Church Fenton, home of No7 Flying Training School with Jet Provosts. There was one Jet Provost flight available for our squadron and our CO decided for some reason that I should get it. At the safety briefing there was a variation on the parachute joke. *"If the pilot says "eject eject!" don't hang about. If you do, you will find yourself alone in the cockpit."*



I obviously didn't have a flying suit so I was taken to the pilots' locker room and a pair of green flying overalls was selected belonging to a pilot of similar size. It had Flight Lieutenant's bars on the epaulettes. We walked out to the aircraft and were strapped in by an airman who addressed me as "sir". The highlight of the flight was, yet again, the aerobatics. During the loop I experienced what I will call a "grey out" caused by the G force. I was fully conscious the whole time but my peripheral vision closed in until I could only see a tiny spot in the middle of the instrument panel in front of me. When we recovered from the loop my vision opened out again. Later that evening in the NAAFI the airman who strapped me in, recognised me. He was not best pleased when he realised he had been addressing an ATC cadet as "sir".

## Flying in a Nimrod and spotting a Russian sub



Later, in the early 1970s, I was a member of the Royal Observer Corps (ROC) based at an underground control room in Inverness. The ROC had a strong association with the RAF dating from WW2 and it was manned by part-time volunteers supported by a small number of full-time officers. Our Group Commandant was exRAF and was on friendly terms with the station commander at RAF Kinloss. He arranged for a number of ROC members to fly in the Nimrods then based at Kinloss. I was lucky enough to get two flights. They were operational flights, maritime reconnaissance patrols. We flew over the north east Atlantic as far as Iceland and the Faroe Islands and on one flight we spotted a Soviet submarine on the surface. The aircrew were very excited because this was unprecedented. To be caught on the surface by a maritime patrol aircraft was the last thing the Soviet navy wanted. It did not dive even when we overflowed at low level so must have had some critical technical fault.

### A Postscript

The DC3 (aka Pionair) is no longer in service and Glasgow Renfrew airport no longer exists. Chipmunks and Jet Provosts are not in RAF service anymore and RAF

Church Fenton is now Leeds East airport. RAF Kinloss is now an army base and Nimrods are museum pieces. The ROC was stood down in 1991. .... so these passenger flights cannot be replicated, although you can fly into Leeds East Airport!

## VE Day fly-In

Sharon Maguire, Dave Barwick



It was our pleasure to host a VE Day, 80th anniversary celebration fly-in at the airfield on the 11th May.

Blessed with beautiful weather, banners and bunting fluttering in the gentle wind, visitors from Scotland, England and further afield arrived at the airfield in a wide variety of aircraft, including C152, C172, C172, Kitfox, PA28, Eurostar, PA28, Falco, Helicopters, gyros, Skyranger, PC12, Birddog to name only a few.

Jim Watt and Archie Liggat demonstrated some impressive formation flying much to the delight of the onlookers.



Activities on the day included a raffle, tombola, "guess the name of the teddy" and a cryptic "Fife" quiz. The proceeds of each activity contributed hundreds of pounds to the defibrillator fund and the RAF benevolent fund.



Kelly and her team provided a delicious BBQ, and made a beautiful cake that was enjoyed by the longing customers after the "guess the weight competition" had been wrapped up.

Period music was played throughout the day providing the perfect soundtrack for reflection, and gratitude to all who gave their lives in service between 1939 and 1945.

The day was a rousing success and a great celebration enjoyed by all. Thank you to all who volunteered on the to make this day such a triumph.

# Safety briefing

Dave Barwick, Safety Officer at Insch (Grampian Microlight & Flying Club)

## Pre-flight checks

Suggested by Ian Corse and extracted from Pilot Workshop **PILOT'S TIP OF THE WEEK** by [David Gagliardi](#).

- Pilot carried out a pre-flight and turned on the master.
- Suddenly the prop started turning so the master was shut off right away.
- Fortunately no-one was inside the prop arc.
- This happened because the starter contactor/relay had failed in the on position.
- Despite the fact that the airplane keys were not in the ignition, turning on the master powered the starter and the prop immediately started turning.
- Pilot reports that he's added a 'Prop area – CLEAR' item before 'Master – ON' to ensure that if this happens again the possibilities of damage or injury are minimized.
- Additionally few pilots think twice about turning the master on when they first open the plane to check fuel levels, deploy the flaps, etc.
- **Don't be one of those pilots.**
- Any time you energize a system, ensure people and objects are out of harm's way.

## Radio frequencies

There has been a few reports recently where aircraft operating in the vicinity of

airfields have used incorrect frequencies - either being 0.5MHz out (which is easy to do on 0.5MHz spacing) or selecting entirely the wrong frequency. You can imagine that this situation adds to operating hazard by:

- The error aircraft not being to hear the position of other aircraft and so having reduced situational awareness, and
- Other aircraft not being aware of the error s aircraft's presence.

This error is particularly relevant at Safetycom 135.480MHz airfields where there is no positive contact as would be the case at *Radio*, *Information* or Controlled sites.

Also, when the aircraft is installed with 'compact head' radios such as the Trig TY91, the digits themselves are very small and, in the case of my aircraft, on the P2 side, it's very difficult to read the 4 digits - especially in bright sunlight.

To avoid radio frequency selection errors you might want to try:

1. Including the radio setting in your checklists, especially the pre-landing checklist.
2. Being very suspicious if there is no chatter on frequency, especially on Safetycom.
3. Not for everyone but consider using SkyDemon (or similar) to remotely set radio frequencies.
4. Use the memory function in your radio to avoid having to manually set frequencies.

## Air-to-Air communications

Watching the Flyer Livestream a couple of nights ago showed details of AIP GEN 3.4 - 3.2.6 Common Air-to-Air Channels for General Aviation

Two channels **123.065** and **123.135** have been assigned for Air-to-Air communications.

These channels should be used to **share important safety information between pilots**, where information is not provided by other services, such as ATC or FIS, mainly in uncontrolled airspace. For example:

- Sharing weather issues
- Formation flights
- Flights in areas without ATC (Airspace classes *Golf* and *Echo*)
- Flights in areas without FIS Coverage
- Local competitions (within Flying Clubs)
- Self-coordination

The channels will eventually be allocated European-wide to enable cross-border communication without the necessity to retune to other channels. The International Council of Aircraft Owner and Pilot Associations (IAOPA) can provide an updated list of other States currently using these channels for Air-to-Air communications.

## Aircraft shares

Alasdair Stewart



Aero Space Kinross CIC Operates two EuroFox aircraft on behalf of its parent charity – Aero Space Scientific Educational Trust (“ASSET”).

### G-OASK

- Nosewheel; 912ULS; 1000 hrs. Based at Fife. LAA Permit.

### G-OLOV

- Tailwheel; 912ULS 50 hrs. Based at Portmoak. BMAA Permit.

Pilots who buy shares in the charity are entitled to fly both aircraft (subject to checks by supervising instructors). To qualify, pilots must be investors in the charity through the purchase of 7500 x £1 shares in ASSET, and cover the costs of hangarage, insurance and routine maintenance by payment of £100 monthly. Flying time is charged at £100 per hour (wet).

Pilots are also expected to volunteer time to support the charity at various events and to help provide free air experience flights for youngsters.

You'll find lots of information about our activities on the website:

[www.aerospacekinross.com](http://www.aerospacekinross.com)

If interested in buying shares, please contact:

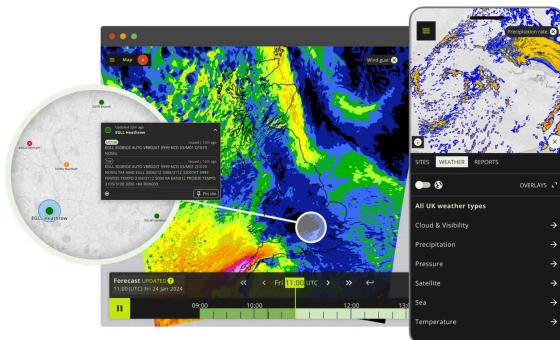
[alisdair@aerospacekinross.com](mailto:alisdair@aerospacekinross.com)

## General aviation news

Chris Gordon

### Met Office launches MAVIS aviation weather platform

The UK Met Office has launched **MAVIS**, a new **Aviation Visualisation Service** that replaces several existing platforms, including the Aviation Briefing Service and OpenRunway. MAVIS provides a single access point for **forecasts, observations, and interactive weather maps**, covering **METARs, TAFs, SIGMETs, lightning data, and more**.



Developed with user input, it offers a more **intuitive and consistent experience** for all sectors of aviation. The **August 2025 update** added a new domain ([mavis.metoffice.gov.uk](https://mavis.metoffice.gov.uk)), plus **site pinning, new weather layers, and syncing across devices**.

The current Aviation Briefing Service will remain available until **spring 2026**, but users are encouraged to switch to MAVIS early.

More information can be found on the [Met Office MAVIS webpage](#).

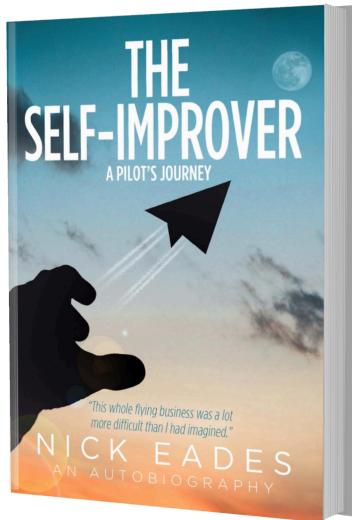
### GASCo performance calculator



The [GASCo Performance Calculator](#) has been refreshed, and it's **FREE!** This is a very handy web app that is designed to work on desktops, tablets and smartphones and provides a very easy to use interface for calculating take-off and landing performance.

## Book recommendations

Chris Gordon



**Nick Eades** is a pilot and author whose writing blends humour, adventure, and a lifelong passion for aviation. His first two books, *The Self Improver* and *Still Improving*, chart his unlikely journey from university dropout to record-breaking Boeing 747 captain, filled with memorable encounters and colourful stories from around the globe. His third book, *Overtaken by a Butterfly*, takes readers on his parallel passion for running, recounting four decades of extraordinary—and sometimes perilous—runs in some of the world's most remote and fascinating places.

You can read more about Nick and his adventures at <https://nickeades.co.uk/>.

## And finally

Chris Gordon

### Ideas for articles

All ideas, articles and submissions are greatly welcome. We would love to hear about your recommendations (books, apps, gear etc), as well as your stories, photos and experiences.

Please get in touch at:

[newsletter@edinburghandfifeaeroclub.co.uk](mailto:newsletter@edinburghandfifeaeroclub.co.uk)

### Acknowledgements

Thank you to **all** who have contributed to this edition of the newsletter, with special thanks to **Alan Laing** for collating much of the material, **Chris Anderson** for his endless patience and advice, and **Ryan Forbes** for his IT wizardry.

Thank you, *Chris*