

# G-FORCE



Established 1935

## EDINBURGH FLYING CLUB

No.XXXX November/December 2006

### *Editor's Note*

Welcome to the Nov/December edition of the EFC newsletter. This month I would like to bid a warm welcome to Ian Adams as a new member of the EFC and to congratulate Gordon Johnston on his successful skills test for renewing his NPPL.

This month's profile features Andrew Voas who has been a Club member for some 15 years. There are also pictures of the night out and details of the Chipmunk flight mentioned in the last issue. The first of a number of parts of Alex Findlay's flying experiences from World War 2 is also featured this month.

### *EFC Night Out*

The first Edinburgh Flying Club night out was held in the Hog's Head pub on the corner of Rose Street and Castle Street and was well attended. Apart from five of the Committee there were another dozen or so members including some from the users groups, students and PPLs alike.

There was a free buffet provided given our numbers and there was lots of 'flying chat'. As you can see from the photos the cuisine was not 'haut' but it filled a hole or two and as you can see from the photo of Andrew, the chips went down well!

*A happy scene in the Hog's Head, venue for EFC's first night out!*



*Andrew enjoying the healthy option!*

Ideas for the newsletter were chatted about, favourite routes discussed and some even made arrangements to cost share. Suggestions as to how to make the Club fly-outs more successful were also tabled, though as always the weather is the main stumbling block. Eshott in Northumberland came up as a

good venue since it is not too far, easy to navigate to (you can just follow the east coast down) and is beside the A1. This is a busy and popular airfield, why not fly there?

### *CFI's Weather*

October was a very disappointing flying month with very mild weather conditions for the time of year due to a strong mainly southerly airflow that brought with it a lot of low cloud with persistent rainfall. This varied between light and patchy to heavy and torrential. There were 22 non flying days during the month due to these conditions. Despite this some 25 hours were flown.

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## Club Member Profile

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Andrew 'resting' on Bob's panda outside EFC



**Name** – Andrew Voas

**Age** - 42, married with two children

**Job** - Veterinary adviser for the Scottish Executive. This doesn't normally have much to do with aviation although I have managed to get a few flights in helicopters in connection with deer welfare issues. I was once involved in loading an export of penguins from the zoo which were being flown from Edinburgh to New Zealand. Less pleasantly, in the Foot and Mouth Disease outbreak in 2001 I was involved in turning the former WW2 airfield and microlight strip at Great Orton near Carlisle into a mass slaughter and burial site for sheep. Normally my job involves giving veterinary advice on farm animal welfare and trade matters. I worked as a vet in general practice in Ayrshire for a couple of years but have worked for the Government in Edinburgh and Galashiels since then.

**Pilot Training** - I joined the club 15 years ago so was fortunate enough to learn to fly when we operated from a building at the other side of the airfield. If it was good weather I could leave work in the evening and be in the club 15 minutes later. That was after signing in at the RAF station, driving past any of their Chipmunks that were out of the hangar and across the end of the runway watching out for the lights and landing traffic. Changed days! At that time there was a choice of at least 3 Tomahawks parked on

the grass right next to the club and I could soon be doing a few circuits using the old 08/26 runway after a very short taxi. Afterwards I could have a drink from the bar and sit at a table outside – happy days!

I got my PPL in just over a year with 47 hours in my logbook. Since then I have flown enough to keep my licence going but haven't managed to do a lot more than that. This is probably something to do with having 2 boys who take up most of my spare time. Despite taking them up a few times they don't seem very keen on flying.

**Longest flight** – a trip to Welshpool which was memorable for a mid-air sighting of a Mustang near Liverpool. It was in the area after giving a display and we waggled wings at each other as it flew past.

**Favourite route** - along the west coast from Rothesay to Oban and a direct route back over the north of Loch Lomond is a beautiful mix of coastal and mountain scenery. Oban is a lovely airfield and I hope it is not spoiled by the new developments there. I would like to do more west coast flying – if the weather is good it is very spectacular. Maybe next year....

**Most eventful flight.** The last leg of my qualifying solo cross-country was from Newcastle to Edinburgh one day in May. It was quite hazy on the way down and seemed to be deteriorating so I didn't wait around in Newcastle. On the way back the visibility was getting worse but was good enough for me to realise when I was northwest of Morpeth and heading straight for the Danger Area around Otterburn! I had misread my PLOG and was following the heading I shouldn't have taken until Alnwick. I sorted this out but was becoming increasingly grateful that the bright yellow oilseed rape fields made it easier to

see where the ground was. However, as I came over the Lammermuirs towards Musselburgh, I could see that the haar had rolled in from the sea across Edinburgh and seemed to be covering everything in the controlled zone from the sea to the Pentlands, but with Arthur's Seat still visible above the cloud. I was rather concerned that the airport would be covered and began to weigh up the possibilities for diverting, and regretting that I hadn't taken the chance to refuel in Newcastle. Fortunately the haar only extended as far west as Corstorphine Hill and there were still aircraft in the circuit although I didn't realise this at first. ATC cleared me to follow the coastline from Musselburgh, but as I couldn't see this from above the haar I headed in the right direction and soon found the airport. I think I was only slightly more relieved to get back than Bob was to see me, since a second student who had set off on the same route later than me had turned back at Dalkeith as he could see what was developing.

**Worst SNAFU;** I once forgot to turn the master switch off after a flight (showing the benefit of using or at least memorising check-lists), As you can imagine this was much to the annoyance of the instructor who had to deal with the flat battery the next morning!



Andrew with GT at Glenforsa on Mull

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## Flying the Chipmunk

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For those too young to remember, the Chipmunk was the RAF basic trainer which first flew in May 1946 and remained in service in various roles until the mid 1990's. This versatile aircraft was

primarily used to teach military pilots initial flight training and general aerobatics. Its long length of service is testament to its suitability for this role, as much as to budgetary constraints!

However, we were not a group of budding “tops guns” but a small group of students and PPL’s who were eager to take the opportunity to fly a piece of aviation history.



*The cockpit and panel of the Chippy*

The opportunity to fly the Chipmunk had been provisionally planned and advertised for the summer of 2005. However due to an engine failure and rather impressive forced landing on the beach near Prestwick, this was postponed until a new engine could be built from parts as no “new” gypsy major engines exist.



*The Chippy on take off from Prestwick*

The initial plan was for Prestwick Flying Club to base the “Chippy” at Glenrothes for the weekend and the aircraft was fully booked with interested members. The aircraft arrived on the Friday night and, according to the instructor, made a “dirty dive” through deteriorating weather but managed to get in. However, as with so many weekends, the Forth Valley was fog bound and it was not possible to get any flying done. The frustration was exacerbated by the fact that it was CAVOK at

Prestwick! Given that the weather around Prestwick is often better for flying, even when it is marginal in the east, a decision was taken to offer those interested the opportunity to fly from Prestwick the following weekend.

So, on a bright clear Saturday, we arrived at Prestwick Flying Club and received a friendly welcome followed by a briefing on the eccentricities of the Chipmunk. Given that I had never flown a tail dragger and the aircraft has a tandem configuration, there were a number of important points to note! Steve, our instructor for the day, explained that the Chippy was far more responsive than the standard “Spam can” (as he consistently referred to Cessna and Piper aircraft) and it would take a little time to get a feel for the aircraft. The other big difference was taxiing! As the Chippy is a tail dragger, there is obviously no nose steering and very little prop wash on the rudder. Steering is achieved with sharp “stabs” on the differential brakes!

Armed with all the facts, figures and speeds required, we made our way out the flight line and had the opportunity to review the very diverse fleet operated by Prestwick Flying Club. This includes a Bolkow Junior, Beagle Pup and a Bulldog together with several Cherokees. The star of the show was however the impressive looking Chipmunk.

Prior to going out to the aircraft, Steve had discussed whether we were comfortable with using a radio as there is only one radio box in the aircraft and it is located in the front cockpit. As you would expect from a basic trainer, almost all the controls are mirrored in both the front and back seats, however the front seat offers the best view and as such, Steve was eager for people get to fly up front if safe and practical.



*The Chippy during power checks*

Happy to operate the radio, I climbed into the fairly snug front cockpit and was strapped in while Steve explained the switches that I would be required to set and then slid the canopy forward. The first thing you notice about the controls on the Chipmunk is that it has a control stick rather than a yoke. This, like almost all the controls, turned out to be very intuitive and required a very light touch.

After start up and the prerequisite radio calls, Steve taxied around the other aircraft and then gave me control. The aircraft, which had smoothly glided around the parked aircraft immediately started to roll towards the grass and so following the advice I’d been given, I began stabbing at the brakes and we jolted and rocked our way along the taxiway and onto the main runway. It would have taken enough effort just to taxi straight, however as with most tail wheel aircraft, the forward visibility is very poor on the ground and as such you required to steer constant “S” turns in order to ensure the way ahead is clear.

Once on the runway, Steve demonstrated the correct approach to a tail wheel take off and I followed through on the controls. This required us to build up some speed and then place a little forward pressure on the tail plane, causing the tail to rise, increasing forward visibility and allowing us to increase to full power. The aircraft then raised off the ground and as we quickly passed through 200ft, Steve’s voice crackled through the intercom with the

immortal words “you have control”...that was still to be decided.... but I gently turned south and headed to the general handling area around Turnberry. We carried out some manoeuvres and I found the aircraft was remarkably stable and easy to fly. As with most people who fly a Chipmunk for the first time, I was guilty of over controlling the ailerons and not making enough use of the rudder. However, with a little practice I soon felt extremely comfortable and given the large glass canopy, the view was amazing!



*Joanne in the front seat being briefed*

Once we had practised some stalls, Steve demonstrated a steep turn left and right and then allowed me to try a few. The aircraft was very manoeuvrable but always felt stable and it was relatively easy to maintain height, even in turns in excess of 70 degrees.

There was no pressure to do aerobatics, but as discussed whilst on the ground, Steve demonstrated some. We climbed to 4,000ft and after HASELL checks, Steve pushed the nose down, built up the speed to over 110kts and pulled the Chippy up into a loop. Looking up through the canopy, the G-force felt quite impressive and I felt my sunglasses and headset slip from my head as we rolled out. A barrel roll and a couple of wing overs followed and then Steve combined these and we looped, rolled and flipped over in quick succession. Feeling rather smug that I wasn't even queasy, I accepted Steve's offer to try a wing over for myself.



*Ready for departure*

A wing over is where the aircraft executes a 180 degree turn by pulling up, rolling either left or right whilst letting the nose drop and then pulling through so that you are heading in the opposite direction. Steve demonstrated the manoeuvre again and then I had a try to the left and right. All I can say is that Steve made it look easy! He checked that I was ok and, still feeling smug, I confirmed that I was. He completed a couple more rolls and a loop and then asked if I wanted to try a loop. It was at about this time that my body caught up with my mind and I began to feel a little “odd”!

Steve had explained, prior to the flight, that a combination of not being used to the forces involved in aerobatics and getting disorientated as a result of not looking in the right direction will cause nausea in most people. The smugness had been replaced with a slightly queasy feeling and whilst I was eager to do more, I decided that discretion was the better part of valour. Steve got me to do a couple of PFL's and we then routed low level back to Prestwick.

Landing a tail dragger is rather different to the standard nose wheel aircraft, not least because the aim is to land all three wheels at once and this results in very little forward visibility. I followed Steve through on the controls and the aircraft gently touched down and remained straight until we had slowed. Steve then smoothly “S” turned off the runway and passed control back to me. With all the grace and finesse of a 20 stone

ballet dancer wearing lead shoes, I taxied back to the club.

It's fair to say that I was quite tired by the end of the flight, however it was an amazing experience and one that I fully intend to repeat.

Unfortunately the Saturday was an all too fleeting window of good weather and only Andrew Voas, Joanne Lyall and myself were able to get flying. The details planned for the Sunday had to be scrapped due to fog and low cloud, however anyone who missed out or who is now interested should speak to Bob or contact Prestwick Flying Club directly.

Finally, I'd like to express my sincerest thanks to Steve Maric and all the guys at Prestwick, who made us feel so welcome and gave us the opportunity to fly such a special aircraft. I'd also like to express the club's thanks to John Paton who assisted Bob by spending the day in Glenrothes throughout the first, fog bound Saturday and organised the trip to Prestwick the following week.

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### ***Into the Wide Blue Yonder***

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Shortly after joining EFC in 1985, the editor of the club newsletter suggested that members might be interested in my experiences of pilot training in the R.A.F. from October 1943 to August 1945. Thus it was that successive newsletters included an account of seat-of-the-pants flying in those far off days.

The current editor Ian Forbes, who has brought new life to the newsletter and who is looking for new material is reproducing these “memoirs” for today's members 20 years on. They are written in light vein and will hopefully raise a few laughs. This is the first instalment and four others will follow.

My interest in flying began in the early days of W.W.II when schoolboys in their teens realised

that here was a golden opportunity to learn to fly and cheaply at that. The first step was to join the A.T.C. (Air Training Corps) which was set up as an introduction to the R.A.F. and which even provided recruits with a uniform in air force blue. Lectures were held in community hall, town hall or school-room on navigation, meteorology, theory of flight etc and we were drilled and generally disciplined by an army sergeant, a tyrant of a man who delighted in putting us through our paces.

Where practical, A.T.C. units would arrange for visits to nearby R.A.F. airfields and in 1940 six of us were sent to Dyce Airfield for an air experience flight. At that time Dyce was home to various Defiants and Blenheims and we were given a brief tour of the hangars. In particular I remember a lone Halifax, a chunk of rudder missing and part of an aileron hanging from a wing. Following a meal in the canteen, a corporal marched us briskly round the perimeter where a Flight-Lieutenant awaited us by a brand new Tiger Moth.



*Tiger Moth in flight*

One by one we flew a brief circuit. I was last in line and by then the Flight-Lieutenant was no doubt bored and exhausted for we exchanged not one word during the flight. In 1941, I was included in a group visit to Kinross where 19 O.T.U. (Operational Training Unit) was based, flying Whiteleys. Known as the "Flying Barn Door", the Whitley was an ugly ponderous bomber with a characteristic nose-down attitude, really an illusion caused by the angle at which the engines were set in the wings. Each cadet was allocated a Whitley and we spent

much of the day crouching behind the two seats (jump seats were I suppose a luxury in those days) lumbering round the circuit. We pulled in every hour or so, for the perspiring trainee to be replaced by another. It was quite common to see as many as five Whitleys in the circuit and I am astonished and ashamed to say it now, but boredom had set in long before the umpteenth circuit!

My call-up papers arrived in September 1943 and on 18<sup>th</sup> October I reported to Lords Cricket Ground in London which was the A.C.R.C. (Aircrew Reception Centre). By 5pm the 300 recruits had been processed and documented, the normal weekly intake in 1943 to cover losses. We were also subjected in the Long Room to an intimate examination of the lower regions – front and rear – to ensure that we were free from infection (F.F.I.).

Many of us were housed in Viceroy Court, a multi-storey block of luxury flats in St. John's Wood, which had been completely gutted of course, each room containing 4/5 beds and little else. Meals were taken in the Zoo at Regents Park, of all places. The inmates had long since been removed to the country for safe keeping; as far as I can remember. Uniforms were issued in day two and on day three we marched very self consciously to Seymour Hall where we were shown a very graphic film depicting the horrors of V.D.! Much hilarity all round, but also a few pale faces as we trooped out. I had an early introduction to the quaint ways of the military. Towards the end of our first week, I was summoned to the Orderly Room located on the ground floor. Hurrying down eleven floors, I arrived quite breathless and in some trepidation. Had I infringed some obscure King's Regulation in my very first week? A Sergeant Withers (I remember his name though was

never to see him again) announced my appointment as cadet i/c fire picket that evening from 18.00hrs to 06.00hrs, and solemnly handed me a large torch weighing about 8lbs and 2ft in length. I assembled the six cadets whose names appeared on my papers and allocated to each his two hour spell of duty. The torch was to be passed down the line from one to the other. I then retired to my bunk, deeply satisfied.

At 06.00hrs, I dismissed my little squad and handed over the papers to my successor. A few hours later Murphy's Law was brought to bear (Yes! Murphy's Law was in the statute book even then!). Summoned again to the Orderly Room, I appeared before a Sergeant Sealand on a "charge" for the loss of the torch! As in a dream, I heard him intone from a typewritten statement – "1820961 Cadet Findlay – hereby charged – morning of 22 October 1943 – conduct unbecoming – as aforesaid – Parish of Marylebone – did knowingly and irresponsibly – fire equipment – due regard – Armed Forces – under Emergency War Regulations R.A.F.) – as directed by His Majesty's Secretary of State for Air".



*A Tiger Moth 'instrument panel'!!*

I was then dismissed, and warned not to leave the premises. About mid-day came another summons to see Sergeant Sealand again. He was brief and to the point – "Torch found lad!" he said "Let that be a lesson to you!". It was.

An amusing incident occurred the following week when all cadets were summoned to a parade one

morning for inspection by a Group Captain and it was on this occasion that Sod's Law was brought to bear on me. A preliminary inspection was being undertaken by a sergeant – a chilling figure of a man as he strode down the ranks of assembled cadets, pausing here and there to adjust a cap, finger a wayward button etc – all this to the accompaniment of a voice which would have filled the Albert Hall! He was one of the old school who believed that all recruits suffered from a hearing impediment.

As he approached me, his pace slowed noticeably, his grim features assumed a crimson pallor



A Blenheim

and to my dismay he finally came to a halt directly in front of me, as if transfixed. He was peering intently at my feet. Had I trod on a whoopsie? Forgotten my socks? "Your shoe laces man!" he bellowed. "They're tied criss-cross!"

Officially I was now "improperly dressed", a catch-all expression used freely to include a whole range of sartorial improprieties, extending far beyond a simple failure to button one's flies. An offence of this magnitude clearly put my very flying career in jeopardy.

In a voice which must have carried to the farthest corner of the parade ground he continued "get them tied parallel-fashion – you have one minute to get back here – at the double!"

I raced to the Admin block, twenty yards away, found a vacant ante-room and collapsed on a chair.

Pulse racing and hands trembling, I bent to my task but to no avail – years of ingrained habit defeated me.

This was the stuff of Sergeant Bilko and my predicament called for all the great man's ingenuity and daring. With the offending laces still in criss-cross mode, I loosened my belt a couple of notches, lowered my trousers to conceal my shoes and raced back to the parade ground. A few minutes later a staff car appeared bearing the Group Captain, his adjutant and two junior officers. After a brief flurry of salutes, the Sergeant joined the little group which now proceeded to move along the ranks.

I resisted a quick glance at my footwear, now cunningly concealed by the concertina folds of my trousers apart from a square inch of each toe cap. All appeared well and yet – and yet – the party was clearly slowing to a halt in front of me. The Group Captain was shaking his head in despair, as he directed a withering look at the Sergeant – "For God's Sake, Sergeant, have this poor devil measured for a decent pair of trousers!"



A Defiant

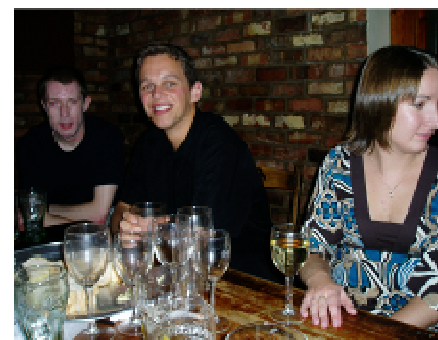
### Coming next issue

In part 2, Alex completes three month's ground training at St. Andrews, and elementary flying training on Tiger Moths at Carlisle. There is also a piece by Robin on his use of Jeppeson charts and databases. A new "Safety Matters" feature written by instructor Tom Ward, will give us

tips based on AAIB reports to help us all fly safely.



A Tiger Moth in Canadian colours



Cool they've been busy – look at those glasses

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## G-Force

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