

Website: <http://www.laahighlandstrut.org.uk>, Newsletter email: [laahighlandstrutnews@outlook.com](mailto:laahighlandstrutnews@outlook.com)

Next Strut meeting on Friday 29<sup>th</sup> September 2023, 7:30pm, at Highland Aviation, Inverness Airport.

**This issue:-**

From the chair	1
Sollas update	2
Strut Fly-in update	4
60 years flying	6
Easter News	8
Fly-in Diary	9
Membership renewal	9

**FROM THE CHAIR – August 2023, by Paul Wayman**

With our annual Strut fly-ins now behind us for this year, it's hard to believe that's another season almost gone. But, there's still a date or two in the diary to come, with the Montrose fly-in coming up next weekend (see below and attached poster for details), and there is often a vintage fly-in at Glenforsa in early September, but I haven't seen it advertised yet.

The Sollas fly-in turned out to be very successful considering the poor weather that weekend. Claudine and team decided to open up for visitors on Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> and made it a 5 day event in the end, with an impressive turnout. Please see Claudine's Sollas update below which is the next best thing to actually being there for those of us who didn't make it (again!).

The Strut fly-in at Easter was also a reasonable success, but not quite as well attended as previous years. We put this down to a not all that good forecast, which may have put off a lot of potential visitors based further afield. The actual weather on the two days was not too bad, with Sunday being the best. In the end we recorded 13 movements on the Saturday and 19 on the Sunday. Sufficient merit was displayed over the weekend to allow us to once again award all of the Haggis prizes kindly donated by **George Cockburn & Son, World Champion Haggis Maker**.

Our sincere thanks to David Munro and team for hosting the Strut fly-in again this year at his excellent facility. Jim Simpson took some fantastic photos over the two days which can be found on the Easter Airfield website here: [www.easterairfield.co.uk](http://www.easterairfield.co.uk)

**Dornoch Airfield**

No updates received from Highland Council so far, but I did note that there appeared to be some refurbishment work to the timber building going on when I visited last. This building was offered for lease by the Council a little while ago, so it might be that someone has taken it on.



**Airspace**

Nothing to report at this time.

**GASCo Safety Evening**

I am waiting for the GASCo representative for our area to contact me with possible dates for a safety evening. I suspect it's unlikely to be much before October. Thanks once again to those of you who got in touch with ideas for venues.

**Visit to Morayvia**

Some of our fellow Strut Members are involved in the Morayvia aviation museum at Kinloss. They have some great exhibits there now including a McDonnell-Douglas F-4K Phantom II, a SEPECAT Jaguar and an Antonov AN2 to name but a few. It was suggested that we could perhaps organise a Strut visit later this year. If anyone is interested in this, please get in touch at [laahighlandstrutnews@outlook.com](mailto:laahighlandstrutnews@outlook.com)

Safe flying and see you at an airfield soon.

## Sollas Update

By Claudine Bloom

Usually, a fly-in is held over one day of the week or perhaps 2 at most, usually on a weekend. This year it turned out that Sollas Beach fly-in was over 5 days – Thursday 22nd through to Monday 26th June. What have we learned? – to be flexible, never give up and expect the unexpected.



With over 35 registered it was going to be hectic, that is if the weather gods played a fair game. We had aeroplanes due to arrive from Switzerland, Belgium, and from all over the UK. Some decided to set off a week early taking advantage of the fine weather. Isabelle decided she could not wait and flew her Robin DR 400 from Belgium to Glenforsa then, with advice from us for the best tidal window, landed safely at Sollas a few days early. Same goes for Ian Gurney from Compton Abbas in a Gardan Horizon.

And so Sollas 2023 had begun earlier than expected.

Everything was ready, the van was packed with everything that could possibly be needed, rakes, fire extinguishers, fuel, camping stove, bread rolls, bacon rashers, chairs, tables, cool bags, ladders, factor 50! and mozzie repellent.....

**Thursday morning** - the phone did not stop ringing

“Can we come today?”

“Of course- why not? But we won’t have set up and our ferry does not arrive until 4.30 pm.”

After about the 4th phone call we decided to try to get on an earlier ferry and arrived on the beach before any aeroplanes. We drove up and down the beach deciding which was the best landing area and out came the rake. The surface was smooth, dry and very firm. The sun was out and the winds light. I started raking. I had only just set the 22 numbers in the sand when Andy called out “ Get out the way I can see three aeroplanes on finals”.

We had our first visitors for Sollas 2023:

**Matt Lanham** from Fife in his Zenith 750 Cruiser

**Graeme Cassie** from Balado in G-CFGZ

**Colin Henderson** from FIFE in his Sport Cruiser – G-CRZR both taking part in the FLY UK round Britain event starting the following day.

**David Lockett** from Dingwall in his RV6- G-BZOZ

**Donald J Smith** from Perth in his MCR-1 –G-CGCN

**Rick Phillips** from Easterton in his C120 – G-BHLW

**Paul Horth** from Inverness in G-KEVI – Jabiru

**Neil Morrison** from Strathaven in G-CDWI – Ikarus

**Iain Macleod** from Stornoway in G-CFUA RV9A

Of these 6 were newcomers to the event



**FRIDAY** was a total washout – nothing to do but wait.

Steve Cleary and his wife arrived at midnight in their 4x4!

**SATURDAY** – the forecast until 1pm was dreadful- very low cloud, rain and strong SW wind. But I have faith in the Met Office. It was apparently going to clear by 1pm! Crossed our fingers while we drank coffee with Joan, Chrissie and Iain (John's family). We were expecting a few visitors from as far south as Shoreham, Popham, Kent, the London area and Old Warden; as far west as Shobdon, and as far north as Inverness. Oh! And a couple from Switzerland near Lake Geneva if they could make it in time.

Bless the Met Office - On the dot of 13.00 hrs the low cloud started to lift, the wind increased to crazy speeds and the sun came out – temporarily! The phone had not stopped all morning and I was giving updates of local conditions on a half hourly basis. The aircraft waiting on the ground in various airports were going to attempt to fly in. The cavalry in the shape of Joan, Chrissie and family were called upon to prepare sandwiches, tea, coffee. They quickly produced amazing fresh prawn and mayo sandwiches and egg mayo for vegetarians. They had cheese and biscuits prepared and Eva, their neighbour, even made the most delicious strawberry cake. Wow! Thank you so very much.

A quick dash to the beach to refresh the runway markings and one after the other they arrived.

**Ken Bowlt** – from Inverness – G-IZZI- C182 -with dog in hi-vi jacket  
**Sandy and Valerie Mitchell** – from Easter – F-LEGG -C182 - stayed overnight  
**Bill Mizek and Jackie Watt** from Easter – G-ZGAB - Bristell - stayed overnight  
**Nigel Stefanyszyn and Simon** from Shoreham – G-AXTA PA28 – who was waiting in Inverness  
**George Cormack and Sue Ellcome** from Cumbernauld- G-HEBO - Islander, with two guests from Carolina, USA.  
 Apart from George all the above were newcomers

Unfortunately, Paul Mansfield and Mike Astles from Popham could get no further than Oban due very low cloud and had to turn back. We always feel sorry and are very impressed that you made the effort.

**SUNDAY** - rain did not clear up until late afternoon. All quiet.

**MONDAY 26th** A much brighter day.

Our friends from Switzerland arrived via Plockton. 2 Amphibians and one Piper Clipper  
 HB-OOJ – Piper Clipper PA16 – Claire Mollet  
 HB-PMN – Alex Kollep  
 F-JTMO - Lionel Meylan and Pascal



From Enstone on a tour of the islands

G-MOAC – PA 28 - Tom Gilbert  
 G-BTCE – PA 28 - James George  
 G-BBDE – PA 28 -Tom Bolam  
 G-ATOR –PA 28 - Will Gilbert



All in all, we had a total of 21 aircraft of which 17 were newcomers to Sollas, the best turnout in years despite the challenging conditions. What do you think guys? Does it deserve to be renamed SOLLAS INTERNATIONAL? I suspect over the three days we had more movements than Stornoway, Benbecula and Barra put together and certainly more from abroad.

We cannot thank you enough for your support of this event. We appreciate it is very remote and a very long way to come so we are very grateful to our regulars and to all newcomers for making the huge effort. We are well received by the islanders so let's keep it going for as long as we can. After all, it is held in memory of our dear friend, John Macleod, who founded the event and without whose sisters and their families in North Uist it would be more difficult to put together. He would be so proud.

Until next year - Fly safe and keep well.



**Claudine**

If you are on our Facebook Group there are some great photos and video clips by our attendees for you to enjoy. At the start of this year we started off with around 40 members on our Facebook group. We now have 115 members.

PS: We raised £280 for local charities in North Uist.





## LAA Highland Strut Fly-in 2023, Easter Airfield.

Aircraft movements:

Saturday 29 <sup>th</sup>	Sunday 30 <sup>th</sup>
G-BXHT	G-MHGS
G-CCTT	G-AVSA
G-LABS	G-CIJZ
G-CKZH	G-CEPM
G-BKET	G-RDMS
G-JUDY	G-OGSA
G-AYPS	G-BBPS
G-BZOZ	G-BTNO
G-OASK	G-BKET
G-BTGM	G-LOYA
G-BZVA	G-AYPS
G-SAHI	G-CFVR
G-CIYN	G-ATVX
	G-SJMW
	G-VALS
	G-BHLW
	G-BZVA
	G-CECK
	G-SAHI

This years lucky prize winners receiving their **George Cockburn & Son Haggis** awards for spectacular, unspectacular or unspecified feats of aviation at the 2023 Strut fly-in.



Baz Knight for best Europa on Saturday.



Most senior aircrew (Saturday) award to Dugald MacAngus (94) for his trip in G-SAHI.



Toni Hausler and crew for best Aeronca Champ (Saturday).



Most senior aircrew (Sunday) award to Billy Grant, who had celebrated his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday on the previous day.



John Farquhar, for best Aeronca Champ (Sunday). John also celebrates a very special 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary since his 1<sup>st</sup> solo (see accompanying article).



Bill and Bridget Ritchie for lowest altitude arrival.



Andy Done, for his Marshalling over both days with his very impressive Jeep.



Jim Simpson, for top class photography of the weekend.



Kenny MacGillivray, for successfully navigating the 3, or possibly 4, nautical miles from his base to Easter Airfield without needing to refuel.



Order on-line here: <http://www.cockburns-haggis.co.uk/>

Many thanks to **George Cockburn & Son, World Champion Haggis Maker** of Dingwall for kindly donating this year's prizes.

The highlights of the fly-in weekend were Dugald MacAngus (94) going up for a flight in G-SAHI with Paul Gibbs on Saturday. Dugald had previously been a pilot and flew in all sorts of stuff but is now a keen flight simmer. His son is a Cathay Pacific 747 pilot.

And Billy Grant, one of our Strut founders and long-time Treasurer, who having celebrated his 90th birthday the previous day, flew with Duncan Sutherland in G-MHGS on Sunday. It was great to see Billy back in the air and I think the smile on his face in the above picture says it all.



## John Farquhar celebrates 60 years flying

26th July 1963, Chipmunk G-AOSZ Self P1 Perth Perth 12.00 - 12.10 10mins First solo

26th July 2023, Aeronca G-BTNO Self P1 Shemp - Shemp 12.00 - 12.10 10 mins 60th Anniversary

Made it ! Who would have thought .....etc. etc.

A young lad went to Navy Day at HMS Fulmar in July with half a crown in his pocket. One of the first things he saw was a sign advertising 'Pleasure Flights' for 10/- I can't recall what the 2/6 was spent on but no doubt it was important and a valuable addition to my collection of aircraft memorabilia which then consisted of Airfix models suspended from the ceiling above my bed and which were replaced as and when new ones were completed. Fast forward a year and the same lad, this time with a 10/- note as well as half a crown, joined the queue for a 'pleasure flight'. The additional 10/- note was a weeks wages from a paper round in Lossiemouth and having trudged through the town for many months, was about to be 'blown' on a ten minute 'pleasure flight.' So, ensconced side saddle in a seat behind the pilot of a de Havilland Dragon Rapide, the Gipsy Queens were started and we taxied out. Fascinated by every movement of controls, flicker of instrument needles and increasing revs from the Queens, we took off for a wide ten minute circuit around Lossie. That was it - I was bitten by the flying bug and resolved.....



I joined 423 Elgin Squadron, Air Training Corps shortly thereafter and travelled on Monday nights to Elgin (the hut was located where Elgin Police station is situated) and eagerly learned all subjects relating to aircraft construction, function, flight, navigation, engines, airframes, controls et al whilst perspiring in our 'WW1 Battle Dress' uniforms which clipped right up beneath our chins! Only later were we issued with a lapel jacket, shirt and two detachable collars. (Even learned how to tie studs without choking!) There were additional unapproved items in the syllabus best not mentioned here! The years passed and I was promoted to Corporal then Sergeant and, being the tallest Cadet in the Squadron, to the role of marker on parades. I won't relate more of my years in the ATC other than to say it was a blast during which summer camps, air experience flights, shooting and sports made me the man I am today ! (no comments please!) Air brained and happy with it!

In 1963 the CO asked if I would like to be put forward for selection for a RAF Flying Scholarship. I took a micro second to answer in the affirmative which resulted in a trip to Biggin Hill which was then the RAF Aircrew Selection Centre. Having convinced the personnel of my fitness, prowess, integrity and knowledge of which way was up, I was notified to report to Airwork Service Training at Scone Airfield, Perth on 19th July 1963 where the CFI, a Norwegian ex WW2 Spitfire pilot, put me into a Chipmunk (G-AOJZ) gave me a quick intro to the controls and off we went at 17.05 to carry out Dual Training Exercises 1,2,3 and 4 landing back at 17.25 when I was promptly sick after travelling from Lossie to Elgin by bus, Elgin to Perth by train and walking (with my suitcase on a hot day) from Perth to Scone which is about 4 miles. I thought my flying career had finished there and then but the CFI told me abruptly to "sort myself out" or I wouldn't see the inside of a Chipmunk again. I did, went solo on the aforementioned date after 5hrs 15 mins instruction and was awarded my PPL after completing the 30hrs flying course laced with exams and flying tests. Halcyon days when you are a 17yo youth.

Moving on, an injury to my nose sustained whilst playing rugby, put paid to my intended military flying career so two years at the university of life (where I met a lovely young lady who became my wife in 1970) Aberdeen and Stirling Uni's, marriage, starting a career, building a house, having family etc, etc, meant that flying was off the agenda until a business venture provided funds to revalidate my PPL at the Highland Aero Club in November 1986. A young lad in the Club was asked to show me the controls of the mighty C152 G-BFLU, in which I soloed in January 1987. Thank you Hughie. You taught me all I needed to know and once Keith Durbidge managed to get me, until then having flown only tail dragners, to stop 'wheelbarrowing' the C152, I was deemed proficient in May 87 immediately converting onto the PA28. Moray Flying Club welcomed me onto the underpowered C150 G-ARFO, and my dentist and party time AFI, Tim Griffiths, invited me to join the Shempston Flying Group and I was back into a Chipmunk, G-BCYJ, and following its sale to South Africa, I was inducted into the Tiger Moth G-ANFV which was without doubt the happiest time of my flying experiences.

My daughter, Karen, accompanied me on a 25th anniversary celebration of my first solo at Scone on the day in 1988 in a C152 after which we were congratulated and dined by the Scottish Aero Club. On the day in 2013, thanks to the cooperation of RAF Lossiemouth, I repeated the commemoration, this time in my own Aeronca Champ, G-BTNO. A Joint Warrior exercise was finishing at Lossie and the warlike names were departing for home bases throughout Europe. They were happy, however, to give the 'minnow' from next door Shempston a ten minute slot to commemorate the 50th anniversary after which a foursome of departing Typhoons overflew Shempston, waggled wings and lit burners before going vertical! A nice gesture as was a copy of the days flying program with my name alongside the warriors and a gift of a CD with the r/t exchange between myself and the tower.

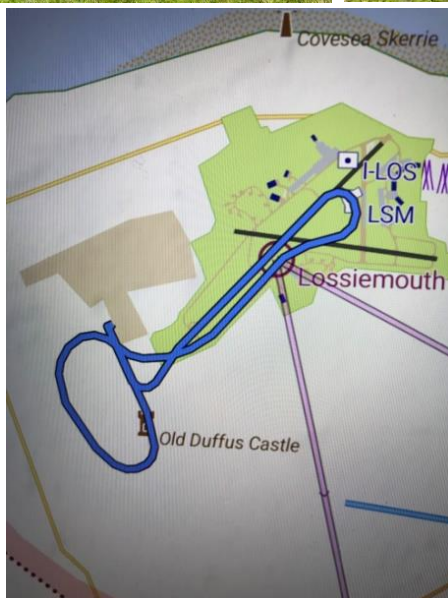
I wrote to the OC at Lossie a few months ago asking to be accommodated in the flying program on 26th July to which he agreed. ATC were happy to 'do the business' on the day and, apart from the pilots of two 'heavies' who hadn't read the script and who wished to depart at 12noon, all went well.

After landing, I wondered why the hangar doors were shut and, on extricating myself from the Champ, the hangar doors were rolled back to reveal a group of my aviating friends, handshakes, buffet, wine, special edition cake, and the local press reporter and photographer. A story was in the E edition of the Northern Scot that night and in the paper editions on Friday last. I was humbled, honoured and a wee bit embarrassed to be hailed for reaching the 60th anniversary milestone and I sincerely thank all those who were so kind and thoughtful to mark the occasion as they did. I won't name anyone but they know who they are.



Where do I go from here ? Watch this space.

**John Farquhar.**





## Easter Airfield News

By David Edes.

The weather in June played ball for the French aviators touring Scotland who visited Easter in June. 15 Gyrocopters, 3 flex wings, 3 microlights and a very well organised support team. 2 minibuses and a crew cab van towing a bowser, catering trailer and spares/equipment trailer.

Our neighbours Toulavadie distillery opened up to give them a tour !



June also saw our Midsummer fly in , which unfortunately clashed with Sollas , but we had a reasonable number of visitors considering the weather elsewhere.

20th July saw us hosting a different event. A phototherapy/modelling event where SA and ZC were used as props along with 2 super cars. Something slightly different.



July also saw the first ever visit of a Cirrus SR22 to Easter.





## Event and Fly-in Diary 2023

**Strut Meeting** – Friday 29<sup>th</sup> September, Highland Aviation, Inverness Airport.

### Perth

Scottish Aero Club Annual Fly-in - Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> & Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> August

### LAA Grass Roots Fly-in 2023

<https://www.lightaircraftassociation.co.uk/grass-roots-fly-in>



### Montrose

Pop-Up Airfield Fly-In – Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> & Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> August

### Visit to Morayvia

TBC. <https://www.morayvia.org.uk/>

Please email details of any fly-ins or events you know of to: [laahighlandstrutnews@outlook.com](mailto:laahighlandstrutnews@outlook.com)

---

## Highland Strut membership renewal for 2023:

-----

Treasurer:-

Chris Haycock.



01 811 8055

### January 2023

We have once again been able to maintain membership to the paltry level of only £5:00 for the year. Subscriptions due by 28<sup>th</sup> February.

To maintain your membership, please complete and return this form with payment to the treasurer at the address shown above. Cheques should be made payable to 'The Highland Strut'.

Payments may also be made by BACS. Sort Code: **83-27-35**, Account No: **00665726**, Account Name: **Highlands & Islands Strut of the LAA**

Please use your name or other suitable ID (e.g. Aircraft reg for landing card) in the reference field. Payees' must send an E mail to [janimar.50@btinternet.com](mailto:janimar.50@btinternet.com) confirming details of the payment made. This is to ensure your payment is recorded accurately against individual members.

Alternatively, come along to the next meeting and pay in person, but please complete the details below which will form the basis of our membership list.

Name:

LAA

BMA

Address:

BGA

LAA Membership No.: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Postcode:

Mobile: \_\_\_\_\_