

National Aero Club of Ireland

Air Education Report 2004

To
FAI International Air & Space Education Commission

National Air Activities Weekends

During the past twelve months our biggest events for young people have been our 2nd and 3rd National Air Activities Weekends held in May, 2003 and March, 2004 at Casement Airbase near Dublin which is Ireland's main military base. Over the course of a full weekend from Friday evening to Sunday afternoon, the young people saw all of the facilities and aircraft of the Irish Air Corps including helicopters, trainers, VIP transports, maritime patrol aircraft, fire and air traffic control services and the bird control unit. We also took the opportunity to invite along the various NACI clubs and these included the Model Aeronautics Council of Ireland, the Dublin Gliding Club, the National Microlight Association of Ireland, the Classic & Aerobatic Aircraft Association of Ireland, the Irish Hang Gliding and Para Gliding Association and the Parachute Association of Ireland. Although military regulations prohibit any actual flying demonstrations, the clubs have a good opportunity to speak to the scouts, show them videos and distribute information about their activities. This year for the first time we had participation from the Police Air Support Unit and the Irish Air Corps museum. We had two presentations from Bombardier Aerospace who recently delivered a Learjet 45 to the Irish government. One of these presentations was a 'Science for Fun' show that used simple but fascinating displays to illustrate aeronautical principles. On the Sunday morning we had a competition for the AMA Cub/ Delta Dart model aircraft, which the young people had built. Prizes included model aircraft and aviation books and posters.

In 2003 we had 70 young people participate and in 2004 this rose to 160 with a further 100 already on the waiting list for the next event.



Scouting Ireland

On 1 January, Scouting Ireland was formed replacing the two previous Irish scout associations. I am pleased to report that the aviation programmes, which I was previously supporting, have been recognised as a valuable resource for scouts and I have been appointed National Programme Commissioner for Air Activities. What this means in practice is that where I previously supported a programme aimed at 11 – 16 year olds, I now have the job of developing Air Activities programmes for all our young members from age 6 through to 20 and beyond! It is a challenge which I am looking forward to.

Art Competition

Regrettably, no entries were received for the 2004 competition despite a good effort at promoting it. The main reason for this I feel is the huge promotion behind the Texaco Children's Art Competition which celebrated its 50th anniversary in Ireland this year and remains the art competition for Irish schoolchildren. It is difficult to compete with this competition but we will give it another go next year.

Air Education Programmes

I have been evaluating several programmes in recent months such as the US 'Inventing Flight for Schools' programme and others from NASA and Bombardier Aerospace which all seek to use aviation to demonstrate aspects of subjects as diverse as science, maths, language skills and business studies. I am co-operating with the education officer of the Model Aeronautics Council of Ireland in progressing some of these ideas into a programme which could be offered to schools. Aer Rianta, the Irish airports authority is interested in assisting with sponsorship. I also hope to assist Bombardier Aerospace in promoting their schools programme in the Republic of Ireland.

As a member of the UK based Popular Flying Association, I have helped establish an education branch of the association which seeks to provide practical support to the Air Programmes of the Irish and UK Scout Associations and co-ordinate the efforts of PFA members in this area. Progress is slow so far but there are several ideas in the pipeline. The PFA operate the Young Eagles programme in the UK and I am still planning to look for their assistance in running YE here in Ireland.

Expanding Co-operation

As noted above, I have already had a lot of success in pulling in assistance from many of the sports aero-clubs here in addition to the Irish military and companies such as Bombardier Aerospace. I have several ideas for taking this co-operation further in the next couple of years.

During the year I made contact with the education committee of the Federation of Aerospace Enterprises in Ireland which represents the aerospace industry. I hope to find suitable opportunities for co-operating with Irish aerospace companies whether through tours of facilities for young people or sponsorship for other initiatives.

I continue to cooperate closely with my UK Air Scout colleagues and I visited their national conference last October. I am progressing slowly in my plans to contact other Air Scouts around the world for the purpose of sharing resources and programme ideas.

I have been working on several ideas that I have got from other CIEA delegates. During the year I received some information on Young Eagles from Gabriel in Spain and Cary in Switzerland. I am also planning to use the airfield tour plans kindly passed on by Klaus Strienz. I have plans for introducing airport open days as exist in Japan and the US and also the International Air Cadet Exchange Programme.

100 Years of Flight

December 17th 2003 saw several commemorative events in Ireland and a lot of TV coverage. I missed out on all of this as I had the chance to visit Kitty Hawk that week where I was well looked after by the EAA and NASA (thanks Debbie!) and got to see where it all began. I had good opportunities to gather information and resources which I hope to put to good use in the coming months. The Irish Air Corps published a photographic record of their history to celebrate the Centennial, several copies of which I was able to use as gifts and prizes since December.

Paul Lynch
CIEA Delegate
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