

# The Spirit of St Olaf now safely arrived in time for Raft Race

AS reported recently in the *Ellon Times*, this year's Ythan Raft Race will feature the internationally renowned Monty Python's Flying Circus, the troop of veteran aviators on whom the cult television series of the 70's was based.

We can now confirm that arrangements are well underway with the advance party and their aircraft has already safely arrived in the area.

Senior aviator Ivor Broadbottom has been making the further preparations needed to stage a low flying event of the type planned for raft race day.

The Wing Commander confirmed preparations began as early as last August when stunt co-ordinator Otto Shisenhaus visited the area to carry out a feasibility study.

The first challenge was to find a service hanger suitable to secure their aircraft, the 1927 Spirit of St Olaf and to provide essential maintenance

and engineering facilities.

On touring the area at large, Herr Shisenhaus happened upon the Park garage in Boddam's Harbour Street and found proprietors Ewan Robertson and Graeme Boyne only too happy to assist with preparations.

It was established that all necessary equipment was available, but unfortunately, the main entrance to the premises was too small for the aircraft to pass through.

Ewan and Graeme discussed the problem with their architect who came up with a novel solution and drafted plans to convert the front of the building into a traditional 20th century aircraft hanger.

The project was agreed upon and the job completed just in time, with only two weeks to spare prior to the arrival of the Spirit of St Olaf in early May.

Another major logistical headache was the co-ordination

of planned television coverage.

The Flying Circus, as previously reported, are currently touring Europe, and every stunt on the tour is being televised as part of the historic record.

The forthcoming BBC Scotland production Big Country, co-hosted by Jenny Faulkner and Doogie Vipond, which begins its run on Friday May 19 at 7pm is to cover the raft race.

It will be broadcast at a later date.

Herr Shisenhaus also confirmed the Spirit of St Olaf will be on show at the raft race start, prior to the race, where members of the Flying Circus display team will be mixing with the public and selling memorabilia.

The proceeds of this will be donated to the raft race charities.

This year's Ythan Raft Race is obviously something NOT to be missed!

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