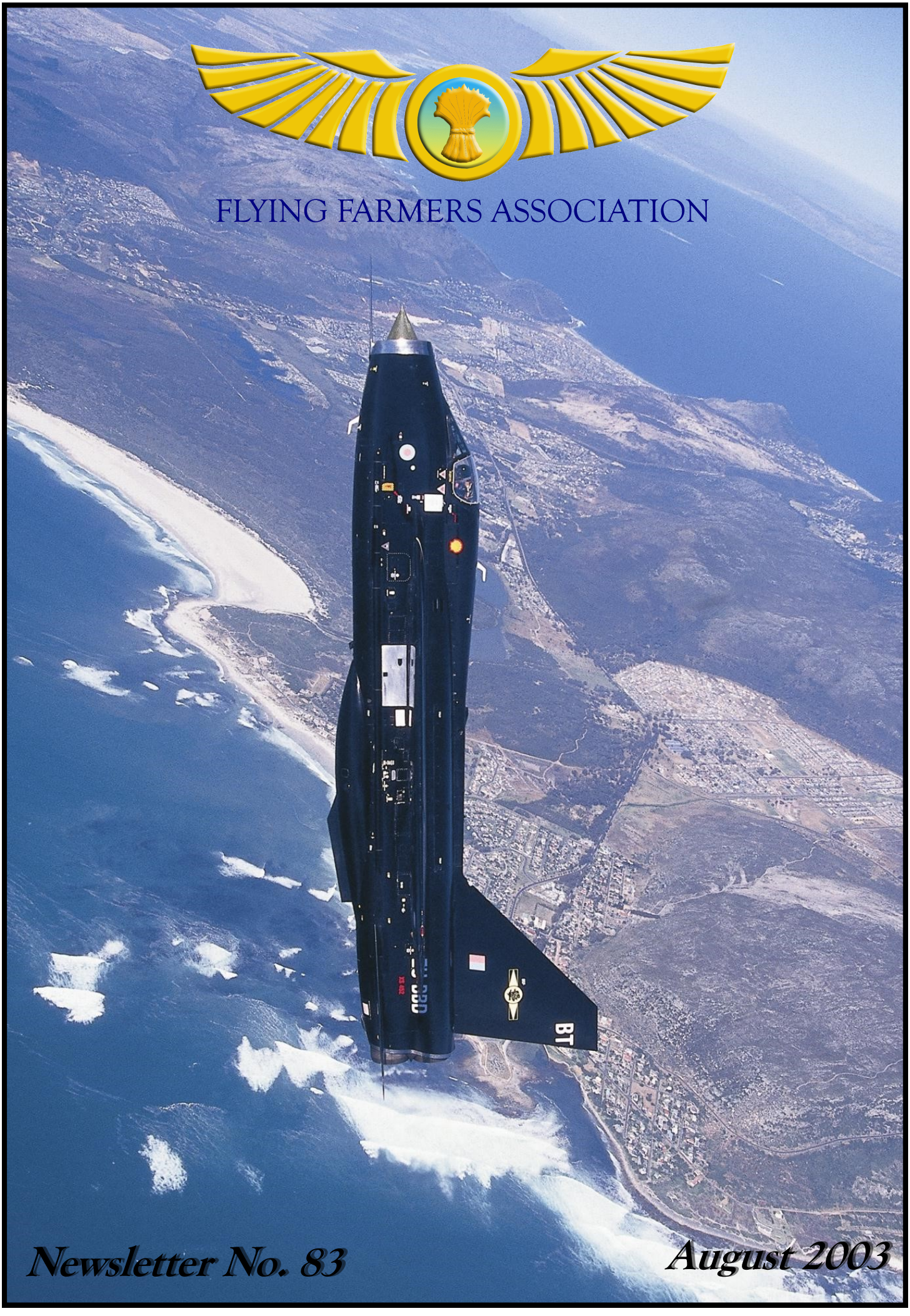
FLYING FARMERS ASSOCIATION



Newsletter No. 83

August 2003

Opening Thoughts

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Editor, Publisher & Printer;

P.A.& R Stephens
Moor Farm
West Heslerton
Malton
North Yorkshire
Tel: 01944 738281
Fax: 01944 738240
Email: chix@farmline.com

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Cover photograph;
An English Electric Lightening belonging to Thunder City going vertical at 50,000 fpm off the coast of Cape Town, South Africa. See Dick Walgate's article in this newsletter.

The Chairman's Message

The harvest season is upon us. The old saying that "the proof of the pudding is in the eating" will hold true as we find out at last whether all the decisions we made earlier in the year regarding varieties, inputs, chemicals etc were justified.

Our best wishes go with those of our members who have made the big decision to give up farming here in the UK and, in at least one case, go almost as far away as is possible to start farming there. Well done, you.

Like farming, aviation is full of decisions: not only where to learn, what to buy, which organisation to use to maintain it - but also when actually flying: whether to continue or turn back if the weather deteriorates. These are decisions that can be critical, even life-saving.

The summer events have gone very well. Our thanks to all those stalwarts who have spent so much pains-taking time organising them.

Finally, one further decision for you to make - come to our AGM. If you are new to the organisation we would like to meet you. If you are a seasoned member then it is always a pleasure to meet you again.

John Golden

Editor's Notes

This is the newsletter that has all the write ups of our summer visits. When I read through them myself, I realise what an enterprising Association we are. I can't think of another aviation organisation that puts on such varied and interesting visits for its members, from the local farm visits, to meetings in Scotland and as far away as Estonia—the furthest north and east that the FFA has flown to—all in one year. We are so lucky that farming and flying go hand in hand—the farming making a landing place for the aeroplane and somewhere to keep it, and the flying allowing us to view the farming from such a privileged position.

A big thank you to Anthony Kedros for the last eight year's work, organising the events programme. Mike Cuttell will be the Events Secretary from now onwards, so please give him ideas and better still, volunteer yourself to organise something in your particular area. After all, it's an Association run by members for members.

The theme of this newsletter is celebrating 150 years of flight since the Cayley glider (see article in this newsletter) and also 100 years of powered flight since the Wright brothers took off. We are now at the stage where we have seen supersonic passenger flight come and go (see the Concorde article). Probably even more remarkable was the short time it took to get to the performance of the Lightening on the coverpage (see the Thunder City article). What an incredible technological achievement of powered flight in just one lifetime. Where will we be in another 100 years!

Next year will be the FFA's 30th anniversary, so we will arrange something to commemorate that little milestone, hopefully with a Flying Farmers dinner. Any suggestions to Mike Cuttell please.

You should be getting the 2003/4 membership list round about the same time as this newsletter, if I can fit it in with this extremely early harvest. Please check that your details are correct and inform me of any changes. There are still errors in there. One was found by David Corbett who tried to find Jean-Marie Cousty's strip in France. He circled round and round and couldn't find it. We later realised that the co-ordinates were one digit wrong, putting him about 50 miles away. Lucky for me, it stemmed from when David did the list himself!!!

I hope you like the slightly more modern styling to this newsletter. I am always looking to improve both the lay-out and content, so I welcome any ideas and articles.

Paul Stephens

Committee Members

Dick Walgate	President	01472 371203
John Golden	Chairman	01725 552384
Paul Stephens	Secretary	01944 738281
David Corbett	Treasurer	01568 708351
Mike Cuttell	Events Secretary	01242 236770
Martin Gosling	Airstrip Advice	01787 269369
Anthony Kedros	Committee Member	01295 720876
Mike Ashmole	Committee Member	01738 627622

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Thank You

Anthony and Bryony Kedros would like to thank all participants on the French Tour in June 2002 for the gift of a walnut tree sapling and accompanying plaque.

The 32nd Guernsey Air Rally

FFA members are invited by Colin Ferbrache (the Air Rally Director) to attend the Rally held from the 12th to 14th September. I have the entry forms on my desk, so if you would like to enter, please contact me (Paul Stephens) or look up their website www.guernseyaeroclub.com where you will find the forms.

Mountain Rescue Search Dog Appeal

Dr David Watt is a dog handler with the Search and Rescue Dog Association (SARDA—Lakes). He is planning to fly his homebuilt aeroplane (Rans S6) around the coast of Scotland in the first fortnight of September this year, as a publicity fund-raising adventure.

Training the dogs to detect airborne human scent, often at considerable distance, takes about 2 years and costs around £2000 per handler / dog. There are currently 15 qualified dogs in the Lake District but more are needed.

Hence the fund raising flight. If you feel you could make a donation, either look up their website www.sardalakes.org.uk or contact me (Paul Stephens) for a form. Who knows when you might need them!

Polly Vacher

Polly set off on her solo round the world tour via the Poles on 6th May from Birmingham in her Piper Dakota. She was held up in Norway because of the weather, but crossed the North Pole on 26th May. She is now in America and is due to cross the South Pole in October.

I sent her congratulations by email after she crossed the North Pole from all the Flying Farmers and reminded her that we hope for an exclusive article for the newsletter when she gets home.

Follow her progress on www.worldwings.org

Committee Deliberations

The FFA Committee held a Committee meeting at Ox House, Shobdon on 9th July, with thanks to David Corbett for the use of his sitting room.

Items discussed were as follows;

1) It was agreed to stick to the action minute format for the minutes of meetings as they are clear and concise. However it was agreed that as not all members can attend the AGM, then the discussions at the meeting, outside of the business part, will be written up in the newsletter.
2) Following two years of split decisions by the Committee, it has now been decided that anyone applying to be a member of the Association will have to have proposers and seconders as per the Articles. This is to help prevent undesirables becoming members and lowering our reputation.
3) As published in the last two newsletters, Anthony Kedros, our Events Secretary has decided to resign his position after eight years of service. The Committee have been on the look out for any member who would like to take on this position and a few have been approached. But no one is prepared to stand, so Mike Cuttell who is already on the Committee, will take the job on for a short period. Thanks to Anthony for all his work on our behalves and thanks to Mike for standing in.
4) If you have your strip published in the Membership List, you may have had some correspondence from Brian Lockyear regarding allowing him to put your airstrip details in his publication. We state in simple terms in the opening paragraph of the List that our newsletter is not to be copied or used in any form for further publication or sale. So Brian Lockyear has overstepped the mark on this one and has received a letter from the Committee.
5) We have had an email from America from the Future Farmers of America (FFA) who claim that they have the trademark, FFA registered and we should cease using FFA. Our initial reaction was to tell them to get stuffed, but after consulting with Tim Scorer (FFA member and aviation solicitor), we replied to them stating that the FFA is an English registered company and we don't trade in the US so there should be no conflict. They have now apologised for their error!
6) A new batch of FFA ties have had to be ordered, having now sold two batches of 100. Anyone wanting the slightly more modern style should contact David Corbett by fax on 01568 708177 or email David.Corbett@fwi.co.uk. The cost will be about £7.50.

Welcome to New Members

Since 1st March 2003, the following have joined the FFA

739 Neil Walker, Abingdon, Oxfordshire
740 Charles Course, Wellingborough, Northamptonshire
741 Ben Faulkner, Ramsdean, Hampshire
742 Charlie Ellingworth, Wincanton, Somerset
743 Dean Wood, Nr. Banbury, Oxfordshire
744 Alun Moore, Morpeth, Northumberland
745 Richard Stanley, Northampton
746 Neville Stops, Andover, Hampshire
747 Bill Hall, Oxford
748 John Illiffe, Reading

The total membership now stands at 356

Programme 2003



The 2003 AGM, Kemble, October 22nd 2003

Australia, November 2004. See article on page 15.

Events such as these set out below are arranged by FFA members on a voluntary basis. It is accepted by those who participate that nothing undertaken by the FFA collectively or members individually shall be construed as establishing a duty of care nor in any way removing or modifying the duties, responsibilities or obligations of pilots or land owners in relation to any event and attendance thereat. All information provided in these programmes is purely advisory and should ALWAYS be verified from official sources.

The 2003 AGM will be held at Kemble in Gloucestershire on Wednesday 22nd October.

10:30 - 10:45	Meet at AV8 adjoining the control tower.
11:00 - 11:15	Transport to the airfield theatre for the AGM.
11:30	AGM
12:30	Return to AV8 for lunch
13:30	A programme of visits within Kemble Airfield, including Delta Jets, the Bristol Collection and possibly a viewing of the Bristol Britannia aircraft.
15:30 - 16:00	Depart

We would like to see as many of you there as possible. Please return the reply slips to Mike Cuttell with any items you would like adding to the agenda.

Meetings Held, Summer 2003

Visit to Rod Herbert's Factory, Wednesday 9th April 2003

I don't know, but it's a fair bet, that this visit was the first time the Flying Farmers spent the entire day below sea level from the time they landed to the time they took off to go home. The 55 visitors in some 26 aircraft would notice the rather featureless terrain around Marshland as they made their way to Herbert Engineering from whichever direction they approached but the one feature that they would notice would be the numerous rivers and dykes that dissect the landscape in this area.

Rod Herbert's airfield was changed from a virtually deserted grass strip to a tightly packed, overcrowded one in the course of an hour as everyone arrived more or less on time for the F.F.A. Tour. The entire procedure handled very professionally by Ray Nicholson, Fenlands ATCO who was in charge of air traffic.

After a short spell of coffee drinking, meeting old friends and being introduced to other visitors, Rod called everyone to order, introduced his Son, Nick, to everybody and gave a potted history of his business and then escorted us across the road to the factory. The Company, established in the early 70's has become well known and well respected not only in the U.K. but world wide for the development and manufacturing of all types of specialised equipment used in the growing, harvesting and most importantly in the packing and processing of vegetables.

On arrival at the factory we were introduced to some of the key staff and then split into groups for a guided tour. The mem-


Rod explains the workings of his factory

bers and their guests were very impressed by the efficiency, large scale and professionalism of the factory, all the way from the research and development team, the drawing office and the factory floor. The computerisation and sophistication of the entire factory was to say the least very impressive. The other aspect of the business that surprised many was the high level of automation now employed in the vegetable industry. It was nice to visit 80,000 sq.ft. of factory in which was housed real state of the art equipment with 120 people all busily going about their tasks which resulted in a real buzz in the factory and a broad grin on Rod's face.

After the factory tour it was all aboard a coach and onto Harps Hall, Walton Highway for lunch which Rod's wife Georgy had organised and what a delicious lunch it was. A vote of thanks from William Proctor on behalf of everyone and then back on the coach to a pumping station which had converted its old engine house into a museum. A talk from Brian Howling on the history of the pumping engine from its steam to diesel and now electric pumps and the importance of these stations if you live and farm below sea level. An interesting visit with the old engines being run up and then it was back on the coach to return to Marshland airfield for everyone to make their way home.

The entire day was enjoyed by all and thanks goes to the Herbert Family for arranging such an interesting programme, laying on a superb lunch at their home and on top of that not charging a penny for the whole day. Once again many many thanks to Rod, Georgy and Nick for their time and generosity and good luck for the future.

Roger Southwell

Heslerton, North Yorkshire, 23rd April

This joint visit to two of our farming members in North Yorkshire was very well attended indeed. 70 participants in nearly thirty aircraft arrived in good time in excellent weather at Heslerton near Malton - about half at Paul and Roz Stephens' Moor Farm on the Wolds, and half at Pat Nutt's family farm in the Vale of Pickering.

The first visit was to the Nutt enterprise, which consists of eight adjoining farms, totalling some 1,794 acres between Malton and Scarborough on the River Derwent. Paul and Andrew, Pat's sons who now run the business, conducted us round the farms. The land is all arable with soil types ranging from sandy loam to medium clay loam. Crops grown are winter wheat, potatoes, barley and oil seed rape. A great deal of attention has been given to drainage, over the years.


Part of the line up at Moor Farm

The Nutts are well known potato growers and have made substantial investments in irrigation and storage.

A delicious lunch was served in Foulbridge Hall, part of Pat and Jill Nutt's home. This superb building was only recently rediscovered by Jill and proved to be a mediaeval structure built by the Knights Templars around 1288-90. Restoration work began in 1984 and is now complete.


Pat & Jill's fantastic Hall

After lunch we visited Moor Farm where we were introduced to Paul Stephens' lighter (boy's) land extending to 884 acres and his extensive broiler chicken sheds. Paul pointed out the differences in farming on this easier land, keeping costs to a minimum and using the poultry muck on every acre of land, every year, to give an ideal nutrient status without any additional compound fertilizer.

The day ended with Roz's tea and copious cakes, before pilots and passengers set off for home.

Very many thanks to the Stephens' and Nutts for their hospitality and allowing us an insight into their thoroughly professional farming enterprises.

Anthony Kedros

Two Day Scottish Tour, 19th & 20th May

About 35 members arrived at the Duke of Hamilton's (FFA No. 643) strip at Archerfield, not far from East Fortune on the southern bank of the Forth. The Duke operates his Bristol Bulldog from this strip, having once used this aircraft when he was their test pilot.

After an aerobatic display by a lovely little biplane, also hangared at Archerfield, we were bussed to East Fortune for lunch and a quick tour of this famous aircraft museum. It appeared from the tour guide that every aeroplane had a unique history, which made the tour even more enjoyable.

The Duke's farm manager then told us about farming on the Duke's Haddington estate on the way to Lennoxlove House, which the Duke's father (the 14th Duke of Hamilton) acquired in 1946. We had a conducted tour of the house, parts of which were built in the 14th century. It is now open to the public as the present Duke (the 15th) moved to smaller premises at Archerfield. It's well worth a visit. It's a very warm and homely property with many paintings and photographs depicting the Duke's ancestry and the many Royal connections.

It was now back to Archerfield where in 1999, Edinburgh businessman Kevin Doyle bought half the Archerfield estate from the Duke in order to build a £60 million Gleneagles style golf and leisure complex. They are part the way through completing the 36 hole course, a 245 room 5 star hotel, restoring Archerfield House and developing 50 holiday cottages and 100 luxury homes. If you want a plot to build a house with services, they are for sale at half a million a piece!

Back to the aeroplanes now in order to fly the short trip to Dundee. Despite our organiser, Mike Ashmole telling us to space ourselves out, the controller at RAF Lossiemouth was a little overwhelmed as we all passed through his airspace on the 10 minute trip. Apparently the Dundee ATC were non too happy as well, when after refuelling some aircraft dared to move, despite being under instructions from the ground marshallers, as the controllers weren't called on the radio!

Paul Stephens



White Park cattle at Lennoxlove House

The following day began at the Discovery Quay Travel Inn with a sociable breakfast followed by a brisk walk along the banks of the Tay estuary (optional!).

All aboard our coach at 9am for a short journey to the Research centre. Sarah who was to be our host for the morning met us on our arrival. She gave a brief outline of the Centre: around 400 employees with extensive research facilities, laboratories together with 150Ha of land, which is used, for experimental crops. The main area of research is in creating a successful 'bio environment' for the growing of Soft Fruit (raspberries and strawberries) potatoes and barley.

We walked the Farm with explanations and questions answered at each strip of experimental crop together with being 'bowled over' by the stunning view of the river Tay. There was the occasional glance skyward as a beech twin, repeatedly, flew low overhead on its instrument training approaches into Dundee airport.

Back to the main facility and it was time for coffee followed by a talk and explanation of LEAF (Linking Environment and Farming). The talk evolved into a two-way dialogue and it was soon pointed out that 'Science Speak' wasn't quite the same as 'Farm Speak', together we all learnt from the informal lecture.

Our visit was wrapped up by mid-day then it was back to the coach for our return to Dundee airport with plenty of time for our flights home.

Many thanks go to Mike Ashmole for organising an interesting and enjoyable visit.

Tim Harrison



About to leave Archerfield for Dundee

The 2003 Study Tour To Baltic States

Anklam to Vilnius

Despite it being billed as unreconnoited with arduous flying accompanied by masses of beaurocracy, the study tour was once again oversubscribed.

I was persuaded to take a further 3 aeroplanes making a total of 18, but this still left some disappointed members.

All but two planes made the rendezvous at Anklam on time, most braving thunderstorms enroute. The other two caught up later in the trip.

Anklam's claim to fame is that it is the birthplace of Otto Lilienthal, the first glider builder and pilot. Some of those that came early did manage to see the award winning museum dedicated to Otto, interestingly Sir George Calley's efforts (mentioned elsewhere in the Newsletter) were recognised.

Dinner was taken at the Schwarz Hotel, preceded by a cocktail party/school reunion type atmosphere, outdoors on a perfect summer evening.

Monday saw the expedition start in earnest . No weather problems, but mutterings about thunderstorms later in the day at our final destination Vilnius, which added to the urgency to get airborne.

The previous evening's resolve by all the pilots to allow plenty of time between departing aircraft, was as usual on these trips completely ignored and the "greyhounds out of traps" mode took over. The Polish lady controller handling the cross border traffic became quickly overwhelmed and closed Polish airspace, resulting in the later take-offs from Anklam, being held on the border orbiting in a sort of no-man's land. Eventually after pressure by the German controller on our behalf, we were on our way with a tail wind that almost made up for the delay.

On arrival at Gdansk we were given the wind in metres per second, and to most of us it was a case of ignorance is bliss, as after getting on the ground and converting the crosswind into knots it was in the order of 15-20 knots across the runway.

For the next leg, Gdansk to Vilnius, the compulsory VFR routes added an average about 20 minutes flying. I had been in negotiation with the Polish CAA to try and get dispensation for a more direct route for almost 3 months, all to no avail. I was therefore delighted to hear when we arrived at Gdansk that the authorities had at last relented and accepted a direct track from Gdansk to Vilnius.

I am still not sure whether it was my pre-trip efforts, or the perceived congestion that 16 aircraft were causing the system earlier in the day, either way it was magic to be told by the Gdansk controller "report at the border".

So we continued our flight crossing Poland, a mosaic of forests, farms and lakes, with very little evidence of the general population. Arriving at Vilnius was straight forward with the controllers speaking perfect English, a pattern set for the rest of our trip.

Mike Ashmole

Vilnius - Kaunas, 9th & 10th June

It was at Vilnius that we first encountered the exasperating bureaucracy which was to delay us for hours whenever our eighteen aircraft passed through a large airport: three sets of fees, three offices, three people, three forms, three photocopies, three rubber stamps, three signatures and three security checks each time - or that's what it felt like. In a strange way these coils of red (as in recently-communist) tape served to bind the party together as we struggled through them and tried to think of ways to beat or at least tame the system. If Mike Ashmole, organiser of the trip, was tearing his hair out, he seldom let it show!

We flew from Vilnius to Kaunas, the main agricultural region of Lithuania, to visit the 1500 ha Bernatonys Farm. This dairy, beef, pig and arable enterprise was formerly the state Agricultural and Electrification Institute. It is now 90% owned by the principal farm equipment supplier in Lithuania and employs 40 people. We saw big machines, healthy-looking stock and excellent buildings in well-tended grounds. We talked at length with the lady who guided us round the farm about the present state of Lithuanian agriculture, and about her hopes and fears concerning the country's imminent membership of the EC. Probably the most arresting statistic she quoted was that 60% of Lithuania's milk is produced by farmers having three or fewer cows! In a system already beginning to favour the larger producers these small farmers have no future, and with them will go the way of life of a whole countryside. Trying to reach the standards set by the EC, the Baltic States are doing in a few years what the UK has done over a much longer time - we hoped that they realise the costs and re-structuring involved, and do not just think that it will be all handouts.

John & Clare Golden

Riga, Latvia, 11th June - Visit to BSW Sawmills

The President of Lithuania, a keen aerobatic pilot, had shown an interest in our trip and had promised if he had time would meet us before we departed for Riga. In the event the closest we got to him was our Chairman being held at the holding point for 20 minutes while his helicopter departed. An uneventful flight and another border crossing, this time to Latvia was completed.

After a splendid lunch at the Leisure Centre in Riga, the party was divided, half the group to the Ethnographic Open Air Museum on the banks of the Jagla Lake and half to the BSW Sawmills, the largest in the Baltic States.

We were greeted by the Works Manager, before setting off we were issued with ear plugs which proved to be invaluable.



It was explained to us that the machinery for the factory was not new but purchased from Scandanavia from a bankruptcy. The machinery was then adapted to suit this enterprise.

166 people were employed on a four day, 11 hour shift followed by three days off, the average wage being £200 per month.

The logged timber was stored outside and was kept moist to prevent cracking. It was then loaded on to a conveyor by grab equipped telescopic handlers. On the way along the conveyor the timber passed through a magnetic eye and any timber containing metal was discarded, the most common problem being shrapnel.

The round timber then passed inside to be squared. A magic eye then works out which way to plank the squared timber. All this is done at tremendous speed with no manual input.

The sawn boards are then graded for length and thickness, then moved away to be kiln dried, banded and shrunk wrapped, although a proportion is machined for such things as decking. The finished product is then sent to the nearby port for shipping mainly to the U.K.

The management were particularly upbeat about the future. At the present time 200,000 cubic metres are produced every year, we were informed that I cubic metre equals one tonne.

The three most notable things from my point of view were firstly the noise, secondly the reliability of the hugely complex machinery and the last but not least the enthusiasm of the workers who toiled for what in this country would be termed a pittance

Bob Beard

Ethnographic Museum

After dropping off the sawmill team we had a 45minute drive to the Ethnographic Museum, further than anticipated.

Walking through trees in a 1 square kilometre park you come across buildings that have been reassembled in situ over the last 60 years, all made of wood and varying in age but at least 200 years old.

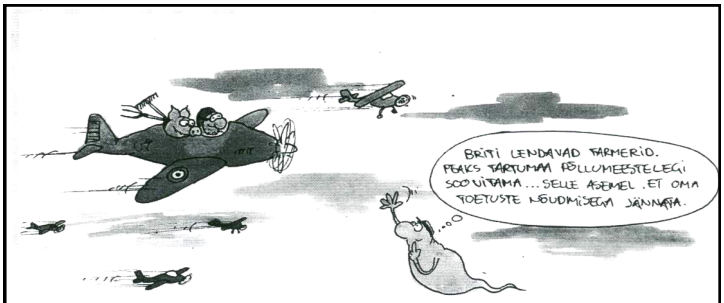
Rain stopped play and we adjourned to the "pub" which transpired to be a shop. One of our more experienced shoppers negotiated the use of Euro's and mayhem ensued.

Roger Taylor

Riga - Tartu - Tallinn, 12th June.

Thursday was a varied and eventful day. When we looked out over Riga's Daugava river to the spires of the old town on the other side, the weather looked marginal for VFR flight, but the reports (particularly those from Tartu, our first destination in Estonia that day) were sufficiently encouraging for us to set out.

We were processed through the airport with surprising speed, and took off one by one north-eastwards for Tartu. Even those who got going earlier were forced to fly very close to the surface by the low cloud, and the plethora of masts, some of which seemed not to be on the chart, made us somewhat anxious at that altitude. Conditions seemed to get still worse as the morning went on, and in the end half a dozen or so of the seventeen aeroplanes had to turn back, some of them cloud-running not far above the treetops. "Special VFR" was a phrase much in use that morning.



A cartoon in a local Tartu paper, translated as – The British Flying Farmers really should recommend to the Tartu farmers that it is better to go flying than worry about subsidies!

Those who got through were warmly and efficiently welcomed at Tartu airport, which is not a scheduled-flight destination but is the centre of aviation training in Estonia. There was considerable interest from the local press in our visit: some of us were interviewed at the airport, our host Aret from Tartu Agricultural University had given two radio interviews about us, and Mike Ashmole was interviewed by a radio journalist outside our lunch venue. We were also joined by Felix, a forester from the Scottish Borders who is a former employee of Mike Ashmole's and who spends one week a month working in Estonia. He told us that forestry now occupied more of the agricultural land in Estonia than other sorts of agriculture, though not many years ago the forestry proportion had been only thirty per cent. The forest was largely self-regenerating, with very little planting.

The restaurant was a three hundred year-old gunpowder-store with fine brick vaulting and what claimed to be the best selection of wine in southern Estonia: more flying was in prospect, so that the captains, at least, were unable to take advantage of this proudly-proclaimed feature! A first for all of us was to be served the first course, a full-bodied stew-like soup, in individual hollowed-out loaves of bread with lids.

After a short tour of the old town centre we went by coach to the campus of the Agricultural University, where Aret described to us the structure and subject-range of the university. The Dean of one of the faculties then gave us a succinct presentation of the current state of agriculture in Estonia, with its problems of demographics, resources, unemployment and uncompetitiveness.

By the time we flew on to Tallinn late in the afternoon, the weather had improved and we were relieved to find that all those who had turned back to Riga earlier in the day, and those who hadn't set off at all, were safely on the ground in the Estonian capital. At the eleventh hour our hotel had announced a day or two before that it was overbooked and we were being transferred to a spa hotel a good way out of town. Some of us discovered the next day that this particular hotel made a cynical habit of overbooking to the staggering tune of 80 or 90 rooms per night: no wonder a party of 35 couldn't be accommodated! But our alternative billet was very comfortable, and once again Mike Ashmole was unflustered by the cavalier attitude to our arrangements.

Simon Littlewood

Tallinn - Tartu, 13th June

Day 6 of this years-European Tour began with a visit in the morning to Neville Hewitt's 900 Ha Dairy/Arable farm near Tapa in northeastern Estonia.

Neville Hewitt an Irishman started off in Estonia in 1997 with a dairy processing plant and then later went on to purchase the farm as a going concern. The dairy unit has 200 Holstein/Friesian milk cows and 200 female young stock. Since there is no real demand for beef all male calves are slaughtered at birth. The milk cows are all zero grazed, and are only turned out at night when there is a surplus of grass. All the cows were in one tie stall building kept back to back and line milked, total staff is 15 plus casual staff. Mr Hewitt's manager told us that he had raised the milk yield from around 2500 its in the Russian days to nearly 6000 lts per cow today.

We were told you can expect snow in winter from November to April with the ground freezing to 1 metre deep and temperatures often drop to -20c. The arable crops are mainly spring sown usually in May and harvested in August with an expected yield of around 4 tons per Ha.

At midday it was onto another of Mr Hewitt's ventures in the nearby village, it was a building he had fitted out as a traditional English pub, here we all enjoyed an excellent lunch

Richard Howard

Kuressaare - Estonia, 14th June

Our visit started at Jurna Recreation Farm, where our hosts Airi & Mati Travis treated us to a lunch of local cuisine in their very pleasant farm dining room.

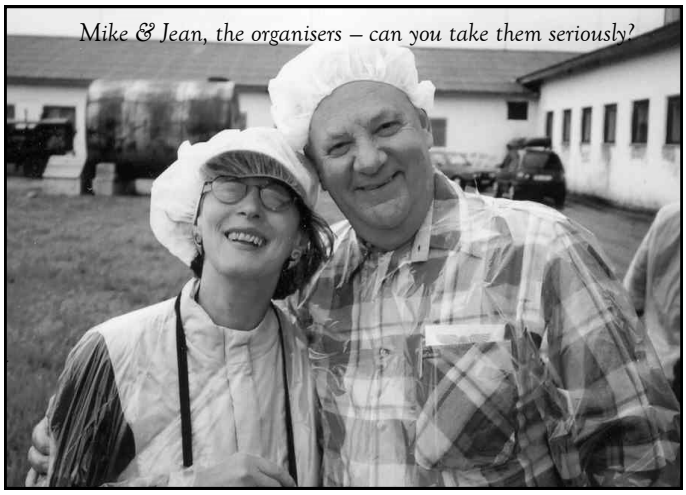
During the afternoon our tour guide was Andrus Sepp, whose farm proved to be the highlight of the day.

Out first port of call was the milking parlour of a local co-operative farm, where 200 locally bred cows were being milked. It reminded us of a bygone era with no mechanisation and a poor standard of hygiene, it did not appear to have improved since the previous regime relinquished control. At our final stop the difference in standards and attitude was immediately apparent. Private enterprise and initiative were a credit to the Sepp family. We felt privileged to be able to enjoy their beautiful farm resurrected from the dilapidated condition the communist regime had left behind.

The farm itself had been in the family for 100 years, being farmed by grandfather Sepp prior to the Second World War. It reverted to Andrus following the fall of the communist regime.

Since the family resumed control, they have been self sufficient, and all the building work undertaken has been financed entirely by his own endeavours. The quality of the new buildings were impressive, and the work has taken place whilst running the farm and on a limited budget.





Mike & Jean, the organisers – can you take them seriously?

The 80 hectares is farmed organically. Crops include barley, triticale, oats and beans. He also runs a beef suckler herd, predominately Herefords. Grass silage is the main winter fodder.

Until recently pigs were kept, which he butchered on the farm and sold in local markets. Owing to low meat prices, the pig enterprise had been discontinued and he is putting more energy into his thriving hunting business.

Andrus and his family run a seasonal hunting business from an annex in their own home on the farm; He is also the Managing Director of the Saaremaa Hunting Association, controlling 23 different hunting areas, with 850 hunters. They shoot mainly roe deer, elk and wild boar.

The general consensus was that this young family deserves every success, and we thank them for making our afternoon a truly memorable one.

Robin Humphries

Conclusion

We were joined at the farewell dinner by the Sepp family, who had impressed us so much during the day.

The President and the Chairman thanked Mike and Jean for organising this years tour and presented gifts.

There was a real sense of achievement by all who participated in this tour, particularly for the distances flown, not always straightforward navigation, and to have started and completed the course on schedule.

We will remember the bureaucracy, but to be fair 18 light aircraft turning up at Birmingham, Manchester or Edinburgh within 40 minutes would probably encounter similar delays and certainly higher costs, and I guess not meet anyone who could speak Lithuanian, Latvian or Estonian.

Our overwhelming memory will be the progress these three countries have made in the short time since independence from the USSR, 10 years ago for instance you would have had a problem finding anyone who could speak English, it was now their second language. We wish them well for their future in the EEC.

Mike Ashmole

Visit to Shobdon, July 9th 2003

Our GPS was rock solid on Shobdon with no problem from the notam giving GPS jamming! As usual this air field gave us a warm welcome. It was good to see so many people from all over the country and especially our friends from Scotland who had to make such an early start,

The weather was dull and dry to start with but it was not long before we were in shirt sleeves. David Corbett. in his usual efficient way, scurried us on to the awaiting coach and gave us the outline of the day. We were introduced to John Amos, managing director of John Amos Energy Ltd and also Richard Corbett (David's son) who is director of Corbett Farms Ltd and Lugg Valley Growers Ltd. We quickly learnt all about the background of the North West Hereford Energy Project, This is all about building a 20 mega watt power station using green energy. The crop selected to be used is Miscanthus which has, in fact been around for three hundred years. It roots six inches deep and grows 12 foot tall. Once planted, it can be harvestcd annually around February for the next 20 years.

The key to the whole operation is government support to build this power station to service an area of 35 miles radius. They explained there is a fifty per cent subsidy on crop establishment which initially costs about £ 1,200 to £ 1,800/ha. The tuber (a bit like a potato tuber) is planted at one plant per metre with a modified potato planter. In the first year's establishment the crop is sprayed with atrazine to kill all the weeds.



Miscanthus

Apart from the seed it is a cheap crop to grow, it needs no fertlilizer and can be grown on any soil type and it is also eligible to be grown on set-aside ground. The crop is harvested by cutting it with a conventional mower conditioner and baling it with a Heston baler when the moisture is 16 to 25%. It dries quite easily because the stem has a waxy exterior. They explained the crop has amazing powers of growth. From bare soil on May 1st we saw the crop at an impressive 8 foot tall on July 9th. I am told peak growth can be 18 inches a week. It looks like this crop could have a big future if only the government will back it.

We then moved on to see Nick Helme who has his finger in several pies. Nick was founder director of 7Y Machinery Ring Ltd. He explained that he became manager of the 7Y Machinery Ring because they cou1d not find anyone else to do the job. He was amazed to find how quickly this service was taken up. It started in the early nineties and has quickly grown to 500 members and a multi-million pound business, one of the most successful in the country. They now have a new manager. Julian, who runs the complete operation. They have also branched out into commodity buying, labour agency, on farm training and I. T. business.

With these enterprises running very successfully Nick has now moved his energies on to a new project called Bio-organics Ltd. This operation is taking green waste that no one else can handle and composting it. He is presently taking in feathers, woodchips, egg waste, general super market waste etc. This is a very smelly business as we soon found out, but produces a very good quality, virtually smell free, compost. This enterprise has come about through E.E.C. legislation to reducing the % of waste going to land fill. To this end be has sunk £1 million in to the project so far, being one of the founder projects in the country which has enabled him to get some government support. How it works for the technically minded: specific proportions of waste are mixed in a mixer wagon conveyed by modified potato equipment into a long insulated revolving drum to aerate the material for 2-4 days where the temperature rises by biological action to 50-60 degrees centigrade to form a sterile product with a nitrogen value similar to a 1/3 of a bag of nitram, but it's organic. In the future he hopes to bag and sell it to garden centres.

Because of the recent land tax, landfill, hard waste was another enterprise. He was taking mixed soil end concrete and stone and separating it into reusable material, soil and fine sand, 1" to 1.5" inch stone and 3 inch down stone and crushing anything that is larger into one of these categories so nothing is wasted. For this service he made a charge of £4 per ton in and £4 per ton out.

A potato enterprise, which is a joint cooperative venture, both growing and long term storage in fridge units is also run from this farm.

Nick is a person that loves challenges and has the ability to keep his finger on the pulse of all his many enterprises. We all found it very fascinating and wish him luck with his next venture!

Roger Helm (Nick's brother) hosted us for lunch in his restaurant he built 4 years ago, overlooking his golf driving range. After lunch he told us about the 9 hole golf course he was constructing to full international standard and all the problems he was having with the planners. It was clear to see every attention to detail was there in a lovely sloping setting with trees all around.

Hampton Court Gardens was our last visit. It was extremely hot and in this lovely rural setting, we could have believed we were in the South of France with such temperatures. It is presently owned by Robert Vancampen from 1999, an American.

It is has a lovely house and is now mainly used for weddings and functions but the main attraction was the newly restored Victorian gardens with water features and the maize. There was also a pleasant walk along the river Lugg. We were told that the thousand acres house and gardens were back on the market and a Herefordshire trust is trying to buy it.

How did we cram so much into such a fascinating day!

Our many thanks to David Corbett and all the people that contributed to such a successful event.

Mike Rowland

Project Propeller

Project Propeller is an organisation that encourages private pilots to give a flight to a WW2 flight crew veteran to join with their colleagues at a get-together at a venue that is different each year. This year was the 5th year of these get-togethers and was held at the Yorkshire Air Museum at Elvington.

I was allocated a 79-year-old veteran who had been a Lancaster pilot in the very closing stages of the war but had not in fact seen action.We were given a fairly tight arrival slot time, and it could be seen why when there were 5 of us in the circuit together and more joining – and ultimately 105 aircraft and their passengers were parked on the gigantic 49 acre apron – hardly covering ¼ of it. Elvington itself has an enormous runway probably stretching about 2 miles long, so landing and turning off before the piano keys was not a problem, ever for the twins – in fact it was an ATC requirement of the day.

There was an hour or so to meet up with old friends or look around the museum before a buffet lunch for everyone, and then the guest speaker for the day was presented. This year it was Eric 'Winkle' Brown who was based at Boscombe Down during the war and whose job it was, amongst others, to evaluate the pro's and con's of captured enemy aircraft. All these aircraft were taken to his unit and he personally flew every one of them – and that was, obviously, without any handling notes to give him a clue!

He gave a truly fascinating talk, which had to be brought to an early end because he just had too much to tell us. His reminiscences were too numerous to recall in detail, but the two that stick particularly in my mind were the discovery that compressibility caused by approaching the speed of sound caused many fatal accidents in the early years, and this initially came to light when fighters were used to cover the Flying Fortress formations which were flying at around 35000'. When the Luftwaffe attacked the formations, the fighters dived on them from about 2000' above – and built up so much speed in the dive that they just continued straight on down into the ground, unable to manoeuvre. The reports of these rather unusual events by the rear gunners in the formations led to the discovery of this phenomenon.

His final recollection was that the Japanese Zero was the best aircraft of the lot – but had rather an unnerving habit of 'twanging' all the time – rather like the noise one would get if you squeezed the sides of a biscuit tin! This was because it was made of very thin material, but which therefore gave it its excellent performance. Just as he recalled that the Zero was the best, he also said that the ME163 Komet was far and away the most dangerous aircraft that he has ever flown!!

He finished by telling us that one Japanese pilot with his formation of Zero's was sent on an operation which was 600 miles from base from Japan, and at this extreme distance shot down 2 Hellcats which were very formidable opponents. He was in the process of attacking what he thought was a third, but which in fact turned out to be a Grumman Avenger which had a rear gunner. He was duly fired upon, and two ½" bullets blew off his canopy and lodged in his head, paralysing his left arm and right leg. He remained conscious, but was unable to operate the throttle with his right hand – which he needed on the stick, and couldn't hold the stick between his knees because of his paralysed leg!! However he managed to fly all 600 miles back to base and survived the 'landing' – and even recovered sufficiently to fight again later in the war – and he only died a couple of years ago!!

The museum at Elvington is a remarkable place to go to see all things aviation, and is entirely run by volunteers. It is a great day out.

Project Propeller is a great success story in getting the ever-diminishing number of veterans together in a flying atmosphere. If you get the opportunity to participate in forthcoming years, do so before the numbers run out. You will be assured of a good day out in good company with good stories to be told.

Battle of Britain Memorial Day

On July 9th 1993 Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother officially unveiled the National Memorial to The Few at Capel le Ferne on the White Cliffs between Folkstone and Dover.The Memorial itself takes the form of an immense three-bladed propeller, each blade 38 metres long, cut into the clifftop. In the centre, the stone figure of a lone pilot is seated on a sandstone base on which the badges of the squadrons and units who fought in the battle are carved.

Sunday 13th July this year was the 10th anniversary Memorial day, and Annette and I were privileged to be present. The weather was exceptionally nice and very warm, and at midday the guest of honour, HRH Prince Michael of Kent arrived and was presented to all the Battle of Britain veterans who had made it to the day, plus Mayors and local dignitaries, having a word with every one of them.

Lunch was then taken for all the guests, after which there was the entry of the Guard of Honour and presentation of the squadron standards, followed by the general salute.

Precisely on cue, as one would expect from our Royal Air Force, came a double flypast of a Spitfire and Hurricane from the BBMF, which evoked a great cheer from all.

After the inspection of the Guard of Honour and an official welcome to all by the President of the Trust, a short service of commemoration took place followed by laying of wreaths. Prince Michael, whose father was killed in the battle, then gave an address.

A replica of Hurricane P2970 in No.56 Squadron markings had been commissioned for the memorial was then unveiled – this was the Hurricane in which Wing Commander Geoffrey Page was shot down, suffering serious burns on August 12th 1940. W/C Page was the inspiration for this memorial, and worked tirelessly for its creation. A campaign has just begun to raise funds for a replica Spitfire to join the Hurricane.

During tea the RAF sent a couple of Tornados for a flypast which were seriously impressive, passing at about 250ft on full afterburner then a vertical climb and roll off the top! Not such good news for me wearing hearing aids with no time to turn them off!

Finally the band gave the Beating The Retreat and the Sunset Ceremony with the lowering of the flags.

It was a most impressive, and rather emotional day. Next year it is on July 4th. Anyone who is able to go would have a great day.

Martin Gosling

Flight Test—Aviat Husky

We all know that farmers and Landrovers go together in the same breath. Well perhaps it should also be Flying Farmers and Huskies. The Aviat Husky must be the nearest thing to the Landrover that you can get in aviation—a real utility, go anywhere machine.

Bob Pooler, the UK agent for Aviat aircraft contacted me in order to show off G-HUSK to the Flying Farmers. As he is based at Sherlow (details in Pooley's) in Shropshire, he said he would meet me at Shobdon to let me have a flight and put it on show for the FFA meeting on the 9th July.

The Aviat Husky is manufactured in Wyoming. To date they have made about 600 Huskies, one of which, an A-1A, belongs to Tony Poulsom (FFA No. 93). Aviat also manufacture the Pitts and Eagle aerobatic biplanes.

We arrived just before Bob and heard him on the radio, so we looked out for him landing. There was no problem seeing him on the approach as the Husky has a pair of powerful landing lights at the extremities of both the port and starboard wings. Even on the clear day, the lights could be seen before the aircraft. Once in view, you could easily mistake the Husky for a Piper Cub with its high wing, tandem seating and very similar rounded tailplane.



He did a short landing in probably no more than 70 metres on Shobdon's grass, stopped, then did what I thought at the time, was a ridiculous and extremely dangerous take off. (Remembering when a Maule Lunar Rocket, as they were called, did a similar exhibition at an airshow, climbing at an impossible angle only to stall and return to earth in a heap, killing the pilot). What I witnessed this time was Bob opening the throttle and lifting of the ground in a three point attitude after only a few yards rolling and then with only minimal forward speed, putting it into what appeared to be an impossible angle of climb. It amazed me that it just seemed to accelerate away with the 180 hp and constant speed prop powering this relatively light aircraft away from the ground.

On landing, Bob and his sales assistant, Sue, jumped out and showed me round the aeroplane. The first thing I said was "Don't you dare do a take off like that with me on board!" This model is the Aviat Husky A-1B, which is the first to be certified in the UK. The A-1A's has a lighter MTOW.

According to the specification, this model has 810 pounds useful load. After you subtract the 52 US gallon (196 litre) fuel load of 312 lbs, this leaves you with 498 lbs for two aviators. Take off two 13 stoners (total 364 lbs) and it still leaves 134 lbs for baggage and incidentals. That's a big load carrying possibility. Curiously it has en even bigger MTOW (2200 lbs) when the optional floats are fitted, giving 832 pounds of load.

Walking round the aeroplane, the initial likeness to the Cub starts to wear off a little as it appears a bigger craft altogether. There are two hatches behind the rear seat to put all that baggage into and the back seat can be folded down to accommodate longer items. The whole aircraft is aluminium and fabric and the wings and tail plane are well braced giving it a strong appearance. There seemed to be rather a lot of things hanging down under the wings to knock your head on, including some massive spade like airflow balancers on the ailerons to give them a light feel.

Like the Maule, a variety of wheels can be fitted to suite the conditions, right up to 31" tundra tyres which can be used for landing on river beds, if that takes your fancy. G-HUSK had some medium sized tyres on, which gave it a real utility look and would be very suitable for landing in any stubble or wet grass fields. The overall appearance was very smart in its blue



and white paint work. The build quality appeared very good, but you can't call it anything but utility and functional, very much like the Landrover, although probably more like the Discovery type than the Defender.

It was time to climb on board. Bob did offer me the front seat which has access to all the trimmers and engine controls, but as I wasn't tail wheel conversant, I thought it prudent to sit in the back, which still has stick, rudder and throttle controls. The side door is a horizontally split door which can be left open for flight. To get into the back requires a few ungainly acrobatics. Bob's female assistant who was a lot smaller and more agile than me, showed that it can be done a lot more elegantly with a bit more technique. Settling into the very comfortable rear seat, I scanned across the modern instrument panel in the front with digital engine gauges and a useful Garmin radio stack, complete with the popular GNS430 VHF, VOR, GPS combination.

Bob jumped in, struck up the Lycoming 0-360 and off we went. From the back seat vision was not too good forward, as you would expect from a tandem taildragger, but as it was a hot



day I opened the sliding side window which reminded me so much of the old style Landrover windows. Bob said he would do a short take off, obviously forgetting my alarmed comment when I first spoke to him. He explained, that the technique was to use full flap and leave the ground in the three point attitude which means it's heading skywards at a fair angle to start with. I left him to it and hardly had we started to roll than we were off the ground at a little over 35 knots, then up we went at 1000 feet a minute. It looked desperate from the ground, but it actually felt perfectly ok from inside the aeroplane with the high power to weight ratio. I guess you would have to react pretty damn quick though if the motor quit!

Before we were even anywhere near the end of the runway, we were well over 500 feet and were turning cross wind and Bob let me take control having pulled the power back and reduced the revs on the prop. The first thing I noticed was that it was light on the controls, reasonably quiet at the low power settings, but oh dear, I'd certainly forgotten about using rudder having been used to a Robin. It brought back memories of the Piper Tripacer, but even that had an aileron/ rudder connection so it was back to a bit of proper flying. In fact I was amazed how much rudder control was needed. We were floating along at about 90 kts and I felt like sticking my arm out the window and doing a bit of farming!

Coming round the 'bad weather' circuit, Bob was operating the flaps and trimming from the front and I was trying to get the feel of the controls and between the two of us we made a pretty awful and bouncy landing. Thank goodness for those big tyres and utility landing gear! With a couple more circuits I was getting the feel and I think with a few more I would have been happy to have gone off myself. It wouldn't take many hours of practice before you would be landing in your neighbours fields for a cup of tea or to see his new combine, using the aeroplane for what it's designed for.

Although it could be used for long distance cruising with it's claimed 120 kts cruise and its 7 hour endurance, it's not really that kind of an aeroplane. It's a real utility and sport aeroplane. It really is great fun to fly and could be used for such a variety of purposes.

Unfortunately on the day at Shobdon, we maybe didn't get the message round to everybody that the Husky and Bob were there to be looked at. Or was it that we didn't have any Cub owners there on the day, as it must be the ideal replacement for the old Piper model. But there is a problem. The Cub owner enjoys a low capital investment in his aeroplane and some cheap flying. If you trade up for a Husky, there's not much chance of getting any change out of £100,000 for a new one including all the VAT, delivery charges and a few accessories. So it could be the choice between the new aeroplane and the new combine!

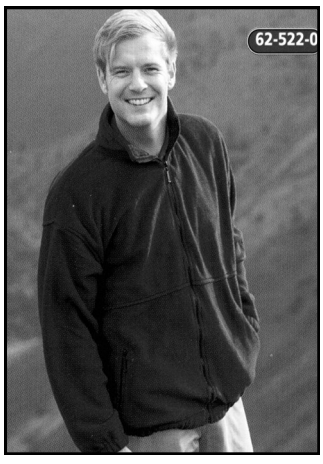
Paul Stephens

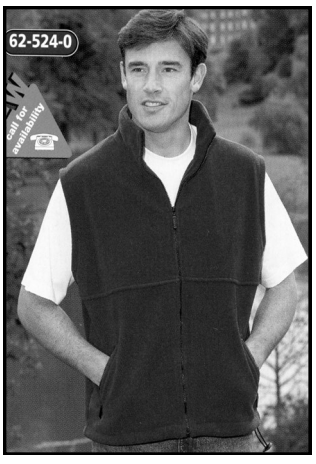
FFA Clothing with the Wings Logo

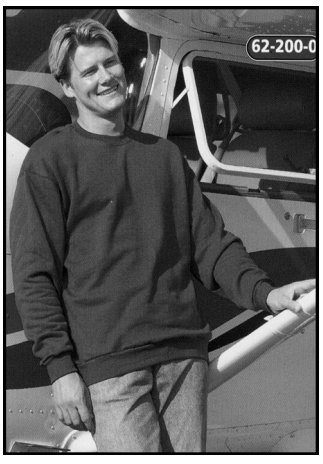
Fleece jackets (£20), fleece waistcoats (£16), sweat shirts (£14), polo shirts (£12) and baseball caps (£5.50), all plus postage. Please ring if you would like any of these items and if they're not in stock, we will order them for you, in your size.

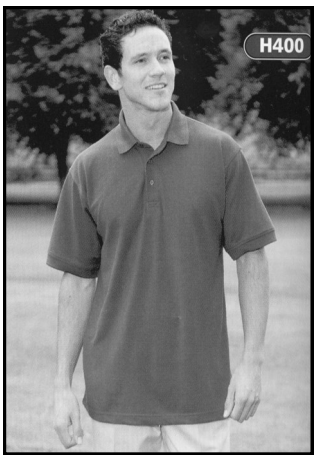
Please contact **Roz Stephens** on **01944 738281** with your order.

For FFA ties at £7.50, contact **David Corbett by fax** on **01568 708177**.









From..... The Cayley Glider

Did you know that the first recorded flight took place in Yorkshire in 1849, when Sir George Cayley put the 10 year old son of one of his servants into a Cayley glider?

Then in 1853, 50 years prior to when the Wright Brothers flew their aircraft at Kitty Hawk, Sir George volunteered his coachman to sit in his glider which carried him 275 metres across Brompton Dale, near Scarborough before crashing. The coachman instantly handed in his notice, claiming that he was employed to drive not fly; but it was the first recorded flight by an adult in an aircraft and the first aeronautical dispute!

150 years later, on 5th July this year Pat Nutt and myself travelled the few miles to Brompton Dale to see the re-enactment of

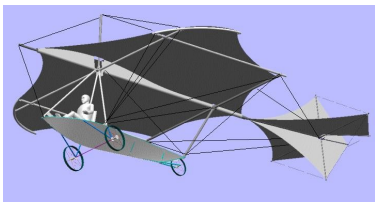


this first flight. The Royal Aeronautical Society at Brough constructed a replica with reference to the original notebooks written by Sir George, sponsored by Virgin Atlantic.

There were one or two other attractions arranged for the day including a fly past by the Red Arrows and an awe inspiring demonstration by a Virgin 747-400 at 500 feet, passing over several times and doing steep turns at an extraordinary low speed and altitude. What made it even more remarkable was that the cloud base was less than 1000 feet and we wondered how on earth the Captain had done his decent through the cloud to give us the demonstration, as we were miles away from any ILS facility.

The time came for the flight of the Cayley glider, weighing only 160lbs. It was pushed up the side of the dale to the exact





place where the first flight took place. Two long bungee ropes were laid out and 20 strong men were destined to run down the hill as fast as they could in order to launch the glider. More atmosphere was added by the descendants of Sir George Cayley all taking part, dressed in period costume. Then the coachman arrived, also dressed traditionally. Guess who it was, non other than another Sir, this time it was Sir Richard Branson who was a great sport and would fly the glider.

With much hype and build up, the 20 strong men took up the slack, raced down the hill and the glider shot forward down the steep slope - but its wheels never left the ground.

It was dragged back up the hill for another launch, as we guessed this was a dummy run for Sir Richard to get a feel for the thing. A few minutes later and with a great cheer, the 20 strong men gathered even more enthusiasm and sprinted down the hill - this time Sir Richard must have hauled back on the stick and it flew at four feet above the ground for about 50 yards and landed safely.



Sir George Cayley, born in Scarborough, North Yorkshire in 1773, was a genius of science whose works in aeronautics pioneered the conquest of flight. From youth, when he devised a three-bladed propeller and placed it on a toy top causing it to fly, until his death he devoted himself to the development of craft to carry man aloft.

A true scientist, he maintained meticulous records of his observations and findings, documentation which was to show the way to later pioneers. Observing that birds soared long distances by simply twisting their arched wing surfaces, he deduced that fixed wing machines would fly if the wings were cambered. In 1804 he flew a model of such a glider, and in 1808 a successful full scale version was flown as a kite. A small boy whose name is not recorded, became the first person in history to fly when in 1849 he made a short flight in a Cayley glider. In 1853 the first man-carrying Cayley glider rose from Brompton Dale with his coachman as its passenger.

Cayley recognized and began the search for solutions to the basic problems of flight: the ratio of lift to wing area; determination of the center of wing pressure; the importance of streamlined shapes; the recognition that a tail assembly was essential to stability and control; the concept of a braced biplane struc-

ture for strength; the concept of a wheeled undercarriage; and most importantly the need for a lightweight source of power to broaden the utility of the simple glider. In his half century of aeronautical investigation and experimentation, he gave the world the basic elements of a practical aircraft.

Cayley's genius embraced many disciplines and pioneered the way for later advances such as combustion engines, spoked wheels, the caterpillar tractor, finned missiles, railway safety devices, and medical equipment.

The first true pioneer of flight, Sir George Cayley opened the vista of flight to mankind.

Paul Stephens

To.... The Concorde Experience

The news that Concorde was to cease flying after the end of October 2003 and my local newspaper offering a "bargain" flight in it to the USA, raised my interest for a once in a life-time thrill. However, by the time my son Angus came back to me with his available time off work, the seats were all filled. Angus then looked for more seats on the internet and found a better package that offered *return* flights on Concorde, London - Heathrow to New York – JFK together with a week's car hire and connecting flights to Aberdeen by Airbus.

We set of on 23rd June, our visit to USA fitted in nicely between the FFA European tour and FFA visit to Shobdon.

On arrival at Heathrow, we found our way to Terminal 4 and were directed to the Concorde Lounge, which is exclusively for Concorde passengers. On entering the Lounge, we had our first sight of Concorde, parked right outside the wall-to-wall windows. Looking down from the Lounge, she seemed small, but very elegant when compared with other airliners nearby. Whilst the aircraft was prepared for flight, we enjoyed the best of French wines, salads and fruits, including my favourite, strawberries and cream.

Stepping inside the cabin, there are pairs of navy blue Connolly leather seats on either side of a wide central aisle. The windows are small, about 5" wide and 7" high. Window seat occupants had a reasonable view out over the relative short delta wing, the outer section "bent" down.

The take off run was the biggest push my back has ever had, reaching the 250 mph lift off speed in about 40 seconds. The high initial speed after take off was certainly noticeable looking down at passing ground features and there was a noticeable deceleration when the afterburners were switched off for noise abatement. We headed directly for the British Channel where





the afterburners were switched on again in two stages, to accelerate to supersonic flight. Not so much of a push this time as the increase in speed is more gradual. A display on the front wall of our cabin indicated speed in mph, Mach No. Altitude and OAT. At Mach 1.7 the afterburners were switched off. Above this speed the engines become more efficient with the "ram" effect feeding them with more air. Full power is maintained at Mach 2 gradually climbing as the fuel was consumed, reaching 57,000 feet three quarters of the way across the Atlantic. Passengers on the right side of the aircraft had a view of New York before touchdown. Flight time was 3 hours 20 minutes. Referring to local times we arrived at New York 10 minutes before we left London.

I thought the landing was a bit heavy; deceleration was very impressive using both reverse thrusts and wheel braking.

We had a laid-back week, staying with friends near Philadelphia, about 75 miles from JFK. We had a day at the beach; a day in New York, visited a "preserved" farm and went on several shopping trips...

On Monday 30th June, we got up at 4am and returned the car at 07:15. We "passed" through security after having all our shoes X-rayed, and as we approached the Concorde reception at 08:15, we were greeted with "You must be the Andersons"! We had breakfast; washed down with all the wine we wanted.

I had a left-hand side window seat this time. Taking off on the NW runway an immediate turn left was made to avoid Manhattan, maintaining the climbing turn going we were on course for the UK. Straight-line tracks are flown, as there is no real advantage looking for tailwinds. In the cruise, flight is extremely smooth, but the noise level is rather high. Our pilot explained that the fuel is used as a heat sink in the cooling systems and is shifted to alter the centre of gravity, thereby avoiding using the control surfaces and the resultant drag. The nose of the plane reached 119 degrees Celsius and the tail 93 degrees during the flight.

This is the world's only successful supersonic airliner, a magnificent achievement for the designers of 40 years ago. It is a terrible shame that this beautiful airliner was not developed further and is to be grounded.

I am absolutely delighted to have had the opportunity and excitement of flying in Concorde.

Jim & Angus Anderson

Friday 13th

Unlucky Friday 13th June 2003 started bright and sunny for me. The forecast for the forthcoming weekend was very good with a large "High" centred over the UK and I had planned to fly up to Lancashire to complete a type rating conversion on another Kitfox; something I had been waiting weeks to complete due weather delays etc. On the previous evening I had been to my home airstrip and kicked the tyres, checked the oil, topped up the fuel and carried out a quick 10 minute flight before leaving my own Kitfox, G-BTNR outside for an early start next morning. Little did I realize what lay in store for me the next day!

As my battery was a little weak I have had the habit of starting the Rotax 582 engine using an external battery when cold but once warmed up for the day normally have no problems. After checking the weather using an internet service (there are many to chose from these days but my choice is "avbrief.com" or "xcweather.co.uk" if you wish to check the winds) I set off for the private strip in Lancashire at about 9am. After settling down on course I checked a few ATIS broadcasts for the actual weather en route and to get an accurate QNH; then called RAF Shawbury asking for a MATZ penetration. This was granted at 2000ft on their QFE. I have found that my own altimeter setting reading is about 4 mbs in error so make an adjustment to whatever setting I obtain.

I was asked to make a call entering the MATZ area, but made another call when overhead Hodnet town out of courtesy as I do not have a transponder and wished to give an accurate fix prior to overflying the Ternhill ATZ. Up to now all had gone according to plan and I had seen both Sherlowe airstrip and Tilstock in the distance; both airstrips where I might have landed. I had been making small adjustments to the throttle setting, something I have always found necessary to do on my aircraft but suddenly noticed a distinct and definite slight reduction in rpm which caught my eye. I thought "Oh Dear, is this engine giving notice of a seizure". (In previous months I had become suspicious of the engine as the max rpm on take off had reduced from around 6200 to 6000 and based on previous experience where a Rotax 582 had failed on another aircraft on the very next flight, I had asked my engineer to check the engine over. All had appeared well with all the crankshaft tolerances being within limits but a change of spark plugs had made a slight but temporary difference). Seconds later:-

A sudden lurch and the engine ran down to almost zero. Shit I thought, engine failure! I collected my thoughts, trimmed the aircraft nose up and tightening my harness, turned slightly right to look at Ternhill Airfield behind me. Making a quick call to Shawbury I stated that I had suffered an engine failure, was northeast of Market Drayton, heading east looking for a field. The immediate response was to ask to call again when on the ground if able to do so and all other traffic was told to cease any calls. I learned later that the controller had thought of directing me towards Ternhill but concluded I would already be aware it was there having just passed almost overhead a minute or so earlier. I did not use the "Mayday" prefix as I was already in regular radio contact.

I briefly considered Ternhill Airfield but dismissed it as being possibly too far away, and into wind. (Do not stretch the Glide) Also the track passed over an industrial area. I then turned on



A Kitfox similar to Hugh's

to an easterly heading as what little wind there was, was from the west. I have always thought that turning downwind in the event of an engine failure gives you a better chance of picking a suitable landing area unless one is immediately obvious to you as you will cover more ground while looking around. I did not notice a private strip which was almost below me but chose an area of rather small fields. At this time of year I was concerned about the type of surface; I did not want to end up in a corn field. Thinking of the five "s"; size, shape, surface, slope, surroundings, I selected what turned out to be a perfect recently cut small grass and predominantly level field.

I concentrated on flying the aircraft, planned my descent profile which seemed to take an awfully long time, and did not make any further radio calls. I did turn off the mags, and attempted to turn off the fuel but since it involved loosening or undoing my shoulder harness, decided to leave it. I do not recall closing the throttle as the engine eventually stopped turning altogether. I was conscious of being high but this was of no concern to me as the Kitfox side-slips very well. I aimed the aircraft about 30 metres into the field and varied the side-slip angle to get there. On rounding out I found myself floating on for a while, despite a dead prop as I held off but was reluctant to force it down in case it bounced. I had used an indicated speed of around 60 mph.

Landing about half way into the field I then noticed electricity wires crossing the field near the far end which had not been seen earlier. I was also heading very nicely towards a pole but stopped about 20 metres short of it. I could have used the wheel brakes to avoid it but just let it come to a gentle stop. No further damage done I congratulated myself and made an immediate call to Shawbury that I was safely down, with no injuries, damage or fire! The Altimeter read Zero!

I then got out and thinking I had suffered a seizure checked the oil tank. It had gone down about an inch after 40 minutes of flying. I could also still turn the prop with difficulty but there were some nasty noises. I then made a number of calls to my home airfield, and my intended destination who had expected me to come by road, but quickly found my mobile battery had run down! The RAF in the meantime had diverted a DHFS/CFS Squirrel helicopter to the scene and the crew kindly landed to offer assistance if I had been injured in any way. That gesture was much appreciated and sincere thanks were later

sent by letter to the crew involved. After seeing I was safe and well and obviously elated about having pulled off a perfect forced landing, they went on their way.

As there were no livestock in the field I was then able to park the aircraft under some trees close to an open road gate on to the public road/country lane. I tied it down, took out my GPS and radio for safe keeping, secured the controls and locked it up. After visiting the farm where the lady kindly allowed me to use her own phone, I then walked down to the nearest main road having left the keys and taken addresses/ phone numbers etc. I completed my journey to Lancashire by hitching a very lucky lift from Market Drayton to Wigan; almost all the way up the M6 to my destination. Two other lucky lifts and I arrived at 2-30pm. only a couple of hours later than intended and was later able to complete the other Kitfox type conversion on the same day.

Good training and 5000 Hours of experience on light aircraft played an important part in completing a successful landing. I kept a cool head, flew the aircraft and did not as so many appear to do, pick the biggest field around. With good planning and the correct approach speed you can land most light aircraft in a relatively small space especially if there is a good headwind.

Friday the 13th was also a lucky day for me as well; at least the date gave me a good title for this report!

Postscript:- The event found itself on the front page of the local afternoon paper. Luckily for me I had telephoned my partner, Wendy, at 4pm, not wanting to worry her at work any earlier; just 30 minutes before our neighbour came round with the paper asking; Is this your Hugh?!



Another Kitfox similar to Hugh's

Engineering Report:- After recovery home by trailer, an advantage for a Kitfox, the engine was removed and stripped down, fully expecting to find a big end failure or hot seizure. This was not to be. Instead the engine was found to be in excellent condition but a fracture of the magneto end of the outer web of the crankshaft had occurred. The failure had all the hallmarks of a torsional vibration failure. Further investigation revealed that my engine was one of the earlier Rotax 582 engines which had NOT had a Hydro Damper fitted as recommended in a Rotax Service Bulletin issued in 1992, to reduce this type of failure. I might therefore have been the victim of an unfortunate oversight which I was not aware of! When buying an aircraft be sure you know the current modification state of your engine! Recorded log book hours were 242Hrs.20 mins.

Hugh Thompson (FFA No. 475)

FFA Airfield Owners and Operators Scheme

The FFA in association with M. P. Bolshaw & Co. Ltd, a specialist in aviation insurance, have created the Flying Farmers Association Airfield Owners and Operators Scheme. The basic policy is available in two parts. The first part covers the premises liability and there are two choices of cover limits available. The premium is determined by the **estimated third party aircraft movements each year** and by the limit of liability chosen by you.

ANNUAL MOVEMENTS THIRD PARTY AIRCRAFT	LIMIT OF LIABILITY £500,000	LIMIT OF LIABILITY £1,000,000
up to 100	£150.00	£265.00
up to 250	£200.00	£295.00
up to 500	£225.00	£315.00
up to 1000	£300.00	£375.00
up to 2000	£375.00	£425.00
over 2000	to be agreed	to be agreed

In addition to premises liability and if hangarage is provided, or if aircraft are kept in your care, custody and control, or where aircraft are moved by you or your employees, then you should include Hangarkeeper's liability for an additional 20% of the applicable premium. There is a £50,000 limit on this section and insurance premium tax will be charged at 5% of the final premium.

If the aircraft movements at your strip exceed 200 p.a. or if £50,000 any one hangarkeeper's liability is insufficient, or if you have any queries whatsoever, contact **Darren Smith at M. P. Bolshaw & Co. Ltd on 020 8953 8033** or fax 020 8207 4007 or email dns@mpbolshaw.co.uk This is also the contact should you wish to purchase cover.
Finally it is worth noting that the FFA are so concerned about this problem that they will be unable to organise an event at any strip that does not have this, or similar cover, for fear of exposing itself and in turn it's members.

On contacting Bolsahws, please tell them that you are an FFA member and quote your membership number.

Rise & Shine Aircraft TLC

Anthony Kedros recommends Rise & Shine Aircraft TLC for their excellent cleaning service and their Acrylic Teflon paint protection system. He said it was very good value.

Carl Barlow, the proprietor of Rise & Shine, has now done a number of FFA member's aeroplanes. You might recognise the one below!

The Acrylic Teflon finish is claimed to revitalise and protect old paintwork, often postponing an expensive respray. Carl also does helicopters, large aircraft and cars.

Contact Carl on 01926 885 999 (Leamington Spa), www.riseandshine.uk.net



David Chalmer's Robin Cadet


Bill Burton's Cessna Crusader



BoldFold Doors

William Procter recommends BoldFold Doors. He has just replaced his old taut sheet door with this bifold door. Made to measure by BoldFold Doors, William says they are an absolutely perfect fit and precision made. He now finds that with a simple press of a button, the doors go up or down in seconds by the use of a clever geared electric motor drive.

They can be fitted to any building and will be tailor made to almost any width and height. Notice how they were fitted to William's awkward shaped building. They have specials seals at the top and bottom to stop any rain or draughts blowing in.

Contact Doug Boldero at home 01621 772925, mobile 07889 955047 or email joyceboldero@farming.me.uk


William's BoldFold doors

FFA Tour of Australia, November 2004

Up to now, we know of at least 7 FFA couples who have taken part in GOANA tours round Australia. Several more are planning trips for this year and next. Nearly all have returned for a second tour, one couple have been on three different tours. This shows the success of the GOANA operation and the satisfaction of their customers.

Mal and Marjorie run a very efficient and friendly operation and they have built up a fleet of around 17 Cessna 172's, all refurbished and well maintained in their own hangars.


GOANA 172's at Emerald Airfield

On our last visit in November 2002 (see the December 2002 newsletter), we suggested to Mal that we ought to do an official Flying Farmer's tour and look a bit closer at farming in Australia. As it is also a relaxed holiday, we didn't want it to be too intense and we wanted to keep it of general interest as well to suite all participants. So we have come up with a very interesting itinerary that should be attractive to most of our members.

This is a brief outline;

Day

1 Arrive Brisbane. Transfer from airport and first night in Brisbane.
2 Checkout and briefing at Redcliffe (a very informal affair!)
3 Fly to Moree. Largest cotton area in Australia. Visit Pecan nut orchard and see wheat being harvested.
4 Land on Neil Unger's arable farm. Neil writes in our Arable Farming and is a flying farmer as well.
5&6 Haddon Rig, the foremost Merino Ram stud in Australia. Cotton is also produced on it's 70,000 acres.
7 Comeroo Station. Outback cattle, camel and sheep station.
8 Birdsville. On the eastern edge of the Simpson desert. A good cattle producing area. Visit a working museum.
9 Windorah. Hopefully meet Sandy Kidd, another flying farmer with over a million acres and the Order of Australia.
10&11 Avington Station. Owned by a delightful couple. Tour their farm by Mule or quadbike. Visit an organic cattle farm.
12 Mitchell. Stud piggery and artesian pools. A small rural town.
13 Bundaberg. Sugar cane farm and crushing mill. Also visit the famous Bundaberg Rum distillery.
14 Return to Redcliffe. Last night in Brisbane.

All the flying is VFR and outside controlled airspace. Even the GPS is set up for you, so it's a really relaxing flight.

We intend to run the tour in November 2004, possibly from the 7th to 20th. Any later and the weather gets too hot inland.

The tour is all inclusive, and I mean all inclusive. In fact you could do the whole trip with only the minimum amount of cash for the odd drink and personal spending. All the aircraft costs are included (about 24 hours flight time) as well as all accommodation including the first and last nights in Brisbane. All meals are included on the tour with the exception of the occasional lunch. As well as all entries, transfers, loan of maps and documentation and they will even do your licence validation for you. It also includes the costs of the tour director who is an encyclopaedia of local knowledge. He flies along as well in another aircraft with spares! This totals £2100 pp. It does not include your return flight to Australia.


"Don't put your fingers in there!"

The tour will be restricted to 6 or 7 couples, FFA members (plus wives or partners) only. We already have a few interested, so please fill in the reply slip to show your interest and I will send you the full itinerary and a map of the route. Payments will be direct to GOANA by credit card. There will be an initial £100 pp deposit by 1st October this year to secure your place, then a subsequent 25% instalment six and three months prior to departure. The balance can be paid on arrival in Australia in November 2004. We do not book the return flight to Australia for you as most people extend their visit either before or afterwards in Australia, or for very little extra cost you could buy a round the world ticket and include visits to New Zealand and the Pacific Islands!

For further information, give me a ring on 01944 738281 or 07711 201431. I will be more than happy to tell you of our experiences of two GOANA adventures and travel arrangements.

Paul Stephens

Thunder City



Our President, Dick Walgate recently visited Thunder City in South Africa. Here's his report of the visit and his meeting with some FFA members on an Air Squadron tour.

For those members who are not sure what Thunder City is and where, I will give a brief description quoting from the official particulars;

Thunder City offers a first for tourists—come and view our 18 operational ex-combat jets—the largest civilian owned collection in the world. Based alongside Cape Town's International Airport, Thunder City offers a viewing opportunity as well as flights in these incredible machines.

The 72 million Rand (approx £6 million) Thunder City development includes guided tours of the hangar in which are the only three English Electric Lightnings and the only three BAE Buccanners flying. It also has seven Hawker Hunters and one BAC Strikemaster along with other aircraft such as the Piaggio Albatross and a Piper Aztec.

A Gloster Javelin welcomes visitors at the impressive entrance, while a DeHaviland Vampire is proudly displayed on the lawns outside the main building. Other static aircraft in the Technoland area include an ex SAAF Buccaneer, two FI Mirages, a Sabre, two Westland Wasps and a Sikorsky 862 helicopter.

The cost of your flight in the two seater Lightning, including the half day ground pre-flight is US $9000, or the Buccaneer is US $6500. The Hawker Hunter is a mere US $3500. The Piper Aztec would be R4000 per hour (£333). Thunder City claims to offer the ultimate flying experience.

You can book your visit by calling Andrew on +27 21 934 8007 or email Andrew@thundercity.com.

It is well worth a visit to this unique collection of jets—I can recommend it but I didn't have a flight, so unfortunately I can't tell you what that was like!!!

I was hoping to take in the Stellenbosch Airshow at the same time on my visit to Thunder City, but unfortunately the weather was so bad that all the flying on the 22nd March had to be cancelled and no aeroplanes flew over the two day period. 8 inches of rain fell on the Saturday in the area, washing away roads and bridges leaving many farms cut off for days.



Stellenbosch is rated to have one of the best airshows in South Africa and both the Lightning and the Buccaneer were due to fly.

I was however very pleased to receive an invitation to attend a function in Cape Town given to the Air Squadron by the South Africans to support the South African President's initiatives around the African Renaissance and the African Century.

This was a most interesting reception and I was pleased to see several members of the Flying Farmers present on this auspicious occasion. They had flown their own aircraft down to Cape Town and had a successful visit.

Dick Walgate