FLYING FARMERS ASSOCIATION



Newsletter No. 92

August 2006

Opening Thoughts

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Cover photograph;

Taken by Roz Stephens. The line up at Fano on the Italian Tour.

Chairman's Message

Harvest is almost upon us, when our thoughts and energies will shift from aviation to agriculture. We will experience again the mad rush to beat the weather – not unlike flying, in fact!

This year the Association has offered us more events than ever before, spread all over the country. Feedback from these has been very positive – our thanks to all who have made them so successful.

October and our AGM will soon be here. The weather for this seems usually to be adverse and cause havoc. The Committee has considered moving the AGM forward or backwards by a month, but when we look back to past years when the AGM was held in the spring or the summer we find that bad weather still caused problems. The venue for this year's AGM has been chosen for its more central location, and also for its easy road and rail access just in case we can't make it by air. Details of the AGM are in this issue; it should be an excellent day and we are privileged to have Terry Lober as our speaker. Mr Lober has produced a report, commissioned by GAAC, into the state of GA. For me this made depressing reading, but with GA's decline there may well be opportunities for the future, particularly for those wishing to commercialise their airstrips.

This week has brought me a shock: when seeking to buy some avgas in bulk I was told that two of the European refineries producing 100LL will be off-line for at least two months and maybe longer. There is a shortage of 100LL and that is partly the reason why I will have to pay 58% more than last time. Here's hoping for a good harvest!

Please try to make the AGM. It's going to be worth it – and it's free!

John Golden

Editor's Notes

As usual, this August edition of the newsletter is full of reports of the summer events. I make no apologies for the amount of space taken up by the FFA Tour of Italy, as there was a lot to report and the contributors have written some very interesting accounts of their experiences. The shame is that as editor, I've had to reduce the content rather than ask for more!

We are so lucky in the FFA to be able to visit the places we do. To go to an RAF base one day, a tomato farm another, then to have lunch in a castle and to be able to see Oceanic Control; these are just a few of the many opportunities that the FFA offered this year, that very few other organisations can. Over the years we have been so privileged to be invited into people's homes and businesses, both in this country and abroad and see how they live their lives. On top of this we actually fly there, which gives us another dimension not available to most.

On a slightly different note, the e-news and photo gallery have been popular additions this year, to the services that the FFA provide for the membership. I've lost count of the number of e-news that have been sent out, but probably exceeds 40 mini newsletters which have resulted in members getting advice on airstrips, notices of forthcoming events, items for sale and forewarning of political changes and consultation documents.

The photo gallery now has almost 1000 photographs taken at FFA events in recent years and arranged into 40 albums, to keep them tidy. They can be viewed as slide shows and some have been looked at more than 200 times. They can be viewed by going to the FFA website, then to Photos. Please send me your pictures either by email or on a disc.

There will be a change of policy regarding Committee members retiring at the AGM. This is to bring our Association into line with other organisations. We already have one new Committee member this year and for the good of the Association, new Committee members should be encouraged, to bring fresh ideas and keep the FFA going forward. But of course we still need some long standing ones to maintain the direction we should be heading.

Paul Stephens

Committee Members

Dick Walgate	President	01472 371203
John Golden	Chairman	01725 552384
Paul Stephens	Secretary	01944 738281
Andrew Cragg	Treasurer	01303 874251
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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Notice of AGM

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of the above Company will be held at SYWELL AIRPORT, NORTHAMPTON on Thursday 12th October 2006 at 11.00am to receive and consider the Committee's Report and Accounts, and to transact the ordinary business of the Club, including elections to the Committee and to amend clause 52 of our articles to read as follows:-

Subject as hereinbefore provided, the first members of the Committee shall hold office until the second Annual General Meeting of the Association at which the new Committee shall be elected. For each AGM up to and including the AGM of 2005 all members of the Committee shall retire at the Annual General Meeting in each year, but shall be eligible for re-election.

For the AGM of 2006 and all subsequent AGM's two members of the committee shall retire from office and shall be eligible for immediate re-election. The members to retire in each year shall be those who have been longest in office since their last election, but as between persons who became members on the same day those to retire shall (unless they otherwise agree among themselves) be determined by lot.

Paul Stephens (Hon Secretary)

Gripe Time

It pains me to write this, but the committee tell me that it's my duty as Chairman to address the issue. Some of the organisers of recent events have been disappointed and embarrassed by the attitude and behaviour of some of our members, particularly those who agree to attend events then just don't turn up.

We have an almost unique Association in that the majority of its members share the ethos of freely giving their time and talents for the benefit of others. What other organisation does so much for its members for a mere £25 a year? Heading up the FFA is the Committee whose members meet at least twice a year at considerable personal expense in time and travelling costs, as well as being constantly in touch with each other on various issues as they arise. Paul and his contributors produce a most excellent magazine for us. Event organisers give their time, money and skills – and things are not always as straight-forward as you may think!

I am trying to make the point that while many members give unstintingly there are a minority of members who are spoiling things for others by their lack of respect and their bad manners.

Please bear in mind the following:

- Always be mindful of the courtesy and consideration we owe to our hosts (and often their families or staff), who have laid on the programme, transport and sometimes food, usually at no cost to the Association.
- Events are laid on for members and not members' guests. It would be wrong to allow guests to attend events where numbers are limited at the expense of members who wish to attend. If you wish to bring a guest, check with the organiser first, and never bring a guest or guests without prior agreement.
- Don't book up for an event and then a day or two before it say that you would rather be doing something else. We understand that a genuine emergency may arise, but that is very different from a casual no-show.
- If you are booked up for an event and for any reason cannot make it on the day, please let the organiser know and save him the embarrassment of holding the coach while he tries to get you on his mobile phone.
- Especially on several-day events, please be on time for meals, coach departures and programme items. It's funny (or not) how it's often the same people who hold us up ....
- Finally, if you or a guest might have any commercial conflict of interest with the host of an event, please tell the organiser and check it all out beforehand.

Let's not be negative but positive, and work together for an even better organisation.

John Golden

Committee Decisions

The Committee met on July 4th at Tollerton.

As can be seen in this newsletter, a decision was made to alter the way the Committee members offer themselves for re-election - this is covered by Mike Ashmole on page 4. Also, on the same page, the AGM meeting was planned.

By request, name tags will be brought back in for the benefit of all and when a new member attends. This will probably be just a simple stick on label that you can write your own name on. They will be issued by the organizer of the event.

There were the usual membership reports etc. (now 371 members) and a discussion about what to do with ex members from whom we still receive standing orders (see page 23).

It was also felt that the Chairman should write the notice on this page regarding attendance at events.

Welcome to New Members

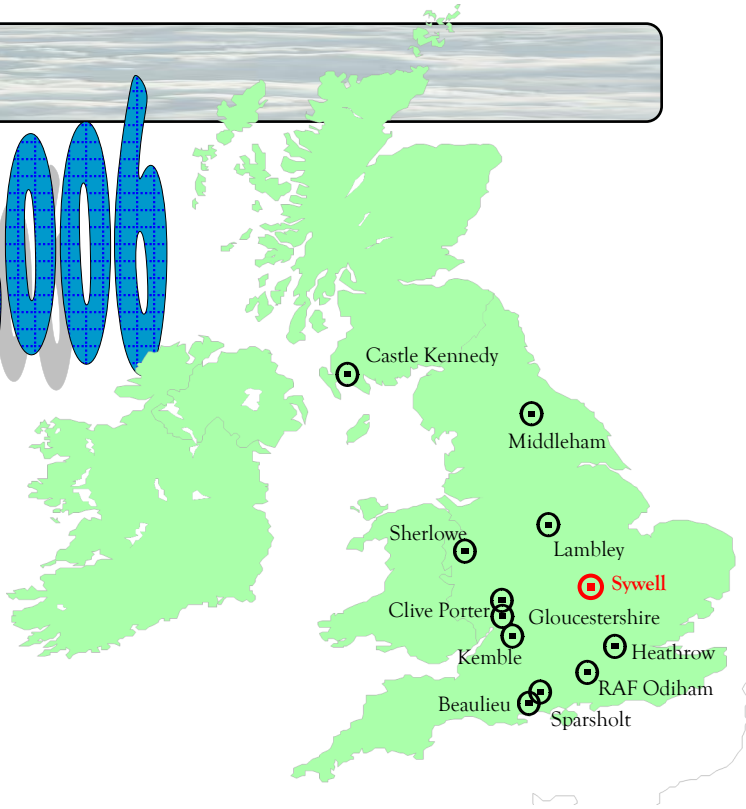
Since 1st March 2006, the following have joined

786 Adrian Hatton, Newark
787 Miles Bowen, Gwent
788 Chris Awdry, Trowbridge, Wiltshire
789 Charles Papworth, Conington, Cambridgeshire
790 Roche Bentley, Cambridge
791 Giles Aubrey, Long Melford, Suffolk
792 John Richardson, Tiverton, Devon
206 Terry Case, Sidmouth, Devon - rejoined

Sorry to Lose You

436 Ian Bonham-Smith, Warsach, Hampshire (deceased)
371 Richard Elliott, Southwell, Notts. (unpaid sub)
284 T W Gore, Hungerford, Berks. (unpaid sub)
639 Neil Martin, Carnforth, Lancs (unpaid sub)
162 David Stokes, Shepton Mallet (unpaid sub)
664 M J Stones, London (unpaid sub)
301 John Trible, Holsworthy, Devon (unpaid sub)

Programme 2006



AGM, Sywell, 12th October 2006

As you will see in the formal notice (page 3) we are holding the AGM at Sywell on the 12th October 2006. The programme is as follows:-

10.30	Assemble at the Aviation Hotel at Sywell Airport EGBK for coffee.
11.00	AGM
12.00	A presentation by Tony Lober, author of the recent report on the state of G.A. in the U.K. and it's likely impact on our members.
13.15	Buffet Lunch.
14.00	It is hoped to arrange a short visit to Sloane's Helicopters and or Flylight, agents for the Skyranger Aircraft, both on site.
15.30	Departure.

The day is being organized by Mike Ashmole. Tear off slips should be returned to him as a notice of intent to attend so that we know how many to cater for.

There will be no charge for the day; all it will cost you is the landing fee. The Committee feel that at the AGM, the room facilities, the speaker's costs and the refreshments should be paid for by the Association.

We hope that with the programme arranged, it will encourage as many of you as possible to attend. The location is central and the speaker will be very interesting to those that operate and fly aircraft. Sloane Helicopters is owned by David George, an FFA member.

Election to The Committee

At our last Committee Meeting we agreed to propose a change to our Articles of Association, in regard to our election of Committee Members (Directors) to bring us into line with current practice, and in addition if adopted it will be easier for aspiring Committee Members (Directors) to gain access to this "Elite Body."

The proposed change is set out in the notice of the AGM and will require 75% of those attending to be in favour, before it can be adopted. Assuming the proposal is adopted it will create three vacancies on the Committee, two from retiring members, John Golden and Mike Cuttell and one arising from the resignation of David Corbett.

John and Mike are eligible for re-election as is Andrew Cragg, who was co-opted to replace David and subsequently appointed treasurer.

The procedure for nominating Committee members is set out in Clause 54 as follows:-

No person other than a retiring Committee member shall be eligible for election to the Committee at any general meeting unless, not less than 3 nor more than 21 days before the day appointed for the meeting, there shall have been given to the Secretary notice in writing, by some member qualified to be present and vote at the meeting for which such notice is given, of his intention to propose such person for election, and also notice in writing, signed by that person, of his willingness to be elected.

I am sorry if all this seems bureaucratic and pedantic, but I must remind members that we are a limited company and are bound by the Companies Act.

Mike. Ashmole

Please make your nominations on the tear off slip and return to Mike Ashmole to be opened by him between 21/09/06 and 09/10/06.

Events Cancelled

Unfortunately, two of the summer events had to be cancelled - the Ironbridge Museum and the Farm Diversification event in Nottinghamshire. There were insufficient entries to make them worthwhile. It was thought this was a matter of timing due to the first being the day after the European Tour and the second on the first day of Cereals. It was also thought that there were maybe too many events organized at that particular time.

Sorry to those that were booked in and to the organizers.

Events such as these set above 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

Visit to Sparsholt and Twyford Waterworks, April 12th 2006.



In view of the perception that British Agriculture is in a terminal state, you would have thought that the very notion of an agricultural college would be very much a thing of the past. Surely, any surviving college would be a dismal place of low attendance, poorly funded and staffed by lecturers who had seen agriculture decline over the years and who would feel unable to enthuse future generations of British farmers? Well, for all I know, there might be more than a little truth in this analysis as far as the generality of colleges is concerned but a visit to **Sparsholt College** near Winchester in Hampshire would prove you wrong in nearly every respect.

I say 'nearly' because Sparsholt, established in 1899, has achieved its positive outlook by moving with the times and accepting that pure agriculture *per se* will be a minority activity in the British countryside of the future. Our guide Nigel MacPherson, a veteran of twenty-five years, explained; only ten per cent of the curriculum involves traditional agriculture and forestry based on 350 acres. Of the 1200 students, half are women. So what does the college teach? Their mission statement gives a clue: "To be the regional and a major national centre of excellence for land-based education and training for learners and for businesses and to provide local, high quality courses, meeting the general, vocational skills needs of the communities and businesses of mid and north Hampshire".

Courses, full-time, part-time, higher- and further educational, include:

Agriculture
Animal Management & Veterinary Nursing
Animal behaviour & Training
Forestry & Woodland Management
Equine Studies
Fishery Studies
Aquaculture
Horticulture & Garden Design
Sport & Outdoor Education
Game, Wildlife & Countryside Management
Rural Business Management
Engineering / Mechanisation, Motor Vehicles & Construction

The facilities and buildings are of the highest standard throughout the campus, and qualify for extra public funding because of the college's Centre of Excellence status. The college has first class conference facilities, is accessible to the public by hosting open days throughout the year and through its garden centre, and accommodates the BBC Radio 4 "Gardeners' Question Time" garden.

Seven aircraft landed at John Dunford's excellent strip within the Southampton CTR to be greeted by Neville Stops, the trip's organiser. Pilots and passengers were minibussed to the College and, together with other FFA members, around eighteen in total, were given the tour of the college followed by an excellent lunch in the Conference Centre.

The departments visited included the Aquatic Centre which housed aquaria of exotic tropical fish and coral in addition to the various carps; the Veterinary Centre which had all the facilities of a veterinary practice, including operating theatre; small animal unit with everything from gerbils to snakes, even beetles, birds and lizards, from the cuddly to the . . . less so. We were suitably awed by the size of the indoor riding arena (an outdoor school was being built) and the equine facilities. We visited the pig unit, horticultural department and the fish rearing and sporting lake.

After lunch we were driven to **Twyford Waterworks** which extracts water from its underground chalk reservoir at a rate of 5 million gallons (22 million litres) a day for distribution to the local South Hampshire area.

The plant was built in 1898 by sinking, by hand, a well 12 ft (3.9 m) by 74 ft (24 m) deep. A second well was sunk two years later bringing the water extracted to a maximum of a quarter of a million gallons (11 million litres) per day, powered by steam pumping engines.

Over the years the wells have been deepened and the power plants replaced, first in 1914 by the Hawthorn Davey triple expansion steam engine which is still on site, and subsequently by the four cylinder Ruston diesel and Gwynnes pump in the 1930s. Today the water is lifted by two submersible electric pumps.

From 1903 to 1969, interrupted by the two World Wars, water softening was part of the process. For this, local chalk (calcium carbonate) was kiln fired to produce quick lime (calcium oxide). The quick lime was slaked with water to produce calcium hydroxide and diluted to make lime water. Adding lime water to the hard water softened it by separating out the insoluble calcium carbonate which settled out or was removed by filters.

Apart from the main engines many other pumps, engines, boilers and machines were used, many of which are still on site and of interest to the connoisseur. The buildings themselves being remarkable examples of harmonious industrial architecture.

Our thanks to Martin Gregory and John Dale of the Twyford Waterworks Trust for sharing their enthusiasm and knowledge; also to Nigel MacPherson and the staff at Sparsholt; to John Dunford for the use of his strip; and of course to Neville Stops for organising a superb visit.

Anthony Kedros

RAF Odiham, May 10th 2006.

In East Anglia we woke to a bright sunny morning and thought that the second FFA meeting of the year would follow the first with a clear day for all the participants to fly in. As we turned the corner by Biggin Hill to head west, the cloud thickened and lowered and the weather at Odiham was distinctly less good than when we left home. Booking in with our organiser Ian Bonham-Smith, it was clear that we were the lucky ones and those intending to fly from the south had been faced with an early morning cloud base of 300' – so, as is so common with our events, the weather played a big part in who was able to fly in.

But equally, and as always, many members rise to the challenge if unable to fly and those within striking distance jumped into their cars to give a creditable turn-out of 34 participants, with 13 aircraft able to fly in.

There would have been a greater turnout, but Ian took phone calls from no fewer than 6 participants on the day before the event (and some even as late as the morning of the event) to say they didn't think they would come because they were 'too busy'. This is not acceptable to an organiser who puts an enormous amount of effort in laying on an event with all the planning that goes into it, and is very discourteous to the host of the day, who put themselves to great trouble to accommodate us all. Illness or unservicability is a perfectly valid reason for cancelling – being 'too busy' is not.

Having said that, the day for the rest of us began with a lengthy and very in depth briefing by the Station Commander, Group Captain Sean Reynolds, on the history of the station and the very extensive role of the Chinook helicopter in both peace time and war, and included a video presentation which vividly showed the role and capability of this remarkable machine in all theatres.

A lunch in the Officers mess was then taken after which we were given a presentation by Flt. Lt. Jonnie Smith and Sgt. Matt Wadsworth, pilot and loadmaster respectively on a Chinook. They talked to us about operations and operating the machine and Matt explained to us how the pilot's job was just to fly it, whereas the loadmaster had the responsibility of all aspects of its serviceability, fuel loading and cargo. A normal crew consists of two pilots and two loadmasters. There is complete and absolute trust between the pilots and loadmasters as the pilots are unable to see anything to the rear or below the helicopter. When 'hooking' a load, the loadmasters hang out of the doors to check the positioning required, and the minute adjustments needed are called out to the pilots via their headsets. This is also the case when embarking or disembarking troops from the mountainous areas, when there maybe a requirement to 'land' the rear wheels and ramp on a rocky outcrop, but the front end is still flying over a drop which may be of many thousands of feet, and which is all the pilots can see. Hence the absolute trust required between the crew members.

It is the only helicopter to be able to operate at the high altitudes prevalent in Pakistan – many of its operations being carried out at 14,000 ft and above. This is where its two powerful engines come into their own although it's payload is reduced from about 19 tons to nearer 2 tons at these altitudes. Serviceability is critical at these heights, as an engine failure up there would mean the second engine taking you fairly swiftly to the scene of the crash. The other helicopters deployed in Pakistan such as the Lynx and Sea King would not be able to even get to that height, let alone carry any payload, and nor would the latest technology helicopter, the Merlin.

Having been given this presentation, we were taken outside to a parked Chinook, split into two groups and given an in depth explanation of all aspects of the machine both internally by Matt and externally by Jonnie. It was obvious that the crews love operating the helicopter and find it a robust and safe platform from which to operate. It's safety record is second to none, and in fact the last time that a Chinook was lost was the accident on the Mull of Kintyre way back in June 1994. Probably the biggest advantage that the Chinook has over other helicopters is its ability to carry underslung loads via three hooks – the centre one having the greatest capacity of a staggering 11 tonnes. Matt the loadmaster says it is an alarming feeling when it is used to its full capacity as you can feel the whole fuselage bending around the hook mounting points as it starts to lift, and when you look down the fuselage side they appear to ripple – but he assured us that they had never yet broken a fuselage!

All our questions satisfied, and there were many, we were taken back indoors and shown a display of assorted weaponry as used by friendly forces, and an array of those used by the many enemy forces encountered around the world. We were all encouraged to handle as many items as we liked and to ask lots of questions. This was done with much gusto by most of us, and some of the resulting photos may amuse you by going to see the pictures taken on the day and posted on the FFA website under the 'RAF Odiham' folder. For me the display of many different types of land mines used all around the world and the in depth explanation of how they all work and the difficulty of their detection was the most sinister part of 'small arms' warfare.

Playtime over, events were now drawing to a close, and we reassembled in the conference hall to hear a final word from the Station Commander before our departure. He is an avid light aircraft enthusiast, and was looking forward to meeting us all on the flight line by our aircraft and having a good look at them, but unfortunately time ran out for him as he had an appointment to attend and so all he could manage was a quick drive up and down the line before rushing off to his meeting.

The day was so ably arranged by Ian Bonham Smith – but could not have happened without the stalwart efforts of Flt. Lt. Susie Woods on behalf of RAF Odiham, who accompanied and cajoled us throughout the day!. We were very privileged to have been allowed have this visit to this very active RAF station, and our great thanks go to Ian and Susie for setting it all up for us. David Corbett gave a vote of thanks, and a presentation of a



The group and a Chinook

Visit to the Vale of Evesham, May 12th 2006.

Early morning on Friday 12th dawned misty, and I suspect several people booked into the trip that day wondered if flying would be possible. Luck was on our side, and by 9 - 10 o'clock the sun appeared and most of the 13 planes booked into Clive Porter's strip at Croft Farm were able to make the journey.

Rick and Laura Holt welcomed a good attendance of people, and told us what was planned for that day. We all boarded a coach to the asparagus fields. There we were met by Clive and Michael Porter, who showed us 1 year old asparagus, and then Polish students cutting; 8 people walking behind a slow moving tractor. We then went to the packhouse owned by Red Star Growers. They also grow salad onions and cabbages. The asparagus has total traceability, and it is washed and graded in hugh machines (made in N.Z.) They mainly grow for Waitrose, but also supply Sainsbury's Somerfield's and Morrison's.

Out of 100 tons of cut asparagus, about 40 tons is waste (not what I would call waste) not up to the very strict Supermarket standards. They also had raspberries and strawberries under glass to catch the early markets. Strawberries were already being picked.

We then boarded the coach for a superb lunch at the "Round of Gras", a public house specialising in asparagus



Picking asparagus

meals. Very good.

We then went to Rick and Laura's farm, and were greeted by the most amazing sight - 6 acres of new glasshouses with the most incredible tomatoes I think we had seen. The variety is Piccolo, which is an Italian cherry tomato, ripened on the vine. They have 10 acres of glass altogether.

The growing system is Nutrient Film Technique, whereby the plants are sitting in a flowing stream of nutrients. The plants are suspended from the roof, so that the operations of picking and deleafing can be done at a convenient height. They employ 1 full time and 14 "Concordia" university students who do a 6 month stint. They are Ukranian, Bulgarian and Polish. Very hard working, and they can earn about £350 per week 6 a.m. - 4 p.m. One of the fascinating sights was the pollination which was achieved by buying in bumble bees, and gradually releasing them into the glasshouses. There is also natural pest control - bugs to eat bugs.

Our day ended with tea and cakes in Rick & Laura's Office, and everyone seemed happy to stay and chat. We all had a



Piccolo tomatoes

sample of asparagus and tomatoes, which everyone was delighted with. So ended a superb day much enjoyed by everyone. Many thanks to all who made this day possible.

Jane & William Procter

A Two Day Visit to North Yorkshire, May 17th & 18th 2006

Arrival and Mark Johnstone's Racing Yard

Around 10am on Wednesday 17th May, most aeroplanes had landed at Mark Johnston's immaculate new strip (just finished this spring), some having braved a very low cloud base in the midlands and south, others turning back to try again later, arriving just in time for lunch. After welcome coffee, tea and biscuits, we were taken on a tour of the racing yard by a very informative and jolly Scott by the name of Jock Bennett. He told us they had around 220 horses in full time training there. He gave us an insight into the meticulous attention these horses are given to attain their full racing potential, such as being fed four times in 24 hours 12pm~ 6pm~10pm~3am. Exercised daily on the famous gallops just above Middleham, swimming exercise in a large circular purpose built pool and regular weighing to check their optimum racing weight. The daily attention of an onsite resident vet and when called upon Simon Stirk who when he is not marshalling aeroplanes doubles up as one of the UK's top equine veterinarians (Mark himself is also a fully qualified vet). All in all it is not hard to see why the yard is so successful.

As time was moving on and lunch beckoning a stop had to



Horses can swim

put to the never ending stream of questions Jock was bombarded with.

Chris Makin gave a vote of thanks to Jock and everyone at the yard. We then departed to the Blue Lion for lunch where Jock fielded even more questions until we moved off for the afternoons visits.

Metcalfe Farms

After lunch approximately half the party visited Metcalfe Farms at Leyburn just to the north of Middleham. (The others went to the Forbidden Corner - a garden of surprises). This is truly a family affair run by three brothers Brian, David, Kieth and Mr Metcalfe senior.

On our arrival we were met by Brian who showed us around the farm.

They milk around 500 holstien-friesian cows twice a day through a 20-20 side opening parlour, all the milk going to a local dairy. The cows are on a complete feed diet of grass + maize silage and a mixture of straights, maize meal, soya, fish meal etc all mixed in a large building with huge bunkers for each type of feed and is then fed by feeder wagon down troughs in the cubicle houses

The Metcalfes are also agricultural contractors, probably the largest in the north of England. They are into all forms, grass + maize silaging, combing, ploughing, seedbed preperations etc. They also have a road haulage business.

We were able to wander amongst the rows of huge tractors and combines and ogle at the massive well equipped workshop and note how clean and tidy everything was kept - a sign of a well run and efficient operation.

Mr Metcalfe senior took great pride in showing us his collection of vintage tractors on which he spends many hours lovingly restoring them, his latest being a 1919 Fordson which he duly started up and drove round the lawn, it having metal spadelug wheels did not do much for the lawn.

If all this was not enough to keep the family busy, they have just gone into partnership with four other people in a 35000 acre farm 200 miles to the east of Moscow. Brian was heard to say that it took two artic loads of roundup to clean up the land as it had been an ex commune farm which had gone bankrupt and the land left to grow weeds. This year will see their first harvest (we all wish them a good one) as this is a very risky and brave venture. But if anyone can pull it off, I am sure they can.

A good old fashioned Yorkshire tea of cream scones and fruit cakes etc was then kindly served by Mrs Metcalfe.



After a vote of thanks was ably given by Stuart Falshaw we went our weary way to Swinton Castle for the nights stay full of thoughts of the day.

Gordon Bellerby

Wensleydale

On Thursday morning we climbed into our various modes of transport for the journey to Hawes. Bus passengers had the pleasure of a very amusing driver who must have listened to Al Read a lot! We detoured slightly to savour the Aysgarth Falls – a real bonus.

The history of the Creamery is remarkable. It was started in the thirties and sold to the Milk Marketing Board in the sixties. In 1992 they closed it down, transferring the cheese production to Lancashire and making 59 staff redundant – a major blow for Hawes. However with drive and determination from the legendary Kit Calvert a management buyout was achieved and with just 11 of the former workforce cheese making was recommenced and the proper Wensleydale flavour and identity recaptured.

After a short video a charming young lady (a farmers daughter) showed us on a small scale how the cheese is produced and we became familiar with such terms as renetting, scalding, cutting and ripping. Then we were able to observe through a window the whole operation. It certainly looked very labour intensive and apart from stainless steel vats the process obviously hadn't changed much since the Cistercean monks settled in Wensleydale in 1150. Now 170 people are employed and the Creamery has a turnover of £16 million a year. The highlight is the visitor centre with viewing gallery that attracts 200,000 visitors a year, and the shop which sells the whole range of their cheeses. Both were very busy.

A most enjoyable visit and one couldn't help but admire the courage, grit, determination and excellent marketing which has led to such a successful business. A morning well spent.

Pat Nutt

Brymoor Icecream

After a superb lunch at the creamery we made our way back down the dale to Brymor ice-cream for our last visit of the trip at East Witton, being royally entertained by our coach driver who had obviously missed his way as an after dinner speaker.

We were met by Robert Moore who, along with his father Brian, run this 200 acre farm where they milk 120 Guernseys, all the milk produced being used in the ice-cream business. They moved to East Witton some 14 years ago from a farm just south of Harrogate after their ice-cream business became so successful they ran into problems with the amount of cars visiting the premises and were unable to gain planning permission for a larger car park.

Our first port of call was the ice-cream parlour for a tasting, only to be met by Dick Walgate on his way out who was already on his second cone [Dick confessed he had been before and was an addict].

Licking our cones we were taken on a tour of the farm. We were able to see into the ice-cream making area through a special viewing window seeing an array of very sophisticated stainless steel machinery involved in making the many flavours of ice-cream and clotted cream. We then moved into the cubical house to see the cows being milked by two Lely robotic milkers. These machines wash the cows teats, put the clusters on and take them off automatically when finished. The cow enters



Dick & Martin fascinated by the robotic milking machine

voluntarily, a special stall where she is fed dairy ration [the amount being determined by computer]. When finished milking a gate opens automatically she walks out and the next cow walks in.

Watching this kept everyone entranced, the most striking thing was how quiet and de-stressed the cows were and how well they looked. "The way forward for the dairy farming industry"!

Time was pressing so everyone was rounded up from different parts of the farm, most were to be found still watching the robots at work, Dick in the ice-cream parlour just about to start his third large cone.

Those travelling by car said their farewells. The rest of us boarded the coach to return to the strip at Middleham. Once aboard, the driver could not resist telling us one last joke which took some time in the telling, but judging by the ensuing laughter it was worth the wait, a fitting way to round off an enjoyable two days.

Gordon Bellerby

FFA Tour of Italy 2006

The layout of this script is based on reports from the participants, relating some of the visits on the tour, and Paul Stephens linking those reports together with background information (in italics).

The FFA has had two brief encounters with Italy on past European tours and had no real intention of carrying out a full blown tour of the country, known for its bureaucratic and inefficient ways - until Richard Howard came out of the blue. He declared that he had some contacts in Italy and wanted to contribute something to the FFA by setting up some visits to make a European Tour of Italy, in recompense for his years of enjoyment on previous tours: But he didn't want to actually organize and run the trip.

I took this suggestion to an FFA Committee meeting and foolhardily said that if no one else wanted to take it on, then I would. So started almost 12 months of work and what ended up to be daily telephone calls between Richard and myself as we hit problem after problem.

Whilst trying to tie up loose ends, Richard came out with a lovely saying - "It's like trying to pen sheep in the dark with a hole in the fence", meaning that just when we thought we had one part of the tour under control, another part would fall to pieces.

Roz and I did a recce in March 2006 which was absolutely invaluable. Having met number of our 'contacts' we learnt so much about the Italians and the ways they like to do business. We found that they are far better to deal with directly and don't seem to respond very well to emails. In fact in nearly all cases, they turned out to be very welcoming and good hosts, which belied the feelings we got from the letters we exchanged with them. So we now felt more confident to conduct 39 Flying Farmers round Italy.

When corresponding with the airfields, the thought of 17 aircraft arriving seemed to overwhelm them and they talked of it being an 'invasion'. We found that the club airfields where fantastic, but some of the major airports - Parma in particular - were not accommodating and didn't really want us there.

So, we had a programme, the hotels and transport were booked and the airfields were expecting us - but we (the organizers) set off fully expecting a load of problems; the weather wasn't really one of them. This is how it went.

Sunday 28th May

Getting to Vercelli – The last one to arrive!

The plan was simple, 17 aircraft and 39 members were to make their way to Vercelli (LILI) in northern Italy for the welcome dinner at 7.30 pm on Sunday 28th May. My father and I had allowed two days to cover the approx 500nm direct route from a farm strip in north Bucks.

Problem No.1: torrential rain all day on Saturday resulting in waterlogged runway and weather below minima. So we finally departed on a glorious Sunday morning at 0800 and routed Maidstone, Reims, Dijon. Listening to other aircraft call signs on the airwaves we could decipher that we were not the only FFA plane that had been held up by the weather. Heading further south the cloud base descended and we found ourselves at 1500 feet, skimming across the vast agricultural patchwork of Northern France. Approaching Dijon the terrain becomes more interesting and that classic phenomena of warm moist air rising over the hills created a 'pea soup' virtually to ground level. So 20nm north of Dijon we about turned and headed back to Troyes (LFQB) and better weather.

At Troyes, three other aircraft from the group who were experiencing similar difficulties, joined us. From Troyes there are two options to get to Italy; direct over the Alps or the much longer route south to the Med and in along the coast. With the excellent weather facilities at Troyes we established that the conditions over Southern France were clear and over the Alps was improving. Two aircraft took the brave decision to fly through the Alps (and got through but had some very interesting experiences!!) whilst we decided to go the long way round, routing South to Monaco. The scenery was spectacular with the snow caps to our left and the blue sea of the Med ahead. By the time we had re-fuelled ourselves and the plane, along the way we found ourselves swooping over Monte-Carlo as dusk was settling and the post Grand-Prix celebrations were underway. It was clear that we would not make it to Vercelli in the light so we diverted to Albenga (LIMG) which is approx 40nm east of



Monaco.

Having heard so much about the difficulties of Italian airports, I couldn't recommend another airport more (except perhaps Vercelli). The runway lights on final were a welcome sight and within minutes we were tied down, escorted to the terminal, had a taxi and hotel booked for us (all at 9.30 pm on a Sunday night!).

After a very pleasant evening we departed the next morning for the short trip north to Vercelli where we were the last plane to arrive to join the rest of the group for lunch.

As an interesting contrast, two days later I had to return to the UK and took a Ryanair flight from Palma for 15 Euro's which took 1hr 45 minutes.

Wilaf Moore

The weather played a big part for the duration of the tour. As related by Wilaf, it started at home and the low pressure and frontal system had obviously read our itinerary and knew exactly where to go next to make life difficult and sometimes impossible for us.

On arrival at the hotel, there was a fax waiting for me. Ian Denney, an Englishman living in Parma, had volunteered to join us on the trip to act as interpreter and local problem solver, as he was familiar with Italian ways. In fact I was relying on him as some of our hosts didn't speak a word of English. Ian had sent this fax to say that we would hate him for it, but he now couldn't join us and he was letting us down.

Another sheep escaping the pen!

Monday 29th May

Rice growing in Vercelli

A few participants for this year's study tour, due to assemble on Sunday May 28th at Vercelli, in Northern Italy, left the UK during the week, but those that set forth at the weekend were faced with a front lying across the channel and most of France. For a while it looked as though many crews would not arrive by the Sunday, but as the day wore on, more and more planes arrived with varying tales of determination against the elements, and by nightfall all but one had struggled in.

Paul & Roz and all the club members warmly welcomed us as we arrived, and most of us enjoyed the warm afternoon sunshine at the airfield, lunching there and greeting the later arrivals. Paul slipped in the unwelcome news that one contact in Italy, Ian Denny, an Englishman living in Italy, had sent a fax the day before to say that he would not be able to accompany us on the tour as interpreter and general 'smoother-out-of problems'. This was not an auspicious start, but Paul had contacted the flying club to see if an interpreter might be available from somewhere in Vercelli, and it was suggested the Town Hall could provide one for our first day.

On the second morning of the tour, Monday, a young lady by the name of Elisa joined the coach as our interpreter with an excellent command of English and there was a large sigh of relief that our visit to the rice farm with all its complex farming terminology would successfully go ahead, translated in a way that we could all understand.

Few of us knew that rice was grown in Italy at all, had it not been for Paul's information in the tour guide book, although she is the largest producer of rice in the whole of Europe, and the Lombardy and Piedmont region, where Vercelli lies, is the most prolific area, primarily because of the ready availability of water so vital for rice growing.

Arriving at the farm at Vespolate, we met with the farmer and also the contractor who was involved in the harvesting of the crop, and we walked across the road to stand at the headland of a field of rice while all the growing, agronomy, harvesting and marketing technicalities of the crop were manfully translated by Elisa with great skill. As she had no background or knowledge of farming whatsoever, it was a great performance (and a very steep learning curve for her!)

As rice is grown in water for the duration of its growing life, and the depth of water is critical, it can be readily appreciated that it is important to start with a perfectly level field – otherwise, unsurprisingly, all the water would merely run off one end! The start of the cycle is to plough or cultivate the field and then the field is laser-levelled with a bladed implement pulled behind a tractor. The machine has a laser head mounted on a mast around 10ft high, which communicates with a



Elisa translating at the rice farm

transponder on the headland.

Traditionally rice is broadcast on to this levelled surface, but before doing so a wide bladed implement, which has a series of inverted 'vee' sections, welded to the underneath of the blade about 9" apart is drawn across the surface to create vee-shaped depressions in the surface. The seed is broadcast onto the surface into 2cms water for the seed to fall into these depressions to create some semblance of rows in the crop, but the result didn't seem very satisfactory to me! Recently there has been a move to drill the crop with a traditional drill, which can therefore put tramlines in place to help with the spraying.

Experience has shown that there is no yield difference from either planting method, and the tendency on this farm is to increase the area planted into the dry surface. As the plant grows in length, more depth of water is added – always ensuring that the top of the plant remains out of the water, otherwise it will quickly drown. Gradually during the season as the crop grows taller, more and more water depth is required up to a maximum depth of 20 cms, and this water depth is carefully monitored throughout the season. 8 days before harvest, the water is drained off and the crop harvested by a track-equipped combine, which is unloaded into trailers waiting on the dry headlands.

During the summer there are several grown-up thunderstorms during the growing season producing large sudden rains, and to cope with the increased depth of water in the fields that these storms would produce, there are removable barriers in the headland banks around the fields allowing this sudden surplus water off, and returning the level to the required 20 cms. Water is readily available throughout the season in this area due to a canal built in the late 19th century to bring water from the Po River and Lake Maggiore. The river and lake is copiously supplied by snowmelt from the Alps during the spring and summer months – although the charge levied for the use of water is one of the biggest costs in growing the crop.

Grass weeds are the biggest problem in growing the crop, and generally it is sprayed 4 times during the season, a fungus spray being the last application. There are few bugs and beasties that attack the crop, save occasionally one that swims in the water and destroys the roots. On all the crops that we passed there was a bewildering multitude of wheel marks though the crops following no obvious pattern, presumably because they are unable to see where their previous spray run occurred as the water immediately covers the wheel marks! When I asked the farmer about this he said in years gone by the fields were marked out by people holding markers at either end of the field for the spray man to follow, but it was labour-intensive and so as available labour diminishes, the bout-matching is now done by guesswork. This situation will be improved by the expansion of planting with a conventional drill that lays down tramlines at the time of sowing. It was hard for us to believe that the crop is sprayed within a flooded field, but I actually saw a crop being sprayed thus as I flew south from Vercelli the next day – a weird operation to watch with the waves rippling away from the tractor, and one that would surely have had our own Defra police apoplectic! Urea fertiliser is used on the flooded crop – another fit of apoplexy from Defra.

All operations to the crop during its growing season are carried out by tractors (and sprayers) shod front and rear with solid steel wheels with heavy lugs around the perimeter for grip – similar to our spade-lug wheels of yesteryear but about only ¼ the width. Apparently rubber tyres would not be able to grip,



'Spade lug' wheels on a rice tractor

but it is still a mystery to me why the tractors do not sink out of sight. The soil type is very clayey and impervious which helps to prevent the water soaking away through the profile, and also helps to support the machinery.

The crop is harvested at 25-30% moisture and dried down to 12% through a drier that copes with 40 tons/day. Risotto rice was the type that was shown to us and the preparation plant consisted of a conventional pre-cleaner followed by no fewer than 12 consecutive sets of sequentially more aggressive rollers to polish the rice. This resulted in a staggering 50% loss rate, the chippings being disposed of as animal feed - although it can be made into a type of biscuit for human consumption. The end product is bagged in 1 & 2 kilo bags, marketed at 2.50 euros/kilo. This cleaning and polishing plant was installed 10 years ago at a cost of 250,000 euros.

Last years harvest had been a relatively good one and yielded 6 tons/hectare, selling for 250 euro/tonne. We were told that the subsidy was 1000 euro/hectare, and we thought this was made up of around 425-euro/hectare standard figure, with a top-up figure of 575 euro/hectare, which we assumed was similar to our protein subsidy.

With so much water in the area, mosquitoes are a major problem – although on the day we visited there were several hairy farmers legs on offer, little suffering occurred!

On our way back in the bus, we were asking Elisa what she did for her normal working week, and she told us that she was actually a flying instructor at Vercelli airfield! With a contact like that, and having done such a sterling translating job for us, Paul, rather tongue-in-cheek, asked her if she would like to join us for the rest of our tour as translator and general problem-solver in the place of Ian Denny, and to our surprise and great delight, she agreed to take us on, travelling with Roger Bell in his Bonanza and ensuring his flying skills were up to the mark. Her presence with us for the following week was both a great asset and a great pleasure.

Martin Gosling

So, we now had an interpreter and what a find she was! She was to make our jobs as organisers so much easier and to top it all she had a frozen ATPL and IR and just loved the flying - nearly as much as Roger did when he realised his passenger was to be a young Italian girl rather than a 50 year old loser from Parma!

The people at Vercelli were so happy to have us there that Maurizio, the President of the Aeroclub Vercelli had asked the Mayor of Vercelli and the President of the region to come and see us leave. They wanted

us to stay for lunch at the club, so we quickly re-scheduled to be duly appreciative.

Around three in the afternoon, we flew the 90 nautical mile to Parma, to be greeted with the height of disorganisation at this regional airport. However, we had survived the first couple of days of the tour and we were all safe and gathered together.

Tuesday 30th May

The next morning looked a bit grim out of the bedroom window, but we had a couple of visits to do in the morning before flying again.

Visit to see the manufacture of Parmesan Cheese.

Reading through the official brochure Paul writes ' We have an early start as it is only made once a day (the cheese) at 8.30 to 9.00.' So by now we are a well behaved group and – with the exception of two with no alarm – we are on the coach packed and ready for a most interesting day.

After a short journey we arrive at some farm buildings with a small sign advertising what turns out to be the centre of production of this hand made cheese.

Parmesan – Parmigiana Reggiano named because it is produced in the province of Parma and Reggio. The cheese is traditionally hand made and the texture and taste are due to the cattle - Friesian and Brown Alpine - grazing on the lush grass grown in the Po valley therefore producing the special flavoured milk. As it is an all year round production, dried grass is used in the winter. The cows are not allowed silage or normal cattle feed and definitely no garlic! Vitamins are allowed. The small farmers in the mountains keep their cattle outside but the larger farmers on the plains keep their cattle inside as there is a law that the cows must not be near a road due to pollution affecting the finished product.

The cattle also drink fresh water suitable for human consumption.

Some 270,000 cows produce the milk for the cheese. They are milked twice a day and the milk is taken to the cheese house within two hours of each milking. The milk is put into large holding basins and the separation of the cream takes place naturally overnight. In the morning the milk is poured into copper cauldrons where it is mixed with whole milk from the morning milk. After warming, a natural whey starter is added obtained from the process of the day before.



Richard Hall counting the cheeses

Next, natural rennet from the stomach of calves is added to make the milk curdle. The curdled milk is broken down into small granules with a huge whisk. This mixture is then heated. Whilst cooling the granules sink to the bottom. This mass is then put into round moulds where it rests for 2 – 3 days. A marking stamp is applied to each mould leaving marks on the rind of the cheese 'Parmigiana-Reggiano' in a repeating pin dot pattern, a number of the cheese house and the date, so each cheese can be identified.

Salt is added by the cheese being immersed in brine for about 20 days. Then the cheese is ready to be stored for 24 months or more.

We were then treated to an amazing sight of 20,000 cheeses stored in a controlled room, the cheeses are lifted individually from the shelves dusted turned and replaced by machines once a day.

After 12 months each cheese is inspected by an expert and the Flying Farmers were able to witness the sounds of a good cheese, a light tapping noise made with a special hammer a bad cheese made a loose hollow sound like a thump on a drum. The imperfect cheeses are sold but are marked with parallel grooves around the circumference. The higher standard cheeses left to mature for another 24 months are branded with EXTRA or EXPORT as an additional guarantee of the superior quality .

A few facts:- Besides being rich in calcium and vitamins it is has one of the lowest cholesterol levels of any cheese and is highly digestible !

Many thanks to Richard, Paul and Roz for organising this visit to a most important part of this region's history which showed us again that traditional methods of farming are encouraged in Italy.

Wendy Burton

After the Parmesan cheese visit, we also went to see the process of making Parma ham. This goes hand in hand with the cheese, as the pigs eat the whey from the cheese. It goes through a very strict quality control process, just like the cheese.

During the tasting of both the ham and the cheese, the weather started to clear a little, which looked more promising for our short flight to Lugo, near Imola. The directors at Parma said that we must leave now and we could no longer park at their airfield as they were expecting a commercial flight in! Part of the problem was that Ryanair have just started a daily schedule to Parma and they were complaining about sinking into the tarmac due to the tarmac contractor cutting corners with the specification. So they had half the apron dug up and although there was still about 20 acres of good tarmac, we had outstayed our welcome. What a contrast to Vercelli.

The weather was good on leaving Parma, but deteriorated rapidly as we caught up with the weather en route. We all got our aeroplanes rather wet, but Flying Farmers aren't deterred by a bit of rain.

Bargam Sprayers, Imola

I was asked to write this report by an e-mail seen after my arrival home on 8 June, from a most entertaining tour of Italy; so I had no notes made of the visit and forgotten most of what I saw and heard.

Following an introduction from Senior Bargam staff in the showroom the party were shown the assembly area. I was particularly impressed with the good quality metal protection and finish of the various parts, which are manufactured elsewhere. It was good to see grease nipples fitted to all boom pivots and bushes, giving them a longer component life.

Then it was out to the yard for a demonstration of one of the larger sprayers, a MAC 5000 XXL self-propelled. This one can have a boom width of 24-36m with radar controlled boom height giving constant height above the crop over uneven



Self propelled sprayers at Bargam, Imola

ground, other features were boom dampening, 4 wheel drive and 4 wheel steering with variable track width on the move, stainless steel 5000L tank all for about £90,000.

This must be a most desirable sprayer for someone with the area of crops to justify it.

At the end, Vincenzo was presented with the FFA letter opener as an aid to open the many envelopes containing orders for his products.

Jim Anderson

Before retiring to the hotel in Imola, there was time to visit the Imola racing circuit and just stand for a few minutes in the grandstand overlooking the start / finish straight. Although the San Marino Formula One Grand Prix had only just been held, the place seemed shabby and surprisingly small. The tarmac circuit looked to be in need of a resurfacing job.

Wednesday 31st May

Wednesday started bright and sunny. But it would be seeing as we weren't flying today!

Visit to Galleria Ferrari - Maranello

The morning dawned clear and bright. It had to, it was a non-flying day and, having been rejected by Ferrari for a tour of their factory because they thought we were peasants, we went instead to the Ferrari Museum or "Galleria Ferrari". After a couple of missed approaches and "go arounds" our coach driver turned off his GPS and magically we were there.

The building at Maranello is stylish and well laid out with exhibits set in dramatic poses. At the same time the history of



The Enzo Ferrari

Enzo Ferrari runs in parallel - the most fascinating glimpse of his background being the set up of his office with original desk and chair, although several of the party couldn't believe it was really as tidy as shown. But the main items of interest were the cars, engines and gearboxes developed over decades. Engines are laid out in chronological order and it was a lesson in automotive design to see the larger numbers of cylinders used as power output increased exponentially. At the same time gearboxes became smaller whilst carrying increased load and it was impressive to see some parts fabricated in sheet material to reduce weight.

Racing and road cars were presented in random order and a small area is devoted to famous people who bought Ferraris. Moreover there's a F1 monocoque in carbon fibre/honeycomb construction which has been crash tested with little damage to its integrity. This is the bit that saves drivers.

Finally, what were the facilities like? The good café was relatively inexpensive but, with all those cylinders around, it was disappointing to find only a single pot loo. And would I buy a Ferrari (all other things being equal)? Certainly not. They thought we were peasants!

Richard Butler

After lunch in the museum, it was back on the bus for our next visit.

Visit to a Balsamic Vinegar Producer.

So there we were, on the bus, heading for a vinegar factory. Call me a philistine but I was beginning to waiver in my enthusiasm for factory visits. Surely there can't be anything more mouth puckeringly boring as a visit to a VINEGAR factory.

This lack of enthusiasm was, I admit, enhanced as after some time I was able to spot the same roundabout that we had driven around several times some twenty minutes before. "The driver's lost or he's playing for time - I don't have a good feeling about this. It's going to end in tears." I thought. I couldn't have been more wrong. We were about to experience what for me was to be one of the highlights of our Italian tour.

Dear reader, I wish you had been there. This was to be no vinegar factory but a private winemaking estate of a proud and passionate family. This is where it gets hard for me to convey what we all experienced. It wasn't the facts and figures, the wine, the hectares or the grapes. The Medici family had been the owners of the estate for four generations, and Alberto Medici and his sister were our hosts for the afternoon. An elegant and aristocratic man of his craft, (maybe in his early forties or so) who seemed to have a calm about him which said he was where he wanted to be in life and was at peace. We could not fail to be impressed by the man.

"I thought you said it was vinegar!", I hear you say. Well, just hang on a bit will you. We'll get there in a moment.

The roundabout well behind us now, we arrived down a dusty track on what was a lovely afternoon and, after some nifty manoeuvring, pulled up in front of some fine, part modern part restored stone buildings. My faith was beginning to return. Having been welcomed by the hosts, it soon became clear to us that the main business was wine and not vinegar. This was a vineyard. "The vinegar is more a cost centre than a profit centre," Alberto explained. "We live from the wine".

The flat fields were full of row upon row of grapevines, already lush and green but with hardly a hint of the ripe red fruit they were later to bear. The main varieties, I believe, were the white Malvesia di Candia, which originate from Greece and Crete,


Alberto Medici telling us about the vines

and the indigenous red Lambrusco of which most of us have heard. It was explained to us that their Lambrusco grapes were NOT used to produce the quite drinkable but hardly elegant fizzy stuff you find in the supermarkets, their wine is something quite different.

Just a few facts and figures. Each vine lasts up to 35 years. They get no subsidies.

The Medici family run about three vineyards in the area, totalling 60 hectares and the one we were on totalled 25 hectares. They grow about 3,700 plants per hectare, producing on average about 10,000 kilos of grapes, with a maximum capacity of 18,000 kilos. Irrigation in summer is provided exclusively by their own wells. They have a continuous threat from fungal attack against which they are allowed to use a copper sulphate based cocktail.

While being shown the vines I noticed something I had last seen in New Zealand but of which I had not worked out the significance. At the start of each row of vines was a rose bush. Was this tradition? Well, in a sense it was. If a disease (or pest) is about to attack the vines, it tends to start with the roses and so these are used as a kind of early warning system for the attack. Simple but apparently effective.

We were finally shown the harvester which had been specially developed to strip the grapes from the vines. This is in the form of an inverted U shape on narrow wheels. It runs down one row at a time and removes the grapes by vibrating the plants. This way it is able to cover one hectare in under two hours. Once harvested the grapes are transported to a separate pressing centre which serves all the estates. Unfortunately we did not have the time to see this or any of the wine production; it wasn't the right season anyway. After all we were there to see the vinegar. Ah yes, the vinegar - I had nearly forgotten.

No vinegar yet though, as Alberto was about to show us the family museum of winemaking through the ages. This wonderful room, the size of a small barn, housed all sorts of winemaking artefacts dating back centuries. These included Etruscan grape presses, fermentation vessels, filters, wine pumps (one made in London ca. 1917), and bottling machines. On the wall were paintings depicting the production and consumption of wine way back in the 16th century. This stunning personal museum, immaculate in its presentation, had clearly been a labour of love and a family project over many years. It was certainly a marvellous and fascinating visitor attraction.

In the museum Alberto explained to us a little of the process of winemaking today. The grapes are pressed and the grape must (juice and skins) is put into the fermentation barrels. Yeast is then added to commence the fermentation. This yeast is generally cultured in the lab and different yeasts are used for different wines. Fermentation usually takes place in about 3 days, depending on the sugar content and the temperature, but never any longer than 7 days after which time it is stopped by chilling or by the filtering process which then follows. Sugar is NEVER added. The wine is then stored in barrels of 200 or 500 litre capacity for maturation, and finally bottled.

AND NOW AT LAST THE VINEGAR!

We crossed the gravelled yard over to what might pass as a large garage. A small door was opened and WOW the aroma hit us. Of course it was acetic acid: but it was more than that, deeper and mellow. All wood beams, only a few barrels and loaded with atmosphere.

"Why is this idiot waxing so lyrical about Balsamic vinegar?" I hear you ask. "Any self respecting Delia Smith disciple knows all about the stuff. We've been buying it for years from the supermarkets in the UK."

Well, no actually you haven't!

I didn't know it either, but now I do. This stuff is known as Aceto Balsamico Tradizionale and is made here in Reggio Emilia and also in Modena. Modena is of course famous for the commercial stuff we all know. Commercially, it is made by boiling grape must, adding acetic acid and caramel for colouring and then storing it in a barrel for maybe 6 years, plus or minus a bit. It is a slightly sweet and richly flavoured vinegar with a very pleasant depth of taste derived from the barrels in which it is stored. It is however vinegar as we know it and is a considerably different product from what we were about to experience. The 'Tradizionale' label, which is granted to this product means that the production has to be in accordance with strict traditional methods dating back centuries. Each final barrel is inspected by the local consortium for quality and provenance before it earns the stamp and can be sold. Each production process, starting with 50 litres or so of grape juice and lasting 12 years minimum, produces only 3 LITRES at the end. But more of that to follow.

We were first shown the room where the vinegar is started. The aroma was heady. It was explained that the 'must', exclusively from the Trebbiano di Romagna white grape is first of all reduced to 50 percent by boiling. It is then allowed to ferment naturally in a barrel to about 5–6 % alcohol. This normally takes place in October when the weather is cold and takes some time. After this time, with the barrels left open, certain bacteria are then encouraged to get to work on the alcohol, and as anyone who has tried to make their own wine knows this happens all to easily. The alcohol is slowly (2 years) converted to acetic acid. What happens then is an exclusive and marvellous process. Read on.

Alberto took us up some stairs into the 'Batteria'. A wall of tiny barrels stood in front of us. Each one of these, only 3 litres in capacity, was stamped with the particular wood from which it had been made, together with a date record of its contents. These were the ageing barrels. The vinegar would be aged here for a minimum of 12 years and at least 25 years for the 'Gold Label' version. The room was just oozing with tradition and pride and we could easily see that it had been done this way for centuries. Along one wall was a line of five un-stoppered larger barrels on stands and in a row. This was the secret. On the left was the largest 50 litre one, then 40, 30, 20 and finally 15 litres. The way it works is this. The raw vinegar is poured into the largest barrel, only filling it to two thirds, and the barrel is left open to allow evaporation. As it evaporates it is topped up with new raw vinegar. The smaller barrel to its right is only topped up to two thirds from the first barrel. The next barrel from the one

on its left and so on. What you have is actually a continuous process, with vinegar passing down the line from larger to smaller barrels, becoming more concentrated in its flavour and ageing as it does so. I'm not sure but I think he said that the top up is done once a year, so by the time it gets to the end if the line it is already quite old. It's not just water that evaporates: it is also the acid, so as time goes on the liquid becomes thicker, richer and sweeter. It is at the end of this process that the vinegar is put into the tiny ageing barrels. By then it has been stored in different woods in turn, including Oak, Chestnut, Cherry, Acacia, Juniper and Mulberry. It is these which impart the wonderful depth and complexity of flavours which characterise the product. We were bowled over by it all: the care and attention, the pride, and the sensory onslaught. But more was to follow – next came the tasting.

We were all given a small spoon and, as we sat at trestle tables in the warm and balmy sunshine just a few drops in turn of the red label then the silver and finally the gold were tried. No this wasn't vinegar – not really. How can I describe a taste? The youngest red label version you might put on salads but not the other two. It was explained that the silver is very good on Parmesan cheese, vegetables and roast meats and the gold is often used on strawberries and can even be eaten with ice cream. They were all dark thick and deeply rich with perfumed and complex flavours of honey, berries, and even a hint of cough medicine. The gold was almost a syrup.



George, David & Jim tasting the Balsamic

So there you have it. I have gone on a bit but, as I said earlier, for me it was one of the highlights.

A number of us bought small bottles. They were quite expensive, but not really, as they only produce 100 to 150 litres per year from the vineyard.. I have since seen other tradizionale for sale from the USA on the internet for $135 to $299 for 100ml. for the red to gold labels respectively.

They do have a website with an English version from which you can get a small idea of what we saw. It is www.medici.it/ Look for 'guided visits' to get a flavour of the place.

Ray Friedlander

Thursday 1st June

The Aeroclub at Lugo had been most accommodating at this fairly up market club airfield. The President, although not there to see us, wrote us 17 letters, one for each aircraft, to thank us for coming.

We had an 80 nautical mile flight to do with a forecast that didn't look too bad, but with the chance of a thunderstorm. It ended up with people diverting about to avoid the storms, but all arrived safely at Fano.

Case New Holland

The short flight from Lugo to Fano offered two possible routes. The threat of CB's and relatively high ground over the inland route made the selection of the scenic coastal route, flying abeam Cervia, Rimini and Pesaro, each with their own beaches and marinas an easy choice.

After refreshments in the smart airfield facilities we boarded our coach for the short trip to Jesi. Unfortunately traffic hold ups on the motorway delayed our arrival, making what was to be a brief visit even a little more rushed.

We were warmly welcomed to the facility over drinks and gateaux by the plant manager, Fluvio Manicardi and two managers flown in to Jesi from the UK entirely for our benefit, Rob Dee, UK eastern area sales manager and Alan Hawes, CNH tractor specialist. Rob Dee gave us all a quick history lesson detailing the many mergers and acquisitions that led to the final formation of CNH in 1999, from many well known brands including Ford, Fiat, IH and David Brown. This is surely indicative of the contracting and competitive nature of the industry in which we work.

After a very pleasant lunch in the executive canteen, we had a brief tour around the factory. The Jesi plant, originally a Fiat facility, is now essentially an assembly operation for CNH tractors within the 60 to 100 HP bracket, including various specialist tractors such as the vineyard models and tracked units. The factory employs just over 1000 people, working two shifts per day, producing 150 tractors daily. The number of different models produced, and the number of different options available on each model means that, on average, on each day only three tractors out of this total will be identical!

Our tour started at the initial build of the drive lines where gearboxes, hydraulics, electronics are installed before bell housings, half shafts and differentials are added. The whole drive line assembly is thoroughly tested and then moved to the paint shop. Engines and cabs, assembled elsewhere in Italy, along with the thousands of other parts required, are gradually assembled into the 'newborn' tractor.

Quality control was an aspect that was very apparent as we were shown around the facility. Sub-assemblies and assemblies were inspected and checked by specialist personnel at numerous points along the assembly line. Despite this, we were surprised that at the final inspection over 5% of tractors required remedial work. All faults are reported back to the assembly lines and to the personnel involved, so that future faults could be avoided. Each day three tractors are randomly selected from the previous day's production and subjected to a much more intensive level of inspection. The impression gained was that CNH was making great efforts to assemble a quality, defect free, product.

Having visited John Deere assembly plants in USA recently, my impression of the factory at Jesi was that, in comparison, it was a relatively labour intensive operation that has not moved



Jane Procter about to crash test a tractor

on from the relatively low wage rates seen in Italy a few years ago. To remain competitive in the future may require a more modern assembly process.

After a vote of thanks from Peter Gale, this excellent visit was concluded by CNH presenting all of the party with bottles of their own label wine before our onward journey to the Grotte di Frasassi.

David Keene

Grotte di Frasassi

The caves were discovered by accident in 1971 when some climbers noticed a strong draft emerging from a hole in the ground. Initial investigations (dropping down some stones) indicated a large cave. When first exploring the caves, they had to descend 130m down a ladder. Later, they discovered that the cave system linked with another known system with easier access.

The caves were formed by underground river/erosion around 2 million years ago. The calcareous formations are deposits left by the dripping water and build up very slowly (0.25 to 2.5mm. pa).

We saw 5 out of 7 caves, but they extend to some 13km. The largest cave is 200m long and is said to be the largest natural hole in Europe. Underground, it was 14°c and there was high humidity and the constant sound of gently dripping water. Air-tight doors are present in the man-made access tunnel to maintain the microclimate.

It is difficult to adequately describe the inside of the caves, words such as fantastic or wondrous come to mind. As well as the stalactites and stalagmites, there were amazing curtain formations, due to the wind through the caves. One looked like a long rasher of streaky bacon, with colouring along its edge. Some are named, such as "organ pipes", "little Niagara Falls" or "witches' castle" They appeared ice-coated, but yet the cave was not icy-cold. The huge size of the caves made it tricky to judge the scale of the formations.

These caves have to be seen to be believed, a magical visit.

Angus Anderson

Coaching in Italy

"Nine o'clock is nine o'clock!" those who were on the German tour will remember Bear admonishing some poor sleepyhead who was a bit late for 'the bus' one day. Italy was quite different. Every morning Paul Stephens, our own home grown very calm and gentle Yorkshire Obergruppenfeuhrer had us all on one luxury coach after another at exactly eight o'clock every morning with not a murmur from anyone. Apart from one notable morning when the joint organiser and his room mate claimed that the alarm clock had let them down to howls of derision from the patiently waiting coach pax. We went to a terrific variety of destinations to see farms, factories, exotic events and marvels. The thrill of choosing your seat and sitting next to whomever you please never wore off and gave everyone a chance to chat to different people every day. The 'bus trips' were a great success; it is so nice to be driven for a change. The drivers were polite and charming, in the main they drove well and courteously.

Roger Bell

Friday 2nd June

The flashes of lightening and the cracks of thunder woke us up and the sky looked black. Of all days, this was the one when we needed good weather, firstly to fly into the Apennines to Celano, then for our onward journey to Rome. Bearing in mind that the hills in the Celano area are up to 10,000 feet with narrow passes, this was not the day for pilots who aren't used to much over 2000 feet in England.

This is the organiser's nightmare, with the hotel booked in Rome, a farm visit arranged and transport organised. Most participants were nervous of the conditions and a total of 53 suggestions of what to do where laid before the organiser.

*Sense had to prevail and safety had to come first, so the day's programme was scrubbed and a first for the Flying Farmers - we became the **Train**ing Farmers!*

It was bound to happen one day. The weather caught up with us. Today we were to visit a vegetable farm at Celano, which is en route from Fano to Rome.

After getting Met. yesterday our leader had a difficult decision. Should we try to fly on and risk becoming separated, or stay together. Wisely, Paul decided to obtain rail tickets to take us from Ancona to Rome and return on Sunday to retrieve our planes. And so Paulo, Roz and our interpreter went into the rail station, to return sometime later with 1st class tickets en-block. This ensured the programme for Rome could go ahead.

The faster train left early afternoon which gave us time to explore Ancona with is large port which dates back to at least 5th century BC. For some who do not travel by rail often, the journey was enjoyable especially when looking at the peaks of the Apenine mountains and seeing many encrusted with clouds.



Better to be down here, etc. etc. After 3 or 4 hours (?) the train stopped at a station in Rome. We rushed to get our luggage from the shelves and shuffled towards the doors. Then someone shouted 'don't get off - this is the wrong station'. So we all sat down again, except one who was seen pulling his suitcase along the platform. There was much shouting and waving, and then laughter as the train pulled out. But he took no notice and continued to walk purposely away. The train stopped again not many minutes later and it was declared that this where to get off. We were met by Roberto and Teresa and led to a waiting coach a few streets away - because it did not have a pass allowing parking near the station. All we had to do now was find the hotel. After 2 hours and passing the Colliseum at least twice, we arrived tired, hot and still a little worried about out missing companion. Whilst piling into the lobby looking for a space to park our bags and checking in there he stood with a

broad grin and holding a cool drink. "Where have you all been - I've been here 1 1/2 hours!"

Richard and Joyce Hall


Paul Stephens & Roberto

Roberto was an excellent contact that we made. His position is the vice-director of the Aeroclub de Roma, a flying instructor and has a girlfriend from Leicester (Teresa), so he speaks excellent English. Although he was disappointed that we couldn't fly into Rome Urbe on the planned day, he was most concerned because the actual weather reports for the Celano area gave the Jetstream down to FL180 at 110 kts and the vertical wind speeds being 65 to 70 knots! On the news that night it showed pictures of cars getting stuck in snow, in the area that we would have been in, which was totally unheard of for that time of year.

Saturday 3rd June

No flying today so better weather of course!

Trelleborg

We were blessed with a fine morning for our short bus ride to the small town of Tivoli. We arrived at the main gate which was akin to the entrance to Fort Knox. The buildings were a little nondescript and austere but fit for purpose, as they say. The factory is one of 120 plants around the world and employs 500 people out of a total of 23000. The factory was built in 1930 for Pirelli to produce a range of tyres including car tyres, since the acquisition in 1999 by Trelleborg, only tractor tyres are now produced. The site also houses one of the 40 Research and Development centres that Trelleborg operates worldwide. The factory production has grown from 21000 tonnes of tyres in 2000 to an impressive 30000 tonnes in 2006.

The tyres are made from 50% synthetic and 50% natural rubber, but not recycled rubber. Also they do not remould any tyres as this would compromise their high quality standards.

The carcasses of the tyres are made from belts of rubber which are created from a rubber mix, which is handled similar to bread dough and is extruded from between two large rollers into rubber strips. The bead of the tyre is made separately along the lines of a fan belt. This contains a few strands of steel and is the only part to have steel embedded in the tyre.

The components are then assembled on a drum which is rotated and all the parts are bound together with a narrow strip of rubber which is continuously wound around the carcass until the required thickness has been achieved.

This construction is done mainly by hand, without the need of adhesives. The whole carcass is then loaded into a steam press for vulcanizing. The process involves putting the carcass over an inflatable bladder and expanding it with water at a temperature of 200 degrees and 22 Bar pressure for 1.5 to 2 hours. The mould has the desired tread pattern created on the inside along with the associated inscriptions.


The CRUZ crew looking at a 'green' tyre

Although this plant is only concerned with producing agricultural tyres the company produces a wide range of rubber products. These include oil platform fire and glass protection, damp seals for all environments and corrosion prevention products for the North Sea, also oil seals for hydraulic rams ,earthquake dampers for buildings and bridges, dust seals for NASA and aerodynamic wing surfaces for the Airbus A380 and many more products !!

After we received gifts of Trelleborg hold-alls and umbrellas, the morning was rounded off by a visit to the nearby historic Villa Adriana and a very fine lunch provided by our hosts. A very big thank you should go to the Team at Trelleborg, particularly Simona who set the visit up, the MD and other managers that came to look after us, especially as it was a Saturday of a Bank Holiday weekend!

Steve Goddard

Villa Adriana

Clutching an umbrella provided by Trelleborg ensured that we were at last blessed with some blue Italian skies. Our guide, Francesca greeted us, informed us that we were late and marched us like ancient legionnaires, uphill through an olive grove towards the villa, maintaining a lead of at least 200 paces. A more leisurely pace would have been appropriate as we had to wait at least 10 minutes to view a model of the villa, as it would have been in Hadrian's time at the reception centre. Here we were given a brief history lesson. Much was made of the location Hadrian's baths in relationship to the position of his wife's palace – a mile distant. This coupled with the fact that he had no children leads to the assumption that he was not too fond of his wife and only married her to fulfil his obligations to the state.

Hadrian, a man of peace consolidated the empire and promoted building of architectural significance – the Pantheon and Temple of Venus in Rome. In spite of this his relationship with the Senate was not good and so after learning of a conspiracy against him he ordered the building of the Villa Adriana choosing a beautiful location, with views of the Tibutine hills, SE of the town of Tivoli well away from Rome.

Considering that some years after Hadrian's death, the villa was used as a quarry, the remains are amazing and it's easy to conjure up a vision of the ancient residents going about their daily life.

Approximately 1200 people lived and worked at the villa, the majority of whom were slaves, servants or guards, and who were kept out of sight fulfilling their duties moving from place to place via 7 km of underground passages. These were originally used by the bricklayers who were employed on site for about 20 years.

Villa Adriana was the permanent residence of the Emperor, a palace for his official functions and a retreat. It's an immense garden park containing a large quantity of buildings and it's believed that Hadrian took a personal part in the design.

Pressure of time meant that we were only able to view three of

the buildings- the Pelicule, the Baths and the Canopus. The Pelicule is a grandiose portico which encloses a garden with a large pool at the centre. Here we marvelled at the construction of the nine metre high remains of a wall, the length of which was related to the after dinner stroll recommended by the physicians of the day. Built of layers of brick and tufa, filled with mortar and once covered with marble – the cramp holes visible, the wall formed part of a double passage with columns built to recreate the atmosphere Hadrian felt in Athens. The entire western side of the complex is built above a substructure 15 metres high consisting of a series of rooms called the Hundred Chambers which provided lodgings for the servants. The main entrance road passes through this area and ends at the staircase leading to the main vestibule of the villa where the guests were received.

Visiting the baths was an important part of Roman culture, a central event in daily life. It was a communal leisure activity, a place to share gossip or hold a business discussion, with facilities to rival modern spas. We learnt about the calidarium (the hot bath), the frigidarium (a place to cool down) and marvelled at the excellent state of the domed roof.

The Canopus was my particular favourite- it's a spectacular



Just a part of Villa Adriana

open air dining room. Here, up to 400 guests ate reclining on couches around a large rectangular water basin built to represent Hadrian's travels in Egypt. An Egyptian Sphinx was found only two months ago on the site. Three sides are flanked by the remains of colonnades decorated with statues. The Emperor ate at the end on a raised platform near a huge curtain of water cascading from a manmade water fall. Imagine the Bacchanal feasts et al.

We finished our visit with our own feast, provided by Trelleborg, in my view, probably the best meal of the entire holiday, a smorgasbord of Italian dishes cooked from the finest ingredients with 'puddings' We must go again.

Lavinia Soul

The River Dinner Cruise

On Saturday evening the FFA group, after having experienced the Pope live in Rome, boarded our river cruise boat for a memorable evening sailing up and down the River Tiber, which runs through Rome. As the quay was near to St. Peter's Square where the Pope's celebrations were still carrying on, loudspeaker music was in the air as we all boarded, adding a certain atmosphere to the occasion. After taking our places we had aperitifs



The FFA in Rome - Hadrian's Mausoleum

and then awaited our evening meal. The boat moved forward under the first bridge past Hadrian's Tomb. Many more bridges were negotiated, and our meal duly arrived and was consumed. By about 10 o'clock our cruise had finished, and I think everyone had enjoyed convivial chat and sustenance. A good time was had by one and all.

Jane & William Procter

Sunday 4th June

Today was going to be a free day, so that everyone could have a leisurely day looking round Rome - but of course we had to recover the aeroplanes from Fano. A bus was hired to take the majority of us on the 4 hour journey - the remainder managing to have a day in Rome. We then had a beautiful flight through the Apennines back to Rome. The snow in the mountains could clearly be seen to the south, which is not what you would expect in southern Italy in June!

Incidentally, the Aeroclub at Fano were very accommodating and didn't charge us a cent for our landing or extended parking.

The Flight from Fano to Rome

Since Paul had not ordered A Speed Departure, we left Fano in drips and drabs having mostly agreed to take the short route from Fano to Rome Urbe over the mountains using the Perugia VOR. The mountains go up to 8,000 feet to the south of the track, a mere bagatelle to us experienced Alpine pilots. The climb out was straightforward but there were one or two CBs lurking and the westerly breeze was stiff making everyone keen to stay away from the lee of ridges and possible rotor. It was a



In the Apennines en route to Rome

pleasant change not to be creeping around at 1,000 feet as in the rest of Italy and we enjoyed reaching up to where the eagles soar. On the whole the air was calm and there was no severe turbulence. We were able to fly back along the route that we had just come in the coach which was fun looking out for the little towns and villages we had passed eastbound in the morning. Once past the PRU we turned south and settled down to carefully selecting ridges and valleys to save climbing and descending to stay within the 1,000 feet AGL rule. The farming looked quite different from the air with a few big arable units on the central valley floor which we had not seen from the road. As we flew along one ridge at about 5,000 feet we passed a herd of cows and calves happily grazing away on what must have been very poor alpine pasture. They seemed quite unconcerned about a noisy aircraft buzzing past a few hundred feet alongside them. They were all white and looked very like the cows and calves from 2,000 years ago we had seen in paintings and murals on our tour of Rome the previous day.

We experienced some powerful lift from time to time and thought of Werner, who had Dave Bell with him today, soaring along with his engine off getting a free lift on God's motor and so it was when we met later. They had soared to 8,000 feet and Dave had a grin from ear to ear. We followed the strict route into Urbe which was easy to follow along natural features and landed after an hour and half of fabulous, exhilarating mountain flying in perfect conditions. What a day!

Roger Bell

Monday 5th June

We had good weather for our flight through the many reporting points as we exit the Rome area to the south. Roberto had eased our passage by writing in formal Italian style to all the airfields and the military to warn them about the 'invasion'. It was then a simple matter of following the VFR routes at 1000 ft agl and making the necessary reports en route.

The Flight from Rome to Salerno

The next flight was to Salerno. Our approaches were many and varied. Paul had devised a brilliant system whereby the fastest aircraft departed the overnight airfield first and the slowest last so reducing the chance of a swarm of Turnip Airliners milling around a tiny airstrip that may not have seen so much aerial activity since WW2. Our handbook, immaculately prepared by Paul said "We don't want any overtaking." However, as usual human nature gets in the way of the best laid plans. Werner and Trudl in the motor glider were away from Rome Urbe first otherwise we would never have seen them again that day. The Burton Rugby Team on Tour in G CRUZ were next with yours truly in my old Bonanza next. David Soul has a racy Rockwell Commander with numbers on the tail and the registration G LADS which says it all. He goes everywhere flat chat whereas the rugger buggers and I tend to do a bit of farming from the air, so we chug along at max economy and spraying speed checking out the crops. My flying companion being Italian and a flying instructor thought this was just the business since she could practice her low flying and remain free from the danger of being sent to the Coliseum to be fed to lions by the Italian CAA. We duly passed Werner and then were quickly overtaken by Hispeed Soul in the Commander going like the clappers. We never saw or heard from G CRUZ so presume they were sneaking about having a 'butchers' at the ground just like us.

The departure from Rome Urbe was a bit technical with lots



En route to Salerno - Isle de Ischia

of turning points and low maximum heights over rising terrain but actually turned out to be fairly straight forward in practice with easy to recognise VRPs. The countryside is beautiful but not surprisingly very intensively farmed with lots of glass and poly tunnels. The previous day we had skimmed over some quite high hills up to 5,000 feet with large white cows and their calves turned out on what looked like a ranching system but this was different, this was city fringe farming and horticulture. The pressure is on to use every square metre as much as possible.

We cleared Rome and set off out to sea to avoid Naples. I was curious to see Pompeii from the air but the official route from the OBG took us out to sea around the Sorrento VOR. Sorry Paul, but Elisa and I decided that this was too good an opportunity to miss, so we dropped down to sea level skimming the waves, only climbing to comply with the 500 feet rule as we coasted in. We had a good look at Pompeii while remaining clear of the restricted zone, It can be clearly seen how an eruption from Vesuvius would have quickly overtaken anyone in the city since it is close by on the flanks of the volcano. I am at a loss to understand why anyone should want to live in range of an active volcano but I suppose cheap land and houses must have been as attractive 2,000 years ago as they are now.

Roger Bell

After a bit of the usual Italian confusion over where we should park - ATC saying park on the apron, firemen saying no you can't, we saw the later landing aeroplanes taxying across what appeared to be a grass field from the middle of the runway, then disappearing in a cloud of dust. Parking was to be at the Aeroclub de Salerno where the President and a slightly overzealous policeman were there to greet us.

As soon as we were all sorted, it was onto yet another bus for an afternoon in Pompeii. Farmers being a bit on the thrifty side, I didn't see anyone take up the offer of a guide, but I saw plenty joining onto the back of an English speaking party and earwigging!

That night was spent in an amazing hotel built onto the side of a cliff overlooking the Salerno docks. Roger Bell we heard, was a little nervous of it falling off the rock face and slept with the curtains shut tight and evacuated his room as soon as he woke up next morning!

Tuesday 6th June

Our host for the morning, Alberto Morese, had very thoughtfully arranged a visit to the war grave cemetery at Salerno and prepared a wreath for us to place on the memorial.

The Salerno War Cemetery



Richard Howard laying the wreath

On 3 September 1943, Montgomery's 8th Army crossed the Straits of Messina from Sicily to mainland Italy. The crossing to Reggio was without serious opposition. However the landing at Salerno on the 9th September by the Americans was fiercely contested; at one point they even began preparing to evacuate. The original objective of securing Naples, 50 miles to the North was abandoned due to the difficulty of holding the Salerno beachhead against strong German opposition, the Italians having surrendered the week before.

The Salerno landing was hard fought; so was the campaign that followed. The tenacity and efficiency of German resistance destroyed any notion of Italy as the 'soft underbelly' of Europe, as Churchill had called it. It also ruled out any prospect of using Italy as the base for a 'second front' attack on Nazi held Austria during the invasion of North West Europe.

The significance of the Salerno landing led to a campaign that diverted substantial German forces and material away from Normandy ahead of the D-Day landings in June 1944.

Richard Howard placed the wreath on the memorial, and we thought of the 1846 young men buried in this cemetery.

Roger Bell

Mozzarella

Buffalo cheese is otherwise known as Mozzarella. The cheese factory is in the front part of what looks like a 19th Century court farm building that has been surrounded by a neat and tidy modern town, so it looks a bit out of place, especially since building maintenance must be low on the list of priorities of the owners. The old entrance hall is the shop space and has a few 19th Century sepia prints of buffalo and horsemen herding them on what look like fairly leggy but well built thoroughbred types rather like what is often called an "old fashioned chaser" by McCririck, Francome and Co on Channel 4 Racing. It could be seen that these men were stockmen by the dress and way they were handling the buffalo. I was a bit surprised by their closeness to the beasts since I had always thought they could be nasty bastards or so their reputation goes. They are about the size of Aberdeen Angus but a lot heavier and their horns are thick at the base and lay back alongside their head in an unthreatening manner.

After milking at four in the morning the raw milk is put in a tub with a starter for three hours when it goes solid. It is chopped up and put in a tub with hot water and stirred until it becomes rubbery. The water is removed and the material is pressed in a mould that forms small apple sized balls which go into a bath with the whey from earlier on, then the balls are fished out by hand and put in little sacks ready for sale. The two girls who were fishing the cheese balls out of the whey all day must have the softest hands in Italy.

The enterprise is owned by the Morese family who provided mounts for the Italian Carabinieri until the early 70s . Anyone who has had the pleasure to see Italian horsemen at work need have no doubt about their skill and understanding of what makes a horse work so they must have been pretty good at producing horses at the Villa Morese to such discerning customers. A few of the more equine minded of us were invited for a tour of the now disused training stables. We were shown a huge collection of rosettes including an Olympic medallion of some sort. The stables were built in brick with wrought iron railings similar to the classic Victorian style common in country houses in the UK. Then with little ado we were ushered into a room where to our considerable surprise stood a beautiful coach. It turned out to have been manufactured in Paris in the 1880s. It is in tip top condition with seats for four in a well upholstered interior. It is not in use which is a shame but I should imagine it will be difficult to find four horses smart enough and sufficiently well trained to do such a beautiful coach justice. There were a few horses out at grass nearby. The paddocks are about a couple of acres each but there wasn't much grass for them to eat. However they were all good healthy looking animals and were obviously well cared for.



The Mozzarella factory

Roger Bell

Our Visit to the Water Buffalo Farm

We visited Alberto Morese's Buffalo Farm on a fine sunny but cool day from our base at Salerno south of Naples. Having already visited the Mozerella cheese factory, how many of us farmers would be pleased to be able to sell the whole of our herd's milk to produce our own final product!

The farm had been engaged in the production of remounts for the Italian Army until the early seventies but since the army no longer required horses the buffalo enterprise was a bit of diversification. Water Buffalo have been in Italy since the Seventh Century and are multi purpose animals being good for draught work, milk and food.

Loie, the farm manager, showed us around the farm which was about 130 hectares with approximately 1000 head all told. The cows are milked twice a day in a five aside parlour in two shifts producing 12 litres per head per day with a 260 day lactation. The gestation period of a buffalo is about 10 months and they have been known to live for as long as 20 years. The Italians have a quota system similar to ours.

They reared all their followers but most of the bull calves were killed with an injection at birth as Italians won't eat buffalo steak. However a few of the best calves are selected for veal production. All the old cows are sold for pet food.

The general regime is that the cows are zero grazed on chiefly maize silage and fed a little concentrate in the parlour. Whereas, the breeding stock graze homestead grass paddocks plus silage. We did not see much grass about but they appeared very content bathing in their mud baths! The young calves were fed milk and high protein creep feed.

The cows had AI and also carefully selected bulls for natural service. They also enjoyed their own large concrete baths where the water was changed every three hours. Being water buffalo, they totally immersed themselves having nostrils that can be closed under water and seemed to come out grinning.

Interestingly, the young heifers, when they first come in to the parlour to be milked, pick a stall and then were milked in that same stall for the rest of their life.

The buffalos were extremely docile, had no parasites and led a very contented life. There is only one main breed of water buffalo. We were assured that there has been no crossing with domestic bovines; as a result they showed great uniformity of conformation and colouring, being all black.



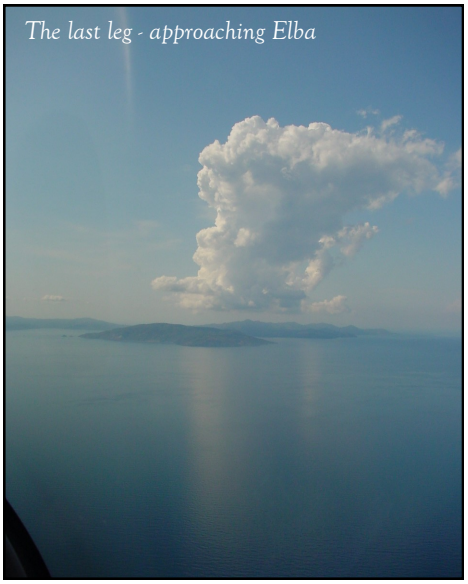
Buffalo enjoying their paddling pool

After we had looked around the farm we were asked in to Sr. Morese's home for, of course, a very cheesy lunch as one would expect. All the family showed us considerable warmth and great hospitality.

Two years ago their last daughter got married with 350 guests attending. They now have an heir to take over the business in the future.

Mike Rowland

It was now just a simple matter of a low level flight up the coast to Elba. Surely the weather wouldn't be a problem when the flight could be conducted at sea level all the way. But I was to be proved totally wrong. The TAF's sent by Roberto looked good, but with a warning of scattered CB's over the coast. The President of the Aeroclub - a 20,000 hour commercial pilot, said that the CBs wouldn't be a problem.....The first few away disappeared over the horizon and all looked ok. Then we had a telephone call from Werner, who had set off before lunch as he was facing a long leg in his motor glider, reporting that he had been engulfed in this massive thunderstorm and managed to land at a military airfield near Naples. We set off towards the end of the group and as we left the circuit we heard the controller refuse permission for the last two to depart due to thunderstorms en route. We pressed on and found three aeroplanes reporting that they were returning to Salerno. Oh dear! We still pressed on and could see the problem - a massive area of black, so we headed well out to sea, maybe 30 miles and went round the storm. After that it was a beautiful flight to Elba!



The last leg - approaching Elba

So the weather had split our party at last. Unfortunately it was the last night, which is always a bit of a special do. Two of the faster aeroplanes did manage to make a very late arrival just before dark and joined the party during the main course at dinner. Also, unfortunately, the Hotel Dumpo (Delfino or Dolphin) was the worst of the trip with the most unwelcoming, miserable old manager and his equally miserable old dog. The meal was also very plain with the worst wine I've ever tasted. But the spirit of the Flying Farmers held up and we had a good night.

Elisa

Elisa, who was our Italian guide for the tour, is a 26 year old flying instructor at Vercelli. Paul recruited her on the understanding that she could sit in the right hand seat of G HOPE and do some flying which she duly did faultlessly through out the tour. On the day I collected her from Vercelli I was able to reassure her sky diving instructor boy friend, Giuseppe that I would act as chaperone and surrogate Father to her. I was a bit surprised when I heard her introducing me to a couple of doubtful looking coves in a bar in Modena as The Godfather!

I had the privilege of being her flying companion for the tour and I found her to be an absolute angel. She certainly made the whole trip more enjoyable for me. I respect her professionalism in the air and her wonderful nature as a travelling companion.

However, she did give me one moment of heart stopping excitement, as we were passing clear of the unusually narrow for Italy Rimini zone at the customary 1,000 feet AGL, she started suddenly whooping and shouting in a quite alarming way. I thought we were being attacked by fighters or the wing was coming off.

After I had calmed her down and recovered my composure, I discovered that she had been overjoyed to see an airliner taking off from Rimini and climbing out all of five miles away. I have invited her to come to the UK and fly around the ATZ of any major airport where it is not uncommon to see big shiny jets taking off and landing quite close to each other. Such is life's experience where no GA pilot climbs above 1,000 feet and the big airports have ATZs 15 miles wide.

Her help and guidance to all of us on the trip was a great asset and her diplomatic handling of some little incidents certainly helped to oil the wheels of what has been the most outstanding event of my flying career.

Thank you Richard for your selfless work in the background in facilitating all the venues and contacts that made it work.

Thank you Paul and Roz for all your hard work in making this excellent tour possible and massively enjoyable.

Two days in Scotland

11th and 12th July 2006.

When The Earl of Stair joined the FFA three years ago, Mike Ashmole went to see him to try and answer some of the questions he had about making part of the ex WW11 airfield, Castle Kennedy, suitable for light aircraft use. The Earl (Jamie to FFA members), had found time in his extremely busy calendar (possibly because Tony Blair had banished hereditary peers from the House of Lords!) to follow one of his ambitions, which was to learn to fly.

He took on the project with much enthusiasm, as he does everything in his business and soon had a PPL. His Factor contacted me at the time regarding the FFA Airfield Insurance Scheme, and so we had a new member. Mike admitted that he did see the possibility of a visit to the Stair Estates and their many diversities.

So, the background over, what did we see? Jamie put a lot of effort into making an extremely enjoyable visit. 27 of us in 12 aircraft met at Sir Charles Fergusson's beautiful strip at Kilkerran, about 15 miles south of Prestwick. This was a very informal 'drop in', just to see another member's strip and to meet Sir Charles himself. The strip is very secluded, long and narrow, but set beautifully in valley in the south west of Scotland. His son has a Tripacer, there are a couple of Chipmunks and one or two other unknown types in the interesting wooden hangar. In true Flying Farmers style, the first few to land had to avoid the sheep on the runway, but what a pleasure to visit this very private strip.

After our cup of tea, we departed to Prestwick for a tour of Oceanic Control. After passing through the strict security procedures, we were sat in a room for a briefing about what exactly happens at NATS at Prestwick. On the Powerpoint presentation, it was explained what area Shanwick Control (a conglomeration of **Shan**non and Prest**wick)** covers. Basically, it's the Scottish area up to Iceland then half way across the Atlantic and down to the Azores. It was also explained that the VHF signal only goes out about 150 miles into the Atlantic, as does the radar cover. Within Shanwick, there are a multitude of different sectors with different controllers. There is also the military control in the same building and the Flight Information Service, which was more relevant to our type of flying.

One big glitch in the whole Oceanic Control is that the Irish won't give up their Shannon area, so all messages have to go from Prestwick, to Ireland, then from there to the aircraft and the reply has to follow the same sequence in reverse, so it can take 5 or 10 minutes to pass messages through the teleprinters.

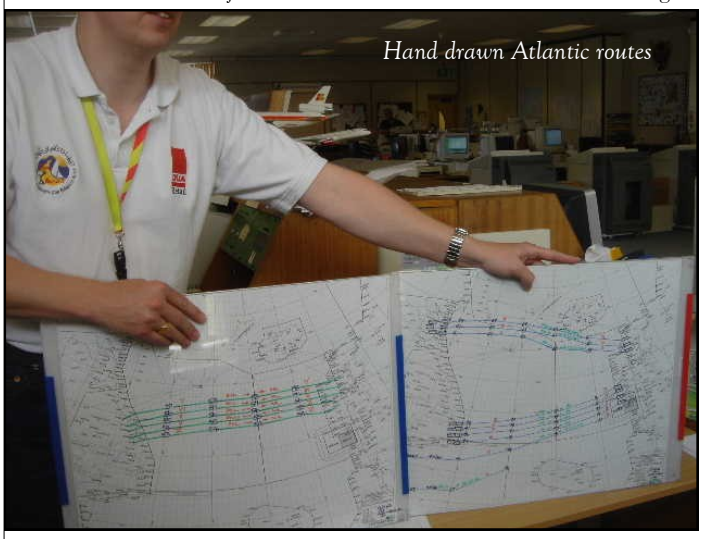


Kilkerran strip

This political inefficiency will be resolved.

The next presentation was about infringements. We were shown some alarming radar traces of light aircraft straying into the approach path to Heathrow and causing serious problems for the controllers to keep separation. It appears that these infringements are on the increase, but although the military infringements were touched on, their numbers far outweigh the GA ones.

The fascinating tour now began. The first room we were shown was the new, state of the art control room, due to start operating in September. With the new technology, digital displays of the aircraft crossing the Atlantic can clearly be seen as if on radar. There is of course no radar coverage, so the blips are computed from messages sent from the aircraft by satellite of their position. HF can be used, but the quality is poor, so there is now a move towards messages and clearances being transmitted as text onto the airliner's computer by satellite. This will be the way forward and much more preferable to voice transmissions, even at airports, especially for clearances as there is then no readback needed and it frees up airwave time. In fact the technology is there for the clearances to go straight into the aircraft navigation system and steer it, but of course the pilot wants to make his job viable! This room is used for training at the moment until the big transfer date in September this year.



Hand drawn Atlantic routes

We then went into the 'old' room where the routes are displayed on hand drawn boards and old green and white screens are covered in numbers which the operators watch and interpret. Everyday, the routes east and west are drawn up in this room, based on the jetstream and the requests from the airlines. The easterly flow obviously want to be in the jetstream and the westerly flow want to be to the north or south of it. The operator makes a compromise to suit everyone and draws the routes onto a board and that is where the aeroplanes will fly that day.

The next room was for the VHF controlled areas round Scotland including the FIS desk. Here we have the radar screens showing all the aircraft after they have crossed the Atlantic and heading for multitudes of different destinations in the UK and Europe. The controllers have to keep the required separation at these upper levels, before they will be handed onto the relevant agencies to bring them into land. The room had all 16 areas with one lonely controller in the corner - the FIS for our lower levels. Most of us had called him on our way into Scotland and

he was aware of our visit and he said on the radio – "see you later". It was great to actually meet the man that you speak to and see his facilities. He explained that although the pilot is responsible for not entering controlled airspace, he can give you warning that you might infringe it. He was a very jolly man and he claimed he was not overworked and he was pleased to see us.

In another corner were the military controllers, but as it was now after 17:00, there was only the 24 hour desk occupied, whereas the civil controllers were just coming into their busy time for transatlantic flights. Next door was the D&D room, with a very enthusiastic team, just waiting for a call on 121.5 or on the military frequency. They demonstrated how they triangulate the transmissions to give a fix when someone is temporarily unsure of their position, or they can give advice on where is to go in an emergency. The majority of calls are military, usually Tornados with an engine out. The controller said they welcome practice PAN's to keep them awake and it gives them some practice. When I suggested that all 12 aircraft on our trip would give him a call en route for Castle Kennedy, he thought that was maybe just too much practice!

Across the road was a new building in construction which is going to be the future of Oceanic Control. Costing £750 million, this is a massive investment for a private company such as NATS and has to be paid for from the £57 they get for controlling each aircraft across their part of the Atlantic and Scottish Area.

This was an amazing visit and we felt very privileged to have been allowed in.

As we were now running a little late as dinner was booked for 20:30, it was back to the aircraft and following a comprehensive briefing by Jamie on departure from Prestwick, we tried to follow the strict radio procedure. Unfortunately, the fluency maybe wasn't quite there with some, reading back the clearances and probably being thrown by a reporting point to leave controlled airspace that didn't appear on the map. The controller was very patient though and we had a beautiful flight to Castle Kennedy.

Although Jamie doesn't yet have an aircraft of his own, he is slowly developing the old war time airfield. He has improved 600 metres of tarmac and made a few hangars for some resident aircraft. He can see the potential, as he develops the estate, for corporate use. We walked to the Plantings Inn at the end of the runway for a superb dinner and we were reminded that we were in Scotland by the No Smoking signs as we entered the pub. Some were staying in the Inn, others were in B & B. We happened to be in a B & B run by the retired Factor of the estate, who was actually the person I spoke to regarding the insurance cover for the airfield three years ago. David and his wife looked after us very well in their large farmhouse with a hearty breakfast next morning.



Jamie explaining the gardens

The second day started with a visit to the Stair Estate gardens. Jamie firstly explained how he is having to adapt the running of the estate to keep it profitable. The Estate extends to 40,000 acres, much of it woodland and property. There is only 2000 acre in hand, half is woodland, the other half is mainly dairy and crops to feed the cattle.

Other parts of the business include the printing works in Stranraer (more later) and the gardens.

The Gardens extend to 75 acres and are amazing. Run by only two staff, they were originally laid out by one of Jamie's ancestors in the 18th century, who was a Field Marshall and also an Ambassador to the court in Paris. He lived in the original Castle Kennedy and was influenced by what he saw in Paris and Versailles. He used his men and horses to dig, sculpture and layout the gardens. They incorporate a walled garden, lakes – one perfectly round covering two acres and totally covered with water lilies; the plants originating from Versailles, and a monkey puzzle avenue planted in the late 1800's which Jamie admits is old and past its best. The area is in a micro climate created by the Gulf Stream and is world famous for its display of Rhododendrons. They get between 9000 and 15000 visitors, which goes part of the way to paying for the upkeep.

Unfortunately, the original castle burnt down when the maid aired the Field Marshall's clothes a bit too close to the fire. So



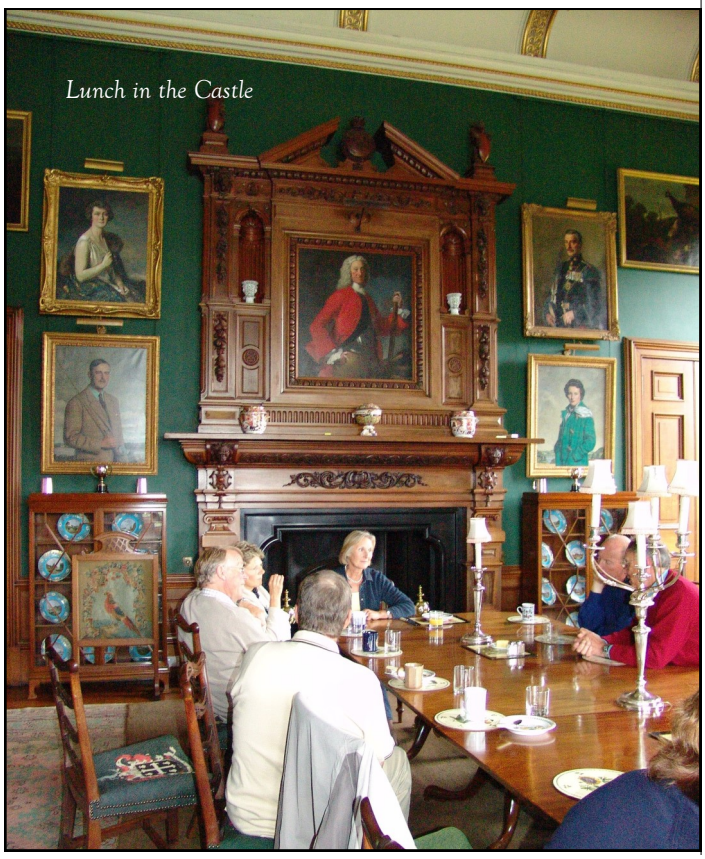
The original Castle Kennedy



Lochinch Castle



The Wigtown Press



Lunch in the Castle



the new Lochinch Castle was built, which Jamie has been living in alone since his mother moved our a few years ago.

A total diversification is the printing works. This again was started many years ago, but Jamie has developed it with new premises and new technology. There are two parts to it, one prints the local newspaper and is one of only a handful of newspapers in private hands. The other part is the commercial printing for magazines, newsletters etc.

This diversification demonstrates the superb way that Jamie is running his business. To have so much knowledge of running the property side, the shooting, fishing, farming, forestry, gardens, dealing with changes of policy due to SFP, printing and maintaining his massive home shows the character of the man.

Finally, we were privileged to have a buffet dinner put on by Jamie in Lochinch Castle, whilst we watched the weather deteriorate further, with persistent rain and cloud on the hill tops. There was a slow moving front over the area, but the Carlisle actuals and further south looked more promising. Three aircraft braved the weather, but the remainder were more than happy to extend there visit and returned to the Plantings and the retired Factor's house.

Jamie, in the meantime had to rush down to London to bring his newly wed wife up north. He'd only been married three weeks and had only just returned from his honeymoon. Unbelievably, the quickest way to London is via the ferry to Belfast, then the flight into Heathrow!

Thanks Jamie, that was a most enjoyable visit.

Paul Stephens

Can You Help Our Treasurer?

Over the years, a list has built up of ex-members, from whom we still receive standing orders. Although it is their responsibility to cancel these standing orders, they are still contributing to the FFA funds. David Corbett has made many attempts to contact these people, but for a number of reasons, like change of address, they seem to be uncontactable.

If you know any of the ex-members below, please let our new Treasurer, Andrew Cragg know on 01303 874251 or brooker.farms@farmline.com, with contact details, so that he can give them one last courtesy call to see if they would like to cancel their standing orders. After this last appeal, we cannot do anymore than accept their money with thanks and it will go towards the contributions we make to the various councils who support General Aviation in this country.

Akehurst R G, Allen W S, Axgro Foods, Bell C H P, Bridges P J, Bur Farm Ltd, Bushell R C, Butler B, Chandless R C, Cleaver J, Collicutt G, Cooper Bros., Cross H J, Davis H E, Dunn W G, Elliott P & A, Evans R, Grant G B, Hammond I R, Headcorn, Henslow J D C, Lay E, Maiklem J D, Mainds, Marsh Hill Farm, Moore M T, Park D, Pigherd Ltd, Rice W J B, Robinson P B, Rogers D H, Rowe D H, Smith J E, Tomkins W, Townsend J G, Walton J B, West Farms Ltd, Woodhouse M C, Woodward S A, Wootton E F, D & W Wright.

Ian Bonham-Smith

A tribute to Ian Bonham-Smith, taken from the address given by John Milne at Ian's funeral on the 27th June 2006

Ian was a very special person. I first met Ian in the late eighties at Sandroyd Prep School where both of our boys were pupils. We had a mutual love of flying and we were encouraged by both wives to pursue our passion, flying to many varied airfields including military at home and also airfields on the continent, always calling each other 'Sir' or by surname. We formed Essex Aerial Photography together and had some challenging commissions with Ian setting up its web site.

I managed to get Ian into the FFA - he was involved with an airstrip after all - and so with his amazing organisational skills he was responsible for numerous visits, including the recent one to RAF Odiham which was a great success and was in the middle of arranging another to Air Atlantique at Coventry.

Ian was looking forward to retirement but wouldn't have eased up as he had so much planned including a summary of all the WW2 airbases in the country. He knew so many people and was always interested in what they had to say consequently he was himself interesting. People always enjoyed his company, had no side to him so one was always relaxed with him, a wonderful sense of humour- I can still hear his chuckle – and a perfect gentleman on whom one could rely and trust.



Ian at the RAF Odiham event that he arranged in May

Flying was in the Bonham-Smith blood; his father was in the RAF and on aircraft design teams and his younger brother a test pilot for British Aerospace.

Ian had been married to his wife Rosemary for nearly 38 years and of his son Rupert he was so proud, our deepest sympathy to them both. He meant so much to so many and will be remembered with pride and affection.

He died suddenly on the 16th June with a heart problem. Among those attending the service were FFA members, John Golden, Mike Cuttell, David Corbett, Anthony Kedros and John Milne.

FFA Airfield Owners and Operators Scheme

The FFA in association with Hayward Aviation Ltd, 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 estimated third party movements each year and the limit of liability cover chosen.

Annual Movements by Third Party Aircraft	Limit of Liability £500,000	Limit of Liability £1,000,000	Other
Up to 100	£195	£300	To be agreed
Up to 250	£240	£325	To be agreed
Up to 500	£275	£360	To be agreed
Up to 1000	£385	£440	To be agreed
Up to 2000	£440	£495	To be agreed
Over 2000	To be agreed	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 **Hangarkeepers Liability** for an additional £75 for £500,000 any one occurrence, but limited to £50,000 any one aircraft. For £1,000,000 any one occurrence, it would be £150, limited to £50,000 any one aircraft.

Additional premium for Extended Coverage Endorsement (Aviation Liablilities) AVN 52G, 15% of premium charged for Premisis and Hangarkeepers Liability.

If you have any queries whatsoever, contact **Tim Procter** at Hayward Aviation on 0207 902 7800 or email TProcter@haywards.net.

Finally, it is worth noting that the FFA Committee are so concerned about liability claims that the FFA 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 its members to any liability claim. Under certain circumstances, the FFA will pay a year's premium if a member will allow their strip to be used for an event.

Please tell them you are an Flying Farmers member when you call.

From our New Zealand Correspondent

As some of you will know Carol and I escaped the shores of 'Barmy Britain' some six months ago, this is how we've got on so far.

After meticulously planning our move, some things didn't quite adhere to their allotted slots. Selling the house turned into a nightmare with so many lying cheating sods trying to pull a fast one when they twigged we were moving a little further than just over the county boarder, still we achieved a sale at the right price after a bit of bluff calling!

When we arrived in New Zealand we had a tremendous amount of help from the contacts we'd made in the past and it slowly dawned on us that this really was a place with more than just good scenery. I started doing some advisory and flying work for an Aviation Company just up the road from where we are living. After a while the Chairman got so frustrated with me for not wanting any payment (a good pension does help



Tim's Robin 3000 (the back one!) which he shipped to NZ



A Robin 2000 series coming off the production line

together with a bit of 'company' fuel for my Robin 3000) that he offered me a Directorship in the Company. Well how could I refuse, this was in fact the route to where I wanted to be. Why so? Well 'our' Company has the major shareholding in Alpha Aviation here in New Zealand. What does Alpha do? It owns the sole rights to manufacture and market, worldwide, the Apex (Robin) 2000 range of aircraft.

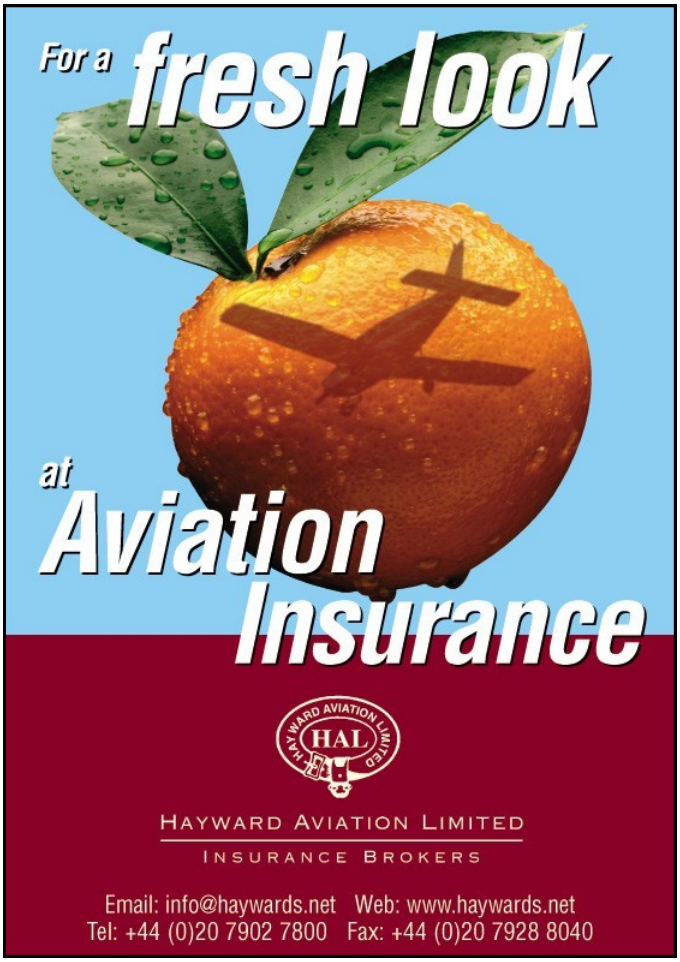
Alpha has now established a production facility in Hamilton and today was the formal hand over of the type certificate from the New Zealand CAA to the Company. Production has started with a vengeance and apart from the first aircraft off the line, which was used for the certification process; there are five fuselages/sets of wings etc taking shape. The plan is to initially produce four aircraft a month this year and then as the facility gets some additions built on, to ramp production up to meet the expected demand.

As for the flying scene here in New Zealand, it's great! We are suffering a little from high avgas prices (they are just over half what you pay in the UK) but with typical Kiwi ingenuity people are turning to high performance micro-light aircraft to satisfy their needs.

Farming and Farmers still have a huge amount of respect from both the public and the ruling classes (politicians). Where else would you get a TV commercial, at prime time, encouraging people to make a career change and become a Dairy Farmer?

I've added some photos of the Alpha factory, and if any one wants further information try their website www.alphaaviation.co.nz or email me timhar@xtra.co.nz

Tim Harrison.



DETAILED INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 ST MARCH 2006

	2006	2005
INCOME		
Subscription & Entrance Fees	9405	9315
Surplus on fly-ins	686	----
Surplus on sale of stock of clothing	31	129
Interest earned	173	----
	10295	9444
DEDUCT EXPENDITURE		
Newsletters – cost of production	3279	3250
Less – advertisements	(225)	(200)
Membership booklet	----	1428
Committee expenses	293	332
Contribution to AOPA	250	----
Contribution to GAAC	300	300
Contribution to GASCo	350	350
Contribution to RAeC	----	90
Accountancy & Taxation charge	118	117
AGM costs	750	235
Fly-in costs	----	170
Website costs	150	190
Insurance	1575	1575
Sundry	39	70
Total expenditure	6879	7906
Surplus/(deficit) before taxation	3416	1538
Deduct Corporation Tax due on interest earned - nil payable (2005 – nil payable)	---	---
Surplus/(deficit) after taxation	3416	1538
Surplus brought forward	16852	15314
Surplus carried forward	20268	16852

BALANCE SHEET at 31st MARCH 2006

	2006	2005
CURRENT ASSETS		
Stocks of clothing	1069	1350
Debtors	1713	1502
Cash at bank	17669	14162
	20451	17014
DEDUCT: CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year		
Creditors and Accruals	183	162
Corporation Tax	---	---
TOTAL NET ASSETS	**20268**	**16852**
RESERVES		
Accumulated surplus	20268	16852

FFA Member's Aircraft For Sale





Robin DR400-140 Earl - 1972

Serial number	737 (factory confirmed that wing spar mod not needed)
Airframe	2800 hours
Engine	1050 SMOH. Top overhaul done in 2003 - new valves and cylinder
Radios	Narco Mk 12, King 170 ADF, Transponder
GPS	Skymap and Garmin
Cambrai cover	

Always hangared, one owner for the last 10 years with TLC. Only reason for sale is that age forces retirement from flying.
£29,000 - no VAT
Ring Pat Nutt on 01723 859140 (FFA No.84)



FFA Clothing

For FFA baseball caps, lined fleece jackets, sleeveless jackets, polo shirts, sweat shirts and FFA ties contact:
Roz Stephens
01944 738281 or email chix@farmline.com
Most items and sizes now in stock.

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For further information and sample of Grass Protection Mesh, contact the address below or download the Slingsby Aviation Case History from our website.

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