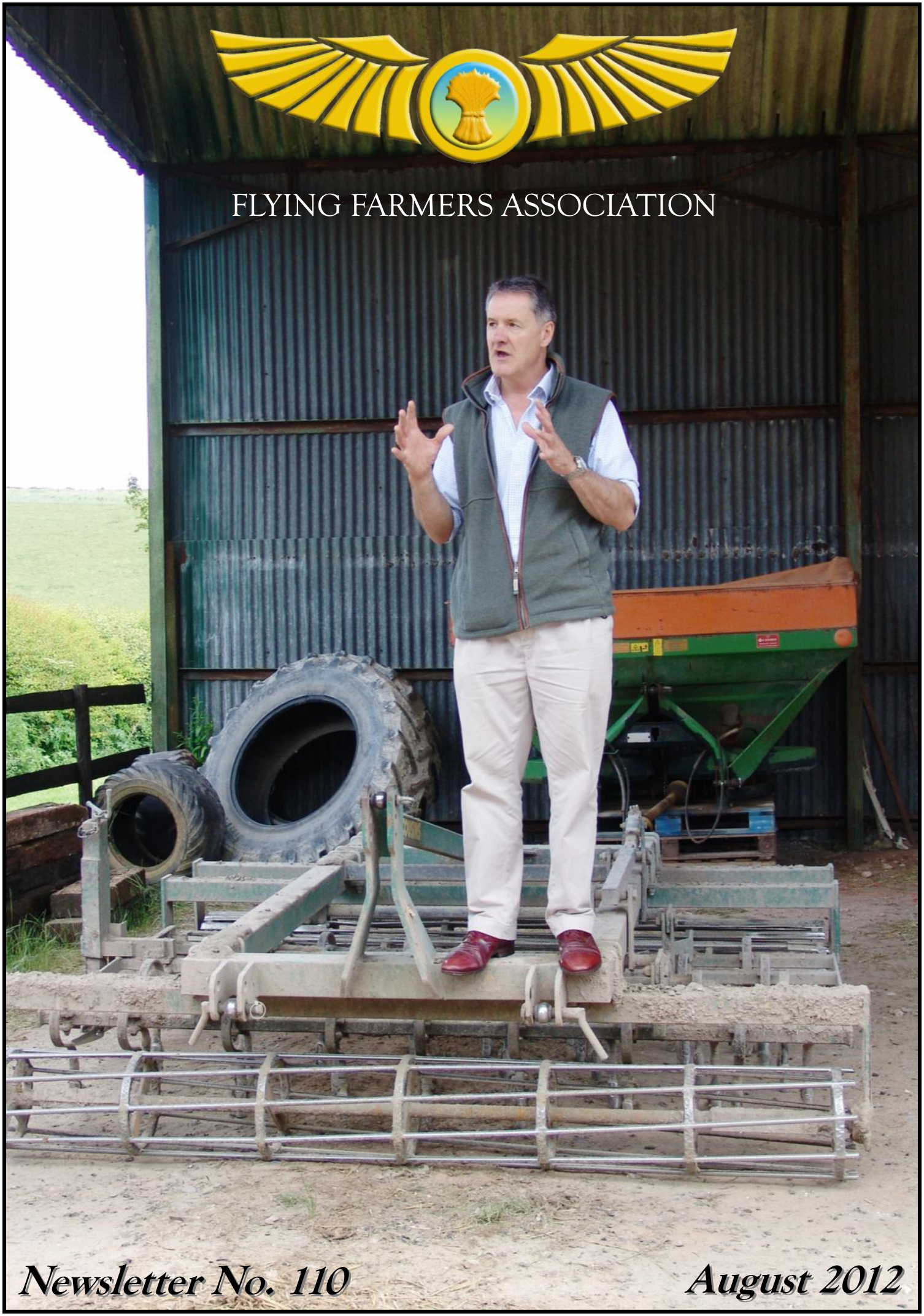


FLYING FARMERS ASSOCIATION

Newsletter No. 110

August 2012

Opening Thoughts

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Editor, Publisher & Printer;

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

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Cover photograph;

Chris Musgrave, Barberry Castle Estate
Photo by Roz Stephens

Chairman's Ramblings

I have been set a challenge by your newsletter secretary for this edition – to see if I can get through it without mentioning the word weather!

It is, as we have been told, all to do with the jet stream being too far to the South of us and no-one knows why, and thus we have the 'wrong sort of weather systems' over us. In the last week there was massive excitement in Geneva when it was announced that scientists working the Hadron Collider had 'almost certainly' discovered the elusive Higgs Particle which has long been suspected to be the missing link in our Universe. This unit which runs in a 17 mile circle deep underground on the Swiss/French border was conceived by over 10,000 scientists from more than 100 countries and cost untold billions to build – and now they are already talking of a replacement for this machine at a projected cost of $20 billion (for 20, read at least 50 by the time it is up & running) to discover who knows what. Now if only they could use the brains of those 10,000 scientists and their apparently limitless amount of money to shift the jet stream a bit to the North.....!

We have had excellent visits for the membership this year so far, sometimes with excellent weather and sometimes with rubbish weather. Where the days have been unflyable, many members have gone to considerable efforts to get to the event by car, and that is so gratifying for the organisers who put in so much to arrange the events for us all. It means a lot – thank you all.

We still await that elusive settled period of weather to start our hay-making. To my knowledge no-one has cut any hay in this area and it is already over 3 weeks behind its optimum cutting time – with no settled spell yet in sight. I wonder what the quality will be like when the time comes – after all, the horses to whom you offer it will not be interested to be told that the weather was a problem at making time, they will merely turn up their noses and walk away, although I have a theory that if they get hungry enough they will probably eat it. As I walked past the crop this morning with the dog, I was however pleasantly surprised to see a lot of green leaf still there – no doubt due to the continual wet, so it may yet still not be too late for reasonable quality.

The milk industry seems to be in dire straits at the moment. Processors cut the price they pay to producers by 2p/litre in June and a further 2p/litre to come in August. Supermarkets simply will not accept price rises. They have the ultimate power and it is sheer greed on their behalf. It may be good for the consumer – for the moment – but in years to come with little or no milk industry left in this country, they may just realise that they have been rather more than a little short-sighted.

By the time you get to read this newsletter, the 2012 Olympics will just be a few days away. The hype surrounding it seems to have been really infectious and the country has got behind it all in a big way. Last weekend Annette and I went to see the Torch Relay pass through Newmarket high street. There were many thousands of people lining the street (in the rain) and it was a real carnival atmosphere. The organisation has been extremely well orchestrated by the authorities and we thoroughly enjoyed the occasion, even though we only saw the torch bearer for about 20 seconds as he rushed past!

I personally fear for the traffic arrangements in London during the event. Traffic in town is a nightmare even on a good day and I just cannot see how it can be anything but chaos and frustration for the entire games. I hope I am wrong, but I shall be watching all I want to see from the comfort of my sofa!

And finally, the Olympic airspace. For months we have been inundated with information on what to do, and more importantly on what not to do. We have been threatened with everything from the loss of our licences to prison to being shot down (although it would be a brave pilot who actually presses the button to shoot one of us down over the congestion of London – or anywhere else for that matter), if we so much as dare to stray a couple of degrees from our planned track. I personally think that the authorities are trying to make it sound so difficult and dangerous for us to fly anywhere near London for that month, that we will just not do it, and thus make it all easier for them.

Is the threat really as great as they are suggesting? We live in a pretty evil world at times with some pretty evil people and the Government are on a hiding to nothing whatever they do. If they put all these restrictive measures in place

Committee Members

Dick Walgate	President	01472 371203
Martin Gosling	Chairman	01787 269369
Paul Stephens	Secretary	01944 738281
Andrew Cragg	Treasurer	01303 874251
Rick Holt	Events Secretary	01386 761816
Gordon Bellerby	Committee Member	01423 520770
Philip Young	Committee Member	01485 525666

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and nothing happens, people will say it was all a waste of time. If they don't take precautions and something does happen, they will be castigated for not taking the threat seriously enough. They can't win.

For my part I am unlucky enough to have my strip in the restricted zone, but lucky enough to be within a mile of the edge. At least I don't have to file a flight plan to get out of or get back into the zone, but I still have to ring Atlas control every morning that the airstrip will be used to tell them what is going on and to get an allocated squawk for the airfield, and then to ring them again in the evening to say when flying has ceased. I bet I forget to do one or the other!! It is all a bit tiresome, particularly the flight planning bit if you want to fly through the zone – thank heavens for the Sky Demon navigation programme which does it all for you. (It makes you realise how lucky we are that we don't have to always file a flight plan just to go flying, as they have to in Ireland and Spain, and probably several other countries as well.)

The sun WILL shine, and when it does, the ground should hopefully dry out fairly quickly so we don't spoil our soil structure too much. I wish you all a very successful harvest – at least the corn and rape prices are holding up very well at the moment which is encouraging. I notice my comments at the end of last year's summer newsletter said that my father had once said to me "In a wet year you wonder where the yield has gone to – in a dry year you wonder where it has come from." I hope that is an old wives tale....!

Martin Gosling

P.S. Did I get away without mentioning that 'word' too much?

Editors Notes

No, I don't think you did! - now you haven't left me any room for my bit.

You will find a loose sheet about our new website which has just been launched. This is a huge step forward and remedies all the questions raised at recent AGMs about keeping the Membership List up to date. It also has all the FFA event photos on, that went missing when the photo website closed down.

I hope this new website is used as the first means of finding the latest news from the FFA and event information. I will endeavour to keep it bang up to date.

The accuracy of the Membership list is totally dependent on you keeping your profiles up to date as your emails, telephone numbers, aircraft etc change.

All will become clear when you read the notes and use the website.

Paul Stephens

Committee Meeting 18th June 2012

The Committee met at the Chairman's house in Essex on 18th June. Thank's to both Martin and Annette for hosting us and providing lunch.

There have been 9 new members join and 7 retire since 1st February, our last Committee meeting, making a total membership of 392. However, when the Treasurer (Andrew Cragg) reconciled the subscriptions at the renewal date of April 25th, he found a small number of non-payers. He has chased them without success and can only assume that they have moved house without leaving a forwarding address, and moved banks so the standing orders don't exist anymore. He will try one last time before they will unfortunately have to be removed from the list.

The Events Secretary (Rick Holt) said that we have had variable weather at the events so far. Bletchley Park proved a very popular event (again) with about 80 participants. The MG Owners Club meeting was plagued with a mirky weather in the local area. The Tour of Ireland had decent weather on the flying days and lousy weather on the 'site-seeing' days. Barbery Castle was a beautiful day and Fonthill was a 200 foot cloudbase.

As you will see on the 2012 Programme page, Neville Stops is organizing a meeting at Middle Wallop for the AGM, with an interesting speaker(s).

We will hold a London meeting again in January / February if anyone has suggestions for a venue, please talk to Rick. The Foreign Office is one possibility. Suggestions for other events include a visit to Camgrain, a Vineyard and Hawker Restorations in Essex. A 2 day First War Battlefields tour in Northern France, a meeting on the Scottish Borders, brassicas in Cornwall and eggs in Yorkshire.

For the European Tour, we have been invited to the Amazon Werks in North Germany and a visit to the European Parliament in Strasbourg by a UKIP MEP, which would also take in the Bugatti Museum. Any other ideas welcome.

The beta version of the new FFA website was shown to the Committee for any comments. Please see a separate article on a loose sheet.

GACC

The CAAs General Aviation Consultative Councils meeting on the 28th March 2012 was notable for the keynote speech which I made on the subject of the role of the CAA in the safeguarding of unlicensed aerodromes. But before I elaborate on that subject I have to report on the usual run of topics introduced by the Chairman, Mr Bob Jones, the CAAs Head of Flight Operations and I might add, a force to be reckoned with. How is it that he can remember the name of the 30 or so members of this committee without recourse to notes?

The agenda included discussion on the London Olympics, the review of GA safety, Volcanic Ash, the adoption of standardised European Rules of the Air, the list of current CAA research projects, Mandatory Occurrence Reporting, Use of light aircraft for Aerial Work, Delegation of the NPPL licence to the BMAA, the regulation of Research and Experimental Aircraft, Warning Signs for ballistic recovery systems, GA strategic issues (including a sustainable future for business and GA operations, future role of CAA, future transport strategy, decline in UK flight training etc),

Joined since 1st March 2012

FFA Number		Strip
878	Simon Reeve, Retford, Nottinghamshire	y
879	Alex Bush, Westbury, Wiltshire	heli
880	Barry Pearson, Umberligh, Devon	y
881	Duncan Robertson, Forfar, Angus	y
882	Andrew Brown, Saxilby, Lincolnshire	(y)
883	Mark Dean, Preston, Lancashire	y
884	Jo Partridge, st Merryn, Cornwall	y
885	Matthew Morton, Arlesford, Hampshire	n

The total membership is now 394

Aircrew Regulation, my agenda item as above and finally the Light Aircraft Maintenance Program review. Rather than provide a detailed briefing on each of these subjects I propose to concentrate on a few important issues of relevance to pilots of light aircraft flown mainly for pleasure. If anybody wants more information they can contact me by email or by telephone.

My topic on the CAAs role in the safeguarding of unlicensed aerodromes was raised because in my professional work for the owners and operators of unlicensed aerodromes I am aware that the CAA expect compliance with CAP793 "Safe Operating Practices at Unlicensed Aerodromes" published by the CAA in July 2010, the safety assessments set out in CAP168 "Licensing of Aerodromes and of course the Rules of the Air, in particular the 500 ft and 1000ft Rules. Yet, at the same time, when consulted by a local planning authority on a planning application proposing a development that could endanger the safe operation of aircraft from an existing aerodrome or other flying site the CAA does not usually raise any objection to a proposed development, even though the required standards expected of aerodromes and pilots could not be met if the development were to be built. Wind Turbine farms and new housing estates are the commonest threats to an aerodrome.

Chris Finnigan of the CAA was the first to respond to my criticism of the CAA. He said that safety rests with the operator and that, if pilots cannot comply with the Rules of the Air then a flight should not be undertaken Well I suppose we all know that. But what happens to an existing aerodrome that is affected by development on the extended centreline? Charles Henry of the GAAC said that he was aware of one housing developer who had suggested a 30 degree turn immediately after take off but this is clearly an unsafe practice. Ben Watkins of the CAA said that he flew a light aeroplane from an aerodrome where on take off he had to fly over the top of a nursing home at low level and that it is better that the CAA does not "rock the boat" otherwise there would be many aerodromes and pilots flying illegally. I said that this is not a satisfactory response. Either the Rules should be changed or the CAA should actively seek to prevent developments lying under or close to the extended centrelines of runways. The Chairman intervened and promised me a considered CAA response once the various sections of the CAA had had a chance to consider the matter further.

Watch this space!

Of interest on other subjects we learned that the CAA has its own Cessna C421 based at Bournemouth, adapted and ready to sample air quality in the event of further volcanic eruptions in this hemisphere, that for conspicuity purposes tests are being carried out with mirror strips on sailplane control surfaces, wake turbulence from wind turbines is being measured and that there were 16,000 mandatory occurrence reports submitted in the UK in 2011.

Peter Kember Dip TP, MRTPI, MRAeS,
Aviation Planning Consultant.
email: 2pk@peterkembert.co.uk
telephone: 01892 750018

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 £100 for £500,000 any one occurrence, but limited to £50,000 any one aircraft. For £1,000,000 any one occurrence, it would be £200, limited to £50,000 any one aircraft.

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

If you have any queries whatsoever, contact **William Man** at Hayward Aviation on 0207 902 7800 or email wman@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.

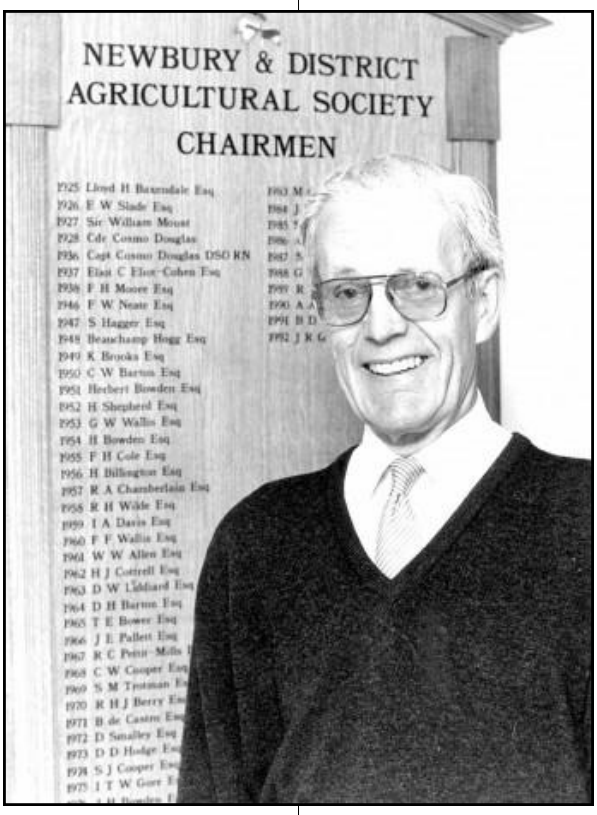
Please quote your Flying Farmers membership number when you call.

Richard Goddard's Eulogy, April 21st 2012

Hello everyone, I am Richard, John's elder son. On behalf of all the family I would like to say a few words about Dad.

John was born in Midgham 86 years ago just down the road at Kennetholme, which you will now know as the Berkshire Arms. 1926 was a totally different world from today. The fields were still partly worked by horses and the Bath road was unpaved. Tarmac came in 1931 so Dad once told me.

John went to the local school in Midgham a couple of hundred yards from here on School Hill. After school at Newbury Grammar School, John worked the local fields around here, often using horses. At this time he developed his life-long love for animals. Later he did contracting work, which brought him to East Hanney, where his Uncle and Aunt lived, travelling there often, first with a horse and cart and later with tractor. There he got to know Basil Sharpus a devoted shepherd and life-long friend.



In 1948, at the age of 22 he married June, a Newbury girl. A year later Colthrop farm, a somewhat run-down mixed farm close to Midgham, came up for sale. He managed to convince a bank manager that he was worth supporting and together with a large mortgage, which would dog him for many years to come, he bought the farm at auction. It took nerve and vision, which John had in abundance.

Mum and Dad never mentioned the difficulties they had at the beginning, but Mum once said that cutting the wicks for the oil lamps was not pleasant. John brought electricity to the farm and rearranged the hedges so all fields centred at the farmhouse and yard. They were difficult times.

Soon he was doing well enough to employ staff and a couple of years later Steve and I came into the world. John was always very keen to use the latest technology. He was never afraid to understand how it worked and repair it if necessary. Steve and I have fond memories of playing in the workshop at Colthrop, where there were innumerable tools to repair farm equipment. Dad never said a discouraging word.

John very much enjoyed driving and in 1990 he and his farming friend David Rabbits drove from London to Peking along the Silk Road. He also loved driving the family through the beautiful countryside around here, doing what he called "farming". He was always keen to look over the hedges and get new ideas from other farmers.

At the age of 38 he started to take flying lessons from Don Greatrex and flying became a life-long passion. Shortly after getting his flying license, he purchased a plane in a syndicate. I can remember my first flight. I must have been about 12, Steve 10. The whole family took off from Colthrop and an hour or so later we were picnicking on the beach at Sandown on the Isle of Wight.

Later on he joined the Flying Farmers, an association of like-minded farmers who organised trips and an annual tour. In this way he flew, latterly together with Steve, to such places as Ireland, Scotland, Romania, Hungary, Spain, France, Germany, Lithuania and the Baltic States. His enthusiasm was contagious and both Steve and I subsequently learnt to fly.

While he was flying back from one trip, the engine seized up and he had to make an emergency landing in Holland. As luck would have it, he landed in a farmer's field. He did not say much about it, but I think to him such an event was life enhancing, something to be learnt from.

Back home on the farm John built up a renowned Simmental cattle herd and exported prize-winning animals to Canada and Germany. In 1984 the Simmental Society brought him to Australia where he, Mum and I visited Michael Bowden's sister Janny, in Tullamore near Syndey and Norman and Jean Allen, farmer friends who had moved to Perth.

John very much supported the Newbury Agricultural Show and exhibited cattle and crops regularly, often winning prizes. In 1992 John served as Chairman of Newbury and District Agricultural Society with Sir William Benyon as president. His interest in breeding animals extended to race horses and I can remember the fun that Dad and Mum had going to races at which a horse that he owned with John Steele ran and sometimes won.

In later years Dad and Mum very much enjoyed their regular Tuesday lunches at the Stag with friends from the local area. He was devoted to Midgham and spent many years on the parish council, together with Hanslip Long. He loved this church and willingly acted as odd-job man looking after the heating and changing the bulbs.

Over the years he fought for a crematorium in the West Berkshire area and eventually succeeded in having one built in the beautiful setting of Colthrop in 2006. There, just two years later, Dad sadly said goodbye to Mum after 60 years together. It is therefore fitting that the family will accompany him to the crematorium after this service.

Over the years he built up firm and trusting friendships with many Newbury people and farmers in the West Berkshire area. John loved his family and was especially fond of his grandchildren, Katherine and William. He often spoke of them with much pride. He was particularly happy that they have done so well and are embarked on interesting careers.

In John we have lost a devoted father, grandfather and much trusted friend. He was a vet, plumber, black-smith, pilot, mechanic and man of the earth. He was not afraid to ask for advice and was a good judge of character and ability and chose his advisors wisely. After informing himself, he made good and quick decisions and stood by them. He is an example to us all.

John will be sorely missed by his very many friends, some of very long standing, and his deeply devoted family.

May I say on behalf of all the family that it is lovely to see so many of you here today.

Programme 2012

Programme 2012

1st February	BBC Television Centre
18th / 25th April	Swanwick
8th May	Bletchley Park, Turweston
23rd May	MG Owners Club
1st - 9th June	FFA Tour to Ireland
20th June	Barbury Castle Estate
4th July	Fonthill & Ballington Estates
10th October	AGM - Middle Wallop



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 and should ALWAYS be verified from official sources.

AGM, Middle Wallop 10th October 2012

Neville Stops is arranging the AGM this year, to be held at Middle Wallop. We will be landing on the airfield between 09:30 and 10:30 on the 10th October 2012. There will be tea or coffee on arrival followed by the **AGM at 11:00.**

After the AGM, there will be a buffet lunch followed by a speaker talking about the Royal Flying Corps formed almost 100 years ago.

All Aircraft must have MOD Insurance (7.5 Million), normally included in the insurance package. Members wishing to fly in to attend the AGM must fill in the form (reply slip enclosed) and send this with a copy of their MoD insurance to Neville Stops.

There will be no charge at all for members, but guests will be expected to make a contribution to the lunch and room hire on the day. (Family are classed as members).

Reports from the 2012 Summer Meetings

Swanwick, Wednesday 18th / 25th April 2012

Both days were not flyable. The building is very impressive (and the salaries!) We were given an overview of controlled airspace and some radar prints of people contravening it. We also visited the D and D room, similar to our visit to Prestwick really.

Brief report from Rick Holt (no one took notes)

Bletchley Park, 8th May 2012

After a long spell of gales and low cloud a decent day dawned for the trip into Turweston. There were more FFA aircraft present than I have seen at any gathering before. I don't know if it was a record. It was an excellent turnout. There were many people whom I hadn't seen before which is good news for the Association.

We were greeted by Tim Pulverman and John Gallihawk who delivered a short introduction over coffee in the former dining room in the big house.

Fifty miles north-west of London lies Bletchley Park. In 1883, it became home to the Leon family, whose patriarch was a wealthy City of London financier. Herbert Samuel Leon bought over 300 acres of land beside the London and North-Western Railway line that passed through Bletchley, Buckinghamshire, developing sixty of those acres into his country estate. At the heart of the estate, he built a mansion in a curious mixture of architectural styles. One of Bletchley's greatest benefactors, he was much loved by the local people. He was awarded a baronetcy in 1911.

Following the deaths of Sir Herbert and Lady Fanny Leon, the Park fell into the hands of property developer Captain Hubert Faulkner, who intended to demolish the buildings and sell the land as a housing site.

But the Government was about to intervene. It was 1938 and the threat of war loomed as Hitler invaded first Austria and then Czechoslovakia. The Government Code and Cypher School, then based in London, needed a safer home where its intelligence work could carry on unhindered by enemy air attacks. At a junc-

tion of major road, rail and teleprinter connections to all parts of the country, Bletchley Park was eminently suitable.

Commanded by Alastair Denniston, the Park was given the cover name Station X, being the tenth of a large number of sites acquired by MI6 for its wartime operations.

After meticulous preparation and a series of trial runs, the codebreakers arrived in earnest in August 1939. They masqueraded as 'Captain Ridley's Shooting Party' to disguise their true identity. It was to be the first installment in one of the most remarkable stories of the Second World War.

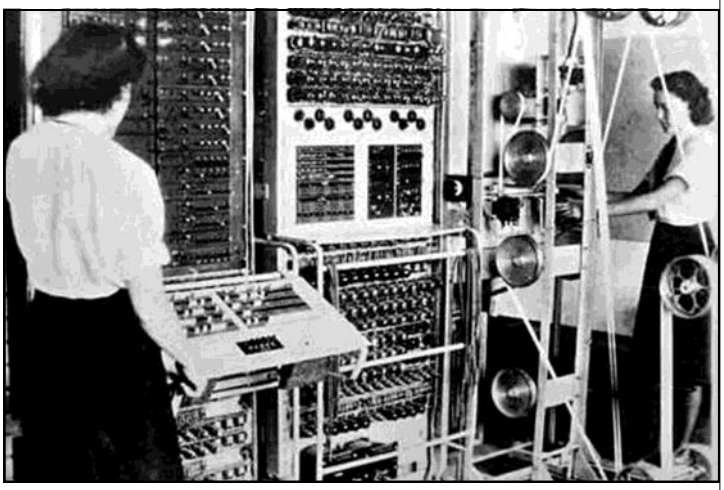
The Enigma cypher was the backbone of German military and intelligence communications. Invented in 1918, it was initially designed to secure banking communications, but achieved little success in that sphere. The German military, however, were quick to see its potential.

They thought it to be unbreakable, and not without good reason. Enigma's complexity was bewildering. The odds against anyone who did not know the settings being able to break Enigma were a staggering 150 million million million to one.

The Poles had broken Enigma in 1932, when the encoding machine was undergoing trials with the German Army. They even managed to reconstruct a machine. At that time, the cypher altered only once every few months. With the advent of war, it changed at least once a day, effectively locking the Poles out. But in July 1939, they had passed on their knowledge to the British and the French. This enabled the codebreakers to make critical progress in working out the order in which the keys were attached to the electrical circuits, a task that had been impossible without an Enigma machine in front of them.

Armed with this knowledge, the codebreakers were then able to exploit a chink in Enigma's armour. A fundamental design flaw meant that no letter could ever be encrypted as itself; an A in the original message, for example, could never appear as an A in the code. This gave the codebreakers a toehold. Errors in messages sent by tired, stressed or lazy German operators also gave clues. In January 1940 came the first break into Enigma.

It was in Huts 3,6,4 and 8 that the highly effective Enigma decrypt teams worked. The huts operated in pairs and, for security



reasons, were known only by their numbers. The codebreakers concentrating on the Army and Air Force cyphers were based in Hut 6, supported by a team in the neighbouring Hut 3 who turned the decyphered messages into intelligence reports. Hut 8 decoded messages from the German Navy, with Hut 4 the associated naval intelligence hut. Their raw material came from the 'Y' Stations: a web of wireless intercept stations dotted around Britain and in a number of countries overseas. These stations listened in to the enemy's radio messages and sent them to Bletchley Park to be decoded and analysed.

To speed up the codebreaking process, the brilliant mathematician Alan Turing developed an idea originally proposed by Polish cryptanalysts. The result was the Bombe: an electro-mechanical machine that greatly reduced the odds, and thereby the time required, to break the daily-changing Enigma keys.

The initial design of the bombe was produced in 1939 at the UK Government Code and Cypher School at Bletchley Park by Alan Turing with an important refinement devised in 1940 by Gordon Welchman. The engineering design and construction was the work of Harold Keen of the British Tabulating Machine Company. It was a substantial development from a device that had been designed in 1938 by Polish Cipher Bureau cryptologist Marian Rejewski, and known as the "cryptologic bomb". This in turn lead to the development of Colossus.

The function of the bombe was to discover some of the daily settings of the Enigma machines on the various German military networks: specifically, the set of rotors in use and their positions in the machine; the rotor core start positions for the message—the message key—and one of the wirings of the plugboard.

With the declaration of peace, the frenzy of codebreaking activity ceased.

On Churchill's orders, every scrap of 'incriminating' evidence was destroyed. As the Second World War gave way to the Cold War, it was vital that Britain's former ally, the USSR, should learn nothing of Bletchley Park's wartime achievements.

The thousands who had worked there departed. Some continued to use their remarkable expertise to break other countries' cyphers, working under a new name: the Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ).

The site became home to a variety of training schools: for teachers, Post Office workers, air traffic control system engineers, and members of GCHQ. In 1987, after a fifty-year association with British Intelligence, Bletchley Park was finally decommissioned.

For decades, the codebreakers would remain silent about their achievements. It was not until the wartime information was declassified in the mid-1970s that the truth would begin to emerge. And the impact of those achievements on the outcome of the war and subsequent developments in communications still has not been recognised fully.

The highlight of the visit has to be the World War Two vintage computer known as Colossus. Basically it used an electronic eye to read paper that had been punched with holes like ticker tape or telex tape as we know it. The readings were compared to each other electronically. When a pattern was established this would form the key for deciphering the message that had been encrypted in the tape. As a farm mechanic I found the electro mechanical Colossus fascinating.

After a jolly good lunch of mince, peas and mash we were taken back to the aircraft and set off home. The whole experience of the visit to Blethcley Park was intriguing. Many visitors bought books and guides to follow up our brief visit with more study. I have now read two books and all the pamphlets that were given to us. The experience of the people living and working at BP was life changing for them and will be source of interest to anyone who goes to see what they did.

Roger Bell

Chris Moore adds: We were very lucky in having the only reasonable flying weather of the whole week. With my Bletchley Park hat on it was extremely gratifying to see nearly 80 people turn up, and as we are still very much in fundraising mode, thank you to everyone who contributed a donation. Further contributions always much appreciated!

MG Owners Club, 23rd May 2012

The weather was beautiful over most of Britain except for the part of East Anglia where Main Hall Farm is based. With 300' cloud base and less than 3000 metres visibility it wasn't the gin clear day that we hoped for. Although the TAF for nearby Cambridge promised an improvement by 10am local there was no change until midday when a lone Jabaru piloted by Robin "Pathfinder" Culley and his passenger Tim appeared overhead, did a tight circuit and landed. Other pilots had tried and failed to reach Main Hall Farm and had either given up and landed elsewhere or returned home. Fortunately and in true British tradition to get through at any cost, groups of enthusiastic Farmers and their guests arrived by car.

The programme was changed to provide lunch before the tour which was a great success and our coach carried us to the MGOC HQ for a tour of the facilities which provide MG owners with publications, a huge warehouse crammed with spares and a large



workshop busy with servicing and complete ground up restorations. It turned out that many in the group owned MGs now or had enjoyed them in the past.

Clutching our MG goodie bags we then returned to Charlie Papworth's airstrip at Main Hall Farm to be shown around the small factory that produces the E GO aircraft. By then, the weather had improved a little and our intrepid pilot in the Jabaru was able to return home, the rest left in their cars.

It was an enjoyable day, which was hampered by bad weather, and we hope to plan another visit in the future so that others can enjoy it too.

After paying for the pre-booked lunches and the coach, the day made a profit of £300.40 which has been sent to the Flying Farmers adopted charity Help for Heroes.

Roche Bentley



Barbury Castle Estate, 20th June 2012

Most people flew in to Draycott Farm Airstrip with a lovely flying day, difficult to find just recently, with over 60 people able to come. We then travelled by bus to the members barn at Barbary Castle which is just a few miles north of Marlborough and a most sincere thanks to Peter Gale for organizing it.

Chris Musgrove gave us a brief outline of his own career, explaining how he came to Temple Farm and what the farming enterprise now involves.

He was brought up on the family farm in Ireland which is now managed by an older brother. There was not enough room for both of them at home so he took a job at Temple Farm as an assistant shepherd and quickly rose through the ranks and ended up forming his own management company 8 years ago, which he called Musgrove Management Systems Ltd. This now manages 7,500 acres which comprises of the Barbary Estate, Temple Farm, Manton Estates and the Maisey farms.

These are all managed with sensitive regard for all the different owner's priorities but with great emphasis on the equine world. There is great biodiversity on the downs and all the farms are run together and have been the only farm chosen to be part of a new government initiative 'The Nature Improvement Area' scheme. Enterprises include clay pigeon shooting, game shooting and rental of surplus farm buildings. Temple and Manton operate the shoots and the main ethos is profitable farming whilst enhancing the environment.

Chris utilises and integrates the many government schemes available to enhance the high requirements of running two racing yards. For instance he has to avoid growing oil seed rape in the areas alongside the horse gallops as this can affect their respiratory systems. Instead areas alongside are in organic or CSS schemes. He also is in the ELS, HLS, Wildlife Enhancement Scheme and National Improvement Area Schemes. Several ponds have been created in the permeable chalk with the aid of clay and straw using a very old traditional way of creating dewponds, called marling. He goes out of his way to encourage English Partridge. Over 1,500 acres are unploughable due to the large sarsen stones of which he sells many tonnes a year at £100/tonne. You don't need many stones for a tonne!

He farms around 2,500 acres of actual arable across these farms with very creditable yields on predominantly light thin chalk land, with yields of around 10 tonne/hectare of winter wheat. He has one large combine, two sprayers and one drill and 17 staff. Most of the staff spends much of their time keeping the grass and estate in prime order as, of course, any race horse owner would expect. He is also growing, this year, a new crop called camilina which apparently goes into aviation fuel. Temple Farm comprises of 2,000 acres and makes use of its natural resources and is home to the Barbary Horse Trials. The ambition of the owner was to create a national hunt racehorse training centre.

Alan King has his yard on the Temple Farm Estate and presides over one of the largest National Hunt training centres in the UK. It is a modern set up making use of the large barns which have been converted into stable blocks on the American barn system.

We returned to the visitor centre at Barbary for a lovely lunch provided by Purton Roasters. Barbary Castle has great history and is the site of ancient earthworks, an Iron Age Fort, round barrows, Celtic field systems and said to be where the West Saxons defeated the Britain's in the Battle of Beran Byrig in 556 AD.

Finally we proceeded by tractor and trailer to the Manton Estate which is a traditional red brick yard and hamlet built on Victorian lines. The owner of this flat race yard is Robert Sang-



ster and Dave McCormick runs the yard. He showed us a newly installed wood fired boiler which was helping to save a considerable amount of energy and money.

It costs about £30,000 a year to prepare and keep a horse at the stables. Therefore if the horse is clearly no good the trainer recommends to the owner to put the horse in the July sales which is the prime time when these horses are bought and sold. As you can see the cost of owning a horse is very high and therefore there are many joint owners.

He joked, standing in this lovely traditional old yard, by the accommodation, saying that years ago they would lock the staff up at night, especially when the horses were racing the next day for fear of valuable information getting out on the horses potential winning ability the next day!

We were shown the millionaire row of horses.

The one thing all the farms have in common is horses and perhaps the public mostly see Barbary Castle where they hold many point-to-points, horse trials and other events during the year. The ambition has been to create the prime National Hunt Race Horse Centre in the country.

There are over 19 miles of race horse gallops on the estates. These are mainly made up of fescue and a vertiman gallop aerator is used every year in the spring to create the ideal riding conditions. The grass is mowed, at this time of year, every 5 days and at the strategic places it is backed up by all weather gallops. This consists of sand, Vaseline and rubber and is about 6 inches deep. When a new gallop is created it cannot be used for 5 years whilst the grass is maturing. These gallops have to emulate as closely as possible the real conditions these horses will encounter. Therefore they have a gallop called The Derby Mile and also 6 Spurs that gets the horses used to the different cambers the horses will have to encounter.

I can only say what an interesting day. Chris Musgrove has such infectious enthusiasm and good delegation skills, you can certainly see why his new management company is such a success!

Mike Rowland

Fonthill Manor Estate 4th July 2012

It all began rather disappointingly, as no one was able to fly in to the beautifully prepared Bathampton Farm airstrip kindly made available by Aidan Maitland-Robinson. Twenty cars did manage to arrive, however, to spend a day of two parts, macrocosmic and microcosmic.

Lord Margadale (Alastair) showed us around his magnificent 9,000 acre Fonthill Manor Estate with the help of Simon Fowler who runs the estate as part of his business, Fowler Fortescue, and Richard Williams of Velcourt who contract farms the cropping.

The estate was purchased in the 1830s by a Mr Morrison who made his fortune in lace with which he managed to corner the lucrative market in a very go ahead Victorian way, earning himself the equivalent of £3 million a month.

The estate comprises approximately one third woodland and two thirds farmland with about 95,000 sq ft of commercial property and various business enterprises. The forestry is managed by outside consultants with three regular contractors and various felling teams. There is an in-hand shoot which employs three gamekeepers providing 35 days shooting per year. There is also a small private stud.

The woods provide wood chips for sale and fuel for an Austrian boiler which heats Fonthill House and its neighbouring buildings. The chips are bulky, 2 ½ times that of wheat, but the saving over fuel oil is over 25%.

The grain stores are enormous, 11,000 and 12,000 tonne capacity, but, to my mind, the 400 – 500 square metres of solar panels on the roof is even more impressive. As it's a difficult year for arable, one can only hope this might help – but then some sunshine would be ideal . . . In 2011 a project for hydro-electric power at the dam was completed.

The dairy, which was originally built on the proceeds of one race horse, closed in 1992. The site now houses a water bottling plant which uses 20 million litres of water per year from five separate sources on the estate, a commercial joinery, a printing and mail sorting business, and even a micro- brewery. These are just a few of the commercial conversions employing over 190 people.

After a superb buffet lunch in the magnificent shooting lodge, we took to the trailer for a lovely but soaking ride through the forest.

After drying off for a few minutes in the large wood chip store we repaired to John and Pauline Tremlett's Ballington Manor where we were refreshed with tea and warmth before setting off again to view the microcosm, as it were, to the Fonthill Manor Estate. This farm being a 'mere' 1,065 acres but with most of the elements of the larger neighbour. A shooting and award winning conservation dream run by keeper David Dillistone and Martin Wellman. The cropping also being contract managed by Velcourt.

John was very open with his costings and management style. Basically Ballington was purchased on the back of supplying Tescos with produce from John s North Kent Farms Business.

Thanks to John Milne for helping organising a truly gentlemanly day, and especially John Tremlett who masterminded the venues and logistics, thus ensuring that everyone had ample food for thought and enjoyed themselves.

Anthony Kedros



FFA Tour of Ireland 2012

I feel slightly responsible for conning one of our three Irish members into organising this tour. Bernard Cullen was doing the hospitable thing and rang to see if any of our members would like to attend his annual fly-in at Athboy, North West of Dublin. I replied that we could maybe do better than that and come in force as part of our annual European Tour. At the time, Bernard was delighted to accept the challenge and enthusiastic about extending the fly-in to a full blown FFA tour.

The original idea was to meet with all three of our Irish members - Bernard, Bryan Sheane and Gerry Humphreys. Unfortunately, Gerry would be out of the country at the time of our visit, so it was down to Bernard and Brian to throw together a tour. Bernard would be the boss, but it was made none the less easy as he hadn't organised a tour before - in fact, being a relatively new member, he hadn't even been to one of our meetings before! I tried to point him in the right direction, but was keen not to get too involved as it would be a more genuine Irish tour if it was organised in genuine Irish fashion.

Over the winter months, Bernard got his head together and made a plan - not too rigid and with only three hotels to lessen the chance of being without a bed for the night if the Irish weather did its worst. What foresight!

The dates were set, to meet on the 1st June and depart on the 9th. 24 members in 13 aircraft made up the total numbers, with another 7 having to withdraw for various reasons just before the event.

So 21 of us found our way to Bernard's super strip at Athboy, about 25 miles north west of Dublin. We were greeted with a very warm welcome by Bernard and some of his airfield enthusiasts and taken into Trim to a very smart hotel. Things got off to an excellent start with a dinner in a private room within the hotel,



which I can honestly say was the best group dinner I have ever had. The beef was superb and Bernard should know as he is in the meat trade. The speaker was Matt Demsey, the editor of The Irish Farmers Journal. His speech was eloquent and flowing, setting out the history of Irish agriculture, the present position and where it is going.

Saturday, 2nd June 2012

The programme today was to fly to Kilrush and back, a grass airfield only about 35 miles due south of Athboy. This is where the Irish logic was first recognised when we called the tower to be told to first land on 11, then the controller changed his mind to 29 and had several aircraft having to change runways whilst they were downwind. Problems increased as the approach to 29 was hindered by some trees, the runway was downhill and worst of all it was downwind. Anthony Kedros decided to abort his landing, while others landed fairly fast and long. Others realised what was happening and insisted on runway 11, which was the correct runway. The controller's reasoning to land on 29 was because we were parking at the far end of the runway and we wouldn't have to back track.

The first visit was to the Irish National Stud where we saw some very expensive stallions worth up to 60 million Euros. The stud fees for these Thoroughbreds are based on their progeny's results, confirmation and parentage. The Queen visited the stud a year before our visit and apparently a lively stallion kicked out only inches from her, but she stood her ground whilst others scattered.

There was time to visit the Japanese Gardens at the Stud before moving onto Newbridge Silver where we had lunch in their award winning Silver Restaurant. As Bernard seems to know everyone in Ireland, we were introduced to the Style Icons museum by William Doyle, the CEO of Newbridge Silver. He explained how they amassed this great collection of dresses and artefacts worn by a host of film stars and celebrities including Marilyn Munroe, Bette Davies, Jean Simmons and Elizabeth Taylor. One piece worn by Audrey Hepburn in 'Breakfast at Tiffanys' was bought at auction for $160,000.00 He also explained how Newbridge Silver was first well known for its cutlery, but now they have branched out into all sorts of jewellery, kitchenware, glassware and gift products. The visitor centre is now rated as one of the top 5 visitor attractions in Ireland.

Sunday, 3rd June 2012

Bernard's fly-in day and a complete wash out. The rain was relentless all day. However, the jungle drums must have been going round Ireland as the fly-in was quickly postponed to the next day. Bernard also had to quickly arrange something for the Flying Farmers and soon had a minibus organised to take those who were interested to the Bloom exhibition, a sort of Chelsea flower show in Dublin. Others went into the centre of Dublin where there was a motor sports show with the streets turned into a temporary race track where the likes of Jenson Button in his McLaren Formula One car demonstrated how much wheel spin and noise he could make. Both events were crowded out despite the wet and cold weather.

Monday, 4th June 2012

Today needed some reasonable weather as we had to fly to Waterford on the south coast, then onto Kilkenny - we were lucky. However, Bernard had mounting stress as first Waterford insisted on flight plans as it is in class C airspace, which necessitated long phone calls by Bernard as they wanted more and more details of the aircraft. Then as people lined up to refuel, his pump started overheating and cutting out. A way was found to keep it going by wrapping cold wet towels round the electric motor! All the time his telephone kept ringing with visitors to his fly-in wanting information until he dropped it and thought he had broken his best friend.

We eventually departed for Waterford after these delays as the first of around 70 aircraft flew into his fly-in to devour a whole hogg roast cooking on the spit. Waterford is a pleasant regional airport with one or two staff who need a serious lesson in customer relations as we were to find out when we departed. At this point, Charles Flint joined us in his Husky - his first FFA meet-

ing.

The visit to Waterford Crystal was very interesting and we were shown round the glass works and could talk to some of the craftsmen who were cutting the crystal glass with a steady hand and great skill. They were working with their hands so close to the cutting wheels that we wondered if they counted their fingers at night to check they were all there - until one of them showed, by placing his finger on the wheel, that although they cut the crystal glass they won't cut human skin.

We were shown some of the commissioned works they were busy with in the factory including the Olympic commemorative pieces and Diamond Jubilee pieces.

On departing for Kilkenny, some of us encountered the an*l staff, as our Chairman described them. He had problems get-



ting through security and then several of us who had left the yellow jackets in the aircraft, because the staff said we didn't need them on the way in, were now reprimanded because we didn't have them. So we had to be escorted to the aircraft by this an*l person who muttered continually about NOTAMs being issued about wearing them.

It was a pleasure to land at Kilkenny, a pleasant, but undulating grass strip, where some of the aircraft owners whisked us into town in their cars. Here we found the last 2 of our gang, Richard Butler and David Keene. These late arrivals had been delayed with the bad weather over the weekend in the UK.

Tuesday, 5th June 2012

Bernard couldn't join us today, so Bryan Sheane took over. Another non flying day and just as well as the weather had closed in again.

We first visited a small family farm which had expanded its cheese making into a large business supplying Harrods and the large supermarkets with its well known Cashel Blue cheese. The milk is supplied by their own 150 cows and more is bought in. Unfortunately, we couldn't watch the cheese making process as they weren't really equipped to show 24 unhygienic farmers round their very clean factory. So instead we were shown a video about this farming family and their cheese making in their nice new building (built with 40% European grants of course). This was followed by a tasting of both the Cashel Blue which was really good and their other brand which is a sheep's cheese with the milk again supplied from their own farm.

Then it was time for a bit of culture with a visit and escorted guide round the Rock of Cashel which is an important and historic rock with various buildings on top of it built in the 11th and 12th centuries. It is the most visited Heritage site in Ireland.



Wednesday, 6th June 2012

Departing Kilkenny didn't go without incident. The airfield owner came and went, but left his 3 Jack Russells loose on the airfield which nearly came to grief as David Soul was warming his Rockwell up. He tried to stop the engine as quickly as possible, but by some miracle, the dogs survived. I now understand why they have short tails. Then Anthony Kedros had to do a precautionary return to the airfield as his 182 started running rough. This was a wise thing to do as he had the boss on board. After an inspection on the ground, the engine was found to be intact and was thought to be a fouled plug.

Martin Gosling and I had made a pretty quick departure from Kilkenny which allowed a bit of time to fly beyond our destination, Kerry, and fly out to the most westerly point of Europe, returning by Dingle Bay. The views weren't the best as there was a lot of low cloud about, but we were glad we took the opportunity as the scheduled day for flying sightseeing on Friday was abandoned due to horrendous weather.

Our stay for the next 3 nights was at the Malton Hotel in Killarney, reputed to be one of the best in this tourist town. They get so many visitors that the population doubles from 16,000 to about 40,000 and has more hotels than Dublin. From what we could tell, most visitors are American. These figures were given to us on a 1 hour surprise horse and trap ride round a part of the 26,000 acre Killarney National Park. We had 8 in each cart and the drivers were so full of Irish blarney that each group were given a completely different set of figures. Our driver said he regularly saw the leprechauns and he



liked a bit of "poached" salmon out of the lake. The park includes the highest mountain range in Ireland where the McGillicuddies Reeks rise to just over 3000 feet. We had yet another storm on our trap ride, but luckily our trap was equipped with a sunshade and roll down side screens.

Although some had been to Irish pubs on their free nights to experience the singing and dancing, when the opportunity arose to see a show just out of town, we were keen to take part. The group of 7 artists put on a show that amazed us all with their talents. The performance told the story of Irish song and dance. The line up included the World Irish Dance Champion and the Irish Singing Champion. The standard of their performance was extremely high and very entertaining. Following a standing ovation, we had the opportunity to meet the performers after the show and express our appreciation.

Thursday, 12th June 2012

Always forecast to be a wash out day, there was no chance of doing any local flying, so we boarded a bus to do the Ring of Kerry. This is a 120 mile drive round the Inverah Peninsular with numerous stops en route including the amazing Skellig Experience - a museum dedicated to the story of the people that occupied this rock 8 miles off the west coast in the years from 500AD to about 1100. How anyone could exist on this rock is beyond belief, but the stone buildings are there to prove it. It was then abandoned either due to the weather turning for



ever colder or maybe it was because the earth was discovered to be round and these religious men found they weren't after all living at the end of the earth. Skellig Michael is now listed as a UNESCO World Heritage List.

Friday, 13th June 2012

After a stormy night with high winds, the weather was due to improve today and it was hoped to fly up to Galway to visit a wind turbine factory. The idea was abandoned by lunch time and Bernard thought we could do with a bit more culture, so we went back into the Killarney National Park to visit Muckross House and Gardens. The house is set in absolutely amazing countryside on the edge of one of the lakes within the park. The house is a moderately sized country house completed in 1843 by the Herbert family who made their fortune mining copper on the Muckross Peninsular in the 18th century. They were actively involved in politics and agricultural improvement in the Killarney area. Henry Herbert built the house which was finished just 2 years before the Great Irish Famine. He was elected to parliament in 1847 and was the MP for Kerry.

They were given 6 years notice that Queen Victoria would



visit for 2 nights in 1861. It is thought that the huge amount of money spent preparing for her visit might have contributed to the downfall of the Herbert's financial situation. It was put up for sale and eventually bought by Lord Ardilaun of the Guinness family and used as a shooting and hunting lodge. It then passed into American ownership (the Bourns and the Vincents) but was handed over to the Irish nation in 1932, probably as it was too expensive to maintain. It was opened to the public in 1964 and throughout this time the Vincent family have kept an interest in the house.

Bernard had prepared a good send off for us on the final night. A private dining room was booked at the hotel and after a champagne reception, we had a very good meal, followed by the customary speeches. Martin Gosling related how much we had actually done in the previous 7 days and the difficult circumstances that Bernard had to deal with. Roz Stephens presented Bernard with a Waterford decanter which was bought with contributions from all participants.

Saturday, 9th June 2012

We awoke to a beautiful morning in Killarney for a very pleasant flight back to the UK. Some will have encountered some weather in the north of England.

Conclusion

So what have we learnt about Ireland? The speaker on the first night briefed us on the agriculture in Ireland and it was plain to see that grass grows for fun with a mild climate and rainfall around 50" in the west, but can be as high as 120" in the mountains. There is a small area of 'tillage' as the Irish call our arable, which is capable of growing huge yields. Ireland is reliant on exports for its agriculture with the biggest customer being the UK. The predominant sectors are dairy products and beef followed by beverages. Pigs and poultry are well down the list due to the lack of cereals.

It is a great country to go flying with some beautiful scenery (or so we are told!) and not too much controlled airspace and the skies aren't overcrowded.

The Irish people are laid back and very friendly. It must be one of the few countries in the world where the population was greater in the 1800's than in the present time. The 8 million head in the 1800's dropped by 1 million due to the potato famine, then by another 3 million as people emigrated. It has now recovered to around 6 million. It appears that they all know each other and are easy to get on with. But just watch out for one of their favourite expressions - the phrase "it'll take 5 to 10 minutes" as this is measured in Irish time and will be more like 40 to 45 minutes, as we found on several occasions!

You can see a video of the event on the FFA website www.ffa.org.uk

Paul Stephens