FLYING FARMERS ASSOCIATION



Newsletter No. 119 *July 2015*

Opening Thoughts

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Chairman's Ramblings

At last we are having a bit of warmer weather – and a bit more like summer. Wimbledon is now but a distant memory – Andy tried his hardest, but on the day he was beaten by someone who was the next best thing to perfection.

With no great skill on my part, I chose the hottest and muggiest four days in the year to make our hay – excellent for the quality but not good for my health at my age! It is always a worry as the cutting day approaches when the commitment is finally made, and every year I ask myself if the worry is really worth it, but once it is all in the barn I forget the effort and concern in getting it there.

The quality was superb, but the quantity was 20% down on last year and I put this down to a considerable shortfall in rain this year. This shortfall will I am sure affect yields generally here in the east – I can't speak for the rest of the country. We had a really good rain here in the south last week with nearly two inches over about 18 hours. I fear it will do little for the yields at this late stage but may well save a fortune on cultivating wearing parts. We have a field of Borage for the first time and it is now looking magnificent in full flower, but the lack of rain up until now means it is very short and so I'm not sure how easy it will be to swath and then subsequently pick up with the combine. Maybe the recent rain will help a little. About three more weeks and we will know the answer to that one.

Blackgrass, long the scourge of East Anglia in now becoming very serious indeed. Several whole crops of wheat have either been sprayed off completely or ploughed in, and several have large patches of the worst affected areas sprayed off leaving a patchwork of green and brown within the field – most obvious from the air. I doubt that these fields will be able to be winter cropped with cereals for many years to come unless there is a chemical breakthrough soon – and I haven't heard of one in the pipeline. With wheat being the main financial mainstay in the rotation, this is a serious situation. The older I get and the more problems I see in the farming industry, to say nothing of ever worsening bureaucracy, the happier I am that I am retired!

Our events season is now nearly over for another year, with the trip to Northumberland being the last until our AGM (see a later paragraph). It has been a successful season with weather being on the side of us flyers at all events – a welcome situation. How quickly the season comes – and goes. A very successful study tour to Denmark, Finland and Sweden was enjoyed over 10 days by 34 participants during the last week in May. The weather was kind to the tour but a very challenging journey home in 50 knot headwinds and a nasty frontal system lying over the North Sea and Western Netherlands meant diversions for several aircraft with enforced overnight stays. It was fortunate indeed that the tour programme had been completed.

We had a committee meeting recently during which we discussed next year's programme. There are several potential trips in the pipeline, and thanks to all those who have made suggestions. Without these, the association cannot function as it has for its whole existence, so keep thinking of interesting ideas, agricultural, cultural or social – which brings me to next year's study tour. As yet we have no ideas on which to work, and it would be a great shame if there was again no annual tour because of lack of ideas, so, have you friends in foreign lands? Can you think of the seed of an idea on which a tour can be built? Please think hard, and there are several of us out there who can help to build a tour around an idea.

The date for the AGM this year will be on Tuesday September 29th at Lasham, courtesy of the gliding club there, the largest gliding club in the world. They are delighted to host us to repay the farming community for the many occasions that farmers have found a glider, struggling for the last vestiges of lift, admitting defeat and having to make an out-landing. There will be a limit of 30 aircraft accepted at Lasham on the day for logistical reasons, and we will have to be on the ground by 10 am local time. If perchance there are many more applicants to fly in than this limit of 30 aircraft, there is a possibility that the overspill could land at Popham and be bussed back to Lasham. So you will see that an early application to attend would be wise.

KEEP THE DATE FREE, because this year we have 'Winkle' Brown as our guest speaker (sourced by committee member Neville Stops). This is as big a privilege as you can get and is an occasion NOT TO BE MISSED. Surely Winkle's career needs no explanation as he is almost certainly the greatest aviator still living, but if you don't know about him, go on line to find out. He is 97 years old now, but still as sharp as a razor and is very much looking forward to speaking to us.

Committee Members

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How many of you have carried out your practice forced landing skills recently – or do you have that common view of 'it won't happen to me'?

Last month, whilst watching an exciting Wimbledon match, my phone rang with a call from a neighbour who had just had a pilot clamber over her fence to say he had force-landed in the field of barley, behind her house. It was a lovely evening and he was pootling about in his Luton Minor when the engine became distressed and then stopped altogether. He began looking for my strip which was off the side of the barley field, but when the engine quit he had no option but to go for the crop just 200 yards from safety. He chose a tramline and nearly got away with it, but as the speed decayed it tipped onto its nose at 90*, without going right over. It had virtually no damage except a dented lower cowling behind the prop – even the prop was undamaged. We put it back on its wheels and walked it out of the crop. It was a skilful piece of piloting with a happy outcome. Should we all be practicing for this undesirable possibility a bit more often? Food for thought.

Harvest is in full swing with all the winter barleys and a good proportion of the OSR completed here in the south. First results I have heard from the barley crops are that the bushel weight is appalling with some farmers finding it difficult to keep the grain from being blown out of the back of the combine. The winter wheat crops certainly look better than that.

I wish you all a successful harvest – despite the disappointing start, we all hope for an easy one with low drying costs.

Martin Gosling

Mark Badminton Retires

After a few years representing the FFA at GASCo and just when he was about to succeed Peter Kember at General Aviation Partnership (GAP) (previously the General Aviation Consultative Committee (GACC)), he has had to retire from the position due to other commitments.

We are therefore seeking two representatives at these important meetings. The candidates will have to be well clued up on the politics side of GA and willing to speak out on matters that concern the FFA.

As you will be aware, GASCo concentrates on safety matters and the GAP meetings are the CAA's means of consulting with different GA organisations on all sorts of topical subjects.

It has always been a principle of the FFA that we are represented at these councils because, apart from the General Aviation Awareness Council, there is no one out there raising issues of farm strips and looking after our privilege - or some would say right - to operate them on our farms. It isn't every country that even allows private airstrips and we want to maintain the status quo!

Issues that have arisen recently are planning matters, development too close to our strips including turbines, immigration and ever increasing controlled airspace encroaching on our airspace.

These 2 bodies meet 3 or 4 times a year. GASCo I believe, can meet in different locations and GAP meet at Gatwick.

The FFA do make a contribution towards representatives travelling costs which can be claimed from the Treasurer.

If you are interested, please fill in the form enclosed with this newsletter or contact me, Paul Stephens by email - chix@farmline.com - giving your name, FFA number, the organisation that you would like to represent the FFA at and a resume of why you think you would be a suitable candidate.

Insurance

Our Chairman picked up on an unsolicited email that could save you a lot of money on your aircraft insurance when your next renewal comes round.

There is an internet based company called Visicover where you can apply online and get an instant quote by logging on to www.visicover.com and following through their easy to use website.

Most of your committee members have applied for a quote and without fail have found that this company will half your insurance. If you were paying £1700.00, you will find they will do it for about £900.00 or less!

One of the committee has already taken up their offer, following a reassuring telephone conversation that they are underwritten by AIG who are huge in the US. They cover a lot more aircraft than is possible in the UK and hence spread the risk further.

The FFA committee can only suggest this insurance as a service to our members. You will have to try an online quote and then make your own decision, as we have no experience of the company.

I would be very interested to know how you get on and indeed if you take up their proposal. Please drop me an email chix@farmline.com

Members before Guests

This is a note, probably more to organisers of events than attendees. However, everyone should be aware of the situation.

We sometimes get comments that a member has been unsuccessful in applying to enrol for an event and then found that there were a number of non members at the meeting as guests of members.

This can be a sensitive issue, but it can't be right for longstanding, paid up members of the Association to be denied access to an event because unpaid, non members have taken the bookings.

Please note - your membership is a family membership, so wives / concubines are definitely encouraged to come to meetings.

So, please note that if you do would like to bring a non member as a guest, you should check with the organiser to see if the numbers are getting tight and be aware that preference will be given to paid up members.

Maybe your guest is eligible to become a member; in that case they should apply online to join and then there won't be any further problems.

Aircraft Maintenance

One of our members has this recommendation for aircraft maintenance - bear in mind his aircraft is a not so young retractable Rockwell Commander -

My aircraft has just had its annual carried out by an Iranian aircraft engineer based at Draycott Farm Airstrip for £1300. The ARC is an additional £400. He charged extra for oil and filter etc but with no VAT it came to £2000, the cheapest annual I have had in 30 years flying.

I wondered if this might be of interest to other Flying Farmers particularly in that neck of the woods. The downside is he doesn't have a loan aircraft but runs a taxi service at 40p per mile with reductions on longer journeys.

Further north in Yorkshire, I can recommend Graham Fox at Bagby for doing a cost effective service. As he only has a 2 aircraft hangar, the annuals are usually done in 4 days as he needs to get one aircraft out before taking another in. I wouldn't say he has the flashest or tidiest hangar, but he is an excellent engineer and will source parts at sensible prices or get things fixed locally.

A member from Aberdeen brings his aircraft all the way down to Bagby and he takes a loan aircraft back. Scotsmen can spot a bargain!

Graham has looked after my aircraft for 40 years and has always done his best for me.

Paul Stephens

Programme 2015

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4th February	Imperial War Museum and Lloyds, London
14th April	JCB, Uttoxeter (Fully subscribed)
13th May	Gilbert Greenall's Estate, Exmoor (Fully subscribed)
22nd - 31st May	FFA European Tour to Finland (Fully subscribed)
9th June	Wilkin & Sons, Essex
8th July	New Forest & Esso Refinery, Southampton
2nd September	Eggers & Beamish Museum
29th September	AGM - Lasham



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.

Trip to Eggers, Hexham, 2nd & 3rd September 2015

I (Mike Ashmole) have had an invitation from Eggers, largest timber processor's in the North of England, for a FFA visit. I would suggest that to make the trip more palatable to our southern members, it should be an overnight trip with a visit to the Beamish Museum next morning.

I have approached the gliding club just to the west of Newcastle and they are happy to let us use their strip.

Please return the reply slip to Mike Ashmole to show your interest.

AGM - Lasham, Tuesday 29th September 2015

Notice is herby given that the Flying Farmers Association will hold their Anual General Meeting at Lasham Airfield in Hampshire on Tuesday 29th September 2015 at 10:30 am.

THIS IS ONE NOT TO BE MISSED!

We are honoured to have as our speaker, Eric "Winkle" Brown CBE, DSC, AFC, KCVSA, PhD Hon FRAeS, RN, former Royal Navy Officer and Test Pilot. Although he is now 96, he is extremely alert and will recall his aviation career and life stories.

He still holds the records for the most number of different types flown (487) and the most number of aircraft carrier deck landings (2407) including the first pilot to land twin engine, tricycle undergear and jet aircraft on a carrier.

He is a hero among military pilots who fly more safely today thanks to the techniques and technologies he helped to test.

He is classed as one of the top 5 aviators of all time. Also he was at the 1936 Berlin Olympic Games, he interrogated Hermann Goering, he helped liberate the Belsen concentration camp and by chance managed to sing with the Glenn Miller band.

Many of you will have read the books of his amazing life and everyone should make the effort to hear about his experiences.

Lasham are welcoming us with open arms and will not be charging any landing fees, in return for the many times their gliders have landed on farmers strips.

There will be no charge at all for the day which will include a buffet lunch, but there will be the opportunity to donate to Winkle's favourite charity on the day.

Accomodation is available at the airfield and locally. Please indicate on the reply slip if you are needing a bed for the night.

Seating will be provided for 100 and parking restricted to 45—50 aircraft, although Popham should have fuel and might be available for more parking.

It is the turn of Philip Young and Martin Gosling to stand down from the Committee. If you are interested in becoming a Committee member, please fill in the reply slip enclosed with this newsletter.

Please return reply slips to Neville Stops before 8th September to register and reserve your place for this special event. Further details will be sent to those applying.

JCB Visit - 14th April 2015

Tuesday, April 14th dawned with good weather for most, but storms in the far north and fog in the south west. However 60 out of the 64 members arrived in 28 aeroplanes and a few cars at Richard Halls superb strip near Abbots Bromley. Joyce had the kettle on in the "clubhouse" which was very welcome as there was a bitter wind blowing. Those that had become temporarily weather bound further south arrived just in time to board the two buses which took us to the Rocester JCB World Headquarters about 10 miles away.





After another cup of tea and a welcome by Andy Furniss, our host for the day, we were split into 7 groups and fitted out with the necessary orange jackets, safety glasses, headset and a guide.

The guides conducted us round the Loadall factory first where we saw how the hydraulic rams are manufactured from bare materials, and the ends being fusion welded to the barrel. This has a 100% success record with no reported failures of the ends coming off as this could prove disastrous. Robots are used extensively throughout the factory as they give total consistency of quality and can weld far better than any human.

Next we saw the chassis of the Loadalls being formed. First the steel is cut out by plasma robots, the steel is folded, tack welded in place in jigs, and then fully welded by yet more robots. They are shot blasted before painting and making their way to the assembly line.

Here, every machine is assembled to the customer's spec. Nearly every one had slight differences as well as the huge range of lifting and reach capacities. Around 75 Loadalls a day come off the line and every one goes into a running-in rolling road booth.



Then the whole machine is put through a leakage check so the customer doesn't receive a new machine with embarrassing oil leaks.

It was a very impressive factory and we felt a sense of pride that almost the whole machine, including engines, transmissions, hydraulics, chassis and cabs are all built at the various JCB factories in the area - in the UK.

Our guide then continued down another line where we saw the JCB diggers being assembled.

All the machines are now equipped with JCB Live Link system which is not only a good theft deterrent as it tracks where the machine is all the time, but it relates any faults back to the dealer and customer and allows the fitter to come out to the machine with the correct parts to rectify any problems.

Lunch was quite a grand affair with organic beef cottage pie followed by a sweet course in a modern dining area.

Our tour then continued to the theatre where we had a short video relating the story of how Joseph Cyril Bamford started by building trailers using war surplus materials including various aircraft wheels and flattened corrugated sheeting.

His son, Lord Anthony Bamford succeeded in 1975 and took the business to new heights and to a worldwide business with factories in Brazil, India, China and America.

There was a presentation by their head sales manager and a short presentation by their aviation operations manager who filled us in with details of the history of JCB aviation which started with a De Havilland Dove - now they have a G550 Gulfstream EFIS Corporate Jet and 2 SK76 Sikorsky 76 Helicopters.

To finish off our visit we were taken upstairs to The Story of JCB – a newly opened museum and history where a replica of Joseph Bamford's first trailer was shown in a mock up of his workshop, to the first side arm loader and the first back hoe attachment for a Power Major. Next came the first JCB 3C purpose made digger and the 3CX. There were exhibitions of Joseph's office overlooking the construction works, the models of all JCB aircraft, the DieselMax world land speed breaking car using two JCB engines, excavators, army vehicles made by JCB, culminating in the very latest 3CX Eco machine.

Finally, the inevitable shop where they have a range of clothing, toys and tools with the JCB brand on them.

What we learnt from our visit was that here was a thoroughly British, family owned company which has been hugely successful and now manufactures machines worldwide. The Bamfords have listened to what the customer wants and have been very strong on promoting the brand. In fact just like a vaccum cleaner is of-



ten called a Hoover, diggers and telehandlers are often called JCBs, even if they have Caterpillar written on them.

There are plans for expansion with 3 further factories to be built in the area employing a further 2500 staff.

Back at the strip, Joyce had tea and cakes waiting. At most events I have been to, there is an almighty rush as pilots make a Le Mans dash to their aeroplanes and disappear out of sight. For once, not an aeroplane moved for about half an hour as everyone enjoyed the Hall's hospitality and the beautiful day and surroundings.

Many thanks to Richard and Joyce. Also to Neville who not only handled the radio but also parked the aircraft.

Paul Stephens

Visit to Gilbert Greenall's Estate on Exmoor, 13th May 2015.

On one of the most perfect flying days imaginable, 18 aircraft and two cars descended onto Gilbert Greenall's Exmoor estate in Somerset for another excellent Flying Farmers visit. Actually that should probably read 'ascended onto', because his 800 metre strip sits atop one of the highest points on his estate. At 1500' AMSL it must surely be in contention for the highest private strip in England.

Actually, only 17 of the 18 arrived at the strip, because Neville Stops suffered a dramatic loss of oil pressure in his Chipmunk some 8 miles away close to Minehead, and, with an extreme vibrating engine and minimal available power, elected for an immediate forced landing in a field of wheat some 170 yards long. Such was his coolness under pressure that he landed exactly down the tramlines with no damage to the aircraft or occupants, and hardly a blade of wheat disturbed, all the while relaying information to fellow flying farmers of his condition and whereabouts. (Getting it out again in bits on a trailer might be a different story!)

An exemplary demonstration of airmanship – well done Neville.

With coffees and teas laid on in a sheep trailer for us, the history of the area and the estate itself was explained to us by his manager Mark, who told us that the area was wet, unproductive land until last century when one of his predecessors used a crawler and a deep blade to break through the solid pan covering the area, which immediately released the water and allowed the land to drain. This transformed the land and allowed stocking to take place. The predominant problem is rushes combined with low Ph values, but by strategic liming to prevent the worst of the acidity, the problem is 'contained' rather than eradicated.

The challenges of farming on Exmoor at 1500' AMSL is one of temperature, being at least 3 degrees colder than at sea level, and of rainfall that many of us can only wonder at. With the clouds coming directly from the Atlantic and finding Exmoor as the first place to release their moisture, an annual rainfall of 150 - 200 mm is not uncommon, and some days there can be 7" or rain or more on the hilltops. Mark said he was given a 3" rain gauge, but he got bored with having to empty it two or three times during the day, so he bought a 7" one which he now doesn't have to empty until teatime!! The colder temperatures have a big impact on grass growth, and whereas in East Anglia we are within maybe 6 weeks of cutting our grass for hay, their grass was barely 3" tall and would be at least August before the hay would be ready. Running the estate as an organic exercise with no artificial fertilisers only slows the already poor grass growth rate further still.

Gilbert bought the estate 10 years ago and immediately set about getting to grips with the problems that presented themselves, leaning heavily on what he had learned by dealing with restrictive bureaucracy on his Gloucestershire estate. It extends to around 5500 acres and much of the land is National Park which presents enormous restrictions to his activities. He also joined the Higher Level Stewardship scheme thus taking full advantage of the many subsidies that go with this scheme. It is no secret that without subsidies it would just not be economically viable – although to an Essex arable farmer like me, the economics are pretty frightening anyway! Another frightening aspect to the economics is that the fencing liabilities could, if implemented to the full, cover a length of in excess of 300 kms! That's from Exmoor to Humberside. The fencing is double row fencing and is costed at £15/metre (I sense you all now getting your calculators out!). Obviously only that which is vitally necessary is undertaken annually.





We drove on two open trailers in the glorious sunshine around the estate looking at the flocks of Scottish Blackface/Leicester Blueface sheep and lambs, and also the cattle enterprise of Angus cross and Galloways, and having the background explained as to why they were the most suitable for this cool wet environment. All the flocks and herds looked extremely healthy and in excellent condition.

We had explained to us how difficult and restrictive it is working with the National Park and how onerous it is to achieve any planning permissions. Gilbert has been able to restore a couple of properties on the estate for use as hostels (as a dwelling for local needs, it was a complete no-no) using his extensive knowledge of working with these authorities gained on this Gloucestershire estate which has similar restrictions. As an example of the draconian requirements, where an access track was required to these properties, there had to be a grass strip down the middle of the track between the wheelings.

Lunch was taken at Bovey's, a local hostelry which laid on an excellent cold spread of quiche and salad and a choice of delicious puds, and here Neville and his guest were able to join us having dealt with all the bureaucracy involved in his earlier outlanding.

We continued the tour after lunch taking in the machinery area and workshops, stopping off to see the superb range of bulls he had on the estate to service his herds. One of these was a magnificent beast that weighed in at over 1500 kgs - and you wouldn't want that standing on your toe (or on your back either, probably!).

On our way back to the aircraft, we watched some of the herds of red deer that are resident on the estate (I thought they only lived up North), and which live in complete harmony with the livestock. They are not pursued for sport.

After thanks for another superb day to compliment last year's visit with Gilbert on his Gloucestershire estate, all aircraft departed in the continuing afternoon sunshine – with our intrepid duo of Jim & Angus arriving safely back on their Aberdeen farm at 9.15 pm.

The following day the weather was a typical Exmoor day with driving winds and belting rain and as such the event would undoubtedly have had to have been cancelled. It is nice to get lucky, and as flying farmers we are privileged to be able to visit estates such as this, combining our hobby with our business.

Martin Gosling

FFA Tour to Finland, 22nd to 31st May 2015

With 2014 being the first year in the history of the FFA when a study tour failed to happen, it was good to ensure that 2015 didn't follow suit. Five years ago a study tour to Scandinavia was proposed by the Burtons and the crew of G-CRUZ based around the Valtra tractor factory in Finland, but Bill's ill-health meant that it had to be put on the back-burner. Fortunately, the notes relating to the visit were still 'on file', and so it was decided that it was time to revisit the archives and thus the 2015 tour planning got under way.

Asking for a show of hands at the October AGM met with an enthusiastic response and 42 people initially signed up, which over the following months reduced to a firm commitment from 36 participants in 15 aircraft.

During the last week of June 14 aircraft arrived at Billund, Denmark's second busiest airfield from places as diverse as Southern Ireland and deepest Scotland, giving their crews enough time to explore the wonders of the original Legoland theme park which was within walking distance of both the airfield and our hotel for our first day. Wanting to keep us small GA aircraft away from their commercial operations, they elected to park us on a very wet and soft area of grass which tested the pilots somewhat when it came to departure. One pilot took an hour to dig himself free, and on requiring if the airport staff had been helpful, he replied that yes they were very helpful, they found him a spade...!

The Lego company was founded by Ole Kirk Christiansen in 1949, and the idea of a park to promote the business began in 1968 – becoming an overnight success. The park covers 45 acres and the various themes within the park are constructed using more than 25 million Lego bricks. I saw a posted outside the park with various facts and figures about Lego, one of which stated that just 8 standard Lego bricks can be assembled in several million different ways (I can't really see how, but then it is said that if you put one grain of sand on square 1 of a draughts board and multiply it by itself as you progress along the squares, by the time you get to the 64th square there would be more sand than in the whole of the Sahara [and I don't believe that either, although my calculator got brain failure after the 7th square!]). (Do I see you getting your calculators out...?)



Billund Airport in Lego

An excellent welcome dinner in the hotel set the scene for the forthcoming tour, and also brought the news that the 15th aircraft had hit bad weather through Southern England and had had to return to base in Perth (Scotland, in case you wondered!), and would try to catch up with us the next day.

The Saturday saw us embark on the long 432 mile leg to Mariehamn, a group of Islands on the South West corner of Finland called the Aaland Islands closer to Sweden than Finland and whose inhabitants consider themselves more Swedish than Finnish and exclusively speak the Swedish language. The airfield was closed over the weekend thus the airspace reverted to Class G and arrival was a self-help affair and consequently free of landing fees (although, curiously, parking fees still applied). Considerable difficulty was encountered with the credit card operated refuelling system, but eventually all aircraft were tucked up on the apron and we found our way to the hotel by a series of taxis. One aircraft encountered a bit of grumpiness with the area radar controller as he approached Mariehamn, with the controller saying "all you Germans come over here and don't bother to close your flight plans...". Unfortunately he picked on the wrong pilot who replied "first we're not Germans and we all have G registered aircraft, and secondly, why don't you just close our flight plans for us?"

A short time to relax in the hotel before we were taken to a local dairy farm for a quick 'heads-up' on the Swedish dairy industry, which is going through exactly the same pain threshold as all



our own dairy farmers in the UK – too much production and continually reducing prices to below the cost of production. This was a small family concern that had introduced the first robotic milking machine in the islands some 10 years previously which had enabled the farmer to have a little time off from the continual milking regime, since the machine was entirely automatic and the cows came and went at will with the machine distributing computer controlled rations to each cow depending upon the amount of milk delivered.

On from the farm we next stopped at our restaurant for dinner – an upmarket place that had a small museum of beautifully restored distilling equipment and a cellar of barrels which we spent a while looking at before retiring to a room put at our disposal for dinner. During dinner we were entertained by a local bearded gentleman in a kaftan who was an expert in the national musical instrument called a Kantele. He told us the history of the Kantele and he brought half a dozen examples of it both to play and to show us. He played songs that he composed and wrote himself, but it has to be said it was not terribly absorbing and several heads were seen to be in a less than attentive position! However the meal was excellent and at the end all the staff appeared in the room carrying a birthday cake for Roger Taylors 70th birthday and sang 'Happy Birthday' to him in the traditional Finnish way.



Sunday saw us move the relatively short distance to Helsinki–Malmi, the Finnish capital's GA airfield. They were having a fly-in on that weekend to try to raise awareness of, and to raise funds for the continued operation of the airfield – which, like so many, is under imminent threat of closure. Why? Well so they can build houses there of course. The fly-in had the advantage to us of not requiring landing or parking fees for our visit – so, so far, two out of two free airports on our visit! Before we left in the bus, a whip-round was arranged from all of us to help their campaign which raised around 350 Euros, and for which they were immensely grateful. From our point of view it was about equivalent to the deferred landing fees, but it meant a great deal to them for their campaign. Bureaucracy being what it is, I suspect they have too great a hill to climb to save the airport in the longer term – remember what happened to Tempelhof in Berlin?

The flight to Helsinki was easy and at relatively low level over a myriad of the most beautiful area of islands and waterways, with occasional cruise ships wending their way through the wider channels – it must have been very difficult in years gone by without the benefit of GPS and I would have thought a complete nightmare for night navigation. The height restriction as we approached Helsinki coupled with the required reporting points aimed us at an enormous TV mast exactly at our level, which didn't seem very sensible and could have been hairy in marginal conditions. It was now the turn of another of our group to receive a word from the area controller: "G-XXXX you have entered my controlled airspace without my permission, and I am a little bit cross with you"! What a charming admonishment!



From our hotel at teatime we took a cruise around the archipelago with a guide who explained all the local bits of interest and also gave us the heads-up on the history of Finland, how it was part of Sweden until 1917 and then became part of Russia and how it fought on the German side in WW2 for which it has ever since been ashamed. A very peaceful couple of hours relaxing on the boat before finding our own venues for dinner in town.

An early start the next morning got us back to the airport for our short(ish) flight to Jyvaskyla where we were to meet the press before being taken to the Valtra tractor factory. A lot of jostling amongst the members to avoid having a microphone being stuck under their noses – those that were the slowest giving a resume of our reasons for our tour.

Being assured that the interviews would be broadcast on local TV at 6.20 that evening, there was much anticipation, followed by much disappointment when nothing was shown! No worries, it was good practice for the next stop where the press would again be waiting!

Valtra is the most northerly tractor factory in the world and representatives were waiting for us to take us to the plant, stopping en route for a very nice lunch in a local restaurant, courtesy of Valtra, and then it was on to the factory where the obligatory audio visual presentation took place with those needing to catch up on their sleep doing just that! The presentation itself was very impressive, (but then with imagination and a creative producer, any presentation on any product can be made to look very impressive!) after which we were split into groups to see the tractors being made.

All factories work on the same principle – bits of metal start at



of the other end. Valtra was no different in this respect, but they do stake their reputation on the fact that whatever peculiarities the customer might require for their particular circumstances they will guarantee to design it and incorporate it in the finished article. An example of this was the tractors produced for the Finnish army needed gun racks mounted in the cabs – no problem. Also it is the only tractor factory that I know where there is a choice of 9 standard colours, and for an extra charge you can have any colour scheme you care to think of – and to prove the point, in the storage compound there was one painted like a Friesian cow!

Factory tour completed, we were taken to a test driving area and let loose on a choice of 4 different tractors with the warning that we should please not break them; we didn't! Reliability is the mantra of the product, but I felt they weren't the most sophisticated of tractors that I have ever been behind the wheel of with very limited computer displays for the driver to play with.

Tour over, we were bussed back to the hotel for a relaxed evening with a meal 'in house'.

Tuesday saw us with a lazy start before being bussed for an hour to the Serlachius Gosta Museum in Mantta. In the 19th century, Gustav Adolf Serlachius pioneered a paper mill based around a small river at Mantta, and despite transport difficulties, constant money problems, ill health and the inevitable fire that burned the factory to the ground, over the course of 4 generations this small idea grew into the premier paper industry in Finland. The museum traced the history of the industry from its small beginnings through the generations by means of a series of excellent models showing its growth and development from conception to the present day. The final part of the exhibition was "Paper Devil", an intensely dramatized and visual experience, showing the phases of the mill owner's life taking us from one scene to the next and from one atmosphere to another.

Gustav's nephew Gosta was an enthusiastic art collector, and the Gosta Serlachius Art Foundation is a museum of fine arts – one of the most important private art collections in the Nordic countries, containing classic works of Finnish art and European paintings from the 15th century to the 1940's. After looking at all the museum exhibits, we lunched in the in-house restaurant before going to the modern day paper mill to see paper being produced.

The Metsa paper mill was a surprisingly scruffy place with uncared-for floors with bits of paper scattered around. An enormous underground vat of what looked like porridge made from recycled paper was fed to some equally enormous rollers which dried and squeezed it until it came out of the other end and created rolls of paper weighing around 7 tonnes and containing several kilometres of paper up to 5 metres wide. There were few employees in evidence, but we were asked not to take photos – for what reason I am not sure. It didn't seem to contain much secret technology! From there we went to the plant using the paper to make all sorts of domestic and industrial products such as kitchen rolls, paper table cloths and loo paper – they have the accolade of being the inventor of the loo paper – the question was not raised as to what happened before its invention...!

From the mill we got back on the bus and were taken to an area way off the beaten track which turned out to be the country house of Ritta, a delightful lady who was the surviving 4th generation Serlachius who had given us very privileged access to her house hosting us with a typical Finnish meal to complete the Serlachius story. Notable for the meal was salmon which was cooked in front of us – with maybe 10 sides of salmon each wired to a wooden board, and each board stood vertically in a circle around a fire in the middle of a grassy area. So ended a most interesting and informative day.

Wednesday morning dawned as an organiser's nightmare. Low cloud and definitely below flying limits, but a call to very helpful ATC at Jyvaskyla airfield promised a fairly speedy improvement, and indeed with only being an hour behind schedule we set off for Kokkola airfield a hundred miles to the north east in ever improving conditions. A reception committee was awaiting us at the airfield including the local press who were intrigued as to what we were doing, and so the inevitable interviews followed ready for the evening TV and the local press for the morning. Problems with the credit card refuelling, took a while to resolve, so there were most of our aircraft in a patient queue at the pumps while our hosts and the press were waiting equally patiently in the terminal. We explained to those waiting the meaning of 'time to spare, go by air'!



Interviews over, we stopped at a charming roadside restaurant for lunch, who seemed unfazed by our late arrival, and then on to the Raniplast factory, the largest manufacturer of agricultural plastic wrapping in the country. A very sophisticated set of machinery created all types of plastics, starting with granules being brought in on trucks, being melted, spun, blown, extruded and eventually creating plastics of varying thicknesses, widths and lengths to suit all aspects of agricultural requirements from bale wrapping to silage clamp covers. A large stock of supplies signifies a downturn in demand, hopefully temporary, but this is indicative of all the problems and frustrations in the agricultural industry at the moment.

Evening TV did indeed show a short clip of our interview from the airfield which intrigued the locals in the hotel, who must have thought for a short moment that we were some sort of celebrities – a thought soon dispelled by watching the TV clip. Dinner was at Mustakari's, another lovely restaurant on the water's edge close to the harbour. Peaceful surroundings and an excellent

meal were topped off with serenading by the staff of another birthday boy – this time it being the turn of Roger Bell, who had tried to keep the event secret from the group, but forgot that I had asked for everybody's passport details before the start of the tour!

Thursday was a no-fly day, and after a bit of a lie-in we set off for a local farm run by the Asbro family. The family comprised of two brothers, a sister and the brother-in-law – all of whom seemed to get along very well together. Predominately a milk producing farm, they had expanded from around 20 cows and a small hold-



ing to over 600 cows on a much expanded acreage. They had been doing very well with their expansion in stock, acreage and buildings, but now suffer like most of the UK and Europe in ever reducing prices that are unable to cover the cost of production. Opportunities for diversification are very limited due to the climate and terrain, and on top of the dramatic price reduction for their milk, the spring weather this year has been unrelentingly wet and cold with spring crops remaining undrilled at the beginning of June, and the grass being unable to be cut – and with the long days meaning the grass grows more continuously they have to be ready and waiting even if it means cutting and gathering during the nights. Another farming story that our own farmers can empathise with.

Back to the hotel and a free afternoon before boarding the M/s Jenny for a trip to the lighthouse island of Tankar with the evening meal on board.

At this point Lavinia Soul takes up the story of the visit.

"*A captured British gunboat, with its battle damage still visible,*
is on display in the 'English Park' in Kokkola....".

It was late afternoon, cold, but in brilliant sunshine that we set sail from Kokkola on the M/s Jenny for the lighthouse island of Tankar. Our guide, a former student of "gilding" began to bring to life the history and geography of the island and this part of the Bay of Bothnia.

Tankar emerged from the sea about a thousand years ago as the result of geological uplift, which continues to this day at a rate of about 1cm a year. Small, measuring only 900m by 500m, it was known initially by the Swedish name Klippan meaning rock. For centuries it was a base for seal hunters and fishermen. Today, it's one of the most popular tourist destinations in Kokkola, offering bird watching and nature walks past homes and buildings, which evoke the lifestyle of its maritime past.

The island is situated about 18 km to the north of Kokkola, and we were on the first trip of the season for the M/s Jenny. We passed by many rocky and rugged islands, which typify the Finnish archipelago. The lighthouse was built in 1889, to offer safe passage through these rocky waters, to ships on their way to Kokkola, to collect pine tar (Stockholm tar) for preserving ropes etc.

It was cold on deck but we were kept there by our curiosity about the history of the British gunboat. Our guide was a little shaky with her facts, but "knowledgeable" farmers helped a little and the story was told.

As a result of the outbreak of the Crimea war in 1853 Great Britain and France sent their navvies north to the Baltic sea and the Gulf of Bothnia to disrupt trade and shipbuilding in the area. In the summer of 1853 the British sent navy ships to destroy the shipbuilding capability of the towns in the gulf. When this news reached Kokkola the townspeople decided to take defensive action. The British arrived in nine gunboats carrying Royal navy marines, intending to ransack the town but were fought off by the residents. After a 45 minute battle the British navy retreated. However one of the gunboats became grounded on a shipwreck. It was captured and its crew taken prisoners.

M/s Jenny passed by the spot where this war trophy, the only Royal naval vessel in foreign possession, was gained. Apparently we have asked for it back, to no avail. However, much to the amusement of our guide it was felt that a party of flying farmers could restore our pride with a midnight sortie to English Park to retrieve it for us.

We ate supper on board, a delicious smorgasbord of Salmon and salads. I particularly liked a lemony flavoured risotto, which was on offer. Later on deck we watched as we approached a windswept island dominated by a lighthouse.

After docking we were given up to two hours shore leave to explore the island and visit its important sites, including the lighthouse, the church and a small museum of sealing.

"The epitome of a classic lighthouse....."

As only six people could climb the up the lighthouse at a time we made a quick dash in its direction. Others wandered off to visit the different attractions.

Tankar lighthouse is the epitome of a classic lighthouse. Built from cast iron, it is slender, red and white in colour, with a lantern and gallery. One of Finland's brightest lighthouses it had been closed to tourists for the past two years and we were the first party to visit since it was decided to reopen it to the public.

Before the lighthouse was built a stone mound was erected as a guide for seafarers. To make it more visible metal poles with barrels attached were placed on the mound. The island then became known by the Finnish name Tankokari meaning pole rock. The stone landmark is preserved near the cabin of the lighthouse keeper. (Now a guest cabin) According to a custom, every first-time visitor on the island must bear one stone from the seashore to the stone pile in the middle of the island. I didn't see any farmers carrying rocks!

The guide opened the door, a hundred and twenty spiral steps later we were faced with the door that led to the light chamber. Disappointment! It was locked and the key did not work. A couple of strong gentlemen, who shall remain nameless, gave the door lock a little helping hand and we were soon climbing the remaining steps to the top.

The wind was howling and although the door, was opened briefly the guide was reluctant to allow us outside onto the gallery platform surrounding the light. The views across the island were amazing. From the top you could see our boat in the harbour, and the small Finnish cottages many painted in the traditional Falu red, dotted on the rocky land leading down to the waters edge. Far out to sea you could see the rocks lurking in the water awaiting unwary sailors.

From the lighthouse we made our way towards the piloting station admiring the mosses, lichens, heathers and small trees clinging to pockets of soil in the rocky terrain. This vegetation continues to change as the land continues to rise from the sea. There was no time for bird watching but we did climb the wooden observation platform and read the information board describing some of the 260 species of birds that have been seen on Tankar.

A cabin was first built for the piloting service on Tankar in the 1700's as the shipping traffic into Kokkola increased. The current piloting station was built in1975. Here was another chance to view the island from an elevated vantage point. The same building houses the Tankar Inn, which offers accommodation for visitors to the island. We found it a bit



basic!

"Eking a living from the sea was hard and dangerous.....".

Another guide, a student of tourism, led us towards the museum of sealing. She was excellent and really knew her facts. We passed a number of scientific instruments collecting weather data and the wooden cabins, the former homes of the herring fishermen, grey from exposure to sea winds. Small and humble, there were once forty dotted along the eastern side of the island. Now only a few remain. The oldest, dated 1768 is known as "Sjoblom's bastu".

Sealing around the coast of Finland has taken place since Neolithic times. Seal oil being the most important product from the catch. There is evidence that it has been practiced on Tanker since the 1330's. On the cabin walls of the museum hangs the traditional sealing paraphernalia and numerous photographs, evidence that eking a living from the sea was both hard and dangerous. Sealing was carried out in harsh wintery conditions, without the help of modern technology. One can only imagine the challenges they faced. One photograph that caught my eye was of three sealers with what looked like bandages over their eyes. These were the forerunners of sunglasses! Worn to prevent snow blindness on the bright sunny days.

Housed in a cabin nearby was a long-range sealing boat, built in 1928. It was designed for both sailing and being dragged across the ice, with a high stern and low inclined bow. The vessel provided a home for the hunter as well as the warehouse for his catch.

"Amazing grace! How sweet the sound....."

Finally we made our way to the tiny church. Built in 1754, so that the fishermen would not have to make the long journey to the mainland each Sunday, it is distinguishable from the fishermen's cabins, only by the white cross on its roof. Inside was an air of tranquility and you could sense the worshipers of a previous age, their names carved into the seats and the walls- graffiti dating back to the 18th century! It is simple and unadorned except for a few old paintings hanging on the wall behind the pulpit.

The church filled with Flying farmers and its Christian life was renewed with a chorus of Amazing Grace fittingly led by the Olney member. Then, transfixed into silence we listened as our guide read to us from the Finnish bible left open on the pulpit. We did not need to understand the language to understand the message and sense the peace.*

Our two hours shore leave was up and we made our way back to the boat and "pudding".

** Amazing Grace was written in Olney, by the slave trader turned abolitionist, the Reverend John Newton. It first appeared in the "Olney Hymns" written by Newton and the Poet William Cowper in 1779.*

Lavinia Soul

Friday was the day we left Finland for Sweden. It was a flight of around 450 miles and some aircraft needed refuelling en route, but fortunately there was a time change of one hour in our favour which enabled all aircraft to get to Linkoping/Saab airfield in time for the local aero club to welcome us with a barbecue and to show us their new hangars and club house given to them (providing the club members did all the construction and commissioning works) by the Saab aircraft factory as a quid pro quo for moving from the Saab side of the airfield to the opposite side – which seemed entirely satisfactory for everyone. The aero club top man was very enthusiastic about our visit and could not have been more helpful in every respect. Asking him if the coach driver was likely to know the way in to the airfield, he volunteered to ring him to clarify the instructions, only to discover the driver was sitting waiting for us in Stockholm – a mere 3 hours drive away. I just knew the planning would go pear-shaped at some stage before we got to the end of the tour! Fortunately the bus company was able to dispatch a replacement with little delay.

There is a renowned aviation museum in Linkoping and a visit was arranged to it in the evening with guides to show us around and then some free time to further explore it on our own before we had our evening meal in one of the exhibition halls amongst the aircraft, which was a very special occasion. The museum itself had an extraordinary collection of aircraft too numerous to mention here but which amongst other things, concentrated on the history of Saab aircraft through the ages of aviation. There were some extremely rare aircraft in the museum, many of which I have never seen or heard of elsewhere.

Nearing the end of the tour with just one day left, Saturday was another no-fly day – fortunate indeed as it belted with rain all morning. Instead we visited another farm belonging to the Lagerfelt family. Two brothers and a sister all wanted to farm in one way or another, and so with the family farm not being big enough for the three of them, farms were bought elsewhere for the other two, with Axel, the older sibling remaining on the home farm.



With the weather conspiring to keep us in and around the buildings, we learned all about the farms development and changing enterprises to take advantage of changing farming requirements. Originally a dairy farmer Axel was one of the first in the area to have robot milking but discovered that production actually fell in relation to traditional milking and so having tried to overcome the problem over two years, finally decided to take out the robots, sell them to other farmers and get rid of the milking enterprise altogether. Cereals feature heavily on the farm with 730 hectares of arable and an ecological egg production operation replacing the dairy enterprise. Biodiesel is produced from cooking oil collected from local catering businesses, a small but not insignificant diversification in the business, and bought-in wood chippings run boilers to heat the houses. A further diversification is the owning of aprtments in Linkoping city for the rental market. He is a very enthusiastic user of quite a sophisticated drone which is fairly new to his ideas of improving his cropping by flying it over the crops to observe their progress. The quality of the image produced by the onboard camera is startling. Gentle persuasion by the Flying Farmers encouraged Axel to take it out into the yard in the rain to give us a flying demonstration with most impressive handling skills! He is obviously a man with great vision and determination to keep moving with the times and is not afraid to change direction if the need arises. He is a most likable man with a very dry sense of humour.

A local restaurant recommended by Axel in the country fed us well after the visit during which time the rain eased, and we then returned to Linkoping for a free afternoon.

The final evening was a cruise in a canal boat on the Kinder



Canal which conveniently ran past the hotel and so was within easy walking distance. The cruise took us upstream for an hour and a half at a leisurely pace and through two locks, one of which had the tallest wooden lock gates in the world. During the journey a sumptuous buffet spread was offered us and words of thanks were offered to, and returned by, the organisers. This was a peaceful evening journey to end the tour before the long journey home on the Sunday.

At 9am the coach took us to the airfield where we were given a comprehensive briefing on the departure procedures and the weather situation to all points west. Several different routes home were taken by different crews, but the common factor was a horrendous headwind for all. A weather front was sitting across Holland and about half the crews were unable to penetrate this VFR and even Texel, many people's preferred refuelling point, was below minima, and diversion airfields further to the East were offered by the radar controller. Those that diverted, stayed



overnight and had an easier final leg to their home bases on the Monday morning. Those that were able, continued IMC across the North Sea into a recorded 50 knot headwind, fortunately not being able to visually witness their painfully slow progress! The back edge of the front lay about 20 miles inland from the East coast of the UK, so those crews had a better final run home to their bases.

All in all, the tour was deemed a great success with the bonus of good flying weather preventing an organisational nightmare!

Martin Gosling

Wilkins Tiptree Jam, 9th June

We had good weather with just over 30 people attending the event organised by William and Jane Procter, with assistance from fellow FFA member and neighbouring farmer Michael Pudney and his wife Jane. 11 aircraft and a few cars arrived at Stows Farm to join the coach for the trip out of deepest Essex to Wilkins of Tiptree.

We were shown into the Visitor Centre and museum, where Peter Wilkin gave us a quick outline of the Company before handing us over to the farms director, Mr Chris Newenham. The farms cover 850 acres and against the trend, are growing more fruit than ever before at Tiptree. It costs more than much of the imported fruit on the British market, but gives them control over quality.

My first impression of Wilkin's factory was that the Wilkin family had been at Tiptree for some time—in fact it has been 300 years! Wilkin started as an arable farmer, but began to alter his cropping to fruit in 1865. Initially the fresh fruit was sent to the London markets but it was the prime minister of the day, William Gladstone who commended to the British public the preserving of fruit. A.C.Wilkin, the great grandfather of today's chairman Peter Wilkin, leapt onto this idea. 1885 saw the first Tiptree preserves produced and the total production was sold to



Australia. Within 10 years more than 200T of fruit was being produced, half for the making of jam.

Divided into groups we were shown around the factopry following the process from fruit, in the most modern and tallest building on site, through the cooking process, pui-removal room, and on to the bottling plants. Here we saw the "little" hotel jars being filled in the blink of the eye, as well as the standard 340 gram jars. Our groups' guide had been with Wilkins for over 25 years and had worked in nearly all departments and seemed to know all the processes inside out.

Wilkins have branched out buying several companies, many now based at Tiptree and we saw Coles Puddings, specialists in making Christmas puddings and festive treats. There is also Joules and Sharpie who produce a range of products which contain sweet hot Habero Chillies. Thursday Cottage is also part of the Wilkins family, is a specialist producer of high quality jams using steam in the cooking process and filling the jars by hand which we also saw. Wilkins also has several tearooms throughout Essex.

Wilkin have spent a lot of thought and money making sure they can keep up production in the face of external problems; they have 4 silos for sugar storage and 4 for syrup, as well as their own electricity generators and water storage systems. Wilkins has planning permission to build a completely new inline factory, so their jam making process can be modernised. What we went round will be housing when the new factory is up and running. This project is being managed by Chris Newenham.

Lunch was in the visitor centre. It was then onto the purpose built trailer for the farm tour. Much of the fruit that is grown on the farm has the benefit of timed trickle irrigation, all of which is controlled by Andrey, the field production manager and his mobile phone. A lot of the fruit is grown under cover, producing beautiful fruit for the supermarket trade. Some of the strawberries are grown on frames about shoulder high, they looked amazing, clean and I can vouch that they were delicious strawberries!

There are between three and four hundred pickers, now mostly from Eastern Europe. Pickers have been coming to Tiptree since the early 1950s to join the local workers harvesting the fruit for the factory and supermarkets. Today they are housed in modern accommodation with up to the minute modern facilities.

One of Tiptree's best known products would be their "Little Scarlet" strawberry jam. Wilkins is the sole grower of this small strawberry that has intense flavour and it comprises 40 acres of the 160 acres of strawberries grown. Other fruits grown at Tiptree include raspberries, cherries, loganberries, damsons, greengages, Victoria plums, meddlers, mulberries, quinces and rhubarb, which is technically not a fruit but is used in several conserves.

The Wilkin family have always had a strong social responsibility providing much for their employees and the local community. The employees benefit from a trust system not dissimilar to the John Lewis partnership. The employees now hold just under 50% of the shares of the company. There are 2 employee directors, 2 family directors and an independent Chairman of the business so I am told.

At the end of the tour we had some time in the visitor centre and also had the opportunity to purchase some products to remind us a wonderful visit.

I am grateful to the Wilkin family for giving us, the FFA permission to look round their enterprise and for William and jane and Michael and jane for organising the event

Roger Taylor

New Forest and Esso Refinery, 8th July.

The weather on the morning was a little overcast, causing some to drive, having arrived at Newtown Park Airstrip, We were given a very interesting talk by Julian Johnson - National Park Authority on their work in The New Forest, which was very informative

We then proceeded to the Farm were we given a long talk by Shaun Lapworth on Gliders and how they sometimes have to land on farmer's land, and the problems in then retrieving the gliders. At the farm there is a large private collection of tank and many other military vehicles, these vehicles are looked after by Mark Hart at Newtown Park Farm. Some of the vehicles were prototypes and very rare - the list would be too extensive to list.

Sadly the farm walk had to be cut short and we had a brief talk from Richard Channel - manager of Newtown Park Estate, on how they have turned the farm around in the past few years with the use of set-aside ground and wild flowers which attract the birds etc. A Ploughman's Lunch at East End Arms then a short drive through the forest to Fawley.

The Esso refinery at Fawley, near Southampton, is the largest in the UK and one of the most complex in Europe. Situated on



Southampton Water, it has a mile long marine terminal that handles around 2,000 ship movements and 22 million tonnes of crude oil and other products every year. The refinery processes around 270,000 barrels of crude oil a day and provides 20 per cent of UK refinery capacity.

We are committed to the very highest safety, health and environmental standards.

The corporation is the world's leading publicly owned energy company and it, or its affiliated companies, operates facilities or markets products in most of the world's countries. It is the parent company of the Esso, Mobil and ExxonMobil companies that operate in the United Kingdom.

In the United Kingdom, ExxonMobil is a major contributor to the economy:

- In 2012, they invested over £317 million in their UK upstream, downstream and chemical operations
- They provide jobs for some 6,500 employees and over 1,500 contractors
- In addition, around 3,000 more people are employed at independently run Esso service stations
- They have almost 7,000 active suppliers on their books and spent more than £1.4 billion on materials and services in the UK in 2011
- They paid £6.2 billion in direct and indirect taxes and duties in the UK in 2012/13 - about 1.1 per cent of the total UK government revenue. If the Chancellor had to find this money by other means, it would be equivalent to 1p on the basic rate of income tax
- In 2012, they invested nearly £1.5 million on community projects and initiatives in the UK & Ireland.

Neville Stops

Aero Expo Friedrichshafen EDNY

The Biggest and Best Aviation Trade Show Outside the USA.

If you have ever thought about going to Friedrichshafen EDNY then here are some suggestions on how to get there, where to stay and what to look out for. I have not covered the thousands of exhibits as that is done thoroughly by the aviation press. I have written down some hints on how to get there, find accommodation and food. Also I took some photos which I have attached below for your interest and amusement.

There are scheduled flights into EDNY but they change seasonally. Check nearer the time for availability.

Driving down will take a day and is easy on motorway standard roads all the way. Beware speed traps in France which may result in heavy fines. The German autobahns are not all unrestricted so take care to ensure you obey the limits on each section as the German police take a dim view of law breaking. But the joy of unrestricted speed where permitted is worth the trip on its own! When overtaking, look out for other cars coming up behind at massive speeds as some vehicles cruise at over 100 mph.

Flying your own aircraft to EDNY is easy and the route through northern France and Germany is easy to follow. Registration on the Aero Expo website will elicit a regular update of info about the show and information on how to book a landing slot for arrival and departure together with PPR. Refuelling is by BP truck and you may pay with BP card credit card or cash. Parking is on grass or concrete as you prefer. Take your own cover, tie downs and chocks. Transport to Expo which is located actually on the airfield from your aircraft is by a fleet of courtesy mini buses that constantly circulate the airfield on the perimeter track. Although a polite queue will form at the pickup point be quick when the minibus turns up as the continentals just rush the door as soon as it opens, no holds barred. It will be best to pay your landing fee when you arrive to avoid the long queue on departure day.

There are numerous hotels and B and Bs in the area. Not surprisingly they charge a slight premium during Aero Expo. But as the expo area is used almost continuously throughout he year for exhibitions the town is well set up to accommodate the thousands of exhibitors and visitors who arrive on a weekly basis. Booking accommodation in advance is strongly recommended as the town fills up to near capacity during the show, there are some deals available on the hotel booking websites if bookings are made early enough. There are courtesy buses into the town centre from the airport. There is a Tent City set up in one of the hangars where double and single tents were available this year for €30 per night. The charge includes a towel and a sleeping mat. I took a blow up mattress which was comfy. The students in the other half of the hangar had a disco until midnight that spoiled things a bit.

Restaurants in Friedrichshafen are numerous and good quality. Booking is essential for big parties but couples can usually get a table in all but the most popular venues. Taxis are quick, efficient and reasonable.

The show itself is arranged in nine halls and there is a static aircraft display outside on the apron. The halls are all connected by covered walkways and there are four large restaurants located between the front five halls. Each of the halls is themed and there are display boards showing the layout and themes.

Expo was originally a show for gliders and soaring aircraft so there is a heavy emphasis on that sport. The major manufacturers are all represented with the Americans furnishing large stands.

There is a chance to sleep in a tent inside one of the hangars at Expo for €30 per night.

It was clean and dry with good showers and wcs but the noisy student party in the hangar went on until midnight.



German fascination with airships continues. This beautiful Zeppelin floating majestically around the airfield while fixed wings and helos arrived and departed.



The whole person is catered for including the chance for a head and neck massage.



One enterprising lady had a special van advertising her presence.



This one had an electric motor about the size of a starter motor and a tractor sized battery just behind the pilot.



Glider simulators were available with realistic Alpine scenery.



Continental launched a 300 hp diesel based on the Mercedes V6 car engine that will fit into the Beech Bonanza and others.



This bonny lass was advertising "remove before flight" underwear and attracted very little attention.

What does a girl have to do to get flying chaps to pay attention?

This glider could self-launch with its own **jet** engine mounted just above and behind the cockpit.





The are many restaurants well placed around the Expo and serve good quality food at reasonable prices.



This shiny Mustang was for sale complete with German crosses.

Had the swastikas been removed?



Engineers were happy with numerous exploded engines and flight systems to contemplate.

Love is staying interested as he explains how an engine works.





There were a few lovely characters. This man with spectacular dyed beard said he visited IWM Duxford in his Gyro last year.

The German Fleet Air Arm was present. This pretty Petty Officer was making elaborate rope gifts which were available for a donation to their RNLI equivalent.





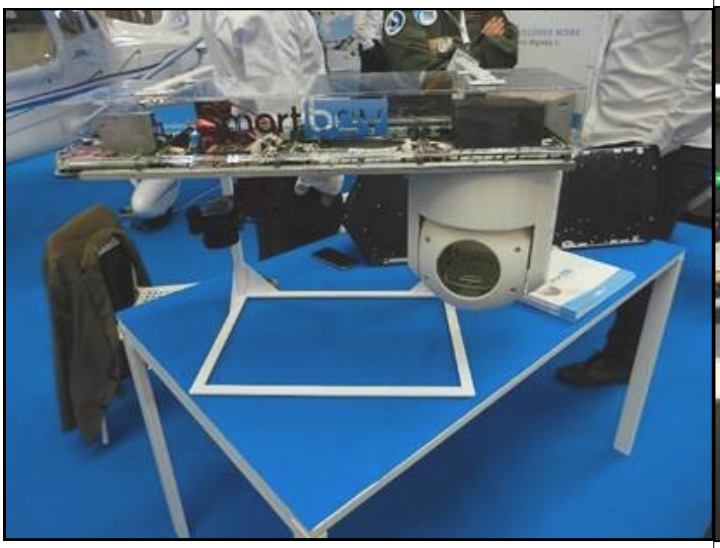
Another Zeppelin, inside this time. When creeping up behind those engaged in deep conversation it caused some surprise.



A chance to contribute to the disabled kids in Malta if you took a fruit kebab and dipped it in the chocolate fountain.



Under wing camera mounting for surveillance.



Another electric VLA from Italy this time.







UL Power showed showed this neat installation in yet another low wing slippery looking composite VLA.



Gyro copters are popular in Germany and there were a number of different types this one is heated and quiet I was told.



Two smiling ladies advertising a float plane. Goodness knows why.



I spent the first day cycling around the show on my folding bike.

There were a few people on scooters and they are a good idea if a little dangerous on the more crowded Saturday.



A GA widow unimpressed by having her photo taken. I didn't see her until I got home and checked my shots.



That's the show you will have fun and it is not expensive.

The German people are wonderfully hospitable and endlessly polite. Everything works and the place is spotlessly clean.

I recommend a visit.

Call me if you have any questions.

Happy landings,

Roger Bell



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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	£235	£360	To be agreed
Up to 250	£285	£390	To be agreed
Up to 500	£330	£430	To be agreed
Up to 1000	£460	£528	To be agreed
Up to 2000	£528	£595	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 £120 for £500,000 any one occurrence, but limited to £50,000 any one aircraft. For £1,000,000 any one occurrence, it would be £240, 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 02079027800 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. So the Association now has overall cover to protect those that host meetings for the period of the event.