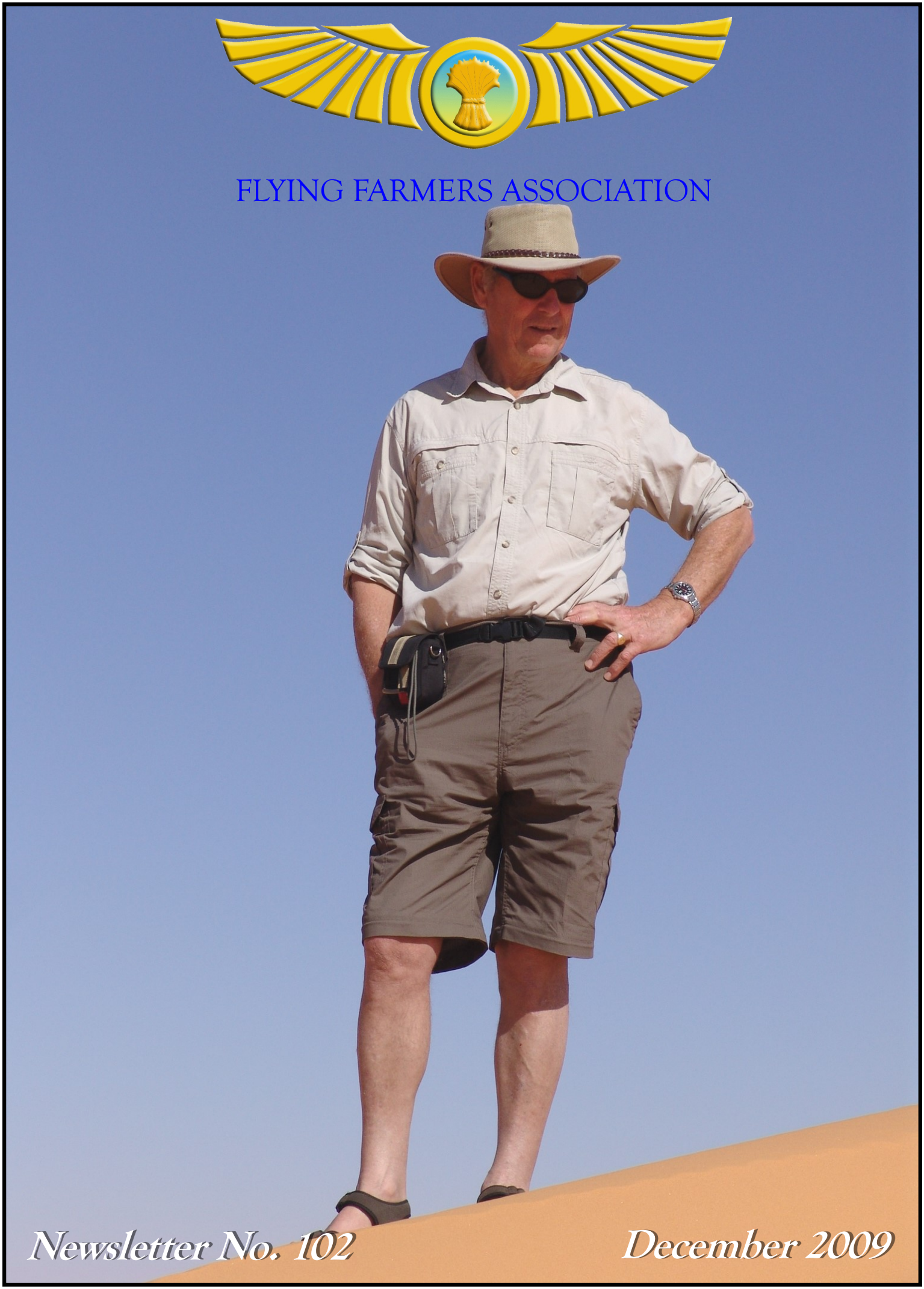
FLYING FARMERS ASSOCIATION



Newsletter No. 102 *December 2009*

Opening Thoughts

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Cover photograph;
Martin Gosling, our new Chairman, in Libya, complete with funny hat, shorts and sandals.

New Members

Since 31st July 2009

Tullis Matson
Whitchurch, Cheshire

Perry Hastings
Newmarket, Suffolk

Michael Stow
Blaydon Burn, Tyne & Wear

Patrick Marshall
Wishanger, Surrey

Marcus de Ferranti
Sydmonton, Hampshire

The total membership is now 400

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

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Chairman's Message

Another year has nearly passed by – another year full of change.

Our FFA has changed – Our Chairman and Events Secretary have stood down after having served 55 years on the committee between them and they will be a hard act to follow. We give them an enormous debt of gratitude for everything they have done for the Association in all those years, in helping to take the Association to where it is now. Thank you, John and Mike, from every one of us.

I have assumed responsibility of the chair and Rick Holt has taking the reins of Events Secretary. We welcome Gordon Bellerby as a new Committee member. Between all of us on the committee we will strive to carry on where John and Mike left off.

There is change also on the farming front. Harvest was a mixed bag of fortunes throughout the country. We here in the South East had a dry harvest after a doubtful start. I actually had to dry all my corn because my contractor was really on the ball in getting the combines rolling, although later harvested crops all came in at under 15%. Elsewhere it never seemed to stop raining – a real East/West split in the country. November has just passed and it has been the wettest for many years – and still we seem to get an unending succession of rain-bearing fronts crossing the country. The Climate change conference is just about to get under way as I write. Will it make any difference to the world – or just add a lot more hot air?

15 months ago prices gave us all much long-awaited optimism in farming, and yet now, another year on, they are on the floor again. The pound has collapsed and if it were to strengthen again, that could be even worse news for corn prices. It was suggested that with ever increasing populations and reducing land for cropping, prices would be unlikely to fall – is there a lot of political pressure in there somewhere to keep prices down for affordable food for all?

There is continuing change on the aviation front. There are proposals to introduce terminal charge at many airports throughout Europe – The spectre of Ofcom charging for aviation air bands has raised its head again, the idea having been shelved a year ago – fuel prices just keep on rising and availability is deemed to be critical, although I have yet to experience it whenever I have needed any across Europe. But our Association is buoyant, we now have 400 members, give or take a few, and applications still keep coming in. Our average age keeps rising too, so we desperately need applications from younger people to come into the Association.

Read the article from Paul about flying around Libya that three members were privileged to do recently – the first time that a group of small planes have been allowed into that country - and enjoy the photos that Paul has posted on our website. There will be a 5-page article about the tour in a future edition of Pilot – the features editor came along with us on the tour.

Support and enjoy the trips that Rick has got planned for us this coming year and, as always, we need suggestions from all of you for trips to arrange for the future. Keep your eyes and ears open – I have found local news channels sometimes present an item that could be an idea for an event. Give the idea to your committee and we can expand upon it.

To all of you, I hope you have a very happy and peaceful Christmas and New Year

Martin Gosling

Editor's Notes

As you will see from the Minutes of the recent AGM (page 11), we have a new Chairman (see front cover), Events Secretary and a new Committee Member.

Martin will be the fourth Chairman since 1974 and is well qualified for the position. He joined in the early eighties and has been on the committee for 10 years. He must have the best attendance record of all members at events and I believe that he has been on every foreign tour. He has also organised many events and tours.

He still farms in Essex and has been involved in agricultural contracting, share farming and of course land ownership. He operates his Robin Regent from his beautifully kept runways near Halstead.

News from the CAA General Aviation Consultative Committee meeting on 10th November 2009

An EASA technical group, including Barry Plumb representing Light Aircraft Association (LAA), is preparing a very detailed report about MOGAS; the final draft was considered in early November, and the completed report is expected to be published in the near future.

OFCOM have launched another consultation about charging for the use of the radio spectrum; the current consultation – which closes on 11 December 2009 – mainly refers to maritime frequencies, but aviation is also included as a general reference. No specific costs are proposed at this stage. (See later comment)

At GACC there was discussion about likely increased levels of security at GA airfields. BBGA (The British Business and General Aviation Association) announced that they propose to run a series of workshops for GA airfields on this subject, and I have asked Guy Lachlan, their CEO, to advise me about the dates when their timetable has been agreed. I will pass on the dates via Paul's e-news when they become available.

For any owner of a Cirrus, or other aircraft fitted with a ballistic parachute, you will soon be required to fit warning placards, as on military aircraft, to warn emergency services and other persons of the presence of armed rocket(s) within the fuselage. This is a safety measure initiated by John Thorpe the CE of GASCo, with the full backing of the CAA and AAIB.

For those members who fly Permit or microlight aircraft, it has always been illegal to remunerate any instructor who gives the owner(s) instruction in that aircraft. This is an issue which will shortly addressed, such that it will no longer be illegal to pay for instruction in your own (single owner) Permit or microlight aircraft; group owned aircraft may not qualify for this change.

The CAA issued a warning to GA pilots about Skysails. Skysails (see www.skysails.info) (select English) are enormous kites which are now being fitted to some commercial shipping to enable ship owners to reduce their fuel costs, and to help save pollution. The problem with Skysails is that they fly at considerable height above ships, and can sometimes disappear into low cloud – such that if you are scud running across the Channel or the North Sea, there is a chance that a Skysail may be in the same cloud as you! There have already been 2 reports; one, an "Airmiss", was filed by a Dutch North Sea helicopter pilot; see the Skysails website. (see photo on back cover of this issue)

The CAA is continuing to pressurize NATS to improve the presentation of NOTAMs, etc; there seems to be no realistic prospect of this happening in the near future.

News from the General Aviation Awareness Council (GAAC) – of which FFA is a member.

A conference about the planning aspects relating to wind turbines, organized by GAAC, took place on 12 November; FFA member Paul Burtwistle presented a paper. See the GAAC website www.gaac.co.uk and look under the News section; the relevant press release is at or near the top of the press releases. If any member is interested, I can forward electronic copies of the papers presented that day.

News from the General Aviation Safety Council – which FFA supports

John Thorpe, who has been Chief Executive of GASCo for many years, is about to retire. A new CE, Mike O'Donoghue, will start as CE on 1st January 2010; it is expected that, with the support of the CAA, the new position will be a full time position, although perhaps not immediately.

I hope that all members occasionally look at www.gasco.org.uk !

Light Aircraft Association

I would recommend those FFA members who are not LAA members to have an occasional look at the LAA website www.laa.uk.com With reference to the OFCOM paragraph above, look at the Consultation Update headline on the home page; you are then linked to the OFCOM consultation document, and to the draft LAA reply. You may also be interested in reading the CEO's "blog" – see box on right hand side of the home page. I could not find any reference to the OFCOM consultation on either the AOPA or the BMAA websites when I last looked on 2 December.

David Corbett.

Close Encounter

Anthony Kedros has been very brave to own up to an incident, the outcome of which can help us all.

This is his CHIRP report:-

On a recent local flight out of Oxford EGTK at FL085 I decided, overhead Worcester, to return via DTY. Avoiding Birmingham CTA to the north, I headed east towards Daventry VOR. Unfortunately, I omitted to descend to avoid class A airspace N859 or Daventry CTA.

Fortunately, I was listening out on Birmingham 118.05 and squawking C 0010. The controller very soon called me up and informed me that I was heading for controlled airspace and gave me appropriate instructions to avoid infringements. Thus, as he put it, sparing me an unpleasant letter from the CAA or something far more serious.

This is just to say that listening out and squawking the appropriate number with charley really does work in the vicinity of busy controlled airspace. My thanks, also, to an excellent air traffic controller.

Following the incident, Birmingham ATC asked me to spread the word about the benefits of listening out and squawking the discrete code near participating airports.

Gatwick	126.825	0012
London City	132.700	0012
Stansted	120.625	0013
Luton	129.550	0013
Birmingham	118.050	0010
Doncaster	126.225	6170
Manchester	118.575	7366

(Check these frequencies and codes.)

This is an excellent alternative for those who do not feel the need of a full ATC or LARS service (i.e. in good VMC)

Anthony Kedros

Programme 2010



3rd February	National Maritime Museum and Tour of the Olympic site in London
Late April	British Sugar, Downham Market
12th May	Marybelle Dairy & broilers, Suffolk
17th May	European Tour - Borders & Scotland
15th June	Salisbury Plain
30th June / 1st July	2 day visit to Yorkshire

These are the events planned to date. More could be added and announced in the March newsletter.

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.

Wednesday 3rd February 2010

This will be a visit to the National Maritime Museum at Greenwich combined with a guided tour of the Olympic site. Unfortunately the Olympic site visit is restricted to 30, so it will be on a first come first served basis.



We will meet for lunch, have a guided tour of the museum. The committee will also have a meeting at the museum.

Please send your tear off slip to Rick Holt before January 10th. Full details will be sent before the event.

End of April 2010

We will fly to David Burnett's strip at Downham Market. There will be a tour of the sugar beet factory in the morning. At this plant, they also produce ethanol and even recycle the soil and stones from the beet.

After lunch we will visit a 28 acre glasshouse growing tomatoes which derives all its heat from the sugar beet factory.

More details in the March issue

Wednesday 12th May 2010

This event will be organised by Guy Plenderleith.

Arrive at Beccles Airfield (there may be an alternative meeting point for cars).

Morning Visit:-

The Marybelle Dairy (www.marybelle.co.uk) was built in 2001, a new 10,000 sq.ft. milk processing and bottling factory, situated near Halesworth in Suffolk. Owned by the Strachan family, a long established dairy farming family milking Holstein Friesian and pedigree Jersey cows, which had a vision to diversify their traditional farming business and add-value to the milk they produce.

Milk is sourced locally from several dairy farms, processed, bottled and delivered to a range of local customers under the Marybelle brand. Customers include local shops, hotels, restaurants, garages, schools, doorsteps and supermarkets. Other products include cream, yogurts, crème fraiche and Greek style yogurt, as well as ice-cream sold under the Suffolk Meadow brand.

Marybelle has also been instrumental in helping with the new Greenbottle invention (www.greenbottle.com), a largely compostable milk bottle.

The visit will be on a processing day, so visitors will have the opportunity to see the processing and bottling in operation.

Lunch

Afternoon Visit:-

St Lawrence Hall Farms Ltd is a 600 acre arable unit growing wheat, rape and vining peas however, it has an expanding broiler enterprise.



The broiler unit, currently 95,000 sq.ft. of traditional old style buildings housing circa 145,000 birds, is under-going a significant re-investment programme. An additional three new sheds, of 25,000 sq.ft. each and housing circa 38,000 birds in each shed, are under construction. The new sheds herald a move to all steel construction, a new concept of evaporative cooling, with rain-water harvesting producing a high welfare bird sold on the Elmwood label to the Co-op.

More information, and a photograph of the first new shed, construction complete and now housing it's fourth crop, can be seen here – www.bpsequipment.co.uk/news.php

Plans are also being developed to build another new integrated poultry site and anaerobic digestion plant. Although this is in the early stages of assessment, there will be an opportunity to find out what we have learned.

Return to Beccles Airfield, or to alternative meeting point for cars

Reply slips in the next newsletter

From Monday 17th June for 6 nights (or more)

For three reasons, the European Tour this year will be a 'home' event in Scotland.

The first being that we have had a run of long distance events to Spain, Romania and Norway, so this is the opportunity for all those that say the tours are too long distance for them.

Secondly, as much belt tightening has been going on, not only with the recession but also the value of the £ / Euro, we thought it was time to make a lower budget tour.

Thirdly, no one has come forward to organise a foreign tour.

An event had to be cancelled last year which was to be organised by Richard Lawrence on the Borders and he has volunteered, together with Mike Ashmole, to include this in a Scottish Tour. There are a lot more ideas coming together including farming, visits to castles, mining and even a bombing range. Details will be forthcoming at a later date, so if you are interested, perhaps you could return a reply slip to Richard Lawrence to log your interest.

Tuesday 15th June 2010

To be organised by Peter Gale.

To we Aviators D123/D124/D125 (Salsibury Plain) is a restricted area the size of the Isle of Wight and used by the Army for training.

We spend a day with the Defence Land Agent visiting a Farm Tenant, DLA Headquarters at Westdown Camp where we will have presentations on warfare training and Air Operations followed by a buffet lunch.

In the afternoon, subject to training restrictions, we visit Copehill Down, a new training Village, the lost village of Imber evacuated in 1942 and other archaeological area's of interest.

Reply slips in the next newsletter.

30th June / 1st July 2010

Arla
ARLA FOODS
MILK PARTNERSHIP

Arrive Chris's Makin's strip near Leeds between 9.30am-10am Wednesday 30th June. Commence visit 10.30am (looking at hydroponically grown strawberries, milk and potash storage facilities). Lunch on the farm around 1.00pm, then coach to hotel in York. Rest of afternoon free before dinner at restaurant in York 8.00pm ish.



Thursday 31st July coach to Arla's new dairy (this is a state of the art milk processing and packaging plant just south of Leeds). Lunch will be at a fish &chip restaurant in Helmsley which has just been opened by Chris's wife Jane (pictured above), called Makins.

To get to Helmsley we will need to leave Arla around 11.30am, return to aircraft and fly to Wombleton, or Kirkbymoorside if I can arrange a visit to Slingsby's, where a coach will take us to the restaurant. After lunch look round either Helmsley or Slingsby's then coach back to Wombleton or Kirbymoorside.

Tour ends.

Beware!

Just a warning that the Border Agency do sometimes meet you at your strip when returning from abroad.

I recently returned from a foreign trip and on the way home refuelled at Troyes in France. My intention was to get back to North Yorkshire. With time running short before sunset and a strong headwind, we decided to change our plans and spent the night with Jane and William Procter in Essex instead.

A quick phone call to William confirmed that it would be alright, he made out a GAR form and because it was less than 2 hours notice, he rang the Customs as well.

Just after we landed, there was a knock on the door and for the first time that I have ever known, there were two officers who wanted to check our passports. All was in order and I apologised for the short notice.

They congratulated us all on the fact that we had done what we could in the circumstances and so I crawled a bit more and pointed out that Flying Farmers didn't want to abuse our privilege of operating directly from our strips. He thanked us again, but said there were moves afoot to alter the system and we might have to do a GAR to leave our strips as well. They also said that they realised that provisions would have to be made for general aviation because of last minute changes of plan, such as ours.

Paul Stephens

John Fairey 1935 - 2009



After the tragic flying accident of John Fairey, a farmer and aviator, on July 8th 2009 and his funeral on the 21st July 2009, on which occasion a small fly past was organised, it was decided to organise a larger fly past. He was flying his Piston Provost at the time, once owned by our President, Dick Walgate (correct me if I'm wrong Dick).

On the 18th September 2009 The Memorial Service for John Fairey was held in Romsey Abbey. It was of course, all of one would expect of an event intended to celebrate the life of someone as highly-respected as John. But what stands out is the extent of the Flypast, which was arranged as a tribute to this fine gentle aviator, and which took place over John's home at Bossington, where the Fairey family generously invited the congregation after the service.

The flypast involved four waves of aircraft comprised as follows:

Four Royal Air Force Tucano's, Andover C Mk1, Seahawk FGA Mk6, Hurricane Mk 1, Spitfire Mk XIX, Seafire Mk XVII, Beaver AL Mk 1, Auster AOP Mk 9, Chipmunk T Mk 10, Tiger Moth, Stampe SV4B, Bolkow 209 Mosun, Saab 91D, Rearwin 8125 Cloudster, Cessna 172, Robinson Raven R44, Alouette 2, Lynx HAS Mk 3, Super Lynx Mk 130, Chinook.

The aircraft involved provided by: The Royal Navy, The Royal Air Force, The RN Historic Flight, The Army Historic Flight, Rolls-Royce Heritage Trust, Agusta Westland and Individual private owners from the General Aviation Fraternity. A fitting tribute to one of the most highly respected gentleman aviators. This must be one the largest flypasts ever mounted for a private citizen, and the wide range of organizations involved, emphasizes the universal esteem reserved for this fine man.

Rest in Peace John. The flying community is diminished by your absence, but has been enhanced by your presence.

Obituary

John Fairey was married, firstly, to Anne Downward, and, secondly, to Beverley Halford who survives him with his daughter. Three sons predeceased him. This fly past could not have been put together or flown without the help of the Army Air Corps & F B Heliservices. It was an unusual site to see some rare aircraft at Middle Wallop

John Fairey spent a lifetime in aviation. He flew with Cambrian Airways, which was later absorbed by BOAC. In 1978 he resigned to spend three years as a flight lieutenant with the Rhodesian Air Force's No 3 Squadron, flying Dakotas on transport and resupply duties.



On returning to Britain he flew with Channel Express before reaching the retirement age of 65. He also flew the Dakota, the Vickers Viscount, the Handley Page Herald and the BAC 111. John was also involved with flying instruction, aerial survey, air taxi and banner towing.

The second son of Sir Richard Fairey, who founded the Fairey Aviation Company in 1915, John Stephen Fairey was born on April 21 1935 at Iver Heath, and educated at Eton and Magdalene College, Cambridge. He joined the University Air Squadron and flew Chipmunks and Harvards, having already obtained a private pilot's licence on floatplanes in Canada.

An experienced display pilot for 40 years with a deep knowledge of the machinery of vintage aircraft, the first aircraft he flew on the display circuit was a Spitfire trainer. When this was sold he organised the construction and operation of a replica of the extinct Fairey Flycatcher biplane fighter of the 1920s. In recent years, his displays with the Provost and the Saab Safir which were noted for their grace and precision, which showed both aircraft to their full advantage.

John was vice-president of the Historic Aircraft Association, chairman of the development trust of the Museum of Army Flying at Middle Wallop. He was also a staunch supporter of the Fleet Air Arm Museum at Yeovilton, where his Fairey Flycatcher replica is displayed alongside a Swordfish and the Fairey FD 2, which in 1957 claimed the world air speed record for Britain.

Known in flying circles as a "gentleman aviator", he was described by one airline colleague as "the perfect role model, always a pleasure to fly with, showing great patience and consideration for the less experienced". A founder member of a retired pilots' club, which meets to "swing on the chandelier over lunch", John was a Fellow of the Royal Aeronautical Society and a Liveryman of the Guild of Air Pilots and Air Navigators as well as a Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Hampshire.

Neville Stops



A Trip Across the Sahara

I opened Pilot magazine one day last June and saw an advertisement, which simply said 'Fly the Sahara'. Reading on, I gathered it was to be an organised trip from the 20th to 29th November 2009 organised by an outfit called Prepare 2 Go.

Within minutes, I rang Martin Gosling to see if he was interested and he had also seen it and his imagination was working overtime. We sent for further details from which we learnt that the route would take us to Tunisia, then to Tripoli in Libya from where we would head south following the Algerian border to the far south of Libya close to the Niger border, where the organiser, Sam Rutherford promised seeing the most beautiful sights of the whole Sahara - he wasn't wrong!

Next step was to find out a bit about Sam. It appeared that he was a helicopter pilot in the army and now, with his wife Beatrice, organising land based expeditions to anywhere in the world including journeys to Australia and South Africa. He had over 9 years experience of operating in Libya. His new toy was a Maule 180 which he had flown from the States himself and was using it to do aerial filming of events that he had organised such as the Stephen Tomlinson balloon flight across the South African countries for the BBC.

This was to be his first airborne safari, consequently he called the flight The Pathfinders.

Now Libya isn't a place you would normally think of visiting for the weekend. In fact this was to be the first group of light aircraft ever to have entered Libya, so not only where we apprehensive about the organisation, but I don't think the Libyans knew how to deal with the thought of 10 aircraft touring their country.

However, Sam has contacts in the right places and he knows just how to go about dealing with the mental attitude of the Libyan CAA. First organise the fuel with the military, then say to the CAA that we would like to come. When they find that the fuel is already arranged they seem to think if its alright with the military then why not.

Problems did arise, like a proposed $1000 landing fee at all airfields plus handling, taxes etc and a policeman had to be carried on board every aircraft. The landing fees were reduced considerably and eventually the police thing was reduced to having one guide with the group.

As the tour wasn't fully booked, Martin and I rang a few likely FFA members to see if they would like to apply as well, resulting in Bill and Wendy Burton joining the tour. So out of the 10 aircraft including the organiser's, the FFA were well represented with 3 aircraft.

We were advised to take a few items with us including a Satellite telephone, water, sleeping bags, ELTs, spare tyre and inner tube etc. These were hired or borrowed, and enough US dollars drawn out of the bank to buy all the fuel for the journey once in Africa, as that would be the only means of payment.

We left the UK a couple of days early to meet up with the rest of the group in Cannes from where the journey would start and end. The weather leaving Martin's strip in Essex was typical November - wind and rain, but by the time we reached Troyes it was settling down.

Troyes is an excellent airfield with customs facilities, self service fuel with credit card, Meteo and a nice little restaurant. The controller knocks off for a couple of hours lunch break, as they do in France, but you just give blind calls and in you go.

The weather was now good enough to go direct over the Southern Alps to Cannes and proved to be a beautiful flight.

Cannes were very busy with dozens of biz jets as there were conferences on, but again it is a lovely airport with all the facilities.

We had a day to spare before meeting the group, so we hired a car and had a delightful day in Monaco. Our first meeting with the group was on the evening of the 19th November at which Sam gave a briefing of what to expect over the coming days. He also briefed us on Tunis, our first stop, and the route over Corsica and Sardinia - a flight of about 450 nm.

Apart from our 2 Robins and Bill's Crusader, there was another Crusader, another Robin President, a 182 with full glass cockpit, a Cirrus SR22, a Grumman Tiger, a Cherokee 180 and Sam's Maule 180. Also to join us in Tripoli was a 6 month old Citation Mustang jet!

Also with the group was John, the official photographer, Dan Tye, the deputy editor of Pilot magazine to write the story and Mike who was a Major in charge of Apache helicopters in Afganistan, now a Lieutenant Colonel and Station Commander of RAF Dishforth in Yorkshire.

The participants were all British apart from Sam's wife and one pilot who were both Belgium. Experiences ranged from low hours to the well travelled.

We woke up the next morning full of apprehension as this was our first flight to Tunis. The flight plans were filed and we



departed Cannes. The first problem occurred as we talked to Ajjacio Information on Corsica. They said we could not enter Italian airspace because the Italians in Sardinia hadn't received the flight plans. This was resolved by us all landing at Figari, a lovely little airport in southern Corsica, and refilling.

Next stop was Tunis. I suppose we were a little surprised at how developed Tunisia is, but we still felt as though we had left the comforts of Europe. The immigration procedure was fairly painless although slow. We were advised not to think, just go with the flow and go at their pace.

That night, we went as a group to the Medina (old city centre) and were guided through the narrow streets by a local carrying a lamp to what appeared to be someone's house, but actually a very old and ornate restaurant. This was the first of many meals consisting of a soup starter, couscous then a chicken dish followed by some dates and the mint tea.

Next morning we were awoken at 5 am by the Call to Prayer bellowing out from the loudspeakers on many mosques. All was going fairly well at the airport, the first few aircraft were cleared

to depart on their way to Tripoli in Libya until it came to Martin's turn. He was told to return to the apron and the rest of us were not allowed a start clearance.

The problem turned out to be the result of the inefficiency of the police who had lost one of the white cards that we had to fill in with passport details. The police revisited all the aircraft and inspected the passports again and we assumed then we could start up, but the answer kept coming back from the tower that we had to wait. Eventually, over an hour later we got the clearance and we were on our way to Libya, a 325 nm mile trip.

On landing at Tripoli International we felt as if we had landed in an aircraft graveyard. There were hundreds of rotting airliners, helicopters and big Illuysian transport aeroplanes scattered all round the airfield. We were parked at an old disused terminal christened the Illuysian Park, as there were 5 or 6 semi





stripped giants surrounding our little Robins.

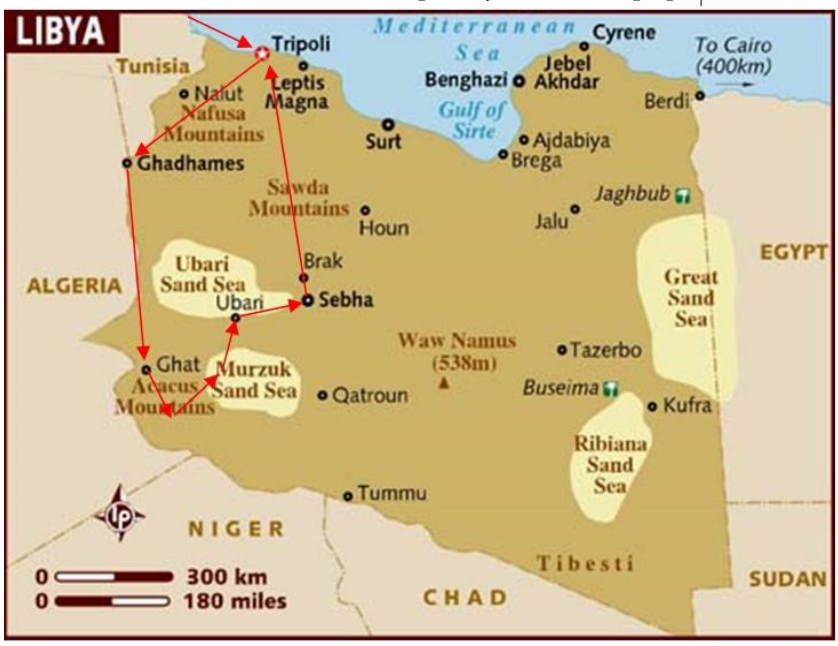
The next lesson in waiting came with the fuel arrangements. Fair enough the avgas was there but they wouldn't fill the aircraft until each of us was taken to the terminal where our US dollars had to be changed to Libyan dinar and the required amount deposited in their bank. Only then would they start the painfully slow process of 4 men refuelling each aircraft. With the delays at both ends, despite an early start, we got to the hotel with only half an hour before the next briefing and dinner.

The hotel was one of the best in Tripoli, or so it appeared. Our room was a suite with large flat screen TV, a computer, Jacuzzi bath, shower with sauna and a full blown massage chair. We soon realised that they had probably bought a load of seconds as although all the stuff was fairly new, the computer consisted of a screen, a mouse and nothing else, just wires hanging. The bath didn't have a plug to keep the water in and there was no socket for the electric plug, the shower wouldn't give any hot water etc, etc. It turned out everyone had similar experiences.

The real flying started next day, heading south into the desert to Ghadames. The only problem was that the top of the control tower was in cloud and mist, but Sam was confident that it would soon clear and by the time we had spent about an hour gradually moving through the airport showing our passports over and over again and repeatedly putting our bags through x-ray machines, the cloud was lifting and we were on our way.

We were instructed to always depart in speed order with the fastest first and fly in buddy pairs in case of any problems enroot. We all used a common frequency to keep in touch. This first part of desert was fairly barren ground with a few flocks of sheep and goats and also camels. The minimum altitude is 2000 feet (unlike our 500 feet over people, houses etc.) even when there's nothing for miles around. However, there's no radar, no information frequency, in fact nothing at all, so our QNH soon went astray and we found ourselves enjoying the scenery from low down.

After 240 nm we came to Ghadames, thanks to 3 GPSs on board. The strip was enormous and deserted apart from the man in the tower, a few ground staff and the refuellers waiting with a bladder bag full of fuel. Why they had to put this bag at one end of the airfield and park us at the other, I don't know. Foolishly, I didn't call for taxi clearance following refuelling and was escorted to the tower. I was sat down in front of Abdullah, the air traffic controller and apologised profusely. He then held his hand out and demanded $100, but like the Queen, I never carry money, so couldn't pay the man. He let me off!



Ghadames is an old border post with Algeria with not a lot going on, but an interesting old underground medina. The hotel was fairly new, clean and fairly basic, but did the job. It even had hot water!

Next day, we headed south tracking the Algerian border on our right and felt as though we were really getting into the desert with ever changing landscape below. We eventually started to see the sand dunes as we neared Ghat, another 300 nm into Libya. Then the scenery started to get ever more dramatic with sand seas and very unusual mountain and rock formations rising to 5000 feet. This was the start of the Akakus, reputably the most beautiful part of the Sahara.

The aeroplanes were left at the airfield and we



took to the 4 x 4s and immediately drove up a sand dune overlooking a spectacular view of the area. On the sand dune, rugs had been laid out and a plastic bag for each of us revealed chicken, chips and couscous! What a spectacular picnic.

After 3 hours driving, first on a tarmac road and then off road, we had various stops to see interesting sights. We knew we were to spend the night in tents and the girls were a little nervous of what the facilities would be like.

As soon as we drove into the 'Touareg camp site' we realised that this was something special. We each had a little marquee, fully lined out inside and even en suite facilities. We were miles and miles from anywhere, so the only power was the generator. Luckily the beds were good as the nights get extremely cold. We woke up during the night whilst the generator is turned off and attempted to go to the en suite, but it was so black dark that it was impossible to see anything. Even in the wilds of North Yorkshire we still get a bit of light pollution, but this was something I had never experienced.

I looked outside and despite the sheer cold, I had to call Roz as the sky was absolutely amazing. If we can see hundreds or thousands of stars at home, this sight was something else, with millions of stars making an amazing sky. Another new experience for me.

The next day was a touring drive back to the aircraft seeing various rock paintings, looking at what can grow in the desert and just generally taking in the amazing scenery.

We were now already on day 6 and we flew the 250 miles to Ubari. This flight was nothing less than absolutely spectacular. First we flew over the Akakus where we had seen the sights from the ground, then over the Erg Murzuk, one of the world's largest sand seas. The sand dunes change colour as the sun goes down, and at one point they were distinctly orange against a crystal blue sky.

We saw the sunset on this flight and luckily the landing lights were working at Ubari, a military airfield, otherwise we wouldn't have found it as the coordinates were slightly off. An amazing flight.

Ubari is quite a populated area, habited by the Touaregs, once the nomads of the desert travelling freely between Libya, Niger, Chad and Algeria. They have now settled into various areas. The men look a bit daunting with their heads wrapped in their Tagelmust - a turban with a veil concealing all but their eyes, probably from the days when they travelled, for protection against the harsh desert sand. However, they are the gentlest of people and apparently the crime rate is extremely low.

As it was dark, we couldn't see the setting of our accommodation for the night. We were in little round mud huts with nothing more than a couple of uncomfortable beds in each with no sheets, just dark smelly throws over them. I am ashamed to admit that Roz and I didn't get undressed for those two nights!

We had a toilet and shower block with no segregation for men and women and to be honest, they were filthy, broken and



fairly unattractive. The hot water was rare - the first into the left hand shower managed to get hot water, but that was about it.

We were fairly used to the soup, couscous and chicken by now for dinner, and this was no different - maybe the chicken was even more overcooked, but probably just as well.

As Martin said - it was character building!

When the sun came up, we were astounded by the view be-









hind the camp with the massive sand dunes. After breakfast we had a leisurely walk as a group over the sand dunes and Sam explained about how they are formed, what animals there are in the desert and how to drive through and over the dunes without getting bogged down. This was demonstrated in the afternoon as we boarded 8 4 x 4s and headed for the lakes about 35 miles into the dunes. The Touareg drivers seem to have abandoned the camel for Toyotas and drove them very enthusiastically and at great speed topping 70 mph in places.

At various points we would go at speed to the top of a dune and stopping just over the top we couldn't help ourselves utter expletives with the view of the drop at the other side.

The lakes are a phenomenon that no one can explain. They are extremely salty like the Dead Sea as Bill and Wendy found out when they went for a swim.

After another night in the 0.5 star accommodation (apparently the best in the area), it was now time to start the journey back to Tripoli.



Sam & Beatrice

There was no fuel at Ubari, so we flew to Sebha (90 nm) then onto Tripoli (340 nm) to land this time at Mitiga, the old International airport. This was a far better experience and miraculously the time spent in the terminal was minimal.

We returned to the Diplomat hotel where Sam had had words with the management about the lack of customer care. It sort of worked but this time none of the plastic card keys would work to get into the rooms!

The route now was a reversal of the journey down, with a night in Tunis again. We had more time in the city, so we walked into the medina and experienced the smells of sheep's heads burning on barbeques and the quaint streets of the old town, contrasting with the broad avenues of the new developments.

Whilst in the desert, we had experienced nothing but CAVOK, so we realised we were returning to Europe with a TAF for Cannes as long as your arm. A front was moving in promising heavy rain and gusting winds even thunder. We all made it into Cannes after a fashion apart from one that went IFR to Lyon (not sure whether he made it) and one that elected to stay in Ajjacio in Corsica.

The rain certainly did come down, but next morning we elected to route low level round to Marseille, then up the Rhone valley. As it happened, the front had almost passed through and we flew up to Troyes at FL65 in good weather. Refuelled and headed for home. Total distance covered, approx. 4000 nm.

So, summing up, we have had the experience of a lifetime. We know there were multiple problems with things not working out as planned, but we wouldn't have been in Africa if it had gone like clockwork and were just part of the experience. The little problems were totally overwhelmed by the whole experience of flying across the Sahara. Just amazing!

Sam and Beatrice will be doing more airborne safaris in the future. We can thoroughly recommend the very professional way they organise the tours and they are just genuinely lovely people.

Paul Stephens

For more pictures you could visit the FFA website www.ffapics.myphotoalbum.com and for Martin's photos www.martingosling.myphotoalbum.com

You can learn more about Prepare 2 Go at www.prepare2go.com

Minutes of the 35th AGM

Sywell, 9th October 2009

Present: J. Golden (Hon. Chairman), P. Stephens (Hon Secretary), A.Cragg (Hon. Treasurer) M. Cuttell (Hon Events Secretary), M.Gosling & Rick Holt (Committee Members) and approx. 40 members.
P.Stephens took the minutes

	Description	Action
1	**Apologies for absence** Apologies received from The President, Pat Nutt, John Graves, William Procter, Roger Taylor, Ian Weston, Trevor Jarvis, Tim Scorer, David Corbett, Mike Ashmole, Bob Crowe, Peter Gale, George Sly, Henry & Elizabeth Pelham, Peter Pilch, Trevor Williamson, Bob Beard, Malcolm Easy, David Hunt and David Keene.	
2	**Signing of the Minutes of the 34th AGM held at Husbands Bosworth on 15th October 2008** The minutes were signed as a true and correct record.	
3	**Any Matters arising from the Minutes** There were no matters arising	
4	**Chairman's Report** The Chairman gave his report saying that the FFA was being properly run and was financially sound. He appealed for members to put themselves forward to join the committee.	
5	**Treasurer's Report** The Treasurer gave his report detailing a few items on the accounts and made the point that we now contribute to the LAA following discussion at last year's AGM.	
6	**Election of Committee Members** It was the turn of the Chairman and the Events Secretary to stand down from the Committee. Neither wished to stand again. Existing committee members Martin Gosling and Rick Holt will fill their positions respectively. There was only one nomination for a new committee member and that was Gordon Bellerby, who was accepted. The new committee will decide at a later date whether or not to co-opt another committee member.	All
7	**Membership Report** The Secretary declared the total membership stood at 399 members. In the previous 12 months 18 new members had joined and 11 members had left the list.	
8	**Event Secretary's Report** The Events Secretary handed over his position to Rick Holt who said that he had appealed to members by bulk email asking for suggestions for the 2010 program. He had had a good response.	
9	**AOB** Bill Burton said that he had met founder member Edward Long who wasn't enjoying the best of health and was in a wheelchair. He had also been in contact with Werner Brombacher who would be unlikely to attend anymore Tours. The Chairman had been in contact with David Keene who was paralyzed earlier on this year following a fall from a ladder. He was progressing and looked forward to leaving hospital near Christmas and getting back to flying as best he could. The new Chairman, Martin Gosling thanked both John Golden and Mike Cuttell for collectively serving 55 years on the committee.	

The FFA in association with Hayward Aviation Ltd, have created the **Flying Farmers Association Airfield Owners and Operators Scheme.** The basic policy is available in two parts. The first part covers the premises liability and there are two choices of cover limits available. The premium is determined by estimated third party movements each year and the limit of liability cover chosen.

Annual Movements by Third Party Aircraft	Limit of Liability £500,000	Limit of Liability £1,000,000	Other
Up to 100	£195	£300	To be agreed
Up to 250	£240	£325	To be agreed
Up to 500	£275	£360	To be agreed
Up to 1000	£385	£440	To be agreed
Up to 2000	£440	£495	To be agreed
Over 2000	To be agreed	To be agreed	To be agreed

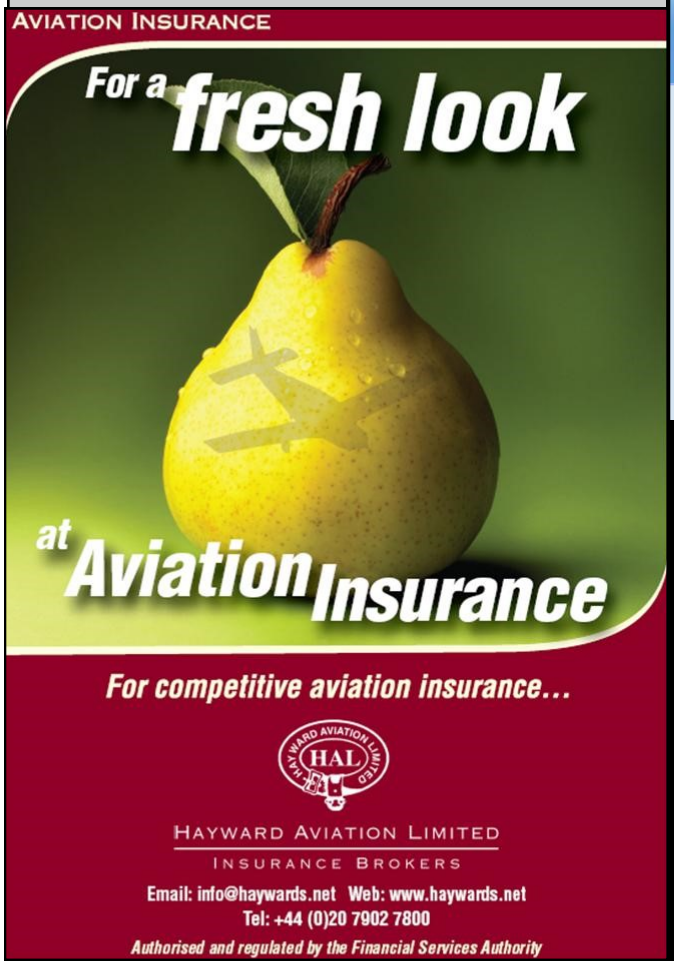
In addition to premises liability and if hangarage is provided, or if aircraft are kept in your care, custody and control, or where aircraft are moved by you or your employees, then you should include **Hangarkeepers Liability** for an additional £75 for £500,000 any one occurrence, but limited to £50,000 any one aircraft. For £1,000,000 any one occurrence, it would be £150, limited to £50,000 any one aircraft.

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

If you have any queries whatsoever, contact Tim Proctor or William Mann at Hayward Aviation Ltd on 0207 902 7800 or email tproctor@haywards.net or wmann@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.

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