

Newsletter No. 117 *December 2014*

Opening Thoughts

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Cover photograph by Roz Stephens;

Tony Fisher telling Peter Gale that his Cub is a real Flying Farmers aeroplane!

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Chairman's Ramblings

I seem to remember when I was in my formative years that I never really bothered about the early dark nights and late dark mornings, but they come around so alarmingly quickly now in my later years, and I really dislike them. Some will say that we should have summertime all year around, but I fail to see what difference it would really make. The length of daylight would be exactly the same and it may be lighter at teatime – but it would still be dark at breakfast. I write from Essex, but for those in the Northern climes it would be mid-morning before they could turn their lights off. I take comfort already that the days are about to start getting longer again.

This time last year I wrote that the pundits were predicting a very hard spell of weather, and I commented that they were only guessing as they really hadn't a clue, but they did have a 50/50 chance of getting it right (or wrong). Well, I was right and they were wrong (!!) so what does that tell you?! We had just 3 days over the entire winter when the temperature dipped below freezing and that was by no more than a couple of degrees. This meant that it was infinitely harder for farmers to get a decent spring seedbed with no frost tilth available and all the seedbeds had to be mechanically forced. At least we have a vast range of cultivation equipment available to us nowadays to cope with this – in my father's day it was either a 'Triple K' or a Triple K', and all they did was to keep rolling the tennis ball of clay around and around if there was no help from the frost – at least here on our heavy clay land that is what happened. Take comfort, the Met Office have just taken delivery of a new super computer with a mind-boggling price tag which will mean they can now get it wrong quicker and more consistently!

And then it rained, and rained, and rained – and blew several gales. At this point I made one of the few good decisions I have made in recent years, and went away for 10 days in the sun with Annette, and we missed all the mayhem! We enjoyed that so much we are doing it again next February – I hope that is not a bad omen for those of you left behind!

I have today just come back from a meeting with a fellow Flying Farmer who has offered to help with the planning of the Study Tour proposed for the end of next May. I had been waiting for a while for suitable weather to be able to get airborne to fly up to Sturgate to meet him. The strip had recently suffered an enormous amount of rain – 35 mm one weekend followed by another 15 mm four days later leaving just half of one of the two strips marginally serviceable. The wind didn't favour a take-off, but the Robin obliged without too much drama. On my way north I was horrified to see how many fields had large areas of standing water - and we have another 3 months before spring is officially upon us. I hope for all our sakes that we don't have the same appalling weather as last year.

But, hey! What happened last year? After all that ghastly winter weather, we could well have expected it to impinge on the final harvest results – but in reality we had the best wheat harvest ever – by some considerable margin. That would never have been imagined back in April when the growth finally began, but by May it was evident that an excellent harvest was in prospect, and so it turned out to be, with the main reason being an almost total absence of yield-sapping disease. All of which goes to show that for all the effort we put into our farming throughout the year, the Good Lord is the final arbiter for good or bad with us just doing our best to help it all along. If only He could help us a bit with the prices we are getting at the moment! Although they have recovered somewhat now, at their worst they were a full £121/tonne lower than the top price my neighbour got last year (not myself obviously, I am much cleverer at buying high and selling low). What is worse than bad prices? Bad prices coupled with poor yields, and that we have, thankfully, mostly avoided this year.

Hopefully you have mostly had a favourable drilling season and your crops are looking pretty good; most around here are certainly looking well established and well advanced. My father would have said the crops are far too forward, but I think that is the thinking of yesteryear. Far better surely to have excellent establishment and strong growth to help crops cope with all the ravages that a bad winter can throw at them.

Today we hear the latest meddling from Brussels where they want to vastly curtail the chemicals we use, primarily

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pesticides. Yet another incidence of interference by people who probably have never worn a gumboot in their lives, and are hell-bent on making our business lives as difficult as they can. We will accommodate their edicts – we always do – and then they will soon dream up some other tiresome restrictions to annoy us, all in the name of Health & Safety, or environmental safety, or food standards or some other unfounded reason to gain public sympathy. Meanwhile we are left to carry on as best we can with an ever reducing armoury of chemicals to produce food which the public deem to be both too expensive and probably unsafe.

Don't be slow at getting your registration forms back to join in with the next season's events – particularly the Study Tour which still has some organising to be done, but for which we will need to know participating numbers as soon as possible

To all of you a very happy Christmas, and the committee and I look forward to seeing many of you at next season's events, beginning in London in early February.

Martin Gosling

Editor's Notes

I would like to thank Peter Kember on behalf of all the members for representing us at the GACC - now the GAP. He took over from David Corbett in 2011 and has represented the FFA well in front of the CAA and produced some good reports for this newsletter. His last report is published below.

Peter will be succeeded by Mark Badminton who is also currently representing us at the GASCo meetings. Mark is not only a flying farmer in North Yorkshire, but also a flying instructor and examiner - so he will be up to date with the politics and red tape of General Aviation (GA). You can also read his latest article below.

The Rt. Hon. Grant Shapps MP, who if you have read anything to do with GA over the last 12 months, you will have noticed that he is conducting a challenge to lessen red tape in aviation. He has just joined our membership as he is a keen aviator and in the process of forming his own strip. At some point in the future, I hope we can persuade him to speak to us, possibly at the AGM about how his campaign is going.

Further towards the back of this edition are a couple of articles written by our tame solicitor - Tim Scorer. As airstrip operators, we have to know the liability risks associated with the strip and Tim, who has first hand experience of a mess up on his own strip, is the man to help you with any problems.

Coincidentally, I was approached about placing an advert in the newsletters from an insurer who will combine aircraft and airstrip insurance. See the back cover. I don't want to turn the newsletter into a list of adverts, but if anything is of benefit to our members, then it could prove useful. Haywards have been associated with the FFA for many years and offer airstrip insurance cover and many of you have taken advantage of their preferential rates. So I would be interested to see how these people compare.

Paul Stephens

GAP Report, November 13th 2014

On behalf of FFA I attended the meeting of the CAAs General Aviation Consultative Committee (GACC) held at Aviation House, Gatwick on the 13th November 2014. Because of my summer holiday I was not able to attend the last meeting held in July 2014 and consequently I missed the CAAs decision to rename the Committee the "General Aviation Partnership" (GAP). The change signifies the CAAs wish to engage more openly with the flying community and to attract organisations, associations, companies and individuals to undertake some (or should that be most?) of the detailed work involved in securing the new regulatory regime which will control GA in the future.

The meeting was chaired by Tony Rapson, who, after nearly a year in office as Head of the GA Unit, is making some real progress with the task that he has been set by, inter alia, the Governments "Red Tape Challenge". He was assisted at the meeting by Ben Watkins and a number of new faces who I had not seen before. Ben is moving to a new job and is being replaced by Tina Patel. Rachel Gardner has taken over Mike Barnards old job as GA Unit Programme Manager and another female, Tricia Ward, has joined the team. Years ago when I worked for the largest town planning consultancy in the UK (and prior to setting up my own specialist aviation planning consultancy) I saw frequent staff changes. To me, a high staff turnover suggests that staff are unhappy with their jobs. Perhaps the CAAs old stalwarts (the strict regulators) do not like working in a period of great change?

At the start of the meeting a serious question was put to the chair, "which organisations come under the the auspices of the GA Unit?". For a moment Tony Rapson was floored, before responding that clarification was needed and would be provided at a future meeting. A second question was put concerning the CAAs unpopular decision to award Southend Airport a new status with a Radio Mandatory Zone (RMZ). That would also be dealt with later we were told.

In his opening introduction I was intrigued to hear Tony describe the outcome of the Governments so called GA Star Chamber which, as is becoming usual these days, was the brainchild of our very own pilot, aircraft owner and MP, Grant Shapps. Apparently at the first meeting all of the Government Departments which are involved with GA came in for severe criticism including the CAA, The Dept for Transport and the Border Agency (or whatever title it now enjoys), amongst others.

Rachel told us that she had been in post for only a month but had, at least, identified that 128 projects made up the GA Units task over the next year or so. 32 of those tasks had been completed, one of which has been to permit of the carriage of a paying passenger (but not for profit!) in the two seat Spitfire. Whilst this is commendable it seems to me that publicity for high profile deregulation is being sought when there are many other more important issues affecting the average pilot, operating his own aeroplane from a private strip. I am pleased to note that Modifications approved in the USA and in Canada are now legal in a non EASA aircraft. It is interesting that the work of our friends across the pond, has achieved a status not afforded to Europe. Apparently this change has allowed the retro fitting of disc brakes to a Boeing Stearman in Northern Ireland. The overflying of urban areas by gyroplanes is next on the list.

We were told that the review of the Air Navigation Order and the 90 day currency rule is underway with a target completion date by October 2016. The review of medical standards for pilots has an earlier target of February 2015. The sooner the better in my view! I resent paying £175 per annum just to be allowed to fly my aeroplane when I am much more likely to have an accident in my car on our overcrowded and potholed roads.

Brian Hamilton, another new face to me, spoke on the subject of CAA charges for services. The CAA no longer has to make a 6 per cent profit and can now look forward to handing over to the

Exchequer, just 2.5 percent per annum. The CAA now has a duty in law to consider the economic advantage of the service that it provides. Thus, if the benefactor makes no money, the CAA cannot charge a profit element. That will not be an easy job to do.

Phil Roberts, another new face, addressed us on the control of airspace and described the powers that are available, including the new RMZ requiring a pilot call to ATC and the need to listen to traffic, but no obligation to comply with ATC advice. The new Southend RMZ was discussed and, flying as I do from my small aerodrome in Kent, due south of Southend, I was appalled that the RMZ had been confirmed despite my objections and those of many other flyers who increasingly find themselves funnelled between London City and Thurrock, a narrow north-south corridor preceded or followed by the similar sandwich of Stansted and Luton.

Roger Hopkinson, from the Light Aircraft Association spoke on the subject of the General and Business Aviation Strategic Forum (GBASF) and reminded us that the Government has commissioned York Aviation, a leading aviation economist consultancy to update the work of Terry Luber, who some years ago had calculated the value to the UK of GA activity. I recall a figure of £1.4 billion per annum. I have previously briefed York Aviation and they impressed me greatly with their expertise so I am confident that we will see a new figure which includes the secondary impacts of GA (the multiplier effects).

Richard Moyes, an ex RAF fast jet pilot, spoke on the work that he is doing for the CAA on the defining of a new transition altitude. This is likely to be 18,000 feet which will exclude most pilots that I know, but it is fair to state that the French authorities see no reason to change from their TA whatever that might currently be. (5000ft?)

Charlotte Reynolds gave a most interesting talk on Electronic Conspicuity seen as potentially the most effective method of ensuring air traffic deconfliction, as it is called. There are a number of devices under development from a basic unit suitable for gliders and microlights to sophisticated units for high flyers. The CAA want to see units being fitted on a voluntary basis and so the basic units will need to be low cost, portable, easy to use and with practical advantages perhaps for accessing controlled airspace.

The last speaker dealt with the problems and inevitable delays with Standardised European Rules of the Air (SERA) and reported that the planned ANO amendments will not be ready this year due to resource problems at DfT.

The next meeting of the GAP will be on the 3rd March 2015 followed by 14th July and 17th November 2015. I will not be attending those meetings because, at age 69 I have decided to spend more time with my wife, my children (one of whom, my son now lives in New Zealand) and my grandchildren all of whom show a healthy interest in little aeroplanes. I also want to fly my Europe more often and to fiddle with my classic car and motor cycle.

I have enjoyed my time reporting to the FFA but now I am handing over to fellow member Mark Badminton, the current FFA representative at GASCo.

Peter Kember Dip TP, MRTPI, MRAeS,
Aviation Planning Consultant
Rotherfield, East Sussex.

GASCo Report

GASCo activities continue apace with the upcoming winter round of safety evenings. For those of you who have not been to one at all (or for many years), it really is worth the effort to track down your local event and trip along. They have been completely rehashed in the last few years and are now presented by a new team of very highly qualified (and interesting) presenters, all of whom have much experience in the aviation field and the talks are now of interest to more experienced pilots as well as students and newly qualified crew. And some insurance companies offer small discounts for attendance as a bonus.

The most recent council meeting was in London in October, which I have always attended, but this year the date was changed to my wife's birthday!! So for fear of divorce I had to miss out. I gained an online briefing of content however, which seemed mostly focussed upon the GA red tape challenge and its safety implications. Whilst any reduction in bureaucracy is of course welcomed, there is some concern that the light touch mentality could seep into safety culture, to its detriment.

The RAF presented their safety culture power point, which seems to focus highly on airprox's and the continued need for good lookout and radio communications, especially (and unsurprisingly!) in MATZ areas. Common sense really, but dressed up with many soundbites and acronyms.

This time of year of course brings its own issues, including wet, soft strips, increased risk of carb icing, and lack of currency due to poor weather. It behoves us all to keep ourselves and our steeds in good flying condition throughout the winter.

Finally, may I take this chance to thank the committee for offering me the chance to represent the FFA at the GAP (General Aviation Partnership), which I am thoroughly looking forward to. GASCo is a tremendously worthwhile organisation, with little need for critical input from its members, just support and feedback. GAP is another matter, and I look forward to voicing our members' opinions, and as an honorary Yorkshireman of 30 years, I do not intend to mince my words!! Please, if you have an issue that is ruffling your feathers, email me with it and I will air it to Mr Rapson and his cohorts. There is a refreshing change in the air with regards to regulation but we are only a staff reshuffle away from the bad old ways, so I feel we need to obtain maximum benefit whilst the incumbents are on our side and whilst giving them the support they deserve, also ensure that the pressure continues.

Mark Badminton

GAAC Report on Airfield Planning Issues

Summary

The continuing trend of airfield pressures, both from economic and housing threats and from inappropriate developments such as wind turbines in the immediate vicinity of flying sites, sadly continues. As has been reported in the past, this is led by government policy in prioritising land for housing ahead of other areas of infrastructure including transportation, which has in turn led to developers attempting to 'cash in' on the land resources.

The GAAC role in these cases has been to provide objective responses to those seeking to keep airfields open, while attempting to advise local planning officers both of the importance of GA airfield as a part of their local business, transport and economic infrastructure, and the recognition of this in the National Planning Policy Framework. In addition the GAAC is also actively driving the importance of leisure aviation as a resource and advocating local airfields' role in providing accessible and sustainable flying training.

Planning Protection

Overall, the recent Government response to the Red Tape Challenge brought good news in terms of recognition of the importance of the GA industry and the need for sustaining a reason-

able infrastructure to support it. However it was disappointing to note that airfields and planning was the one area in which Grant Shapps and his team had failed to address any of the questions raised within the challenge.

The continuing wish to devolve decision making to Local Planning Authorities and the support of continued CAA inaction in the protection of small and medium-sized airfields is flawed. Unless we lobby for a change of policy, current Government activities, by accident or design, will come too late to prevent the haemorrhaging of airfield sites, currently being lost to other land uses.

One means of creating greater protection for the change of use for sites would to be require that any change of use for an established airfield should be subject to the scrutiny of a Planning Enquiry. This is a procedure is already used in some EU countries such as Germany.

This would at least ensure the debate, and any subsequent decision, would be subject to the measured and objective decision of a Planning Inspector, who is in a better position to offer an overview including airfields' role as a part of the national transport and economic infrastructure. It would also act as a potential test of whether the aviation community in a particular area can offer a strong enough case for an airfield's viability to convince an Inspector of its retention.

Currently, serious doubts about the objectivity of local councils often lead to a feeling of a 'fait accompli' once airfields are threatened. A decade ago, it was noted in the Lober Report that 41% of local planning authorities indicated they would offer no proactive protection to offer planning safeguards for flying sites and only 7% indicated that they would seek to protect flying sites. The involvement of the Planning Inspectorate in any change of use of airfields would significantly enhance the future protection of airfields as a part of the national infrastructure.

A further alternative may be to compel Local Planning Authorities to enter into formal consultation with the CAA as part of the change of use process, and that the CAA should be legally required to make formal comment on any changes of airfield planning status.

Aerodrome Viability

The recent closure of Blackpool airport on financial grounds by Balfour Beatty has focussed attention on the failure of business model generated in the early 2000s of trying to turn what had been successful GA airfields into 'regional airports' aimed at attracting low cost airlines, at the expense of GA operations.

In addition to Blackpool, there are worrying signs that other similar operations are showing signs of distress. Perhaps now is the time for the GA sector to step forward in advocating more holistic use of the remaining airfield infrastructure and finding ways of demonstrating that GA offers airport operators a reasonable revenue stream?

GA Consultation

As part of recent inputs to Government, The GAAC made as submission on the current status of GA airfields to the All-Party Transport Select Committee last month. The GAAC has also attended meetings with the Aerodrome Operators Association and Richard Kaberry the senior consultant for York Aviation, who is carrying out the Government's GA research project.

Blackpool, Manston and Panshanger Closures

While all three of these airfields are now officially closed, activities continue to attempt to maintain some scope for their use for GA purposes. At Blackpool, limited operations continue for based operators such as Westair, but no visiting aircraft are being accepted. Negotiations continue with local council and other interested parties, but concerns are that if no alternative is found by late November, the airfield infrastructure and assets will be dismantled and sold off.

At Manston, much of the infrastructure and resources have been sold and although Thanet District Council have pledged to debate a compulsory purchase order, the site has already been sold to a 'regeneration company' for other land uses. Political pressure to maintain part of site for GA use is ongoing, potentially converting a taxiway to a GA runway, allowing redevelopment of a large part of the remaining site.

Panshanger was closed at the end of September when landowner Mariposa Developments refused to extend the lease of their airfield tenants' contracts, forcing airfield closure and removal of all aircraft. WHDC is however being pressurised to maintain airfield planning status, and as part of demonstrating sustainability, we have prepared documents for Save Panshanger and WHDC outlining GA aircraft parking requirements in SE England and contributed to a letter requesting that WHDC prevent Mariposa carrying out any demolition or disruption of landing areas, on safety grounds, till spring 2015.

Wellesbourne

In late July, the owners of the Wellesbourne airfield site presented a 'Scoping Consultation' document to Stratford District Council, presenting their plans for mixed housing and commercial development on the airfield site. We have supported Wellesbourne Matters with a GAAC objection to the proposal, filed with Stratford District Council, reminding them of their commitment as part of their core strategy plan that: "the established flying function of the airfield should be retained due to its importance to the local economy".

Wellesbourne Matters have developed a radical approach to defending the airfield by focussing on fund raising to hire a legal practice, Zyda Law,that normal ly specialises in representing developers to refute protest group arguments. Among the initiatives they are employing is the development of alternative planning options, combining housing with continued use of the airfield, to demonstrate that the housing developer's option is not the only one available.

Wycombe

The GAAC is closely monitoring concerns that Wycombe District Council are attempting to 'claw back' around 30 acres of land on the south side of the aerodrome, in a similar location to that unsuccessfully proposed for a football stadium in 2011, to develop light industry sites. While Wycombe is already well served by such industrial areas, the council are thought to be using this development provide justification for an additional southerly spur road from the M40 Handy Cross intersection, which would in turn unlock around 1000 acres of land on the SE of the M40 intersection for potential housing that cannot currently be allocated due to a lack of appropriate road access.

The council are attempting to achieve the airfield 'land grab' by rejecting the renewal of the existing airfield lease, which was taken over by Heli-Air. While the GAAC does not wish to get involved in the likely legal battle between the two parties, were the area of airfield be lost, it would mean the loss of the airfield's N/S runway and the end of gliding operations by Booker Gliding Club.

Good News. Bentwaters and Rochester

Suffolk Coastal District Council have, after a vigorous debate and objections posted by organisations including the National Trust, unanimously approved plans to increase flights at the former US airbase.

Bentwaters, near Woodbridge. Flights will be limited to historic, classic or vintage aircraft, or piston-engined general aviation planes, or other aircraft below a maximum take-off weight of

15 tonnes. A maximum of 960 aircraft movements a year will be permitted, no more than 40 a week, with no flying between 9pm and 7am.

Rochester Airport is in the final stages of planning approval for the Council-led plans to redevelop the airfield with a lit tarmac and parallel grass runway, new hangars and admin buildings, as part of a 25-year plan. The planning process is expected to be completed in December and work on redevelopment will begin in 2015.

Wind Turbines / Safeguarding

The initial planning applications for the two large wind turbine developments at Bullington Cross and South Woodmancott, which threaten operations at Lasham and Popham, have been refused by all three local council planning committees and, as both applications will now either move to public enquiry or be 'called in' by the Secretary of State for direct decision, we have successfully lobbied for the LPA to give grounds for rejection including "impact on GA (not just military Radar) at Lasham and Popham - and recognition of their 'value and of national policy thereon'. This gives case precedence for both airfields' involvement in likely Public Enquiries or Secretary of State submissions. The GAAC has also offered all three councils' assistance in preparing supporting submissions on behalf of the GA Community.

The past months have seen the GAAC successfully lead to the removal of two inappropriate wind turbine development proposals in the immediate vicinity of 'farm strip' flying sites in Devon, but three new cases have been come to light. In each case the developer has clearly ignored a visible and long-established flying site, hoping to hoodwink or force through an application without carrying out an appropriate risk analysis or contacting the flying site operator. In each case we have reminded the LPA that the development is in breach of CAA advice and if allowed they place the local authority in a potential position of liability if a resulting incident were to occur.

It was noteworthy that none of these flying sites had been unofficially safeguarded by the submission of plans to the LPA. However the reaction from most 'Flying Farmers' is that they "get nothing but hassle from their LPAs and would rather keep a low profile, or they don't want to open a bag of worms." One FFA member stated "Until there is a more professional attitude from LPAs, and with my own experience, I find it difficult to advise our members to go through that performance."

At the November GAAC council meeting, safeguarding specialist Richard Vousden agreed to work with GAAC to create an information sheet for local planning officers, in a similar form to the advice provided on wind turbines. This fact sheet will be available in early 2015.

Downwind Turbulence Research

Results of the research work on downwind turbulence from wind turbines initiated by GAAC, via the cross-industry Air Space Initiative Wind Farm Working Group, and funded by CAA and Renewable UK, will shortly be published. It is hoped that an initial briefing on the Liverpool University project may be available at the ASIWWG meeting on Thursday 20th November and that the final report will be published early next year, in time for inclusion in an updated version of CAP 764.

This will offer a more complex and accurate model than the current '16 x rotor diameter' figure based on 2003 research.

Industry Co-operation

In addition, the GAAC are continuing to work with the industry to try to both develop mitigation and awareness of the specific needs of and risks to General Aviation. In addition to our work with the Air Space Initiative Wind Farm Working Group (ASIWWG), for the first time we have been invited to address the Renewable UK national conference, giving an unprecedented opportunity to present the case for General Aviation as a specific category with different requirements to Commercial Air Transport.

Oxford RMZ

We were have been made aware of the start of a consultative process by London Oxford Airport regarding the application of a radio mandatory zone (RMZ) for air traffic operations to the north of the airport. https://sites.google.com/site/oxfordairportrmz/home .

As this is based on their wish for a known airworthiness environment for traffic flying NDB approaches to runway 19 from the Daventry NDB, it is likely to directly involve and potentially exclude non-radio traffic currently known to be operating from Shennington, Shotteswell, Bicester, Hinton and Enstone as well as several private airfields in the area. It will also potentially impact on airfield utilisation at Chiltern Park, Turweston, Sywell, Wellesbourne and further afield as en-route traffic will almost certainly be affected.

While GAAC is not directly involved in airspace discussions, Stephen Slater circulated information to the LAA, BMAA and BGA informing them of the situation, to allow them to respond on behalf of members. The VAC will also preparing their own response on behalf of our 300 Vintage Aircraft Club members, many of whom operate non-radio vintage and classic airfield in this area.

Significant Areas for Sport

Work continues on the future classification by Sport England of flying sites as Significant Areas for Sport (SASP), based on sport flying and competition aerobatic activities, giving additional planning protection.

Currently around 15 sites have been identified for consideration by Sport England. However some of these sites have requested a delay while the land owners are consulted as there are clearly implications for future sale of land in the future. Following further dialogue with the LAA, BMAA, British Aerobatic Association, Royal Aero Club, Helicopter Club of Great Britain, it is hoped that an aerodrome owners' questionnaire for each site will be completed by the end of December.

Anemometer Mast Conspicuity

One of the major steps forward in recent weeks has been development of greater conspicuity for 'met masts'. While we have no statutory capability, the CAA asked the GAAC to provide advice to planning officers in a joint initiative. We initially advocated the use of 'spherical orange markers' such as used on high-voltage power cables. The weight of these however caused concerns of potential structural overload in high winds or icing condition, so we researched the creation of greater visual acquisition of the 15 bird flight deflectors already required to be placed on each outer guy wire.

We identified a specific type of reflective bird flight deflector, which is 135mm in diameter and weighing 0.2kg, which may achieve reasonable visual recognition at about 1km without the additional structural load.

As a result of the moves forward in this respect, the CAA has requested wording from GAAC to be incorporated in the next update to CAP 764 "CAA Policy and Guidelines on Wind Turbines" early in 2015.

Stephen Slater.
14th November 2014

Programme 2015

Programme 2015

4th February	Imperial War Museum and Lloyds, London
14th April	JCB, Uttoxeter
13th May	Gilbert Greenall's Estate, Exmoor
22nd - 31st May	FFA European Tour to Finland
9th June	Tiptree Jam, Essex
May / June	Esso Refinery, Southampton



More events to be added later

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.

London, Wednesday 4th February 2015

This event has been kindly arranged by our Hon. Legal Advisor, Tim Scorer, taking time out from his 'lawyering'! Your reply slips should be sent to him at the address which will be provided.

10.30 Meet at the Imperial War Museum (IWM) in Lambeth. The museum cannot provide a guided tour which suits our requirements. However, Tim will provide an information sheet on the day to help members to see the more notable exhibits in their own time.

13:00 Coach to take us to have lunch near to Lloyds.

14.30 Tour of Lloyds' of London. Approx. 1½ hours. It is hoped that an aviation Underwriter or Broker will be on hand to answer questions.

Costs. Entrance to IWM and tour of Lloyds' are free. The coach and lunch will hopefully be covered by your £30 fee with the reply slip to be completed by January 4th.

It looks like there is some flexibility but numbers will be limited to approx 40. Therefore if you have to cancel please let Tim know (07860 557766).

JCB, Uttoxeter, Tuesday 14th April 2015

Although we have visited JCB before (January 2004), we thought it would be worthwhile to pay them another visit and hopefully under better weather conditions than last time when there was a snow storm. Landing will be at Richard Hall's strip only a few miles from the factory.

09:00 - 10:00 Land at Richard Hall's strip, Abbots Bromley.
10:10 Bus departs.
10:30 Reception at JCB & The History of JCB
11:00 Loadall Tour
13:00 Lunch
14:00 Tour of the World Parts Centre (WPC)
15:30 Return to Richard Hall's strip and depart.

Although JCB are subsidising the costs, the price will be £25 pp to include lunch and transport. Please return the reply slip by February 5th to Paul Stephens.

Visit to Gilbert Greenall's Exmoor estate - Wednesday 13th May 2015

This is a follow up visit to Gilbert's other estate on Exmoor; last year's visit to his home estate near Ledbury was both fascinating and oversubscribed. There will again be a top limit of 30 participants. You are well advised to apply early. There is an excellent airstrip on the estate of ample proportions. Gilbert has offered to supply lunch in the house at which there is limited room - hence the restriction on numbers. Gilbert's suggestions for the day's activities are as below.

"The tour would be stock farming orientated and look at both cattle and sheep enterprises on the 6100 acre estate (2100 owned, 4000 rented off the National Park). The suckler herd (Angus and Galloways) has recently reduced from 550. We run 1700 Blackface ewes. and I would discuss the challenges of running such a major HLS scheme on the whole estate and being a National Park tenant. The National Park tenancy has 70 km of fencing alone.The estate is between 1250 and 1500ft and sees extreme weather every year."

Entry will be £25/head. Applications to be returned, with a cheque, to Martin Gosling by March 31st

FFA European Tour 2015 - Finland, Friday 22nd May to Sunday 31st May 2015

This years Study Tour will be loosely based on the postponed tour originally scheduled for 2010. Planning is still very much 'work in progress'

Friday 22nd May

Fly to Billund (EKBI). Visit to the original Legoland. Overnight Billund.

Saturday 23rd May

Fly to Mariehamn (EFMA) - 432 NM. Free time. Dinner on boat? Overnight in Mariehamn.

Sunday 24th May

Fly to Helsinki Malmi (EFHF) - 154 NM. Visit TBA. City tour. Free time. Overnight in Helsinki.

Monday 25th May
Fly to Jyvaskyla (EFJY) - 130 NM. Visit Valtra tractor factory. Possibly an aviation museum. Overnight in Jyvaskla.

Tuesday 26th May
Non flying day. Coach to an agriculturally orientated visit. Overnight in Jyvaskla.

Wednesday 27th May
Fly to Kokkola (KOKK) - 105 NM. Visit to plastics manufacturer to the agricultural industry. Overnight in Kokkola.

Thursday 28th May
Visit to local farmer or contractor. Overnight in Kokkola.

Friday 29th May
Maybe fly to Stockholm Bromma? (ESSB) - 302 NM. Venue uncertain - may have one more day in Finland

Saturday 30th May
Visit somewhere in Sweden. Farewell dinner

Sunday 31st May
Depart for home.

Some of the detail will undoubtedly change in the planning before a final itinerary is fixed but the bare bones are as above.

Anyone interested in participating in this years tour is invited to apply with a non-returnable deposit of £100/person. Cheques will not be cashed until required by hotels, but participating numbers will be needed to be known so as to book suitable hotels. Further funds may be required before the final planning is complete depending on costs and requirements.

Please reply to Martin Gosling together with a cheque for the deposit by January 31st **stating type of room required.** No cheque = no participation!

Esso Refinery, Fawley - May /June 2015

This visit is being planned for May / June, cost to be finalised

The visit starts with an introductory talk about the refinery. The talk is followed by a coach tour of the site. This will be an afternoon visit, and a morning visit is also being arranged.

As we will be limited to numbers, would those interested please let me know using the reply slip.More details next year.

AGM - Langar - 29th October 2015

On an exceptionally murky morning with low cloud, 8 aircraft emerged out of the gloom much to the surprise of the the chief pilot at Langar who was also manning the handheld. (This is why some of you had trouble hearing her when you first called up). The Langar fire crew and the John Deere gator soon organised a double act to get the pilots from the parking to JD.

Along with cars, 50 members out of 55 expected were able to make it; an excellent result considering the weather.

After refreshment in the JD canteen we assembled in their well appointed meeting room.

The AGM was lively with much contribution from the floor such that it lasted 60, rather than the billed 30 minutes.

David Joyce, our guest speaker, is a gynaecologist who retired at 60 and decided to build a plane. He built a Europa and has flown it to 120 different countries. He was going to fly it to Australia in 2009 but with his son recently diagnosed with Motor Neurone disease, decided instead to visit all the islands on the British Isles half mil chart as a Dawn-to-Dusk challenge and raise money for MND.

With all this flying over water, it got him thinking about the issue of engine failure and ditching. Information from GASCO indicated that 88% of pilots survive the ditching and then 50% of those die before rescue. However, no one could tell him where this had come from so he looked into the data himself:-

Between 1990 and 2011 there were 49 ditchings involving 80 people with 8 fatalities; actually only 10%, not the 44% implied by the official guidance. Of the 8, 4 were as a result of loss of control on ditching, 2 had no life jacket, 1 had no position and 1 survived the ditching but went back to save the passenger and sank with the plane. On the matter of survival in the water , the minimum survival time without suits is 3 mins, average 5 mins and above 15 deg C you will not die of cold. The coldest winter water temperature around the UK is 8 deg C where minimum survival is over an hour.

Now you are in the water, what about being found? He went on to say that a 5-mile radius search can take a day but a 10-mile one takes a week. David was comforted by the fact that his Europa was supposed to float but noted that a Piper Cherokee will sink in 20 seconds. The clear recommendations coming from this were - wear a life jacket - carry a Personal locator beacon - don't hang about.

David had also looked into the issue of stall/spin accidents. Experience is no protection since surprisingly these happen to IR/IMC pilots more than students. It is clear where these accidents take place, (in the circuit, engine failure - stretching the glide, in valleys and mis-managed aerobatics) and why, (distraction and stress, loss of attention to speed especially on turns and muscle tension/tendancy to pull back). It seems that standard stall warners are often ineffective and David recommended an active system which calls your speed such a the Bendix King KLR10 or the SmartASS Mk3 voice.

A superb and interesting talk to rival any CAA safety evening.

James Evans from John Deere, himself a helicopter pilot and our host for the day then gave us a very interesting talk about the history of John Deere, it's origins in the US and global operations today. They have 67000 dealers in 35 countries, 60 in the UK with 121 outlets. Knowing JD for their agricultural equipment, many were surprised to know that outside Europe they have a very strong turf, forestry and construction portfolio. He went on to describe the different divisions in the UK; finance, power (engines), parts and most interestingly the Intelligent Solutions division selling hi-tech IT based products for modern farmers including GPS guidance, automatic headland management (where the headland turn and all implement actions are done automatically), telemetry, where the equipment is returning information in real time to the office in order to see locations, machinery "health", workrate, yield and work done, the latter being particularly useful for contractors charging on.

Langar is the JD UK parts centre and we were given a flavour of the logistical challenge of providing a parts service to the UK where many of the parts come from the European parts centre in Germany. For orders placed before 5pm, a part can be expected to be picked in Germany, flown from Frankfurt to Coventry, delivered to Langar, re-sorted out to dealers by the next morning.

Lunch was courtesy of JD in their canteen, after which we have a short tour of the parts facility. Many members noted how many spare diesel tanks were on the shelves although none were in any doubt about the reason.....

A very good day, despite the weather with many thanks to John Deere who hosted us completely free, James Evans, our host, David Joyce, who drove up from Gloucester to speak to us and Langar airfield who did us proud and by all accounts did not charge a landing fee. You may be pleased to know that on account of this, the committee decided to send them a donation for their funds.

Andrew Cragg

Welcome To Our Farm Strip!

The Fortieth Anniversary issue of this magazine (March 2014) appropriately contained an excellent article by Gerry Humphreys about "Farm Strip Flying". It highlighted that "A high proportion of the accidents and incidents that occur to light aircraft (in Ireland) happen during the take-off or landing phases from short or unlicensed airstrips". The UK records do not differ substantially. There are increased risks and demands not necessarily covered in a basic PPL course.

I would not be justifying my role as the FFA "tame Legal Eagle" if I did not pass on some further guidance and recommendations to those hospitable FFA members who are airstrip owners. Some of what follows is based on my own experiences as a former airstrip owner – and I had a visitor who wrote off my beloved aircraft in an accident – and some on the experiences of friends and clients with their own strips, not forgetting the clients who have come to me with a problem or question about their legal liabilities and insurance arrangements.

Let's start with the chapter & verse. The Occupiers Liability Act of 1957 imposes an obligation on the occupier of premises to take reasonable care for the safety of those using the premises. The airstrip is "premises", and the "occupier" is the person who runs it. This is who we are addressing in this article. What about "reasonable care for the safety of users" ? This is mainly a common sense thing. It isn't just clearing the area of sheep, as the visiting aircraft approaches. The "duty of care" should start well before that, when the intending visitor pilot does as requested, and makes that first call for PPR. We might call this intending visitor "Frederick Francis Arbuthnot" (entirely fictitious ! "Mr. FFA").

This first call is the opportunity to pass on as much detail about your airstrip as possible. Things like overhead wires, noise sensitive areas, u/s areas of ground, gradients, obstructions, wind farms and so on; everything should be fully spelt out. The best way to do this, when you finish reading this article, is to start making a list of all those things which you should be telling prospective visitors intending to arrive at your strip by air. Put yourself in the position of a pilot visiting your own strip, and see what you'd tell yourself ! It's a checklist, which you can then read out over the phone to them.

When you've made the check list, and you get your first PPR call, you should write the caller's name in a logbook, so as to confirm that you actually did read out this list on such and such a day to the calling pilot. The follow on is then a fairly simple but necessary task. On the basis that you should have taken Mr. FFA's mailing or e-mail address, along with the details of his aircraft, passengers and so on, you should then send out an e-mail or hard copy of what you have read out to him. This is the backup, in the likely event that he listened to you but didn't write it all down. You should keep a copy of what you send out, of course.

What else should you do ? If between the time of the phone call and the mailing to the invitees, there's any change in the information you gave them, you should be sure to pass this on; again keeping a written record of what you've told them. What you're looking for is to ensure that Mr FFA, the inbound pilot, has been told everything he should about coming into your airstrip. Every inbound pilot, allowing of course for his own duties as P1, should be equipped with all the information to enable him/her to make a safe and successful arrival, touchdown, and of course departure.

Regretfully, your "duty of care" doesn't stop there. You must have due regard to those who are already there at and around the airstrip, with whom the approaching pilot has no communication. These may be farm employees, friends, other guests, neighbours or whatever. You need to consider what protection they should have for their safety, such as fences, barriers, marked no-go areas etc. all of which need to be planned and laid out in advance. There may be a need for some marshalling too - of passengers, and your other visitors, in order to keep them safe and separate from aircraft. Propellers and rotor blades don't take prisoners !

Your duties continue while the visitors are there, with their machines parked, and everyone hopefully having a good time. "Loose cows" as well as loose dogs should be redirected ! Modern covering fabrics may not be as "tasty" as doped canvas, but livestock can cause expensive damage to aircraft with a need for expensive repairs. When the party's over, it is no bad idea to hand out a departure briefing sheet, while the pilots access the latest met and do return flight planning. This step may not be so much as to help pilots comply with legislation, as to preserve goodwill among your neighbours, as well as ensuring safe and liability free departures.

Do you have insurance for your airstrip owner's liabilities ? I had a recent case where the airstrip owner, who only had about 15 visitors a year, considered that the premium for a proper Airstrip Owner's Liability policy turned each visit into an expensive exercise. So he decided to cut back on visitors. In reality and considering the risks, not simply of having to pay out damages to an injured passenger, but as much to defend an opportunistic but ungrounded claim, a modest degree of insurance cover for your premises, equipment and of course your potential liabilities to visitors, is a must, especially having regard to the litigious society in which we live.

Of course visiting FFA members themselves might not be so ungracious as to return your hospitality with a claim, but what about their passengers, who do not have the same affinity with you ? And what if Mr. FFA's insurance had actually expired shortly before he visited you ? As the "wealthy landowner" (sorry, but that's how you'll be seen) you would be a natural target for a claim by a passenger, although the pilot may be the prime target. Even if the accident was really down to Mr. FFA's pilot error, the costs involved in defending yourself can be considerable. Normally these "defence costs" will be covered by an appropriate Airstrip Owner's Liability policy. In any event, you should ensure that your home/household/farm premises and liability cover is such that your potential liabilities would actually be adequately covered by the insurance you're paying for. If you don't have it, buy some specific cover through reputable aviation brokers. You may find a scheme being run by one aviation insurance broking company, which can offer you cover for your airstrip owner's liabilities at a very modest additional premium on top of your normal aircraft liability premium.

On a rather more encouraging note, another piece of legislation – the Civil Aviation Act 1982 – provides that the operator of an aircraft has a strict liability for injury to persons or damage to property on the ground caused by the aircraft in the process of taking off, landing, or in flight. So if the pilot does make an error resulting in your expensive summer house being wiped out as he/she comes in to land, the claim for replacement cannot be

defended, unless the mishap was caused by you yourself - a highly unlikely situation. However, this strict liability does not apply in the case of passengers, because they are not classed as "third parties on the ground". Statistically there is a far bigger risk of claims by them, and those claims are many times greater than the cost of replacing damaged crops.

I am often asked if visitors can be required to sign away their rights to compensation for death and personal injury – the old style "blood chit". The answer is a firm "NO". What can be done, however, and ahead of your event, is to seek an indemnity from visiting pilots against any claims which made be made against you and which arise from the use of your airstrip by the visiting pilot and his aircraft. This step involves what might be seen as a rather hostile and bureaucratic gesture between friends, or fellow members. In reality it is one way of protecting yourself although only in limited circumstances and to some extent, depending on the circumstances giving rise to the claim. As a regular attender at FFA events, you will have seen a similar indemnity on the back of your booking forms.

If you want to know the outcome of the nearly fatal accident I had at my airstrip, I regret that must be a topic for another day – or for a personal discussion between you, as an airstrip owner, and someone like me ! I might say that "I learned a lot about airstrip operation from that" !

© Tim Scorer, MRAeS. 28th October 2014
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How an Old Spam-Can Pilot Went Microlighting

Comme-ci – G-OMSA

It must have been joining the BMAA which brought about a big change in my attitude to microlights. I had detected a huge and infectious enthusiasm and energy for microlight aviation in their magazine, engendered no doubt by their Editor, the irrepressible Geoff Hill. But in distant years past, I had attended (as a lawyer on behalf of the CAA) just about every Coroner's Inquest inquiring into the death of a poor pilot in what was then an unregulated often homebuilt microlight, which he needed no qualifications to fly. You will understand therefore that I was bit (no, a lot) put off by these aircraft, and that remained the case until recently.

I'd been flying for about 40 incident-free years, starting with Austers, and progressing to a Rallye 100, then a Jodel 1050, and ultimately to my beloved FR172J Reims Rocket. I was contentedly flying this "spam can" for years without realising what was going on in the microlight world. Not only had there been developments (and regulation) of those early weight shift machines, but along had come a whole fleet of highly sophisticated under 450kg three axis aircraft, to whet the appetites of aspiring pilots, and rekindle the flying flames in older traditional pilots like me.

And so it was that I found myself at Damyns Hall Aerodrome, in a corner of the M25, helping with a pre-flight check "A" of a "pocket rocket" called CT-SW, designed in Germany and produced in Crimea. Helping me around the aircraft was Deepak Mahajan, of London Airsports Centre, the CFI, and boss of this Flying Training School. "The manufacturers have given the pilot everything he would get in a commercial aircraft but in a miniature version", he explained. And so it seemed. For instance, he told me that the oil dipstick takes 300 ML from empty to full – about the same amount of oil, as my glass of wine at lunchtime !

In the remarkably comfortable and spacious cockpit, gazing at a glass screen smaller than my laptop, I thought I'd caught him out. "Can't find the heading ?". "It's there - at the top, and the speed is on the left, the altitude on the right. Keep below 1500 ft, please. We don't want to upset Southend", Deepak patiently pointed out. In between these important numbers was a large Flight Condition Indicator, A/H, and electronic turn and slip. On the right of this were all the engine instruments in digital strips, that went from red to amber to green. You just need to keep it all green, then you're alright. Press a button, and you're in NAV mode, backed up by a clamped iPad, with full GPS capability. Press the button again, well – I didn't get that far myself.

The best thing for me about this carbon fibre dragonfly, was a real stick, and despite all the hi-tech stuff around me, there I was once again holding a joystick. What a joy, indeed; just like the old Auster days. Thank goodness some things don't change. The control inputs weren't what I had expected. I started off being too cautious and sensitive to this little aircraft. "It's a question of energy management" said Deepak, and I was encouraged to be more positive. That was certainly the case when trying a few stalls,







which were very manageable and pleasant, at about 41 kts clean. The aircraft really seemed to be saying: "Oh, go on then, if you must. It's really not a big deal", and it wasn't. I soon felt far more confident after 20 mins in this 'plane than I expected to be.

The remarkable capability of the CT-SW is amply borne out by Deepak's adventures with a group of fellow owners who travelled to Jerusalem via Italy and Greece, and back via Romania and Poland. He recorded his trip in a book "A flight called Wanda". Certainly it was evident from the drop down baggage hatches, that there was good storage for several overnights, as well as room for a "Little John", though accessibility could be a problem. However I was warned against putting anything metallic in bags in the back as this would affect the magnetic compass in mid-fuselage.

If you're a diehard spam can pilot, give yourself a real treat. Go and experience today's high spec microlight. You'll be staggered. The evolution over the last 30 years of the Cessnas and Pipers may not seem like much. But the technology has been advancing at a remarkable rate in the microlight world. The CT-SW bears that out and does so magnificently. However, there's still one small problem. You can pick up an old airworthy Cessna or Piper for £20 -£30 K, but a new CT-SW will set you back about £70 K. There aren't any old CT-SWs around as yet, but if you can find 5 or 6 other pilots to join you in buying one, well, then you're quids in and can have some great and cheap flying. At least with carbon fibre you won't be looking at metal corrosion !

Note: No commission, rewards or other benefits have been paid, given or promised to the author in the writing of this article. However, one does live in hope..... !

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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

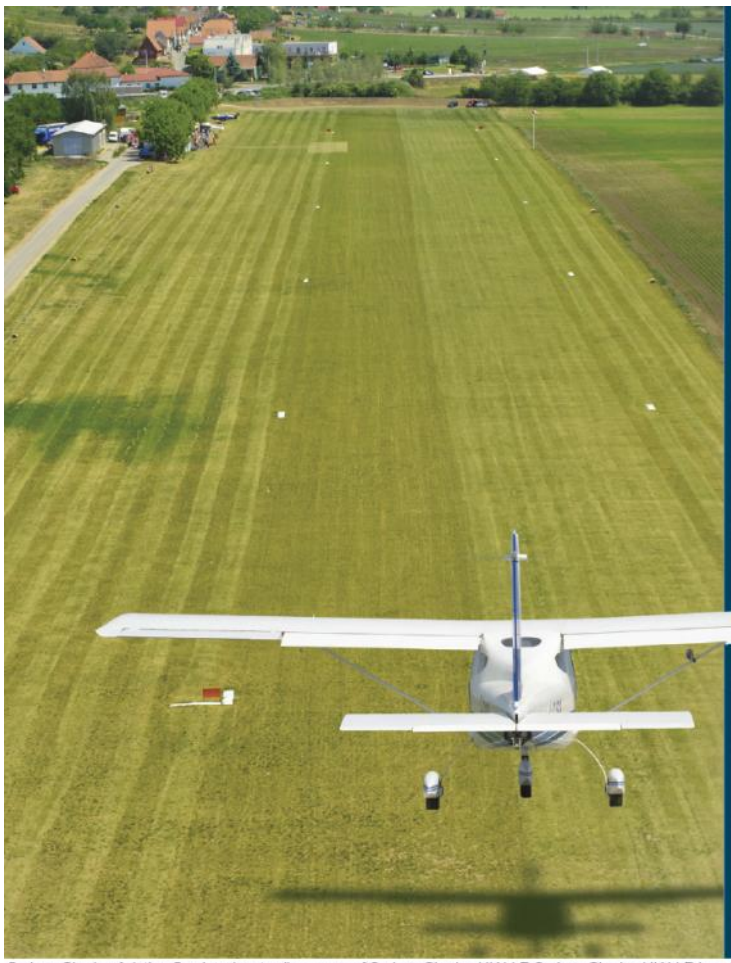
In addition to premises liability and if hangarage is provided, or if aircraft are kept in your care, custody and control, or where aircraft are moved by you or your employees, then you should include **Hangarkeepers Liability** for an additional £120 for £500,000 any one occurrence, but limited to £50,000 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.

Please say that you are a Flying Farmers member when you call.



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